

Memo to: class

### Assignment #3: Central Square

Central Square, Cambridge was re-landscaped about five years ago to provide wider sidewalks, better bus shelters, cleaner pavement markings, bicycle lanes, as well as street trees and brick sidewalks. Prior to these improvements, the Central Square section of Mass Avenue looked pretty much like Mass Avenue between Lafayette Square and MIT. At right angles to Mass Avenue, River Street used to join Mass Avenue at an angle in the area which is now a small park. (The revision of bus routes was required to facilitate the park.)

The assignment is to go (in groups) and make observations of the Square during two periods: peak hour (AM or PM) and an off-peak period (prefer noon-2 PM) measuring (approximately) cars, trucks, buses, bicycles, pedestrians crossing the street, and pedestrians entering the Red Line. The site visits should be in groups to facilitate counting. You might use the same groups as Assignment #1 to simplify logistics. You should count key locations in the intersection of Mass Ave/Prospect Street/River Street, but also observe some locations at a distance such as the Cambridge Street/River Street/turning ramp/Storrow Drive/Memorial Drive location.

You should discuss your observations within the team, but:

-- write a 3-5 page memo as an individual. Try to apply the planning framework to the issues you see in Central Square.

-- What are the central problem(s)?

- Who are the major institutions and constituencies?
- How do you assess the history of the area?
- How would you involve the "community" and who is that?
- What do you see as "successes" and "failures" in the re-landscaping?

The intent of this problem is to go beyond the observations of Problem Set #1, and think about the regional context of Central Square.

We will be starting the walking tour in Central Square on Saturday, so I will give some of the "Inner Belt" history of the area from the late 1960s-1970s period.

The assignment is due Week #8. I hope we will have Sue Clippinger from the Cambridge City Transportation Department to listen to your presentations and discussions, preferably Week #8. (Subject to confirmation).