

Pedestrian Committee - June 24, 2010

Members in Attendance: Brian Culver, Thayer Donham, Robin Finnegan, Debby Galef, Peter Kane, Thomson Kao, Sean Pierce, Helen Rose, Joe Rose, Eran Segev, Amanda Trombley, Megan Weintraub,

City Staff in Attendance: Rosalie Anders, Jeff Parenti, Jeff Rosenblum

Agenda:

Introductions/Review of Minutes

Western Ave: Jeff Rosenblum

Break

Mass Ave between Harvard - Porter: Debby Galef

Traffic signal timing between Harvard & Porter: Jeff Parenti

Golden Shoes & CitySmart

July & August Walks

**Golden Shoes:** Anders reported on a successful Golden Shoes campaign. All but six shoes returned (out of about 65). Donations from Brattle Theatre, Economy Hardware, MIT museum, Acupuncture Together, Cambridgeside Galleria, Stonehearth Pizza.

**CitySmart:** 345 households have requested the bags so far; a great start (more than Cambridgeport at the same time last year). Kickoff family event a few weeks back and it poured. There was an inside option (Peabody School). Not many attendees. Other events & ways to get involved; stay tuned.

**Western Ave:** Rosenblum gave an overview and answered questions. The project started primarily to replace sewers (1870 sewer system). Opportunity to dig up the whole street for sewer replacement and improve the street surface.

City staff worked with 19-person advisory committee and came up with five conceptual ideas.

First three concepts assume that Western Ave remains a two-lane street

Fourth concept reduces Western Ave to one lane to Gilmore Street, then two lanes (Rosenblum acknowledged that Western Ave seems larger than two lanes because lanes are generous, plus parking on each side).

There is significant amount of traffic using Western Ave from Putnam to Memorial Drive/bridge, so one lane in that area is off the table.

When light at Howard Street turns green can enough cars go through?

If there are fluctuating backups (worst case backup is to Jay Street, occasionally to Mass Ave) there isn't enough room for queueing. Length of line and amount of time to get through the line are two independent things.

DCR owns signal at Memorial Drive & Western Ave which makes coordinating the signals nearly impossible. Lots of inefficiency at that intersection.

Concept 1: pretty much what exists today. 10 foot sidewalk, parking, two travel lanes, bike lane, parking, 10 foot sidewalk. Extended sidewalk at bus stops, will allow shelters. Buses can't typically pull in when they have to go all the way into the sidewalk. They would probably narrow lanes a little and put more space in for sidewalks. Wider bike lanes are a good idea but too wide lanes can result in cars using the space for travel or parking.

Concept 2: Cycle track concept. Put (non-raised) cycle track on the other side of the parked cars on the right with a buffer. Not a great deal of space for snow clearing. By moving parking, it narrows view of street. Cycle track would ramp up to sidewalk level at bus stops.

Concept 3: Same as #2, but raised cycle track (raised to same elevation as sidewalk). Puts pedestrians even further away from moving cars. For snow removal, snow removal on cycle track would hopefully be done by the city, but details remain under consideration.

Concept 4: narrow to one travel lane. Sidewalk, parking, travel lane, bike lane (at street level), parking, 20.75' sidewalk/feature zone. Businesses tend to be closer to the river, not really between Pleasant & Gilmore, so not as much likelihood for cafes, etc.

Top two concerns for everyone in process: speeding, pedestrian safety.

When travel lanes narrow, traffic slows instinctively. With two lanes of travel, more difficult for pedestrians to cross ("double jeopardy").

18 feet: distance for roadway for non-parked cars for the fire department to feel comfortable getting emergency vehicles through. Also needed for braces for larger fire trucks when fighting fires. 12 foot travel lane, 6 foot bike lane. No cycle track.

There are plans for bump-outs for pedestrian crossings in all plans.

Concept 5: Sidewalk, overhang zone, reverse angle parking, travel lane, bike lane, sidewalk. Reverse angle parking can be safer (trunks open at sidewalk, rear car doors open at sidewalk) Reverse angle parking is easier than parallel parking. Opportunities to build pocket park if remove a few parking spaces.

One lane concept: Given the way that things are generally moving, over the next 20 years there will be a significant shift towards buses & transit and transit prioritization. There is currently hesitation to taking travel lanes away from cars. Between Central Square and Harvard campus in Allston, could be a candidate for Bus Rapid Transit. This type of street reconstruction only happens every 60 years.

In concept 5 there is no bus bump-out as it would block a travel lane.

Some committee members excited by bold designs, others wanted to see something even more radical, yet others were nervous.

Concept to explore at Pleasant Street & Franklin Street: make green space area work better.

Extend triangle out into Western Ave.

Enterprise Rent-a-Car: sidewalk extension. Doing legal research to see if they are allowed to have curb rampage. If not, city will trim back to legal size.

Bubble park with no sidewalk across from old Police Station. Community has asked how to add a sidewalk there; may not be possible due to funding but they are exploring it.

Put an island in at Franklin and Western for pedestrians. May be difficult due to snow clearance.

Construction will begin in summer of 2011.

Our July meeting will be a walk of Western Ave, committee invited Rosenblum to join us. If people had enough interest, Rosenblum would be willing to have a separate meeting for pedestrian & bike committees to ask more questions.

## **Break**

Galef: Subcommittee of city council met June 2 at City Hall on Mass Ave between Common & Porter Square. Harvard Law & Lesley's plans for Porter Sq area. Also mentioned traffic lights. Lots of broken microphones, difficult to hear. Proposal put forward at: <http://agassiz.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/FinalReport-05-27-10Update.pdf> and includes crosswalks at all four sides of block rather than three. More frequent crosswalks. Improvement of cracked pavement. By Commonwealth Lock in Porter (between T station and Porter Exchange), sidewalk is very narrow.

Parenti: Jeff Parenti brought himself and Powerpoint presentation. This was emailed to the committee back in June. If anyone wants it, email to [hrose@ckdhr.com](mailto:hrose@ckdhr.com).

Jeff talking to Police Department who have just started tracking crashes. Their data (crash counts) does not match what Jeff gets from RMV.

Jeff says about 80-90 crashes per year, but he doesn't know what the report rate is. He suspects there is under-reporting.

Non emergency police line: 617-349-3300. Police will contact contractor. Ideal for after hours.

Next month's walk: Western Ave walk, potluck at Anders'. She will send address information. Drop off potluck stuff at Anders', then go for walk. Anders will ask Rosenblum if he can join us. [update: later changed dates for this walk]

August's meeting & walk: perhaps North Cambridge, led by Charlie Sullivan.

Amanda said some sidewalk cafes have improved a little, but many have not. No changes seem to be made.

