



Providence Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Jorge O. Elorza, Mayor

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Regular meeting of the Providence Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission

March 18, 2015, 4:45 PM

444 Westminster Street

Providence, RI 02903

401-680-8400

Overseeing Body: City of Providence Department of Planning and Development

Members present: Eric Weis, Jef Nickerson, Matt Moritz, Jenn Steinfeld, Michelle Cortes-Harkins

Non-voting Ex-Officio members present: Martina Haggerty, William Bombard

Other staff and officials present: Robert Azar, Emily Koo

Eric Weis called meeting to order at 5:51pm.

Eric Weis asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the February commission meeting. Jenn Steinfeld made a motion to approve. Motion was seconded by Jef Nickerson. All voted in favor.

Eric Weis asked for a motion to approve the 2015 meeting calendar for the commission. Jef Nickerson made a motion to approve. Motion was seconded by Matt Moritz. All voted in favor.

Eric Weis introduced Bob Azar, Deputy Director of Planning and Development. Mr. Azar presented a plan previously proposed for Fountain Street as part of the next phase of Downtown Circulator improvements, pointing out elements of the Circulator project that have been completed to date, and those elements that are planned to be implemented next, which include LaSalle Square, Emmett Square, Fountain Street, and Dorrance Street. Mr. Azar discussed the bicycle lane and sidewalk widening that were both planned for Fountain Street, but explained that funding for the previously proposed sidewalk widening on Fountain Street is now limited and likely will not allow for the sidewalk widening to be constructed. Mr. Azar also pointed out the planned sharrows for Broadway and Dorrance Street. Mr. Azar went on to explain that the City is now considering the implementation of a buffered bicycle lane or two-way cycle track along Fountain Street in lieu of the previously proposed sidewalk widening. Mr. Azar noted that this bicycle lane could be on the outer side of the roadway, nearest to the curb, with

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parallel on-street parking located on the interior side, closest to the vehicular travel lane. He also noted that this could serve as a model for how buffered bicycle lanes could be accommodated elsewhere in the City.

Michelle Cortes-Harkins asked for clarification on where a potential two-way cycle track would start and end on Fountain Street. Mr. Azar clarified that the lane would likely run from Empire Street to Dorrance Street. Jenn Steinfeld noted the challenging aspects of an unconnected bicycle network, but also noted the value of a visible demonstration project such as a buffered bicycle lane on Fountain Street. Bob Azar and Jef Nickerson discussed the possible use of large planters that are currently being used on Empire Street between Fountain and Broadway as additional protection within the painted buffer area adjacent to the bicycle lane proposed on Fountain Street. Mr. Azar noted that if the bicycle lane and buffer area were to be made wide enough, snow plows and street sweeping equipment could likely be used to clear the bicycle lane without issue. Mr. Azar answered several additional questions from members of the public.

Matt Moritz stated that he would likely oppose a two-way cycle track on Fountain Street due to safety concerns, but would possibly support a contraflow bicycle lane on the opposite (northern) side of Fountain Street. Jef Nickerson noted that there seems to be plenty of room on Broadway, nearest to Dave Gavitt Way, for bicycle lanes rather than sharrows. The possibility of diagonal parking on the northern side of Fountain Street was also discussed as a possibility to off-set parking needs on other Downtown streets so that on-street parking on some of those streets could possibly be removed to accommodate bicycle lanes.

Eric Weis and Jef Nickerson volunteered to follow up with Mr. Azar regarding their continued involvement in the Fountain Street plans on behalf of the Commission. Based on a request from a member of public, Eric Weis suggested that the Commission consider adding the review of the Kennedy Plaza redesign to a future Commission meeting.

Eric Weis introduced the next item on the agenda, discussion of the DPW list of upcoming road projects. Martina Haggerty suggested that Commission members review the DPW list over the next two weeks and bring specific areas of concern to her and the Commission chair's attention so that those specifics could be discussed at future Commission meetings. Eric Weis asked if details such as planned bicycle lanes are specifically mentioned within the list. Bill Bombard responded that in most cases, such details are not mentioned on the list that the Commission members were given. Mr. Bombard requested that Commission members bring to his attention any streets listed that are important to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements so that he can bring specific details and plans for those streets to the next Commission meeting.

Eric Weis introduced the next item on the agenda, discussion of the Bicycle Friendly Community visit by League of American Bicyclists planned for April 16th. Eric Weis and Martina Haggerty discussed the

agenda for the upcoming visit, including the details of a morning bicycle tour with a small group of 8-10 invitees as well as a larger meeting afterward during which Stephen Clark from the League of American Bicyclists will send a

Eric Weis introduced the next item on the agenda, discussion of the City's participation in the USDOT Mayors' Challenge for Safer People, Safer Streets. Martina Haggerty provided an overview of the City's participation in the Challenge, including highlights from the Challenge Summit that recently took place in Washington, DC and an overview of the seven Challenge areas that USDOT has asked the City to explore as part of the Challenge. Ms. Haggerty briefly described the seven challenge areas as:

- Taking a Complete Streets approach;
- Identifying and addressing barriers to make streets safe and convenient for all users regardless of age or ability;
- Gathering and tracking biking and walking data;
- Using designs appropriate to the context of the street and its uses;
- Taking advantage of opportunities to create and complete bike-ped networks through regular maintenance;
- Improving biking and walking safety laws and regulations; and,
- Educating and enforcing proper road use by all.

Jenn Steinfeld requested that the City address street sweeping issues as well as driver education through the Challenge.

Ms. Haggerty then went on to discuss the draft action plan that DPD has developed in order to create specific tasks to accomplish some of the goals of the Challenge. She noted that the action plan is meant to address tasks that the City can accomplish in the next twelve months. Specific tasks mentioned by Ms. Haggerty included:

- Complete Streets education and training for city staff
- Creation of a Complete Streets implementation plan that would assess all current City policies, practices, procedures, and documents and detail necessary changes in order to fully implement Complete Streets in Providence
- Assessment of current biking and walking data, assessment of additional data needs, and creation of a plan to attain needed data
- A review of all local ordinances and regulations to determine potential weaknesses
- Engagement with Public Safety to discuss enforcement issues, training issues, and review best practices for ensuring bike and ped safety
- An analysis of the locations that present the most risk to bicyclists and pedestrians and then working with law enforcement to target those areas for enforcement

- Developing an education plan to ensure proper road use by peds, bikes, and drivers

Matt Moritz suggested that we also analyze potential conflicts between local ordinances and state laws and also mentioned that an analysis of this sort had been performed in the past. Eric Weis suggested that the City lead by example by having city staff and officials participate in a cycling class. Jen Steinfeld suggested that we ensure that bicycle officers abide by traffic laws. Martina Haggerty suggested that Commission members review the draft action plan and send any additional thoughts so that they may be incorporated into a refined draft of the action plan by the next meeting date.

The discussion of ideas for improving pedestrian and bicycle conditions that were generated from February 18th Commission meeting was postponed to the next Commission meeting. Martina Haggerty requested that Commission members review the draft list of ideas and make note of additional ideas that should be added so that they may be discussed at the next Commission meeting.

Eric Weis announced that Bike to Work day would be taking place on Friday, May 15th.

The meeting adjourned at 6:07pm.

Respectfully submitted by Martina Haggerty.