

Columbia Road Community Advisory Team

The thirteenth and final Community Advisory Team meeting took place on Tuesday, June 10th, from 6:00 to 7:30 pm.

This meeting focused on showing how CAT members' feedback has helped shape the design concepts that will soon be shared with the broader public.

What We Covered

Early Action Mural Project Update

We began with an exciting update on the mural project. All three Dorchester-based artists have finished their designs, and they've been officially approved by the Boston Art Commission. We walked through each mural, introduced the artists, and talked briefly about the materials that will be used – including street safety elements like flexposts and Zicla armadillos that will be installed before the artwork this summer.

Public Open House: Delayed but Still Coming

We let the group know that the public open house originally scheduled for June 16 has been postponed. This gives the team more time to refine the design materials and ensure we're ready for meaningful community engagement. A new date will be announced soon and shared widely.



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Getting Ready for Public Engagement

To help prepare for the open house, the team gave a preview of the materials in development. Toole Design explained how each segment of the corridor will have its own display board to walk people through the context and ideas behind the design options. Reed Hilderbrand shared how the open house will be set up, with multiple design tables where attendees can explore the different sections and share their feedback.

We made sure to emphasize: the designs shown at the open house will not be final. They're concepts – meant to get feedback from the public and spark conversation.

Segment-by-Segment Design Updates

Segment 1: Parkway (Franklin Park to Geneva Ave)

This is the widest part of Columbia Road, with opportunities to improve biking, walking, tree canopy, and access to transit. Highlights include:

- Protected bike lanes in both design options
- A bus queue-jump lane to help with delays at Washington Street
- A new public space near a potential future Fairmount Line stop at Ceylon Street

One CAT member asked about the timeline for the commuter rail stop. We shared that it's a long-term idea being considered by the MBTA, but nothing has been confirmed yet.

Segment 2: Upham's Corner

This busy stretch includes businesses, new housing, and a growing arts scene. We shared three draft design options:

- **Option 1:** Keeps existing parking and medians, adds shared bike lanes and raised crosswalks
- **Option 2:** Adds wider sidewalks, shared-use areas for bikes/scooters, and some back-in angled parking
- **Option 3:** Reimagines the space in front of the Strand Theatre as a larger pedestrian plaza

CAT members raised concerns about reducing parking (especially near the post office and Strand), and some shared worries about loitering or safety with wider sidewalks. We reiterated that these are draft options meant to explore different tradeoffs, and that we want to hear from all types of community members – including residents, business owners, older adults, and people who don't drive.

Segment 3: East Parkway (Edward Everett Sq. to JFK/UMass)

This segment connects to schools and the JFK/UMass station, and presents safety challenges for pedestrians and cyclists. Proposed updates include:

- A continuous two-way bike path on the south side of the street
- Raised crosswalks and safer crossings at tricky spots like Buttonwood Street

There were no comments or concerns on this section from CAT members.

Looking Ahead

We closed the meeting by thanking CAT members for their ongoing dedication to the project. Over the past year, your insights have directly shaped these design ideas – and we're excited to now bring them to the wider community.

Keep an eye out for the new open house date! We'll be sharing draft designs and collecting more feedback to help move the Columbia Road project forward together.

