

Pedestrian Committee 2011-01-27

In attendance: Pete Kane, Rosalie Anders, Joe Rose, Thayer Donham, Andrea Yoder, Alan Greene, Helen Rose, Debby Galef, Amanda Trombley, Thomson Kao, Eran Segev, Rona Gregory, Robin Finneran, Sean Pierce,

Visitor: Janine, Elizabeth

Agenda:

Introductions/Approval of Minutes

Conflict of Interest statements

Broadway from Third Street to Ames public meeting Project Review meeting on 1/31
Snow & Ice Bridges Bus 1 proposed changes Walk web page BREAK Subcommittees

Update to December minutes: Everett & Chauncy Street, not Everett & Chelsea.

We skipped conflict of interest statements from the agenda.

Broadway from Third Street to Ames: 25% design hearing meeting got cancelled due to weather. Proposal is to redo Broadway between Third Street & Ames Street, reducing the number of travel lanes, fixing the crosswalk at Volpe. City would like Committee to send a letter of support for the project. Member H. Rose agreed to draft a letter and attend the rescheduled meeting, sending a summary of the meeting to the pedestrian committee email list.

City staff Anders and Seiderman advocated this redesign for many years and are pleased it is finally happening. Member Greene asked how the timing will interact with Longfellow Bridge redesign but the final timing is not set, and will depend on state funding.

Anders explained when there are special working groups for larger projects, the pedestrian committee will put someone forward who can represent pedestrian issues on the project.

Monday 1/31: project review meeting.

Member Segev said anyone who wants to see the Western Ave design can attend next Tuesday's committee meeting.

Snow & Ice:

Top complaints around snow/ice clearing:

DPW continues not to clear paths to pedestrian push buttons. Many corners are not clear so pedestrians cannot walk into crosswalks.

People shovel snow onto sidewalks. Can there be some penalty for this?

Clear commuter sidewalks in parks (Ft. Washington Park) Some sidewalks crossing parks need to be prioritized.

Encourage property owners to clear drains.

Members should send their snow photos to Chair Trombley.

Trombly proposes writing a letter to DPW. Several members report DPW having a broken snow hotline. Some suggested sending email rather than calling; attaching a photo often helps.

Member Gregory saw a city contractor snow plow clear snow straight onto the sidewalk. She tried to get in touch with the DPW and reached someone who didn't provide any relief; her sidewalk remains covered in snow.

What about clearing hydrants? The fire department does that. Could DPW clear drains? The city snow brochure encourages property owners to do this, but owners often do not know where the nearest drains are..

Can we get data on snow violations issued? Both traffic (parking control officers) and DPW. [Note: this data was later obtained and posted to the Cambridge Community Television website]

Large recycling toter bins - more of a problem in the snow compared to the old blue bins

At the meeting with Disabilities Commission they proposed to have the city take over maintenance of ramps at corners. No price on this yet. One issue is personnel.

Blocks could band together to clear the whole block, rather than each individual property owner taking responsibility just for their property.

Could City website have page where people who want to shovel could connect with those who need those services? Or could the city manage this? They have purchasing power. Senior center runs a program where City shovels for low income seniors & disabled people.

task rabbit: web site where individuals can connect with others to perform small tasks.

Bridges Update:

Anderson Bridge: JFK Street & Memorial Drive. To put bike lanes on Anderson Bridge they need to reduce travel lanes from 4 to 3. Would need to eliminate left turns, allowing for concurrent signals with LPI. Where would cars make those left turns? Hawthorn Street or DeWolff streets. DCR put in a cross walk with no signal and poor sight lines at Hawthorn. Adding a signal there would be to the benefit of that crosswalk and those who use it.

River Street: MA DOT looking at either a cycle track on the River Street bridge and then have the cycle track merge into the sidewalk OR make the whole thing a multi-use path. In either case, bikers who want to continue across the River Street bridge onto River Street will have to contend with pedestrians and/or vehicles, especially vehicles that turn right onto Memorial Drive.

Advantage of having bike on sidewalks: the bridge is where people are coming off of the highway and switching lanes; it is a difficult spot for cyclists.

Signal time length at River & Memorial is VERY long, River crossing Memorial. People are aware of this problem but there's no easy fix. Anders says retiming is being looked at, but DCR controls the intersection.

#1 Bus: MBTA is trying to figure out how to make the #1 route better. One option: eliminate some stops. Another option: traffic signal prioritization. MBTA wants a signal at Mass & Pearl, probably not likely to go through.

Stop eliminations: Memorial Drive, Hancock Street, Landsdowne/Front Streets. Proposed changes would happen in May/June. Add street furniture, add pavement markings. Traffic signal prioritization would take a few years.

Bus delays tend to happen in Central Square, especially from people who want to load their Charlie Cards on boarding. Could the MBTA investigate pay before boarding?

Stops must be long enough for the bus to pull to the curb.

The MBTA could make the CT1 bus more visible, but CT not really faster than the 1 in practice.

Announcements: Harvard has run a new walking/running program out of the president's office. "Harvard on the Move". They will have a lot of walks.

Cambridge Health Alliance heard from Michelle Obama. Regional/federal administrators asked Cambridge to sign on to "let's move" campaign. They want a photo op on Monday February 7, 10am, City Hall. May be a good opportunity to reinforce the connection between health and walking.

Subcommittees:

PVIS: Why hasn't sergeant Murphy been coming to pedestrian committee meetings? Or another police officer. Would like a collaborative discussion with police on enforcement. Future meeting. Give positive reinforcement.

Community outreach: billboards

Next meeting: subcommittee redesign.