



Pike officials: Lincoln St. temporary walls will come tumbling down

By **Auditi Guha**/ Staff Writer
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Residents living with the traffic and noise along the Mass. Pike may not have to deal with it much longer.

At a community meeting in the library on Tuesday, Massachusetts Turnpike Authority officials laid out plans to build a snow and salt barrier wooden fence along Lincoln Street this year, only to tear them down in a few years to make way for a permanent fence.

"If you are going to spend money on a wall today, why tear it down in five years and do it again?" said Paul Berkeley, president of the Allston Civic Association and one of many area residents who worry the temporary fence will not block much noise.

Michael Swanson, chief engineer with the Turnpike Authority, said the fence is a safety issue and must be installed. The 8-foot fence will run 1,950 feet along half of Lincoln Street and could be extended further both ways, as neighbors would like to see, Swanson said.

It would run from both sides of an existing brick serpentine wall near the Boston Tech Center, towards Market and Cambridge streets.

State Rep. Brian Honan, D-Brighton, said it might be a good idea to provide immediate relief from the noise of Pike traffic.

Residents suggested alternative materials and designs. One, Harry Mattison, brought pictures of sound barriers in Newton built by the Turnpike Authority and wondered why Allston couldn't get the same.

"It looks nice and it isn't a graffiti threat," he said.

With the contract to build the fence out and construction expected to start this summer, it is too late for design changes, Swanson said. The Turnpike Authority board unanimously voted to award D & R General Contracting Inc. the Lincoln Street sound barrier contract for about \$195,000 in early February.

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However, landscaping is something that residents can still contribute to, and the next community meeting will bring in drawings and designs based on their suggestions, Swanson said.

These include planting hardy trees and plants along the fence and covering it with vines or ivy to discourage graffiti.

But the half-dozen residents at the meeting were not keen on a temporary fix and are upset that the hearings seem to have had little effect on the state agency.

"They made up their minds before they said, 'Hello' to us," Berkeley said.

Swanson said the temporary fence does not require a full community hearing, but a sound barrier does.

Allston is on the state's list for a full-fledged sound barrier that will include a whole new design and hearings, said Kevin Coen, director of legislative affairs.

According to a Turnpike Authority report, the project is ranked ninth in order of priority on their to-do list and will cost about \$407,000.

So far, seven of the 17 communities have received barriers, said MTA spokesman Doug Hanchett.

"As funding becomes available, we will continue making our way through the list of 17, but there is no set timetable," he said.

District 9 City Councilor Jerry McDermott is thankful that the district is finally being served by the Turnpike Authority, but hopes it will be served right.

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"The Massachusetts Turnpike Authority shouldn't hesitate to spend extra dollars on this neighborhood, because it's suffered long from a lack of attention," he said. "While folks are thankful the project is finally going through, there is a sentiment of we've waited this long, let's get it right."

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