

Columbia Road Community Advisory Team

The twelfth Community Advisory Team meeting took place on Tuesday, May 6th, from 6:00 to 7:30 pm.

What We Talked About

Early Action Project Update

We kicked things off with a quick update on the roadway mural project. All three mural designs have now been approved by both the Disabilities Commission and BTG Engineering. Next, the Boston Art Commission will review the designs in June. Pending approval, mural installation will happen this summer! Before that, we'll be installing new pavement markings, flexposts, and Zicla armadillos to protect the murals.



CITY of BOSTON

Photo credit: Jamie Bologna



Looking Back at Upham's Corner

We also revisited some key takeaways from last month's meeting about the Upham's Corner section of Columbia Road. CAT members emphasized pedestrian safety, shared concerns about parking and access to businesses, and talked through challenges around bike lanes and public space.

Segment 3: Early Design Ideas

The project team shared early ideas for making Columbia Road safer and easier to get around – especially for people walking or biking to places like JFK/UMass, Moakley Park, and Carson Beach. Some of the ideas included:

- Redesigning the 4-way intersection at Edward Everett Square
- Adding a raised and separated bike lane from Mass Ave to JFK/UMass
- Installing raised crosswalks and mid-block crossings to help people cross more safely
- Adding more trees along the corridor
- Creating a bus “queue jump” lane to help the 8 and 41 buses avoid traffic delays
- Simplifying intersections (like at Buttonwood Street) to make turns safer
- Removing one of the two left turn lanes in certain spots to simplify traffic flow and make turning movements more predictable

What We Heard from the CAT

CAT members and the project team discussed the tradeoffs of different street design options. A few members raised concerns about changes like sharper turns for drivers or removing certain turn lanes – and whether that could lead to more traffic cutting through smaller residential streets. There were also questions about how nearby businesses and quieter side streets might be impacted.



One idea that got a lot of discussion was making part of E. Cottage Street one-way. People were curious how that might affect traffic patterns and whether apps like Google Maps would start sending more cars through side streets. CAT members made it clear that keeping those smaller streets safe is a priority. We also talked about the City's ongoing “Safety Surge” program, which is adding speed humps to calm traffic on residential streets.

There were mixed opinions about expanding public space at Edward Everett Square. Some people were concerned about public safety and how the space might be used, especially by unhoused individuals. Others were excited by the idea – especially if the space includes good programming and invites people in. Many liked the idea of making the area better for walking, but noted that removing turn lanes could slow down traffic a bit.

We also touched on how improving traffic signals and simplifying intersections could make traffic flow more smoothly overall. Even if that means cars move a little slower in spots, several CAT members said it would be worth it if driving feels less chaotic and more predictable.

Looking ahead, our next CAT meeting will be the final one before we bring draft designs to the public. We'll share updated plans based on all the feedback we've heard and have one last group discussion.