

Burlington Walk Bike Council (BWBC)

December 6, 2023 Meeting Notes

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

In-Person Attendees: Erik Brotz, Jak Tiano, Daisy May, Gordon Dragoon, Jason Stuffle, Bob Leidy, Faith Ingulsrud, and DPW Staff Julia Ursaki, Olivia Darisse, Laura Wheelock.

Online Attendees: Jonathan Weber (Local Motion), Michael Arnold, and Peter Keating.

1. Introductions, Announcements, Updates and Public Comments

Bob Leidy and others expressed concern about the Winooski Bridge design project, following up on last month's discussion about it, noting issues with both the intersection on the Burlington side and the proposed design for the bridge itself. Laura pointed out some of the site constraints that are driving the current design. The bridge design will be the main topic of discussion at the BWBC meeting in January.

Erik announced that he will be serving as the BWBC representative on the Shelburne St./Home Ave intersection scoping study.

Julia responded to a question about the status of the Plan BTV Walk-Bike update. DPW decided not to try to do a Vision Zero plan at this time because it adds a lot of requirements and coordination that is more than what is needed for the short term to obtain grant funding. The approach is to prepare an update that is an Action Plan for accessing Federal infrastructure funds and help reset safety standards (like pedestrian delays at intersections). The existing Plan BTV recommends a long list of projects but now that we have done some of the low hanging projects and have more information 6 years later, the city is in a better position to pick top priorities for federal funding. She noted that the DPW already incorporates Vision Zero into their own planning, and still intends to pursue a city-wide Vision Zero plan in the future.

2. Changes to Main Street (Great Streets) Design and Construction

Olivia gave a short presentation on the changes that the city council approved for the Great Streets project on Main Street. Due to bids coming in much higher than estimated, the decision was made to phase the project and go forward with construction on only the three blocks between South Winooski and Pine Streets. Phase I will also include the ravine sewer. The City hopes to line up federal funding for Phase 2, completing the streetscape improvements to Battery, and hoping that construction on Memorial Auditorium can help contribute to the completion to South Union. S.D. Ireland won the contract and expects to start work in January with the ravine sewer at Church and King. The following changes were discussed:

- Intersections at Pine St. and S. Winooski, the bike lane will be merging into the street; the signal will have a leading pedestrian interval so bikes will be able to go through the intersection ahead of motorized traffic along with pedestrians
- Parking on lower Main will change to parallel (as planned in original scope) to allow for a 5' wide bike lane next to the parked cars between Pine St. and Battery St.

Questions and comments about the construction work should go to Natalie Boyle, the public engagement contractor.

Jonathon asked whether the travel lanes could be narrower than 12'. Laura noted the need to accommodate emergency vehicles but said once the Parkway issues are resolved, there will be an opportunity to reexamine the street design for lower Main.

Other discussion points:

- Whether protected bike lanes were being considered for the Burlington connection to the new bridge over I-89. Laura said they have not yet been planned and noted that's something to address in the new Action Plan. She said the city is aware that it needs to focus more on regional walk-bike connections now that surrounding municipalities are engaged in their own walk-bike improvements.
- Would it be possible to only have on-street parking on one side of lower Main St? Laura noted that businesses will already be stressed from the construction and being left out of streetscape improvements, so the City isn't ready to irritate them further by proposing to remove more parking spaces than they already are.
- Given how expensive these big projects like Great Streets are, is there a way the city can shift to doing more with cheap projects that can improve walking and biking? Laura suggested that this could be a good topic for a joint TEUC and Public Works Commission meeting.

3. Mayoral Candidate Survey

Jonathon presented proposed survey questions based on those used for the last election. Given that public safety is the primary concern for city voters, discussed ways to frame walk-bike questions that focus on that.

After making edits based on discussion, all agreed that the Coordinating Committee should finalize the survey.

The meeting adjourned at 7 pm.