

Burlington Walk Bike Council (BWBC)

December 4th, 2024 Meeting Notes

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

In-Person Attendees: Phillip Peterson (DPW), Erik Brotz*, Bob Leidy, Gabe Nelson, Marty Gilles, Liza Boyle, Ellery Ames, Clayton Dykstra, Laura Wheelock (DPW), Maddy Suender (DPW), Hannah Page, Max Medina

Online Attendees: Jonathon Weber (Local Motion)*, Serrill Flash

* BWBC Coordinating Committee members

A recording of the meeting can be found here:

https://zoom.us/rec/share/mHu12vphqhMiM5AnvdmmEpTkkVZuyIG3MXq6_ku2_iTjq8PoJDYqTuxlxixcBzur.bPrLlaq0bgoYN4WQ

1. Announcements & Updates

VPOP will be hosting a 2 year anniversary at the secret bowling alley under St. Mark's Church next Saturday, December 14th at 5:45 PM.

2. Winooski Bridge

Update from City Engineer Laura Wheelock

Schedule is currently just after the "Commitments and Clearances" stage, in mid-2025 we will start the Solicitations of Contractors step.

Construction won't start until 2027, which is apparently quick for a federal project. (\$90 million dollars in investments)

As a review, they have expanded the mixed use path for active transit on the western side of the bridge from 12' to 15'.

The lanes will stick at 11', there has been a lot of conversation on this point but the planners have determined it isn't safe to go lower than this at this time.

Federal funding doesn't extend to facilities beyond the intersection sadly, so it's difficult to use the funding for connections to active transit further up the hill on Colchester Ave.

Considering adding an under bridge path on the Burlington side, there are concerns that the Burlington side isn't as active as the Winooski side and this could lead to bad behavior and/or be a waste of money.

There is a councilor concerned about turning left towards Burlington from Mill Street that is considering turning the project down without it.

It seems as if the only prescriptions to this problem are taking the intersection or if they are members of Chase Mill they can take the private road.

December 16th is when the councilors will be voting on this project, if they vote no then we will lose our federal funding.

Next Wednesday the 11th at 4:30 PM at Main Street landing there is going to be an open house.

Some concerns from people on whether or not it is worthwhile. Feels as if we are missing a chance to do something more in the future. DPW thinks the proposed project is a big improvement over what we have currently and that not doing it now would be a big mistake. Question on if our federal delegation can change the rules for what the funding can go to; the response was that the feds have been denying funding because of scope creep so that is probably not viable.

3. Shelburne Road Response

Context: A recent fatality has led community members to ask for change to the Shelburne Road corridor to improve safety. We are curious to know the City's response to this call for action.

Phillip:

We don't know what the final conditions of this road will be as the Champlain Parkway isn't complete yet. A lack of data makes it difficult to make informed decisions. Nothing to move forward with yet essentially.

The idea of doing a Shelburne Road corridor study is something that DPW has considered for a number of years. They've consciously made the decision with CCRPC to wait until after the Champlain Parkway is complete. They have done other work to support alternatives, like adding bike lanes to Pine St. They are also working on improvements to the Shelburne/Home/Farrell intersection and moving forward with Home Ave bike lanes next year.

All that said, there has been data collection on this road as recently as this summer. They have some data that they are able to start analyzing, but they haven't had a chance to review it quite yet. They currently have support of the CCRPC to do a full corridor study of Shelburne Road.

Question on the timeline: Parkway will complete June 2026, after that they could start collecting data as soon as three months after the opening. If they did a corridor study right now it would almost certainly say that Shelburne Street needs 2 lanes in each direction.

Question on whether or not we could purposefully reduce traffic capacity on this road to encourage bus use. But this is apparently difficult because our buses are privately owned and that makes coordination quite difficult. It would be a problem if the transit was not able to make up the difference.

4. PlanBTV Walk/Bike Action Plan

Phillip:

They are working on a priority list of projects to include in the plan.

Lighting analysis for walk/bike (the ONE was called out, specifically Archibald)

Intersections are in need of improvement, there are some small investments that can happen to make them a lot safer

Need to start collecting data on “Near misses” so we can better understand the danger-level of areas for walkers/bikers. Can maybe use existing cameras used to detect cars and bikes for signals to collect data.

The DPW team will be discussing the full list in more detail and then there will be a Project Advisory Committee meeting later this month to finalize the list. Also Phillip should be sending the notes that he had taken.

[PlanBTV website](#) has a survey on where changes need to be made [here](#)

We want to back up to discuss the timeline and such, basically why was it pushed back to 2040. The answer is that they are trying to be realistic about the timing of these things. Basically things have been delayed a whole lot because city councilors are reactive to residents that are against some of the changes being put into place. They talked to the consultant helping put together the action plan and did their own review and basically things won't happen as quickly as they'd like.

The things hold them back are A) Funding and B) Politics.

PAC meeting on December 19th at 9:00 AM - Not public though

Comments

Comment: Can we change the process for feedback to not require resident review for minor things? Or change the process to make that sort of review a bit quicker?

Phillip: DPW has reviewed this question. There have been thoughts that perhaps they did too much public engagement on some of the projects in the past. It seems that a lot of the negative feedback they get is not aligned with reality. But that's democracy.

Comment: Is there a way that we could come to city council with an “annual slate” of projects so our reps have a better understanding on the interconnectedness of a system instead of needing an explicit review of each project?

Phillip doesn't think it's a bad idea

There's a lot of projects that aren't “huge” like Battery Street and all that. Using Locust as an example, everyone in that neighborhood thinks that cars drive too fast. Instead of putting the onus on DPW or the council could the NPAs be empowered to help address those concerns?

Phillip: We have that ability with community-led demonstration projects. He can help move things through the process.

Comment: maybe DPW could reintroduce the community-led demonstration project process to NPAs.

Comment: Wondering if Complete Streets is a good direction for this.

Comment: can we establish milestones to ensure progress is being made on the plan instead of getting to the end and realizing that goals were not met?

Phillip: Considering using Accelerated Mobility Playbook. Basically they talk to stakeholders and then they lay out what needs to happen on a year-by-year basis (and 5 and 10 years). This playbook is more concerned with the entirety of moving around Burlington/the region and can help visualize things at a higher-level.

Comment: maybe street markings could be repainted twice a year instead of once (or not even once a year sometimes).

Phillip: The streets team used to have a large contingent of summer staff that was reduced during COVID and hasn't recovered. Alan Bastar is always looking for people on the traffic team.

Comment: The nature of bike facilities in Burlington right now means that occasionally you are going to be in a spot you don't want to be. I.E. things can transition from a protected lane to a sharrow or nothing at all pretty quickly.

Comment: South Burlington is doing their walk/bike plan right now and have 79 projects that need to be done, ordered by need. We should either work with them with our priority list or do something alongside them.