

Massachusetts Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Board Meeting Notes

Wednesday, September 22, 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.

Update on MassDOT's speed management project

Jackie DeWolfe provided an overview regarding MassDOT's ongoing Speed Management to Prevent Serious Injuries and Fatalities project. (attached) Over the past year, the initiative has focused on:

- MassDOT review of policies, plans, and practices
- Best practice research
- Public presentations
- Listening Tour
 - 40+ sessions with hundreds of individuals from across MA, US and abroad from October 2020 – April 2021

Going forward, it is MassDOT's intent to proactively work with/support communities and provide consistent and clear guidance to local, regional and state entities, residents and transportation professionals - to realize the overall goal and larger objective of zero fatalities and serious injuries. This updated guidance will be published on the MA.gov website. Our next step is to send a draft of the content we're creating to get feedback from MABPAB. We will then follow up to get your input on additional deliverables for this project

Some questions and comments included:

- Related to the listening tours mentioned, did you hear much from individuals about the conditions that they're experiencing related to speed concerns about aggressive behavior? In Massachusetts more than any other place I've lived the posted speed limit seems irrelevant
 - Yes, through our public engagement and outreach this was a consistent theme over and over - that people were concerned about speeding and unsafe conditions. It is a significant contributing factor of why people don't feel safe cycling or walking on our roadways
- Representing my city's transportation and parking commission, the requests for traffic calming and slower vehicle speeds is constant and is a huge worry that people have. Yet at the same time regulation-wise, often there's very little we can do so I appreciate that this effort is underway and look forward to MassDOT hopefully being able to make some changes
 - That's what we want: your feedback and perspective on this information: is what we're providing helpful, is it providing the guidance you need, is it going to help you know?
 - There's certainly a fair amount of what some people call "myth busting" that we have to do; some form of kind of like FAQ would be useful just to make sure the information is out there on what on what is possible
- What kind of roads are we talking about where speed limits cannot change? I'm assuming those are busier roads, for example, like Route 9 from Boston to metro-west or something along those lines. Are those the kind of roadways where those speeds are issues?

- That's a great question. The project scope for this purpose is any all-access roadway so it would include Route 9, but it would also include local jurisdiction - municipal roadways. What it doesn't include is limited-access highways, where only vehicles are allowed. Otherwise it's all-access roadways regardless of jurisdiction, and whether it's posted or unposted as well, in terms of speed limit.
- Regarding the setting of speed limits, are we going to address the quasi-formal or informal 85% rule? I know that was something that we brought up several meetings ago and wondering if that same issue can carry forward into this conversation?
 - Yes, some of the questions MassDOT will answer include: What is the 85th% rule; why does it stand; where does it come from; should it still be used and what does that mean for Massachusetts?

Discussion on MBTA new initiatives – bicycle parking and mobility hubs

Prachi Vakharia gave a brief background on her job description in her role as Technical Program Manager within the MBTA's Customer Technology Department: she leads a digital and innovation team that looks at all technologies as they impact station access, including bicycle parking. Prachi then provided an overview presentation on the MBTA's current bicycle parking and sought input on ways to improve multimodal access to all stations.

Some questions asked and comments included the following:

- A bike cage on the Blue Line downtown would be a real game changer for commuters living across the water in East Boston, knowing they could store their bikes overnight if they are traveling during rush hours (when bikes are currently restricted). City Hall Plaza has ample space and should be considered for a future bike cage
- While there are bike racks at Aquarium and Government Center, many cyclists don't feel they are safe places to lock bikes, especially at night
- Is the MBTA thinking about potential additional bike commuters as it plans more off-peak service in the future?
 - It's a valid issue the MBTA is looking into going forward
- For a major transportation hub, bike parking at North Station is an embarrassment: it's hidden in the back; it's not secure; it's not clean; it's not safe and it's not the centerpiece for all northern trackage like it needs to be. MBTA should use its influence to engage with the property manager for better accommodations
- I have seen some prohibitions on locking e-bikes in the cages (at South Station), and I want MBTA to reconsider that if you're trying to encourage electric micromobility. We need to make sure that there are no prohibitions on locking and potentially even encourage it by having charging stations as well as having electric vehicle charging stations put up on public spaces, I don't see why bike parking charging stations couldn't also be included so take a look at that as well
 - The MBTA agrees that there should be more accommodation for different types of bikes
- The MBTA should be commended on allowing bikes on all commuter rail service with no restrictions, even at peak rush-hour times
- If there are going to be shuttle buses for interruption of service, make sure that there are bike racks on the buses as many people are dependent on that feature
- This is the once in a lifetime opportunity to redesign the new Green Line stations and cars so that we can actually have better bicycle access. I imagine there would still be the same restrictions as all the other lines, but please don't miss this opportunity to remake our only light rail line that still prohibits all bikes

- There's a definite need to be able to keep your mobility device with you when you are continuing to travel. There can't be just parking if you need to keep your bike or your scooter or your skateboard or your device with you
- There's an expectation that now you can take a bike on the commuter rail almost anytime. This should continue and be expanded as more regional rail service is planned. There should be the ability to have multiple bikes on multiple cars without making conductors panic. I can tell you, as someone who has both led bike tours and just gone with people on bikes as friends, train conductors are in panic mode when there are more than four bikes on a platform for commuter rail
- Forest Hills Station is a great example in regard to bike parking, wayfinding and access that should be used as a role model by the MBTA for its other stations. There's ample space for people there and it's so thoughtful relative to almost every other station. Just implementing what's working here, how can we apply these principles elsewhere, would go a long way
- Related to restrictions on the Green Line: unless I had a folding bike or folding scooter I was not allowed to bring a full frame bike. While I understand the dedicated space for disabled riders, people with strollers or people with luggage are also able to occupy that space, even when there wasn't somebody who was in a wheelchair
- Based on my experiences from other transit agencies, specifically in Europe, before we get the type 10 trolley cars and the current station setups with the Green Line - maybe try to allow some bicyclists to be able to bring their bikes on
- There's a huge disincentive to riding the Green Line if you're not allowed to bring your bike aboard
- There was a good job done with the Cape Flyer where one or two cars had designated bike parking on them
- I think we should also take that opportunity for when we introduce new rolling stock, to be able to have the capacity for more bikes. I've seen this when I was abroad in the Netherlands: they have rail cars that specifically to allow people to park their bikes to not have conductors be overwhelmed that there's more than four bikes in a train
- You can have as many bike cages as many bike racks at these stations as you know, but without the proper dedicated bike lanes and bike paths, people are going to be too scared to ride their bikes. They don't want to ride on the sidewalk where there's going to be other people and they don't want to ride on the road where it might be too risky for them to get hit by a car
- Working with the municipalities and with MassDOT to get the infrastructure in place is extraordinarily important before we really dive into bike cages and bike racks
- When infrastructure to support cycling comes along it can leave behind people who have needs beyond a two-wheel bike. I just want to put in your consciousness that one of the fastest growing segments of the market are recumbent tricycles
- Many cyclists are older with balance issues or stroke survivors or a whole variety of reasons that two-wheel bikes don't work. A large number of these adults are using either recumbent trikes and or the upright adult trikes
- Most of the existing bike parking infrastructure is too small and won't accommodate anything other than a traditional two-wheel bike. I would just love to put in your consciousness: there is a segment of potential users that's going to be growing and mobility could be better supported by considering having some new and expended infrastructure
 - The MBTA is looking more closely into design specifications for non-traditional bikes, especially in Boston and Cambridge, where more space now seems to be devoted. The MBTA will conduct additional research on this
- Up-to-date wayfinding would be useful. In particular, my home station - Airport Blue Line - if you're on one side you can't access the bike share station, if you use the other side, the bike parking actually gets locked at night because it's in the MassPort-owned park so it's

important to know that up front. I know there's a lot of complexities regarding station access with weird exit rules

- The small mobility hub spots that have popped up around East Boston are a good step forward: having some central location that says here's where to access bikeshare stations and bike parking and so on, and if that's going to be permanent, put in more permanent signage

The MBTA then asked whether any attendees have numbers on micromobility devices being used around Boston to share. Besides bike data currently being collected by MassDOT, do people know e-bike usage, the one-view usage and other kinds of devices, such as e-scooters?

- Most statistical analysis of any of these devices lump them all together so there's no way to tease out the trends or identify observations – e.g. none of the bike count data subdivides in any municipality
- The bike team at the City of Boston Active Transportation Team conducts bike counts quarterly and they've moved to a model where there's a manual count that matches the digital counts, to confirm the data and, within that they have specific subsets for bikes versus micromobility options. So, if nothing else, you could see proportions of micromobility types by parts of the city, but it wouldn't give you a breakdown of what any other micromobility is

There was also feedback sought on whether current bike cages are secure enough and whether there are accessibility issues with the two-level racks, specifically for children and smaller-sized adults. Subsequent comments included:

- Whether the bike cages need to be located within an MBTA station, e.g. Government Center or State Street. That could address some of the timing-related issues. Having a designated bike valet could also double as an added security measure against bike theft
 - MBTA response: Within stations is still the ideal location as we can design and provide amenities without asking permission from outside sources
- I'm sure the new urban mechanics could come up with some creative safe 24-hour bike parking ideas around City Hall Plaza if we ask them
- More bike cages are needed, particularly in Somerville at Porter and Davis Red Line stations, where there is a huge demand and limited existing bike rack parking
- Washington DC would also be a good model to emulate with its bike parking adjacent to its main train station, complete with bike rentals, repair shop and shower facilities
- Coordination with a major property developer such as Boston Properties could be a potential partnership between state agencies and the City of Boston for a future mobility hub
- Alewife has a life-size cut-out police officer to deter theft inside its Pedal and Park bike cage, though bike theft in the open-air bike racks is a much bigger concern
- There is a public bike repair station next to the back entrance of Maverick Station in East Boston though I've never seen anyone use it
- I would say 99% of people don't know any bike repairs more complicated than pumping up the tire. People who do know how to use tools tend to have the tools they need already on them
 - MBTA response: While complicated to maintain, Los Angeles has recently added ipads to their fix-it stations with instructions on how to use. For example, if you're if chain is broken fix that by using this and other clear instructions on how to use the station
 - Some basic trainings go a long way, or we could partner with the Community organization to offer free trainings
- Boston Cyclists Union does free bike repair at farmer's markets in the summer, and I've taken my bike there multiple times. I see people in my community get their bikes fixed there also. To expand and support that surely would be welcome

- Bike repair stations on college campuses tend to be heavily used, such as the one on the UMASS Lowell campus
- Remember to install bike racks out of the path of travel so blind pedestrians won't trip or go into the area by mistake
- Bike parking in locations where MBTA express buses travel – such as Medford or Newton would also be beneficial
- Occasional issues with some of the newer, larger e-bikes not being able to fit within the normal-sized racks on MBTA buses
- Lithium battery-powered e-bikes also need to be taken into consideration as potential fire hazards

Prachi concluded by stating that the MBTA will be conducting additional outreach to various stakeholders in the future. If you're interested in participating in a bit longer workshop - going much, much deeper they would love to have your input and output.

Overview of Franklin County Pedestrian Plan

Beth Giannini, Senior Transportation Planner with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) presented on their recently released Pedestrian Plan (attached). The two overriding goals of the strategic plan are:

- To provide a comprehensive resource that identifies tools and strategies for developing pedestrian-related infrastructure improvements in Franklin County
- To provide inspiration and encourage towns consider pedestrian accessibility whenever feasible

Some questions asked and comments included the following:

- How often are you in contact with the 26 communities as they relate to these kinds of pedestrian initiatives? Are there some communities that you hear from on a weekly basis and are there some that you only hear from once a year?
 - It varies. Some of the towns have really jumped on board with various programs like Complete Streets, Shared Streets and Spaces, Safe Routes to School and I'm in much more frequent contact with those communities. Another example is if there is a specific project being undertaken within a community
 - Of particular note: Only two or three communities of the 26 have an actual planning staff of the town. Most of the towns have a town administrator and highway super but that's the extent. If we can help and provide them with assistance, that benefits them and they really appreciate that. The other kind of program that we've been doing a lot of work recently is ADA transition plans, which have that component that really dovetails with these other programs to improve the built environment
 - Similar to many communities, speed is always a concern, especially in some rural towns with no sidewalks where people routinely walk on the roadway. Having additional signage is an effective measure that helps raise awareness for all users
- Narrow roads are a concern in many parts of the state where people want to walk and bicycle; right-of-way takings are always problematic
- WalkBoston conducts a lot of research on rural state roads, some under MassDOT jurisdiction. Traffic numbers, volumes, as well as people walking and the volumes of those don't always warrant certain types of traffic signals and other things that are used in more suburban and urban environments. The challenge is: how can we mitigate speeding traffic in those cases where you want to promote a walkable village center, particularly for older adults who often live in those in those smaller towns?
 - If there is any opportunity for a conversation, at some point on some level, I think it would be a great opportunity for all stakeholders – local, regional and state

- Did the plan look at access to rural stores and shops? I know the neighborhood convenience store was the only place we walked to - growing up in a rural area - and it certainly wasn't the safest trip
 - Yes, the plan focused on access to destinations, such as the one town store in New Salem

Other Announcements

- MassDOT's [Complete Streets Funding Program](#) applications due October 1
- [2021 Moving Together](#) virtual conference taking place December 7-8-9
- Next MABPAB meeting on Wednesday, November 17, 2021

- List of board members in attendance (see below)
- Other attendees:
 - Amber Vaillancourt (MassDOT)
 - Ben Muller (MassDOT D6)
 - Max Pavlov (MassDOT)
 - Jeff Owen (NMCOG)
 - Christian Milneil (StreetsBlog Mass)
 - Bill Hanson (Framingham Bike/Ped Advisory Committee)
 - Amber Vaillancourt (MassDOT)
 - Beth Giannini (FRCOG)
 - Casey Claude (CTPS)
 - Karen Foster (All Out Adventures)
 - Michaela Boneva (MassDOT)
 - Jeff Rosenblum (Toole Design Group)
 - Bob Seay (WGBH Radio)
 - Fay Rhault (CMRPC)
 - Jonathan Kapust (HNTB)
 - Alan Cloutier (Stantec)
 - Erik Scheier (MBTA)
 - Abdulmuhsen Alqunaie (MassDOT)
 - Ethan Britland (MassDOT)
 - Brian Pigeon (City of Worcester)
 - Evan Moorman (CCC)
 - Steve Tupper (CCC)
 - Ray Hayhurst (AECOM)
 - Nicholas Russo (BRPC)
 - Papren
 - Santiago
 - Bull
 - Jennings

MA BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY BOARD

Board Member Sign-In Sheet

September 22, 2021 – Teleconference

Member Name	Attended	Notes
Tom DiPaolo MassDOT-Highway	yes	
Prachi Vakharia MassDOT-MBTA	yes	
Pete Sutton MassDOT-Planning	yes	

Kurt Gaertner EOEEA	yes	
Gerald Autler DCR	yes	
Jackie DeWolfe MassDOT	yes	
Rebecca Han DPH	no	
Phyllis Cahaly MOTT	yes	
Jeff Larason EOPSS	yes	
Jeff McCollough MARPA	yes	
Betsy Goodrich MARPA	yes	
Jackie Jones MARPA	no	
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)	yes	
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	yes	
Meg Robertson – public member	yes	
Alice Brown – public member (Boston Harbor Now)	yes	