

City of Boston – BTD Lower Roxbury OAG Meeting 09.21.2023

Attendance:

Ashley Pierre-Louis, HSH

Louisa Gag, BTD

Amber Torres, Office of Arts and Culture

Andre Jones, Director or Community Engagement Nuestra Comunidad

Angelique (Angie) Brutus, Community and Development Liaison D7 (standing in for Godfred Afeghera)

Donald Ward

Jamarhl Crawford, Community Engagement Manager BPDA

John Smith St. Cyere, Program Coordinator at Camfield Estates (Lenox St, Roxbury)

Robert (Bob) Barney, President Claremont Neighborhood Assoc.

Tahara Samuel, Community Planning Manager for Madison Park

Jacob Wessel, BTD

Ron Whitaker, People's Baptist Church

Agenda:

Refresher

City Transportation Programs

Keeping Up Awareness

Notes:

Q: references to a question asked

C: references to a comment stated

A: references to answering a question or comment

Refresher

- The purpose of OAG is to help us communicate and collaborate with communities about the project
- Q: Tahara: Is this for the Roxbury Corridor redesign?
- A: Louisa: This is around safety specifically. This is for the Lower Roxbury Transportation Study project

- Q: John S.S.C.: Are you able to reshare the final design?
- A: Louisa: Final designs can be found
<https://www.boston.gov/departments/transportation/lower-roxbury-transportation-study>

City Transportation Programs

- Goals and tools – everyone should feel safe and comfortable on their neighborhood streets
 - Infrastructure and design
 - Policy – we can enact to encourage safety (ex: Vision Zero, Connect Learn Explore)
 - Programs
 - Safe Routes to School – promote walking and biking to school
 - Silvia Castanos is the Safe Routes to School planner in BTDC; Vivian Ortiz is the MassDOT Safe Routes to School coordinator for the Boston Area
 - Learn to Ride Workshops – adult biking classes
 - Sunday, September 24
 - Saturday, September 30th
 - Summer Sports Center for Children
 - New partnership to expand goal to teach all kids to ride a bike
 - Bike Repair Workshops
- Q: Louisa: Have you heard of these programs?
 - C: Tahara: I'm a little sad that I've never heard of this group. I think this is great, but I wish it was easier to find. Boston is a city of silos and gatekeeping, but I'd love to connect with others. Very involved with MassMotion. We did a street assessment with youth, and I'd love to share that feedback. I'd love to talk about how do we involve youth in these spaces.
 - C: Bob: – I've never been to this meeting before and I live in this area. I'm curious about how it's being communicated. We have Roxse Homes and United Neighbors of Lower Roxbury. It's an observation, not a critique that I don't see them here. I think an element of safe walking for elders is important. How do we make this a better place for elders? I'd like to see more residents here. How do we focus on those who have trouble navigating the sidewalks now?
 - A: Louisa: When we know construction is coming in the Spring, we'll be asking the OAG to push out the information and re-engage the community. This group is in a bit of a slow period because the final designs have already been shared with the community.
 - C: Tahara: Community engagement is in a really hard space right now. Covid is still creating so much harm.
- BlueBikes – publicly owned bike share system
 - We'll be expanding the system by 40% in the next year. Focus is filling the station capacity downtown and fill in gaps in neighborhoods. We'll be doing community engagement around that.
 - A goal is to make BlueBikes more accessible and affordable
 - Current programs - Income eligible program

- \$50/yr or \$5/mo
 - New discount launching soon for Boston residents
 - \$5/yr for income eligible residents
 - \$60/yr for new members that have not had an annual membership in the last three years
 - Q: Tahara: Is there talk of making some of them electrical, or do they exist in the system already?
 - A: Louisa: Yes. There are plans to add e-bikes to the system. When e-bikes are added we'll have to figure out pricing to make sure it's still accessible
 - Q: Bob: Can these [BlueBikes] be free for income restricted residents?
 - A: Louisa: There is currently an income eligible program for BlueBikes and we'll be launching the new program soon with an even deeper discount (\$5/year for Boston residents).
- Bike Racks
 - We install and repair 160 bike racks each year
 - High quality bike parking in the right locations encourages more individuals to bike regularly and helps them feel safe doing so
 - Another team is working on how to improve secure bike parking across the City for people who can't store their bikes in their homes, or have large bikes or heavy bikes like cargo bikes (e.g. pods).
- Mobility Hub Pilot
 - Combine transportation options and information (ex: BlueBike docks next to a bus stop, bike racks, street art, and information kiosk)
 - Goal is to improve access and reliability
 - The program is currently being piloted in East Boston
 - Q: Tahara: Can we pilot this in underserved areas? Pilots never happen in Black and Brown areas.
 - A: Louisa: East Boston is an Environmental Justice community. I don't have much information on the criteria that led to East Boston being chosen for the pilot program.
- Boston Brakes Campaign
 - Outreach and education campaign by Mayor's Disabilities Commission
 - The goal is to raise awareness of and increase safety for pedestrians with disabilities on Boston's public rights of way
- Educational videos
 - Street Design Tools for Ped Safety
 - What the Tech?
 - What is green infra?

Keeping Up Awareness

Do you guys see gaps in these programs? Are there barriers that we're not addressing?

Do you have ideas for how we can get the word out about these programs?

- C: Bob: In London they have Zebra Walks, They have RRFBs when someone needs to walk but the drivers really adhere to the signals
 - I know BTM is working on traffic signalization but we're just not there yet
 - The condition of the sidewalks in Lower Roxbury is poor
 - I want to make sure that the condition and safety of sidewalks is being considered
 - I agree with Tahara, that piloting in a Black and Brown community would be beneficial
- C: John: It may be helpful to work with property management companies to help increase awareness and get the word out about different programs
- A: Louisa: We haven't done that for programs but I'd love to hear more
- C: John: Yes, I think they'd get the word out. They usually have community coordinators and town halls.
- C: Tahara: Paper flyers are best for elders in Lower Rox. Using engaging words on materials also helps.
- C: Tahara: We need to be mindful of the racial disparities – Black and Brown kids aren't riding bikes in these neighborhoods because of the gangs. Having events to ride bikes in certain spaces isn't always helpful. The bike training programs aren't necessarily where we need them. You should host events within the property management.
- A: Louisa – I love this idea of bringing the programs more where people are, like a housing development.
- C: Angie: If a program like this was piloted in my area, I'd feel more like it was for me. I suggest working with ongoing events where relationships are already established in the community.
 - Black Girls Do Bike is a group that already exists
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/BlackGirlsDoBikeBoston/>
 - Partner with existing orgs
 - C: Angie: Black Girl Trek could be another nice organization to look into
- C: Ron: For anything we want to be successful, it needs to be held in and for the community. If you need a space, the church is more than welcome to host. They've hosted plenty of successful events.
- Q: Ron: Are there any BlueBikes stations in the Lower Roxbury area where we are? I think bikes are being used by unhoused people.
- A: John: there's one [BlueBikes station] on Lenox
- A: Louisa: There are 4 in the project area; but they were low on bikes around 9:30 AM this morning. That means they're being used but also that the area could use more stations.
- C: John: I wonder if it's more generational than racial. The young people I work with love the BlueBikes but people my age aren't riding.
- C: Ashley: There is public data around the Bluebikes. It's not very user friendly, but it would be interesting to look into.
- C: Jacob: There's a new open data Blue Bike data website <https://bluebikedata.com/>
- Q: Tahara: Is there any data on stolen Blue Bikes?
- A: Louisa: We're aware that new users aren't always aware of how to correctly dock their bikes, so we're working on spreading awareness around that
 - There are a huge number of bikes that are lost in the system each year
 - Lyft is trying to do better with recovering lost bikes and holding users accountable - piloting a beacon program, for example

- The E-bikes will have location tracking data
- In the past we've talked to the Boston Public Health Commission to develop a program that lets people swap our current BlueBikes with older bikes that aren't part of the system. It would be a BlueBikes trade in program with 0 repercussions.

Next meeting Jan 11, 2024 at 11 AM