

## **Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC)**

Meeting Minutes for March 2, 2009

Submitted by John Dempsey

The meeting took place in the Community Room of the Public Safety Building at 7:00 P.M.  
Present: Harry Margolis, Tommy Vitolo, John Dempsey, Don McNamara, Cynthia Snow, Mitch Heineman, Peter Furth (Transportation Board)  
Public: Rebecca Albrecht

Handouts: Agenda, Minutes from 2/2/09, diagrams of Carlton Street Improvements

### **The minutes from the February 2009 meeting were approved.**

#### **Welcome new participants**

There were no new participants present.

#### **Carlton Street Improvements**

- Mr. Furth distributed copies of the diagrams with suggested improvements.
- Discussion about northbound bicycle traffic Beacon to Mountfort
- Mr. Furth reported that the residents of Carlton Street were upset about loss of parking as suggested by the BAC on Carlton Street.
- DPW suggested No Parking during peak hours (“7-9 AM and 4-6 PM”)
- There are 2 metered spaces and 14 unmetered spaces.
- Suggestion to create more parking on both sides of Chilton Street and Churchill Street
- Mr. Vitolo said our mission should be to get families from the Muddy River to the Charles River as safely as possible.
- Mr. Vitolo said the narrow area of Carlton just north of Beacon is the most dangerous part of the Carlton Street route. That area must be made safer for bicyclists who are not traffic tolerant.
- Discussion about the ineffectiveness of “Share the road” signs
- Discussion about signs saying “Bicycles allowed use of full lane.”
- Mr. Furth contended that bicyclists should move to the right as far as practicable.
- Mr. Furth suggested a hybrid sharrow design with white pavement markings (dashes) enclosing a bicyclist symbol.

#### **Discussion about southbound bicycle traffic**

- Keep the white line (like a fog line) but remove the bicycle symbol and other markings in the short section of Colchester.

#### **Discussion about section from Beacon Street to Monmouth Street**

- Narrowest part of Carlton Street (23')
- Too narrow for cars to safely pass bikes.
- Therefore, shift the center line so the vehicular lanes (both north and south) are 9.5' each.
- Stripe a 3.6' bike lane on the northbound side.

#### **General discussion**

- Agreement that “Share the road signs” are ineffective and should not be used.
- Remove as many signs as possible.
- Use terminology “Bicycle Priority Lane” rather than “Bicycles allowed full use of lane.”

- The concept is to fix the weakest part of the route so that it is safe for traffic-timid cyclists – including children.
- John will present the BAC recommendations at the March 5 Transportation Board meeting.
- See Memorandum below.

### **March 26<sup>th</sup> Transportation Board Meeting**

- Article 11 (bike registration) and Greenway Plan are on the agenda.
- BAC question is, “What’s going on?”
- Todd is making up cost estimates.
- Peter already did a rough budget for the Greenway Plan.

### **Report on CIP Recommendations/Finance Comm. subcommittee meeting - Vitolo**

- We were informed that there are many projects already in the CIP pipeline, and that the procedure for getting into the CIP begins with department heads meeting in June.
- They pointed out that bicycle infrastructure was being included as streets were repaved.
- Though that is good, we pointed out that often the streets being repaved are not in the greenway or safe routes to school plan.
- To have a viable system of safe bicycle routes, we can’t wait until those streets come up for repair/repaving.
- Question raised, “Could we use traffic calming money for bicycle improvements?”
- Question raised, “How much of the \$1.7 million set aside for street improvements could be used for bike/pedestrian improvements?”
- Can Todd give us a list of roads scheduled to be rebuilt during the next seven years?

### **Web Site and Friends of BAC e-mail list - McNamara**

- 350 addresses were entered.
- E-mail message sent out on Friday, February 27, 2009.
- 3-4 people unsubscribed.
- Mr. McNamara will check for bounces.
- Mr. McNamara needs people to work on the pages of the web site.
- Discussion about our relationship with the town web site.
- Mr. Margolis raised the question if we were even allowed to have a web site separate from the town web site.
- Mr. Furth suggested that we needed to operate like a government agency and an independent group.
- Mr. McNamara will work with Todd on the town website.
- Mr. Vitolo reminded everyone that the BAC e-mail is for information only, not for discussion of items before the committee.

### **Bicycle Parade – Dempsey**

- Date: Sunday, May 31 at 12:30
- Coordinating with Amory Playground rededication
- Poster done
- Postcard almost done
- Printer found c/o Mr. Dan Borden
- Mr. Dempsey will meet with Erin Gallentine and get a letter for Ms. Albrecht to use to solicit ice cream from vendors.

### **Column in the TAB – Heineman**

- The following ideas were suggested:  
Bike Parade

Bicyclist Bill of Rights  
Bicyclist responsibilities  
Bike Tune-ups for spring and before the parade

**Bike Racks – Snow**

- Ms. Snow gave Mr. Kirrane a copy of a bike rack donation policy.
- No response yet from Mr. Kirrane.
- Mr. Vitolo will meet with Mr. Alden Raine about bike parking zoning bylaws.

**Ciclovia – Furth**

- Mr. Furth was inspired by Enrique Penalosa’s comments about Bogota, Columbia.
- The idea would be to close certain roads on a Sunday - Beacon Street and out to South Brookline and back.
- Suggested date of Sunday, August 23, 2009.

**April Meeting Date**

- We will meet on Monday, April 6, 2009, at 7 P.M. at Devotion School

**Adjournment:**

We adjourned at 9:25 P.M.

**Assignments:**

- John will present the BAC recommendations at the March 5 Transportation Board meeting.
- We will attend the March 5 and March 26 Transportation Board meetings.
- Tommy will ask Todd for a list of roads scheduled to be rebuilt during the next seven years.
- Don will check the e-mail list for bounces.
- Don needs people to work on the pages of the web site.
- Discussion about our relationship with the town web site.
- Don will work with Todd on the town website.
- John will meet with Erin Gallentine.
- John will get a letter for Ms. Albrecht to use to solicit ice cream from vendors.
- Tommy will meet with Al Raine about bike parking zoning bylaws.
- Mitch will write another Muddy Rider column.

**MEMORANDUM**

To: The Transportation Board  
From: The Bicycle Advisory Committee  
Date: March 5, 2009  
Re: The February, 2009 Proposed Bike Route plan for the Carlton Street Corridor

The Bicycle Advisory Committee is pleased to see the many good features of the earlier draft plan retained. There are still some “weak links” that present safety issues that can render the entire route off-limits to bicyclists unwilling to ride in heavy traffic. If our goal is to create a bicycle network that improves conditions for mainstream, traffic-intolerant

cyclists – including children - then these high traffic danger areas must be further addressed. The Committee also recommends some changes in signage and markings that will improve safety, traffic flow, and aesthetics along the corridor.

**Beacon to Ivy going north:** There should be an uninterrupted, marked bike lane on the northbound side with no parking at any time. The danger to northbound bikes of having to merge into the heavy traffic crossing Beacon onto Carlton is present at all times, not just peak hours. Though a bike lane would mean eliminating two metered parking spaces and fourteen un-metered spaces, there seem to be reasonable parking alternatives on Churchill and Chilton Streets.

**Beacon to Monmouth:** The centerline should be offset so as to create a northbound bike lane of 3.6 feet and two motor vehicle lanes (northbound and southbound) at 9.5 feet each. This is a narrow section of street that presents safety and flow problems for cyclists and drivers. Perhaps the greatest safety problem here is riding southbound as an established platoon of cars, freshly discharged by the traffic light at Beacon Street, tries to pass a bike. The southbound lane, at 11.3 ft, has a dangerous “in-between” width – too narrow for cars to safely pass a bicycle, but wide enough that many motorists try to anyway. Research shows that vehicle lanes of 9.5 feet have just as good a safety record as wide lanes and are effective at reducing speed. For bikes, narrowing the lane to 9.5 feet eliminates the ambiguity about whether it’s safe to pass a bike; it makes it unmistakably clear that expected behavior is for cars to patiently ride behind bikes until it’s safe to pass. To further reinforce the desired lane-sharing behavior, we also recommend marking a Bicycle Priority Lane, as described later. As for the northbound side permitting a bike lane simply makes the bike lane continuous from Longwood to Ivy.

#### **Eliminate most bike-related signs.**

The Committee recommends eliminating 42 signs from the plan.

- The Committee does not favor use of Share the Road sign; many motorists don’t understand the meaning.
- The Committee does not favor use of Bicycles Allowed Use of Full Lane (BAUFL) sign. First, the implication of what it means for other streets is uncertain. Are bicyclists allowed full use of the lane on every street (so that this sign is just a reminder), or only on streets where this sign appears? There are state laws about what part of the lane a bicyclist may use; is this sign just a reminder, or does it go beyond state law? A BAUFL sign on a 2-lane, 2-way street seems inconsistent with state law requiring that when motorists want to pass, cyclists should ride as far to the right as is practicable. Until now, BAUFL signs have only been used on multi-lane arterials, where cyclists can take a full lane and still allow motor vehicles to move into another lane to pass.
- The Committee recommends not using Bike Lane Ahead, Bike Lane Ends, or Right Lane for Bikes Only signs; those signs are superfluous and are no longer required by the MUTCD.
- In its *Green Routes Master Plan*, the Committee recommends not using the proposed Bike Route signs with their arrow and destination plate; that format will be obsolete when the MUTCD is next updated. We recommend a project to install destination signs in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of implementation, after there are several destinations that will be linked.

Delaying until then will give us time to choose the best sign format and to coordinate with neighboring communities.

**Change lane markings.**

- Where bikes have to share a lane with cars on Carlton, Chapel, and Colchester Streets, instead of the “Share the Road” and BAUFL signs, the committee supports the use of Bicycle Priority Lane markings, which we believe are much more understandable to motorists and much more effective for cyclists at promoting safe positioning. The Committee recommends using dotted lines only to bracket sharrows – for example, a sharrow every 100 feet, with each sharrow bracketed by a 20-foot stretch of dotted lines.

**Southbound on Colchester Street:** There is a small section wide enough to support a bike lane. Rather than mark it as a bike lane, the Committee recommends that it be simply a shoulder – that is, retain the lane line, but eliminate bike symbols. Short bike lanes are confusing for motorists and irritating to cyclists.

**On Carlton Street at Mountfort:** The Committee recommends eliminating the sharrows in both the right and left lanes. Once bikes reach the stop line, they have their own *de facto* lane (the parking lane, since no parking is allowed within 30 feet of an intersection), and there is no left turn.

**Open Meeting Rules**

- A meeting must be posted to the Town Calendar at least one week before the meeting is to take place.
- Must include time, location, and agenda in pdf format, contact person, and contact e-mail address.
- Within two subsequent meetings we must post to the website a copy of the minutes in pdf format.
- An email will be sent to all TMM and other officials about the meeting.
- Therefore, Todd Kirrane needs information from BAC 1 ½ weeks before the meeting.