



Providence Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Jorge O. Elorza, Mayor

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Regular meeting of the Providence Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission

July 20, 2016, 4:45 PM

444 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903

401-680-8400

Overseeing Body: City of Providence Department of Planning and Development

Voting members present: Eric Weis, Laura Bozzi, Jef Nickerson, Michelle Cortes-Harkins

Alternate voting members present: Alex Krogh-Grabbe

Non-voting Ex-Officio members present: Martina Haggerty

Other staff members or officials present: Nate Urso from DPW, Dan Waugh from RIDOT, Rachel Newman-Greene from the City of Providence Healthy Communities Office

Eric Weis called the meeting to order at 4:45 PM.

Approval of the June meeting minutes was postponed to the next Commission meeting.

Mr. Weis introduced the first agenda item, an initial scoping review of the Olney Street project. Martina Haggerty gave an overview of the project which includes reconstruction, repaving and restriping of Olney Street from Camp to Hope streets and also summarized the DPD staff recommendations for alterations to this project. Ms. Haggerty highlighted that Olney Street was one of four corridors in the city that were identified as important to the city's bicycle network to better connect Downtown to the East Side and points beyond. She also noted that the preliminary plans, once prepared will come back to BPAC for review at a future BPAC meeting once they are at 30% completion. After further discussion of this agenda item between the BPAC members, Nate Urso and Ms. Haggerty, the BPAC made the following recommendations:

- The 40' curb to curb width along Olney Street should be restriped to include one 8' wide parking lane, two 11' wide vehicular travel lanes (one in each direction), and two 5' wide bike lanes (one

in each direction). Bike lanes should be included in both directions from Prospect to Hope, where the curb to curb width is approximately 40'.

- The scope of the project should be expanded to include similar inclusion of bike lanes between North Main and Camp streets.
- If the section of Olney Street between North Main and Prospect is found to be narrower than 40' from curb to curb, this segment of the street should be restriped to include a bike lane in the uphill direction and sharrows in the downhill direction.
- Bike boxes should be incorporated into the intersection of Hope and Olney.
- The intersection of Camp and Olney should be changed from a 2-way stop to a 4-way stop.

A motion to approve the above recommendations was made by Jef Nickerson. Laura Bozzi seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Weis introduced the next agenda item, Allens Avenue restriping. Ms. Haggerty gave an overview of RIDOT's preliminary plans for the restriping of Allens Avenue from Blackstone Street to New York Avenue and also summarized the DPD staff recommendations for alterations to this project. Dan Waugh from RIDOT and Nate Urso from DPW discussed their understanding of the scope of the project and that the scope may only be limited to repaving at intersections only. Mr. Waugh noted that restriping beyond the intersections may be feasible due to the low cost of such an addition to the project. After further discussion of this agenda item, the BPAC made the following recommendations:

- RIDOT should consider lowering the speed limit on Allens Avenue from 35 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour, to be consistent with the speed limit on other city streets and improve safety.
- RIDOT and the City of Providence should work together to reach out to partners including Johnson and Wales University to discuss the planting of street trees along the entire length of Allens Avenue.
- Bike lane stencils should be painted more frequently along the entire corridor to ensure adequate visibility of the bike lane.
- Bike lanes should be dashed in or painted green across all intersections and driveways to improve visibility of the bike lane and safety of bicyclists.
- Clear signage should be installed at intersections and driveways to alert drivers, particularly trucks, to the presence of the bike lanes.

- Both short-term and long-term strategies should be developed and implemented to improve the safety of bicyclists at the rail tracks embedded in the roadway. In the short-term, strategies such as paving over the rail tracks where they cross over the bike lanes should be further explored. In the long-term, removal of the old rail tracks should be explored.
- Between Indiana Avenue and Ellenfield Street, the vehicular travel lanes should be reduced from 12' in width to 11' and the parking lanes should be reduced from 10' in width to 8'. The extra 6' should then be divided evenly to create buffer zones between the bike lanes and the vehicular travel lanes as illustrated in Attachment A.
- Various options for the improvement of bike lanes north of Ellenfield Street should be further studied and implemented as part of this project. At a minimum the following recommendations should be incorporated into the project:
 - North of Ellenfield Street to Thurbers Avenue, the four vehicular travel lanes should be reduced from 12' each to 11'. The extra four feet should then be divided evenly to create buffer zones between the bike lanes and the vehicular travel lanes.
 - The southbound bike lane appears to disappear near the Thurber Avenue intersection. Approaching and through the Thurbers Avenue intersection, bike lanes should be improved by increasing their width, adding bike lane stencil marking and signage, and dashing the bike lane through the Thurbers intersection.
 - North of Thurbers Avenue, the four vehicular travel lanes should be reduced from 12' each to 11'. The extra four feet should then be divided evenly to create buffer zones between the bike lanes and the vehicular travel lanes as illustrated in Attachment B.
 - Between Public and Blackstone streets, the 9' and 6' wide shoulder/bike lane areas should be stenciled and signed consistently as bike lanes to avoid confusion and unsafe conditions for bicyclists. In addition to reducing the four vehicular travel lanes from 12' each to 11' each and stenciling and signing the shoulder areas as bike lanes, the bike lanes should each be 6' wide with 3.5' wide buffer zones between the vehicular travel lanes and the bike lanes.
- Alternately, more robust protections for bicyclists (as illustrated in Attachment B) should be considered for inclusion in the portion of the project north of Ernest Street to Globe Street, such as the creation of a two-way protected bike lane on the eastern side of the street, where there are few intersections. A two-way protected bike lane could be developed in phases to lower initial costs for the project: the initial phase could include striping of the buffer area and placement of flexible delineators within the buffer, while a future phase of the project could include the more costly construction of curbing and plantings in the buffer area.

A motion to approve the above recommendations was made by Alex Krogh-Grabbe. Jef Nickerson seconded the motion.

A member of the public, Kevin Proft, asked for clarification regarding the process for these recommendations. Ms. Haggerty clarified and confirmed that a staff report from DPD staff is generated for each project that comes before the BPAC for review, noting that a staff report is distributed to BPAC members in advance of each Commission meeting. The recommendations for improvements to the project outlined in the staff report are discussed at the Commission meeting by the BPAC members. Additions or alterations to the recommendations from the staff report are then voted on by the BPAC members at the meeting and a letter is then sent from the BPAC Chair to Russ Knight, the Director of DPW as well as Bonnie Nickerson the Director of Planning with the recommendations as approved at the meeting.

All voted in favor of the previous motion.

Mr. Weis introduced the next agenda item, Francis Street mid-block crossing improvements. Ms. Haggerty gave an overview of RIDOT's preliminary design plans for a new mid-block crossing across Francis Street to improve pedestrian safety between the main entrance of Providence Place Mall and Station Park and also summarized the DPD staff recommendations for alterations to this project. Ms. Haggerty noted that there was not yet funding in place for implementation of this project and that the goal of this meeting was to gather feedback from the BPAC and public in order to improve the plans so that they are ready to be implemented once funding is made available for the project. Features of RIDOT's plans highlighted by Ms. Haggerty included the creation of a new mid-block crossing, adjustments to the RIPTA pull over lane adjacent to the Mall, and improvements to the areas allocated to RIPTA for bus stops on either side of Francis Street at this location. After further discussion of this agenda item, the BPAC made the following recommendations:

- The scope of the project should be expanded to include:
 - The improvement of and possible reduction in width of the traffic island median from the proposed pedestrian crossing location, north to the intersection of Francis and Gaspee streets;
 - Bringing in the curb along the western (mall-side) edge of Francis Street in order to reduce the width of the vehicular travel lanes and the length of the existing pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Francis and Gaspee streets; and,
 - Accommodations for bicyclists (such as a bike lane and creation of a right turn only lane) headed north on Francis Street at the intersection of Francis and Gaspee streets to improve safety for bicyclists.

The Commission members also discussed the possibility of either a roundabout or other reconfiguration of the intersection of Hayes/Francis/Gaspee. After additional discussion, a motion to approve the above recommendations was made by Jef Nickerson. Michelle Cortes-Harkins seconded the motion. All voted in favor. After further discussion, another motion was made by Jef Nickerson to request that a future meeting be dedicated to a discussion of the Francis/Hayes/Gaspee intersection and that a the City request that RIDOT conduct a Road Safety Assessment (RSA) for the Francis/Gaspee intersection to further study the above recommendations and other ideas to improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians. Michelle Cortes-Harkins seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Due to the late time, the Commission agreed to postpone discussion of the potential improvements to Tobey and Ridge streets as well as the discussion about the potential improvements to streets surrounding the new LINK District waterfront parks and Providence River Pedestrian Bridge. Mr. Krogh-Grabbe asked Mr. Weis if the Commission could perhaps think about a process to prevent agenda items from being continually postponed at BPAC meetings due to time constraints. Mr. Weis and other Commission members discussed the possibility of extending the length of future BPAC meetings to allow more time for discussion of projects.

Mr. Weis asked for any announcements or staff updates as part of the final agenda item. Ms. Haggerty announced the postponement of the 6-10 Connector public meeting which was previously scheduled for this week. The new date for that meeting is planned to be August 30, 2016. Flyers for the meeting will be distributed closer to that date. She also briefly discussed the City's intent to apply for the People for Bikes Big Jump opportunity and asked Commission members to think about potential areas of interest for the application prior to the application due date in October and invited Commission members or other interested members of the public to attend a Road Safety Audit walk through that would occur on August 1 at both the Elmwood/Atlantic intersection and Canal/Park Row intersection. Mr. Urso announced the Road Safety Audit planned for Mount Pleasant Avenue in September.

The meeting adjourned at 6:19 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Martina Haggerty.