

Complete and Green Streets Task Force (BHCSTF)
Meeting Minutes
Sept. 30, 2024

Attendance (Task Force Memebers): John Leo (Chair), Dana Nigro (Vice-Chair), Subhronil Mukherjee (Secretary), Lauren Perl, Sgt. William Fettes (BHPD), Gale Bradford (BHPS), Councilwoman Margaret Illis, Councilman Manuel “Manny” Couto, Steve Carrellas, Rich Caruso

Attendance (Guests): Liza Vianna (Administrator)

8:05 pm - Call to order

Chair’s Presentation on Complete and Green Streets - presentation covered new “risk management” approach as well as integration of green solutions for traffic calming

Task Force Goals/Mission

- Short term goals of awareness and data collection
- Long term goals of town council recommendations
- Comments
 - Brief discussion about green streets aspects
 - Recommendation: a list of trees appropriate for planting next to sidewalks (limited by impervious surfaces) would be appropriate to maintain - John
 - DBC highly engaged in aesthetics - having an EC-vetted list would benefit DBC - Manny

Workgroup Briefings

- John outlines two-part strategy for working towards goals:
 - current street conditions
 - current ordinances
- Limits on crash data forces a focus on soft data (commonplace for existing Complete Streets policy)
- Consider what soft data the task force can pursue vs what a grant or township planner can engage
- Discussed public task force email - this was ultimately tabled with concerns - alternative is an online form using existing “Report a Problem” link or a unique form for Complete Streets-related input

Snapshot workgroup

John briefed highlights

- Sgt. Fettes and Steve will continue to review limited two-year crash data as per resolution
- Seeking traffic studies that have already been conducted—John will ask Planning Board
- Work closely with Communications and School workgroup to capture Safe Routes to School data
- Develop the online form - John work with Comms

What Is Possible?

Bronny briefed group on review of existing Complete Streets programs in comparable towns, as well as NJ towns considered “most walkable,” plus interviews with Rutgers planning professors

- Tactical Urbanism - approach to neighborhood building that uses short-term, low-cost and scalable interventions and policies to catalyze long term change - applicable to testing suburban road designs/safety features

Routes around Schools

Gale Bradford briefs group on their workgroup

- meeting scheduled for next week
- Discussion about the value of crossing guard placement and their observations
- map of town, green dots where crossing guards are
- we have no Hazardous Road Policy passed
- Transportation presentation looks into bussing for schools
- John: everyone should take a look at the presentation
- Margaret: we'll do a map of Berkeley Heights where sidewalks are/have been installed and this will help us identify areas where there are walkers along major routes without sidewalks
- Gale: biggest thing is we're developing a survey, how kids get to and from school but this does not include trails (ex: harrison)
 - Margaret: why not
 - Gale: map was too small and parents are not comfortable kids walking through trails
 - John: why do parents feel more comfortable next to roads as opposed to trails? we should look into that

Downtown

- Downtown workgroup paused

Communications

Dana briefs group on workgroup findings

- Google Drive with subfolders, master list of references for everything organized by category
- Different workgroups can share files with other workgroups
- Resources we need: Developed an outreach list of town departments, boards, committees and community organizations
- Developed a Letters of Introduction for each relevant stakeholder group
 - Task force members to review in next 48 hours
- October 9th National Walk to School Day
- Dana: Can Gale email principals to make sure above dates get out to parents
- Discussion about collection data on SRTS days versus a publicly pushed “walk to school” day
 - SRTS measures walking data two days in a year surveys
 - PTO volunteers
 - John: will look for an official flyer for walk to school day
- Other avenues discussed for awareness campaigns
 - A social media strategy must be discussed
 - Develop a collection of photos for press releases
 - expanding education in schools
 - education in high school for drivers
 - Programs for seniors via rec department
 - Winter Walk / Summer Block Party
 - Liza: will share email for registering for Winter Walk
- Develop a webpage for Task Force/Complete Streets
- Discussion ensued about task force email. Ultimately, a public email was tabled referencing concerns. Group settled on the development of a Google Forms-style approach that allows managed input from users (pedestrians)
 - Liza recommended we set up a form on the town website rather than use Google Forms
- Takeaway: Next meeting we will discuss what the form should look like and what we want to capture

Putting it All Together

- Workgroup assignments - group agrees they understand their tasks as discussed in open session today
- Workgroups deliver assignments to Chair/Vice Chair
 - John: work groups shall work towards end goals of supportive and appropriate recommendations for town council representatives
- Developing 2024 Recommendations

9:30 HARD STOP

Meeting ended at 9:31, proposed by John and seconded by Manuel

Next meeting date October 28, 2024 in the Dogwood Conference Room at 8:00PM