

## Pedestrian and Bicycle Committees Joint Meeting

July 6, 2020

5:30 – 7:30 PM

Zoom Webinar

### **Attendance**

Bicycle Committee: Joel Anders, Jon Anjaria, Julian Astbury, Mark Boswell, Amy Flax, Alison Harris, Dien Ho, Gloria Huangpu, Qian Mei, Ruthann Rudel, Randy Stern

Pedestrian Committee: Robin Bonner, Debby Galef, Sandy Goldberg, Ian Henneberger, Elka Kuhlman, Magda McCormick, Pam McLemore, Angie Meltsner, Sean Peirce, Erica Seidel, Wade Smith, Erik Tillman, Theresa Tobin, Olivia Turner, Jenny Turner-Trauring, Alanna Williams

Staff: Joe Barr (TP&T), Greg Hanafin (CDD), Susanne Rasmussen (CDD), Andy Reker (CDD), Cara Seiderman (CDD)

### **Agenda Review, Zoom Meeting Protocols**

- Greg reviewed zoom ground rules
- Dien Ho described the purpose of the bike committee
- Debby Galef described the purpose of the pedestrian committee

### **Street Changes**

Presentation (Joe Barr: Director, TPT dept.)

- There is a Shared Streets pilot going on – parts of Magazine Street, Harvard Street, and Garden Street (from Concord to Field Street) are designated for shared use (walkers, bicyclists, cars all using the actual streets).
- The idea is simply to yield to anyone moving slower.
- See [cambridgema.gov/covid19/streets](http://cambridgema.gov/covid19/streets)
- Launched Fri June 26
- Public webinar held on 6/25, available on city web site in COVID-19 section
- The goal is to support local businesses, provide space for safe physical distancing, improve transit operations, mitigate the impact of reduced transit capacity and use, and account for accessibility and equity.
- This is a pilot – will be reviewed, and other streets may be added to the initiative.
- There is a precedent – Palmer Street, Longfellow Street, Winthrop Street.
- There are no changes to parking or curb access
- Communication about it: There was a recent community webinar. Also, all Cambridge addresses will get postcards. Also there is a virtual office hours coming up, and will do some flyering esp in the Port area.
- Program goals
  - Provide space for physical distancing, encourage shared space, lower vehicle speeds, mitigate impacts of reduced transit capacity and use
  - Support local businesses
  - Improve transit operations and support riders

- Work done to date
  - 4/27 city council Policy Order to look into these goals
  - 5/29 internal discussion held w city manager
  - 5/28 updated council on plans for street changes, announced 3 streets - Garden, Harvard, and Magazine
  - 6/16 started to implement - posted coming soon signs
  - 6/17 postcards
  - 6/18 website update
  - 6/22 wiki maps web site for feedback
  - 6/24 10 MPH signs installed
  - 6/25 public webinar
  - 6/26 implementation complete
- Info and plans
  - A very small number of prior shared streets in Cambridge: Longfellow Rd, Palmer St, and Winthrop sts
  - Rt 64 bus moves to River S
  - 7/6 postcard will be sent to all of Cambridge
  - 7/17 deadline for comments
  - 7/23 Second public webinar
  - 7/30 Additional streets
  - Also added new Inman Sq outdoor dining - N side of Cambridge St between Springfield and Prospect, now traffic one way west on Cambridge St there
  - Also Central Sq near Monkfish

#### Inman Square Changes

- Part of Cambridge Street in Inman Square is being designated for outdoor dining, with one-way vehicle traffic flow. (Bike lanes are available in both directions though.)
- Expected to keep in place until November

#### Discussion

- Very positive and grateful response
- A key issue that came up: cars are still going too fast.
  - Speed limit remains 20 mph per state law. But advised limit in the shared streets areas is 10 mph. It's a plea to get people to pay attention to each other, not a law. (Hence why the signs look different from the typical speed limit signs in the city.)
  - Plan is to have alternative route/detour signs so that people have an option to bypass the shared streets.
- Also conversation about signage. Signs can come detached. Some think signs are too small. And at night they are not as visible.
  - There will likely be a volunteer program for people to maintain signs.
  - Reflectors are being considered too.
  - Tough to make the signs too much larger – the streets are narrow.

- This is a medium term solution – in the winter, for instance, it will be difficult to maintain the signage while also accommodating snow removal.
- In the longer term, looking at other options.
- Suggestion: Can there be more obvious connections from one shared street 'span' to another so that people can traverse the city in a more end to end fashion
- Suggestion: Expand to Church Street and Oxford Street
- Suggestion: Have some traffic police presence
- Suggestion: Close down access to shared streets from bigger streets with higher traffic and just allow access from the calmer, more 'minor' streets

## Q&A

- Randy Stern - what was the objection to doing all of Harvard St? A - some unnamed people raised issues and had questions, so TPT decided to schedule more community process. Not publicized in Port area yet for community meeting on zoom. Flyer will be sent soon to residents.
- Sean Pierce - likes Garden St, is there something better than a sandwich board. which creates a pinch point for bikes+cars, and does not slow down cars, ---A - will add more 10mph signs, some get knocked down, medium to longer term want to do more with these streets since they are in the Bike plan for all ages and abilities. Further changes can be done now -- open to suggestions.
- Jon Anjaria- why not use large signs as used for construction sites - large sign in middle of rd with sandbags, would be much more clear than the small sandwich boards? Eg “local residents only” - A, there are businesses, did not want to send a very strong message.
- Sandy Goldberg - Magazine St, 10mph signs are not easy to see - they are not near the local access signs, people do not see them. Much traffic going too fast. A - we are looking at adding more 10mph signs, possibly on cones in the road.
- Dien Ho - The shared streets need better traffic calming. Traffic still way too fast. Also, connections from Garden/Sherman to Harvard St, and Harvard St to Magazine need to be easier and safer. Should add Church St, and Oxford St as shared streets.
- Amy Flax - Oxford St is a great idea. Connectivity is essential for commuting. Its a great start, thank you. She is seeing parents with strollers, also city services are still happening. Really needs some police presence to monitor cars speeding, pedestrians entering from side streets is dangerous if cars exceeding 10MPH..
- Jenny Turner-Trauring - The plan needs connections, please add Oxford St, biking on Garden is fine, walking does not work as well, there are blind turns, and it does not feel safe, it needs better traffic calming. “Yield to faster traffic” - what does that mean? Must cyclists move over for cars? A - That's a delicate topic, we want cars to be responsible, but people should be courteous and step out of way.
- Angie Meltsner - Magazine St, I use Magazine St with a stroller, few cars but speed is still too high. Really need better 10 mph signs.
- Mark Boswell -This is a terrific change, needs better Garden to Harvard connection. Why are speed limits yellow diamond rather than black and white rectangle like normal speed limit signs? It would be good to use barrels rather than sandwich boards, more

solid and better -- A - city has no statutory authority to lower speed to 10mph, so speed must be advisory, requiring an advisory style sign. So cannot be enforced. Sandwiches easy to deploy.

- Erik Tillman - Magazine, same concerns that have been raised. How about quick build speed bumps, eg rubber speed bumps? A - city does not do speed bumps for traffic calming, also no major construction is planned for the shared streets implementation now. Only raised crosswalks are done. Speed bumps are not appropriate for public streets. Need to figure out what to do for the lower traffic streets in the bike plan. Thinking about it.
- Joel Anders - what level of concern would warrant tighter control, given speed issues? No answer.

#### Public comment

- James Mahoney 06:08 PM
  - Q - Inman Sq plan appears to have eliminated all but 7 (awkward) parking spaces across 3 blocks. How do the businesses feel about that?
  - A - The plan was driven by business, developed w business associations.
- Bill McAvinney 06:11 PM
  - Q - Sign attachment to the A frames is too weak. A number of the the signs have become disconnected from their A frames.
  - A - will keep an eye on those
- James Mahoney 06:34 PM
  - I think it's important that people know the legal limit on Shared Streets remains unchanged (20 mph being the state minimum) so that they don't feel that drivers are breaking the law. How do you intend to let people know this? Mark's question is a good example of this misinterpretation of what the speed limit is.
  - A - still rolling out 20 mph streets in city, and will be adding 20 mph signs
- David Sculley 06:32 PM
  - Thank you for this wonderful initiative. My experience on Garden street is that cars are still very aggressive, including fast speeds and weaving to avoid sandwich boards. Can there be larger barriers added at closer intervals?
  - A - Its hard to find room for larger signs. Will increase frequency of current signs.
- Shane Woolley 06:43 PM
  - Would it be possible to put up alternative route/detour signs at the entrances to the feeder streets so through-traffic goes around the shared street neighborhoods entirely?
  - A - will be adding routing signs, eg suggesting Mass Ave or Broadway, rather than Harvard St. for longer distances
- Gavin Lund
  - Could you close down major access streets to Garden, eg Huron Ave, Concord Ave? To reduce through traffic.
  - A - could look at that, maybe...

## Cycling Safety Ordinance

Joe Barr presented highlights from the Amendment to the Bike Ordinance, and outlined next steps. Original ordinance required protected bike lanes designated in the city bike plan when streets are reconstructed under the 5 year DPW plan, unless not feasible. To fully build out the network would take an indeterminate amount of time. Criteria for Separated Bike Lanes (SBL) and timelines were reviewed, and the next step is further review by the City Council. Four areas along Massachusetts Ave. need a higher level of study, and these are separated from the overall plan. On behalf of the Bicycle Committee, Dien Ho offered to write a letter in support of the intent of this Amendment, to be addressed to the City Council.

### New ordinance

- Adds a timeline. It also allows quick build lanes to satisfy the protected lane building requirement and clarifies exclusions (eg bus stops)
- Adds Bway Quincy to Hampshire and Garden Huron to Mason to protected bike network requirements
- 22.6 lane miles must be done by 5/1/26 (6 years), The City Manager can extend this by 1 year if the city council approves
- North Mass Ave has special treatment, and planning time. All of Mass Ave would be completed by 5/1/22, minus several complex areas or trolley wires of Mass Ave that may require more capital intensive solutions. Central Square has capital project to be rebuilt, design for PBLs can start by 1/1/23, with construction started by 12/21/25
- Feasibility study for 4 special segments of Mass Ave by 5/1/21, where feasible install by 5/1/23, where not feasible within 1 yr. Must submit a timeline to City Council for capital project
- Additional segments are added that are not in the old bike plan – Broadway from Quincy to Hampshire, Cambridge St from Oak to Second, Hampshire St, from Amory to Bway, Garden St from Huron to Berkeley
- Must install at least 2.5 lane miles each year
- Annual progress reports to the city council and public starting 5/31/21
- A public website must track the projects
- Due to COVID-19, can request schedule changes to the City Council, also use “temporary traffic control devices” (ie quick build techniques) for protected bike lanes. Also, the city manager can request schedule adjustments by 7/1/22, to get extra 4 months due to COVID-19.

Cara – The ordinance is related to the bike plan, which is being updated. What are the feasible quick build streets? What will order of implementation be? Factors for prioritization include: connectivity, routes to schools or major destinations, higher crash rates, bicycle level of comfort improvements, spatial equity, fair in all neighborhoods, community input, simplicity of design transit opportunities and needs, and COVID related changes, eg. Shared streets, expanded sidewalks, dropoff pickup needs.

Joe Barr – ordinance committee meeting 7/7 at 5:00. After hearing, if approved, will refer to city council to pass, amend, etc. Next council meeting 7/27, or after Labor Day. If not referred back

for 7/27, will have to wait until Sept if more meetings decided by ordinance committee. Could be amended in either Ordinance committee mtg or city council mtg (NOTE AT THE 7/7 ordinance meeting, the Ordinance was approved and sent to the full city council.)

#### Q&A

- Dien Ho - 4 extra street segments, for extra feasibility analysis.
  - A - These segments are still required, but there will be additional design process to figure out what will happen in those segments
- Amy Flax - It's complicated, but the intent is not complicated, Would like the bike committee to formally support this.
- Ruthann Rudel - Seconds Amy's suggestion. This ordinance will make it safer for people sooner.
- Randy - Thirds Amy's suggestion. Its critical to implement the protected bike network as soon as possible on a realistic timeline that city staff agrees is doable. Especially w COVID-19, T use will be lower, we don't want everyone in cars.
- Dien Ho - Need more time to digest this. How do shared streets overlap?
- Mark B - Agrees that the committee should support this. How can we make a decision to do that in this meeting, then review details off line.

Decision: It was decided by a unanimous vote of the bike committee members present that Dien would draft a letter to the city manager and city council in support of the ordinance, and that committee members would review/edit on-line so that it can get sent to the city council well in advance of the 7/27 city council meeting. The pedestrian committee will discuss this separately and decide if they can endorse it as well.

#### Public comment

- James Mahoney 07:09 PM
  - How will overall traffic flow throughout the city be factored into the plan for people to move smoothly on foot or in/on the various vehicles we use?
  - A - Susanne Rasmussen: Technical analysis has been and will be done on all streets to assure all needs are being met.
- Sam Feigenbaum
  - Has two points he wants to make. The first is just how popular this ordinance is with Cambridge residents. 70% of Cambridge voters voted for candidates who signed a[pledge to support the ordinance, plus do everything possible to implement Protected Bike Lanes on Mass Ave within 2 years. Second, its important to note that this new ordinance represents a compromise with city staff reached after many discussions. The actual implementation timeline can extend to 8 yrs, 60% more than the 5 yrs the city council supporting members had pledged. Discussions between Cambridge Bicycle Safety and city staff was very successful, but did add complications in the ordinance.
- James Mahoney 07:37 PM

- It's a bit disingenuous to equate every vote for a counsellor who signed on to the plan as meaning that all those voters supported it. Most voters, I venture, didn't know about the plan. Even the bicycle committee is unsure of the details...
- Cara Seiderman
  - Have not heard feedback from the Pedestrian committee yet? Do they support this?
- Robin Bonner
  - The pedestrian committee is interested in bus stops on complex sections of Mass Ave.
  - A, Joe Barr - 2 bus stop areas in Harvard Sq are impacted, and we still need to figure out how bus stops and protected bike lanes will work there. For northern Mass Ave, the issue is really trolley wires potentially interfering with fire truck ladders.
- Jenny Turner-Trauring
  - Driving speeds were slower on Cambridge St after PBLs put in, so it does make it safer for peds as well.

### **Development projects**

Most project reviews have been moved to August and beyond. See Planning Board website, under Special Projects, to review the larger projects: Cambridgeside Galleria, 325 Binney St., Smith Place.

Will look at further in 7/29 bike/ped meeting.

### **Affordable Housing Zoning Overlay**

Modifications to bike parking standards include: waiver on distance of parking from residential structure and number of spaces. Ruthann R. offered to submit a letter on behalf of the Bike Committee expressing the preference for bike parking to be closer to residential buildings, a safety concern of some citizens.

### **Next Meeting dates (tentative)**

July 9: Transit Advisory Committee

July 29: Joint Committee meeting

Please submit agenda ideas for future meetings to Greg or Cara.