Western Avenue Corridor Study and Rezoning
Transportation and Multi-Modal Improvements
January 27, 2022
Staff Introductions & New Key Contacts

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Welcome Partner Agencies & Electeds

Local Electeds
MBTA Staff
DCR
Agenda

1. Introduction & Housekeeping
2. Review: Transportation Planning Context & Previous Concepts
3. Western Ave Transitway
4. Curbside Management Strategies & TDM Measures
5. Next Steps & Discussion
1 Introductions & Housekeeping
Project Website

bit.ly/westerncorridor

- Presentations (including tonight’s!)
- Recordings from virtual meetings
- Project documents (e.g. Zoning Toolkit and Housing Toolkit)
Zoom Tips

Your controls should be available at the bottom of the screen.

Clicking on these symbols activates different features:
Virtual Meeting Protocols

- Following the presentation there will be time for verbal Q&A. Please be respectful of each other’s time so that all may participate in the discussion.

- You can always set up a conversation with the project team through Joe Blankenship, joseph.blankenship@boston.gov.
Meeting Recording

- The BPDA will be recording this meeting and posting it on its website at bit.ly/WesternCorridor. The recording will include the presentation, Q&A, and public comments afterwards.
- Also, it is possible that participants may be recording the meeting with their phone cameras or other devices.
- If you do not wish to be recorded during the meeting, please turn off your microphone and camera.
Transportation Planning Context & Previous Concepts
Objectives of Corridor Study

- Create a **compelling vision** for the Study Area
- **Recommend zoning** informed by that vision (and grounded in financial analysis and transportation modeling)
- Propose **multimodal improvements** to Western Avenue and other transportation enhancements
Go Boston 2030

- Go Boston 2030 - Citywide long-term plan
- A primary objective is mode shift
- Reduction of SOV driving and increase in transit, walking & biking are key

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode for Bostonian Commutes</th>
<th>Today*</th>
<th>2030 Aspirational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Transit</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>Up by a third</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>Up by almost a half</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Increases fourfold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpool</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>Declines marginally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive Alone</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>Down by half</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/Work from Home</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Slight increase in Work from Home</td>
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More Planning Context

- Western Ave identified in Go Boston 2030 as a priority Better Bike Corridor
- MBTA Bus Network Redesign - Western Ave as priority transit corridor
- Community Feedback - bold transit paramount
Existing Right-of-Way
Typical Cross-Section

Looking West
Illustrative Purposes Only
Public Process To Date - What We Heard

Results from **2019 Workshop:**

1. Buffered/Protected bike lane
2. Bus lane
3. Bike lane
4. Planting zone

**April/May 2021 Public Feedback:**

1. Bolder Transit Vision
2. Impacts of larger development area
Concept 1: Protected Bike Lanes

- Implementation within ~2 years
- Lifespan 5-15 years
- Reallocate existing right-of-way:
  - Strategic bus improvements, e.g. stop & accessibility improvements, queue jumps, transit signal priority
  - Low stress bicycle facilities
  - Pedestrian improvements, e.g. new or improved crosswalks
Concept 1: Proposed Cross-Section

General Approach

Looking West

Illustrative Purposes Only
Concept 1: Plan View

General Approach

Mahoney’s Garden - Antwerp St
Concept 2: Alternating Bus Lanes & Protected Bike Lanes

- Timeframe: 5-15+ years
- Bike lanes stay
- Additional 15 foot setbacks with new development
- Northern curb moves by 3 feet
Concept 2: Alternating Bus Lanes
Concept 2: Alternating Bus Lanes

- Opportunity comes with future development on north side
- South side curb held constant
- North side curb moved approx. 3 feet

Looking West

Illustrative Purposes Only
Concept 2: Alternating Bus Lanes

- 12’ wide Westbound bus lane along the southern side curb
- Sidewalk-level bike lane & Enhanced streetscape design w/ landscape & cafe zones
Concept 2: Alternating Bus Lanes

- 12’ wide Eastbound bus lane along the southern side curb
- Sidewalk-level bike lane on both sides & Enhanced streetscape design w/ landscape & cafe zones

Illustrative Purposes Only
Concept 2: Alternating Bus Lanes

Everett - Antwerp Streets
Western Ave Transitway
Why a Transitway?

Community Conversations
- Community desire for better transit service on Western Ave - *along with other multimodal street improvements*

Fits with City Goals
- Works with existing streets and utilizes existing infrastructure more effectively
- Reduces transit delay, improves reliability, increases person throughput & improves safety on city streets

Design Context
- Works with other multimodal improvements - like better bike infrastructure, pedestrian facilities, and open space
- Similar designs have worked in other American and Canadian Cities
Transitway Process

● Initial Community Feedback
  ○ We heard you wanted better biking connections, transit, walking, and open space

● Proof of Concept for Transitway - we are here
  ○ Community conversation about this concept, benefits, and potential next steps

● Refine Concept Design for Transitway
  ○ Community conversation around design elements and additional transportation analysis

● Detailed Design for Transitway
  ○ Detailed design with community & stakeholder discussions

● Implementation - likely in a Phased Process
What is a Transitway?

- **Dedicated bus lanes** which are separated from general purpose traffic
- **Enhanced transit stations** with real time arrival information, improved shelters, benches, and bus boarding areas
- Complementary **bike and pedestrian improvements and accommodates loading needs**
- Redirects some drivers due to roadway space constraints
Transitway Example
Market Street, San Francisco

- Prioritizes buses, trolleys, bikes, & local deliveries
- Works with parallel roads for through traffic
- Trucks and deliveries are managed through use of series of intersecting streets
- Quick build implementation resulted in 25% increase in cycling and transit times improved by up to 12% in first two months alone according to the City of SF
- SF is now working on a permanent design incorporating these improvements
What does this mean for Western Ave?

Prioritize transit movements on Western Ave

- **Congestion-free transit** on Western Ave for Routes 70 & 86, improving the connection to the Red Line, Cambridge, and Watertown
- **Predictable travel times for buses** - consistent travel times with less variation
- **Plans for the Future** - accommodate population/job growth in Allston/Brighton through a high-capacity transit connection and upcoming MBTA’s Bus Network Redesign
Transitway Routing Concept

**Two-way travel** for transit, school buses, & emergency vehicles

**One-way travel** for passenger vehicles with connections from Telford and Everett Streets to enable access to Western Ave
Western Ave Traffic Access

Redirect some vehicular traffic

- Local vehicle traffic may utilize Soldiers Field Road to reach destinations on Western Ave
- Some “regional” vehicle traffic may divert to other corridors such as the Mass Pike, Soldiers Field Road, Greenough Boulevard to rather than using Western Ave
- Further design refinement would detail access to specific buildings and streets in collaboration with stakeholders
- Additional coordination occurring with DCR around Soldiers Field Road
Western Ave Local Traffic Example

A car trip from Watertown Home Depot to Pavement Coffeehouse today takes **4 minutes** according to Google Maps.

With a diversion to Soldiers Field Road, this trip would take **1 minute longer**.
Western Ave Regional Traffic Example

A car trip from Watertown Home Depot to the Mass Pike Onramp in Allston has multiple alternative options according to Google Maps.

Or, a driver could decide to enter the Pike in Newton.
Western Ave Transitway Concept

Eastbound Curb-Extended Bus Stop @Charlesview Residences

Looking West

Illustrative Purposes Only
Western Ave Transitway Concept

Westbound Floating Bus Stop @Mahoney’s

Looking West

Illustrative Purposes Only
Western Ave Transitway Concept

Mahoney’s to Antwerp St
Western Ave Transitway

Concept Bus Stop Locations
Concept Example: Intersection Change – SFR and Telford St
Western Ave Transitway - Stress Test Analysis

- Traffic Computer Model (Synchro)
- Assumptions for Traffic Analysis:
  - Street direction changes
  - Modified intersections
  - Mode shift scenarios tested
    - 50% reduced SOV mode shift - Go Boston 2030
    - 20% reduced SOV mode shift - Local examples
  - Passenger vehicle diversion
  - Additional development activity in Allston/Brighton and Watertown
Background Development

Western Avenue Rezoning
- 6.6M Square Feet

Initial Known Area Development
- 3.4M Square Feet

Expanded Known Area Development
- 7.4M Square Feet
Traffic Analysis - 20% Mode Shift

- 20% is a recent mode shift seen on Brighton Ave bus lanes & intersections near Boston Landing Station
- Some congestion may occur during peak traffic conditions
Traffic Analysis - 50% Mode Shift

- Matches Go Boston 2030 Goals
- No major delays for cars at DCR intersections as roadway network exists today
- We are aware of DRC’s potential road diet for Soldiers Field Road - we will continue to coordinate w/ DCR on SFR
Agency Coordination To-Date

Concept Coordination & Review led by BPDA & BTD

- Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR)
- MBTA & MassDOT
- City of Cambridge Planning & Transportation Staff
- City of Watertown Planning & Transportation Staff
- Harvard University Planning Staff
Western Ave Transitway - Next Steps

- Evaluate Community Feedback
- Refine Concept Design and Examine full extent of Western Ave in Boston
- Discuss neighborhood roads and vehicle access
- Coordinate on Soldiers Field Road, area development projects, other area transportation projects
Curbside Management & TDM Measures
WACRZ - Curbside Management Strategies

Area wide strategies

- Parking Ratios in line w/ Citywide maximums
- Pickup/Dropoff discouraged on Western Ave
- Internalize loading & locate entrances off of side streets
- Discourage new curb cuts on Western Ave
WACRZ - Curbside Management Strategies

- Location specific strategies
- Develop curbside management & traffic calming plan around Charlesview
- Work w/ WBZ development to utilize South Campus Drive for public parking
- Consider on-site public parking during Article 80 Review
- Curbside management & traffic calming plans as part of Article 80 review
WACRZ - TDM Measures

- Amount of parking & pricing parking are essential

PARKING STRATEGY
Right-size the parking supply to avoid building excess parking spaces and incentivizing driving over sustainable transportation

TDM STRATEGIES
Manage demand for parking by providing high-quality sustainable options, such as walking, biking, and transit

Figure 1: TDM plans and right-sizing parking supply feed into each other.
Western Ave Parking Ratio Maximums:

- **Office:** 0.8 per 1,000 sq/ft
- **Institutions:** 0.8 per 1,000 sq/ft
- **R&D / Lab:** 0.8 per 1,000 sq/ft
- **Residential:** 0.5 per unit for rental projects; 1.0 per unit for condominiums
- **Retail:** 0.45 per 1,000 sq/ft or 5,000 sq/ft; 0.75 per sq/ft based on project
WACRZ - TDM Measures

- Percentages represent trips that shift away from vehicle to other modes of travel
- Managing volume & pricing of parking is key
- Increased work from home & 100% transit subsidy are important

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TDM Strategy</th>
<th>Replacement Travel Mode</th>
<th>Vehicle Trip Reduction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ring 1 (0-3 miles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce parking supply</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(25% less than the parking ratio guidelines in the Corridor)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide market-rate parking</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide increased work from home flexibility</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide 100% transit subsidy</td>
<td>Transit</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unbundled parking</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
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Strategies to be Implemented through Development[^1]
Next Steps
WACRZ - Next Steps

- Finalize recommendations & WACRZ planning document based on feedback received
- Public meeting to review & release full WACRZ draft report targeted for late March
- 30 day public review & comment period on full report
- Broader examination of Western Ave transitway & coordination with DCR & MBTA
Thank you

Discussion