

Cambridge Pedestrian Committee

September 27, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Olivia Turner, Debby Galef, Sean Pierce, Helen Rose, Amy Kaiser (MIT rep), Johanna Pittman

Staff Present: Cara Seiderman

I. AGENDA REVIEW, MINUTES

- Minutes from the June meeting were approved

II. Summer Walks

Committee members discussed observations from the July River Street walk and August 23 walk of Mt. Auburn Street from Putnam Ave to Mason Street.....

Committee comments on the River Street walk included the following:

- Not as much width as Western Ave. – less clear what you can do / whether Western Ave. interventions will be replicable
- One very wide intersection – Pleasant Street - intersects at an angle, poses challenges.
- Parking on one side, not the other lent a different feel to each side of the street
- Vehicular speeds seemed quite fast, even though a police officer was accompanying the group and the width of the street seemed narrow.

Cara noted that a River Street advisory committee is to be assembled in advance of project start-up, and asked that committee members let her know if they're interested in serving or know others who are. Approx 1 year commitment. Link is here: <https://cambridgema.iqm2.com/Citizens/Board/Vacant>

Committee comments on the Mount Auburn Walk included the following:

The group met at the Mt. Auburn/Putnam Ave. intersection and walked the length of Mt. Auburn, to Brattle Street, ending at Mason Street. The group looked at the new signal operations at Mt. Auburn/DeWolfe Street, including opening the signal cabinet to see how it functions. The group also discussed the changes on Brattle Street.

Notes/observations include:

- Is there some way to better use the island at Putnam Square?
- Putnam Ave. is uncomfortable to bike on – add Shared Lane Markings? Right around intersection is particularly uncomfortable.
- Along Mt. Auburn:
 - Sandwich board signs narrow available sidewalk space – especially on/along JFK Street.

- Double Parking Issues
- The marked out pavement in front of the Lampoon seems to be a de facto loading zone.
 - Is this OK? Serves a function ...
 - Is there a better use of this space? What could that be?
 - A “wild west” approach seems to have worked reasonably well – illegal parking for drop-off kind of works.
 - A small area – what else to do with it? Though, a lot of pavement.
 - Navigation of emergency vehicles is a factor in current configuration
- Should there be “shark’s teeth” Yield Markings for pedestrians at crossings?
- Accommodations for tour buses seem to work reasonably well.

III. SOUTH MASS AVE PROJECT UPDATE

The committee reviewed a presentation highlighting project goals, background, design elements, and implementation schedule, as well as additional analysis recently undertaken and subsequent adjustments to the plan. Cara noted that most project elements were anticipated by end of October, though some elements may take longer, depending on weather. She also described the City’s plans for enforcement of priority bus lanes.

More information here:

<http://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/Projects/Transportation/southmassavecorridorsafetyimprovementsproject>

IV. COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The committee discussed whether it would be desirable to combine the pedestrian, bike and transit committees into a single group with sub-committees to address topics/projects of interest to just one of the modes. Committee members spoke favorably of the idea, noting the number of joint meetings already occurring, the fact that committee members’ concerns – and projects – often impact multiple modes / the value of having a range stakeholders discussing topics together, and that this approach could reduce meeting burden / duplication of efforts for both committee members and staff. Potential concerns and considerations with this approach included concern that one committee might dominate; a need for more formality around meetings and agendas; potential scheduling difficulties; and determining the right size for such a committee.

III. OTHER UPDATES / DISCUSSION TOPICS

- Porter Square:
 - construction starting soon, to be completed this fall
- Inman Square
 - A meeting will be held 3rd week in Oct. to discuss design of the plaza. City Council voted to accept an act of the state legislature.

- Concerns of opponents: Too costly, safe enough as-is. But it's a clear hot spot for crashes and not a nice place to walk around
- Will be great when it's done! Construction won't happen till Spring
- A new signal will be added at Broadway and Ellery – hopefully this fall
- Huron Meeting:
 - Concerns were noted about plans for landscaping on Raymond Street, given intersection sightlines
- Vision Zero:
 - Discussion of expanding 20MPH speed limit to other parts of the City. Would this reduce crash rates?
 - Changes to at-grade rail crossing near Jose's
- Mem Drive Phase 3:
 - Will be happening; will include fixing the path and crossings, including some attention to BU rotary
- Participatory budgeting and potential for pedestrian committee involvement

IV. UPCOMING PED MEETINGS

The committee discussed potential topics for future meetings, including:

- DCR projects
- Street lighting
- Officer elections

The committee adjourned at approximately 8pm