

Minutes of the PBAC meeting of May 22, 2014.

Present:

Steve Kruse, Sam Bunting, Deanna Stockton, Anita Jeerage, Laurie Harmon, David Cohen.

Visitors

Lisa Serieyssol, Mike Suber, Dan Rappoport

Absent:

Liz Lempert, Carolyn Sealton

Note: Karen Jezierney has retired from the committee.

1. Review of past events:

- Ciclovía. Question about whether the event is worth the trouble for 60-75 participants. Points / ideas to consider: improve marketing, do the event more regularly, build links with partner organizations, risk of bad weather, add food trucks, do it on a road closer to downtown, for example Faculty Road, which is a private road which must be closed at least once a year.
- The Wheels Rodeo required relatively little investment from PBAC for organizing. Lisa Serieyssol pointed out that students all received a flyer about the Wheels Rodeo, which is an effective publicity tool, and suggested that PBAC might solicit the schools so that publicity information about future Ciclovías could also be distributed to students.

Possible future events”

- Possibility of promoting PBAC at Princeton ‘Community Night Out’ on August 5. Deanna has reserved a table. August 5. Anita, Sam and Lisa are interested in participating.
- Deanna will attend the John-Witherspoon MS PTO meeting next Friday at 8.30 a.m. to help establish links with parents and students about cycling. Sam will try to attend.

2. Engagement of University Community and other bodies in PBAC

Steve expressed the desire to capture more input from the University, particularly among the urban planning department in planning cycling issues in Princeton. There is also a potential opportunity to reach out to the Recreation Department to plan trails together.

3. Paper Bike Map Project

The town commissioned a map with Nat Case, a professional cartographer, to represent cycling routes in Princeton. The Middlesex County ‘Bike Suitability’ map is like what we are aiming for. There was some discussion about what should be included in the map.

It will include information about sidepaths, sharrows, bike-rack availability and bike-friendly roads.

Action item: Steve will advise Nat about the reach of the map, to ensure it includes key sites such as Princeton Junction station and Princeton North shopping center.

4. Engineering Update

- Deanna reported that John Bucchieri of the police safe neighborhoods unit had advised her that it would not generally be possible to assign priority to cyclists on sidepaths when they cross intersections with sidestreets. He will also work to start removing broken-down bicycles from bike-racks downtown.

Mike Suber advised the committee that in the past, serious accidents occurred involving cyclists on asphalt sidepaths and automobiles entering driveways. These accidents happened when the motorist “didn’t see” the cyclist. In these cases, the police could not assign fault because of a lack of specific direction in Title 39. Mr Suber urged the committee that if cyclists are expected to ride on sidewalks or sidepaths, then they ought to have legal protection.

Deanna advised the committee that the former Township and Borough ordinances were being harmonized and there might be an opportunity to strengthen protections at that point.

- Valley Road will be improved next year (2015) thanks to a NJDOT grant and one possibility is that there will be bidirectional bike lanes at that location. Another idea is to widen sidewalks on Valley Road to accommodate shared use with bicycles and pedestrians. No specific plans exist at this point.

Mike Suber presented a scale drawing of Valley Road. He stated that the road is 30-ft wide, and that there is sufficient space to add bike lanes. Laurie Harmon stated that she greatly preferred on-street bike lanes instead of sidepaths were possible, because sidepaths are likely to be used for bidirectional bicycle use, and this creates too many conflicts between cyclists going in each direction and pedestrians and dog-walkers.

- Park Place / Vandeventer – this project is ongoing but has been complicated by unexpected abandoned gas lines and other hazards in the project zone.

- Deanna also reported that she had discussed with the municipal administrator about placing 13 bicycle racks at 7 locations in downtown Princeton, including two covered sites at the Spring Street parking garage. The municipal administrator will consider these sites for new bicycle racks at the same time as considering placement of other street furniture including new recycling cans. The possibility of adding a bike corral at a decommissioned parking bay at Chambers and Hulfish Street was raised (a matter arising from the full Traffic and Transportation committee). Deanna will pursue the possibility of adding a bike corral at this location in the upcoming meeting of the Public Works committee and the Traffic and Transportation sub-committee.

- Hamilton Avenue, Prospect Avenue and Mt Lucas Rd capital engineering projects. Deanna advised the committee that Hamilton and Prospect will be put out to tender first. The Prospect traffic calming measures will be “pilot-ed” with temporary measures to ensure that they fit with school bus movements and the neighborhood. Neighborhood meetings will be scheduled- potentially before school lets out. Mt Lucas is in survey now. Deanna has advised the neighbors that there will be a neighborhood meeting in September.

There was further discussion about potential bicycle improvements as part of the Hamilton project, which includes the blocks between Harrison and Snowden. The previous plan for this project included an on-street cycle lane on the south side heading out of town, and a shared-use sidepath on the north side heading toward town. There was consensus among the PBAC members that bi-directional on-street cycle lanes would be safer for cyclists and pedestrians relative to a sidepath. The committee noted that there was resistance to the idea of on-street cycle lanes from certain elected officials because of a perceived need for on-street parking.

The committee unanimously agreed that

1. Bi-directional on-street cycle lanes are the preferred alternative for cycle improvements on Hamilton Avenue between Harrison and Snowden.
2. If dedicated street space for bi-directional cycle lanes will not be allocated, the best alternative would be one dedicated on-street lane to be added on the north side of Hamilton heading toward town, with a striped shoulder on the south side heading out of town. In this case, the striped shoulder on the south side would not be specifically dedicated to cyclists, and would also be available for on-street car parking. (This side of the street is available for on-street parking under the existing conditions). A shared-use sidepath would also be added on the south side of Hamilton in the project area. Under this contingency, the layout of the cartway would be as follows (north to south) 5-ft dedicated bike lane; 10-ft travel lane; 10-ft travel lane; 5-ft striped shoulder. In the case where a 5-ft shoulder lane was insufficient to meet parking code, the striped shoulder would be increased to 7-ft and the centerline would disappear.

- Safe Routes to School grant

Deanna is working on a \$300,000 application for traffic signals on North Harrison Street to benefit students walking to JW middle school and the Princeton Charter School.

- Deanna will email a PDF version of the PBAC bike plan to Steve Kruse.

5. Goals of the Planning Sub-committee

Steve presented about potential goals of the planning sub-committee, which are to:

1. Produce a paper map of local good places to cycle, and
2. Produce a 'bike masterplan' document. Steve went through sections for a potential bike masterplan, including conceptual maps of how a built-out plan would afford connectivity through the town. There was consensus that the final plan would be based on the official municipal map.

6. Other business

- Planning; there was some discussion about broad goals of PBAC. No formal action was taken.

- Mike Suber presented a Proclamation from Princeton Township and Borough from 1992, indicating that May 19, 1992 would be a 'Car-Free Day'. He donated this Proclamation to Deanna, who agreed to retain it on behalf of the engineering department.

The meeting was adjourned at 9.20 p.m.

Next meeting: June 26, 2014