

**Houston Bike Plan
Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) - Meeting # 4
Friday, January 29, 2016
611 Walker, 6th Floor, Raia Conference Room**



Attendees:

BAC Members:

Patrick Walsh (COH – P&D)	Andrew Pompeii (H-GAC)
Jeff Weatherford (COH – PWE)	Jesse Thornsen (H-GAC)
Rachel Die (COH – HPARD)	Michael Payne (Bike Houston)
Carra Moroni (COH – HHD)	Mary Blitzer (Bike Houston)
Guilmate Pierre (COH – HHD)	Luis Guajardo (METRO)
Monica Marsh (COH—HPD)	Yuhayna McCoy (METRO)
Lisa Lin (COH – Sustainability)	Will Rub (Houston B-cycle)
Chip Place (HPB)	Matt Starr (Neighborhood Centers)
Lisa Kasianowitz (HPB)	Cedric Douglas (Neighborhood Rep.)
Steve Parker (Super Neighborhood Alliance)	Isabel Longoria (AARP)
Jay Blazek Crossley (Houston Tomorrow)	Jordan Berry

City Council:

CM Robert Gallegos	Martha Castex (CM Green)
Tashon Thomas (CM Cisneros)	Julia Retta (CM Robinson)
Chris Gustafson (CM Edwards)	

City Planning and Development (P&D) Staff:

Amar Mohite	Matthew Seubert
Monique Johnson	

Consultant Team:

Geoff Carleton (TEI)	Christof Spieler (Morris)
Alex Weinheimer (TEI)	Zakcq Lockrem (Asakura Robinson)
Shaida Libhart (TEI)	Tara Mather (Asakura Robinson)
James Llamas (TEI)	

1) Welcome and Introductions

Patrick Walsh, Director of the Planning & Development Department (P&D), welcomed BAC participants with a round of introductions and acknowledgements to Council Member Gallegos and staff in attendance representing Council Members Edwards, Cisneros, Green, and Robinson. Director Walsh provided an overview of the meeting's objectives and explained the intent of the Houston Bike Plan.

2) Bike Plan Presentation

Amar Mohite (P&D) summarized the case for action. This included input from the public wanting safer and more comfortable ways to bike in the City. Mr. Mohite also explained how people need to recognize that bicycling is not only an alternative mode of transportation, but the only option for some people. Mr. Mohite provided an overview of the Plan timeline, and thanked the funding partners and the BAC for their participation.

Geoff Carleton (TEI) continued the presentation, highlighting the extensive community input to date, and the vision and goals for the Bike Plan. Mr. Carleton explained the importance of the plan in providing a city-wide network of high-comfort bike facilities for people of all ages, skills, and income levels in communities across the City. Mr. Carleton continued by showing the map of existing bike facilities, which are discontinuous and do not form a complete network. Implementation of the Bike Plan will greatly expand the existing network, with programmed projects and relatively low-cost, short-term improvements accomplished largely through 'paint and signs.' Key connections will provide important links and create a citywide network. Full implementation of the long-term vision will provide the overwhelming majority of City residents with a high-comfort bicycle facility within ½ mile of their home, job or school.

Michael Payne (Bike Houston) asked what was needed for the City to achieve gold-level bicycle-friendly status. Mr. Carleton stated that there is no specific number tied to gold-level designation. Jay Blazek Crossley (Houston Tomorrow) asked about the timeline for implementing the long-term network. Mr. Mohite explained that projects would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and incorporated into the CIP process. Director Walsh added that the City is aware of the challenge in adding bike facilities to streets that are currently built to their full right-of-way capacity, especially arterial roads outside the 610 Loop. Mr. Payne suggested that the Plan should identify top priority projects. Chip Place (HPB) noted that HPB, TIRZs, Management Districts, and others will also be implementing projects, not just the City.

Mr. Carleton continued the presentation by explaining that implementation includes projects, highlighted in the bicycle toolbox. For example, the Dutch Cycling Embassy consulting team, who assisted with the Downtown ThinkBike workshop, noted that utilizing the neighborhood shared on-street concept could be an effective, relatively low-cost approach, which would require coordination with PWE's Neighborhood Traffic Management Program. Mr. Carleton explained that implementation also includes policies and programs. Implementation will be measured by using metrics to gauge performance.

Mr. Carleton presented information on planning-level cost estimates for different levels of network buildout. He explained that completion of the short-term network and key connections would put the City on the path to achieving gold-level bicycle-friendly status. Mr. Carleton also highlighted five pilot projects in different areas of the City. Mr. Crossley asked if implementation could be paid for partly with philanthropic contributions. Jeff

Weatherford (PWE) said that this is allowed provided that the Mayor agrees to accept the contribution. Mr. Crossley suggested that neighborhood bikeways could be renamed neighborhood greenways, with a complete streets approach that would include improving sidewalks and enhancing safety. Mr. Mohite said that adding sidewalks was outside of the scope of the Plan, but that he would discuss the issue with Mr. Crossley separately. Mr. Weatherford explained that drainage fees can be used for bicycle facilities included as part of street reconstruction, but not for painting and signage projects. Yuhayna McCoy (METRO) asked if the cost estimates included design costs. Mr. Carleton clarified that the estimates do include design contingency. Mr. Mohite stated that the project team would appreciate guidance from the City Council as the project moves forward. Council Member Gallegos asked if Management Districts and TIRZs have been involved in the process. Mr. Carleton explained that the project team held a meeting with Management Districts and TIRZs to solicit their input. Two Council aides asked if the maps could show Council districts and if the Plan could specify what items require Council action. Mr. Mohite stated that the project team wanted feedback before proceeding to Council, and that such information would be provided at the briefings of Council Members.

3) Public Engagement Material Feedback

Zakq Lockrem (Asakura Robinson) noted that the Bike Plan includes a pilot neighborhood plan in the Gulfton/Sharpstown area. Two focus groups were held on January 28, and a neighborhood workshop is planned for mid-March. Mr. Lockrem asked for BAC feedback on the presentation, the online materials, and on a draft tri-fold brochure that was distributed. Mary Blitzer (Bike Houston) asked that the presentation include more pictures and focus on cost estimates, short term connections, and timelines. Mr. Mohite explained that the long-term network plan is important to the implementing agencies. Lisa Kasianowitz (HPB) commented that the presentation should have more personal stories, such as the 'Why I Bike' videos from Bike Houston. Cedric Douglas (Neighborhood Representative) asked which City department would lead coordination and implement programs. Mr. Mohite explained that the Planning and Development Department would coordinate with other City departments and partners. Mr. Lockrem added that the Plan identifies lead actor for individual programs. Mr. Weatherford added that PWE will lead implementation of projects, including discussions with Council regarding funding.

4) Outreach

Mr. Lockrem provided an overview of the community engagement approach, including public meetings and events, as well as opportunities for online participation and feedback. He asked for the Committee's help in using social media and email blasts, providing letters of support from member organizations, and speaking at public hearings. The project team would also appreciate information on important community meetings where the draft Bike Plan could be presented.

5) Next Steps

Next steps include presentation to Council TTI Subcommittee, the Gulfton/Sharpstown neighborhood plan, conceptual pilot project development, and updating the calendar for public outreach events.

Next BAC Meeting: TBD. Details will be forthcoming.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by Matthew Seubert