



March 30, 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
2nd Community Meeting¹
Meeting Notes of March 22, 2011**

William (Bill) Clark (Director of Planning & Community Development for the Town of Milton) opened the meeting by welcoming the members of the audience and thanking them for their attendance. He then introduced the two attending members of the East Milton Square Parking & Access Study project team: Keri Pyke, the project manager, and Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis, the public involvement specialist.

Highlights of the Presentation²

Following his opening remarks, Bill turned the meeting over to Keri who briefed the audience on the current status of the project with a short PowerPoint presentation. She requested that audience members hold their questions and comments to the end of the presentation and that they speak into the microphone provided as the meeting was televised by Milton Local Access Television. Highlights of the presentation included:

- o The last community meeting was held in November 2010. At that time, the project shared background information gathered to date and the evaluation criteria developed by the Business and Citizens Advisory Committee (BCAC). Shortly after this initial community meeting, the MWRA completed work in East Milton Square, allowing the remaining data collection to take place.
- o The purpose of the East Milton Square Parking and Access Study is to provide the Town with a set of possible options for the redesign of the Square. Any option should address the evaluation criteria developed by the BCAC. Criteria include:
 - o Providing demonstrable transportation benefits. This includes ensuring that cut-through traffic in residential areas around the Square is improved or at least does not worsen.
 - o Addressing parking concerns.
 - o Improving safety for all users: vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.
 - o Providing environmental benefits.
 - o Improving the aesthetics of the Square.
 - o Providing favorable conditions for local business
 - o Protecting residential neighborhoods, both from cut-through traffic and parking by patrons of Square businesses.

¹ Meeting attendance sheets are reproduced in Appendix 1.

² Much of the presentation consisted of graphics and users may find it helpful to have these at hand when reading these minutes. The presentation can be downloaded at: <http://www.eastmiltonsquarestudy.com/documents.html>

- o Balancing cost with benefit; ensuring that the Town receives a good value for the option or set of options chosen.
- o Offering a phased approach to construction to ensure that businesses in the Square can operate successfully during construction and that none of the suggested early action steps preclude more long-term steps.

A more detailed version of the evaluation criteria can be found in the documents section of the project website.

- o In June 2010, prior to both the beginning of the MWRA project and school summer vacation, the project team obtained traffic volume counts for important intersections in and around East Milton Square. Counts were obtained for the a.m. (7:00-9:00), p.m. (4:00-6:00), and Saturday midday (11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.) peak periods. Based on these data, the project team has determined:
 - o Traffic volumes in East Milton Square are fairly consistent and not subject to directional peaks. For example, in all peak periods over 1,000 cars approach the square from the south via Granite Avenue.
 - o In all peak periods, over 700 cars approach the square from the west via Adams Street and turn right onto Bryant Avenue southbound, most likely to access I-93.
- o The project team has modeled current and future (2030) traffic conditions in and around East Milton Square. This is accomplished by taking counts at the study intersections, obtaining key intersection dimensions such as number and width of lanes, number of heavy vehicles³, and signal timings and inputting them into a computer program. The computer program then provides a Level of Service (LOS) or grade, letters A-F including E, which shows how the intersection is operating. Based on this modeling, the project team has determined that in the a.m., p.m., and Saturday midday peak hours:
 - o As of 2010, most of the intersections in East Milton Square operate at acceptable LOS for built-up areas, D or better, and including some A's and B's.
 - o The only intersection which is not functioning well is that of Granite Avenue/Boulevard Street. This is in part due to the intentionally timed delay on the Granite Avenue northbound approach.
 - o The project team also modeled likely conditions for 2030. 2030 conditions are determined by growing volumes using the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CPTS) regional model, which factors in elements such as population growth and job change. Based on this modeling, assuming no changes are made in the Square, 2030 LOS will be very similar to what they are today with all intersections in the Square operating at LOS D or better with the exception of Granite Avenue/ Boulevard Street.
- o The project team has also analyzed the most-recent three years available crash data from MassDOT. Crash data is supplied to MassDOT by the Registry of Motor Vehicles. Most of the intersections in Square do not experience a lot of crashes; however, the intersection of Granite Avenue/Adams Street has a crash rate of 1.34 crashes per million entering vehicles. This is almost double the district rate of 0.78 for a signalized intersection. The primary crash type at this intersection is a rear-end accident due either to the long red light on Granite Avenue northbound or solar glare on Adams Street eastbound or westbound. While there have been relatively few injuries at this intersection, the project team has targeted it for improvement. There are also some side-swipe crashes at this location, possibly due to the quick narrowing of Adams Street eastbound from two lanes to one next to the fire station.
- o Data on parking was collected in two steps: an inventory of available on and off-street parking was performed in July 2010. The inventory counted parking spaces and determined how they are regulated. A parking turnover study was conducted in December 2010, following the winter shutdown of the MWRA project and before the heavy snowfall in January. The turnover study notes the first few characters of a vehicles license plate every hour to determine how long it stays in a given parking space. Generally speaking, a business district will benefit from higher parking turnover, meaning more vehicles are using each space over the day. The turnover study for the Square showed that:
 - o Parking in East Milton Square falls into three zones: west of I-93; east of I-93 low desire, those areas of parking south of Adams Street and north of Bassett Street; and east of I-93 high desire, those areas of

³ Examples of heavy vehicles include tractor-trailer trucks and MBTA buses.

parking including Adams Street east of I-93, Granite Avenue between Adams Street and Bassett Street and Bassett Street from Granite Avenue to Franklin Street.

- Parking in the east of I-93 high desire zone is often full while the other areas tend to have lower usage.
 - Parking regulations are in place, but are not generally enforced with vehicles parked for 3, 4, or more hours in 2-hour zones.
 - There is frequent illegal parking in driveways, next to hydrants, and on crosswalks. This is due to a combination of low enforcement and low turnover and contributes to a sense that the parking supply is stretched beyond demand.
 - The Square is not the most hospitable pedestrian environment, which prompts drivers to attempt to park as close to their destination as possible. A difficult recirculation pattern may also prompt motorists to park illegally rather than going beyond their intended destination.
- Options to improve the parking situation include the following:
 - Increasing the number of legible parking signs around the Square as some are badly faded.
 - Selecting a uniform timeframe, such as 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. that parking time regulations are in effect.
 - Improving the pedestrian environment by shortening crossing distances and making it more comfortable to walk longer distances from a parked car to one's destination.
 - Improving wayfinding using signage that points the way to parking and instructs motorists how to recirculate to parking spaces they may have passed up previously.
 - One option which has been controversial among BCAC members is the implementation of parking meters. Meters are one potential layer which can be added to East Milton Square and are not considered "a must" by the project team. For them to work effectively, all parking in the Square would need to be metered. Smart parking meters can be used that cover multiple spaces from one pay station and are capable of accepting credit cards. These systems can be solar powered to reduce operating costs. The cost-benefit analysis of meters will be layered into the project team's final report. Generally speaking, meters help to drive parking turnover, which is beneficial to local businesses.
- The project team has developed a short-term option for circulation and pedestrian improvements in East Milton Square. This option is designed to be feasible with only moderate changes such as roadway striping and signs. It includes the following:
 - Curb extensions at key intersections surrounding the I-93 deck. These will shorten crossing distances and increase pedestrian comfort while helping to define and protect parking lanes.
 - Boulevard Street and Edge Hill Road would be converted into a one-way pair with Boulevard Street coming into the Square and Edge Hill Road leaving it. Angle parking would be placed along both of these streets. This could help to provide additional parking for postal employees or as an expansion of the Square's service zone to relieve the pressure on the "prime" spaces east of I-93.
 - This option is easy to implement, relatively inexpensive, and can be used as a base for later, more complex changes.
- Long-term options under discussion by the BCAC include the following:
- **Hybrid Plan:**
 - This option is a blending of the East Milton Square Revitalization Plan and one advanced by BCAC member Kurt Fraser.
 - It includes closure of Adams Street over I-93 and converts some of the I-93 deck to parking with landscaping in the center. The driveways for these parking lots are still subject to change as the project team works out the best possible circulation pattern for parking.
 - The left turn from Adams Street eastbound to Granite Avenue is maintained, but eastbound through traffic would need to make a U-turn around the central parking area.
 - This plan provides for some improvement in LOS at the intersection of Granite Avenue/Boulevard Street, but the LOS at Bryant Avenue/Boulevard Street deteriorates.
 - Some pedestrian improvements in this option can be maintained through narrowing Adams Street near the post office.

- **Roundabout:**
 - A roundabout is not a rotary. It is much smaller than Roosevelt Circle or Copeland Circle. The intent of a roundabout is to slow vehicles down to around 15-20 miles per hour. Traffic signals are generally eliminated in this scenario, though some pedestrian signals may be needed, so there may be long-term operational cost savings associated with this plan.
 - The roundabout in this option has the benefit of returning Adams Street to two-way traffic flow over I-93.
 - Boulevard Street and Edge Hill Road are converted to a one-way pair with Edge Hill eastbound and Boulevard Street westbound. An access road is provided for the Shell Station on Bryant Avenue.
 - A parking lot, situated in the northeast corner of the deck, and closest to the high desire area for parking, provides 36 new parking spaces. An island in the middle of this lot prevents its use by cut-through traffic.
 - The entries to the roundabout from Adams Street both operate at LOS B, with LOS E and F still appearing on the Granite Avenue northbound approach. This may be acceptable given the desire to deter cut-through traffic. All LOS are calculated assuming no diversion of traffic, however it is possible that the slowing of traffic caused by the roundabout could cause some traffic to divert away from the Square.
 - With regard to circulation, vehicles would move through the roundabout as follows:
 - On Granite Avenue northbound, cars could stay in the right lane to access Adams Street eastbound or continue on Granite Avenue going northbound. From the left lane, cars could access Granite Avenue northbound, Adams Street westbound, or even make a u-turn around the center island to Bryant Avenue/I-93 southbound.
 - On Adams Street eastbound, cars would use the left lane to continue east on Adams Street, and to access Granite Avenue northbound or Bryant Avenue southbound. The right lane would provide access to Boulevard Street westbound or Bryant Avenue southbound.
 - Westbound vehicles on Adams Street could use both lanes to access Granite Avenue northbound, and the left lane to continue on Adams Street or to access Bryant Avenue or Boulevard Street.
- **Reconnection of Adams Street:**
 - In this option, Adams Street is returned to two-way operation without significant changes to the geometry of the roadway where it passes over I-93. Parking on Adams Street on the deck is moved to the south side of the road, which provides one additional parking space and better lane alignment.
 - The intersection of Adams Street and the Wood Street Extension would need to be modified as a signalized T-intersection to handle the change to two-way traffic on Adams Street.
 - This option provides improvements to the weaving now sometimes seen on Adams Street eastbound approaching the Square.
 - Like the roundabout option, this scenario converts Edge Hill Road and Boulevard Street to a one-way pair with angle parking on both. Edge Hill Road would flow eastbound with Boulevard Street flowing westbound.
 - Of the long-term options, this one probably requires the least amount of new construction, though some new signals would be required.
 - This option offers improved LOS, D or better, at all of the intersections around the I-93 deck. This still assumes the use of the Wood Street Extension to allow vehicles coming north on Granite Avenue to access Adams Street westbound.
- The project team is also considering two long-term parking options for parking along Bassett Street. They are being considered separately since they could be combined with any of the options for the I-93 deck. Both options are expensive and the costs/benefits are still being evaluated. These include:
- **Bassett Street South Side:**
 - This option involves acquiring four properties, one on Adams Court, and the other three on Bassett Street between Adams Court and Franklin Street.

- Acquiring these properties would cost the Town \$1.227 million, based on the assessed value of these properties, and create 43 new parking spaces. The project team is developing an accurate cost per space, including land acquisition and construction.
- This option could include a deck over the ground level parking without access ramps due to the grade difference between Adams Street and Bassett Street. An arrangement for access would need to be worked out with the owner of the lot for 4 Franklin Street. Structured parking has a cost of approximately \$20,000-40,000 after land acquisition costs and has associated operating and maintenance costs.
- **Bassett Street North Side:**
 - This option adds spaces to the parking lot currently leased by the Town on the north side of Bassett Street, as well as acquiring one home on the north side of Bassett Street and two homes on the corner of Bassett and Franklin Streets.
 - Acquiring these properties would cost the Town \$1.04 million, based on assessed value, and create 49 new parking spaces. The project team does not currently have an understanding of how much it would cost to acquire the currently leased parking area and is working to develop one. This may dramatically raise the cost of this option.
 - Including a parking deck on this option would require ramping. This deducts between 20-25% of the total number of parking spaces to provide space for the ramps.
- At the first community meeting and some of the early BCAC meetings, the project team heard significant community concern regarding the speed and volumes of cut-through traffic on residential roads surrounding the Square. Cut-through routes mentioned frequently included, but were not limited to, Governors Road, Franklin Place, Belcher Circle and Emerson Road. While the Town of Milton has other committees directly addressing these issues, the project team has been careful not to offer any redesign option for the Square which will induce more cut-through traffic on residential roads. The smoother traffic flow should help to reduce cut-through traffic, keeping cars on the main roadways.
- In the final report submitted to the Selectmen, a menu of traffic calming options for the neighborhoods surrounding the Square will be presented including:
 - Curb extensions or bump-outs.
 - Speed humps – a wider version of a speed bump.
 - Raised crosswalks – the crosswalk is raised to the level of the sidewalk. Textured and colored pavement can be used to prompt motorists to reduce speed, while lighting can be used to indicate when a pedestrian enters the crosswalk. Typically, these devices force drivers to slow to between 10 and 15 mph.
 - Raised intersections – also known as tabled intersections, these traffic calming options bring the whole intersection up to the level of the sidewalk. This forces vehicles to slow while entering and exiting the intersection in order to climb on to and off of the tabled section.
 - Chicanes – a horizontal feature which moves the road back and forth to force drivers to drive more slowly. An example of a local chicane is on Columbia Street in Cambridge, Massachusetts. One of the more famous chicanes is Lombard Street in San Francisco.
- Another potential option for the Square is reverse angle parking. This method of parking has been used in several cities in the eastern United States including Frederick, Maryland, Philadelphia, and New York City. Instead of driving into a space head-in, a vehicle backs into an angle parking space. Several areas in Boston will have this style of parking soon. Before implementing this style of parking, signage and an education campaign would be required. Reverse angle parking presents several safety advantages:
 - 3 steps to park a vehicle as opposed to the 5 associated with traditional parallel parking.
 - Increased visibility for motorists when leaving the parking space.
 - Increased safety for passengers, particularly children, who are directed towards the curb by the open car doors.
 - Increased safety for cyclists who can be more easily seen by motorists.
 - Loading and unloading of a car can be done directly from the sidewalk instead of adjacent to a live travel lane.

- o Handicapped spaces can be placed at the end of a section of parking facilitating access to handicapped ramps.

Question & Answer Session

- C: Joe Onorato (JO): I think the option which shows the most promise is reconnecting Adams Street, especially if you could get Granite Avenue and Boulevard Street to operate at LOS B or C. That will help out the folks on Governors Road by removing some of the incentive to cut through. I worry that the parking lots in the middle will make the traffic flow on Granite and Bryant worse and induce more cut-through traffic. The merchants might like the parking in the middle, but I think you should prioritize reducing cut-through traffic for the residents. Those traffic calming devices don't take the traffic away, they just slow it down.
- A: Keri Pyke (KP): That is true. Traffic calming does not necessarily reduce volume, but it will slow people down. Right now, according to Town data, Governors Road has traffic moving in excess of 70 miles per hour.
- C: JO: I think getting people through the Square more effectively will help. When the deck first went in, I thought it was an oversight that the selectmen didn't change the traffic patterns. The traffic should be over the Expressway and the amenities at the edges where they can do so some.
- A: KP: That was the genesis of the roundabout idea. It came from our efforts to get the traffic into the middle of the deck and keep some amenities at the edges. There's not quite enough space to do it by just bending Granite Avenue and Bryant Street towards the middle of the deck which may be why the traffic pattern was not changed when the deck went in.
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- C: Will Hynes (WH): Coming up Granite Avenue from the south, it always puzzles me why Mechanic Street and Pierce Street are one way southbound. If you reverse one of them it would take the pressure off that intersection. I think by having them one-way, you're just adding to the problem. I know that the people on those roads wouldn't like it, but it would help out the problem.
- A: KP: I think you just mentioned why those roads are one-way going south. I would assume that if one of them offered a connection between Granite Avenue and Adams Street it would receive a high volume of cut-through traffic.
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- C: No name given (NNG): I have a map here that I pulled off your website that addresses parking. It shows public parking on Bryant Avenue south of Boulevard Street, but that's service zone parking with one handicapped space right at the intersection. Also, on your first short-term option where you showed angle parking on Boulevard Street, there's access to parking lot and a garage there so unless you are planning to cut off access to those areas, that parking won't work.
- A: KP: We only have survey for a short distance up Boulevard Street and so we may not have known about those driveways, but we already have been told by the BCAC that we may not be able to bring the angle parking that far down on Boulevard Street because we need to maintain the right-turn lane. We just haven't had time to amend the drawing yet.
- C: NNG: I also wanted to talk about the diagram with the cut-through routes. I know there's a cut-through issue on Grafton Avenue and that isn't shown on your slide.
- A: KP: That slide was not supposed to be comprehensive, that's just based on what we've heard from the community thus far.

C: NNG: There's also a problem on State Street with cut-through traffic, though I agree that the streets you are showing have some problems. Maybe that slide shouldn't be shown any more because it will make people feel left out. I think also you should remove all the parking on Boulevard Street. There are three parking spaces up there which make it hard for people to come down Edge Hill Road to the traffic light. It's only three parking spaces and it would improve the flow if you took them out. In the rotary option, are all the traffic lights removed?

A: KP: Please remember that it's a roundabout, which is smaller than a rotary. This roundabout would fit inside the center island of the rotary just west of the Fore River Bridge on Route 3A, which we are also working on, but you're correct in that we're thinking of removing three, maybe four traffic lights in the roundabout option. While this is still conceptual we think we might need some pedestrian crossing lights at the approaches.

C: NNG: I think there is a need for parking. Right now it is hard to park in the center of the Square. If you miss a spot going by it, by the time you get back to it, it's always gone. No business can survive without parking.

Q: JO: Can you look into the idea of putting the angle parking along Granite Avenue next to the stores and then shifting the traffic so it runs by the expressway?

A: KP: Yes, we can look into that for you.

C: KP: All right, I guess we are done. We have a meeting of the BCAC coming up in April. If you think of anything tonight or tomorrow, please feel free to email or call Nate, his contact information is on the website.

Next Steps

A draft of the final report will be delivered to the BCAC prior to their next scheduled meeting on April 13th. This meeting will run from 6:30-8:30 p.m. and will take place at either the Council on Aging or at the Milton Public Library. The final community is tentatively scheduled for May 18th and will take place at Cunningham Hall if the site is available. The project team's final report will go to the selectmen in late May.

Appendix 1: Attendees

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Nathaniel	Cabral-Curtis	Howard/Stein-Hudson
Steve	Camardo	Resident
Bill	Clark	Town of Milton
Jessica	Constantino	Resident
Arthur	Doyle	BCAC
Will	Hynes	Resident
Paul	Lane	BCAC
Scott	Love	Resident
Bernie	Lynch	BCAC
Meryl	Manin	BCAC
Scott	McKeen	Milton Times
Paul	Nelson	MassDOT
Joe	Onorato	Resident
Steve	Pepin	Resident
Keri	Pyke	Howard/Stein-Hudson
Adam	Roberts	Milton Patch
Robert	Sweeney	Board of Selectmen
Lee	Toma	Milton Bicycle Advisory Committee
Jean	Wilson	Resident



Welcome to the Town of Milton Community Meeting for the East Milton Square Parking & Access Study!

If you would like your attendance to become part of the public record, please provide the requested information below.

Name	Street Address, Town	Email Address	Telephone Number
Steve CamarDO	25 BRYAN Ave MILTON.	SteveCamarDO@gmail.com	502-860-4922
MEAYL MANVIN	536 Adams ST MILTON	MEAYL@BROWN@aol.com	617-696-1490
Jan Wilson	61 Belcher Circle Milton	jeanm.lw@verizon.net	607-698-1646
Scott Love	11 BATES RD	SCOTLOVE@SHORTS.NET	617-696-6904
Adam Roberts		adam.r@patch.com	617-869-1434
Will Hynes	20 Reservation Rd	WHYNES2965@AOL.COM	617-696-1054
Scott McKee	Milton Times		
Paul Nelson	MassDOT		
Bob Sweeney	156 Whittier Rd	bgsweeney@verizon.net	696-8015
Jessica Costantino	24 Belcher Circle	jesscostantino@comcast.net	322-9700
JOSEPH CURRAN	30 GRAFTON AVE		
Lee Toma			