Pedestrian Committee Meeting 4/23/15

I. Introductions
Cara Seiderman, Victoria Farr, Carrianne 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
    o 40 foot buffer of bus routes
    o 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...
  o Cycling has major health benefits
  o 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...
  o Get incremental budget to do specific projects
  o Sewer separation and stormwater projects end up funding a lot of the sidewalk and bike lane reconstruction...
    o Sewer separation has to be completed by 2015 (30k a day fine after that)
    o 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?
  o Minimum do the ramps
  o How does the type of tree get selected (Carrianne)? 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 particulary loathed b/c of smell)
  o (Everyone interested to ask about brick sidewalks [NB: ped committee had a full discussion about this in the fall])...
    o She showed information about how to look at the interactive projects and find information about who to get in touch w/
• Street tree standards
  o 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...

Carrianne highlighted an issue with interpreting the convenience (or not) of driving...

- Some might see driving as inconvenient, rather than a choice to make 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...