



Christine McCall
Assistant City Manager/DPD Director

Craig Thomas
Deputy Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Eileen M. Donoghue, City Manager *EMD*

FROM: Christine McCall, Assistant City Manager/DPD Director

DATE: September 28, 2021

SUBJECT: MOTION OF 9/14/2021 BY COUNCILOR DRINKWATER
REQ. CITY MGR. PROVIDE AN UPDATE REGARDING THE GOLOWELL
SHARED STREETS PROJECTS AND CORRIDOR STUDIES, AND POSSIBLE
FUNDING SOURCES TO IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS.

Go Lowell Multimodal Complete Streets Plan

The GoLowell Multimodal Complete Street Plan is anticipated to be complete in December 2021. Led by Toole Design and an interdisciplinary team from the Department of Planning and Development (DPD), the planning process included extensive public outreach including several tabling events; two surveys with over 1,000 responses combined; neighborhood group presentations; three large public meetings; corridor-specific public Zoom meetings; coordination with partner agencies such as Lowell National Historical Park, Lowell Regional Transit Agency, and University of Massachusetts Lowell; and neighborhood walk-throughs and bike-throughs.

In addition to introductory material, the GoLowell plan will include four major sections:

1. **Walking and Rolling** – This section will include a set of recommended priority improvement projects targeted toward pedestrians and those who use mobility aids such as wheelchairs or scooters.
2. **Bus Network** – This section will contain a proposed pilot transit program taking advantage of an existing Sarbanes Transit in the Parks grant that includes two pilot bus routes and permanent enhancements at five key bus stops.
3. **Bicycle Vision** – This section will include a map showing a visionary, equitable bicycle network highlighting corridors for future enhancements. Improvements may include but are not limited to sharrows, bike lanes, or separated bike facilities when space is available. It will also include a proposed work plan toward that vision.
4. **Connecting it All** – The final section will combine recommendations from the previous three sections to present conceptual cross-sections and key intersection plans for four Complete Street corridors (Appleton Street, Bridge Street, Broadway Street, and Chelmsford Street); improvements at Gallagher Terminal; and Transportation Demand Management recommendations for business and City offices.

The recommendations in the bus network section are fully funded. This means that construction of the recommended bus stop enhancements will begin in spring 2022 while testing of the pilot bus routes by LRTA will take place in 2023. Other recommendations in the plan are unfunded; however, the plan will include recommended funding sources to pursue.

GoLowell Shared Streets Pilots

In addition to the GoLowell plan, DPD utilized Shared Streets funding from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation for two pilots in summer/autumn 2021.

The Pawtucket Boulevard project narrowed the eastbound section to one 12-ft wide travel lane and an 11-ft shoulder/parking lane, placing concrete barriers in the existing shoulder between Sampas Pavilion and the intersection with Varnum Avenue. These barriers along the shoulder defend pedestrians and cyclists on the sidewalk from high-speed traffic. By removing a lane of travel, the project also had the visual effect of narrowing the travel way, thereby discouraging and reducing speeding.

MassDOT is currently evaluating the safety and capacity impacts on the street. This includes evaluating traffic counts, wait times at the Varnum Avenue signal, evaluating crash data and prevailing speeds, and reviewing community feedback. MassDOT will perform the same analysis after the removal of the pilot. DPD intends to use this analysis in future long-term planning.

The project at Merrimack Street and Cardinal O'Connell Parkway implemented crosswalk safety improvements as well as transit stop enhancements. Pedestrian safety improvements included repainting the crosswalks at the intersections of Merrimack Street and Cardinal O'Connell Parkway and Market Street and Cardinal O'Connell Parkway as well as curb extensions created by paint, flex posts, and planters to reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians. Transit stop enhancements included relocating the bus stop on Merrimack Street to a safer position. Construction of a permanent version of this pilot will take place in 2022.

Middlesex and Branch

DPD is using remaining funds from the MassDOT Shared Streets program in conjunction with the Reach LoWELL Coalition to improve pedestrian safety and mobility in a portion of Branch Street and Middlesex Street. DPD completed the striping of Branch Street and Middlesex Street from the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Lowell to the intersection of School Street. Other improvements include intersection analyses of Middlesex and Branch, Middlesex and School, and Branch and School, as well as sidewalk repairs and signage upgrades.

CGH /ce/cmm

Cc: Christopher Glenn Hayes, Neighborhood Planner
Camilo Espitia, Chief Design Planner
Alan Heredia, Transportation Planner