

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, August 10, 2022

8:18 AM

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room,  
City Hall

**Members Present:**

Drew Bryenton, Chair  
Todd Horner, Vice Chair  
Rowland Russell  
Dr. Chris Brehme, Alternate  
Charles Redfern, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

William Schoefmann, GIS Technician  
Kürt Blomquist, ACM/Public Works &  
Emergency Management Director  
Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation,  
Cemeteries and Facilities Director  
Jesse Rounds, Community Development  
Director

**Members Not Present:**

Dillon Benik  
Jan Manwaring  
Michael Davern

**1) Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chair Drew Bryenton called the meeting to order at 8:18 AM. Alternates filling in for regular seats. Mr. Ed Robarge to present to the group.

**2) July 13, 2022 Minutes Approval**

Rowland Russell noted a slight correction to the notes as his name has two L's at the end. Correction noted. Chair Bryenton motioned to approve minutes, motion seconded by Mr. Charles Redfern.

**3) Downtown Infrastructure Project Update- Ed Robarge, Stantec**

Ed Robarge, of Stantec, started his presentation using a slide show. Slide two of his presentation was a utility upgrade map, which shows the general the project area. He explained that the project area was dictated by the amount of utility work they will be doing. They plan to start slightly north of Central Square head, and then make their way down south. In doing so, they will pick up parts of Lamson Street and Church Street. The project area does not include much of Roxbury or West Street, just enough to tie some of the utilities and lines (water, sewer, or storm drain). The map showed water lines as blue lines, sanitary sewer as red and storm drains as orange. Not included in the map were individual services to each of the buildings, which was intentional as it would have made the map too busy. Additional project areas are Gilbo Avenue

all the way to School Street and the mapping cut of just before Saint James Church. There will be some significant large replacement of utilities along that street as well as with Railroad Street out to Wells Street. Parts of this project will be looking at public open spaces at Central Square as well as Railroad Square. As well as potential of what could happen along the rail trail and public pieces of property along Gilbo Avenue. The project extends southerly down to Water Street from the utility perspective. There has been some extension a little further down Water and picking up parts of Emerald as well as Eagle Court. The project limits are continually being defined as the project moves forward.

Mr. Robarge explained that this project has really been a two-part effort. The first part was to look at the condition and status of all of the downtown utilities. Some of these lines have not been touched in a while. Some sections of water and sanitary sewer are being looked at to evaluate for re-lining or replacement. The second part is determining what is going to be done with all the surface infrastructure.

They are scheduled to be at Steering Committee next Tuesday, August 16, 2022 and hope to get feedback from them about these goals. The goals were selected from the requests for proposals document and conversations they have had. They range from advance priority utility improvement to define and expand the downtown district. Mr. Robarge said they really looked at how to create and embrace the opportunities for more sustainably built environments and how to improve multimodal transportation access. While these are broad goals, the hope is to drill it down to how to make it easier to walk, bike or use a bus through the community. What are the connections? How does the bike path (whether organized or just part of the street system) allow people to get to and from downtown? In their conversation, they heard a lot about right size parking in downtown. Downtown merchants are very worried about each space. There is generally about 140 feet building to building. The more pertinent question is what does the community want to do with those 140 feet? Is it Parking, bike lanes, open space, open sidewalks to improve access? Mr. Robarge and his group will be working with the Steering Committee on these goals and objectives.

As part of their information gathering process, they posted information regarding their plan and goals to ask the public if they were missing anything. The public was asked to respond and provide feedback. They are in the process of summarizing the feedback right now and will put all that together. In the public workshop that was offered by Stantec, they incorporated a fun exercise in which asked participants to use five dots to vote for elements of interest. The feedback received ranges from curb extension to storage facilities/bike facilities to bathroom, way finding, flexible street space, bike lanes, outdoor dining or activities and street furniture. This provided a bunch of additional ideas, but of note was that the top two suggestions were outdoor dining or activities and flexible open space. Also included in the top third of suggestions was street furniture. Bike lanes and bike lane enhancements were in the middle third.

Mr. Redfern noted that in a previous slide, there was note of protected bike lanes. Mr. Redfern asked Mr. Robarge if it was safe to assume that refers to a dedicated bike lane and asked him to elaborate on writing beneath the picture. Mr. Robarge clarified that it said, "Protected bike lane includes space for buffer and space for cars." Mr. Robarge added that the buffer can include

vertical elements, such as curbs or posts. Mr. Redfern also noted that there is a bike path that goes through Railroad Square and questioned whether that will be protected. Mr. Robarge explained that there has been a lot of conversation either as the TRC level or the Arts Alive in trying to better identify the crossing and how that hubs into downtown along with ideas for increasing visibility. He noted it seems understated now, but there is definitely a good future conversation there. As far as this project goes, that path will remain retained and protected. Mr. Robarge loaded a slide of vehicle patterns and mentioned how the traffic pattern is really a guidance tool on how people come and go. The map helps to start looking at street capacity. Mr. Robarge noted that they did full traffic, pedestrian and bike counts. They are finishing those counts now and should have more information on that soon. Slide 36 of the presentation was a map showing the critical fire access. Mr. Robarge said maintaining that movement is critical to their response time. Slide 38-40 helped to identify some of the challenges in traffic. There are 23 crosswalks within this project zones and some of them are critical. There are significant delays at West, Roxbury and Central Square. Their group is evaluating all of the crosswalks and midblock crossings to see if they can create some efficiencies and improve the safety aspects. It was noted that bike facilities are limited. There are some bike racks included in the Cheshire Rail-Trail, but as you move north and south, there is a dedicated bike lane on Washington Street outbound and some shared use arrows on Court Street. Beyond that, the overall infrastructure for biking is limited. They identified some clear gaps in pedestrian facilities along Gilbo Ave, Cypress Street, Eagle Court and within Dunbar Street. Mr. Robarge said he is Interested in hearing feedback from the group on some of the constraints, issues, and what the BPPAC committee is thinking about for the future and potentially, how that can be implemented into Stantec's plan for the future.

Mr. Rowland Russell thanked Mr. Robarge for his presentation and wanted to reinforce that bikes can get in, but it is tricky to move through the Main Street area and keeping the bikes safe as the move through the area should be of importance.

Mr. Robarge asked if the committee has discussed expanding way finding in terms of signage and broadening the wayfinding signs. Mr. Will Schoefmann clarified that they have focused on the trailside of that, but have stayed away from the downtown wayfinding signs. Mr. Andy Bohannon added that he had sent the wayfinding study. Right now, the City is going through a rebranding. Once that is completed, the City will be doing a wayfinding upgrade within the downtown.

Mr. Chris Brehme asked Mr. Robarge to go back to slide 47. He pointed out that as the Rail-Trail goes down Gilbo Avenue, it dog legs at School Street and picks up past Ralston Street. Mr. Brehme offer to make some corrections and send them to Mr. Robarge. There was discussion of the group of what was the possibility to take it down Emerald? Mr. Schoefmann mentioned that many people do not take the official route and travel through the parking lots.

Mr. Redfern asked Mr. Robarge what kind of counters were used for the recent bike counts done on the rail trail. Mr. Robarge responded that they used radar counters instead of tubes, as they are able to pick up pedestrians and bikes individually. Mr. Robarge was asked how and who will make the decision around which design will be implemented and how will the process move

forward. Mr. Robarge responded that the scope was determined in collaboration with Kurt Blomquist, Director of Public Works. As part of their deliverables, they are also looking at alternatives for each location and the potential for public spaces along Gilbo Avenue. This includes things like public space components, intersections treatments/alternatives, street segments and options for areas between West Street/Gilbo Avenue and from Emerald Street to Water Street, and streetscape options along Gilbo Avenue. They are trying to capture all of the comments from both public and city and determine how best to balance and incorporate the suggestions or come up with acceptable alternatives. The process will be that their staff will review them and it will then be passed to the Mayor's ad hoc committee. From there, it will go to public for feedback, which will likely result in changes. All of the input from the various stakeholders will be factored in and used to determine what the disturbance impact is of their project. At present, they are looking to hold some upcoming public workshops right now as well as in the later part of September. Next week, they are meeting with the Steering Committee as well as again in September. The hope is to get the information to the public in the later part of September. Ultimately, it would go to the full Council for a vote. Chair Bryenton thanked Mr. Robarge for his time and the informative presentation.

**4) BPPAC Website**

Mr. Schoefmann noted that Mrs. Jan Manwaring had requested the website as an agenda item, but she is not present to discuss. The group believed she was looking for some information. She wanted more publicly available and easily access information about the various committees and their interface with the rest of the city. There was also question of whether it was possible to link to all the transportation heritage information, parks and rec, etc. thereby threading the information.

**5) Old Business**

**A) Wayfinding/ Amenities: North and South Bridge signage, downtown bike racks.**

Mr. Schoefmann asked if Mr. Blomquist had any information. Mr. Blomquist said road signs were with DOT.

**B) Bike/ Pedestrian Counts: 2022 plans**

Mr. Schoefmann said there are a few locations where the racks had been, but they are no longer there. There are still racks out, but they are just not in all the typical locations. Mr. Schoefmann asked if the group felt strongly about putting the missing racks back out or at least investigating the reason for removal and lack of replacement. Group was in consensus to investigate further.

He added that counters are out doing visible counts for Southwest Community Services. There likely will not have any info until further into the fall.

**C) Public Art and the Trails Update**

Mr. Redfern asked Mr. Bohannon if there are still plans to do a ceremony for the opening of the Amy Brown Trail head and whether there were plans to invite the BPPAC members to the ceremony. Mr. Bohannon stated the date for the opening has not been set, but added that it will be forwarded out to members.

Someone has set up a meeting with Mr. Redfern and Pathways and historical society to talk about potential for restoring and installing the railway signal that Peter Poanessa has. If anyone wants to be involved, let him know and he would be happy to include.

**D) Volunteer Opportunities**

The group had nothing of note to add. Mr. Redfern suggested trying to come up with an idea for timeframe or calendar of future events and volunteered to spearhead that. Mr. Schoefmann agreed to work with him on it.

**E) Kiosk Map Updates**

Mr. Schoefmann has a template and just needs to add a key. He plans to get something to Mr. Bohannon before the end of this month.

**6) Regular Project Updates**

A brief update of bike racks was provided earlier in the meeting, but Mr. Schoefmann added that he plans to talk with Harry McKelvey, Transportation and Storm Waters Operations Manager, about getting the old map and investigating the reasoning for the removal and options for replacement.

Cheshire rail trail and Park Avenue loop- most of the painting is done. Mr. Blomquist added that the chevron and other painting work is to be finishing this month.

Mr. Schoefmann said there is a presentation today for the downtown restructuring. He asked if there was any way for the BPPAC group to provide their opinion on the presentation today. Mr. Bohannon suggested offering prioritized thoughts. Discussion ensued on the timeframe of the projects and members concern around the impact to businesses. Chair Bryenton motioned to provide a formal statement for Dillon Benik to bring to the Steering Committee. Motion seconded by Mr. Schoefmann.

**7) New Business**

**A) Items to be included for next meeting**

Committee will firm up shared document and statement for Mr. Benik to bring to steering committee.

8) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Bryenton adjourned the meeting at 9:31 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Will Schoefmann, KGIS Mapping Technician