

WALKBIKE SPRINGFIELD JULY 11, 2019 MEETING NOTES

I. MassBike Springfield Bike Summit Recap

A highlight was the luncheon presentation by Josh Diaz, a youth leader of the 413 Wheel Pak Youth Committee. This gained press attention – see WalkBike facebook post “Good messages already coming from the Bike Summit Last week. Check out the video at 36:25 to hear what Sarah Page had to say about The Bike Summit and young riders.

<https://www.wvlp.com/news/infocus/infocus-2019-springfield-health-equity-report/?anvt=2188&fbclid=IwAR0VZHTL11wkw-VeqvsF42TxofHm-ZdUxtwbzWbdjPZgYNXXBRYIIjODZIo>

We will send a thank you to MassBike and to Mass in Motion for hosting the summit in Springfield.

We discussed what we should do to get the MassBike bicycle education program in Springfield schools. We will track down the status of the curriculum. We will see whether all the elementary schools have PE teachers and who oversees the PE curriculum.

II. Mayoral & Council Questionnaire

It was reported about the hoops required to get the list of candidates. All of the candidates have been sent links to complete the questions via Survey Monkey. Deadline is our next meeting on August 8, when we will discuss how to disseminate, etc.

(list of candidates and questions attached).

III. Roadway Projects, Street Repavings & Complete Streets

We have meet/talked with Hector Velez at DPW at few times. Want to still pursue a protected rather than just buffered bicycle lane on Bicentennial Highway – or at least more of a vehicle lane road diet so the buffer and bicycle lane can be even wider. Discussed whether we should organize an “open street” event on Bicentennial to demonstrate that one side of the roadway could be converted for pedestrians and bicycles. DPW director Cignoli is hesitant to change the roadway because there is an adjacent large potential development parcel.

Mill Street is not being repaved this year because utility work is still underway.

Plans are underway for additional bicycle lanes on Page Boulevard (extending those by CRX) and on Tapley Street from the bridge to Central High School.

If Springfield receives the current pending MassDOT Complete Streets funding, there will only be six projects left on the Prioritization Plan. It was suggested that funds be sought to do an update of the Complete Streets Plan – We will call MassDOT staff Laura Hansen and see if there are MassDOT funds for this. Other sources?

It was mentioned that Peter Shumway, DPW engineer, who liked the idea of using the Mill River dry tunnels as an way to enter and exit the south section of the Riverwalk. We should consider a 2020 Community Preservation Fund proposal to get a schematic design for this. We should see if Scott Hanson could get a UMass Design team to engage in a Mill River trail design project.

Construction of the Six Corners intersection and of Central St./Hickory/Rifle projects have begun. The funding for the X reconstruction is now slated for 2024.

IV. Speeding Issues & Yard Signs

The red “Go 25” yard signs were welcomed by the residents of Trafton and other nearby streets that lead to the current entrance to Forest Park. In the next week or so, Todd will retrieve the signs and leave a thank you at the home that hosted the signs, encouraging the neighbors to get together and get more signs made in order to continue having them on their streets. Next, will be finding home in East Springfield to host the signs. Then, we will develop a list of possible streets for the McKnight neighborhood, as the sites for late summer.

(MassBike press release and video of signs attached)

We discussed the need to have some old posted 30 mph signs removed. Deborah will ask about this process, as well as about getting better 25mph signs.

It was mentioned that Springfield was recently recognized as an Age-Friendly City and that developing a Speed Management Plan (a plan to improve safety by bringing together street data analysis, design, enforcement, education, etc.) might be part of the AFC agenda. She has reached out to Western Mass Public Health Institute/LiveWell Springfield about this.

(materials about developing speed management plans attached)

V. Ordinances

The City Council voted the initial passage of the ordinances related to riding on the sidewalk outside of the downtown commercial district and legalizing the pedal assist bicycles at the June 17 meeting. Final passage is expected at the July 15 meeting.

Need to provide DPW with a model “downtown designation” sign. Todd will compile the comments made to date about the material for the Good Neighbor Handbook and recirculate. At the August meeting we will discuss outreach to the neighborhood councils and other avenues.

VI. Non-motorized wheel Park & Police Outreach

Parks Department is hiring a designer to do a schematic design for the Boys & Girls Club site. A report on the visiting the Burlington Vermont skatepark, which when she visited was being used only by skateboarders was made. Was told that some BMX bicyclists do also use. The Springfield Park will aim to have facilities for both.

The 423 Wheel Park Committee is meeting the third Wednesday, July 17 at the South End Citizens Council at 510 Main Street at 6 PM.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/392212414957625/>

VII. Multi-use Paths

We discussed that Springfield Park Department was just awarded a MassTrails grant for \$150,000 with the City providing a \$150,000 match. Also, \$200,000 was awarded from the Community Preservation Fund. And, DPW Director Cignoli committed \$350,000. Beta Engineering is awaiting finalizing the contract to undertake the “25%” design. How much will this cost? How much is remaining for “final” design? Where is all the money? What department is overseeing? To be pursued.

PVPC Regional Transportation Plan

(comment period 6/25-7/18)

<http://www.pvpc.org/content/2020-regional-transportation-plan-update>

We were encouraged all to submit comments that support the need for improving walking and bicycling infrastructure as a climate change resiliency strategy.

IX. Other

We should try to meet with Springfield's new Chief Development Officer Timothy Sheehan and introduce our group to him. (Started work on July 8)

<https://www.masslive.com/business/2019/06/new-springfield-chief-development-officer-timothy-sheehan-says-its-not-about-the-buildings-its-about-community-impact.html>

NEXT Meeting: August 8 at Pioneer Valley Planning Commission