



**Providence Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission**

Jorge O. Elorza, Mayor

**DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

**Regular meeting of the Providence Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission**

**May 18, 2016, 4:45 PM**

444 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903

401-680-8400

**Overseeing Body:** City of Providence Department of Planning and Development

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Voting members present: Eric Weis, Matt Moritz, Michelle-Cortes Harkins, Jef Nickerson, Alex Krogh-Grabbe (alternate member temporarily replacing Laura Bozzi as a voting member for this meeting)

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

Voting commission member Laura Bozzi arrived towards the end of the meeting.

Mr. Weis called the meeting to order at 4:51pm.

Mr. Weis introduced the next agenda item, Waterman Street modifications. Ms. Haggerty and Mr. Bombard provided an overview of the Waterman Street project, which was noted to include restriping of Waterman Street in Wayland between Butler Avenue and the Henderson Bridge ramp. The City's proposal for a new configuration to include relocating on street parking from the southern side of the street to the northern side of the street and the installation of a new crosswalk was discussed by the Commission members, staff and members of the public. Mr. Weis made a motion to approve the following recommendations, which was seconded by Ms. Cortes-Harkins and approved by all Commission members: clear signage for the new crosswalk should be installed to increase pedestrian safety and a buffered bike lane should be installed on the southern side of Waterman Street, between Cold Spring and the Henderson Bridge ramp, instead of the two new on-street parking spaces shown in the preliminary striping plan. The Commission members also discussed how a bike lane on Waterman would connect directly to the bike infrastructure on the Henderson Bridge, the importance of Waterman Street as a key east-west connection for bicyclists, and that bike lanes should be eventually striped along the entire length of Waterman Street. Concerns about street lighting at the crosswalk location to improve pedestrian visibility were also discussed. After additional discussion, Mr. Weis made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Krogh-Grabbe and approved by all Commission members to recommend that DPW study traffic movement approaching Butler Avenue in order to determine the feasibility of a

bike lane between Butler and Cold Spring by reducing the number of vehicular travel lanes from two to one.

Mr. Weis introduced the next agenda item, the Eddy Street restriping project. Ms. Haggerty and Mr. Bombard provided an overview of the Eddy Street project, which was noted to include restriping of Eddy Street in Upper South Providence between the I-95 underpass and south of Willard Avenue. RIDOT's proposals for two different restriping scenarios, a "left turn scenario" and a "shared lane" scenario were discussed by the Commission members, staff and members of the public. Both alternatives included the striping of bike lanes along Eddy Street. Ms. Haggerty reviewed the staff recommendations made to BPAC as part of the staff report generated for the meeting. Those recommendations included that:

- The "shared lane" scenario should be implemented rather than the "left turn" scenario. The "shared" scenario provides enough space to continue bike lanes south of Willard Avenue and between Blackstone and Dudley streets, whereas the "left turn" scenario does not. The lack of continuous bike lanes included in the "left turn" scenario would reduce safety for bicyclists.
- Travel lanes between Willard Avenue and Blackstone Street should be reduced to 11' each (rather than 12' as shown on the cross section) and an extra foot should be given to the bike lanes in either direction, increasing their width from 5' to 6' each. The width of travel lanes between Blackstone and Dudley is unclear as it is not indicated on the drawings. The width of the travel lanes there should be clarified and they should be no wider than 11'. Any extra right-of-way width should be given to the bike lanes and/or to a buffer for the bike lanes.
- The right turn lane and left turn lane between Dudley Street and Hospital Driveway should be reduced from 10' to 11' and an extra foot of width should be given to each bike lane, increasing their widths from 5' to 6' each.
- The planning of this overall project should be coordinated with RIPTA and the City of Providence Department of Planning and Development to ensure that any work that is done complements the soon to be constructed enhanced bus corridor that will run along Eddy Street, terminating at the north-east intersection of the Dudley-Eddy intersection. Shared bus-bike lanes should be added along Eddy Street whenever possible to accommodate the future enhanced bus service.
- RIDOT should work with the City of Providence to determine if the "future Dudley Street Connector" (the extension of Dudley Street east of Eddy Street) is in fact needed at this point in time and how it might be coordinated to better complement the soon to be constructed enhanced bus corridor. Regardless, the wide curb cut across from Dudley Street, where the old highway ramp was located, should be eliminated to eliminate illegal parking on the ramp, reduce the pedestrian crossing length and improve pedestrian comfort and safety.

Conversation between the commission members, staff and members of the public continued. Mr. Weis made a motion to approve forwarding the staff recommendations in addition to three additional recommendations on to the Director of Public Works and the Director of Planning and Development. Mr. Mortiz seconded the motion. All commission members voted in favor. The three additional recommendations were that: no vehicular lanes should exceed 11' in width; thick green striping should be painted through the Dudley intersection for the southbound bike lane to increase safety for bicyclists and visibility of the bike lane; and that the "pedestrian rail" proposed along the sidewalk south of Willard Avenue should not be installed. Instead, the Commission suggested that RIDOT should work with the property owner of the adjacent parking lot to move the pedestrian passage through the fence to better direct pedestrians to the new crosswalk at the intersection or keep one of the two crosswalks proposed for removal and make it ADA accessible. After additional discussion of the project, Mr. Nickerson made a motion to add two additional recommendations/comments. Mr. Weis seconded the motion and all voted in favor. The two additional recommendations/comments that were approved by the Commission were that:

- 1) The dimensions of the vehicular travel lanes and bike lanes in the underpass were unclear based on the drawings reviewed by the Commission. The Commission suggested that the width of vehicular travel lanes should be no more than 10'-11' under the I-95 underpass and that excess width should be used to create a buffer for the bike lane.
- 2) Additional information about the bike lanes north of the I-95 underpass and at the southern end of the project beyond Willard Avenue should be requested from RIDOT. The transition from the bike lanes proposed as part of this restriping project and the rest of Eddy Street were unclear based on the drawings reviewed by the Commission.

Ms. Haggerty suggested that agenda item 5, a discussion of bicycle infrastructure improvements to connect to the new waterfront parks and pedestrian bridge, be postponed to the June BPAC meeting. No Commission members objected to this and it was agreed that this agenda item would be postponed for discussion until the Commission's June meeting.

Mr. Bombard provided an update on the status of the City's automatic pedestrian signal pilot project (Agenda Item 6), which included the transitioning of crosswalk signals in the core of Downtown to automatically turn on the walk signal when the opposing traffic has a green light, eliminating the need for pedestrians to push a button to request a walk signal. Mr. Bombard reported that two complaints had been received by DPW after the signals were automated: one from RIPTA and one from PPAC. Mr. Bombard noted that RIPTA expressed concern about the impact of automatic pedestrian crossings on their Transit Signal Prioritization at intersections in Downtown. Mr. Weis and other Commission members asked Mr. Bombard if any tracking of the impact of the automation of the crosswalk signals to RIPTA buses or to general vehicular traffic had taken place. Mr. Bombard explained that no tracking or impact study had been conducted by the City but that no noticeable impact to traffic had been noted by DPW. Ms. Haggerty noted that the crosswalk signals at the intersections of Empire/Westminster and Empire/Washington had reverted back to push button signals after working as automated signals for

some time. Commission members agreed that without all intersections within the pilot area being properly automated for pedestrians, it was difficult to properly determine any results from the pilot project. Mr. Bombard agreed to look into why the automatic signals at these intersections stopped functioning correctly.

Mr. Weis asked for any announcements or staff updates as part of the final agenda item. Ms. Haggerty discussed the Vulnerable Road Users Safety Action Plan that the City was in the process of conducting with RIDOT and VHB, noting that two corridors had been selected by the City to be studied further: the “service road corridor” along either side of I-95 between Atwells Avenue and Point Street (including the I-95 overpasses and both service roads) and all of Broad Street. Ms. Haggerty also noted that a walkthrough of the two corridors was scheduled for June 16<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM and invited Commission members to attend or pass along the invitation to any other stakeholders who might be interested in attending the walk through with City and VHB staff. Mr. Weis mentioned that there would be a Bike to Work Month reception tomorrow evening at the East Coast Greenway office. Members of the Commission also discussed plans for Bike to Work Day on May 20 which will include bike trains coming in from various points in the City to a morning event from 7:00 AM to 9:00 AM in Burnside Park in Downtown.

The meeting adjourned at 6:17 PM.

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Respectfully submitted by Martina Haggerty.