

Jamaica Plain Design Project Meeting Notes

July 8th - Meeting #3

Hyde Square Design Focus Community Mtg

WHERE: 6:30 PM, Kennedy School, Jamaica Plain, MA

Meeting notes: compiled by Rachel Szakmary, BTM

Project Administrator attendees:

- Rachel Szakmary, BTM Project Manager
- Vineet Gupta, Director of Policy & Planning at BTM
- Marie Mercurio/James Fitzgerald, BRA Representative
- Jullianne Doherty, JP Neighborhood Liaison
- Zach Wasmouth, Boston Public Works
- Kyle Zick, Project Landscape Consultant, KZLA
- Stephen Farr, Project Engineer Consultant, Nitsche Engineering
- Councilor O'Malleys Office
- Jennifer Maria, Latino Liaison

Presentation by consultants to the community involving quick re-cap of project introduction, project team intros, presentation of Hyde Jackson area of for design focus/comments. Vineet Gupta, Director of BTM Policy/Planning presents the project re-cap noting the addition of the "South" to the project name to include the South St section of JP south of Monument Square. Vineet Gupta goes over Community Vision Statements from the Action Plan to include:

- Transportation Goals to focus on stormwater, energy and smart technologies
- Project area context discussed (South Street added back to scope)
- Hyde Square (importance of rotary, tighten crossings, "too much cement")
- Hyde to Jackson (incremental improvements, crossings, neck-outs)
- Monument Square (preserve, visibility, area feeling)/ two Action Plan ideas not popular/ changed to Hubway Stop location

Topics for discussion in Hyde area:

1. Crosswalks
2. Street Furnishings
3. Angel Mem. Wall
4. Parking
5. Access/use inside the Rotary
6. Sidewalks (width)
7. Rotary Islands
8. Consolidated Bike Parking

II. Comments/ Questions

- Consultant Comments: KZLA questions for the community post-presentation:
 - Opinions/New standards for benches, trash receptacles, lights, planters, bike racks, tree pits, crosswalks?

Public Comments:

- What is the Budget? Ans; \$400,000k ...**public request** for a **construction budget**. Comments that community doesn't want to design without knowing what they can get/afford.
- Hand-out next time should include existing & proposed for the design area, with clearly labeled roadways, page title, orientation etc..
- Request for better bike accommodation around the **rotary- cycletrack** or bollard barriers to provide a buffer
- Keep the feel of the area in design components to reflect the **branding as the "Latin Quarter"** potentially with addition of a sign recognizing this at the rotary
- Benches- red ones with sign were provided by Brown Fund in 2001/2- **request** for bench/public art **design contest** in the area?
- Work with the MTA to remove the old **T poles**
- Request for **raised crosswalks** at all streets approaching Centre Street as traffic calmer (**LEOS**)
- Design the **crosswalks** to reflect where the stop lines should be.
- Hyde Square Task Force suggests speaking to the **Blessed Sacrament** to see if there could be use of the outside space surrounding the site just off from the Hyde Square area to help with placemaking opportunities.
- Any **benches** should be non-metallic or black- others are too hot to sit on.
- **Info Signage** could be to updated/added in the Square - opportunity to have things point to points of interest, maps and other info.
- **More greenery** added to the Hyde square area. Rotary is a public park- talk to parks dept for maintenance options- **tulip trees/bio swales requested**)
- Suggestion of outdoor exercise equipment (ex. of outdoor ellipticals in Santa Domingo), or crosswalk flags (example in Heron Village in Cambridge) in area to add more **interactive-ness** in the areas around the rotary
- Could the **rotary be removed** and new configuration made to improve safety? - "No one actually yields". Issues with site-lines for pedestrians, room for two cars but it is tight.

- **Day Street** comments regarding the **wall**, can this be taken down or reconfigured? Issues with site lines and pedestrian crossing there. Wall is unfriendly, ugly and creates barrier still.
- Not attached to the **trees inside the rotary**, introduce water feature or art in some way.
- **Street trees** should frame streetscape to indicate residential from retail areas.
- More ped activity in the area of the rotary- can you open this up and still accommodate the loading needed?
- **Ped-refuges** need to be re-aligned, they serve a role in the design of the round-about, but right now there is a tree in one of them that makes it feel un-safe.
- **Focus on the study from 2009**, many man hours went into developing consensus on design and the function of the area. Study concluded to keep the rotary or roundabout form, more spaces for seating, and less artistic additions but more efficiency in the function of the area.
- Use **materials** that will last- we shouldn't start from scratch on this- use the old designs from the 2009 study.
- Project design should be **transformative** to the area (tree pits, sidewalks need to be ped-friendly)- not just spot upgrades- how can we get a larger budget to do this?
- Want a **continuous/unified design** in the whole corridor- reflects history, art, unity, diversity with unifying elements. Consistency & Diversity.
- **Traffic signal boxes**- why do we have them? Other major cities don't have these and/or locate them in the middle of the right of way (ex. NY/San Fran).
- Traffic in the area currently- don't want it updated so it's fast but free-flowing and smoother.
- Area by **Stop & Shop** needs a **signal light**- does not work for cars.
- Designs reflect bump-outs, this is an issue for **Sheridan Street** (as a one-way, there is no way to get there from rotary if you bump this out).
- **Variable parking meter-pricing** should be considered for this area.
- Add areas for more **short-term parking** for pick-up & drop-off.
- Can we **expand the scope** if requested by residents? Letters of support need to be submitted and other project additions could be considered after this contract has finished.
- **Monument Square**- is the signal going to be discussed in the next meeting? Yes, this will be covered in terms of short-term action items we are currently working on.