

Brookline Commission on Disability (BCOD)
Subcommittee on Lower Beacon Accessible Parking
Meeting
Sunday Nov 10, 2019
1:00 to 2:30 PM
41 Centre St., Brookline

Minutes

Attendees: Saralynn Allaire, Rob Heist (BCOD members), Cindy Lee (Trans. Board liaison), and guest Elena Huisman, member of the Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC).

Saralynn provided the minutes.

Review proposed plan to reverse the positions of the parking and bicycle lanes on Beacon St. westbound between St. Mary's and Carlton Sts.:

Elena explained that the main reason for the proposal is that double parkers in this commercial area frequently block the bike lane. The risk of being hit by driver side door opening was a second reason. There currently are no curbside HP spaces along this stretch of Beacon St. There are one or two HP spaces in the strip of diagonal parking spaces along the Green MBTA tracks. Given their location, these primarily serve MBTA riders. Curbside HP spaces for this stretch have been requested in the past.

Identify issues for people with disabilities:

In reviewing the plan, it was noted that the distance between the passenger side of parked vehicles and the curb was always at least 8'. As access aisles between HP spaces are 8', the space between passenger sides of vehicles and the curb appeared to be adequate for WC accessible van ramps to be lowered and for users to rotate wheelchairs at the bottom. Wheelchair users would then need to travel in the bike lane to the nearest curb cut and then to their destination.

While the access described above may be reasonable for power chair users, the travel distance for manual wheelchair users would be a burden to them or anyone pushing them in good weather and very difficult in rain, sleet, snow, etc.

List possible remediation solutions:

One suggested solution was to raise the level of road surface between the curb and parked vehicle passenger side to curb level. This would enable a WC accessible van to lower its ramp to curb height and provide straight access to the sidewalk. However, passengers with limited leg strength and manual wheelchair users would find it difficult to stand up when exiting onto a curb height platform.

The other suggestion was to change some parking spaces to HP spaces. Various possible locations were discussed. It was noted that access to a nearby curb cut is needed.

Develop recommendations:

The BCOD members of the subcommittee recommended that the regular parking spaces on both the right and left sides of the crosswalk to the St. Mary's MBTA stop be converted to HP spaces. Both are easily accessed. This change would require very little additional work for DPW, i.e., road painting and signage. These members agreed to support the plan to reverse the positions of the parking and bike lanes if the HP spaces are added. The BAC visitor had a positive view of the recommendation.