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JAMAICA PLAIN

City developing new options for Monument Square redesign

Posted by Matt Rocheleau November 5, 2010 03:48 PM

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(Courtesy: Boston Redevelopment Authority)

Conceptual redesign plans for Monument Square. Another, less-drastric proposal is currently in the works, officials said.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

City transportation officials say they are developing a less-radical alternative plan to redesign the Monument Square area that would keep much of the square's existing structure intact.

The second option, to be presented at a public meeting early next month, is being created in response to concerns raised since the square's conceptual plans were unveiled in late September, said Vineet Gupta, director of planning for the Boston Transportation Department. Among the concerns were the loss of on-street parking spaces and the belief that the plan may slow the flow of traffic through the square.

Monument Square's proposed changes are one aspect of broader conceptual redesign plans for a two-mile corridor in Jamaica Plain's commercial center.

Under the original plan, the green space surrounding the square's Civil War

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monument would be expanded, resulting in the loss of as many as 20 parking spaces, the rerouting of traffic, and the installation of a new traffic signal, according to the planning director. A "carriageway" running through the park area surrounding the monument would be open only to pedestrians, cyclists, and emergency vehicles.

While Gupta said the alternative proposal "would maintain for the most part what's in the square today," the plan includes several changes – to expand the area around the monument and improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety – that are less-drastic than the design idea presented at the last public hearing in September.

A neighborhood business association was most opposed to that idea, fearing the parking reduction could hurt area stores and restaurants, Gupta said.

"We want to respect their concerns, which is why we want to re-examine this," he said.

The two-mile stretch of redesign focuses on transportation, business, and streetscape issues in a core commercial area of Jamaica Plain.

The city's redevelopment authority, the mayor's neighborhood services office, a community advisory group, and a project consultant, McMahon and Associates, are working together to improve the area from the Jackson Square T station on Centre Street to the Forest Hills T station on South Street.

Aside from lost parking in Monument Square, some residents have also questioned whether the more-radical conceptual redesign would improve traffic flow or not.

However, based on a traffic analysis that was conducted by city transportation officials, "We are convinced that the proposal would improve traffic flow in the area," Gupta said.

E-mail Matt Rocheleau at mjrochele@gmail.com.

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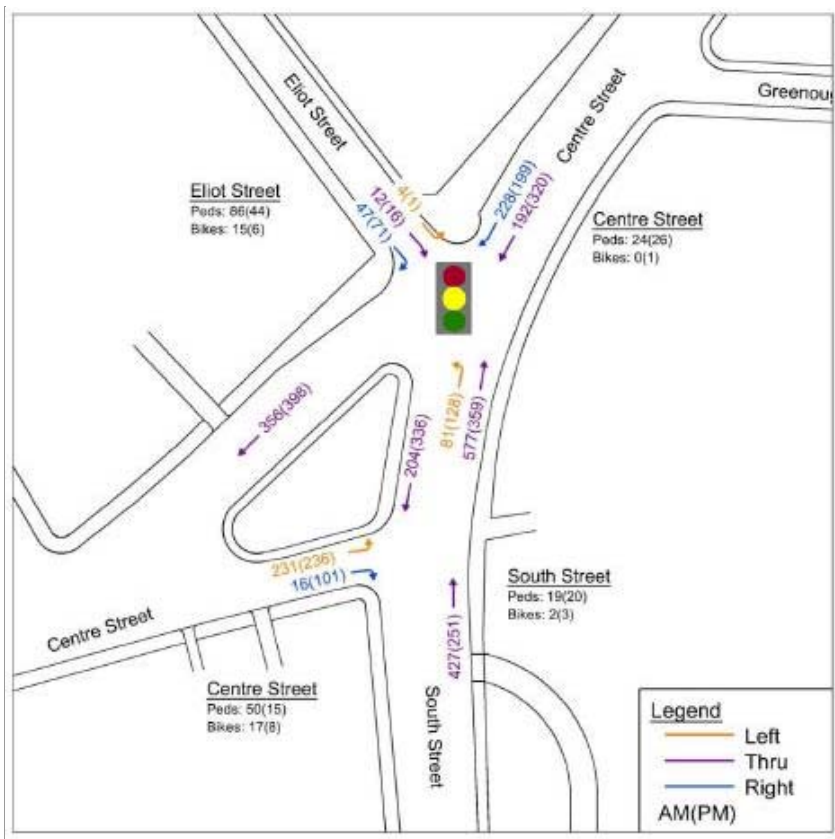
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(Courtesy: Boston Redevelopment Authority)

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