

Meeting Minutes

Transportation Advisory Committee

April 15, 2020 7:00 PM

Zoom Video Conference Call, Zoom.us

Members present: Josh Ostroff, Chair; Cody Jacobs, Vice Chair; Alex Walker, Clerk; Matt Page; Steve Brayman;

Also present: James Freas, Director of Community and Economic Development; Jeremy Marsette, DPW Director

Josh called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM, noting that the meeting was being held via Zoom in accordance with the Governor's emergency order regarding public meetings.

Public Comment: no one was present to speak

No announcements of note were made to the committee

Josh, Cody and Town staff provided brief updates for committee members on a range of projects.

Project Updates (7:19 PM)

- CRT is now behind schedule by 1 or 2 months due to work shortage due to COVID-19 related safety concerns.
- MBTA station has started, but it is unknown what impact COVID-19 will have on progress.
- Rte 27 South has been started by the town's contractor.
- Hartford Street to CRT bicycle/pedestrian connection design is underway, a public meeting will be announced for abutters.
- 9/27 interchange is potentially scheduled for Federal FY 2025, costs estimates are at \$45 million in current dollars, and thus could exceed \$55 million in 2025. It is unknown with the current economic conditions if this project will still go forward in its current design state.

Bike Share (7:24)

- Josh, Cody and James met with representatives from Mathworks regarding the potential for the company to sponsor bicycle docks within town. By all accounts Mathworks is interested in the bikeshare program, and the sense is that they would likely be willing to provide the funds necessary to provide docks at their own corporate campuses.
- The committee agrees that a dockless bike system would make the most sense given the current technology with docking stations. Potential locations for these docking stations would be the MBTA commuter rail train stations, the Natick Mall, and Mathworks Apple Hill and Lakeside campuses.
- Cody is going to follow up with Zagster, a company that provides bike share programs to find out their current status.
- The committee is going to attempt to find alternatives to Zagster that provide similar services since this will be a requirement for any sort of procurement process.
- Steve asked a question about liability regarding the usage of bikes, the company that offers the bike share service would be required to carry liability insurance for this purpose.

Complete Streets (7:38)

- Jeremy indicated that the town will reach out to MassDOT's Complete Streets division to find out the impact of COVID on its planning schedule. Also, there has been some turnover in personnel at the Complete Streets program so some effort needs to be made to reestablish contacts, etc.
- West Natick pedestrian lighting and West Street improvements went out to bid with two bids returned. Both bids were almost twice the grant award, with neither bidder being pre-qualified to complete the work. Both bids were therefore rejected by the town.
- Bike rack installation is being considered as a replacement for the Complete Streets grant and is far enough into design phase to be considered for Complete Streets funding
- Complete Streets priority plan needs to be updated, Matt will lead the effort of documenting which items on the plan are complete.
- Deadlines for tier-2 and tier-3 submissions to the Complete Streets program have been extended to July 1.

Transportation policy priorities (7:56)

- James provided insight from the transportation plan offered in the Natick 2030 master document. Due to the geography of the town, there are limited north/south and east/west roads that are friendly to non-automotive transit. The 2030 plan calls for additional modes of transit throughout the town, especially in areas that are currently overtly car friendly e.g. The Golden Triangle, and Downtown Natick.
- Adding last mile bus service - such a shuttle would move people to/from their residence to commuter rail stations.
- Creating a public forum to hear public concerns regarding transportation. Transportation Management Associations used to be funded by the state to assist with community transit options. Now a new MassDOT system is in place to handle these types of bids to grant funding for innovations in transit.
- Questions were raised about how to deal with traffic and congestion? What is this committee's messaging on traffic and congestion? What is this committee's messaging on downtown parking?

Natick Net Zero Initiative (8:32)

- Transportation Advisory Committee plans to coordinate with the Sustainability Committee regarding their Net Zero initiative.

Meeting adjourned on a motion by Cody; seconded by Alex at 8:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alex Walker, Clerk