

Massachusetts Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Board Meeting Notes
Wednesday, July 21, 2021, 1:00 – 3:00 PM
Teleconference

*****NOTE***:** This meeting was originally scheduled to take place in person. Due to circumstances related to COVID-19, all large out-of-office MassDOT meetings are now being held remotely via the ZOOM app until further notice.

Welcome & Introductions: Pete Sutton, ex-officio, called the meeting to order, called roll and motioned to accept minutes from the previous meeting. Pete also took the opportunity to introduce and welcome the newest MABPAB member – Gerald Autler from the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Gerald's new role as Director of Trails and Greenways includes planning future projects as well as upgrades to existing bicycling and walking infrastructure on all DCR properties.

One year lookback and discussion on MassDOT's Shared Streets and Spaces

Jackie DeWolfe provided an introduction, stating the intent of today's presentations were to provide a deeper dive beyond regular updates. Additionally, there was a desire for MABPAB to provide input on whether there are additional initiatives and projects that should be integrated into these programs to better suit current needs. Cassandra Gascon, MassDOT's Community Grants Program Administrator, then provided an overview of the [Shared Streets and Spaces Program](#) (attached). A municipal grant program focused on quick-build projects bringing meaningful benefits to cities and towns as they respond to COVID-19, the program has funded 310 quick-build projects totaling \$33 million since its inception in June 2020. These grants have allowed communities to quickly launch or expand improvements in support of public health, safe mobility, and renewed commerce. Eligibility guidelines were intentionally broad to allow communities to address their unique needs. Grant maximums varied by round and project type with project types/foci varied by round:

- Main Streets: Repurposing streets, plazas, sidewalks, curbs, and parking areas to facilitate outdoor activities and community programming
- Safe Streets and Paths: Achieve safer speeds by implementing safe street design and engineering
- Better Buses: Establish new facilities for buses, including but not limited to dedicated bus lanes, traffic-signal priority equipment, and bus shelters
- Shared Mobility: Support the capital costs of new bikeshare equipment

Complete Streets

Cassandra proceeded to provide an update on MassDOT's [Complete Streets Funding Program](#) (attached). CSFP encourages communities to incorporate Complete Streets into regular planning and design practice for safe and accessible travel for all modes. The program provides technical assistance and project funding to eligible municipalities through a three-tiered approach that incentivizes municipal involvement. Updates taking effect this year include:

- New Program Guidance and other program materials
 - New funding eligibility criteria
 - New Prioritization Plan template and guidance for revised plans
 - New Tier 3 application template
 - New Funding Agreements
- Published CSFP five-year [report](#)
- Hosted several new trainings
 - Intro-level course with rural focus
 - Various advanced-level courses:
 - Bicycle/Pedestrian Planning
 - Traffic Calming
 - Design Workshop
 - Public Engagement

Some questions asked included the following:

- The "revisions" to the Complete Streets Program guidance have opened up opportunities for participation and created renewed interest from many communities. Thank you for your continued work on this important program. Are dates available for the "intro training" with the rural focus?
 - Yes the full schedule of upcoming training sessions can be found [here](#)
- One of the things that we heard from the disability community was the lack of access to some shared streets environments and/or blocking areas that were a public right-of-way; not having compliant pedestrian barricades for people wanting to access the eating area. Were there

guidelines giving more suggestions on how to avoid those issues or were municipalities advised just to follow ADA guidelines? (which usually isn't very helpful)

- They do need to self-certify that any of their improvements will be ADA-compliant but in addition to that, we have a resources page on the program website: [The Shared Streets and Spaces Resources Library](#) provides helpful guidance on municipalities in adopting shared streets models, but still ensuring that they're doing what they need to do in terms of being ADA-compliant. That's a great question.
- MassDOT had a diverse set of colleagues responsible for reviewing a wide variety of plans and projects. The process was very fluid with many of us learning as we went along; for example such as what types of materials to use and what is allowed. We did the best we could for the projects we were funding and raises a really good question - that's something we're very cognizant of moving forward. Also excited to see new national resources coming out about how to make these projects more permanent and work for everyone
- Was MassDOT aware of any municipalities not implementing their projects correctly from an accessibility standpoint, i.e. within ADA-compliance?
 - MassDOT was not aware of any widespread issues regarding ADA-compliance. We encouraged municipalities to follow existing ADA guidelines for guidance
 - MassDOT also offered technical assistance to our applicants before they even applied, helping them connect with engineers and planners – with generous resources provided by the Barr Foundation. That was a really helpful part of the program - providing that planning and the engineering design resource upfront
- From an advocacy standpoint, it really helps MassBike do our job because it shows that we have the state support for these types of quick-build projects. There's been times when municipalities would want to do something and could not implement without state approval. Now we can point to these programs and say "Oh wait - actually not only do they *want* you to do it they'll fund you to do it". These funding programs change the conversation for all 351 municipalities if they do take advantage of them
- On a federal level, this has made its way into the conversation with the Surface Transportation Act, INVEST Act and Senator Markey's Complete Streets act, which, basically is modeled off of what was built in Massachusetts. Know that all the work you're doing is also making its way to the national level, if we can get it going. Is there any data available yet regarding benefits to retailers or businesses and corridors; or reduction of fatalities by lowering of speeds; anything that we can attach numbers to show the efficacy?
 - That specific data is obviously tougher to come by, which is unfortunate as it's also data MassDOT really wants. There is a reporting component for all of these awards: municipalities have to report back to us, confirming every single thing that they did, as well as challenges encountered, differences that they've seen and what it has meant to their community. The Barr Foundation is currently working on a report that features these types of metrics mentioned above
 - MassDOT does have information and accompanying data on whether many of the projects are temporary (pilot projects) or permanent, such as new sidewalk installation

Safe Routes to School

Derek Krevat, MassDOT's Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator gave an overview of the current program (attached) which works with schools, communities, students, and families to increase active transportation among elementary and middle school students in the Commonwealth. This federally funded program focuses on [infrastructure grants](#) – large and small.

- Large (\$300K to \$1M) project funding part of MassDOT's federal-aid program:
 - Sidewalk improvements, traffic calming, crossing improvements, on-and off-street bicycle & pedestrian facilities, traffic diversion
- Small (\$6,000) project funding part of MassDOT's SRTS Signs and Lines program contract
 - New signage, removal of signage, crosswalk improvements, pavement markings

Derek also pointed out that SRTS infrastructure grants can improve not only roads adjacent to schoolgrounds but larger intersections in the area that must be traversed by students. Recent examples include upgrades to Mystic Ave in Somerville and Auburn St in Medford. This [webpage](#) links to the newly developed SRTS Program Dashboard

DCR Parkways Master Plan

Dan Driscoll - Director of Green Transportation for MA Department of Conservation and Recreation - presented on DCR's recently released [Parkways Master Plan](#) with a detailed overview. The Parkways Master Plan develops short- and long-term recommendations for each parkway in the metropolitan Boston

study area. Short-term improvements include all elements that can be fixed or updated as part of DCR's repaving program (e.g., new bike lanes, crosswalks, ramps), or as a standalone project initiative on the parkways such as a comprehensive curb ramp program, a new crosswalk, repainting of key markings like bike lanes or crosswalks, updated crossing signals and parkway lighting. Long-term improvements include the opportunities that may exist for each parkway if newly designed for full reconstruction to bring the parkway into complete streets and full ADA compliance.

Some questions asked included the following:

- Does "signing" include any wayfinding signage?
 - Yes, everything DCR is implementing will evaluate the opportunity and the inclusion of way finding as part of the project
- Regarding accessibility, in addition to upgrading curb ramps are you including pedestrian-accessible signals at traffic lights and possibly hybrid beacons along those routes?
 - Both. DCR is also evaluating separate bike crossing versus the pedestrian crossing signal - looking at a lot of new tools available within the world of traffic signal design and incorporating those treatments wherever it makes sense
- Is DCR requiring all new signals be accessible to blind and visually impaired pedestrians?
 - Yes new signal installation will include those characteristics. DCR tries to take into consideration the context of the particular location. A good example is on Charles River Rd near Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown which has Braille capabilities with a constant sound emitting from them
- DCR and MassDOT have such great forward-thinking policies. Please make sure that the municipalities are also in step with both agencies and feel like they're brought in on all of these project details
 - DCR is very committed to working with municipalities. For example, the Hammond Pond Parkway reconstruction project has already had four meetings with Newton's mayor and DPW in order to improve connecting roads, such as Beacon St. It's a great opportunity to ask those municipalities to help us on the transition points that are under their jurisdiction so that's what happened in Newton and Lynn, which has been great
- The New York Times recently published an article about Memorial Drive in Cambridge titled [The simplest tool for improving cities is also free](#). During COVID, repurposing DCR roadways like Parkman Drive and elsewhere have been hugely important to reintroduce the idea that these are linear parks
 - Another great example is Little Greenough Blvd in Watertown: DCR recently closed this low-use road to all vehicular traffic and converted it to all-recreation until November. It's a great place for young people to learn about biking and how to ride under little pressure
 - DCR's transportation program between maintenance and new parkway construction is approximately \$25 million a year. It's the largest Capital program and we're optimistic that a lot of the work we're going to do will tap into that. It's symbolic of a cultural shift more than it is an ask for big money
 - DCR has some big projects in planning: Morrissey Blvd, Arborway and the Lynnway that we are already talking with MassDOT about partnerships and looking at the possibilities of an resurgence of federal funding and capital to help us
- Is there was an existing policy regarding upgrades to the adjacent bike path/sidewalk when repaving a parkway such as Memorial Drive?
 - There will be a separate future project involving a road diet which will include widening the existing path. It did not make sense for DCR to make those path improvements until then. Ordinarily, the answer is yes, with a good recent example being North Beacon St in Watertown
- Can you tell us more about the new Office of Green Transportation, how many people are in it and what's its charge, and how does it fit into DCR's organizational structure?
 - Right now it is within the Department of Transportation and Engineering and it's an office of one (Dan). Our vision is to have it be an office of three or four folks including a couple of civil engineers and possibly a regional planner or with some landscape architecture background
- On one of the slides you mentioned winter maintenance of trails and I was just wondering if you have sort of a big picture view. I'm out in western MA where the Norwottuck Rail Trail is a commuter superhighway all year round

- It's going to be an ongoing discussion with advocates: half want to use it for commuting and the other half want to use it for recreation, such as cross-country skiing. But as these trails get better connected, their use goes up and plowing becomes highly desired
- Is pedestrian scale lighting a consideration at mid-block crosswalks?
 - It's possible, depending on the conduit that's already out there and how easily it can be added, or if it's a new crossing being proposed, we will think about safety lighting. As far as corridors themselves we're not directly lighting these unless the street lighting itself is providing some ambient lighting
- Will there be a road diet on Winthrop Ave?
 - Yes the entire parkway system in the Winthrop, Revere and Lynn areas are all slated for major reconstruction

Polling Question: Amber Vaillancourt launched the following poll to all attendees: What topics do you think MassDOT should integrate into its current grant programs to better meet the needs of critical bicycle and pedestrian related initiatives and infrastructure? Responses included:

- Child-centered/friendly design
- Continue to collect information for decision making and use this information to for improvement and next steps. Use this as needs assessment information. Collect on the individual projects and combine like minded programs to show progress.
- Without creating a bureaucratic barrier, the addition of public participation requirements to funding programs are key to successful project implementation. Many of the most successful "shared streets" projects were publicly vetted in one way prior to implementation. The revised Complete Street Program Guidance addresses the importance of public engagement. It is important that we reach many different populations and address a variety of needs in project development. We need to continue to go that extra step to make sure our projects are impactful and support community goals.
- Feedback on the initiatives, the use of new projects and any suggestions users may have. Thank you.
- Improving access in all designs for those with sensory and physical disabilities -integrating access in design such as accessible ped signals for blind and DEAFBLIND users, vs just those with physical disabilities.
- Please continue to build on what the Shared Streets program has done by encouraging inclusion of older adults and age/dementia friendly design in grant programs. At a previous meeting, we presented the beginnings of the state's Alzheimer's Advisory Council to work on "age and dementia friendly" infrastructure. Happy to work with MassDOT to advance this work - and thanks!
- Recommend new types of safety infrastructure (e.g. armadillos)
- Walk audits with the public

Other Announcements

- MassDOT's [2021 Bicycle and Pedestrian Update](#) has now been posted on-line for review, highlighting many projects from both plans originally released in 2019
- [2021 MassTrails Grant Award](#) recipients have now been posted on-line for review
 - 54 applications reviewed this round – 20 selected
 - Provides matching grants to communities, public entities and non-profit organizations to design, create, and maintain diverse network of trails
 - Generally range from \$5,000 to \$100,000 with grants of up to \$300,000 awarded to high priority projects
- Next MABPAB meeting on Wednesday, September 22, 2021

- List of board members in attendance (see below)
- Other attendees:
 - Amber Vaillancourt (MassDOT)
 - Laura Hanson (MassDOT D2)
 - Leah Grodstein (MassDOT)
 - Jeff Owen (NMCOG)
 - Christian Milneil (StreetsBlog Mass)
 - Derrick Roma
 - Amber Vaillancourt (MassDOT)
 - Cheryl-Ann Senior (MassDOT D5)
 - Eric Molinari (NMCOG)
 - Amanda Lewis (DCR)
 - Michael Trepanier (MassDOT)
 - Beth Giannini (FRCOG)
 - David Loutzenheiser (MAPC)
 - Casey Claude (CTPS)
 - Barbara LaChance (MassDOT D5)
 - Paul Jahnige (DCR)
 - Chris Timmel (FHWA)
 - Stella Lensing (DCR)
 - Gus Norrbom (MassDOT)
 - Gregory Grzegorzewski (FHWA)
 - Karen Foster (All Out Adventures)
 - Michaela Boneva (MassDOT)
 - Sungchul Takahashi (MassDOT)
 - Ian Adams (MassDOT)
 - Fay Rhault (CMRPC)
 - Wesley Lickus (MassDOT)
 - Lee Toma (Bike Milton)
 - Tim Dinneen (Somerville Bicycle Advisory Committee)
 - Joe Geller (Topsfield Rail Trail)
 - Derek Krevat (MassDOT)
 - Jason Santos (DCR)
 - Ed Sinofsky (Cape Cod Cycling Club)

MA BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY BOARD

Board Member Sign-In Sheet May 19, 2021 – Teleconference

Member Name	Attended	Notes
Tom DiPaolo MassDOT-Highway	no	
Prachi Vakharia MassDOT-MBTA	no	
Pete Sutton MassDOT-Planning	yes	
Kurt Gaertner EOEEA	yes	
Dan Driscoll DCR	yes	
Jackie DeWolfe MassDOT	yes	
Ben Wood DPH	no	
Phyllis Cahaly MOTT	yes	

Jeff Larason EOPSS	no	
Jeff McCollough MARPA	yes	
Betsy Goodrich MARPA	yes	
Jackie Jones MARPA	yes	
Bryce Hoffman – public member (Lowell Bike Coalition)	yes	
Keith MacDonald – public member (South Coast Bikeway Alliance)	yes	
Galen Mook – MassBike	yes	
Karin Goins – public member (Walk/Bike Worcester)	no	
Seun Oluwole – public member	no	
James Fuccione – public member (Mass. Healthy Aging Collaborative)	yes	
Cheryl Casper – public member	yes	
Sam Squalia – public member (Fitchburg City Council)	yes	
Stacey Beuttell - WalkBoston	yes	
Maureen White - public member	no	
Meg Robertson – public member (Commission for the Blind)	yes	
Alice Brown – public member (Boston Harbor Now)	yes	