

Joint Cambridge Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee Meeting 12/9/2015

Minutes

Present: Mike Proscia, Sean McDonnell, Ingrid Schorr, Debby Galef, John Goodman, Amy Flax, Jodi Cohen-Tanugi, Helen Rose, Magda McCormick, Matt Nelson (CPD), Elizabeth Bierer, Peter Stokes, Liza Cohen, Mechthild v. Knobeldsdorff (notetaker), AnnMarie Biernacki, Cara Seiderman (CDD), Dana Benjamin (TP&T), Allison Quach (CDD)

Guests: Wil Durban (Councillor Kelley's office); Other (unidentified)

I) Agenda review, approval of minutes

Minutes of the previous minutes approved (both by pedestrian committee and bicycle committee).

No updates or changes to the agenda.

II) Committee work plans

Bicycle Committee workplan needs to be finalized, everybody signs up for at least one project.

Pedestrian committee has yet to finalize work plans.

Anne-Marie-already contacted people in SF who also educated drivers about parking in bicycle lanes.

III. Projects Updates and Reviews

a. DPW Updates

No update from Jim.

Concord Avenue construction – difficult to bike there.

Added: discussion on new HAWK signal (Dana Benjamin, TP&T engineer)

HAWK signal at pedestrian crossing on Binney Street/Sixth Street, near Police Department

You can see a description on the traffic Department Website.

<http://www.cambridgema.gov/traffic/News/2015/12/newhawksignalinstalled.aspx>

The City of Cambridge has installed a HAWK (High-intensity Activated crossWalk) beacon at the intersection of Sixth Street and Binney Street. This traffic signal, the first of its kind in Cambridge, is designed to allow pedestrians to cross safely while limiting the impact on the flow of traffic as much as possible.

The HAWK beacon, which is also known as a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB), consists of one yellow light under two red lights. When pedestrians are not trying to cross or have not activated the signal, all three lights will be off and traffic can proceed through the intersection. However, once a pedestrian pushes the crosswalk button, the yellow light begins to flash, warning drivers to slow down. Next, the yellow light switches from flashing to steady, and drivers should prepare to stop. When both red lights are illuminated, pedestrians will be able to cross and the pedestrian signal will display the "Walk" sign. Finally, in the last stage, the pedestrian signal will show a flashing "Don't Walk" with a countdown and the two red lights will alternate flashing. During this phase, drivers should stop at the stop line, but may proceed if the intersection is clear, just as they would at a stop sign.

For a streamlined, visual example of how the beacon works, see this [DDOT brochure](#).

This is the first one that exists in Cambridge. The aim is that drivers notice there is a pedestrian who wants to cross.

This was completely funded by Biogen. They wanted a full traffic signal. If it works at this location, it might be implemented in other locations.

Question: Why not ordinary traffic signal? Needs to meet traffic warrants.

This particular signal was developed for this situation. It does not show green, so it does not encourage cars to speed to pass before signal turns.

Some states really embraced the signal, like Arizona. It would likely stay limited in Cambridge, since it is primarily intended for more major wide roads with multiple lanes.

Issue:

People have not been used to waiting, this morning it has been a mess with people just crossing. Also, it is confusing for drivers.

Wait time for pedestrians could be as long as 30 seconds. But it responds immediately if the signal has not been pushed by more than 30 seconds. As a pedestrian, you have a solid red hand when you are not supposed to walk.

b. MIT PUD – PB Hearing January 5

No direct response after Committee letters were submitted.

Do we want to speak at PB hearing?

Debby Galef (and some others) will go. Everybody welcome to go.

c. 399 Binney Street

Developer working to ensure there is enough ROW for future GJ path.

d. First Street Assemblage Development Project

Nothing new from last meeting. Planning Board meeting on December 15.

e. Watertown-Cambridge Greenway project

Meeting on November 30. Several committee members attended.

Committee reviewed PPT about the project.

Old railroad – last part towards river already done (blue on picture of presentation). One can currently walk most of it.

Potential Access points

Path ends right now on Arlington Street in Watertown.

Ideally 14 feet wide, with separation of pedestrians and bikes – Minuteman can be a mess.

Underpass Lighting at Mount Auburn Bridge

However, no lighting shown along path – DCR says don't want to create precedent (too many miles). And concerns about Fresh Pond wildlife, but this may be a red herring. Important to have lighting for school children. This is a critical issue if the path is going to be useable; it is dark in the morning and later afternoon hours during many months of the year, when people are traveling to/from school, work, etc. This is a critical item for this path. Can do low-scale lighting, do not need major overhead lights. There are many precedents for lighting paths; Somerville Community Path is lit.

Access points

- Cottage Street
- Holworthy Place – people park there. DCR could do parking lots on the state land, or have green space. Access for pedestrians.
- Possibly DCR will reach out to the Star Market about access through their parking lot.
- Water Purification Facility Entrance

More access points would be ideal – right now people would have to be looking for the path in order to find it.

Possible to have more access points. Fresh Pond neighbors group would like more on Huron Avenue. With that access point, one could keep the path out of the reservation, with the path going around Fresh Pond Reservation. But: Fresh Pond is already paved all around, and the rail tracks are at the outside.

City of Cambridge thinking about another access point near Mount Auburn.

Funding from DCR – not fully funded yet. 25% through donations, 50% through state raised capital.

Work with State representatives to support the project.

DCR received a lot of comments in June. They have not responded to them yet. Letter Bicycle Committee previously sent contained all the main points that were raised in the discussion. No direct response to our letter. Send another joint letter. Ruthann is writing first draft.

f. Magazine Beach

Comments are due on tonight, December 9. Also DCR project.

Meeting on November 18; Elizabeth Bierer attended the meeting and provided some information and details; the plans were reviewed on slides.

Completion of phase 2 design.

Details

Trying to make a multiuse path (unclear whether along the river or further up)

They are keeping a path along the road.

Overpass is very safe. Residents want a traffic signal, but they won't get it. Instead, wall to prevent people from passing. Seems too short.

Beach – grassy part where people can sit.

Welcome entries to the park, with benches. They call them “lily pads.”

Looking for a tenant for the building.

Path will be re-landscaped.

Kayak landing.

Concerns at the public meeting about the trees, which have to be removed.

Path very close to the street. Only five foot in between.

Currently nothing to slow drivers down. Scary.

2 parking lots – one for pool and boat house. Parking would need more signs to warn motorists for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Main comment points

Drivers have to pay more attention – at intersections, parking lots

Get rid of the wall. Make it more enticing for people to use overpass. Possibly retrofitting overpass with stairs. Rather slow down the traffic. Easy, safe, convenient.

Lit path

Primary multiuse path: Clarify location

12 feet wide, not 10 feet

soft edges for runners

Introduce request for traffic study of Memorial Drive. Would be great to make crossing easier.

Bike racks that meet City of Cambridge Standards.

Liza submitted comments from the two committees.

IV. Announcements, Upcoming Meetings

Meeting about I-90 project next week at Morse school next week. The proposal is to move the Turnpike entrance and a new commuter rail station. Relevant for Magazine Beach project because of view and noise nuisance.

Participatory budget vote is open right now until December 12.

V. Informal discussions and snacking