

# Burlington Walk Bike Council (BWBC)

## July 10th, 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 (Chair), Phillip Peterson (DPW), Bob Leidy, Julia Ursaki (DPW), Laura Wheelock (DPW)

**Online Attendees:** Gordon Dragoon, Ali Hamedani, Jonathon Weber (Local Motion), Jason Stuffle

### 1. Introductions, Announcements, Updates and Public Comments

*Laura* got a promotion to City Engineer!

*Gordon*

A person on a bicycle was hit by a driver on the intersection of the bike path and Starr Farm. The community sentiment is that the bike path should have the right-of-way

*Phillip*

Pedestrian pilot zone on Stanbury has been approved. New North End sidewalk scoping study in progress, with a survey on potential new sidewalks.

<https://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/transportation/current-projects/scoping/burlington-new-north-end-sidewalks-scoping-study/>

In process of ordering rubber speed bumps which will be tested on Gosse Ct, Elmwood Ave, and Grove Ct. to see how well they work. They are much cheaper than standard (permanent) speed bumps.

*Laura*

Champlain Parkway update: Initial construction is wrapping up in August, Lakeside-Home connection should be accessible before that. A 30 day test of new signals for walk/bike/vehicles should occur within a month.

### 2. Reducing Downtown Speed Limits

Phillip

DPW is giving a presentation to the public works commission next week. (Next Wednesday at 6:30 PM). They are going to recommend 20 mph in the downtown core.

- There were concerns over whether or not a reduction in speed limit will be effective.
  - This is a single part of a larger picture, but enforcement would certainly be part of this.

### 3. Bank St. & Cherry St. Public Improvements

*Julia Ursaki* presented “Great Streets - Reconnecting Bank & Cherry”

A copy of the presentation can be found here (under “Other”):

<https://burlingtonvt.portal.civicclerk.com/event/7331/files/agenda/11275>

The project website is here: <https://greatstreetsbtv.com/gs-initiative/reconnecting-bank-cherry/>

Current iteration of the project is derived from the “Great Streets BTV (2018) ”plan.

#### Cherry Street

Currently it is wider than it needs to be. The current plan includes narrowing the travel lanes and parking lanes to expand the amenity and sidewalk zone. In some sections, one parking lane would be removed to allow for more planting and public gathering space.

#### Bank Street

The current plan is similar to Cherry St., but also includes turning it into a “festival street” with a flush curb and even narrower travel lanes (10’ 6”).

#### Pine Street and St. Paul St

New connections being added between Bank and Cherry. Pine Street goes under the Bank Street building (formerly was an entrance to the parking garage) with limited clearance. Both include narrow travel lanes and some on-street parking with sidewalks and amenity zones on both sides.

Schedule was linked at the end of the presentation. Expected to be done with design development in October 2024. Construction expected to start in 2026 for Cherry St.

#### Questions

- *Jonathon*: How does curbless work with parking on both sides? There’s concerns with pedestrians potentially not being protected as well as they could
  - Yes they are considering curb extensions on the edges. Also they think the verticality in the amenity zone will discourage high speeds.
  - Additionally considering bollards in the pedestrian zones
- *Bob*: Could one of the entrance/exits for the garage on Bank be removed?
- *Bob*: Could there be bollards that are removable/come out of the ground on the entrances to Bank/Cherry?
- *Bob*: Could there be a light pole over the sidewalk to help the lighting on Cherry St in particular?
  - The electrical department does the lighting. They have considered canopy placement relative to lighting.
  - These lights are similar to the ones on St. Paul Street. Less of a spotlight and should feel more natural.
  - Also trees should grow above lights as they age.

- *Bob*: On Pine, is there concern that the limited clearance will be missed and trucks will get stuck?
  - DPW thinks the clearance bar should be sufficient, and there are options for turning around
- *Jak*: On Bank Street specifically, but also overall, what is the design speed of these roads?
  - 15 is probably a fair estimate. Though 10 and 20 is reasonable at some points.
  - Some concern that 20 will be a bit fast on these streets
- *Ali*: Could these through-ways be made pedestrian only?
  - St. Paul: Bus access is going to be helpful here, so at the very least they'd like to allow those vehicles
  - Both these streets were made with parking garage entrances in mind
  - Pine Street: Will be quite different from our other downtown streets. No business frontage and high walls without windows makes it more of a transportation corridor and less appealing for pedestrians
- *Gordon*: Could the new streets be 1 way, north on Pine and south on St. Paul?
  - They have considered it but it won't be part of the first pass as it hasn't been realistically explored much. Could be looked at in the future.
- *Jason*: Is it necessary to add street parking at all on the additions to Pine and St. Paul?
  - Happy to see feedback on this. It's possible it won't be necessary. Currently the entire plan is parking-neutral with some parking removed on Bank and Cherry.
  - *Jak* echoed these thoughts
- *Jak*: There are currently not a lot of great spots for loading, trucks will just park in the roadway. Could we have a designated spot for truck loading and such instead of the current parking spots?
  - *Bob* echoed this point
- *Jak*: Is the finishing of Pine going to line up with the completion of the Railyard enterprise project? Concerned about Champlain Parkway traffic going north through new Pine St connection.
  - Tentative finish of parkway is June 2026
  - Railyard project timing is uncertain
  - Pine St connection is expected to be complete in 2028.
  - So there may be a gap when Pine St is open and Railyard is not complete. DPW appreciated this observation.
- *Jonathon*: Bank probably offers the best opportunity for pedestrianization.
  - Similar to the conversation about one way, the current design leaves a chance to do that if that's the direction the city wants to go.
  - *Follow up*: Would it be a huge funding issue if the city council changes on this?
  - Potentially. Most of the concern is that outreach and community conversations haven't occurred yet.
- *Erik*: Bicycle facilities are limited to sharrows, do we like that?
  - General feeling was that because of the slow speeds it's probably sufficient

## 4. Bicycle & Pedestrian Ordinance Changes

Last year we proposed some changes or elimination of several ordinances related to walking and biking. We [sent a letter](#) outlining our proposal to members of the Transportation, Energy, and Utilities (TEUC) committee of the City Council, and followed up a couple times but did not hear back.

Phillip says that public vetting needs to occur before ordinances change, which is why TEUC is a good starting point. But these changes could start anywhere so long as it was public. DPW has been having internal discussion around ebike definitions, so they'd like to flesh out that discussion a little bit more. The changes will have to go through the Ordinance Committee anyway, so the process could also start with them.

Recently it has also been suggested that we propose an additional change to the ordinances: removal of a requirement that cyclists riding on a sidewalk come to a complete stop before crossing the street. When a child on a bicycle crossing a street from the sidewalk was hit by a car recently, this ordinance was used as a reason not to ticket the driver. The ordinance can be found as item 6-3 - (e) [here](#).

All members present agreed to add the removal of this ordinance to the proposed changes. No members objected. DPW abstained.

Our current plan is to update the proposal documents, and to send them to the ordinance committee, and then attend a committee meeting to present our proposal.

Phillip can be our liaison here, talking to other city staff to figure out if this process works.