

# Burlington Walk-Bike Council Meeting Minutes

October 26, 2017

5:30-7:00pm

**Presiding:** Erik Brown Brotz

**Minutes taken by:** Sarah Goodrich

**Others present:** Steve Norman, Stu Lindsay, Phil Hammerslough, Nicole Losch, Jason Van Driesch, Max Tracy, Chapin Spencer, Miro Weinberger, Terry Jeroloman, Curt McCormack, Lynn Eisenberry, Debra Blumberg, Kily Ciulla, Julie Campoli, Jon Ark, Wes Hyslop, Perri Freeman, Laura Jacoby, Cleary Buckley, JF Carter Neubieser, Drew Baker, Matthew Vaughn, Rick Sharp

## Agenda Item: Announcements

- None

## Agenda Item: Bike-Walk Infrastructure Implementation

Miro: We set a high goal for this year, and we haven't met our goals.

- Broader frame: 2017 is a year of some big victories for biking and walking infrastructure.
  - Opening 2 miles of rebuilt bike path and one more to be done by winter.
  - Successfully settled the North Ave pilot and bike infrastructure. This shows the administration's commitment to bike infrastructure when the data shows it's safer.
  - Doubled capacity for planning and implementation in DPW with Elizabeth's position.
  - The implementation of ambitious 5-year plan has begun, including pedestrian infrastructure like sidewalks and new curbing.

Chapin: Successes and challenges this year.

- DPW keeps the thin veneer of civilization going 24-7 (water, etc.)
- Plan BTV Walk-Bike is a great comprehensive plan, and we do want to implement it.
- Over 3-1/2 miles of sidewalk implemented this year (more than triple last year)
- Sustainable infrastructure plan was approved in November 2016.
- Plan BTV passed in April 2017
- DPW generally plans a year out.
- Some things happened in 2017.
- The 5-corners demonstration was a success.
- City Council weighed in with several projects.
- Public engagement plan is now in place.
- One challenge this year: Striping contractors. There's only one in Vermont that can do this kind of work, and a few in surrounding states. Only one bid to do the work and when contacted they were no longer interested.
- When we put in bids Jan, Feb, March, we get good prices.
- The projects from this year will go into the city's big striping bid, so it will get into the project list
  - Pearl Street
  - Flipping Willard to provide opposing direction to go with Union.
  - More protected bikelanes, working with designs, possibilities include Austin Drive, North Champlain,
  - Bike lanes added and extended to many streets.
  - Greenways: ONE, Lakeview Terrace.
- By this winter, we'll have a roadmap to get out to bid.
- We're ready to make 2018 a very strong year.

Miro: Union Street protected bike lane.

- Protected bikelanes are the real game changer.
- A network to safely bike around the city.
- Glad we have a start.
- It seems more people are riding on it.
- A challenge this summer is grappling with implementation of the walk-bike master plan.
- Getting to the interconnected network of protected bikelanes will take years, no way around that.
- The political support for bike infrastructure is fragile.
- We need to be smart, thoughtful, implement well.

Jason (Local Motion)

- Not in question: This is an awesome city with lots of great things going on.
- Not in question: The commitment of the city's leadership to implementing Plan BTV. We have good allies here. That includes Nicole and Elizabeth.
- However: 5 major projects planned for this year, 1 got done.
- Streets and sidewalks got done this year. They were out for bid early and in large bids.
- Bike projects went out later and as individual projects.
- Why do bike projects not seem to move?

- What can we change so that they move like other things are moving in the city?
- One promising possibility is bundling all bike projects into one large bid, similar to streets and sidewalks. It sounds like DPW is moving in that direction.
- Rethink public process. The benefit is at the level of the whole network, but opposition is expressed street by street.
- Hold one process for the south end, one for the north end, one for the central district.
- Think about how projects get packaged, put out for public review, and get done.
- Local Motion's goal is to figure out how to help the city move these projects through and to completion.

Chapin

- We have more time this year to get projects bundled
- Doesn't think something has broken down as Jason says.
- 1 of 5 projects is done. 4 of 5 are nearly ready to go, but winter comes every year.
- Jane Knodell says to blame her for delays in bike infrastructure because she requested more public process around the bike infrastructure projects.

Miro

- Jane makes a good point about the time not being wasted; better process ultimately will make things move more smoothly.

Phil

- Likes the idea of combining projects, but not necessarily by district.
- We should become more political. Request that Miro take more of a stand on this. It's the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It ties into housing and requirements for parking.
- Regarding North Union: The plastic bumpers holding up bollards make it difficult to turn into bike lane across from City Market. Can we look into bollards that are more individual. Also the counterflow bike traffic is scary.
- Let's group projects together to get less of a Nimby effect.

Lynn

- Was here a few years ago and has the same question now as then. This city is a death trap, and we have so many college students.
- Do we have representation with this committee?
- Could the universities use a percentage of their money to implement this infrastructure?
- Can we put a crosswalk with flashing light behind city market? Those are fantastic? That's a tough spot.

Miro

- Champlain College and UVM were approached to contribute to the \$50M plan (including walk-bike master plan).
- They were asked to pay 10%. Miro will brief the council on the status of negotiations at the next meeting.
- One argument that the universities respond with is the on-campus infrastructure that they have to fund.
- Multi-mayor multi-modal tour each spring. This spring it included UVM and how it meshes with city plans.

Chapin

- Universities are paying the lion's share of the new bike share program coming to town.
- DPW will consider a mid-street crossing behind City Market. Guidelines from the state are pretty specific about where RRFPs can be placed.
- Bollards can be moved and adjusted, and DPW wants to hear feedback. So far most feedback on Union is good.
- Even the Fire Dept has responded positively. There's a common goal of public safety.

Miro

- Main Street plan is going to be great for trees, storm water, and biking.
- The walk-bike master plan is a vision of the future that he stood up for.
- Burlington has an authentic downtown because it's a pre-automobile city, and it is walkable if not bikeable.

Rick Sharp

- We have not done a lot for bicycles.
- Recommends the book Street Fight. NYC has done far more than we have. Lots of other cities too. It's time Burlington got to it. We need to make it safe for people who ride bicycles.
- Concerned that if Bike share is not done right with enough bikes and riders then it may fail and not come back for many years.

Sarah

- Why must we do this work on a project-by-project basis, and why must it take years, even several years? Individual projects are bound to be unpopular because you still can't get out and bike around the city. A network is what's needed. Why can't we implement a connected network all at once?

Chapin

- This is what's planned for 2018. The pieces are all interconnected.

Jason

- Calgary model: Tear the bandaid off and implement an entire network in one season. Get to results.

Chapin

- This is a good vision.
- Constrained right-of-way is a challenge in Burlington

Max

- Deeply passionate about walking and biking.

- Read in August about proposal to develop more public process and a moratorium on removing parking. It's angering and depressing.
- Some city councilors won't come around on this, but some will.
- We don't need to compromise on everything and satisfy every request, some of which are unreasonable. Some councilors have delayed, delayed, delayed.
- Bundling projects is crucial.
- Tried to develop community engagement plan that would work. Request that Chapin share the plan with BWBC.
- Bike advocates need to organize and show up in order to win.
- Miro has spoken well for walking and biking. Let's work together to get this done.

Laura

- What do other people see as the solutions to our congestion problems? Wider roads, overpasses?

Miro

- Yes, some people think wider roads are the solution. This is a real battle of ideas.
- Some people think it's crazy to take away any parking or do anything against flow of automobiles.

Jason

- In the transition period, congestion can get worse. When the network is complete it gets better. So best to get to the complete network sooner.

Rick Sharp

- Safety is paramount.

Drew

- UVM student. Encouraging a more holistic approach, including better public transportation and solution for getting up the hill in addition to the 2 slots on the bus for bikes.

Miro

- Public transit is not part of \$50M plan. That's separate.

Chapin

- GMT is working on solutions to retrofit busses to fit more bikes in a safe way (3-bike racks block headlights).
- Increasing headways is part of the solution.
- GMT revisiting its routes; please come and speak up.

Carter

- UVM student: Anything to address the crosswalk over Main Street at L/L?

Chapin

- Decades ago there was a plan for a footbridge.
- Looking at widening the crosswalk.
- Looking at changing the light cycle.
- This is a big challenge that is being worked on.

Julie

- People run red lights there frequently. Is it high crash?

Jason

- Vtrans is rolling out a ticket by camera system. Maybe we can be part of this pilot.

Julie

- She felt like Max 30 years ago. She's a city planner. Some cities implement bike infrastructure, and some just talk about it. The cities that do it, rip the bandaid off. When you put in protected lanes, you build a constituency because you turn drivers into bikers.

Miro

- Basically agrees with what's been said here.
- Not satisfied with an incremental approach.

Note: the group decided to skip the planned field trip to tour the Union St. projected bike lane to allow conversation to continue (and because of rain)

Matt Vaughn

- Ward 2 and 3 rep for implementation committee. His role is to speak up for the ONE.
- He's heard repeatedly about how it's hard to implement these projects in the ONE because of Narrow Street.
- Projects that need more attention:
  - Archibald slow street
  - Depot street: Need to connect the ONE with the waterfront. ONE residents feel disconnected from the waterfront and improvements there.
  - Idaho bike law: For bikers, stop signs become yield signs and stop lights become stop signs. It's in the plan to explore this in Burlington. What's happening?

Jason

- An interim step would be to have bikes go on walk signals.

Wes Hyssop

- Works for the Dept of Health and Emergency Preparedness and safety.
- It's good to hear what's going on here.

Miro

- One reason the city has pushed for the new 12-acre park on Burlington College land is to connect the ONE with the waterfront. This is a near-term project for the next construction season.

Chapin

- We can look at Depot Street at the same time.

Rick Sharp

- We use Depot Street to train people on Segways. It's not safe. Adding bollards would keep cars off the street.

Cleary Buckley

- Really happy with the improvements on North Ave.
- The protected lane on Union also looks good.
- Advocates for a connected protected bike network.
- Also drives every day.
- The city has relied too much on 4-way stops.
- The protected lane on Union has resulted in narrower street, which results in naturally slower auto traffic.
- Suggestion to add more protected lanes; then maybe some stop signs can be removed.
- Signage to go with the connected bike network would be good.

Debra

- Is a walker, not a biker, but likes the protected bikelanes because she wants the bikers off of the sidewalk.
- Sidewalks get narrower and narrower as greenery isn't trimmed, and walkers are shoved off the sidewalk.

Laura

- Game changer for biking is e-bikes. They're a great option for commuting, if there's safe infrastructure.

Miro

- BED is working on subsidies.

Jason

- Local Motion, Old Spokes Home, and BED have partnered to do this.

Carter

- When will the 4 projects start in the spring?

Chapin

- Expect April or May; It needs to be above 58 degrees to do striping work.

Stu

- What about bike parking, showers, etc. for bikers to use?

Chapin

- Yes, covered bike parking is included in designs.

Stu

- Particularly with e-bikes, secure parking is important.

Jason

- One of the cheapest ways to implement secure bike parking is a locked cage inside a parking garage.

Julie

- The pop-up at 5 corners worked so well. It's being designed, but when will it be implemented? What can we do to make it better this month, this year, so kids can safely cross the street?

Chapin

- The short term interim solution will be implemented in 2018.

Meeting adjourned at 7 pm.