

Creedon, Paul

From: John Sanzone [sanzoneja@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, January 29, 2015 7:55 PM
To: Creedon, Paul
Subject: City council comments Jan. 29

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Date: January 29, 2015 at 4:18:39 PM EST
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Policy order 23 - for the city government to collaborate with the CRA on completing the northern stretch of the GJP, from Binney Street to Somerville

- The CRA is breaking ground in a few months on the first section of the GJP to be built, between Main Street and Broadway
- Helps put resources into completing the overall Grand Junction Path
- This serves two neighborhoods (WH and EC) that are in particular need of environmental and transportation justice, and better integration with the opportunities in Kendall Square and the City of Boston, which the GJP will serve dramatically.

Policy order 24 - for the creation of a Grand Junction overlay district, serves a few important purposes

- Like #23, it puts resources toward the completion of the path
- In addition, it gives us the opportunity to think about the integration of the path into the surrounding transportation network and neighborhoods. One great thing about the Grand Junction Path is that it forces the rethink of several important intersections in Cambridge, such as the Mass Ave - Vassar Street death trap. We also need to think about future development possibilities along the GJ corridor. Ensuring that abutting developers are incentivized to provide good access to the path and walk and bike connections to and from the corridor, is great to think about now.

Calendar item 4 - regarding the Pearl Street reconstruction

The reconstruction provides an opportunity to contribute to reduction of reliance on automobiles. I'm not speaking as an advocate for bicyclists, I'm speaking as an advocate for making healthy and sustainable modes of transit default and attractive options for everyone. It's possible but only by design. Biking and walking and taking transit shouldn't be "alternative" transportation, they should be primary transportation.

We can set all the public health and sustainability goals we want, but none of it just happens. Until the healthy and sustainable transportation options are not only safe and attractive and comfortable, but simply, defaults, most people aren't going to use them.

Nobody in this room would send their child to bike on Pearl Street as it is now, nor would they in either of the CDD proposals. The same goes for all the streets around it: even ones with allegedly sufficient biking infrastructure like Brookline Street. Certainly not Mass. Ave. But, if we build a protected, curb-separated bike lane on Pearl Street like what's on Vassar Street or on the new

Western Ave., most of us would. On top of that, everyday people who don't want to bike will feel a little better about biking, because at least this stretch of their commute or trip, will be safe and comfortable.

Cambridge is behind on world-class biking infrastructure. We aren't building as if we want to increase the mode share of biking. We have pieces of great infrastructure, but not a network. As long as the great infrastructure only comes when it's relatively easy and doesn't do anything to impede the status quo, we will never have a network.

The handwringing about ensuring parking for those that need it is disappointing in America's Innovation City. Obviously we can come up with a way to ensure that those who truly need it, have it, and not sacrifice a sustainable future where to keep an arbitrary "high-as-possible" supply of on-street permit parking. The next generation should grow up feeling great about walking and biking and taking the bus. We can do better with how we design this public space, and streets are, indeed, public space.

I'll end with news out of the City of London where the mayor just announced a major dedicated bike lane project that will transform the city. I quote from a local writer, substituting "London" for "Cambridge":

Last week I was in Seville for a story about Seville's experience with segregated bike lanes, 50 miles of which were opened in one go in 2007 (they now have 75 miles).

What struck me most of all was the people who cycled. Stand by a [Cambridge] London street and the bulk of people on bikes will be young, probably male, mainly dressed in specific bike gear, and generally riding light bikes at relatively high speed.

Seville's lanes, separated from the motor traffic by a raised kerb and fence are, by contrast, used by children, people in their 70s, men, women, families. Almost all wear everyday clothes, and ride at relaxed speeds.

The effect is humanising, civilising, relaxing, enchanting. It makes the city immediately more appealing. Beyond all that it also rebuts the perennial complaint that the push for [Cambridge] London bike routes is the niche hobby horse of a small coterie of middle-class, male cyclists. The whole point is that if you create safer cycling you necessarily create more inclusive cycling.

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