

Burlington Walk Bike Council (BWBC)

May 1st, 2024 Meeting Notes

The monthly meeting took place 5:30- 7:00 pm via Zoom and at the DPW Office.

In-Person Attendees: Erik Brotz (South End), Gordon Dragoon, Phillip Peterson (DPW), Jak Tiano, Bob Leidy, Jonathon Weber (Local Motion), Serrill Flash, Bruce Wilson, Kel Richards

Online Attendees: Jason Stuffie

1. Introductions, Announcements, Updates and Public Comments

There was an update meeting on the Railyard Enterprise Project at the same time as this one. Not sure of the status of that project; they have not decided on the intersection design yet.

Parks is in charge of closing the bike path

- **We should having a meeting with them** to see if they have a “traffic control plan” for closing the bike path for event and whatever else comes to mind
- Deryk Roach & Max Madalinski would be good representatives
- Phillip says that this was something that came up for the Rock Point Bridge in the near future

Bob did a walking audit with AARP and the Old East End Neighborhood Coalition group on the Winooski bridge project, the net conclusion is that cars are going too fast. Which is a shame because it's a beautiful area.

- Wanted to announce that all cars sold in 5 years need to have auto-braking connected to infrared imaging. Kinda neat
- Questions around the rotary and how the roads are going to be setup
- Jak wanted a summary on the bridge meeting that happened about a month back
 - Erik: There was an idea shared from the project team that widened the bridge by another foot, to let it be 5/5/5 ped/bike on the west side and 10 on the east side.
 - Jonathon: Pressed on what the colchester ave -> Winooski looks like. Advocated for a raised lane. Thinks the reception was lukewarm sad to say
 - They also discussed the alignment of the bridge and how it might be up to the contractor (??). We discussed how it is bad to leave it up to the contractor
 - Phillip tells us that it won't be less than 11 feet because of truck traffic
 - Serrill wanted to bring up the pedestrian fatality on the bridge about 8 years ago, and thinks that this bolsters the argument for a single lane roundabout (Note this was actually 2012 - <https://www.mynbc5.com/article/man-struck-while-crossing-vt-street-dies/3302264>)
 - Bruce: *Could bring up some bridge concerns with Bryan Davis at the CCRPC meeting on 5/7/2024*

2. Discussion with DPW (60 min)

We'll have a discussion with DPW about ways to more rapidly improve conditions for active transportation in Burlington. Some particular questions for the discussion (in Green):

Phillip had a presentation with responses to the questions; a copy will be posted with the minutes.

With the change in administrations, what is DPW thinking about changing in terms of how it approaches development of active transportation infrastructure?

Remain committed to advancing active transportation, but their first priority is to build a relationship with the new administration because there are quite a few unknowns with how they are going to approach the problem. Planning an E-bike tour with the council (and the mayor hopefully) with Julia and will hopefully showcase the infrastructure firsthand.

What would DPW like to change in order to be more effective and faster in development of active transportation infrastructure? What does DPW need in order to make those changes, and how can BWBC assist you?

Naturally, currently there are funding challenges. There is also a sentiment that a lot of the “low hanging fruit” has already been achieved. The big projects that they want to happen require a lot of political will and funding, though DPW is willing to fight for these things. The Main Street protected bike lane is an example.

They've explored what some quick builds could look like. This requires significant maintenance and a **volunteer task force for maintenance** would be one way for BWBC to help.

We have a grant for hardening the Greenway in Old North End

- Phillip: North Champlain protected bike lane and a demonstration project on Battery will happen if we can get the safe-streets grant. Additionally there will be a stretch of protection in front of Cambrian Rise on North Ave
- Erik: What are those volunteer tasks that help is needed with?
 - Phillip: When you put in amenities things tend to gather around it. Refuse, needles, graffiti and such.
- Gordon: How can we make the tactical urbanism stuff more agile?
 - Phillip: There is always a fight when you remove parking for a small amount at time. As a solution we could potentially use “construction permits” for this type of project? So with an improved temporary traffic control plan and some temporary paint would such a thing be feasible? Will bring this idea up internally.
- Erik: It sounds like we have two things. Finding tasks that need to be done by volunteers and those volunteers themselves. The other is making the process for these quick-build projects a lot easier.

How does DPW respond to crashes?

They collaborate with BPD to analyze the police report and see what happens and identify engineering solutions to prevent future crashes. For example, the driver in the recent North Ave crash with a pedestrian in a crosswalk may have been distracted (e.g. with a device). Also the pedestrian may have stepped in front of traffic without waiting for it to stop. So there may be an educational element for pedestrians. Bob suggested putting something in the crosswalk that tells pedestrians what the proper behavior is. But also some roads like North Ave seem like it's more possible to use a device, while on others it is less likely because drivers know they need to pay attention.

The current challenge is capturing unreported bike/ped crashes and "close calls". Discussed if they could collect data from the hospital to see if there are things that go unreported there, though there are naturally issues with confidentiality.

- Jonathon: Thinks this could potentially be a standing item for the BWBC. If there is a crash that occurs we bring it up and do a retrospective on it.
 - Phillip: There is a delay that happens because of some of the police reports, but this is certainly something that is feasible.
- Bob: Could see-click-fix be used to report close-calls?
 - Jonathon: Is this data that even needs to be captured, or could we just use the data we have on crashes?
 - Phillip says the data on close calls would be useful. Generally though that SCF could be used but wanted to check.
- Gordon: Could we do a bike audit for determining the perceived safety of different areas of the city? That can be a pretty good rough estimate for how many close-calls were around an area, at least maybe.
- Phillip: When it comes to data collection the hardest part is building the system, and we have one.
- Erik: There are two ideas here, one to use see-click-fix to report close-calls and such and the other is to do the volunteer audit for perceived safety walk/bike. We could pursue both.
- Jonathon: The CCRPC has [a map on traffic stress](#) for State roads.
- Phillip: There is an "Eco-Counter" that counts bikes and pedestrians down near the skatepark. We also learned that they are capable of data mining the data in see-click-fix

Eclipse and Main Street closure retrospective: What can/is DPW learning from these street closures? How can those learnings be applied to how the City operates?

The effort and staff time for preparing for the eclipse was fairly substantial. Assumed our intent with the question was looking into how the closure of streets could work, but thinks that the parallel might not be quite there as the amount of work was fairly large.

- Jak: Many of these different projects can serve as a demonstration of what the expected impact is for various changes. With the amount of street closures that occurred during

the eclipse (and that are occurring right now, Main Street for example), are we collecting data on the results of those closures? Described the eclipse as a lovely experience overall.

- Phillip: Discussing transportation data. We don't have it for biking at all and it's not ideal. There is currently stuff in the works for that. In terms of vehicles we use AADT (Annual average daily traffic), and sadly when we do these projects there are not the resources to collect the necessary information.
- After continued conversation, Phillip continued to say that this is not a trivial process and it isn't easy to achieve. Especially with only 6 people in the engineering department. There's a sentiment that our existing data collection and traffic software is in the stone-age, it's difficult to upgrade though with the current budget shortfalls.
- *Could be something that we collect anecdotally, as the BWBC or otherwise*
- Erik: To summarize, what are the decisions that are being made currently that we disagree with that we think extra data could help to avoid in the future
- We're going to come back to this question next month after Phillip talks to the engineers
- Jonathon: We've seen that we are capable of closing traffic on Main Street and still see things continue working, he'd be interested in seeing the attempt at closing things more occasionally just to see what happens.
- Continued conversation on what the goals are for this in the future, we discussed the closure of College Street.
- Bob: DPW is quite good at closing parts of the city. When he visited Rome they closed the city to cars for 1 day every month. Is this something feasible?

3. Future Topics for BWBC (15 min)

We'll solicit potential topics for future meetings - what do you think we should be focusing on?

Did not get to this agenda item specifically, but in course of above topic did discuss having on site audit/meeting to observe a specific area