



January 27, 2011

To: William Clark  
Director of Planning & Community Development  
Town of Milton

Through: Keri Pyke, P.E., PTOE  
Howard/Stein-Hudson  
Project Manager

From: Nathaniel Curtis  
Howard/Stein-Hudson  
Public Involvement Specialist

RE: **East Milton Square Parking and Access Study**  
**Meeting of the Business & Citizens Advisory Council (BCAC)<sup>1</sup>**  
**Meeting Notes of January 18, 2011 (originally scheduled for January 12, 2011)**

William (Bill) Clark (Director of Planning & Community Development for the Town of Milton) opened the meeting by welcoming the members of the BCAC and thanking them for their attendance. He also noted that the meeting was one short of the quorum required to make a decision, but that the committee would go ahead as scheduled since the purpose of the session was to share data and brainstorm ideas.<sup>2</sup>

## Highlights of the Presentation

Following his opening remarks, Bill turned the meeting over to Keri Pyke (HSH) and Steve Heiken (ICON Architecture) who briefed the audience on the current status of the project with a short PowerPoint presentation. Much of the presentation consisted of charts and graphs. Readers may find it helpful to have these available to them to review in reading the minutes. A copy of the presentation can be found at: <http://www.eastmiltonsquarestudy.com/documents.html>. Highlights of the presentation included the following:

- Topics for discussion in the presentation included:
  - Discussion of zoning in East Milton Square;
  - Review of the benchmark squares selected by the BCAC;
  - Detailed results of the parking turnover study;
  - Next steps; and,
  - Question and Answer session.
- East Milton Square is one of three zones business districts in the Town of Milton. The other two are Milton Village/Central Avenue and Granite Avenue. Both of these are just south of the Boston/Milton line along the Neponset River.
- Within the Square itself, the business zone extends along Granite Avenue between Woods Street and Pierce Street, along Adams between Babcock Street and Mechanic Street, along Bryant Street from Adams to Boulevard, and along Edge Hill Road to the intersection of Edge Hill Road and Boulevard Street.
  - Three major businesses have been allowed, either through variances or being grandfathered in, to operate in the Square outside the business zone. These are:
    - The Milton Marketplace
    - The office building at 476 Adams Street
    - The Dolan Funeral Home

<sup>1</sup> Meeting attendance sheets are reproduced in Appendix 1.

<sup>2</sup> Several members arrived shortly after the presentation was begun.

- Beyond the three sites listed above, zoning in the Square is generally consistent with conditions on the ground. Some questions to think about include:
  - Is it worth making changes to the zoning so that the three outlying businesses are in the business zone?
  - Does the parking standard outlined in the zoning code reflect current best practices? By current practice, the Milton Marketplace may have too much parking, leading to under-utilization of this space.
  - Is a planned unit development or PUD appropriate for the Square? Currently, Milton has one PUD in the Milton Village business zone which:
    - Requires 80,000 sf in Milton Village (section III.I)
    - Requires 20,000 sf in Central Avenue sub-area (section III.J)
    - Encourages business and residential mixed use.
    - Requires public amenities and “quality development.”
    - Requires 10% affordable housing and allows for housing at higher density.
    - Allows for shared parking.
- The benchmark squares selected by the BCAC include: Concord Center, Hingham Center and Newton Centre. These areas were analyzed in terms of retail mix, pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, wayfinding, and on-street parking supply and regulation.<sup>3</sup>
- With regard to retail mix, the largest segment in all three squares is specialty retail, the type of business the BCAC would like to see more of in East Milton Square. In Hingham Center and Concord Center, it represents the majority of retail business present.
- For bicycle and pedestrian conditions, the following data points were analyzed:
  - The width of a crosswalk in the center of the square.
  - Condition of the crosswalk’s paint.
  - The longest pedestrian crossing in the square.
  - The presence of “yield to pedestrian signs”
  - Sidewalk width in the center of the square.
  - The presence of bike lanes or “sharrows.”
- As compared to the other benchmark squares, East Milton has:
  - A standard, 10-foot wide crosswalk. Wider crosswalks are considered to be more pedestrian friendly, but 10 feet is generally accepted. This is on par with Concord Center and better than Newton and Hingham Center.
  - Crosswalks in the Square are fair. While some are in excellent shape, others are badly degraded. This is similar to Newton Centre; however the crosswalks in Concord and Hingham are excellent and good respectively.
  - The Square has the longest pedestrian crossing in the benchmark: 61 feet over three active travel lanes in front of the post office. Yield to pedestrian signs, present in Hingham and Newton Centers are not used.
  - The Square has the narrowest sidewalks in the benchmark at 7.5 feet. In general, wider sidewalks are considered to be more pedestrian friendly, providing space for street furniture to be better arranged, and encouraging active use of the sidewalk.
  - Bike lanes or sharrows are not present in any benchmark square.
- With regard to traffic circulation:
  - East Milton Square is like all the benchmark squares in not making use of “don’t block the box” striping for intersections. These are new to Massachusetts and something to think about for the Square since one is already in use outside the Milton Public Library.
  - In terms of recirculation patterns, East Milton ranks towards the bottom of the benchmark without wayfinding signage or a particularly clear demarcation of where the square begins and ends. Newton Centre leads this part of the benchmark by using one-way streets, restricted turns and wayfinding incorporated into public art.
- In terms of parking the benchmark splits into two groups:
  - Squares with closely regulated parking and meters – Newton<sup>4</sup> and Concord.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> To ensure an accurate comparison, only municipal lots and on-street parking were analyzed for the benchmark squares.

- Squares with minimal regulation and low enforcement – Hingham<sup>6</sup> and East Milton.<sup>7</sup>
- Of the squares with meters, Newton Centre has the most comprehensive approach to parking including:
  - A range of parking meter time limits including 1, 2, 3 and 12 hour meters.
  - Rigorous enforcement.
  - 1 hour meters are placed at the center of the square and in other high desire areas, like the shops along Union Street. This encourages turn-over.
  - 12 hour meters are placed at the outer edge of the square assuring that commuters must walk through the square's shopping opportunities before reaching the MBTA station.
  - Residential areas are protected by one-way streets, restricted turns and 1-hour time restrictions during the week.
- At the previous BCAC meeting (12/15/10) the project team provided the BCAC with a qualitative look at the parking situation in the Square. Findings included:
  - Existing regulations are inconsistently enforced. As a result, motorists overstay time limits by several hours and often block crosswalks and driveways.
  - The goal of most motorists seems to be to park as close to their destination as possible with high desire areas in use all day with nearby lower desire areas often sitting empty at the same time.
- The parking study looked at two types of parking in East Milton Square:
  - Un-striped on-street and lot parking<sup>8</sup> - **analyzed for occupancy**. Occupancy answers the question “how full is a given section of parking?” This was done due to the difficulty of collecting turnover data for large lots like the Milton Marketplace and for un-striped parking which can hold a somewhat variable number of cars depending on the size of the vehicles parked. *This type of parking is referred to herein as “occupancy parking.”*
  - Striped, on-street parking – **analyzed for turnover**. Turnover answers two questions “how full is a given section of parking and how long do vehicles stay in this section of parking?” *This type of parking is referred to herein as “turnover parking.”*
- The study showed that parking in East Milton Square breaks into three broader zones for both turnover and occupancy parking. These are:
  - **West of I-93** characterized by high usage along Bryant Avenue by the park and Edgehill Road, with lower usage everywhere else and low turnover throughout.
  - **East of I-93 low desire** characterized by somewhat lower usage throughout, especially at the far northern, southern along Granite Avenue and eastern edge on Adams Street, and low turnover throughout.
  - **East of I-93 high desire** characterized by heavier usage throughout, particularly along Adams from Bryant to Church, Basset, Granite between Adams and Bryant and the fruit center lot/municipal lot, with low turnover throughout.
- On a week day, the occupancy zones operated as follows:
  - **West of I-93:** two peak occupancies during the course of the day, 53% full at 9AM and 61% full at 7PM. This second peak was caused by a parent-teacher night at the St. Agatha School.
  - **East of I-93 low desire:** a peak of 44% full at 4PM.
  - **East of I-93 high desire:** a peak of 73% full at 1PM.
- On a Saturday, the occupancy zones operated as follows:
  - **West of I-93:** a peak of 99% full at 5PM due to Saturday evening mass at St. Agatha's church. Occupancy was below 50% with the exception of 9AM when it was at 52%.
  - **East of I-93 low desire:** a peak of 47% full at 11 AM.
  - **East of I-93 high desire:** a peak of 85% full at 11 AM.

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<sup>4</sup> 600 parking spaces

<sup>5</sup> 330 parking spaces

<sup>6</sup> 200 parking spaces

<sup>7</sup> 240+/- parking spaces

<sup>8</sup> Municipal lots or lots offering shared parking only – private lots were not analyzed.

- The study showed that for turnover zones, turnover is generally very low, meaning that cars stay in one parking space for a long time. This is generally considered not to be good for business. The following table shows average parking durations for the three turnover zones:

Parking Area	Weekday Average Parking Duration	Saturday Average Parking Duration
West of I-93	4.8 hours	3.4 hours
East of I-93 – Low Desire	1.8 hours	1.7 hours
East of I-93 – High Desire	2.4 hours	2.0 hours

- On a week day, the turnover zones operated as follows:
  - **West of I-93:** A peak of 75% full at 10AM.
  - **East of I-93 low desire:** a peak of 54% full at 3PM.
  - **East of I-93 high desire:** a peak of 79% full at 7PM with additional peaks of 76% at 10AM and 75% at 2PM.
- On a Saturday, the occupancy zones operated as follows:
  - **West of I-93:** a peak of 69% full at 9AM. Occupancy fell off throughout the day thereafter.
  - **East of I-93 low desire:** a peak of 63% full at 11 AM.
  - **East of I-93 high desire:** a peak of 93% full at 11 AM. It is worth noting that between 9AM and 11AM, this segment of parking was heavily used, being occupied in the high 80% and low 90% ranges. After noontime, occupancy fell to below 80% and generally trended downward through the rest of the day.
- The results of the parking study show that:
  - Better management of the existing supply is appropriate prior to expansion. The overarching message of the study is that throughout the day, a good amount of parking for a vibrant business district remains available throughout the Square.
  - Perception of inadequate supply may be driven by a host of factors including:
    - Low turnover;
    - Illegal parking;
    - A pedestrian environment and lack of clear wayfinding that discourage longer trips between parked cars and destinations; and,
    - A lack of a clear circulation pattern that makes it difficult for motorists to see all available parking and/or return to spaces further out that they may have passed up on their initial trip into the Square.
- Short-term options discussed earlier in the process could well be appropriate. These include:
  - Signage improvements to clarify regulations;
  - Enforcement of existing regulations;
  - Improvement of wayfinding, lighting, and pedestrian conditions to make the Square friendlier to longer car-to-destination trips; and,
  - Making use of paid parking to drive turnover.

## Question & Answer/Brain-Storming Session

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- C: Bill Clark (BC): What you just saw there was our zoning code, chapter 3 subsection I for Milton Village. Subsection J is the Central Avenue planned unit area which allows for 20,000 square feet. In the Milton Village area, we have one building that's under construction, one that is being permitted, and another project trying to figure out which side of the line it's on. The next subsection is K and that addresses brown-fields. There is the potential to go to a subsection L if that is recommended.

A: Steve Heiken (SH): So East Milton Square does not have a PUD currently; that means you have an opportunity to do this for your Square.

C: Keri Pyke (KP): I would definitely say that it provides the committee some food for thought.

Q: Lesley Will (LW): What document is being referenced here and is it on line?

A: BC: We're discussing the Milton Zoning Bylaw. You can find it on the town website, I can provide a link to Nate so that it can be placed on the project's site as well.

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Q: LW: Can you tell me where law firms and other professional services like financial advisors fit it? I think they might have a set of different parking requirements.

A: KP: We can ask her, but I believe she may not have inventoried those as they are businesses and not retail operations.

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Q: Kenneth Caldwell (KC): Can I get some hard copies of these slides to look at later?

A: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis (NCC): Of course, I will print off a set and mail them to you tomorrow.

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Q: LW: On the retail mix slide, can we add in the data for East Milton Square to see how it compares?

A: KP: We can definitely ask Carol to gather that information and get it back to you before the next meeting.

Q: LW: Can we find out about the professional mix, I think that would give us something to play with.

A: KC: I think that is important to figure out since office space has a different set of parking needs than retail space.

Q: John Virgona (JV): Do you think you could provide us with square footage for these businesses?

A: NCC: What Carol did when she pulled this data was a walk-through of the square. She counted the businesses up and then categorized them to produce the data you see here. It isn't tied back to square feet. She indicated to me that it may be difficult getting square footage for businesses in these squares because the size of business we are working with are small enough that they are invisible in those terms to the government, it's not like we are dealing with shopping malls or something very large, it's not like the headquarters of CitiBank are in Concord Center.

A: KP: All right, well, we will get what we can get. I think it would certainly be helpful to have this information maybe just in terms of a general massing, for example, there's a big building, it's all full of shops and its general footprint is x.

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Q: KC: Does your comparison of parking data also include private, off-street parking?

A: KP: We wanted to provide an apples-to-apples comparison, so our inventory for the benchmark squares is just on-street parking and municipal lots.

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Q: Kurt Fraser (KF): Were any of the parking spaces obstructed by construction when you did your review of parking in Milton?

A: KP: MWRA had finished its work for the year when we went out. If you will recall we had a bit of a delay over the summer to make sure that their work would not impact our parking data.

Q: KC: When you looked at the benchmark squares, did you see any spots for compact cars only?

A: KP: I don't believe we saw any of that. Generally you see more of that in garages. The compact standard is generally based on length and not width, so if you assume a standard parking stall is 20' by 9', a compact space is more like 18' by 8'

Q: KC: But since most of the parking we are talking about here is cars at curbside, do you have any idea of how much space we might be able to gain?

A: KP: I honestly don't know how much it would get you. Also, any time you are in a garage and you have a compact spot, there's always the issue of an Escalade trying to jam itself into the spot for the Mini and in the end you really won't get much more space. Again, it's a garage thing in general.

Q: KC: I understand, but if you're going to do more enforcement for time limits, this is something you could also enforce.

A: KP: In theory you could do that, but you would need to write some enforcement language to address that. Even in garages there really is no enforcement mechanism, but I suppose it's something you could think about.

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C: KC: It would be really helpful if we could get some kind of listing for this so we could see where these zones you're talking about are and what they have in them.

A: KP: Rather than doing a list, I think we can modify the graphic that you've seen for on-street parking over and over again. We can make that available to you over the website so you don't have to wait until the next meeting.

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C: Brian O'Shea (BO): I think some of the conditions you are describing in the west of I-93 parking zone are driven by the post office; I mean their employees have to park somewhere.

A: KP: Of course, but they should be in the service zones and not in the spots on Edge Hill Road which are set up to be for people coming in to buy stamps or mail a package.

C: BO: I also think it's important to note that these times you're giving us for how long cars sit in parking spaces are averages. Some cars are staying the 2 hours or 4 hours, but some spots might be turning over in the time limit.

A: NCC: That is true, but having participated in both days of the parking study, I would note that it is probably more on the other end; there are some cars that are staying the posted limit, but more that are sitting there for far longer than they should.

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C: JV: Does the parking zone for west of I-93 include the Jesson Building lot?

A: KP: It does not. The lots we counted were either municipal like the one next door to the Milton Marketplace or those which have shared parking arrangements like the Dolan Funeral Home. Since the Jesson Building is all private, we don't count it.

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C: LW: You know I had no idea St. Agatha's was shared parked, I'd never have thought to use it.

A: KP: They have a shared arrangement with Fitness Unlimited, but it seems like not too many gym patrons take advantage of it. Our people who did the turnover work said there were lots of people who parked right in front of the gym and then went in for their workout.

C: LW: It's just such a huge lake of parking; I wonder if it's distorting the results.

A: KP: It's no problem for us to take a look at that area without the St. Agatha's lot in it.

Q: LW: If that were a public parking lot, would you say it would be too far from the Square to be effective for it?

A: KP: Not at all. I believe it is within ¼ mile of the center of the Square which we see as being about the distance people are willing to walk; I just don't think it's obvious to people so you have low usage.

Q: KC: How many spaces in the St. Agatha lot are set aside for Fitness Unlimited?

A: KP: I don't believe there is a restriction, but we can find that information out for you.

C: LW: They don't hand out stickers, there's really no way for them to know?

C: KC: I know there are some people parked there all day; do you think they are carpooling from there?

A: KP: I don't know. Do you think some parishioners might do that?

A: KC: I don't know myself. Right now, given cut-through traffic, it could just be some of those people coming down Governors Road.

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Q: KC: What about handicapped parking spots? How should we determine where they go?

A: KP: In terms of on-street parking, there's no real hard-and-fast rule. Typically, the owner of a building will request that a spot be put in if they have a high number of handicapped people going there. With off-street parking it is typically governed by zoning requirements.

Q: KC: All right, but is there some way to calculate the number you'd need to be in compliance?

A: KP: Again there isn't really a rule for it. Generally we don't install too many on-street parallel handicapped spots because the nature of parallel parking makes it hard to create an accessible spot for someone in a wheelchair or with otherwise limited mobility. However, I think that is something we ought to think about in terms of the location of parking around the Square.

C: KF: In Brookline, the architectural access board regulates it by facility and sets the ratio at 1 handicapped space per 25 normal spaces and I believe they treat the street as a facility so the same requirements are made to apply there as well. For example, on Beacon Street, they say the median constitutes a facility.

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C: Jean Wilson (JW): I have to say that as a pedestrian I really feel like the walk from St. Agatha's to the Square is a really horrendous experience.

A: KP: I think that's one of the reasons we are pushing for a more pleasant pedestrian environment.

C: LW: Also, that lot is close to the Square, but Adams Street isn't the most direct route. Is there maybe a straighter pathway that could be marked out for people?

A: KP: I think that if you go completely straight off the back of that parking lot you would run into I-93 which can't be crossed at that point, but those are the sorts of connectivity issues we need to address.

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Q: KC: In those communities that have the parking restrictions and meters, when are those meters in operation?

A: KP: In Newton, the meters are in operation Monday to Saturday and from 8AM to 6PM. In Concord, they run from 9AM to 6PM Monday through Saturday. I know this won't be popular, but you really may need some kind of pay-for parking system to drive turnover. At the next meeting we will provide you some information on the different types of

parking meter system and what they cost to install and operate. You would of course need to figure out what you'll make in revenue and balance it against costs.

Q: KC: Can you get annual revenue from meters for Newton and Concord?

A: KP: Certainly we can try.

Q: Bernard Lynch (BL): Do you have to use a police officer to monitor the meters?

A: KP: No, you can have a meter reader do it.

C: BL: And a few weeks back you mentioned those central pay facilities that can automatically ticket you.

A: KP: That's the kind of information we'll be bringing back to you. We'll have data on not every type of meter produced, but a good range from the basic coin-operated kind to the more advanced central pay types including those that run on solar power and don't have such high installation costs. There will be menu of options for you to look at.

C: BL: I think one thing you will need to do is talk to the police department about this. If they don't want the meters it won't happen.

A: KP: We do have another local officials' briefing coming up towards the end of February. At that meeting we would have the police chief or his representative there and bring them up to speed on our findings.

Q: KC: When you collect the data about the revenue streams from the meters, can you also check on how much vandalism they have to deal.

A: KP: We can definitely ask about that.

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Q: KP: So let me ask all of you, does the 9<sup>th</sup> of February still work for our next BCAC meeting?

A: KC: I think we ought to keep the date we have. How is your timeline doing?

A: KP: We are still targeting to be done in May. One thing we are doing is working on the report document so that we don't wind up having to write the whole thing at the very end. Ideally, we would like to provide a draft of the report to you by April so that you can review it. We can then come back for a meeting in early May at which you can give us comments, and then we'll bring you a finalized report that reflects your questions and comments for you to bless and send to the selectmen.

Q: KC: Did Bill talk to you about giving a status report to the selectmen?

A: KP: Yes, we do have a legislative briefing coming up and while that isn't specifically for the selectmen, they will all be invited as they were to the meeting we had for them back in September. I imagine they would also come to our next community meeting in March. Also, and I will need to check our scope on this, but I believe a final presentation to the selectmen is one of the last things we will do in May.

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C: LW: I guess I am bothered by your parking information. I guess it's the way the parking is divided up. You told us there's availability, but our perception is that there isn't availability. I want to know for sure whether there isn't enough parking or whether that's the perception.

A: KP: I think the data says it's an issue of perception. As a society, and in general, we have become less and less tolerant of walking and so not having a space right next to where we want to go is perceived as a problem.

C: SH: I think there is a gap between the perception and reality out there; I think Keri is advocating management tools to close that gap.

- C: LW: So in an ideal world, we would want more parking closer to where people want to be, but the availability we have isn't where people want to be.
- A: KP: We're saying that a ¼ mile, five minute walk isn't unreasonable. We are saying that the existing parking supply should be adequate to serve the existing businesses here. We've heard that you want to maybe have some different businesses here and some of those may have different parking needs. However, at the moment, you seem to have enough parking with the difficulty that it isn't easy to walk around the Square and there are some areas of parking that if you pass them up to try and get closer to the middle of the Square, getting back to those further out, less utilized areas is difficult.
- C: JV: I am concerned with these numbers. Apparently there are always spaces available and that just doesn't match my understanding of the Square. Looking at those high desire spots, you say there's always around 10-15% availability and that just doesn't match up for me.
- A: KP: John, we may have oversimplified this in trying to present you with a clear picture of the data. I think what we can do is disaggregate the data so that you can see how each segment of parking is working as opposed to seeing it in these larger zones. We'll try to get that posted to the web for you so that you don't have to wait until the next meeting for it.
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- C: BL: So it sounds to me that traffic should be slowed and walking needs to be made easy and pleasant so that people won't mind parking five minutes walk from their destination.
- C: KF: I would also add that as I see it, there's a parking problem in the Square from 8AM to noon on Saturday if there's any. The issue is circulation. If you don't find your spot, it's difficult to recalculate and then you develop the perception that there's no parking. I think we need to increase the signage and improve wayfinding to make circulation easier.
- C: KC: I think John's assessment of what someone sees when they come down Adams Street and want a spot right in the Square is probably correct. Those spots are full all day long and you're lucky to get one if you catch someone backing out. Part of the issue I think is that people are staying there all day. I'm not sure what the turnover is in those sections, but it's probably more than the one hour limit.
- A: JV: But if someone stays there for more than an hour, then they probably need more than an hour.
- A: KC: That's fair, but the prime spots probably need to be limited for a shorter duration. If you need to be here for more than an hour, we can have some longer duration spots a little further away.
- A: KP: The study did show that those high desire areas were full a good bit of the day; I think that is why perhaps we need to break this down a little more finely. As we talk about this and looking at more long-term options, I think one thing we will need to weigh is whether taking land right in your business district to build lots or parking structures represents the highest and best use of the space.
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## Next Steps

The next meeting of the BCAC is scheduled for February 9, 2011. This meeting will take place at Cunningham Hall in East Milton. BCAC members are requested to save the date. This meeting will address a wide range of topics including existing traffic conditions, concept development and analysis and local merchant survey results. The next legislative briefing is currently set for sometime in late February with the second community meeting following shortly thereafter in late February or early March.

**Appendix 1: Attendees**

<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Nathaniel	Cabral-Curtis	Howard/Stein-Hudson
Kenneth	Caldwell	BCAC Member
Bill	Clark	Town of Milton
Kurt	Fraser	BCAC Member
Steve	Heiken	ICON Archirecture
Bernard	Lynch	BCAC Member
Scott	MacKeen	Milton Times
Keri	Pyke	Howard/Stein-Hudson
Brian	O'Shea	BCAC Member
Frank	Schroth	MyTown Matters
Lee	Toma	Bicycle Advisory Committee
John	Virgona	BCAC Member
Leslie	Will	BCAC Member
Jean	Wilson	Resident/Warrant Committee Member