

Joint Bicycle, Pedestrian, Transit Advisory Committees meeting
11/18/20
Minutes

Attendance

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

Pedestrian Committee Members: Debby Galef, Robin Bonner, Olivia Turner, Erica Seidel, Jenny Turner-Trauring, Magda McCormick, Sandy Goldberg, Sean Peirce, Wade Smith, Erik Tillman, Theresa Tobin

Transit Advisory Committee Members: Jackie Jones, Robert Ricchi, Devin Chausse, John Attanucci, Saul Tannenbaum, Bill McAvinney, Matthew Coogan

Staff: Greg Hanafin (CDD), Cara Seiderman (CDD), Andy Reker (CDD), Adam Shulman (TP&T)

Guests: Ken Williams (MITIMCo), Joe James (Reed Hilderbrand), Gary Hilderbrand (Reed Hilderbrand), Selma Mandzo (VHB), Amanda Keefe (Redgate), Christine Song (Elkus Manfredi), Lisa Serafin (Redgate), David Manfredi (Elkus Manfredi)

Public: Michael Brandon, Gavin Lund

MIT Volpe Project

Ken Williams-MIT project manager, along with project team

- 10-15 year build out
- \$8.5M for transit, \$8.5 for Grand Junction path, 2100 bike parking spots, transit analysis

Committee comments and questions

- Private Streets? How do city laws apply? MIT - As applicable to public spaces, they don't, it's private property
- The visual image shown is lacking a bike lane on Bway -the Bike Committee would not support this. Cara clarified that the City is working with the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority and a consultant team on designs for Third Street and Broadway, which will include separated bicycle lanes (SBL) as a given (in accordance with the Cycling Safety Ordinance.)
- Potter St a shared St? 10mph? But has sharrows, no bike lanes? Not like Broad Canal Way, which is a shared street? Why vehicles at all? (MIT - Large trucks must go to Volpe Center on Potter St) Q: could some streets have limited hours of vehicular access? Unlimited vehicular access does not seem to be prioritizing pedestrian/cyclist use.
- 5th St south is showing a separated bike lane from Bway to Potter – why not all the way to Binney? - Potter to Binney is showing on-street parking, so it is physically possible to put separated bike lanes on the 5th from Binney to Potter.
- Permeability? 3rd St Park has no parking below. Most parking under buildings, not walkways/tree plantings.
- MIT- parking garage access is proposed via Potter, 5th and Broadway, not Broad Canal (which is proposed as a shared street)
- Underground parking + street spots (1856 spots) - daily, or hourly? (Daily would reduce car traffic) MIT- MIT has a shared parking strategy, spaces to be reused for business, retail, residential.
- Perhaps add bus stops on 5th street? Shuttles are more efficient than ride hail vehicles.
- Why have streets at all? Why a through street on 5th St? There seems to be too much access for cars. MIT - Trying to make it a “place.” Accessible to everyone, motor vehicles, peds, cyclists. 5th St wide sidewalks, on street parking.

- Question from committee: Why any parking at all on the internal streets?
- There was a discussion about on-street parking – comment/question was about why it is being provided when there is so much parking underground? MIT team: Parking makes pedestrians more secure b/c they are protected from car traffic. Committee comment that no cars would be better for peds, parking and car access does not make it better for peds. Another comment is that pedestrians prefer trees and separated bike lanes for safety, not parking.
- Bike parking below grade accessible via elevator - why not ramps? MIT - slope of ramps is not designed for riding, since having less steep slopes would require too much space. [City clarification: the zoning code states that in order to meet access requirements for people bicycling, the slope cannot be steeper than 8%. Nothing in City regulations prohibits people bicycling on ramps; what the zoning code says is that if the slope is greater, then an alternative access means must be provided, such as an elevator.].
- Vehicle access encourages Uber trolling
- MIT - how do you design street to encourage peds. Use pavers at 3rd St to make Broad Canal Way not seem like a car prioritized way.
- Broad Canal Way - again, why have vehicle traffic at all? 5th St, people driving will use it as a through street. Maybe make lower part of 5th one way towards Potter?
- Keeping in mind people with disabilities is key. A bus stop or bus shuttle stop is needed.
- There needs to be a clear definition of shared streets. [NB: there is a definition in the Cambridge Traffic Regulations but those do not apply to private streets.] Trying to accommodate everything on a shared street does not work. Paving must make it clear that shared street is not for cars, even if truck access is permitted for deliveries.
- Trend to “private streets” is unfortunate. Would prefer political accountability as transit priorities change in the future. Perhaps convey these streets in the future to the city? MIT - no discussion with the City on that to date. Cara – the Planning Board may make determinations/ requirements for streets through the special permit process.
- We need a stronger vision of this whole area as a pedestrian/cyclist zone. Traditional streets vs design for pedestrians. More potential here for wide pedestrian paths and buffered bike lanes. No need for street parking. Need designated spaces for ride share on periphery, not allow or support pulling over any place on a “shared street.” Prefer to ban all vehicles except deliveries off hours, shuttle vans for accessibility, and emergency vehicles.
- Increase of vehicular traffic expected? MIT - 750 to 800 additional vehicle trips projected, Today 10,000 to 13,000 trips on surrounding streets.
- Too many parking entrances = more collisions with cyclists. What can be done to minimize parking entrances? MIT - parking interconnected underground into 2 structures.
- Suggestion - Make Potter a one-way street to free up more space for peds and cyclists.
- How is this design open and welcoming to all income levels? MIT - goal is to make it welcoming to all. Zoning requires 2.5 acres of open space, MIT is exceeding that, none is internal to building clusters.
- Broad Canal at 3rd St - MIT - no signalization, existing crosswalks.
- Night access - Is exit on Binney being dumped into a dark zone? What is the path to Kendall Cinema?

Notes:

- MIT is hosting a series of community workshops

Community Engagement Input Sessions

- Open Space Design and Programming
- Community Center Programming
- Retail Diversity
- Housing Equity
- Job Equity

Details and presentation at <https://volpe.mit.edu>

Please send questions and feedback to volpemit@mit.edu

Public comment

- Gavin L.: Sharing streets with trucks disqualifies streets for kids/as an all ages and abilities facility. Need a more creative solution that does not require 2 directional car traffic and parking.
- Bike elevator needs to be big enough to share and hold cargo bikes

Committee Business and Project Updates

- Pedestrian committee meeting will be tomorrow and all can come discuss this further.
- Webster Ave separated bike lanes installed after a development project made changes to the street and a new evaluation was done. Comments from committee members were positive.
- Binney Street will eventually have all raised separated bike lanes, but there are intermediate steps where street flex posts will be installed in the section between 6th Street and Broadway (this is because there significant utility work to be completed before the final surface reconstruction).
- South Mass Ave
 - “City is beginning to identify bus priority opportunities”, all expected bus travel gains have not been realized so far. Any potential street design changes will be brought back to the committees. Looking for solutions that do not impact separated bike lanes.
 - Grand Junction Path Mass Ave crossing design is starting
 - Pedestrian crossing at Windsor St is being improved
- Bicycle Committee December meeting topics: outreach and engagement and a review of the Cycling Safety Ordinance amendment

Public comment

- Michael Brandon (North Cambridge) wanted to bring to the committees' attention a project at 2072 Mass Ave. This is an 8-story affordable housing project; anticipated to come to the Planning Board on 12/1, and to The Board of Zoning Appeal likely 12/10 (as a comprehensive permit). He has concerns about pedestrian and cyclist safety at corner of Walden and Mass Ave. Would be good to have ped and bike comm input.