

**River Street Reconstruction
Public Meeting #3
Thursday, October 29, 2020
5:30 PM – 7:30 PM
Virtual Zoom Live Q&A Session**



MEETING SUMMARY

The following is a meeting summary of the third public meeting for the City of Cambridge's River Street Reconstruction Project. The meeting was held as a Question-and-Answer Public Information Session to complement the online Virtual Open House StoryMap (<https://arcg.is/10Xvum>). The Virtual Open House StoryMap is available from October 27 to November 14, 2020. For more information see Cambridgema.gov/riverstreet.

1. Welcome and Overview

Andy Reker, Transit Planner, City of Cambridge, opened the meeting at 5:30 PM. Andy reviewed the instructions for participation in the Q&A session. Responses to questions that could not be answered, asked during the Q&A or those submitted via email are to be posted on the project website following the meeting.

2. Virtual Open House StoryMap Tour, 5:30 – 6:00 PM

Bill Deignan, Cambridge Community Development Dept. Transportation Program Manager, introduced City Staff including Andy, Jerry Friedman, DPW Supervising Engineer, and Patrick Baxter, TP&T Engineering Manager, as well as the design team including HDR, Halvorson Design and McMahon Associates, all present to answer questions as needed.

Ruth Tane, Strategic Communications Coordinator, HDR, provided a tour of the StoryMap functionality, including:

- Scrolling through the information
- Viewing videos
- Navigating through the interactive corridor map
- Opportunities for submitting comments and feedback
- Clarification of the information presented for Carl Barron Plaza – these are not four options to choose from, but are used to show how different elements could be combined in multiple ways.

Bill responded to a public question regarding why the meeting was not recorded. Public meetings are typically not recorded and a written summary/answers to all questions will be provided following the meeting for people to read and find information that is of most interest to them.

3. Live Q&A, 6:00 – 7:30 PM

At 6:00 PM Andy reiterated instructions for participating in the Q&A for new attendees. Questions submitted in advance of the meeting from the StoryMap and email were addressed first, followed by live questions submitted via the Q&A panel in Zoom, and followed by some typical questions that have been asked in the past.

Corridor – Pre-submitted Questions

1. Can you make some changes to the visuals on the Virtual Open House to make it easier to follow streets at different parts of the project area? In particular, it was difficult at Pleasant Street.

Bill Deignan: Yes, we can try to modify the StoryMap as needed to make it more readable for street names and other items.

2. How are you creating a more pleasant entryway treatment to Cambridge?

Bill Deignan: We are doing this in a number of different ways.

1. There will be a smoother transition for bicycles and pedestrians with improved crosswalks at Memorial Drive and River Street.
2. There will also be more subtle gateway treatments at the Memorial Drive end in terms of paving, greenspace, and trees. This will visually narrow street so people feel like they are coming into a neighborhood and less of a speedway.
3. In general, the design has less pavement, more green spaces and tree canopy, along with a brick sidewalk edging strip along the park side and special paving at the park entryways.

3. The bus lane is great in theory, but this street is too busy and congested to make half the street a bus lane. It is already so difficult to enter River Street from a driveway. I worry crashes will happen.

Andy Reker: Analysis was performed using traffic software modeling, which included all modes from pre-Covid counts and shows that travel times will not be reduced with the proposed design. Travel times for motorists were roughly 4-5 minutes on average pre-COVID during rush hour and, in the model, roughly 4-5 minutes on average after the reconstruction is complete. For entering traffic on River Street, regular gaps created by traffic signals will make it possible for people to pull into River Street traffic. It should also make entering traffic more straightforward by having a single lane for trucks and vehicles.

4. Why have a bus lane and will it get used?

Andy Reker: Cambridge's policy is to prioritize sustainable modes of transportation – walking, biking, and taking public transit while minimizing impacts to motoring.

Though buses are a small number of the vehicles on the street, they carry a significant portion of the people travelling. On River Street, during the AM rush hours pre-COVID, roughly 30% of travelers on the street were in buses. The 64 bus has also been recently rerouted to River Street and riders from that route were counted in this number.

In addition, in parts of the corridor buses experience significant congestion resulting in negative impacts on bus travel time and reliability. In particular, buses on River Street from

Norman Tubman Square to Mass Ave experience highly irregular travel times in addition to delayed travel.

On this corridor, there were around 3,000 MBTA bus riders every weekday before changes related to COVID-19. We believe ridership will return in the future. There are also school buses, tour buses, and employer shuttles that can take advantage of this lane. In addition, a bus lane will keep a lane on this street open for emergency services at all hours of the day.

5. How will you prevent drivers/vehicles from parking in the bus lane? Will drivers be encouraged to pull up onto the curb and potentially block the bike lane instead of parking in the bus lane?

Andy Reker: As part of project, we are planning to use red lane markings, which have been effective at encouraging motorists to not use the bus lane for driving, stopping, or parking. With the red lane markings and adjustments to curb use regulations, we believe there will be enough safe, legal spaces on the left-side for motorists to stop or park.

Patrick Baxter: Curbs to stop or park at are available on the left-side, which will be maintained in the majority of the corridor. We can't say there will never be illegal parking, but there should be plenty of opportunities for accessing the curb, as there will also be additional loading zones in areas adjacent to businesses. As in other parts of the City, we can monitor and adjust curb use regulations to meet changing demands on the street.

6. Why can't the bicycle facility be two-way and won't cyclists just ride the wrong way?

Bill Deignan: River Street is fairly narrow and there is not enough room to fit a two-way bicycle facility. Some cyclist may travel the wrong way but the intent is that cyclists heading away from Central Square use Western Avenue.

7. Will this design make people want to drive faster?

Bill Deignan: There will be many elements that are likely to make people drive slower. The road will visually appear narrower with one lane for trucks and vehicles and one lane for buses compared to two general travel lanes. Additionally, a single general-purpose lane also naturally controls speeds as a driver can only go as fast as the vehicle in front of them. The roadway will also be narrower due to the bicycle lane raised to sidewalk level rather than in the roadway. The addition of more trees, curb extensions in the flex zone and other street elements will help to visually narrow the road which will also contribute to reducing speeds. We are hoping speeds will go down on River Street like they did on Western Avenue.

8. At Norman Tubman Square, can you maintain a bike lane through the part of Kinnaird Street that is being closed?

Bill Deignan: yes, we are planning on having a clear path for bikes to transition from Pleasant Street to River Street through the proposed area at or near where Kinnaird Street is currently closed. In the designs, there will be a marked path where bikes can continue across Tubman Square to make connections to River Street.

9. Are there any new crosswalks or things to make is easier and safer to walk on River Street?

Bill Deignan: There are several new crosswalks proposed at locations where crossing opportunities previously did not exist. Additionally, having a single travel lane for general

vehicle traffic will improve safety for people crossing River Street since there is just one lane to negotiate, except when there is a bus coming. Each crosswalk is also being evaluated for the implementation of pedestrian actuated Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) to alert drivers when a pedestrian is present. Side street crosswalks will be raised, which is an access improvement, and also gives pedestrians priority when crossing side streets. River Street will be more enjoyable given the new trees, planted areas, increased buffer from traffic (bus lane and raised bicycle facility), and curb extensions on the other side of street where there was parking with areas outside of businesses for café seating.

10. What will this project be doing to support local businesses? Will it be harder for them to find short term parking/loading zones?

Patrick Baxter: We will more finely tuned proposed parking regulations on each block of River Street. There are at least two metered parking spaces in front of businesses to guarantee turnover and availability of spaces. Loading zones outside of business are also planned and are helpful for deliveries and for individual drivers to drop-off passenger or pick-up a food order.

11. Pleasant Street is a very narrow street which is a primary walking path to and from two local Cambridge Public Schools – Amigos and Morse. How can we ensure Pleasant Street does not become a through-way given it is heavily used by children and families?

Jerry Friedman: I believe this question is primarily concerned about whether we will be shutting down River Street during construction. We will maintain through traffic on River throughout the construction period. Generally, there will be one lane of traffic open for all modes, similar to the gas company construction this summer and fall. When we did the similar Western Avenue project several years ago, we also maintained through traffic at all times. This does extend the overall duration of the project, but we recognize that detours through residential streets are neither appropriate nor feasible. We will provide more information on construction logistics as we get closer. It is also important to note that the contractor will not be working along the entire length of River Street at one time.

12. I heard that there was a lot of daytime noise when Western Avenue was reconstructed, do you expect to have the same kind of impact for River Street?

Jerry Friedman: Unfortunately, there will be noise on River Street as well. There is a fair amount of underground utility work that is noisy, dusty, invasive, and annoying. Doing work at night is not preferable so there will be noise during daytime work hours. . The City will work with individual abutters that may have special concerns, and be proactive to minimize nuisances.

Carl Barron Plaza – Pre-submitted Questions

1. How does the design address the population that is usually in the plaza and makes it uncomfortable for others to use it?

Bill Deignan: The goal is to create a plaza that is safe and usable for everyone, whether you are someone who uses it regularly or someone who wants to use it. The intent is to find a design that works for a wide variety of people. We are talking to social service providers, police, and others who work with users in plaza to come up with ways to make it safe and

usable for everyone. We would like to hear your ideas for what would make everyone feel welcome in the plaza

2. How will the plaza be maintained and programmed?

Bill Deignan: The City maintains most public space, but the Central Square Business Improvement District (BID) will have a role as well to keep the plaza in good shape. This includes plantings, trash pick-up, and snow and slush removal. It will be a work in progress.

3. I do not see any assurances that existing trees will be preserved. Is that correct? I've noticed spray painted markings in the plaza that make me think the trees will be removed.

Jerry Friedman: The spray paint markings relate to existing underground utilities, not tree removal or where proposed features are located. The design calls for saving some but not all of the existing trees. There are some trees near the Holmes Building in low planters and some trees in the middle of the plaza in high planters. People do not like the large planters in the current arrangement as they inhibit sight lines, flow of people, ability to hold flexible events. We will remove the trees in the large granite planters (and potentially replant them elsewhere in the project area or in the City) and maintain the trees in the back which are in better condition, and plant a lot more, probably three times as many trees, in better soil conditions.

4. Why does the bike lane curve into Carl Barron Plaza? Could bikes be sent into the street or could the bike lane continue next to the bus lane on River Street approaching Mass. Ave.?

Patrick Baxter: The challenge with this suggestion is that bus riders would be boarding/exiting the bus into bike lane if it were next to the bus lane. The bike lane would be uncomfortable for cyclists if it were in the street in between two lanes of traffic with buses on right and cars and trucks on left. This would also violate the city's separated bike lane ordinance to create a separated bike lane all the way to Mass Ave. Additionally, the bus stop is a terminal bus stop with (1) buses stopping frequently and (2) many riders getting on and off. As a result, the design is for a dedicated space that goes "behind" the bus stop to minimize conflicts for boarding/alighting bus passengers.

5. At Carl Barron Plaza, how will you make sure that people biking and people walking are not put into conflict with each other? The Plaza is already very busy. Markings and/or barriers will be needed. People tend to congregate or wander around this area.

Patrick Baxter: We are using many ways to reduce conflicts. We are considering enhanced "Yield to pedestrian" markings, as seen on Western Avenue, as well as crosswalk markings. We are also planning to use shelters and planting areas to direct bus riders and people walking to specific locations to cross the separated cycling facility to make sure people end up where they belong. To support that, clear markings and/or vertical features alongside bike lane will be used so people do not congregate or wander around this area and so bikes don't divert into the plaza.

6. For landscaping features, could you do green walls?

Jerry Friedman: A green wall is a wall with live plantings on it. They provide shade or heat reduction, and can help buffer noise. There are limited locations where that could work on this project, as there are active storefronts and few blank walls fronting the entirety of Carl Barron Plaza. There is a potential opportunity on a blank wall at Tubman Square. We can look for additional opportunities, but they are limited.

7. For architectural features, can you incorporate solar panels into any structures that are constructed?

Bill Deignan: Yes, that is a good idea. The structures have not been designed yet. We will see if there are ways to do that. At the Mass. Ave. end of the plaza, it is considerably shadier than at the Green Street end where incorporation of solar features may be more feasible.

8. Can any canopy-like features have a more solid roof rather than more open? The more solid the more functional it would be to shelter from rain, sun etc.

Bill Deignan: Yes, we have heard shade is very important for people. People waiting for the bus need to have a solid roof – we are planning for multiple different bus shelters in plaza, which will all be at least three sided.

9. For water features, I think a water feature is good in summer, could you consider a water mister instead of a conventional fountain?

Bill Deignan: Yes, this will be considered. Features that provide multi-seasonal interest are a priority, whether it is a water mister or not. There may be a water feature that gives off mist, but also has sound of water. We heard in past people are interested in the sound of water.

10. For event features, can we consider making space for food trucks in Carl Barron Plaza?

Bill Deignan: This is not off the table. Under the proposed design, the plaza will be enlarged by removing the busway and putting bus stops around edges, so there may be space for food trucks. We will look at ways to program the plaza and make it a destination. We can look to incorporate electrical outlets, water, and things that are secured to provide options.

11. Can the city negotiate with abutters to find active uses in the storefronts that face Carl Barron Plaza?

Bill Deignan: This has been brought up in the past and will be communicated again to the building owners. We have heard that the uses there are not the best ones, but the City cannot dictate what businesses are in retail storefronts. We can encourage adjacent property owners to rent to more active users. The BID is aware and would also like to identify more active uses.

12. For bus shelters, can you consider heated bus shelters or "SADD" lighting to help with the lack of sunlight in winter?

Andy Reker: SAD stands for seasonal affective disorder, that is, the "winter blues" as a result of short days and less direct sunlight in winter. We definitely want shelters to be comfortable for people waiting for the bus and will be looking at providing shelters that offer protection from the elements. We will look at heating elements to see if that is viable given the open-air nature of the shelters. Lighting options will also be reviewed.

13. I'm concerned about the proposed changes to MBTA Route 47 and that it might make people walk further and complicate transfers to the Red Line.

Andy Reker: Thanks. Together with the project working group and other input from the public in previous meetings, a plaza design priority has emerged to find space for a

significantly larger pedestrian plaza at the bus terminal area and to enhance the bus stops in the bus terminal.

The creation of this larger public plaza, along with enhanced bus stops, means that the Route 47 will no longer travel to Mass. Ave. as it does today. Other routing options that would keep the Route 47 on Mass. Ave. are longer and have significant negative impacts to Route 47. On the other hand, changing bus stop locations for other routes would result in negative impacts to those routes or result in much less public plaza space.

We do recognize that having the Route 47 beginning and ending at Green Street instead of Mass Ave does mean some people will walk further than today to make a connection to the Red Line. As a result, we are making sure that the bus terminal area and Carl Barron Plaza walking paths and other walking paths between Green Street and Mass Ave. are designed well and with accessible travel in mind.

Bill Deignan: We are looking at a series of trade-offs; not just bus routing, but better ways to serve riders at bus stops. One option that we will review is moving the last stop for the 47 up on Green Street closer to the new plaza.

14. I'm concerned about rerouting the Route 47 to Franklin Street and extra noise it will create and potential for buses to get stuck on turns.

Patrick Baxter: As part of this project, we looked at different ways that the Route 47 could be rerouted with as little detour as possible and with minimal changes to bus stop locations. We also consulted with the MBTA to understand if they would identify any key operational, safety, or other problems to the proposed routing. While some minor details do still need to be worked out, in general MBTA staff appear to believe the routing to be workable.

Using Franklin Street is the most direct routing from the proposed first stop to where the Route 47 runs today on Pearl Street. Other options that were reviewed do not provide the high level of transit service. Realizing that some of the turns are tight for larger vehicles like an MBTA bus, we're planning to implement some parking restrictions at corners on some legs of the intersections mentioned to make sure that buses can make these turns safely.

15. How are you improving communicating with people on how they can get around and find buses and the T?

Bill Deignan: We are considering wayfinding and real-time signage for MBTA buses. We would love to hear suggestions for wayfinding signage.

Live Questions via Zoom

1. Will travel be allowed throughout the work and what is the construction time frame?

Jerry Friedman: Yes, we will maintain one lane of travel through work zone. We do not yet have a final construction time frame or sequence, but expect it to last 24-30 months. Work will be done in small segments at a time. There will be a series of meetings about construction and construction impacts closer to that phase in 2021.

2. Who's going to reliably maintain the trees after the contractor's obligation expires in 2 years or so? Young trees too often don't thrive in the city because they aren't reliably

maintained. They keep having to be replanted, which is expensive, and not just in dollar terms.

Will increased cleanup of streets and sidewalks and plazas be on the plan? Central Square, for instance, is very trashy. Is there a plan to be sure the planters are maintained on a regular basis? They will be used for trash often! And will need refreshing and regular watering.

Jerry Friedman: In terms of overall maintenance, the Department of Public Works will be responsible after the contract ends, specifically our Forestry Division and Landscape Division. The way trees will be planted now is better than it was 20-40 years ago. More soil volume will be provided underneath the sidewalk and between trees helping them to grow. The City has found success with this new planting method on Western Avenue and it is now the City standard for street tree plantings. There will also be automatic irrigation systems at major corners similar to Western Avenue, and granite box planters. There are in-house and contracted folks to look at these areas. Trash removal on planters will be done on a regular basis. There will be attention to Carl Barron Plaza as it is a heavily used space, and the BID may also help with maintenance there.

3. What is the percentage of parking you are removing? How have you decided how much parking to take away?

Patrick Baxter: There will be significant changes to parking. Most of parking is currently unregulated, which will no longer be the case because it has the tendency to lead to unwanted behavior. For example, people from other neighborhoods or people using it to access the T may be parking on River Street long term. There will be more resident permit parking, metered parking, and loading zones. There will also be activation spaces and landscaping in place of parking.

4. At some points the cycle track seems to narrow the sidewalk a lot, e.g. the eastern side of Kelly intersection by firehouse. Is that just a trick of graphic? How wide is it?

Patrick Baxter: The bike lane is about 6-feet wide in most of the corridor. There are a few segments where it narrows to 5-feet in constrained locations. River Street has a narrower right-of-way than Western Avenue, but the bike lane does meet city and state minimums.

In terms of the sidewalk width, in most locations a clear sidewalk width of 5-feet is maintained on both sides of River Street. The sidewalk width narrows at some pinch points, primarily in the vicinity of intersections on the south side of River Street, however a minimum of 4-feet is maintained at all times for accessibility.

5. I don't think you answered the question about the bike lane in Carl Barron Plaza. Does the MBTA require some limits for waiting and boarding space? There will be a conflict of bikes and pedestrians at the Mass. Ave crossing. How do you plan to manage that? Where does the bike path cross and interfere with pedestrians? We all know that many bikers don't wait to allow other users if they can take advantage of a little break.

Andy Reker: There are standards to design these spaces. In particular, the MBTA bus stop guidelines provide standards for making sure bus stops are accessible to all riders, including those with disabilities or using mobility devices. There is more ridership at stops in Carl Barron Plaza than at typical stops. We looked at how much space people need to get around comfortably, including dimensions for seating, benches, shelters, and other structures. For example, the MBTA operator's booth will be maintained. We looked at how

much space is needed for the conflicting flows of people both boarding and exiting the bus. We also made sure each stop can accommodate the maximum number of riders in peak periods.

6. Is there no way to make an exception for this bike lane, which will really break up this precious, public open space?

Bill Deignan: The intent is not to break up plaza. Bus stops are located around edges, and the bicycle facility will go between and adjacent to those bus stops so there will still be open plaza area. The City's cycling ordinance requires that on major routes cyclists be separated from moving traffic. We are minimizing conflict between people getting to bus stops and allowing cyclists to move safely, while allowing buses to move in and out of stops.

Patrick Baxter: Regardless of ordinance, the goal is to create a safe and comfortable facility for people of all ages and abilities, especially in this location, which connects from the Charles River up to Central Square. When people see how the bike lane is integrated into plaza, with furnishings and landscaping, it won't be obstructing use of the plaza.

7. Why not send #47 over to Western Ave and then turn on Franklin?

Andy Reker: This routing would add time to the route, as it takes a longer amount of time in to go to Western Avenue with the signal at Franklin Street. The MBTA prefers that the Route 47 not go through the signal there.

8. Has the Plaza design been analyzed in the context of snow removal and maintaining safe pedestrian access in the winter?

Jerry Friedman: The separated bike lane, and the bus stops and related pedestrian ramps will be cleared of snow by the City. We have been over the plaza design with maintenance staff to make sure it fits with their equipment. The City will add the plaza to the inventory of key pedestrian spaces which we clear.

9. Is there a commitment to provide real time bus arrival/departure information at the bus shelters?

Andy Reker: We are looking at real-time bus information signage in a pilot on Western Avenue and in Porter Square. The current pilot has revealed that it is difficult to find a technology solution that works well with the MBTA real-time system. However, the MBTA has stated they believe in near future they may offer real-time signage to municipalities and we are exploring that for this project.

10. How many people, other than city personnel and contractors, have been attending this meeting? I realize some people join & leave.

Bill Deignan: There are about 20 people currently left in the meeting at this point. We are looking for the StoryMap to be the main way people ask questions and submit comments on the project. There have been over 400 visits to StoryMap as of the date of this Q&A (as of 10/29). We ask that you pass on the information for the StoryMap to others.

11. What study was done to justify removing 40% of parking from River Street? If no study, on what basis was the decision made?

Bill Deignan: We completed a parking utilization study. Parking along the majority of River Street is currently unregulated. We expect that with resident permit parking and meter regulations, there will be a different utilization. The parking utilization study showed that parking was less utilized at the end of the corridor closer to Memorial Drive, and more utilized towards Central Square. The existing parking closer to Central Square is metered, the other parking is unregulated, accessible, or a loading zone. Based on the study, a reasonable parking supply will be available on River Street and side streets.

Patrick Baxter: Developing the parking regulations was a process. We didn't start with removing 40% of parking, but worked through the design process to identify concerns on the corridor for business owners and people using different modes. We added design features to improve the roadway for all by adding crosswalks where there are currently large gaps or where people have trouble crossing, adding activation spaces to enliven areas near businesses, and improve bus stop facilities.

12. What examples are there, from other cities that worked where they addressed inappropriate, undesired drug usage behaviors that we could adopt or glean ideas from? I know Miami, Portland, Dallas addressed these concerns.

Bill Deignan: We are talking here about the design of the plaza, not changing personal behaviors, but we are working with social service providers to gain information on how the design will serve a wide array of users. The design itself will not address drug use, but there are many social service providers in the city providing input into the design.

13. Can the Plaza design be phased by adding one special feature at a time rather than all together to see how it works and then decide on the next one?

Jerry Friedman: We can't start adding features until we start demolishing. The bus stop changes will trigger other changes that would have to happen, same with bike lane and seating. It would be great if we could do that with a blank slate, but it is not practical with space that is already so developed.

With a break in live submitted questions, City staff then answered some FAQs:

1. Are trucks still allowed on the street?

Bill Deignan: Yes, this is not something we can prohibit. River Street and Western Avenue function as a one-way pair and there would not be a suitable alternate route that would get trucks to where they need to go. Trucks will stay on River Street, but we hope with improved conditions trucks will make less noise and travel slower.

2. Will there be any seating or benches along the street?

Bill Deignan: We have identified at least a dozen places along corridor for benches and potentially more than that. This does not include the benches in the plaza. Activation areas on the corridor could have small bench or businesses may put out their own seating. We will look to have benches and/or shelters at some of the busier bus stops.

3. Are you adding any new green space or plantings?

Bill Deignan: We are adding in a number of new planting areas similar to the ones on Western Avenue that will still allow for sight lines and add visual character.

4. What type of public art is part of the design?

Bill Deignan: There are a few locations for public art, as noted in story map. The artist is Ritsuko Taho, who designed the artwork currently in Carl Barron Plaza and elements of that work will be re-worked into the seating elements that she is designing.

Lillian Hsu (Cambridge Arts Council, Director of Public Art): We are still refining the design of each element. The art element is a tall and narrow with a single seat bench. Each element will have a seat on either side to be symmetrical. The vertical pillar part will be made of a ceramic terracotta pattern to illustrate the dreams from the multicultural manifesto's project. Some of the patterns will be repeated with new colors, more colorful than what is now in Carl Barron Plaza. The locations for art are still to be determined based on what the budget can support, but likely to be at Tubman Square, Mass. Ave., and Riverside Press Park. The general direction is to have a short resting spot along the street. The seat itself will be made of wood and powder coated steel. The benches are paired with cherry trees so that when seated, a cherry tree will be in view. A visual is available in the interactive map within the StoryMap.

A potential element for Carl Barron Plaza is a piece that was removed from Lafayette Square. It is a tile mosaic about 3-foot by 4-foot. There may be potential for rotating public art, performance art, or interactive programming if spaces are created where these things can happen.

5. Why is the artwork being moved out of CBP and is something else going back there?

Bill Deignan: Yes, we are looking at iconic structures and design elements to create visual interest. We welcome other suggestions for artistic elements you want to see in the plaza.

6. What happens to the cars that use Green Street now to get to Western Ave or continue across on Green St and where will they go?

Patrick Baxter: There are several benefits from closing this short section of Green Street. We received a lot of complaints about how the cluster of intersections work at Green and Magazine and River/Western. The close proximity of intersection at Green and Magazine controlled by a stop sign with a signal 50-feet away leads to cars queueing back through intersection, blocking Magazine Street. When the traffic signal at River Street is green people don't want to stop at the stop sign at Magazine Street. The vast majority of conflicts are removed if this section is bus and bike only.

If the majority of people were going left on Western Avenue, they would now be turning left on Magazine Street, then right on Franklin Street and left on Western Avenue. The new traffic signals at the River/Western intersection will allow all of the movements to move together. Similarly, someone could take a right on River Street and left on Green Street. Based on the origin and destination of drivers, many are using Green Street as an alternative to Mass Ave., so they will be likely to stay on Mass Ave. or use other streets.

7. Did you consider impacts to side streets?

Patrick Baxter: With Franklin Street converted to two-way traffic between Magazine Street and River Street, there will be opportunity for people to drive up Magazine Street and zig-zag. Drivers can still go up Magazine, but will turn left on Franklin and right on River, in a similar maneuver as today, but it will work better.

City staff then answered a few additional questioned submitted via Zoom:

8. I asked ahead about construction timeline on corridor & that hasn't been answered.

Jerry Friedman: This is anticipated to be a 24-30-month project. The number of side streets down on the lower end of the corridor will be part of separate community process. This doesn't mean the contractor will be on the entire corridor the whole time.

9. Couldn't the plaza be trimmed to accommodate continued 47?

Andy Reker: We need to consider that one of main desires for project is to create additional plaza space. Designing the plaza space so that the Route 47 could turn from Green Street to River Street and onto Mass. Ave, greatly impacts the ability to provide useful space for transit riders at the bus stops on River Street and Green Street. In addition, this would likely result in separating the bus stops along River Street. Other changes that would result would be minimal additional non-transit plaza space. We were trying to accomplish multiple goals with the plaza design and want to accommodate the multiple goals as much as possible.

3. Next Steps

Bill concluded the meeting by reiterating that the City is accepting comments from the StoryMap through Nov 14th. The City and design team will work through changes to the project based on comments, and begin the final design towards end of 2020 and into 2021.

The City will return to the Working Group to discuss public comments and get additional feedback. Another public meeting will be scheduled, whether virtual or in-person, to show the final design before it goes out to construction. This meeting will involve more discussion on final features and expectations for construction.

The Carl Barron Plaza design is not as far along as the corridor design. The City is reviewing all comments and suggestions on elements of the plaza and will reconvene with staff and stakeholders. Through this iterative design process there may be another public meeting for another final draft design.

The City will continue to give updates through the River Street mailing list, which can be joined at <https://www.cambridgema.gov/riverstreet>.