

Town of Westwood

Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee  
Thursday, October 26, 2023  
Carby Street  
Champagne Meeting Room

**Committee Members in Attendance:**

- Michael Kraft (Chair)
- Steven Olanoff (Vice Chair)
- Tom McShane
- Enkelejda Klosi
- Maria Costantini

**Guests and Residents in Attendance**

- Joe Privetara (Select Board member)
- Danielle DeLuca (Active Transportation Working Group in Dedham)
- Bryan Plummer (Active Transportation Working Group in Dedham)
- Todd Korchin (DPW, via telephone)
- Fred Van Wagenen
- Gary Yessaillian
- Stuart Eldridge

**Meeting Start:** 7:32 PM

**Topics**

**Canton Street Project**

Steve Olanoff provided an update regarding the recent Select Board meeting and explained the current design and a compromise proposal from MassDOT.

Todd Korchin emphasized nothing is inevitable and highlighted that the initial presentation was not well received by the public. The goal is to find common ground and to seek ways to find a design that satisfies both MassDOT and residents. The state on the 23<sup>rd</sup> responded to DPW and relaxed the previous sidewalk on both sides of the road requirement and proposed one shared use path of 8 to 10 feet. They believe that this would adequately satisfy bicycle and pedestrian accommodation. Todd

stated 8 feet is more desirable and is being included in the next proposal. Greater width would have an impact that affects trees and other concerns that have been voiced. Todd wants to see a 2-to-4-foot buffer, bringing the total width from the side of the road to 10 to 12 feet. This idea was presented to the select board, who voted to proceed with this revised design. January is the next time when the board would decide to proceed further, Todd will have the Town's design consults proceed with this new design.

Chair Kraft asked Todd, how much a single sidewalk would cost, Todd didn't know exactly, but with granite would be double-digit millions. A standard sidewalk is up to 9 feet with the buffer. In total, there is a difference of 3 feet between a multi-use path and a sidewalk.

Michael asked if bump-outs are a possibility for trees, and Todd mentioned this is likely possible. The select board would like to form a working group for this project once the preliminary design is completed for further refinement.

Todd mentioned there are drainage issues that would be addressed within the project that would otherwise go uncorrected.

Steve asked Todd about the lack of discussion about stone walls during the select board meeting. Todd mentioned the details would need to be refined in the preliminary design, since they're trying to avoid touching the walls and still comply with the requirements.

Kela asked Todd if a 3D rendering may help residents comprehend and assess the impact better than a 2D rendering, perhaps with some animation. Who is deciding who to hire as the landscape architect? Todd mentioned that it is part of the design consultant's job and since we are in the preliminary stage, it would be post-January before they refine designs and go through a more detailed process with the schematics. Todd highlighted this as an opportunity for the future working group to raise these issues.

### **Update from police: Officer Frank Baker**

Data from Canton St, 170 Canton St. collected from Aug 29<sup>th</sup> was shared with the group. Volume data from consecutive Tuesdays, with 7709 in a 24-hour period, bi-directional.

Todd shared that granite curbing can be effective when combined with narrow roads in providing for more traffic calming.

Michael asked Todd about the addition of flashers at crosswalks and Todd recommended emailing him the locations.

Joe Privetera shared that he is personally advocating for the formation of a task force for the Canton St project.

### **Comments from Residence in Attendance**

Gary Yessaillian, Canton Street resident, claimed that the warrant article was originally for a sidewalk only. He also shared concerns about the adding of a slip ramp from Route 95 north that may increase traffic volume. Gary believes we should negotiate with the state to keep traffic on University Ave. When University Station was put into place, the road design was to naturally curve to route traffic to University Ave with two lanes, versus the current design that naturally carries traffic onto Canton St. Gary is concerned with future construction plans on 95 and additional traffic. Gary stated we need a professional negotiator to work with MassDOT to address the traffic. The water main opportunity was available pre-pavement, but the window of opportunity is closing due to a tight timeline. The residents of Canton St want to reduce the volume of traffic

Fred Van Wagen, a Canton street resident, shared that Top Golf is opening early November so traffic is going to be the priority.

Fred also added the use of a multi-use path may reduce the biker's rights.

Stuart Eldridge, a Canton St resident, questioned the purpose of the path, asking "a bike path to where?" and thought it was a waste of \$20M.

## **Westwood Day**

Steve Olanoff reported that people were receptive and engaging despite the weather.

Michael noted there was more activity around tables that had some attractive goods to distribute. If we continue to do it, we need to have the ability to make ourselves better known, better giveaways, and better displays.

It was noted that the crosswalk light at University Station and the railroad station does not stay on long enough for individuals to cross before it times out. To be discussed further at the next meeting. Officer Baker also mentioned this feedback has been provided for future improvements.

## **Active Transportation Working Group in Dedham**

Formed in 2019, with the involvement from several groups to discuss improvements for pedestrian and biking safety. No sole group is focusing on it, so the group was formed. The 2014 plan for pedestrian and bike routes was created by the MAPC for Dedham and Westwood. The group has been going through the plan. Bridge street now has a buffered bike lane. A grant was submitted for \$10,000 for a buffered bike lane with physical barriers on Bridge St. Michael Kraft asked about interaction between the groups. Danielle mentioned the microtransit idea of collaboration between several towns. Steven mentioned that on-demand seems to be the desired approach compared against fixed routes for shuttle bus service. Michael mentioned sponsorship may be feasible from some of the businesses in the area. A bike network in Dedham is underway, and you want bike infrastructure to extend through the areas and connect into the Westwood bike network. Kela recommended additional collaboration with the Needham committee so Dedham, Westwood, and Needham collectively could exchange ideas.

Steve would like to give additional thoughts to crosswalk improvements.

**Next Meeting Date:** November 30, 2023

**Meeting Adjourned:** 9:17 PM