

Draft

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities

## Minutes for Thursday, December 9, 2021

Online via Zoom

Meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm

### Present:

Members: Loring Brinckerhoff, Avril dePagter, Mary Devlin, Gary Dmytryk, Jerry Friedman, Stelios Gragoudas, Valerie Hammond, Nicole Horton-Stimpson, Jackie Jones, and Dan Stubbs

Absent: Phil Kongtcheu

Staff: Rachel Tanenhaus and Kate Thurman

### Minutes:

- Motions to approve the minutes for the September and October meetings were seconded and passed.

### Separated Bike Lanes, Bus Lanes, and Accessible Parking:

- Brooke McKenna, Assistant Director for Street Management, and Andreas Wolfe, Street Design Project Manager, of the Traffic, Parking, & Transportation Department (TPT) presented on the quick build bike lanes and resulting effects on disability parking on Massachusetts Ave. See attached presentation.
- Main points included the following:
  - City Council passed the Cycling Safety Ordinance in 2019, asking TPT to identify streets for “greater separation” of bike lanes.
  - The ordinance was amended in 2020 to require TPT to install about 25 miles of separated bike lanes over the next several years, including on specific streets (such as all of Mass Ave)
  - The Mass Ave quick build project was given a deadline of April 30, 2022 and was thus put on a fast-track timeline. The first section of North Mass Ave (Alewife to Dudley St.) has been completed.
    - For more information on the North Mass Ave section, see <https://www.cambridgema.gov/StreetsAndTransportation/ProjectsAndPrograms/MassAveDudleyStToAlewifeBrookPkwy>.
  - Due to the unusually tight deadline, TPT had to significantly adjust their typical process for implementing the changes. Usually, CCPD staff play a large role in street redesign projects, ensuring accessibility for people with disabilities. TPT regrets that CCPD staff were inadvertently left out of the discussions about the quick build bike lanes on North Mass Ave. Brooke assured members that CCPD staff would be consulted in all future projects, and CCPD staff emphasized their gratitude for the strong working relationship they have with TPT.
  - Even though CCPD staff were not initially consulted, TPT was able to add 4 designated disability parking spots in the North Mass Ave area in the final design. Those spaces have been installed and are against the curb. There were previously no designated disability parking spaces on that section of Mass Ave.
  - The Cycling Safety Ordinance does call for accessible parking to be treated differently than other kinds of parking; bike lane separation is not required at disability parking spaces, meaning they can remain against the curb.
  - Quick build projects are different than construction. In this case, the quick build project involved making changes in pavement markings, the installation of flex posts, changes to signage, and some modification in traffic signal timing. Quick build projects do not involve any construction.
  - In this project, bus lanes were installed in both directions and separated bike lanes were created, requiring the removal of parking on Mass Ave. The city tries to improve transit whenever they can. The

bus lane in the inbound direction can be used as a loading zone from 9AM to 10PM, but the outbound bus lane is in effect during all hours

- Changes to improve transit accessibility made as part of this project:
  - Relocation of a previously inaccessible bus stop to an accessible location
  - Lengthening of existing bus stops to more easily accommodate curb-level boarding
  - There are no bike lanes at the bus stops, allowing buses to pull up to the curb
- The first public meeting was held on September 14<sup>th</sup>, second on October 28<sup>th</sup>. Implementation began in November.
  - TPT made some changes to parking on side streets; they added metered spots on side streets, which helped to offset the amount of metered parking that was removed from Mass Ave
- All future projects will include engagement with CCPD staff and other stakeholders.
- TPT is always looking to expand their outreach
- CCPD members noted that the removal of parking on North Mass Ave has been especially difficult for people with disabilities and seniors.

### **Public Works Update:**

- Jerry said that DPW will be working on the quick build bike lanes on two other sections of Mass Ave: Dudley St. to Beech St. and Roseland St. to Waterhouse St. These sections are more complicated because of the MBTA's overhead bus wires. The way the ordinance was written gives them some more flexibility in those sections. DPW's task is to report to City Council by April 30, 2022 what the plans are for those sections. DPW is taking charge of these sections because there is construction involved.

Meeting adjourned at 6:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kate Thurman