

Cambridge Bicycle Committee

June 9, 2010

Present: Ellen Aronson, Eric Batcho, Joan Friebely, Richard Holton, Megan Krey, Henry Lewis (CPH), David McNally, Mara Miller, George Perkins, Chris Porter, Jeff Rosenblum (CDD), Matt Schrupf (visitor), Cara Seiderman (CDD/by phone), Adam Serafin (MIT), Randy Stern, Peter Stokes, Christopher Vaughan (visitor), James Wilcox (DPW), Walter Willett

Opening

- George Perkins chaired the meeting and opened by reading rules of effective meetings from the Pedestrian Committee.
- The minutes of May 2010 were approved with no corrections.

Western Ave. Reconstruction

- Jeff R. presented on the proposed Western Ave. reconstruction, which is early in the design process and being overseen by a community advisory committee. Jeff first gave background on the project and then discussed the challenges and options for dealing with bike accommodation. The reconstruction is being driven by the need for sewer replacement and will be entirely city-funded. The city is putting together a brochure based on the first six advisory committee meetings to get people more involved in the design. The project has the potential to include an upgrade of the signal system at Memorial and Storrow Drives and to consider bike access both to and from Cambridge via the Western Ave. and River Street bridges, working with the MassDOT/DCR projects to reconstruct these bridges. Counts show about 60 cyclists currently using Western Ave. in the peak hour, which is one-way westbound and an important route to Allston.
- Jeff distributed five design concepts and the committee discussed the pros and cons of each: (1) current configuration (two general travel lanes and parking on both sides) with bike lane; (2) cycle track flush with the street to the right of parking (instead of a bike lane); (3) raised cycle track to the right of parking; (4) one general travel lane with bike lane and two parking lanes; and (5) one general travel lane with "reverse angle" (back-in) parking on the left side and bike lane on the right.
- Questions were posed regarding maintenance of the cycle track and interaction of bicyclists with bus stops. The committee expressed a preference for an option that did not put a bike lane against parking (i.e., option 3 or 5 from the concepts shown). Jeff noted there is a public meeting on June 29th to discuss the concepts. The designs are conceptual and a subcommittee will do a more detailed review of a preferred option design(s) in the future.

Activities

- May 22 ride – Thanks to Henry for leading and others for assisting with planning and running. It was a "complete success."
- June 12 – CitySmart Family Day and Rodeo – still need volunteers, and tell your North Cambridge neighbors to attend.
- Bike counts – Special summer counts - done yesterday, tomorrow cancelled due to weather.

Reports

- **City projects** - Jim W. gave an update on DPW project status along with a handout.
- **Police report** - There was no police report as Kathy was not present.

- **Bike racks** – The city has purchased racks with costs to be reimbursed by MAPC through ARRA funding. The city also got a good price for installation. Rack types are mostly post-and-ring. Locations are being identified based on the city’s recent study of demand vs. supply.
- **Accelerated Bridge Program** – A 25% design meeting should be scheduled for the Western Ave/River St. bridges soon. See PowerPoint from the last public meeting on MassDOT’s web site. MassDOT is proposing to do interim striping of bike lanes on the bridges. George will be making a field visit with Peter Furth to examine the feasibility of doing underpasses for the bike paths. A question was raised about whether an underpass is being considered for the BU Bridge on the Cambridge side. The answer is no, as the BU Bridge rehabilitation is already under construction.

Subcommittee Projects

- **BU Bridge-Inman Square wayfinding:** Cara is working with David and Mara to create an on-line survey to get feedback on the best route option.
- **Safety awareness:** George distributed some concept bus shelter posters that he brainstormed and requested comments. The posters are targeted at cyclists and based on the MassBike Same Roads Same Rules website. Cara noted that the city is designing a new brochure to accompany “watch for bikes” stickers for car door mirrors that would be distributed with parking permits and at city outreach events. The goal is to merge a positive message with “watch out and be careful.” George noted the need to make easy/simple messages ubiquitous. Cara asked for ideas about what other forums we might use for the message – we have limited access to bus shelters and have to wait in line with other public service announcements.

Other

- Cara will be gone two weeks at the end of June to the Velo-City conference.
- A question was raised regarding the status of the North Bank bike/ped bridge (north bank of the Charles River, east of Lechmere). The project was just started with utility and base line work in progress. It is expected to take two years to complete. A question was raised re: the possibility for the South Bank bridge (behind Spaulding Hospital/North Station in Boston) – this is a complicated project, no funding identified at this point.
- Tentative agenda item for the July meeting is for members of the Watertown Bike Committee to attend and discuss completing the Watertown Branch path.
- A public meeting is scheduled June 22nd for the reconstruction of Mass Ave in East Arlington. The proposal includes bike lanes but this is controversial because one general travel lane would also be removed. Ellen noted that she has attended two meetings for North Mass Ave in North Cambridge and asked about the possibility of bike lanes on this stretch of road. She noted that there has been lots of interest in bike and ped improvements expressed at the meetings. There is no money currently available for full reconstruction of this street but it is important to keep highlighting bicycle issues in the study process.

The meeting was adjourned.

Minutes respectfully submitted by,
Chris Porter