



July 15, 2009

Commissioner Richard Sullivan
Department of Conservation and Recreation
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600
Boston, MA 02114

RE: Comments on the Jamaica Pond Pedestrian Access Enhancements at Three Locations
Boston, Massachusetts

Dear Commissioner Sullivan:

WalkBoston is happy to provide comments on the Jamaica Pond Pedestrian Access Enhancements in the Jamaica Plain section of Boston. We are very pleased that DCR is pursuing these improvements to enhance pedestrian access to this wonderful open space resource.

Three projects are proposed: one at the intersection of Eliot Street and the Jamaica way at northbound Pond Street, another at the intersection of Kelly Circle and Parkman Drive, and the third at a midblock location on Parkman Drive. Alternative options for each have been explored and presented to the community.

The **Eliot Street** location affords an option that appears to reduce major dangers for pedestrian crossings at the currently unsignalized intersection. It provides a signalized crossing and median refuge for pedestrians. This proposal (Location A, Option 2 – West Pedestrian Signal) includes the possibility of a curb extension at the wide portion of the thoroughfare where the Jamaica way meets eastbound Pond Street. With a curb extension to narrow the pavement, the pedestrian crossing distance can be shortened and made safer. The new median extension provides for a much-needed refuge for crossing the street. The median extension also appears to solve issues with southbound Jamaica way drivers attempting to turn left into Eliot Street. An option that combines a signal, shorter crossing distance and a median refuge seems to be a sound proposal that would greatly improve pedestrian access between the Pond and nearby neighborhoods.

The **Kelley Circle/Parkman Drive** intersection is somewhat more complicated. In both options for this crossing, pedestrian access is improved by an enlargement of the triangular island where Parkman Drive meets Kelley Circle. In both options at this site, each of the crosswalks over the northbound and southbound movements at the Parkman Drive/Kelley Circle intersection will be narrowed and made safer for pedestrians. This will be a positive improvement for walkers.

However, there appears to be a remaining issue of whether Kelley Circle itself should be reduced to two lanes. The island can of course be made larger if the street width is reduced and new space is added to it. However, the island can also be enlarged without the reduction of the Circle to two lanes because the proposals also reduce the access and egress lanes of

Parkman Drive to one lane in each direction. Whether the Circle is two lanes or three does not significantly affect the safety of the proposed pedestrian improvements at Parkman Drive. There seems to be local sentiment to both improve pedestrian safety and at the same time minimize the potential for increased traffic congestion so we would urge that a solution which best meets those two objectives be selected.

The third proposed pedestrian crossing is a location at a midblock site on Parkman Drive. It connects the Jamaica Pond walkway and the Parkman Memorial. Option 2 is the better of the two locations in terms of safety, due to the speed of traffic and the profile of the road. This location would be enhanced by the use of textured pavement on either side of the crosswalk that would alert cars to the crosswalk.

We are concerned about the proposed sidewalk that parallels Parkman Drive from this crosswalk south. This walk route does not follow potential pedestrian demand, either to the playing fields, the picnic areas or to the Parkman Memorial. We think a better idea would be to provide a stone dust path from the end of crosswalk leading more directly to the Parkman Memorial. The sidewalk along Parkman Drive could then be eliminated.

As discussed at the July 1st public meeting, useful improvements might be implemented at the intersection of Parkman Drive and Perkins Street, where turning movements and current pedestrian crossings may be in more potential conflict. We urge consideration of improvements for pedestrian crossings at this intersection.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Jamaica Pond Pedestrian Access Enhancements. We hope our comments are helpful.

Please contact us for any clarification or additional comments that you may need.

Sincerely,

Wendy Landman
Executive Director

Robert Sloane
Senior Planner