WORKING GROUP MEETING

Tuesday, December 3, 2019
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Cambridge Public Health Department
119 Windsor Street

Working Group Members	**City Staff**
Jason Alves	Bill Deignan - CCD
Tom Evans	Andrew Reker – CCD
Kathryn Brown	Susanne Rasmussen - CDD
Caroline Lowenthal	Jerry Friedman - DPW
Michelle Lower	
Miguel Perez-Luna	**Consultants**
Brad Pillen	James Turnbull
Robert Ricchi	Kate Ackerson
Dalila Salcedo	Jonathan Church
Jose Luis Rojas	Jesse Boudart
Not here:	**Public**
Joseph Aiello	Karl Alexander
Rebecca Bowie	Rachel Burckardt
Christopher Cassa	Roy Palmeri
Nicholas Dard	**Public**
Amy Flax	Karl Alexander
Ambar Johnson	Rachel Burckardt
Bill McAvinney	Roy Palmeri
Sarabrent McCoy	
Diana Prideaux-Brune	
Florence Toussaint	
John Sanzone	
Katrina Sousa	

Key:
CDD = Community Development Department
TP&T = Traffic Parking & Transportation
DPW = Department of Public Works

The following is a meeting summary of the Working Group Meeting #4 for the City of Cambridge's Grand Junction Multi-Use Path Project. For more information see https://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/Projects/Transportation/GrandJunctionPathway

Introductions and Welcome
Andy Reker, Assistant Transportation Planner for the City of Cambridge, welcomed everyone and conducted a brief round of introductions of the Working Group, project team, City staff, and other meeting attendees.

Review of Previous Materials at Working Group Meetings #2 and #3
Andy then reviewed the agenda for the evening's meeting and provided a recap of the previous Working Group meetings. The main points highlighted/discussed at previous meetings were:

- Vision is for a Grand Junction Multi-Use Path as a corridor for commuting, exercise, safe cycling, and a connection to other modes.
- Varied availability of space along track and varied ownership.
- Multi-use path will have to switch sides of the railroad at two points and has major street intersections to cross as well.
- Identified a preferred path cross-section and a limited space cross-section.
- Designing for current limited rail use, but not precluding future two-track transit.

Andy also reviewed the demand estimates for people who are projected to cycle on the Grand Junction Multi-Use Path as provided by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) for the A.M. and P.M. peak hours. He also reviewed the overall comments and suggestions provided by the Working Group members of what concerns, transportation features and design elements they hope to see along the path. Finally, Andy reviewed the overall project schedule and highlighted where we are to date.

Review of Toolbox for Design Concepts/Overview of Intersection Crossings
Jesse Boudart of the project team presented the toolbox of design concepts and provided an overview of four of the five major roadway intersection crossings that the Grand Junction Multi-Use Path will cross over. Jesse reminded the members that the transportation design challenge is about design for people, not the modes of transportation. He then reviewed the crossing controls and potential design elements that could be used, such as pedestrian signals and countdowns, curb extensions, bicycle traffic signals and Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs).

Jesse then reviewed the four roadway intersection crossings, which are Massachusetts Avenue, Main Street & Vassar Street/Galileo Galilei Way, Binney Street and Cambridge Street. The fifth roadway intersection crossing at Broadway & Galileo Galilei Way is being redesigned as a separate project with the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (CRA).

- Massachusetts Avenue
  This is likely the busiest intersection that the Grand Junction Multi-Use Path will cross. There are multiple movements to factor in, including pedestrians, bus transit, automobiles and bicycles and the roadway intersections at Mass Ave/Albany Street and Mass Ave/Vassar Street on either side of the Grand Junction Multi-Use Path need to be coordinated. There is a history of crashes at these locations. Additional microsimulation modeling for this location is being completed as part of the conceptual design phase.

- Main Street & Vassar Street/Galileo Galilei Way
  Because the path would meet Main Street just west of the intersection, initial concepts looked at whether to have the path cross at the intersection or along the rail right-of-way at mid-block. A major factor to consider is how the path will integrate with the existing Grand Junction Park and the existing multi-use path already constructed. Balancing safety and traffic movements at this location will also be key to consider.

- Binney Street
  Because traffic is lighter at this location compared to other points along the corridor, it was suggested that a flashing beacon (such as a Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon or RRFB) or raised crosswalk could be used at a mid-block crossing location rather than installing a fully controlled traffic signal. Further, the multi-use path transitions from the east side of the railroad tracks to the west side due to available right-of-way and proposed development nearby.

- Cambridge Street
  Cambridge Street is the second busiest crossing location for the Grand Junction Multi-Use Path. The path transitions back from the west side of the tracks to the east side. In addition, coordination of the existing traffic volumes at Cardinal Medeiros Avenue, Warren Street and Lambert Street will be required with possible signal installation at the Cardinal Medeiros/Cambridge Street intersection. Lastly, existing crosswalks at the Millers River Apartments will need to be reviewed and bus stop relocation may also be needed.

Working Group members provided the following general presentation comments:

- A group member asked for the date of the next working group meeting. Andy answered that it would be sometime in late winter 2020 after MassDOT concept plan review and prior to the second community meeting.
- A group member requested for a visual representation of how wide 14' is as the path is shown in the cross-section to be that wide (this representation was provided by the consultant team just prior to the end of the meeting by laying out 15 sheets of 8.5" x 11" paper in a line on the floor)
- A group member suggested making intersection treatments as similar as possible throughout the GJ multi-use path. They communicated that if each intersection is different, this may create confusion amongst users.

Workshop on Design Concepts

All attendees were divided into two stations to provide comments and feedback on the proposed concept designs. Halfway through the allotted time, the members switched stations. The stations were divided as follows:

- Station A – Massachusetts Avenue and Binney Street
- Station B – Main/Vassar Street and Cambridge Street

The following is a general summary of comments provided to City staff and consultant members as verbal comments and through stickie notes on the concept designs.

Massachusetts Avenue Intersection - Conceptual Design Comments:

- Suggestion to make sure the signal timing at Vassar and Albany St intersection are coordinated with any signals at this crossing
- Group members voiced concerns about the mixing zone between peds and cyclists. This stretch of sidewalk is a high foot-trafficked area and group members were concerned that cyclists would not appropriately yield to pedestrians
- Suggestion to add a ramp up or bollards to encourage cyclists to stop, get off the bike and walk across Mass Ave rather than ride through.
- Could bike boxes be installed for cyclists making turning movements from Mass Ave onto the path?
- Suggestion to route cyclists to the Vassar Street off-street cycle path during this stretch; this would create separation between cyclists and peds and reduce safety concerns. Cyclists could be redirected back to the Grand Junction Multi-Use Path on either side of the Mass Ave intersection
- Suggestion to consider a surface material change at the location of the ped and cyclists mixing zone.
- Suggestion to install tactile pads on either side of where the path crosses the sidewalk to warn peds of the crossing with cyclists.
- Concern that buses would have to stop on railroad tracks if queues get backed up or if they are yielding to path users

Main Street & Vassar Street Intersection - Conceptual Design Comments:

- Concern that cars may stop on the path crossing on Main Street and block pedestrians and cyclists from crossing.
- Suggestion that if an RRFB is installed at this location, make sure that the activation button is located close to where cyclists stop
- Suggestion that the exit of the path from the MIT Brain and Cognitive Sciences Complex building is "blind." Can it be improved?
- A group member commented that they liked the mid-block crossing rather than using the intersection at Vassar Street. This will reduce the number of conflicts at this complex intersection

- Another group member liked the path crossing at the intersection rather than mid-block as it may be a safer option for crossing Main Street
- There was a split between members about the proposed roundabout for the path – some thought it was a good way to merge, others thought it was overly complicated
- A group member was concerned that there would be pedestrian conflicts with cyclists when combined with the sidewalk.
- A group member asked if there could be more of a road diet and to "neck up" to turn lanes on Main Street eastbound only as needed by vehicle queues
- Another group member suggested that the path between Massachusetts Avenue and Main Street be "pedestrian only" and that cyclists should use Vassar Street.

Binney Street Intersection – Conceptual Design Comments:

- Question about whether "Little Binney" could be a one-way street.
- Suggestion to integrate green space within pockets of this intersection to strengthen relationship between path and Binney Park.
- Concern that during rush hour, the entry way to the parking garage/movie theater will require the intersection crossing to be fully signalized.
- Group member shared that the traffic is very "pulsing" in this area because of intense entry volumes to the parking garage in the AM hours and intense exiting the parking garage in the PM hours.
- Group members shared that many kids use this crossing because of schools surrounding the intersection.
- Suggestion to install material between tracks/pavement to make the crossing of the railroad tracks safer/more comfortable for cyclists
- Suggestion to mirror the crossing on both the north and south sides of Little Binney to support cyclists/peds who want to turn left onto path (coming from westward end of Little Binney).

Cambridge Street Intersection - Conceptual Design Comments:

- It was suggested that the path be plowed in winter so it can be used year- round.
- A group member asked if it is feasible to have a separated bicycle crossing on the path from the pedestrian crossing?
- Another group member was concerned that without crosswalk yield markings added on the path that cyclists would not slow down for pedestrians
- There is concern that cyclists will "back-up" waiting to cross Cambridge Street and block pedestrian access along the sidewalk
- Group member voiced concern for visual queues for elderly pedestrians near the Millers River Apartment complex and how they would negotiate crossing bike lanes to a floating bus stop.
- On group member suggested continuing parking separated bicycle lanes on Cambridge Street through to abutting intersections.

Closing/Next Steps

After the workshop, Andy highlighted what the next steps would be. The comments and feedback received tonight will be used to develop 25% designs that will be presented at a future Working Group meeting. The next working group meeting will be in Winter/Spring 2020, followed by a public meeting in Spring 2020. Andy thanked everyone who attended. The meeting ended at 7:58pm.