
ROXBURY

Redesign of Dudley Square roadways advances

Posted by Patrick Rosso

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By Patrick D. Rosso, Town Correspondent

Progress is being made on the redesign of the roadways surrounding Dudley Square in Roxbury.

The Boston Transportation Department has been working since October 2012 to improve flow and access in the square as part of its Complete Streets model, which aims to support safe streets for pedestrians, cyclists, cars, and public transit users.

The initiative will look at the area roughly designated as Dudley Square -- from Shawmut Avenue to Harrison Street as well as Dudley Street, Roxbury Street, and small portions of Warren Street, Washington Street, and Malcolm X Boulevard.

The project is especially timely because of the work happening in or around the square including the Melnea Cass widening project, the redevelopment of the Ferdinand Building, and the filing of plans for the Bartlett Yard project. It also takes into account past projects and studies in the area including those completed by the development non-profits Nuestra Comunidad and Madison Park Development Corporation, as well as MassDOT's Roxbury/Dorchester/Mattapan Transit Needs Study.

On Monday, nearly 60 residents and stakeholders met at the Dudley Branch Library to discuss the project.

Monday's gathering was the second large public meeting for the \$9 million project; a kick-off meeting was held in October.

After hearing input and more than 140 comments in October, BTD created three designs that were presented at Monday's meeting.

The first design calls for upgrading sidewalks and ramps, painting shared bike lanes, and improving street aesthetics.

The second design, in addition to making aesthetic changes, would alter how buses enter Dudley Station. Buses would enter via Roxbury Street and exit it via a portion of Warren Street in the square that would be made two-ways. Eight parking spaces would be lost on Roxbury Street under the second option.

The direction on Ziegler Street would also be reversed into the square and a bus stop would be added to Dudley Street in front of the Bank of America.

The second plan would also construct a cycle track, an enclosed roadway for bikes, along Dudley Street that could be connected to the proposed Malcolm X Boulevard cycle track. The Dudley Street cycle track wouldn't impact parking.

Under the third option, Washington Street would be changed from a one-way street to a two-way street and Harrison Avenue from Warren Street to Dudley Street would be made one-way.

After the options were presented, attendees broke up into small groups to discuss the options, highlight their favorites, and suggest other improvements.

Option two seemed to be the favorite Monday evening. Many liked the improvements to transit in option two, but said the two-way Washington Street in option three didn't make sense.

Others also highlighted parts of the plan they believed were left out.

"This study has to go on past that point [Warren Street and Washington Street intersection]. It has been discussed for three or four years now," said Charlotte Nelson, a Roxbury resident, who pushed for more ways to make Dudley Square a gateway.

Some pushed for more focus on public transit.

"I would want to see a plan that airs more on the side of public transit than a bike path," said Bridgette Wallace, a member of the Roxbury Neighborhood Council. "Not to say it doesn't have a place in the conversation, but who is it for?"

It was clear after the breakout groups that residents knew that Dudley Square and the traffic that snarls it is a mess. Some liked the ideas presented, but raised concerns about how parking might be impacted, how to create more exposure for businesses, and how new streets will create the community many want to see in Dudley Square.

"Dudley needs to be looked at as a destination and not a drive-through," said City Councilor Tito Jackson.

BTD will now take comments generated Monday and boil them down to create more concise options.

By the spring of 2013, BTD hopes to be at the 25 percent design phase, with construction expected to start in late 2013 and be completed before 2015.

The transportation department has created a website for the plan.

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