

MAYOR'S PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COUNCIL

August 6, 2014
3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Meeting Minutes

1. Introductions and Welcome of New Members

MPAC Members Present:

Co-chair, Rebekah Scheinfeld – Commissioner, Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT)
Co-chair, Peter Skosey – Metropolitan Planning Council

Adam Becker – Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago's Children (CLOCC)
Dennis Embree – Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)
Sharon Feigon – Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT)
Melody Geraci – Active Transportation Alliance
Benet Haller – Department of Planning and Development
Ben Helphand - NeighborSpace
Jennifer Herd- Department of Public Health
Mary Lopez – Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety
Randy Neufeld – National Complete Streets Coalition
Rudy Nimocks – University of Chicago
John O'Neal – Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)
Greg Piland – Federal Highway Administration
Erika Selke – Chicago Park District
Joseph Schofer – Northwestern University
Marsha Trawinski – Metro Seniors in Action

Others Present:

Jaime Arteaga (CLOCC), Allan Mellis (Public), Steven Vance (Streetsblog Chicago), Kristen Maddox (Alta Planning), Josh Sikich (Alta Planning), Tony Ruiz (Chicago Public Schools), Jeffrey Wright (Chicago Public Schools), Kyle Whitehead (Active Transportation Alliance)

Chicago Department of Transportation Representatives Present:

Mike Amsden, Janet Attarian, Suzanne Carlson, Lauren Crabtree, Luann Hamilton, Eric Hanss, Hannah Higgins, Angel Montalvo, Charlie Short, Carlin Thomas

Commissioner Scheinfeld welcomed three new members to the Council:

- Ben Helphand of NeighborSpace; Ben is a longtime walking advocate.
- Dr. Stephanie Whyte, Chief Health Officer at Chicago Public Schools; Dr. Whyte works with CPS and CDPH to improve health of public school students, including physical activity.
- Dr. Karen Sheehan, Medical Director for Lurie Children's Injury Prevention and Research Center; Dr. Sheehan worked with the Mayor's office and at press conferences about the children's safety zone initiative. She is currently working with CLOCC staff on a walkability survey that incorporates crime prevention through environmental design awareness/strategy.

2. Approval of Minutes

- The meeting minutes from 5/7/2014 were approved.

3. Pedestrian Fatalities 2014 Update

- Commissioner Scheinfeld presented provisional 2013 crash data from IDOT thanks to the discussion at the last MPAC. There was an increase in pedestrian major injuries for the first two quarters of 2013, the first increase since 2009. Every other year was a downward trend. VMT (vehicle miles traveled) also went up – pedestrian injuries may be tracking with VMT. Overall, though, major pedestrian injuries are still below 2009 for these two quarters. Official data for all 2013 is expected from IDOT in October.
- There have been 21 pedestrian fatalities in 2014 according to data from the Chicago Police Department. 2013 and 2012 year to date: 18 and 16.

4. Chicago Pedestrian Plan: Connectivity

a. Scorecard (*Suzanne Carlson*)

- Presented Chicago Pedestrian Plan scorecard for “Connectivity” and reviewed goals and progress.
- Highlights include Walk to Transit grant programs, at-grade railway crossings, underpass improvements, and identifying pedestrian streets (“P-streets”). Discussion amongst the council resulted in formation of a sub-committee to work on P-streets (includes Ben Helphand, Peter Skosey, Benet Haller). **Council members were asked to Contact Peter Skosey at pskosey@metroplanning.org if interested in participating. The new sub-committee will review the P-street designation process and return with updates at the November MPAC meeting.**

b. Snow Removal Program (*Luann Hamilton*)

- An interagency Sidewalk Snow Removal Task Force has been established to identify issues around snow removal. The Task Force is a partnership amongst CDOT Project Development, Infrastructure, In-House Management, Department of Planning and Development, Streets and Sanitation, 2FM and the Chicago Transit Authority.
- Members of the Task Force are responsible for removing snow from public facilities such as bridges, public agency buildings, JC Decaux shelters.
- The City reassigns personnel (CDOT in-house, Streets and Sanitation crews) during major snow events to provide greater coverage.
- The Task Force identified issues for snow removal, including vacant lots, unoccupied facilities, bridges in outlying areas, viaducts and underpasses, CTA stops adjacent to private property, snow berms created in the public way during plowing of lots/driveways, pedestrian refuge islands.
- Ben Helphand commented that railroads/underpasses are of most concern. He also asked for the number of non-JC Decaux bus shelters, and if they're in front of businesses or residents.
- Marcia Trawinski commented that private parking lots often pile snow in handicap parking spaces. Suggested Talk to SSA's to find out who they hire to clear snow and if these companies have the capacity to do other streets.
- Sharon Feigon commented that ice is a major issue, sometimes even more than snow.
- Enforcement of the sidewalk snow removal ordinance focuses on commercial properties and large apartment buildings, which is based on complaints made to 311. 311 is available for reporting commercial building owners/tenants who have not removed snow from their property. Typically a warning is issued first with a citation if no action has been taken.
- Awareness of the sidewalk snow removal ordinance is disseminated through doorhangers and letters to aldermanic offices. Chicago Shovels and Adopt a Sidewalk are tools for encouraging and helping Chicago residents organize to keep sidewalks clear of snow.
- Council member suggested working with block clubs and neighborhood groups. There needs to be a place for people to report that they cannot shovel and need assistance, tie this into Chicago Shovels. There should be a snow removal reporting option on the 311 App “See Click Fix”.
- Council member suggested language regarding ice in the snow removal ordinance.

- Council member inquired if there could be a snow enforcement event similar to the pedestrian and bicycle safety enforcement events. Due to limited personnel, reporting violators and promoting awareness of the ordinance were recommended as countermeasures.
- c. Pedestrian Count Projects (*Eric Hanss*)
- There have been two volunteer counts in 2014 to date with one in May and one in July. Volunteers were recruited through MPAC, UIC, Active Transportation Alliance and through community organizations; CDOT provides training in intersection pedestrian crossing counts.
 - Count methods and dates are guided by the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project (NBPD); counts have been submitted to NBPD.
 - Initial focus has been on locations with high numbers of pedestrian crashes in the Central Business District: Dearborn and Ontario & Fairbanks and Ontario
 - Working directly with community organizations, such as the Streeterville Organization of Active Residents (SOAR) has been successful. The Council was asked for suggestions for future community organizations interested in conducting counts. Currently there are no set geographic parameters for counts aside from being in Chicago. As data becomes more substantial, specific areas may receive repeat counts.
 - **The next count will be between September 9-14, 2014 coinciding with the NBPD Official National Count days; counts will ideally occur in several TBD locations depending on number of volunteers. Please forward Eric's contact Eric.Hanss@activetrans.org to interested volunteers or to suggest networks to reach out to for future volunteers.**
 - Stay tuned for an upcoming pedestrian count webpage on www.chicagocompletestreets.org that will describe the program and serve as a resource for those looking to do their own counts.
 - The program is creating a pedestrian count database by compiling volunteer, internal and subconsultant counts for internal and external use through Traffic Tracker (www.chicagotraffictracker.com) when the database is complete.
 - CDOT is working to procure automated field counters for 24-hour counts; counters will help to gather pedestrian volume information to develop Chicago-specific adjustment factors to improve the utility of peak hour counts.
 - - Steven Vance asked about the downtown pedestrian count and if/when it will happen again, perhaps this should be included in the next round of UWP grant fund applications.
 - Ben Helphand stated that ped counts should be used to prioritize and achieve other goals in the Ped Plan (identifying barriers, P-Street designations, etc.)
 - - Members discussed the feasibility of having the private sector pay for ped counts
- e. Argyle Shared Street update (*Janet Attarian, Hannah Higgins*)
- The Argyle Streetscape Project goals include:
 - Improve infrastructure by creating a cohesive and flexible streetscape plan within funding limitations
 - Support existing Argyle St. merchants and their customers and bolster Argyle St. as a regional business destination
 - Brand Argyle St. business district and develop community identification
 - Implement streetscape and infrastructure elements that increase public safety and deter negative activity
 - Provide a complete and shared street that benefits the flow of pedestrian, vehicular and bike traffic equally.
 - Shared street design includes speeds less than 15mph, blurred lines between pedestrian and vehicular spaces and the removal of barrier curbs. Benefits include increased safety through individual responsibility, expansion of public urban space, increased pedestrian and bicycle traffic, promotes economic development.
 - The shared street will slow down speeds for all road users. There will be stop signs only at the perimeter of Argyle Street on Winthrop and Kenmore and the traffic signals will remain at Broadway and Sheridan. There will be domes at crosswalks on the edges of the shared street to meet ADA standards while a secondary tactile grooved paver will separate the

pedestrian only area from vehicular traffic on Argyle. Council was asked for feedback about designs. Design presentation is available at <http://chicagocompletestreets.org/streetscapes>.

- The Streetscape is currently in design phase and next steps involve changing the ordinance for pedestrian to have right of way on these streets similar to other cities regarding ordinances and legal requirements. **The Council was asked for feedback about any ordinance change and suggestions for crafting language, which would be reviewed with a draft ordinance to be shared at the November MPAC meeting.**
- Council member Randy Neufeld suggested reviewing loading zone regulations, which could be limited to hours when foot traffic was lower thus reducing conflicts; he also suggested to build in an evaluation period for the pilot project.
- Design will be complete within the next month. Construction will begin in Spring 2015 and completion anticipated for the end of 2015 (weather permitting).

5. Safe Passage, Chicago Public Schools

- Tony Ruiz and Jeffrey Wright presented an overview of the Safe Passage Program.
- Created in 2009 after a fatal incident when CPS student Derrion Albert was killed on his way home from school when he got caught up in a street fight, CPS Safe Passage is designed to provide safe routes for students to and from school.
- The concept of “Safe Passage” has been around in several different forms going back decades via parents walking their children to school, crossing guards and student and parent patrols.
- Schools are identified by the school community, popular mode of student transportation (walking, public transit, biking, driving), arrival and dismissal times, and student residence location.
- Safe Passage Schools are generally allocated five to ten Community Watchers to supervise student travel, which includes reporting pedestrian hazards to 311. Watchers are hired from the community and from the schools and employed by community-based organizations. Each route has a base operator. All incidents must be submitted immediately. All Safe Passage workers are trained and evaluated based on their ability to build relationships, identify situations before they come an incident; they all must undergo and pass a background check. Watchers work 5 hours per day and earn \$10 per hour.
- In 2013, 86 schools were identified and staffed with 1,200 Community Watchers. 2013 program results expected in September.
- In 2014, 90-95 schools will participate in the Safe Passage Program.

6. Looking Ahead – Chicago Pedestrian Plan: Livability (11/5/14)

- The November MPAC meeting will focus on the Pedestrian Plan “Livability” chapter. The Council may review this chapter in advance of the meeting and suggest items to be highlighted at the next meeting including follow-up to the “Connectivity” chapter. The Chicago Pedestrian Plan is available online at www.chicagocompletestreets.org. Please contact carlin.thomas@activetrans.org with any suggestions and/or questions.

7. Adjournment