

Complete Streets Committee
Friday June 9, 2023
Abbot Hall

Members present: Thatcher Kezer, Rebecca Cutting, David Kurcharsky, Dennis King, Felix Twaalfhoven, Doug Jones, Charlie Quigley, Peter James and Amy McHugh. Member Ed Lang Disabilities Committee was absent.

A quorum being present the meeting was called to order by the Chair Thatcher Kezer at 9:01 AM.

Board's Role

The Town Planner Rebecca Curran explained the meeting was called to reconvene the Committee, provide an update, and get the Committee's input on several items.

The Town Planner explained that there was a citizen's Article at Town Meeting that created a bylaw establishing a Traffic Safety Advisory Committee. The stated purpose of this committee is to implement Complete Streets Policy and Evaluate Public Safety issues involving traffic, roads, and transportation infrastructure. It was passed at the Annual Town Meeting in May and is with the Attorney General for approval so it will probably be created sometime in the fall.

Thatcher Kezer, Town Administrator, explained the broader picture, and stated the intent right now is to have both committees and a member of this committee could also be one of the citizen members on that committee and act as a liaison.

Dave Kurcharsky agreed there is a synergy between the two committees. If you're doing a complete streets project, any traffic calming issues might have come up through the different committees.

Railroad Right of Way Update

The Town Planner then described a project funded by a \$175,000 earmark from Congressman Moulton's office, as part of the Border to Boston Trail for design from the Swampscott line to Smith Street. The Town is currently working its way through the federal regulations and expects to issue a request for design services this summer, interview designers and select a designer/engineering firm. The project scope will involve public input from relevant boards and departments, the abutters, the Temple, and other landowners as well as stakeholders such as the bicycling community and conservancy, schools, and users of the path to name a few.

The Town Planner discussed progress on a Department of Conservation and Recreation grant from the state that is concluding in June. It is a straightforward project from the Marblehead side as it is basically the prototype of our approved Rail Trail Masterplan, an 11-foot-wide trail all the way through from Lafayette Street in Salem and adding some benches, a kiosk and other related work and rebuilding the bridges. Marblehead is the lead community for the grant and Salem is a participating community because the project goes all the way to the connection to the Salem bike trail. There are some issues to be resolved with limiting vehicular access and concerns that the utilities have.

Update on Complete Streets Project – Discussion

Salem is doing another project on Lafayette Street which Dave Kurcharsky, who is also the Traffic & Parking Director in Salem, explained includes striping and bike lanes to the town line. They are still working on it and don't have a timeframe.

Town Planner agreed to update the Excel version of the priority list and add a status column or color code what's in progress, what's complete or other status information.

Discussion ensued on what the committee wanted to prioritize in the Complete street's prioritization plan and how to approach it. Discussion ensued on issuing an RFP to get consulting services to help the Town with an overall bike plan. It would include robust public input from all the relevant committees and departments, and stakeholders such as the biking community, schools, etc.

Amy McHugh stated that presently Environmental Partners Consultants are doing the pedestrian master plan and they have been discussing bike lanes that go to the tracks and incorporate school access. Discussion ensued on how to blend these different plans together.

The Town Planner was tasked with drafting a scope to be discussed at the next meeting.

Doug Jones asked about the pedestrian master plan that's underway and what it is. Amy McHugh explained that Environmental Partners are working on that plan as well as the pavement management plan. It was part of the debt exclusion override passed last year to address sidewalks and roads. Currently, they are working on the inventory of existing conditions. The project has a large scope, a road rating, and a road management program that they are putting together now. They will then incorporate the sidewalks. The intent is to create a holistic program. Coordinating through one consultant seems to be the best way to get to a final plan to make sure we will get every component, such as utilities, sidewalks, and pavement into the plan.

Amy explained that capital requests for funding ongoing and future programs should tie back to a plan, to expend any funds with a systematic plan to back it up. All of our facilities, roads, infrastructure, and everything is based on a plan with a longer vision. And that's what we draw from for any capital program or request. In time it will all be on the website for all to see.

The Town Planner mentioned some other items that relate to transportation projects such as a request for state funding for the redesign at Five Corners. Town Planner mentioned this committee and others would be involved in that if successful and that it is part of the Local Rapid Recovery Plan.

Members agreed the Committee should meet at least monthly for now because of all the ongoing projects and the members agreed Friday works well for all committee members present. The next meeting will be July 14, 9:00 AM, in the Select Board meeting room, if available, and in the Town Administrator's office if not.

The first Compete Street project of \$393,100 for the rail trail crossings on major roads has been completed. Felix asked if the new sign for the crossing could be looked at, he felt it might be blocking the flashing beacon. Amy agreed to look.

Dennis King announced a grant for the installation of solar powered Speed Radar Feedback Signs to assist with speed calming as another priority and reported that we have a new street painting contract and that will begin soon.

Adjourn

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 9:34 AM, All in favor.

Respectfully submitted Rebecca Curran

