

Summary of Advisory Group and Key-Person Interviews

Allston-Brighton Transportation Visioning

Advisory Group

- Problematic MBTA service; different points of high traffic congestion at different time periods, such as Brighton Center, Cambridge St., and North Beacon Street. Infrequent bus service, crossing streets not pedestrian friendly.
- Infrequent rapid transit (MBTA or express bus), inadequate traffic lights, inadequate traffic light coordination.
- Impact of new development such as WGBH -- public transportation will be even worse in North Allston; transportation infrastructure.
- Inadequate public transportation for current conditions, so new development doesn't help.
- Parking; inadequate parking (especially with current large-scale vehicles) makes sightlines difficult, so cars creep out into intersection and cause hazards -- especially so in high-density areas.
- Lax enforcement of existing traffic and parking rules.
- High traffic on Harvard, Brighton, and Commonwealth Aves. Double parking because of insufficient loading zones. MBTA doesn't run late enough. Enforcement in municipal lot is bad -- people park there and then take the T. Would like to see a new train stop next to Sports Depot restaurant.
- No access to suburban rails. Large institutions do not subsidize public transportation. No bike lanes -- at least some streets should be feasible for bike lanes.
- Beyond large developments -- many 2-family houses have lots of young adults and their cars (this is not exactly addressable by a transportation study, but worth documenting).
- Private institutional transit services bleed money out from public services.
- In North Allston, along Western Ave. and North Harvard St., street parking is unregulated despite numerous requests from residents and business for restricted parking (8-10AM and 4-6PM) -- non-residents park in this neighborhood then take the MBTA into work. Traffic backups lead to safety issues.
- Lack of circumferential transit.
- Along river near Cambridge St. and Western Ave. (near entrance to Mass Turnpike) there are no pedestrian walk signals.

Summary of Key-Person Interviews

Eight residents, one business owner (one resident and business owner)

Most commented that the location was one of the reasons they like AB. Almost everyone said the diversity and the sense of community were treasured.

Interviewees said trash, graffiti, lack of code enforcement and lack of comprehensive planning were key problems. They also cited issues related to students (parking, number per apartment, behavior, and number in general) as detracting from living in AB.

All were aware of proposed development in the area. Three thought the proposed developments could have positive impacts.

Six interviewees identified poor transit as one of the biggest transportation problems (Green Line, infrequent and unreliable bus service). Condition of sidewalks and poor pedestrian crossing conditions in Cleveland Circle were cited five times.

Enforcement of parking regulations in municipal lots and on-street was cited more frequently than the lack of residential or commercial parking. Three said, "It's a city. Don't worry about parking." Five of the nine frequently shop or eat in AB. Two said they would do more in AB if the streetscape were improved and the quality of the shops better.

Traffic problems in business districts included congestion on Market Street/Chestnut Hill Avenue; congestion and Brighton Center; double parking creates bottlenecks; and signals are poorly coordinated or timed. Several noted that congestion indicates thriving businesses.

Conditions for pedestrians were identified by six as needing improvement. Sidewalks in bad condition and faded crosswalks were singled out along with lack of wheelchair ramps on Commonwealth Avenue and Harvard Avenue. Conditions for bicyclists could be better: Interviewees said pavement markings (for bike lanes or to organize cars better) would help and commented on the lack of bike paths, lanes, and bike racks. Three called for traffic calming.

Institutional growth was identified by six of nine as having the potential to have the greatest impact. Two said they thought Harvard expansion would help improve Western Avenue.

Parks and open spaces were called out as special areas not to change. Ringer Park, the Charles River, Chestnut Hill Reservoir, and Chandler Pond were singled out primarily. Several commented on the need to prevent chain stores from dominating and the need to protect the street wall.

Enforcement of existing regulations and laws was cited by six of nine. Enforcement of occupancy laws which would help control the number of cars in the neighborhood; enforcement of speeds limits, double parking, and traffic regulations at off-peak times as well as peak were identified.

Suggestions for transit improvements included calls for the MBTA to do a better job managing the Route 57 bus and Route 501 bus and require bus drivers to pull into the curb. Commuter rail got a mixed reception, with half questioning if it make a difference. Better connections to the Red Line and more frequent and late night service was requested.

Comments: Density is good, but the perception in AB is that you need a car, so there are a lot of cars. More housing is needed in the North Beacon Street area. More trash cans allover.