

Providence Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission

MINUTES

February 19, 2014, 4:30 PM

Members Present: Chair Eric Weis, Jef Nickerson, Matthew Moritz, Jenn Steinfeld, Michelle Cortes-Harkins

Staff: David Everett

1. South/North Main Street ADA Project – Lambri Zerva, Kate Wilson, RI DOT; Todd Brayton, Bryant Associates

Mr. Zerva introduced the project and turned it over to Mr. Brayton, who gave a Power Point presentation. He explained the project limits as being James Street and Smith Street and gave an overview that included the following:

- South/North Main has varying widths and consists of two one-way north travel lanes and sidewalks which vary in material (RIHPC was consulted and existing brick surface will remain)**
- There are up to 160 pedestrian crossings per hour.**
- ADA requirements are the basis of the project and have specific grade standards**
- A new fiber optic conduit is being installed during excavation/construction**
- Landscaping will include bigger tree pits and diversified tree species; tripping hazards caused by roots will be eliminated**
- Curb ramps will be installed at all side streets and there will be**

mid-block crosswalks

- **Pedestrian accommodations will be upgraded at crossings**
- **There will be no reduction (or gain) in traffic spaces**
- **Through coordination with RIPTA, the project will include marked bus stops and improved pedestrian access and sight distance**
- **For bicycle accommodation three alternatives were analyzed: unmarked shared lanes with signs as needed, marked shared lanes, and bike lanes within a 40' cross-section**

Questions were then entertained from meeting attendees.

Jonathan Harris, representing the Sierra Club, offered several comments: crosswalks and bumpouts are good but could be better, 12' travel lanes are neither needed nor AASHTO-required, a reduced lane width would reduce speeding, and he advocated for 10' or narrower travel lanes with bike lanes widths.

Additional input sent to BPAC was represented by Eric Weis, including a question as to whether two-way traffic had been considered (no) and various alternatives to accommodate bike lanes (rendered by Mr. Harris). Discussion followed. Mr. Harris said sharrows do not increase ridership. Mr. Zerva said business parking needs were an important consideration. Mr. Harris suggested consideration of "back-in parking." One vehicle lane was suggested and dismissed as not practical. Push button crossing signals were discussed, something that BPAC has advocated against and which was similarly addressed by attendees. Recommendations included extending Waterman pedestrian accommodations, reducing the crossing distance at Roger Williams Memorial Park, and building a

dedicated bike lane (specifically supported by the RI Bicycle Coalition, which will submit a letter). Al Dahlberg of Brown University also expressed support for a dedicated bike lane, saying it is a vitally important corridor for Brown and the pedestrian and bicycle traffic will increase dramatically in the next ten years. He also said that push buttons shouldn't be needed.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Mr. Zerva stressed that the current plans' striping reflects current conditions and that larger future changes can reflect use changes that occur.

2. PSAs and Public Education – Despina Matakos-Harris, RI DOT Office of Highway Safety

Despina gave a quick overview of State programs including grants to help municipalities to better enforce traffic laws, videography resources, and low-cost “roll call videos,” which provide brief training opportunities for police officers. She also cited National Ad Council spots on television, which can be done inexpensively and shown as public service messages free of charge, as well as youth-directed culture change messages. Some discussion followed about message topics, including crosswalk and sharrows use education. Dave Everett will set up a meeting to discuss options with Despina and at least one representative of BPAC. Despina lastly mentioned that it's important to identify the target audience and that there is severe under reporting of accidents by cyclists, which can make it hard to verify issues beyond anecdotal evidence.

3. Miscellaneous/Follow-up

Bill DeSantis of VHB spoke briefly about having a BPAC/staff workshop to identify streets citywide with wide lanes that have the potential to accommodate bike lanes.

4. Adjourn – 6:10.

Respectfully submitted by David Everett