

# Melrose Ped/Bike Committee

Meeting Notes October 5, 2016

Attendees: Andy Paul, Gabrielle Watson, Steve Leibman, Liz Foulser, Elena Proakis-Ellis, Ellen Katz, Katie Moore, Paul Moore, Cindy Chabot, Carol Naczas, Richard Fries (MassBike), David Loutzenheiser (MAPC)

## Action items

- Gabrielle: Still need to provide a committee representative to the Complete Streets Working Group.
- Liz: Email Stephen Fogarty to check in on SRTS inclusion in schools

## Important dates

Wed Oct 26: Master Plan public forum

Wed Nov 2: 7pm Next Melrose Ped/Bike meeting

## Intro

Meeting begins with moment of silence prompted by three recent fatalities: Cyclist today (10/5) in Porter Square Cambridge, landscape worker yesterday on Howard St Melrose, pedestrian a couple days earlier on Lynde St Melrose.

## Bikeability assessment by MassBike

Richard Fries (executive director of MassBike) is performing a bikeability assessment for Melrose that will feed into the Complete Streets prioritization process.

Comments from Richard:

Looks at corridors and connectivity.

Melrose is not far from Boston (40 minutes from financial district by bike).

Connectivity is improving all the way from Boston to the Melrose border (replacement of Charlestown Rutherford Ave / N. Washington St bridge; Northern Strand Trail added in recent years to Malden and Everett; Northern Strand extension in Everett to the Mystic River).

Oak Grove is nearby, making multi-mode commutes common.

Richard is optimistic that a lot can be done in a reasonable budget (e.g. within \$400k Complete Streets Funding). We have the required width in places like Main St south of the central downtown blocks and parking utilization is fairly low south of Wyoming.

Andy P.: We also have questions about wayfinding (to Oak Grove, to bike path, etc.)

Richard: Agreed. Need consistent signage that gets you back on route, which David is working on for regional routes with the LandLine network.

David: Regional network would follow the obvious routes (Northern Strand Trail, along the Mystic River, etc.)

David points out that most of Melrose is an older street grid, small scale, low speeds, no strip malls (except Whole Foods area). These are good characteristics, but also many of the roads are narrow as a consequence.

Bikeability assessment will largely be an inventory, but will include challenges, opportunities, recommendations, resources.

Also an assessment of bike culture – ped/bike committee, shops, clubs, events.

Carol asks about whether we always have to work within existing curb widths or whether things like that are flexible. Elena answers that the city is bound by right of way, but there's flexibility within those bounds when redoing a whole road.

Richard comments that on Binney St Cambridge, they just started doing 10' lanes and it has made a big positive difference with no notable complaints.

Ellen: Comments that people are interested in

1. networks that would allow circumventing downtown main st
2. Other civic locations (library, parks, schools)
3. Separated bike lanes. Could we do something narrower than NACTO standards if we have to and have it be better than nothing?

Richard: Good to cultivate demand -- try to build demand before supply so that people are asking for it and we don't build things that don't get used.

Good bike parking at MBTA stations is high ROI, very effective.

David: MAPC bike parking program (which Melrose has taken advantage of some in the past) continues -- they're putting it out to bid to renew pretty soon.

David: Key to developing routes in Melrose is through traffic calming. Speed tables, raised crosswalks. Describes european model of cutting residential areas cut up in zones.

Cindy: One of the things we need help with is cultural shifts.

Richard: Look for champions - Chamber of Commerce. Get involved with business community, rotary. Could have Richard and David speak, do examples, case studies. Also do things on a pop-up basis - temporary parklets. Did it in Lexington with one parking space, which was really hard to get in, but then very popular and expanded to a few more spaces.

Elena points out that there's some fatigue around controversial projects (not politically the right time for removing parking on Main St) but there are lots of non-controversial opportunities.

Gabrielle:

Richard will take about 5 weeks to do bikeability assessment.

Aiming for coordinated timing with Complete Streets prioritization plan.

Kara has Technical Assistance grant that will allow us to have David Watson take a closer look at High School area.

David Loutzenheiser talks about regional corridors and shows a map with north/south ideas. Derby St: Consider officially allowing two-way bike traffic.

Possibly the second bike lane in town: Southbound on Tremont St from Melrose St to Lynn Fells.

Committee will provide more feedback to David Loutzenheiser, especially on the north-south corridor plan.

Elena asks: In the assessment, how do we incorporate the reality of kids biking to school -- will be on sidewalks instead of out in the street, etc.

Richard suggests things like walking/biking school buses. Have educational events.

## Infrastructure liaison

Andy coordinated getting comments to DCR in a digestible manner for Lynn Fells. Similar thing to city for Tremont St.

Elena: Tremont St will probably be striped according to Andy's suggestion. Other road projects generally don't have any particular ped/bike enhancements. One exception: Burrell St where it connects to Lynn Fells -- there is a short section with no sidewalk where it will be added.

Cindy asks about Howard St. Elena comments that there's general agreement that speed on Howard Street is a problem, and that they're looking at various options to address it.

## Safe Routes To School

Some reorganization at school. Met with Stephen Fogarty who is now in charge of phys ed, health, and wellness.

Safe Routes walking program is an elementary program.

Fogarty was very receptive. Will meet with Tim from SRTS.

Liz: Getting the walking program into the curriculum would make a big impact.

Elena: SRTS folks talked about 3 models:

1. They train adult volunteers, volunteers train 2nd graders
2. They train the 2nd graders
3. They train the 5th graders to train the 2nd graders.

The third seems like a particularly good approach.

Richard: We (massbike) do some of the SRTS training, and have permission to do bike rodeos as part of that now. Also, transportation training (how to find a bus, etc.).

Liz will email Stephen Fogarty to check in.

## Complete Streets

Elena: Selected BETA group. Submitted Statement Of Work to MassDOT. Will then hopefully get the \$50k of Technical Assistance money. Have purchased 2 tablets for engineering dpt, and will begin some data gathering.

Creating GIS "wishlist" layers containing feedback from community events. They will then turn all these inputs into a plan.

Elena notes that we still need to provide a liaison to the CS working group.  
Gabrielle: We have some nominees.