



Urban Land Institute Boston/New England

West Roxbury TAP

JUNE 11, 2019



About ULI – the Urban Land Institute

Mission

To provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI is a research and education institution with nearly 36,000 members worldwide representing the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines, working in private enterprise and public service.

ULI at the local level

Boston/New England District Council covers nearly all of New England with over 1,400 Members—developers, architects, planners, public officials, financiers, students, etc.



Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs)

West Roxbury, MA

ULI Boston/New England is committed to supporting communities in making sound land use decisions and creating better places. A TAP brings together a group of ULI members with a range of professional expertise to provide focused, collaborative consultation to a local government or qualifying non-profit organization.

This TAP

- This panel looked at the full range of options from an unbiased perspective.
- Panelists include public and private sector experts in the fields of architecture, planning, design, and law
- Panelists have donated their time
- Final Deliverable – Written report (8 weeks) will be available at <http://boston.uli.org>

PANEL SPONSORS:



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The Panel

Co-Chairs

- Jim Heffernan, Navem Partners, LLC
- Nyal McDonough

Panelists

- Jim Heroux, Copley Wolff Design Group
- Sarah Kurpiel Lee, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)
- Christine Madore, MassDevelopment
- Matt Marotta, ICON Arcitecture
- Alykhan Mohamed, Sasaki Associates
- Kartik Shah, Harriman

ULI Staff

- Manikka Bowman
- Sara Marsh

TAP Writer

- Mike Hoban





Panel Assignment: Address These Questions



1. Which sections of Centre Street are the most critical areas to focus on in terms of making significant and impactful change? What type of changes are recommended in those sections and why are these areas most likely to be successful?
2. Which properties are the most important to focus on? Are there specific uses that panelists feel are lacking that should be focused on?
3. From the business and community perspective, what experiences, examples, and impacts can panelists point to in other communities that may have already completed a roadway diet?



What did we hear?

Assets and Opportunities

- Centre Street is the center of West Roxbury
 - Nodes of activities
 - YMCA connection to Lyndon School
- Community pride & engagement
- Daytime utilization from families & seniors
- Multiple transportation options
 - Commuter rail & buses
- Centre Street provides width for shared use
- Underutilized parking
 - Private/MBTA options



Credit: Northeastern University



Challenges

- Street design does not serve pedestrians, cyclists, or retail shoppers
- Safety for all users
 - Speeding cars, confusing for drivers
 - Safety of children & seniors
 - Long wait times to cross street
 - Confusing for pedestrians
 - Not accommodating for cyclists
- Underutilized Parking
 - Lack of enforcement & wayfinding
- Consistent, concentrated, diverse retail
 - Lack of vibrancy of Centre Street
 - Landscaping and “strolling” opportunities



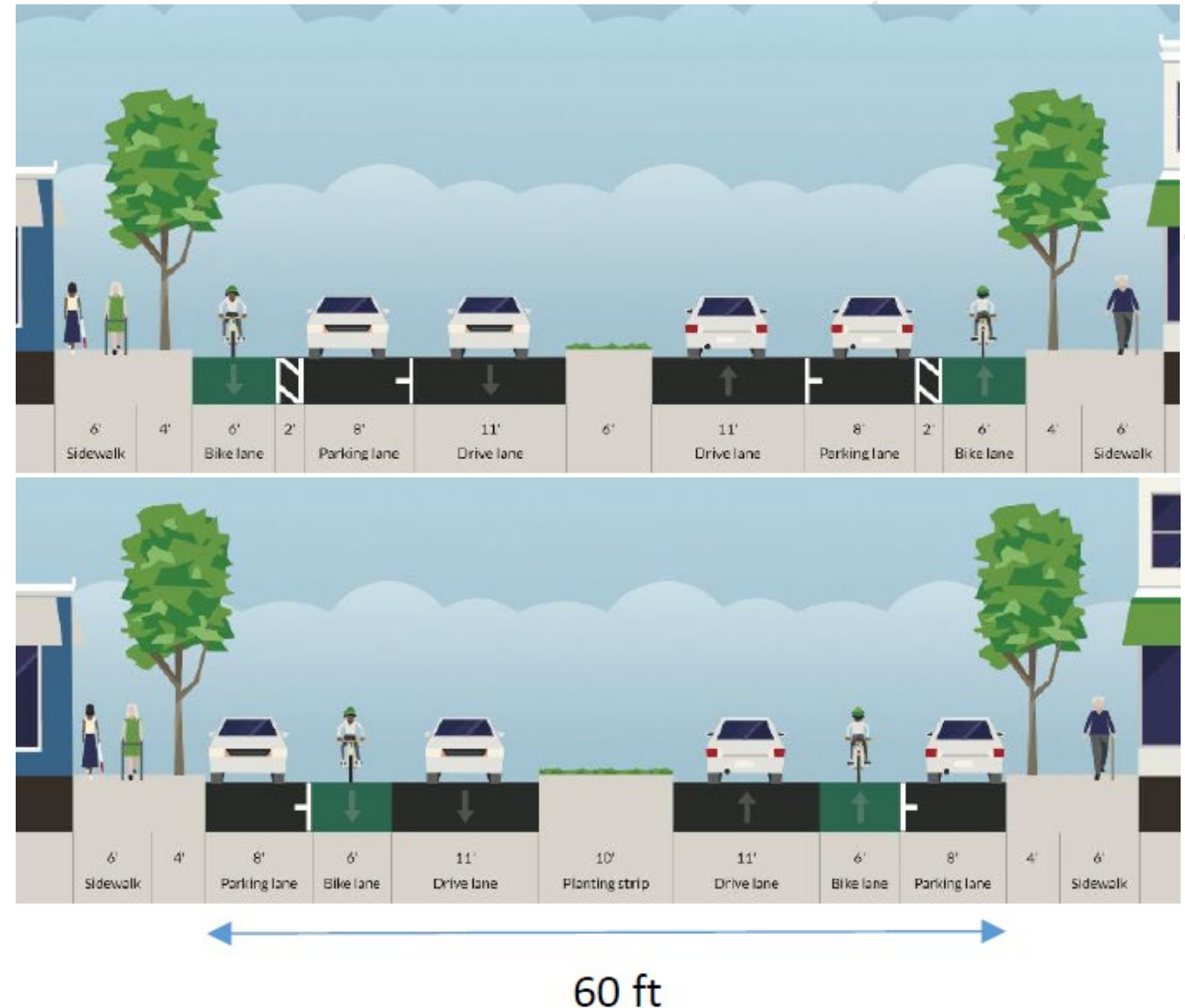
A grayscale background image showing several hands holding pens, poised over a table covered with papers and documents, suggesting a collaborative meeting or a formal review process.

Recommendations

Make Centre Street a Street For All

- Improve accommodations for pedestrians, shoppers, and cyclists
 - Vehicular lane reduction to one lane in each direction
 - Better connects West Roxbury to the rest of the City

Photo Credit: Northeastern University Feasibility of Lane Reduction "Road Diet" On Centre Street, West Roxbury Report



Improve Safety for All Users

- Vehicular Traffic
 - Reducing points of conflict
 - Dedicated turn lanes
 - Increased reaction time & better visibility
- Pedestrian/Retail Shoppers Traffic
 - Reducing points of conflict
 - Better traffic visibility
 - Shorter distances to cross street
 - Improved pedestrian environment for children & seniors
- Cyclists
 - Provide dedicated biking space
 - Reduce points of conflict
 - Buffer from vehicular doors



Example: Western Ave, Cambridge

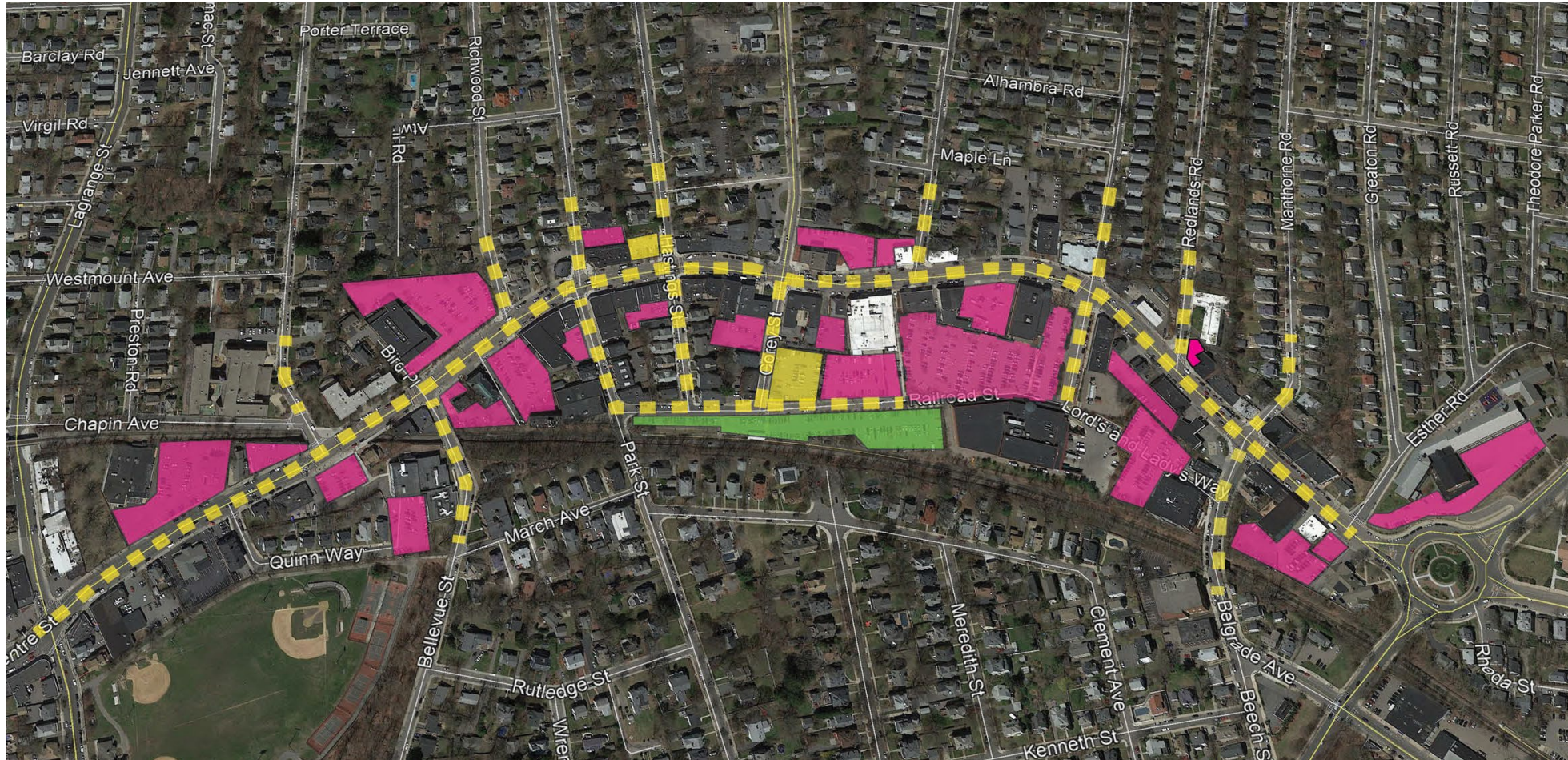


Credit: Vision Zero Boston

Parking

- On street Parking
 - Perform parking utilization study
 - Create parking management plan
 - Enforcement
 - Improve utilization – limit amount of time
- Encourage Shared Parking Opportunities
 - Private owners, city, MBTA

Parking - Wayfinding



Encourage Concentrated, Diverse Retail

- Housing density and housing types support different types of retail
- Retail use enhances vibrancy
- Active uses on the first floor and offices and residential on the second floor and above

Improve Vibrancy of Centre Street

- Identify existing nodes of activity along Centre Street
- Strengthen these nodes with landscape amenities and gathering zones
- Connecting these nodes with improved streetscape
- Promote pedestrian ownership on Centre Street through festivals and events

Improve Vibrancy of Centre Street



Identified existing nodes of activity

Funding

- Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP)
 - Community engagement assistance
- MassDevelopment
 - Real estate technical assistance
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)
 - Parking and placemaking programs
- Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
 - Massachusetts downtown initiative

A grayscale background image showing the back of a person's head and their hand raised in the air, suggesting they are in an audience or at a public meeting. The person is wearing a light-colored t-shirt. Other people are visible in the background, also in grayscale.

Q&A

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