

**Washington Street Corridor Improvements
Response to Working Group Comments
February 10, 2016**

1. Comment: We support the addition of three new signals at the intersections of Washington Street with Hollis Street, Central Street, and Exchange Street to ensure pedestrian safety and orderly traffic flow. We also offer these requests/suggestions:
 - Clarify sequencing of downtown traffic lights and coordination with the light at Highland/Washington Street
 - Install roadside pedestrian and traffic signals in addition to overhead signals to maximize visibility
 - Specify signal technology including recommendations on the use of emergency vehicle preemption systems for public safety vehicles and audible pedestrian crossing features.

Response: The three proposed traffic signals will be coordinated with different coordination times for different time periods throughout the day using sophisticated traffic signal controllers and detectors.

The Highland Street/Washington Street intersection is approximately 3,700 feet from the Exchange Street/Green Street/Washington Street intersection. Typically, signal coordination is effective when the signals are located within 2500 feet. Given the distance to the Exchange Street/Green Street/Washington Street intersection, coordination of the downtown signals with this intersection will not be effective.

The proposed traffic signal equipment will meet the current MUTCD requirements for signal head placement and pedestrian signal indications and include emergency vehicle preemption and audible pedestrian signals and countdown timers.

2. Comment: We very strongly recommend eliminating the multiple through lanes which have been proposed in the current plan. We believe the addition of new lanes will result in additional safety concerns due to merging, passing, and weaving that outweigh any potential decrease in queuing. Specifically, we propose the following changes:
 - Northbound at Exchange St. – Replace second through lane with right turn only or a single through-right lane onto Exchange Street to discourage drivers from using the right lane to queue up for the right onto Central Street
 - Northbound at Central St. – Replace second through lane with right turn only onto Central Street
 - Southbound at Green St. – Replace second through lane with left turn only onto Exchange Street

Response: The analysis of a single through lane in each direction has been provided in a previous memorandum from McMahon to the Town of Holliston dated June 5, 2014 (see attached memo).

3. Comment: We support restoration of on-street parking throughout the corridor as a result of eliminating multiple through lanes. Further, we request that future designs make every attempt to retain the current number of on-street parking spaces which are important to local businesses.

Response: Parking spaces are being eliminated to create space for the additional travel lanes along the roadway. Every effort was made to minimize the loss of on-street parking to the maximum extent possible while ensuring satisfactory traffic operations.

4. Comment: We strongly recommend making all travel lanes 12' wide and preserving all existing turning radii for safe passage of emergency vehicles. We also request a schematic demonstrating that all turning radii and roadway widths safely accommodate the town's largest public safety vehicles.

Response: The proposed conceptual design considered emergency response and heavy vehicle restrictions in the geometry of the roadway. Truck turning templates were used to ensure that the vehicles could maneuver within the intersections. During the final design phase, features such as 12-foot versus 11-foot travel lanes can be reviewed.

5. Comment: We support replacing painted medians with slightly raised medians with flush/mountable curbs to create the impression of a narrower roadway while preserving maximum turning radii for emergency vehicles. Medians should only be considered in locations that do not impede access to business/driveways from either direction.

Response: As part of the proposed design, a majority of the painted medians will be converted into space for the additional travel lanes. Design options for the proposed median between Exchange Street/Green Street and Central Street can be further explored during the final design phase.

6. Comment: We request an evaluation of the following alternatives for crosswalk placement:
 - Green/Exchange: Evaluate straightening crosswalk and moving northbound to the corners of Green and Exchange Streets. This may require reconstruction of the gas station curb cut further to the south
 - Central/Washington: Evaluate straightening crosswalk and moving it slightly northbound. Evaluate adding bump-outs in the area where parking currently exists so there is no reduction in turning radius from Central Street

- Some signatories on this letter have concerns about the proposed elimination of the crosswalk at the library. Please provide more analysis on whether it's possible to retain this crosswalk while still ensuring pedestrian safety and a crossing at Hollis Street. Note: the Police Department is opposed to restoring this crosswalk due to safety concerns.

Response: Optional curb extensions and/or driveway modifications required to facilitate straightening of the proposed crosswalks at the Exchange Street/Green Street/Washington Street and Central Street/Washington Street intersections were proposed as part of a previous design alternative which was not selected as the preferred alternative by the town. The crosswalk in front of the library is to be removed because midblock crossings create potential safety issues. It is safer for pedestrians to cross at the signalized intersections when traffic is stopped.

7. Comment: We request an evaluation of time-of-day turning restrictions to minimize impacts of possible cut-through traffic on surrounding neighborhoods (Pleasant Street, School Street, etc.)

Response: The traffic analysis indicates that the proposed traffic signals will operate an acceptable level of service, so there is no apparent need for turn restrictions under the selected alternative. An evaluation of potential turn restrictions could be completed during the final design phase if the town desires.

8. Comment: We request an evaluation of ways to safely incorporate bicycle traffic, such as the addition of a bicycle lane or shared lane markings

Response: The existing right-of-way is not wide enough to accommodate an exclusive bike lane without the need for land takes, which are beyond the scope of this project. Shared lane markings can be considered during the final design phase if the town desires.

9. Comment: We request the incorporation of centrally located bicycle racks and/or singular bike racks (such as city of Cambridge standard)

Response: The installation of proposed bicycle racks could be included during final design if the town desired to include these (and potentially other) streetscape elements in the project.