



WalkBoston

May 22, 2008

Frank Tramontozzi, P.E.  
Chief Engineer  
Massachusetts Highway Department  
10 Park Plaza  
Boston, MA 02116-3973

Re: MHD Designs for Museum Road and Forsyth Way

Dear Mr. Tramantozzi:

WalkBoston attended the public hearing of the re-design of Museum Road and Forsyth Way on Tuesday, May 13, 2008 that was very ably conducted by your staff.

WalkBoston is pleased that Mass Highway is creating street/sidewalk designs that will complement the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) expansion. However, we have several suggestions for how the re-design could better serve pedestrians.

**1. Incorporate the Museum Road and Forsyth Way intersections with Huntington/Fenway into the scope of this project**

WalkBoston understands that these intersections are not included in the Scope of Work. We strongly urge MHD, in collaboration with the City, to incorporate the intersections. With the MFA expansion, these streets will become much more highly utilized. Pedestrians will not be able to appreciate the fact that the new walkways are landscaped and provided with new lighting if they feel they are taking their lives in their hands as they cross Huntington or the Fenway.

**2. Reduce curb radii on both Forsyth Way and Museum Road as they intersect with Huntington and the Fenway**

As now designed, the curb radii are very wide and cars will be able to turn the corners, barely slowing down for crossing pedestrians. At the intersection of Forsyth Way/the Fenway, the pork chop island should be removed, and the turn radii substantially reduced to prevent high speed turns. Huntington Avenue, in particular, is one of the most dangerous roadways in the City of Boston with a large number of pedestrian accidents requiring Emergency Medical transport occurring upon it. Moderating traffic speeds is an important means of improving pedestrian safety. Adding curb extensions to these corners would also increase safety for pedestrians.

**3. Add a pedestrian crosswalk of Huntington Avenue on the east side of Forsyth Way**  
This location does not presently have a crosswalk, but is nonetheless used by many pedestrians each day. A safer crossing is needed at this location.

**4. Provide a pedestrian-only sidewalk on the west sidewalk of Forsyth Way**  
The west sidewalk, 15 feet wide, along Forsyth Way is currently considered a "multi-use path" with pedestrians, service vehicles from the Museum and possibly bicyclists co-mingling. WalkBoston feels strongly that this pathway should be reserved for pedestrian movements, recognizing that occasional service vehicles in off peak hours may need to use it. Many walkers on this sidewalk will be museum visitors, walking in small groups, and chatting. As they stroll down the attractively landscaped walkway, they will be extending their museum experience; not anticipating either bicyclists or service vehicles.

**5. Safely accommodate pedestrians and bicycles on the east side of Forsyth Way**  
While WalkBoston does not generally endorse shared-use pathways outside of parks, there is a strong desire to provide an off-road bicycle link between the Emerald Necklace and the Southwest Corridor - and this could be accommodated along Forsyth Way. If the project is to include a shared use path for pedestrians and bicycles its design must ensure an adequate width for safe passage of pedestrians, wheelchair users and bicycles, and a design that clearly reads as a path and not simply as a wide sidewalk. A shared use wide sidewalk will "read" to pedestrians as a zone exclusively for pedestrians, thus putting them at some risk from moving bicycles.

WalkBoston looks forward to seeing the next round of project designs that reflect the variety of comments that MHD receives, and to improved pedestrian safety and amenities along Museum Road and Forsyth Way.

Sincerely,

Dorothea Hass  
Senior Project Manger

Cc Vineet Gupta, BTB  
Chris Porter, MassBike  
Peter Furth  
Charlie Denison, Liveable Streets