



Meeting Notes

Attendees: See Attached.

Date/Time: March 6, 2014 at 6:30PM

Project No.: 99901.15

Place: Cambridge Boat House,
Cambridge, MA

Re: Greenough Blvd Information Meeting

Notes taken by: PGD

A public meeting was held on March 6, 2014 to talk about the roadway improvements on Greenough Boulevard. Joe Orfant (DCR), Herb Nolan (Solomon Foundation), Pete Sorensen (VHB) and Laura Castelli (VHB) completed the presentation. After the presentation, the following was discussed:

1. One person noted that cycling safety is important, and adequate lighting is needed in the area. Bike racks are also needed.
2. It was noted that studies have shown that reductions in pavement widths results in lower operating speeds.
3. Cycle tracks should be designed instead of shoulders that accommodate bikes. Vasser St, the Longfellow Bridge, the North End and Boston Common all have cycle tracks. It will encourage non street biking.
4. The traffic at the Greenough / Grove Street intersection was discussed and the following comment was made: The new signal and intersection geometry are great, but if you narrow Greenough then over 20 years, there will be cars backed up on Grove Street, with fumes going into the apartment building next to the roadway.
5. The westbound traffic on the Blvd backs up at the signal, causing fumes into the apartment complex
6. There was a concern that if Greenough Boulevard is narrowed, then more traffic will back up on Grove Street, causing delays for emergency vehicles.
7. Another person commented that they did not think the removal of an eastbound lane on Greenough Boulevard would affect the long queue on Grove Street since there is no change to that movement. The consultant confirmed this.
8. DCR stated that the signal operations and traffic numbers will be further evaluated as part of the design development process.
9. A member of the Watertown Bike Committee stated that they support the project, and asked about the route from Cambridge to Grove Street. It was noted that the bicyclist wishing to use the Boulevard shoulder will need to use the crosswalk at the Eliot Bridge intersection to cross over to the West bound side of Greenough. They may choose to use the new shared-use path and cross Greenough at the Grove Street light instead.

10. One person asked how negotiable the design of the project is. If narrowing the roadway will cause traffic jams will the project change? DCR stated that everything is on the table, and now is the time to work through the design issues.
11. One person stated that the 14 ft multiuse path should be part of the project, and not an add-on.
12. One person stated that they were in favor of the project, and the traffic issues at Grove Street should be looked at.
13. One person stated that there are current flooding issues in the boulevard that should be addressed. There is a concern that if the roadway was narrowed at the cemetery, and it still floods, then cars won't get through. The consultant stated that the current blocked up drainage system will be cleaned out and made to function as part of the scope of the project.
14. One person suggested using cones now to close the lanes to get a feel of final conditions.
15. One person stated that there is currently parking on the westbound shoulder for school events. And the future condition does not accommodate parking. DCR stated that the parking is not permitted for this use.
16. One person asked for the net change in pavement surface within the floodplain, and not to pave along Marsh Path. DCR stated that that path will be constructed using stabilized soil. VHB stated that there will be approximately 1.65 ac of reduction of pavement as part of the project.
17. One person asked if the roadway adjacent to the Marsh Path be reduced to provide more separation. DCR stated it will likely remain the same but this can be looked at.
18. One person stated that roadway diets do not reduce roadway capacity. The consultant stated that there would be a longer queue at the Grove Street light only for east bound drivers on Greenough during part of the morning rush hour. Ample capacity will be maintained on the roadway itself. ..
19. The storm water advisory committee stated that they were happy with the project.
20. Funding was discussed. The Deputy Director of the Solomon Foundation stated that the foundation was committing up to half a million dollars (\$500,000) towards design, permitting, and construction of this project this year and would attempt to raise any additional funds that are needed to fill the gap. DCR is committed to other deferred maintenance projects across the state and does not have funding for this project currently.
21. The Watertown bike committee supported the project and stated that they would prefer both a bikepath and cycle tracks if there is room. They noted the drainage issues in the boulevard.
22. Representatives from WalkBoston were happy that the project addressed runners as well as bikers. They requested soft surfaces adjacent to the path, asked for it to be constructed now, and not during the next phase.
23. CRWA – stated that water quality is a primary goal of the project, and requested the quantification of reduction of pavement at the next meeting.
24. DCR recognized the state delegates, and other officials and DRC staff in the room.