

19 April 2009

Jonathan Greeley, Planner
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Andy Grace, Senior Urban Designer
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Vineet Gupta, Director of Policy and Planning
Boston Transportation Department
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Re: Downtown Crossing Pedestrian Zone

Dear Mr. Greeley, Mr. Grace, and Mr. Gupta:

LivableStreets would like to express its support for Mayor Menino's vision of a strengthened Pedestrian Zone in Downtown Crossing, as presented at the April 14, 2009 public meeting. We would also like to know what the next steps are for enhancing the Pedestrian Zone.

We are excited to learn that the Mayor believes that the Pedestrian Zone should remain just that, with vehicular access restricted to authorized deliveries at limited hours and emergency vehicles only. As was reinforced at the meeting, Downtown Crossing has a history of being a very vibrant and inviting place for pedestrians. Within recent years, the gradual encroachment of unauthorized vehicles has whittled away at the pedestrian-friendliness of the area. The proposed short term improvements to better enforce current vehicular regulations will without a doubt help to alleviate this problem. We fully support

the introduction of better signage, addition of physical barriers, and better enforcement of vehicular prohibitions.

We are glad to hear that the BRA and Downtown Crossing Partnership are working to create more reasons for people to come to the district throughout the day and night. Live entertainment, art shows, and other types of events should help to add some vitality and interest to the streets. We hope that both agencies will also work on more permanent improvements to bring people in and give them a reason to stay, for example the addition of restaurants and bars that are open later into the evening and night and the reintroduction of more pushcart vendors.

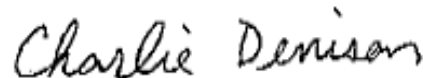
We are also excited that there are still plans to move forward and realize the visions of the branding consultant team with the reconstruction of the streets in the Pedestrian Zone. The removal of the curbs on Washington Street and the introduction of new brighter paving materials will have a large positive effect on the pedestrian friendliness and aesthetics of the area. However, since the funding for much of this is tied into the Filene's development, we hope that some lower cost short term physical improvements can be made to the streetscape. In particular, we think that the addition of more outdoor seating (preferably tables and chairs) and planters will give people a place to stop and relax as well as soften the look of the area.

We look forward to the work to come, and continue to be happy to provide ideas or assistance in any way we can. We would appreciate it very much if one of you could let us know what the next steps are. Jackie Douglas is our primary contact on the Downtown Crossing initiatives. Her e-mail address is jackie@livablestreets.info, and her phone number is 617-621-1746. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Jacqueline Douglas
Transportation Advocate
LivableStreets Alliance



Charlie Denison
Board of Directors/Advocacy Director
LivableStreets Alliance

CC:

Mayor Thomas Menino, City of Boston
Thomas Tinlin, Commissioner, Boston Transportation Department