

Complete Streets Committee – Meeting Minutes

March 15, 2016 @ 10:00 a.m. in the Youth, Parks, & Rec Conf. Room

Attendees:

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Jim Jones	Technical Support - Town Engineer
Chris Bushover	Handlebars Cycle Co.
Greg Szewczyk	NYS DOT
Jim Cuzzo	NYS DOT
Lt. Nicholas Bado	Town Police Department
Kathleen Johnson	Village of Kenmore
Jim Hartz	Town Planning and Development
Mike Kaiser	Town Technical Support
Tom Jones	Town Highway Department
Katie Burd	Village of Kenmore
Bill Phillips	Village of Kenmore Police
Justin Booth	Go Bike Buffalo

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

There were no additions or deletions made to the previous meeting minutes. Motion to approve the Minutes of the January 19, 2016 Meeting. Motion: Kathleen Johnson Second: Jim Jones.

Voting: Ayes - All Nays- None Motion Approved.

2. Local Complete Streets Network – Options

Jim Hartz presented a conceptual map showing potential local street options for a complete streets network. The local street options were added to the State and County jurisdictional routes to create more access points for residents in all of Tonawanda’s neighborhoods. The local network will connect all public schools, public parks, high use commercial areas, and existing off-street trails. The map also shows some of the current planned projects such as the Evergreen Ditch and the Lincoln Park Trail Loop.

Kathleen Johnson said that Delaware Avenue cannot support a bike lane in the Village of Kenmore as the road width is too narrow (the road width narrows within the Village). The Village cannot eliminate parking as most of the businesses do not have off street parking available. The Village is therefore looking to establish a bike route on Elmwood Avenue.

Tech Support has developed an app to add bike lane requests to a live map and add comments. We can go live with the map during the public outreach effort.

Jim Hartz also said that the local mapping options and design options are hopefully going to prompt some discussion regarding the proposed policy language. A public information meeting will be held in May.

Justin Booth asked if there has been any analysis done on which local roadways can accommodate some easy changes. Jim Hartz said that he is proposing to classify the roadways based on a combination of land use and AADT data. The local network map actually leads to three different categories for policy considerations. The “Major Arterials” or mainly NYS jurisdictional corridors have AADT of over 10,000 vehicles per day and are mainly commercial areas. The “Collectors” or County jurisdictional corridors have AADT between 3,000-10,000 vehicles per day and contain a mixture of residential and commercial uses. The “Minor Streets” or local streets have less than 3,000 vehicle trips per day and are mainly residential in nature. Each classification can call for different treatments.

Aerial photography was used to get existing curb to curb and R-O-W designs. Jim presented some R-O-W options for each jurisdiction identified on the local network. Harrison Avenue was one of the local streets discussed. Public parking along an identified corridor was discussed. It would be politically difficult to restrict parking along some of these corridors. Justin Booth suggested it may be easier to just use the “sharrow” option along some of the lower volume local streets. In the City of Buffalo, they just used some traffic calming techniques and signage to help encourage accessibility on some of the local streets. It’s also a much cheaper solution.

3. Design Guidelines – Options

Design options would be presented to the public during the public outreach effort. The public would have the opportunity to choose which amenities they would prefer to see on which type of roadway.

Greg Szewczyk asked what the long term goal of the Town is moving forward. If there is a wide R-O-W that is underutilized, wouldn’t you want to include all of the facilities you want now? Greg mentioned that grant opportunities will look at what is contained in the locally adopted plan. He also mentioned that a 66’ R-O-W may not be enough in some areas, and that some projects might require additional property acquisition.

Jim Jones mentioned that there is a need for a different measure of what a street should include and accommodate. A level of service for all types of users’ needs to be used when looking at our roadways.

Jim Cuzzo suggested that the Town provide some streets for each category that is under consideration so that they can look at how they might be designed. Jim Jones said that it may be premature to begin designing roadways. Jim Hartz suggested that it is important to translate to the public various design options for each type of street. These items have to be illustrated conceptually to get some feedback.

Several different design option visuals were presented to the Committee.

Nick Bado suggested not showing the public some of the improvement options due to the fact that there is no locally designated pot of money to implement these changes. Jim Hartz mentioned that the

State and County roadways that include state or federal funding must include complete streets design elements under current State Law and that there are special pots of money at those levels to implement some of what we are discussing.

Jim Jones mentioned that federal policy is heading in the same direction. Nick Bado and Kathleen Johnson both said that local funding levels aren't great and not improving with the State's tax cap policy.

Jim Hartz mentioned that another dynamic in play is an ever increasing bicycling community out of economic necessity. More people cannot afford a vehicle and the costs associated with it, so there are more and more bikers on the roadways. We have to be proactively planning for safer pedestrian accommodation.

Justin Booth said that the entire City of Buffalo policy is being implemented based on resurfacing and maintenance projects. When the City is re-doing a street, they can re-design it to accommodate bikers and pedestrians with paint and signage effectively and cheaply. Not every project involves protected bike lanes. And then there are those other projects like Ohio Street where \$11.5M was spent on a 1.5 mile stretch of roadway, because there was a plan in effect. Those opportunities, although rare, must be planned for. In the meantime, the City is asking itself on every resurfacing project, "how does this street design comply with the bicycle master plan?" The City uses NACTO design guidelines instead of coming up with their own.

Justin also said that there is state legislation moving around the legislature that would create an additional pot of money and that the best thing a municipality can do is plan for the future.

Greg mentioned that the State is working with less money than they had 20 years ago, but that there are some pots of money that can only be used for implementing alternative transportation projects. The Town has to be prepared to capitalize on those grant opportunities or another municipality will.

Nick Bado said that you should just give people a realistic timeline as to when they can see these types of improvements.

Jim Hartz asked how the DOT looks at its obligation under the 4-year old law regarding complete streets design inclusion (Highway Law - Section 331). Greg said that some of the State's projects do have to explain that funding limitations will limit the design alternatives, but that you have to plan for what you want.

Justin Booth said that the City of Buffalo's plan has a 20-year time horizon to build over 300 miles of improvements. They have built 82 miles of bike lanes and they are planning for 10 more miles next year. Jim Jones mentioned that there are younger families and people out there using their bicycles. As a professional engineer we should be trying to plan for the safest routes possible. Katie Burd said that she agrees that the Town and Village should be proactively planning for these safe networks. It is important that it gets planned even though we may not see it implemented for many years.

Nick Bado said that it will take a cultural change to see these things implemented regularly. Too many agencies and people are set in their ways. Greg also suggested that we include examples of bicycle furniture options into an implementation plan that can be utilized at business locations or high demand areas such as schools and libraries.

Justin Booth explained to the Committee that the metrics and guidelines offered through the League of American Bicyclists provide a plethora of information on how to go about creating better accommodations in the community.

4. HAWK Traffic Signal Video Presentation

The Committee watched a 3-minute video presentation of a HAWK signal from Tempe, AZ.

5. Current and Proposed Projects:

Jim Jones updated the committee on some progress regarding a Spring Clean-Up event along the Rails to Trails corridor. Also, he has been planning the installation of the Lincoln Park Trail Loop with YPR.

Jim Jones mentioned that the NFTA is taking some additional time before releasing their Tier 3 analysis regarding a preferred route for either BRT or LRT.