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MINUTES

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee of the Transportation Policy Advisory Committee

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee of the Transportation Policy Advisory Committee met virtually at 4:30 p.m., on September 9, 2020, via Zoom.

Attendees: Craig Tufts, Ursula Maldonado, Dick Lemieux, Greg Bakos, Boyd Smith

Staff: Sam Durfee, Senior Planner, Staff Representative
Karen Hill, Transportation Engineer

1. Minutes of the August 4, 2020 Meeting

Ursula motioned to approve the minutes of the August 4 meeting, Greg seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Sidewalk Priority List

Sam provided an update on the work that staff and members of the Subcommittee have been doing on the sidewalk priority list. The group discussed how some of the criteria are scoring relative to estimated scores. The safety criteria appeared to be scoring inaccurately. Greg proposed multiplying the traffic speed and traffic volume scores as opposed to adding them together. The group liked this idea and suggested considering the reallocating of crash history points to other criteria. Staff will test these suggestions and report back. Craig will distribute a blank copy of the spreadsheet so committee members can enter their scores for the "Existing Demand" category.

3. Transportation Alternative Program Grant Round

Craig gave a quick rundown of the potential TAP projects that have been discussed by staff. These include a package of sidewalk projects, the Merrimack River Greenway Trail boardwalk, an improved Gully Hill design, and the northern rail trail extension through downtown if the City is able to acquire the rail line from PanAm. If a fall TAP round is announced, TPAC and staff will move quickly to put an application together and will chose a project at that time.

4. General Transportation Project Updates

The group discussed the Loudon Road bridge project. Nearly all members were at the TPAC meeting on August 27th where this project was discussed at length. The consensus seems to be that a shared use path on both sides of the bridge is ideal, but it is recognized that this could

significantly increase the cost of the project. Finding a way to fit shared use paths on both sides without excessive widening to the bridge, perhaps by removing a median island, was preferred by the subcommittee. Sam explained that City Staff would be meeting on Friday, September 11th to talk further about the design alternatives for this project and that he would provide an update at the next meeting.

5. Demonstration Project

The possibility of a demonstration project was discussed given the current pandemic crisis. At previous meetings, the idea of a cyclovia, an event where a section of street is closed to traffic and opened to bikes and pedestrians and is typically accompanied by vendors, music, and other events, had been discussed. The group agreed that the pandemic makes large events difficult and any demonstration project at this time would likely have poor turnout.

Given the sidewalk priority list has taken up a lot of the Subcommittee's bandwidth, the group agreed to start putting more thought into a cyclovia for 2021, provided the health crisis improves, once the sidewalk priority list is completed.

6. CNHBC Update

Craig informed the group that the Bicycle Coalition met for the first time in a while and discussed the possibility of a bike swap in May given this year's swap was canceled.

7. Private Development

Sam shared with the Subcommittee the plan set received for the Brixmor major site plan at 80 Storrs Street. This project consists of the redevelopment of a portion of the parking lot to build a restaurant, a retail space, and a coffee shop with a drive-through facility. The development would support patio areas with pedestrian access from the Storrs Street sidewalk.

The Subcommittee reiterated that it did not think this location in the opportunity corridor and in close proximity to Main Street was appropriate for a Drive through. The committee also expressed frustration over the drive-through design and the inadequate and possibly confusing escape lane, the inconsistencies between the architectural elevations, and the landscape plan. The group thought that one of the elevations of the proposed 110 Grill, which is located on the corner of the site driveway and Storrs Street, was inconsistent with the vision for the district given its blank walls with no fenestration and the lack of a side walk at this location on the site plan. The committee felt that the intersection corner of Storrs and Pleasant Street Extension was an important location for extending the downtown Main Street feel into the Opportunity Corridor area, and that blank walls and lack of sidewalk would inhibit rather than invite activity between locations. Sam stated that he would relay these concerns in the upcoming Architectural Design Review and Planning Board meetings.

Meeting adjourned at 6:09 PM