

SOMERVILLE BICYCLE COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES: August 26, 2003

ATTENDEES: Jim Gallagher, Vice Chair, presiding; Jim Hodgdon- Somerville Police Dept.,
Ron Newman, Tuck O'Brien-OHCD, Greg Palmer, Bhupesh
Patel-Secretary, Domenic Siraco, Jr.
Guests: Paul Estin- Watertown Bicycle Committee, Bryce Nesbit- Friends of the
Community Path

1. **City Report**

Active Living by Design demonstration program, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, accepted a proposal by a Somerville consortium (including Groundwork Somerville, Friends of the Community Path, city Health Dept., OHCD, Mass. Alliance of Portuguese Speakers) to be considered in competition for one of 25 five-year grants (\$200,000 per grant). Bryce explained that a portion of the grant would fund a Pedestrian/Bicycle Coordinator for the City. Awards will be announced in September.

Lowell St. Bridges replacement should be advertised by MassHighway by the end of Sept., according to Tuck; the design includes a curb cut for future access to the industrial area west of the bridges. He will get plans, with the curb cut design, from the DPW for the Committee to review. Jim H. mentioned that the burned out street light between the bridges will be replaced by either NStar or the City once the Jersey barriers are moved aside for access.

Community Path design by Vollmer Assoc. is moving forward after issues of insurance and right of access to the railroad right-of-way were resolved.

2. **Beacon Street**

Drainage project is starting in September and will take one year to complete (new pipes to store storm water during heavy rains); street will be repaved only in the project limits: Miller St. to Museum St.

Reconstruction project plans, from Oxford St. to the city limits just outside Inman Square, Cambridge, were reviewed by the Infrastructure subcommittee at DPW offices, reported Greg. They are still at 25% (from 1999), but 75% plans are expected very shortly; Tuck will notify the Committee when they are received by the City. Construction is not expected to begin until 2005. Greg said that there is no money to do any interim repaving of street, whose surface is badly deteriorated; Tuck said the City is developing a pavement management plan that would try to address some of these citywide roadway issues. He suggested that the SBC contact DPW about temporary patches on Beacon St.

3. **Somerville Avenue**

Reconstruction plans (75%) for the Avenue were looked at; they were originally reviewed by the ad hoc bicycle committee back in 1999. Bryce suggested a "bike box" area for bikes to wait at the Mossland Ave. traffic light be painted, something that could be done by the city outside of the project. Bike lanes will run most of the length of the Avenue, from Union Square up to the Beacon St. bridge, but not the segment from the bridge to the Cambridge city limits at Porter Square because the street narrows down at this point; lanes could be added later as part of the proposed air rights development over the commuter rail tracks. Overall lane widths are (in meters): 1.5/bike, 2.5/ parking, 3.5/travel. Greg explained that the 4 foot-11 inch bike lane width is slightly wider than current MassHighway standards (1.25m.), and was designed before the current concerns about cyclists being "doored" while riding too close to parked motor vehicles.

Committee comments:

- Add second dashed line (it's single now) in bike lane in front of Massive Video (Park/Central sts.)
- Paint diamonds and stencils before and after Park St. intersection
- Bike-sensitive detector loops should be added to the left turn lane on Somerville Ave., westbound, at Park St.
- Dash the bike lane lines on Somerville Ave., westbound, before Dane St., where there is a left turn lane

- Make the crosswalk at Lowell St./Sacramento St. pedestrian underpass area perpendicular to the Avenue
- Add a crosswalk at Church St. near Market Basket
- Dash bike lane lines just before Washington St. (there is a left turn lane at this intersection)

It was also asked why the crosswalks are stamped asphalt, instead of the more visible "zebra" or "ladder" paint?

Tuck will get a catalogue to look at the unfamiliar bike rack specified in the plans; Committee guidelines prefer the inverted U rack.

4. **Bicycle counts**, part of the City's transportation element in the state Community Development Plan will be done during three weeks in September, on a Tues./Wed/Thurs. schedule, during the AM and PM rush; Tuck presented the location list, to which the Committee added Beacon at Washington sts. Bhupesh will coordinate volunteers. Bryce is planning a research study survey in Davis Square to determine what how far people walk/bike/bus to get to the square; Jim G. suggested asking if they use the path.

5. **MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) letter** from the SBC in regards to future transportation projects and programming was reviewed; Ron asked to add the Amelia Earhart Dam crossing of the Mystic River as a project, and to mention the Route 28/Fellsway Bridge undercrossing as well; Bruce suggested bulleting points for emphasis, and to mention projects that are eligible for Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funding. Bhupesh will email the revised letter to MPO by the deadline on August 27.

6. **Miscellaneous**

- Federal Transportation bill: Jim G. reported that the House version would no longer require states to spend 10% of their Enhancement moneys (which helps fund multi-use paths); instead it would be optional (they could spend the money on any transportation project). The Mass. delegation is strongly in favor of keeping the requirement.

- Bhupesh continues his work on the city bike rack inventory.

- Tuck requested that the Committee's bicycle guidelines document be wrapped up by the end of September; the DPW and Traffic & Parking Dept. should get a "technical" version. He reported that DPW City Engineer Joan Lastovica is very excited to be getting the guidelines.

- Porter Square Request For Proposals (RFP) for air rights development over the commuter rail tracks was issued by the MBTA, reported Tuck; only 2 responses were received, and both were rejected. The RFP process will start over, and the T will meet with Somerville and Cambridge again about the process. Bhupesh summarized some SBC concerns, including funding Somerville Ave. amenities (see #3, Somerville Avenue, above); opening up access from Mass. Ave., Cambridge, to Somerville for peds and bikes; Porter Sq. Red Line headhouse redesign. Greg added he'd like to see a study of turning Mossland Ave. into a cul-de-sac, with access for bicycles to and from Somerville Ave.

- Greg recapped the SBC's presence at the Foss Park "Take Bake The Greenspace" event; community attendance was spotty, but bike route maps and literature was handed out and gladly accepted.

- Bryce mentioned that MassHighway has plans for a 25% design meeting this fall for the Belmont/Cambridge/Somerville enhancement project (Linear Park/Davis Sq. crossing/busway/Grove to Cedar sts. path).

The next meeting of the Committee will be on Tuesday, September 23, 2003, location TBA.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.