

Pedestrian Committee Meeting 4/23/15

I. Introductions

Cara Seiderman, Victoria Farr, Carrienne Jung, Jodie Cohen-Tanugi, Joseph Rose, Sean Peirce, Sam Stern, Bill Dwyer, Kathy Watkins (DPW), Justin Schreiber (CDD)

II. DPW 5 Year Sidewalk and Street Reconstruction Plan

- Update the 5 year plan each year, meet w/ peds, cyclists and disability committees each year in conjunction w/ the updates
- Early plan versions focused on sidewalks (building them at all) and accessibility
- Now more aligned with bike planning, concept of complete streets...
- Prioritization criteria: close to transit, parks, schools, senior centers
 - 40 foot buffer of bus routes
 - And w/ accessibility issues...
- Fix criteria: Crumbling, excess cross-slope, street trees...driveways, etc.
- Also looked at missing corner ramps, either no ramps or not done to code...
- Bike counts have tripled from 2002 to 2014...
 - Cycling has major health benefits
 - Bike network plan:
<http://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/Transportation/bikesincambridge/bicyclenetworkplan.aspx>
 - Green are off-road paths
 - Purple is some degree of separated paths, e.g.,...Western Ave. cycle track
 - Yellow is more for secondary streets, low traffic, low-speed with traffic calming
- Budget assumptions: \$4.5 million from state...Street & sidewalk reconstruction...
 - Get incremental budget to do specific projects
 - Sewer separation and stormwater projects end up funding a lot of the sidewalk and bike lane reconstruction...
 - Sewer separation has to be completed by 2015 (30k a day fine after that)
 - Then surface work and water work continue after that into 2015...
 - Huron Ave will get dug up again later this year for the water main...
- What work do they do?
 - Minimum do the ramps
 - How does the type of tree get selected (Carrienne)? City arborist has input, 10-15 species they pick from for good street trees
 - Go to public works site and look for trees (Ginko was particularly loathed b/c of smell)
 - (Everyone interested to ask about brick sidewalks [*NB: ped committee had a full discussion about this in the fall*]...)...
 - She showed information about how to look at the interactive projects and find information about who to get in touch w/
- Street tree standards
 - To plant street trees, need a minimum 6 foot sidewalk

- To make sidewalks accessible with big street trees blocking, they'll do sidewalk bump outs to create an accessible route and protect the trees...
- Can do back of sidewalk street trees on property owner land, better for sidewalk, better for trees...
- Sidewalk materials – one-quarter is brick
 - City policy: replace existing material w/ existing material
 - Can go from brick to concrete w/ no charge
 - Must pay difference to go from concrete to brick...
 - Disability commission favors concrete...
 - Some places are able to do concrete w/ brick edging (e.g., Broadway, parts of Mass Ave, Brookline St)
 - Jodie expresses concern over brick, both cost, and accessibility...(Several agree)
 - Long history of this discussed in community, there is no consensus so current policy is the result
 - The modified raised crossings for ped crossings at side streets – adding more and more of these now (Great!)
 - Fire dept doesn't have to individually approve these...They've got blanket approval for this...
- Follow-up: Send the maps of the 5-year planned work...
- Why can't DPW clear sidewalks of snow?
 - Not physically possible to clear snow off most streets (especially residential) since most require hand work.
 - City does city buildings, parks
 - Looking at priority streets – high priority bus routes (Mass Ave, western ave, Cambridge st, and adjacent public ramps...)
 - There is a program for low income/disabled and low income/elderly that they'll shovel for...
 - Could the neighborhood associations coordinate?
 - Could the pedestrian committee take this on?...

III. Safe Routes To School

- Federally funded, state implemented, locally tailored program to encourage biking and walking to school for kids
 - Tobin & Vassal schools signed up...
 - Kids bike parade at Fresh Pond Day May 30
- Walk and bike Wednesdays...
- Lots of other stuff too...
- SRTS Parent Survey – 890 responses so far 13.5%
 - 25% of people walk to school every day (self-reported data)
- Might do a follow-up survey in the classrooms to ask people...
- Why don't people let their kids walk to school?
 - 70% said safety of intersections/crossings was an issue
 - 53% said speed of traffic along route

- 46% said cycle tracks/separated bike paths...
- Carrienne highlighted an issue with interpreting the convenience (or not) of driving...
 - Some might see driving as inconvenient, rather than a choice to make of convenience...
- When would people start letting their kids walk to school, 47% by 5th grade, the rest mostly in 6th or 7th grade...
- Looking for volunteers for the Ride/walk day on May 6 – two groups going together from two parts of Cambridge (west and North) to the Tobin/Vassal school campus...

IV. Committee Activities / June walk

- 2nd annual organized walk for the community – Saturday June 20th 11:00 am start time (12:30 pm end, roughly)
 - Last year was June 19/20 in Kendall square (25 people), picked out locations to stop and share information, got lots of free treats from merchants...
 - 2 weeks ago, Victoria, (Debbie, Maggie & Liza) went for a walk to scope out the route...
 - North Point area...
- Cara reached out to Education First – their restaurant (Lingo) will give us food!
- Speaker from the Charles River Conservancy who will bring up a couple of topics for us (Renata)
- Victoria reached out to Roger Boothe, formerly of the CDD (not available for the walk, but Victoria will tap his knowledge)
- Reached out to DCR as well, as they own the park area around there
- Great park for kids...
- Hidden Gem (“There Be Dragons”)
 - Joseph highlighted the variability of one ramp that might be closed, so just keep an eye out that it’s open when we go...

V. Committee Activities / Intersections matrix

- We had been keeping track of specific locations in the city that people recognized were a problem. They come up in a meeting, people say that might get addressed (or not)
 - Might be enforcement issues
- Sean created a master list of the issues
 - Issues: (long signal time, illegal rights on red, etc.)
- Some stuff is marked as completed...Fell off around 2011...
- **Sean offered to resurrect the list** – Victoria suggested that he convert it to a Google doc so that we can collaborate in the cloud...
- Focus on problems/issues (don’t worry about solutions)
- **Joe was volunteered to convert it...**

VI. Committee Activities / Other stuff

- We no longer need to be sworn in (60/70 boards and committees, it would have been unwieldy)
- Summer – we do a walking meeting (or 2). Look at an upcoming project, July and August...
- Next month’s agenda: identify spots for walking meetings in the summer...