

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEETING NOTES

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, March 16, 2021

TIME: 1:00 p.m.

PLACE: VIRTUAL

CHAIR: Jamie Carrington, WMATA

**VICE-
CHAIRS:**

Jeff Dunckel, Montgomery County Department of Transportation
Laurel Hammig, National Park Service

Attendance:

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Marty Baker | MDOT |
| Jamie Carrington | WMATA |
| Mike Doyle | Virginia Families for Safe Streets |
| Jeff Dunckel | Maryland Highway Safety Office |
| Henry Dunbar | Arlington |
| Laura Ghosh | Loudoun County |
| Yolanda Hipski | Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland |
| Laurel Hammig | National Park Service |
| Tiffany Jennings | Prince George's County DPW&T |
| Joe Kelly | Frederick County |
| Andrea Lasker | Prince George's County |
| Mackenzie Love | Northern Virginia Transportation Authority |
| Andrea Lasker | Prince George's County |
| Carole Lewis | DDOT |
| Karyn McAlister | DDOT |
| Heidi Mitter | VDOT |
| Miyoung Park | City of Gaithersburg |
| David Patton | Arlington County |

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the March 16, 2021 Meeting
Page 2

Stephanie Piperno
Jennifer Wampler

Capital Trails Coalition
Virginia DCR

COG Staff Attendance:

Michael Farrell
Charlene Howard
Andrew Meese
Jessica Mirr
Jon Schermann
John Swanson

1. General Introductions.

Jamie Carrington of WMATA Chaired the meeting.

2. Review of the February 2 Meeting Notes

The February minutes were approved.

3. Jurisdictional Updates

WMATA has opened the Bike N Ride at Vienna.

Bike lane construction season starts soon. DDOT will construct 8 miles of bike lanes and trails, plus two miles of advisory bike lanes. The Frederick Douglas Memorial Bridge will be open in the Fall of 2021.

MDOT has released its Strategic Highway Safety Plan. For each of the six strategies there is a working group.

There has been an increase in pedestrian and bicycle fatalities in 2020. Over 25% of traffic fatalities in Maryland are nonmotorized.

The next Maryland Bike Ped Advisory Committee meeting will be on April 23. The Maryland Bikeways grant program will be announced in May. MDOT/SHA will release a pedestrian safety action plan in a next step towards realizing the context driven approach that was released in 2019.

Prince George's Bike plan is in process. A traffic garden has been installed at the Prairiewood elementary school, which is also a bike to work day pit stop. Prince George's

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the March 16, 2021 Meeting
Page 3

recently applied for a pedestrian safety grant from the Maryland Highway Safety Office. Prince George's will use "Signal Woman" the Baltimore pedestrian safety campaign.

VDOT just completed its W&OD trail bridge over Route 29. This month there will be joint meetings with Fairfax over VDOT's paving program, which will include road diets and bike lanes. The State Bike/Ped Advisory Committee will meet on April 7, and the central office is looking to update its strategic plan. There is a pilot "innovation challenge" program which is accepting applications.

Arlington will soon install its 100th Cabi station. An action plan for Vision Zero will be presented to the board in May. A bike network plan is being developed for Crystal City.

Loudoun is updating its prioritization criteria for its bike/ped network to include equity. Though a VDOT grant the county will look at its on street bicycle network to see what it would take to build build that out.

The Rock Creek Trail in DC will have a meeting on March 18 to discuss upcoming construction. There will also be construction near the Kennedy Center. The 15th Street cycle track is also moving forward quickly.

Charles County is working on its Indian Head trail feasibility study.

Frederick County is doing its next PSA about walking and running on roads that do not have sidewalks. Frederick is developing an Action Plan for its Vision Zero. Jeff Dunckel praised the last video Frederick County produced, and asked them to share it.

4. Bicycle and Pedestrian Project Map and Database

Staff briefed the Subcommittee on the draft project map, the bike/ped project database, and the next steps towards the completion of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the National Capital Region.

Nearly 1800 projects from all the major jurisdictions have been submitted. Two issues that have come up: lack of geospatial data for some of the projects that were submitted, and lack of clarity over the lead agency for certain projects. Another issue is completed projects

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the March 16, 2021 Meeting
Page 4

– completed projects dating from before 2014 should not be in this database. We do want to keep projects in the database going forward as they are completed, in order to track progress. Projects older than 2014 are existing facilities. If you put in a completed project we need to know the year of completion. Mr. Farrell will continue to work with jurisdictions individually. He has not approved projects which lack geospatial data, or projects that are listed as complete but with no date of completion.

Mr. Farrell suggested that an April working group on the plan might be helpful. Both the TPB Tech and the TPB will be briefed twice, once for information, and once for approval. Mr. Farrell thought we could still complete most of the substantive work in this fiscal year, though approval will have to happen in FY 2022, likely in September.

Ms. Howard said that the database still had some issues but there has been a lot of progress since the last meeting. Existing facilities should not be put in the plan, especially if they were completed before 2014. Going forward, we will keep projects in the database as they are completed, and the completed projects will be filtered out so that we can report progress.

Ms. Howard presented a draft project map showing the projects. There are still 400 projects for which we don't have geospatial data so you don't see them on the map. We received GIS data from Prince George's after the bulk import was completed, but we are working with them and some other jurisdictions to get these projects included in Project Infotrak (the PIT). Another issue with the database is duplicate projects which will need to be identified and eliminated.

National Capital Trail Network Projects are just the planned projects, not the existing segments.

Jessica Mirr will provide back to the jurisdictions spreadsheets showing the projects which lack geospatial data. Duplicate records and incorrect lead agencies will also be identified. We'll get rid of the duplicates that have no geospatial data. We hope to have these issues resolved in time for an April meeting. Thanks to all of you who have already provided geospatial data for all your projects.

Mr. Farrell asked for clear guidance on the submission of completed projects. Ms. Howard said that if anything is submitted that is complete, we will archive it. We still need the date of completion in order to be able to track progress.

Mackenzie Love asked about the clarification process. Ms. Howard pulled up a spreadsheet of duplicate projects to illustrate. There are several entries for a Baltimore Avenue bike lane, one record under MDSHA and one for Prince George's, and we need to figure out which one to keep. If one is mapped we keep the mapped project.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the March 16, 2021 Meeting
Page 5

Jurisdictions will soon be given the ability to map point features such as bike share stations that are not necessarily tied to any particular road.

Ms. Jennings said that different agencies within the County were the lead agency for different projects, notably MNC-PPC. Ms. Howard said that we can have Mr. Farrell work with the contractor on that. Most of the time the lead agency is the jurisdiction. Normally we have listed the county government as a whole, not the specific agency within the county. However we may be able to accommodate that request. If an agency is already on our list, we can easily change it from one to the other. Mr. Farrell asked Ms. Jennings to follow up with a specific request.

Ms. Howard said that we can still accept additional projects if they are complete with geospatial data. We are currently in negotiations with the contractor to do one more bulk import into the PIT.

Ms. Ghosh asked if a segment of roadway has bike lanes and a shared use path. Ms. Howard suggested that it might depend on the time frame. You can pick one facility type. Or you can add them as separate projects. It's up to you.

At the level of a regional plan we don't need a high level of precision. We want to know roughly how many miles of bike lane, shared use path, etc are planned. If there are dual facilities, it's OK to pick one and report that. We won't have every planned bike/ped facility in the region in this plan.

Mr. Farrell has encouraged the jurisdictions to reduce the number of small projects that they submit, but be sure to include projects that will address our regional priorities. For example, DDOT removed most of its standard bike lanes, but put in the protected bike lanes, shared use paths, and selected standard bike lanes that make important connections. We generally don't need to know about sidewalks since most jurisdictions have Complete Streets policies, so provision can be assumed.

Last but not least we want to keep the database manageable, so that it can be maintained and kept accurate. Very large numbers of tiny projects will make it harder to maintain.

Ms. McCalister asked about her records that Mr. Farrell had rejected, and noted that she couldn't make changes to things that she had submitted. She's also had problems updating the line work. Mr. Farrell promised to follow up on those issues. His understanding is that if he denied a project then the submitter should be able to edit them again; but we need to verify. Ms. McAlister said that projects that had been denied she could edit, but projects which Mr. Farrell had accepted but made comments she could not edit. Mr. Farrell replied that that was an error on his part. Also some projects had been accepted but a date of completion was needed. Mr. Farrell will have to go back in and deny those projects so that the submitter can edit.

In the case of Prince George's County, the projects came from Prince George's Planning, but Prince George's listed MDSHA as the lead agency. Kandese Holford at MDSHA has indicated that she wants the County to be listed as the lead agency, not the state, since this project is from a County plan, not a state plan. The submitting agency should be the lead agency for now, regardless of whether it's a State highway. The lead can always be changed later, if the State takes up construction of the facility. There is an option to add a secondary agency to the project.

We will distribute spreadsheets of likely duplicates shortly.

5. Transit within Reach

Mr. Swanson briefed the Subcommittee on the Transit within Reach program. This program is designed to provide assistance to our member agencies in a manner similar to the TLC program. There are 49 transit access focus areas in the region. To encourage ped/bike improvements in this area TPB has set up this technical assistance program. Applications will be solicited in May. Projects will be selected in September, with work starting in January. Projects will be up to \$80,000 for 30% design.

In the TLC program we got 27 applications this year, so very competitive. April 1 – May 17 is the application period for TAP in Maryland. DC and Virginia TAP application periods are also coming up.

6. Other TPB Program Updates

There are two webinars coming up:

- FHWA Bikeway Selection Guide Webinar – March 30
https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/tools_solve/docs/fhwasa18077.pdf
- Vision Zero Arterial Design Webinar – April 23

7. Commuter Connections Regional Bikeways Map

Mr. Sheehan spoke to a draft regional paper bikeways map which Commuter Connections is producing for Bike to Work Day.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the March 16, 2021 Meeting
Page 7

There are electronic bike routing resources available. But the paper map will give you the ability to view the network as a whole, even if high quality cell signal is not available. It has two sides, one for inside the beltway, and another for the entire region.

This map will in some ways replace the old regional ADC Bike Map, which is no longer in publication. While the individual jurisdictions publish their own paper bike maps, a regional paper map has been a felt need.

Commuter Connections is looking for comments from the Subcommittee on the proposed network.

Ms. McAlister asked if this map would feature sufficient detail to be able to identify actual streets. The paper map at the regional level won't show the local streets.

Mr. Farrell asked what facility type these routes are. Mr. Sheehan replied that they were not all trails; some are on-road routes. It's intended to be a navigable network.

Will the Potomac Heritage Scenic Trail be shown, even though some of the facilities are hiking trails. Mr. Farrell asked who the target audience – commuter bicyclists? Mr. Sheehan replied that commuters were the target audience, not so much recreation.

Mr. Carrington asked what this product would provide relative to other available products – what is the niche?

Mr. Farrell replied that he had some history with the ADC Bike Map. It died when ADC died – they had been doing it at their expense, with our input. We had an advisory group of bicyclists drawing routes on mylar. For the 50 mile radius side, the level of detail was not sufficient for it to be very useful for route-finding. The inside the beltway side, on the other hand, was very useful and popular, and its' absence has been felt. There is a demand for a paper map with an adequate level of detail, that you can take with you, or pin to wall to quickly identify a route. Mr. Farrell said that it would be helpful to show the facility type, as the ADC map did – that would not complicate the map too much.

Mr. Sheehan noted that there would be multiple iterations of this map. It won't be perfect by bike to work day, but this won't be the last version.

Ms. Howard offered to give her input on this product.

Mr. Farrell offered to provide a vintage copy of the ADC Bike Map. It's a tried and true product. Another model is the current DC bike map. It goes beyond DC, largely because of the way DC is shaped. Their symbology and level of detail is good, and it would be helpful to have a map that extended that symbology and level of detail to cover the entire area

inside the beltway. The two best models are the old ADC bike map, and the current DC bike map.

Printed maps are popular hand outs at events.

8. COG Regional Travel Survey

Mr. Joh presented on a new data resource from the regional travel survey that COG has recently made available to access data from the 2017-2018 Regional Travel Survey, the RTDC RTS Tabulations. This resource provides descriptive summaries of variables in the RTS household, person, vehicle, and trip files. You are welcome to use this data for your own analyses. First level tabulations have also been made available.

The RTDC can be found at <https://rtdc-mwcog.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/regional-travel-survey-rts-tabulations>

Mr. Farrell encouraged Subcommittee members to make use of this information. The household travel survey is our only good source of data on nonwork trips, which are a majority of the trips in the region. Among other things, it shows that there has been a big shift towards walking and bicycling.

9. Announcements

Mr. Carrington noted that the MUTCD is being updated. Is COG/TPB going to comment on it. Mr. Farrell said that was a good question. However, COG is not a traffic engineering entity. We have enough people and agencies represented on this Subcommittee who could provide comments. However, anything that goes out under COG/TPB's name required multiple layers of approvals, including from TPB Tech and TPB. Several TPB member jurisdictions are submitting their own comments. Heidi Mitter noted that the turnaround was only two months, and it might be hard to get a consensus within that time frame on such a technical subject. Ms. McAlister said that the committee could host a discussion of the new MUTCD when it comes out.

Another topic is a proposal for a regional bike counting program suggested by National Park Service. The National Park Service has hired Volpe to study the issue. They will present their findings at the next Subcommittee meeting.

Ms. Howard said that Maryland may be working on its own program. Ms. Hammig said that Nate Evans at MDOT is the lead for that. There will be stakeholder meeting on the Volpe effort next week which Ms. Howard is welcome to join.

COG/TPB is a consumer of count data, but is not an operating agency that is equipped to

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the March 16, 2021 Meeting
Page 9

maintain counters, etc.

Adjourned