



August 21, 2012

Thomas Broderick, Chief Engineer
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
State Transportation Building
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116

Re: Causeway Street Reconstruction Project – 606320

Dear Mr. Broderick:

WalkBoston appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the design of Causeway Street, and is very glad to see that this very important street is being re-designed to better serve the many thousands of pedestrians who use it every day. We support most elements of the re-design of Causeway Street that have been presented to date. In particular we are pleased with the increased number of concurrent signalized intersections and the raised crosswalks, neckdowns and wider sidewalks on Causeway where pedestrian volumes are higher than vehicle volumes.

However, WalkBoston would also recommend that the design incorporate even more pro-walking features to reflect the fact that walking, transit and bicycling are increasing in the City while vehicle volumes decrease. As Mayor Menino has declared: “the car is no longer king,” and WalkBoston believes that the design for Causeway Street should reflect this new reality throughout the design.

Causeway Street

- Each intersection should have two crosswalks across Causeway, not just one. This is particularly important at Portland and Haverhill Streets.

Lowell Square

- Widen crosswalks and provide larger median (storage) areas. Pedestrian crossings here (Lomasney Way) are the heaviest in the corridor with 1,000 walkers crossing at peak hours.
- Many pedestrians will cross diagonally through the intersection (northwest to southeast corners) as they do now and this crossing needs to be accounted for in the design. WalkBoston strongly recommends a signalized crossing with an exclusive pedestrian phase be considered for this location.

Keany Square

- The Square, now a very treacherous intersection for walkers, will not be made

safer for pedestrians. Several attendees at the hearing on August 8, 2012, including owners whose businesses are located here, spoke of the many pedestrian near and actual crashes that have occurred at the intersection. We do not believe the re-design improves the pedestrian safety of this intersection although the prohibition of left turns from North Washington onto Causeway is laudable.

- Cars headed north on North Washington are already on a wide roadway, made visually larger by the nearby presence of Endicott and the lack of vertical elements on the northeast corner of the intersection. WalkBoston believes that urban design elements such as trees, poles with banners or even building structures would cue drivers that they are not on a wide roadway, devoid of pedestrians.
- To reduce vehicle speeds, the designers should re-assess the need for the two dedicated left turn lanes from Causeway Street. While WalkBoston supports concurrent signalization, we have found that pedestrians are hesitant to cross concurrently when turning motorists are jockeying with other cars and are not attentive to crossing pedestrians.

Green Space Along the Corridor

- A number of comments were made at the hearing about excessive green space along Causeway. WalkBoston strongly supports greenery along urban streets both because it softens the hard edge of the environment and because it provides walkers with perceived and actual safety from moving vehicles.

Sincerely,

Dorothea Hass
Senior Project Manager

cc: Richard Davey, Frank DePaola, William Tuttle, Albert Miller, John Romano, MassDOT
Thomas Tinlin, Vineet Gupta, Jim Gilooly, BTD
Jonathan Greely, BRA
City Councilor Salvatore LaMattina
Nicole Leo, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services
Guy Busa, Howard Stein Hudson