



Thomas F. Broderick, P.E., Chief Engineer
MassDOT, 10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116
Attention: Paul King, Accelerated Bridge Program Project File No. 605511

RE:Comments on 25% Design

Dear Mr. Broderick:

WalkBoston has appreciated the opportunity to participate in both the Working Advisory Group (WAG) and the Design Advisory Group (DAG) associated with the replacement of the Casey Overpass. In providing comments on the twenty-five percent design for the proposed Casey Arborway, we would like to begin by conveying our strong support overall for the at-grade approach which we believe will provide a safer and more inviting environment for pedestrians. In addition to creating a more balanced, multi-modal transportation network for Forest Hills, the at-grade design greatly increases the opportunities for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in the area.

Though we whole-heartedly support the general at-grade design, we do have concerns about specific aspects of the design which we hope can receive additional attention. While a number of these issues were discussed in our January 8th MEPA letter (attached), we would like to take this opportunity to both expand on several of these previously outlined issues and raise a couple of additional issues that have subsequently come to our attention.

Pedestrian and bicycle conflicts

We believe that more may need to be done to minimize the potential for bicycle-pedestrian conflicts. Areas of concern include the proposed multi-use paths along the southern end of Washington St. as it heads toward Roslindale and the plaza areas between the station and the immediately abutting stretches of Washington St and the proposed Casey Arborway. A third area of concern is the most direct path that runs between the proposed headhouse and northeast corner of the intersection of the Washington St./Hyde Park Ave. and the Casey Arborway. While this pathway appears designated for bicycle use, it will likely be the desire line for pedestrians as well.

Addressing these various areas susceptible to bicycle-pedestrian conflicts will likely involve a variety of design adjustments. Given the absence of on-street bicycle facilities that might encourage faster moving cyclists to use the roadway, one design change that should be explored is introducing sharrow markings along the outside lanes of the Casey Arborway.

Shea Square and proposed double left-turn lanes

We strongly support the conversion of the existing Shea Circle into a more conventional intersection. While it is possible for much smaller, tighter, so-called mini-roundabouts to be designed in a manner that is pedestrian-friendly, larger rotaries or traffic circles requiring more than a single travel lane are generally less safe, convenient and welcoming for pedestrians than a well-designed intersection. Though we feel strongly about an intersection at this location, we are opposed to the double left-turn lane which we believe unnecessarily increases pedestrian crossing distances and reduces safety for pedestrians crossing at the entrance to Circuit Drive.

The Washington St. slip-lane

We are still unclear as to whether or not the current design embraces our suggestion for raising the proposed slip-lane for EB traffic turning right onto Washington St SB. Again, this treatment would

make the slip-lane acceptable to WalkBoston, and there are precedents for this type of application adjacent to similar parkways.

Design Speed – a traffic-calmed urban boulevard; not a high-speed parkway

Realizing the at-grade design's many benefits for pedestrians, cyclists and the broader Forest Hills community hinges on achieving not merely access for these users but actual comfort and protectedness. Motorists traveling along this section of the Arborway need to receive visual cues that they are in the an urban village area that people inhabit, not the higher-speed parkway-like environment that characterizes other portions of the Arborway as well as the Jamaica way and Riverway. WalkBoston encourages a design speed of 25-30 mph and respectfully requests that applicable road, streetscape and urban design treatments be explored toward this end. One design feature we recommend is modest interior lane widths (e.g., 10-10.5'), consistent w/ an urban context such as Mass. Ave. in Cambridge/Boston or Congress St. in downtown Boston. These streets accommodate MBTA buses and other large vehicles, and are appropriate models for cuing motorists on the Casey Arborway that they are in an urban setting.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this important project. Please feel free to contact WalkBoston with questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wendy Landman".

Wendy Landman
Executive Director