Rutherford Avenue/Sullivan Square 2nd Community Meeting
Thursday, November 13, 2008
7:00pm at Knights of Columbus

DRAFT Questions, Comments and Responses

1. Given the congested roadways leading to Sullivan Square, is there one road that seems to be more problematic than others, impacting traffic flow the most?
Cambridge and Maffa intersection seems to be posing most problems.

2. Where are people moving through this intersection traveling to?
Most people are moving toward Rutherford Avenue. Roughly, 30-35% are going through Maffa to Rutherford and 25% are coming off of I93 toward Downtown.

3. Traffic on Rutherford Avenue going inbound in the AM is significantly different than traffic traveling outbound in the PM.
The consultants confirmed that the traffic volumes are not equal. Capacity is around 60-65% traveling inbound in the morning and around 45-50% traveling outbound in the afternoon. There needs to be a benefit to travel in the opposite direction and we haven't figured out what that is yet. One possible explanation, as observed by a resident, is that there is an exit ramp in the tunnel at Government Centre and people are getting off earlier going inbound but not going outbound.

4. Timing of the lights at Cambridge Street coming from I93 ramp and at Sullivan Square are not well coordinated, creating a bottleneck.
We can look into fixing this now as a short-term implementation step.

5. How much movement of traffic is there between Cambridge and Everett rather than South flowing traffic? The proposed alternatives make movement between Cambridge and Everett more difficult.

6. Where is stormwater going to go under new alternative scenarios?
Water will mostly discharge into the Mystic River. However, we need to continue to review stormwater mitigation to ensure the project is sensitive to runoff.

7. Does BTD decide an alternate route for traffic during construction of the project?
BTD and Police will work together to re-route cargo.

8. Will there be any land-takings involved with the proposed scenarios?
The City and Consultants have worked together to create alternatives that would not involve land-takings.

9. Was a smaller traffic circle considered as an alternative?
The consultants studied the impacts of both a small and large circle. The problem with traffic circles is that they are bad for pedestrian crossings. Also, volumes would only allow for a 2-lane rotary.

10. When creating these alternatives, how much weight was given to future traffic traveling from I93 through Sullivan Square to Main Street (IKEA question)?
Consultants and BTD need to look at the IKEA traffic analysis to gain a better understanding of future traffic associated with this movement.

11. Alternative 3 is preferred – separating Maffa Way and Main Street would help reduce the magnitude of Rutherford Ave.

12. Need more information about decking vs. non-decking since decking can be a very expensive proposition. Will we explore the financial implications of decking?
Decking is very expensive and we need to understand the cost implications.

13. Decking and eliminating the tunnel is advantageous and provides more options for pedestrian crossings and open space.

14. What will density look like on new blocks? How will the bike/street fit within existing block design and will it be a smooth continuation with the existing neighborhood?
We are aiming to create a flexible street grid. We don't want blocks that are too big but we don't want blocks that are too small and impossible to build on. We want to create blocks with front doors, enhancing the existing neighborhood.

15. What is the availability of funding? Is there any "phase one" out of the three scenarios which can be completed to look most like the final design?

16. Are any of the alternatives less expensive than others?
We don't know yet but are aiming for a constructible phase one that will be completed.

17. Alternative 3 is currently one-way. We could consider making Middlesex from Assembly Square two-way to improve traffic.

18. The goal is not to allow for more regional traffic. The separation of Maffa and Main is good as well as eliminating the overpass, with one lane in each direction.

19. Main Street is two-way which will encourage IKEA people to come through Sullivan Square coming out of IKEA. We are better off keeping Main Street one-way.

20. Will BTD and Consultants rank the alternatives at this point?
We still need to test our alternatives to understand the traffic circulation and the cost. By the end of the next meeting we will hopefully reach consensus about the best alternative and will score the alternatives ourselves.

21. Accessing industrial land through another route other than via Rutherford is very attractive. Does the proposed street to access this land go anywhere?
We are creating an opportunity without knowing the answer. We need to work with the Highway Dept. and MBTA to understand these connections.

22. The MBTA should dedicate road to more T traffic to get transit out of main vehicular flows. A dedicated bus lane would help ease traffic problems.
The MBTA could help with this type of solution since they are a land-owner.

23. We should encourage the consolidation of parking by creating structured parking.

24. Friends of Sullivan Square recently determined shared values – with the number one shared value being a linear park down Rutherford Ave. Therefore, options 2 and 3 are most attractive because they allow for width for a linear park.

25. Is funding secured for this project?
We are meeting with state agencies to secure larger amounts of money for this project. No news is good news but the current economic state is unpredictable.

26. Alternative 3 increases movement away from Schraff Building which is very attractive. Is that also possible in Alternatives 1 + 2?

27. Changing the grid doesn't alleviate the bottleneck in Sullivan Square. Can we redirect streets as they converge to eliminate the congestion?
The geography naturally creates a kink. We are working to spread apart all traffic coming through this one intersection. The constraint has been trying not to develop through existing private property.