

Cambridge Bicycle Committee

April 3, 2024

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Cara Seiderman (CDD); Mike Mantello (CDD); Charlie Creagh (CDD); Pardis Saffari (CDD); Jerry Friedman (DPW); Stephen Meuse (TP&T); Mark Boswell; Randy Stern; Richard Freierman; Denise Haynes; Martha Birnbaum; Muna El Taha; Leah Pickett; Michael Burke; John P. Ellersick; Alison Harris; Amy Flax; Guido Cuperus; Eitan Normand; Camille Jonlin; Worth Smith; Scott Kilcoyne; Ling Zeng; Gregory Carey-Medlock; Catiana Jean-Pierre (guest); Billy O'Connell (guest)

Minutes of prior meeting - approved

Cambridge Bicycle Plan (Cara)

- First created in 2015 then updated in 2020
- Plan Vision - streets available to everyone
- Numerous city policies support biking - VTRO, PTDM, VZ, CSO, etc.
- Many benefits to cycling - climate, health, air quality, safety to pedestrians
- More social connections on streets with lighter vehicle traffic
- People shopping shop locally, and by bike spend more than those driving
- Equity - Biking is affordable
- Cyclists and peds are happiest commuters
- Cambridge surveys - 85% of people who have biked in the past year want to bike more, and 53% of those that did not bike want to bike more
- Lack of safe facilities is #1 barrier to people biking, even more so for women than men
 - Also bike parking, programs/policies
- Bicyclist level of comfort - vast majority of people comfortable only in separated bike lane, both for cyclists and those that would like to ride more
- Bicycle Network Vision
 - Every street is part of the network
 - High priority streets need either greater separation (on main routes) or traffic calming to slow speeds (on smaller streets)
- From Vision to reality
 - 5-year plan for Sidewalk and Street Reconstruction
 - development mitigation
 - capital projects (e.g., Western Ave, River St, Inman Square)
 - quick-build projects (e.g. Cambridge St, Brattle St, South Mass Ave, etc)
- More/better facilities, # people biking has been going up year over year (bike counts)

- In last 15 years, 23% increase in Cambridge people commuting by bike, Bluebikes ridership constantly increasing (over 23 million trips taken systemwide)
- Crash rate has gone down from 2003 to 2020 from 30 to 10 per some million bicycle miles traveled
- Crash severity has also gone way down - from 50% in 2004-2012 to 3% more recently

CSO Economic Impact Study (Pardis Saffari/CDD)

- <https://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/Projects/EconDev/cyclingsafetyordinanceeconomicimpactstudy>
- Volpe National Transportation Systems Center partnered with CDD in 2023, completed in January 2024
- Business survey (sent to 1600 businesses, and staff followed up with reminders to 900 businesses) pre/post installation of SBLs
 - Opt-in survey response rate 17%
 - **Q - How many businesses filled out the survey? A - Around 300.**
 - **Q- Business did report decrease in revenue - Biased towards complainers? Yes, but some responders were positive on bike lanes (less than half)**
 - **Q - Can we realistically get more objective data? A - Not very confident, but hope**
 - Businesses wanted more communication
- Customer survey (214 responses) done in commercial corridors on mode of transit
- Could not get objective credit card data or tax data (but **will try to get this in the future?**)
- No difference in employment before after
- On average, not change in vacancy rate
- SafeGraph data - to estimate number of visits to businesses - but too many gaps in data
- Recommendations/future plans from Volpe
 - Note - Data did not show direct impact from separated bike lanes on businesses
 - Build in evaluation in advance of projects (obtain better before/after data)
 - Get tax and employment data
 - Parking utilization studies
 - Increase communication (city staff have met with over 200 businesses)
- **Q - Vacancy data from city may be useful - A - Volpe did not use that info because reason for closing unclear (e.g. pandemic vs bike lanes). Maybe more useful in future more stable business climate.**
- **Q - Is there access to rental cost data? A - yes, city has averages, but crude, for East/Mid/West Cambridge, reported in Co Star real estate database - average rents have not changed in the past 2 years**

- Q - Can you look at Toast, e.g. by street? A - no, they won't share data
- Q - Have you asked business who say business has changed to open their books?
- Q - Can you stand in front of one business all day? A - good idea
- Q - Can the city count cyclists going into shops? A - labor intensive, plus you can't really tell how someone got there unless customers were asked directly

Charlie Creagh - will be interim Bike Committee CDD staff liaison

Bike/ped crossing over Fitchburg line at Danehy to Rindge Ave (Charlie)

- City awarded \$2.4M to design crossing/bridge
- Asks for Letter of support from Bike Committee to get funding up to \$3.5M for construction for path to approach the bridge
 - Need the letter Friday morning!
- Q - Great project. Can proposed path to Alewife be extended to Minuteman? A - that is a separate project to be negotiated with the city and the MBTA, who plans to change the station at some point.
- Q - Can the proposal reference equity/environment justice for local residents? A- Y.
- Q - timing for funding? A - 2025, most likely, but need to investigate.
- Q - Can copies of the letter be provided to the whole committee? A - Yes.

The Committee officially voted to endorse the project with a letter of support.

Bike Rides

- Winter ride - was great
- Spring ride
 - Route has been defined
 - Ride name: Neighborhoods of the African American Heritage Trail (must confirm name with Historical Commission)
 - 2 stops would be great
 - St Augustine's church in Cambridgeport
 - Harriett Jacobs plaque near Story St
 - Maybe at library too at beginning
 - Subcommittee to review details again
 - Add a short section on Mass Ave - will review with Police and DPW
 - Committee members should add their names to the [google sheet](#) to volunteer for day of ride (make sure you are on the correct tab (Spring 2024))

DPW Updates

- Huron Ave bike lane from Aberdeen to FPP will be completed this summer

Q - City Council seems to be about to propose to delay implementation of the CSO?

- **A - Committee members free to express personal opinions to CC**
- **A - Committee would have to discuss in a public meeting if making comments as a committee**