

Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC)

Meeting Minutes for October 6, 2014

Submitted by Chris Dippel

The meeting took place in the Town Hall Room 408 at 7:00 P.M.

Present: Cynthia Snow, Bryan Decker, John Dempsey, Chris Dippel, Don McNamara, Sgt. Mark Trahon, Thomas Vitolo

Public: Nick Schmidt, Mitch Heineman, Anne Lusk, Phil Bowman, John Bowman, Henry Winkelman, Lt. Phil Harrington, Neil Gordon, Rebecca Albrecht, Irv Kurki

Handouts: agenda, Bicycle Count Summary and Observations

Introductions

Review and Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

- The committee reviewed and voted to approve the minutes from the September 2014 meeting.

Election of Officers

- Ms. Snow and Mr. Dippel were nominated and elected to the positions of Chair and Secretary, respectively.

FY2016 CIP Projects

- Ms. Snow noted that the bicycle box at St. Paul and Aspinwall was approved by the Transportation Board (TB) and will be installed in FY16 and that the committee had previously recommended that a box not be installed at St. Paul and Beacon.
- Ms. Snow solicited comments on the plan for accommodations on St. Paul as described in an aerial view provided by Mr. Martin of the Transportation Department and noted that Mr. Safer, Transportation Board chair, had suggested that the lane be moved to the southbound side. It was the consensus of the committee that the plan stay as drawn because the northbound lane was a continuation of the lane being installed on the south side of Beacon as part of a repaving project, parked cars prevented a curbside lane in the block before Commonwealth Ave., and the more concentrated flow of cyclists was most likely in the morning and toward Commonwealth Ave.
- Ms. Snow solicited comments on the redrawn plans for proposed accommodations on Goddard Ave. and Newton Street as described in an aerial view and email provided by Mr. Martin. The committee endorsed the plan in general with one requested change:
 - Removal of the “cross bike” marking on Newton at Goddard because its meaning and use to cyclists and motorists was generally not known and better protection would be afforded cyclists by a bike box/waiting area at Goddard Circle, a bike lane on Newton St. westbound that connected to the Goddard lane, and reduction of the auto lanes from two to one.

Committee members and attendees also discussed the following additional changes:

- Reduction of the right turning lanes from Clyde onto Newton to one and continuation of the bike lane with allowance of right-on-red.
- Installation of a cycle track between the row of parked cars and the park border on Goddard, although it was noted such a track would also be used by pedestrians and subject to opening car doors.

Idaho Stop Tweet and Concerns about Law Enforcement

Lt. Harrington described the genesis of his tweet on the Idaho Stop and said that more than 200 responses had been received. He also noted that the Police Department has an interest in being more flexible about

enforcement of red light and other violations by cyclists, for example, by not citing cyclists crossing intersections with the walk light. However, adopting an Idaho-Stop-type policy was not likely because without wider adoption by other communities or the State, it would lead to confusion by road-users. The committee members and attendees offered the following comments:

- Cyclists will appreciate even-handed enforcement, e.g., citing of cars blocking bike lanes.
- When a group of officers implement an enforcement activity, it seems to cyclists more like an ambush and was unwelcoming.
- Bicycle-specific lights at Beacon and Harvard may help traffic flow there.
- Sgt. Trahon noted that fewer citations and warnings had been given cyclists in August 2014 (about 200) than in August 2013 and that 90% or more of actions involving cyclists were warnings while approximately 70% of actions against motorists were warnings. Ms. Snow requested that he send her his statistics.
- All officers (not just bicycle patrol officers) should receive training specific to enforcement of laws related to cycling on a regular basis.

Bicycle Counts

- Ms. Snow distributed a summary of counts that included those done in September and a page of observations made by the counters. In the subsequent discussion, she noted that the data show a steady increase in bicycle use, 28 to 46% of the cyclists were female (dependent on location), the counts will be given to the Transportation Board. A change in the counting time frame to earlier by 15 minutes may be tried next year. Mr. Heineman suggested conducting a longitudinal count (over consecutive days) at one key intersection.

Information Card

- Mr. Dempsey requested that the committee consider creating a card with information about the BAC that could be given to possible interested persons, and he provided a draft. The committee agreed to consider it and will review language by email.

Heath Street Traffic Calming

- Ms. Snow provided an aerial view of the proposed calming measures (two bumps and a raised crosswalk) and noted the route had low bicycle use.

Follow Up

- Gateway East project: Dr. Lusk noted that no date had been set for the design charrette she was organizing and requested BAC help in getting appropriate maps for it. Mr. Heineman offered his help.
- Possible bicycle training area: Ms. Snow noted that a pilot project drawn in chalk or inexpensive paint at Robinson Playground was endorsed by Erin Gallentine, director of parks. The Robinson Playground will be in line for rebuilding in a few years, and if the pilot is successful, a permanent plan could be considered at that time.
- League of American Bicyclists application: Ms. Snow requested photographs for inclusion, e.g., from the Parade.

Other Business

- Mr. Decker asked about the status of the Beacon St. outbound accommodations by the Transportation Department, and Ms. Snow said she was meeting with a representative soon and will check on it.
- Ms. Snow noted that the Transportation Board will meet on 10/23, and she and Mr. Decker are up for re-appointment.

- Dr. Lusk noted that the committee had agreed to recommend a bicycle rack design and it should be attractive to all.
- Mr. Dempsey noted the 2015 Parade date was likely to be May 17 and that May 31 was also a possibility. The committee preferred the 17th.

Next Meeting

- The next meeting will be Monday, November 3rd.