

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEETING NOTES

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, January 18, 2022

TIME: 1:00 p.m.

PLACE: VIRTUAL

CHAIR: Tiffany Jennings, Prince George's County DPWT

VICE-CHAIRS:
Jamie Carrington, WMATA
Laurel Hammig, National Park Service

Attendance:

Marty Baker	MDOT
Bryan Barnett-Woods	City of Rockville
John Bell	
Karen Boodlal	DDOT
George Branyan	DDOT
Eric Brenner	
Jamie Carrington	WMATA
Henry Dunbar	Arlington County
David Edmondson	City of Frederick
Cindy Engelhart	
Sean Eum	MDOT
Nate Evans	MDOT
Alex Freedman	Takoma Park
Annaly Galeas	Montgomery County Parks
Laura Ghosh	Loudoun County
Francie Gilman	
Laurel Hammig	National Park Service
Yolanda Hipski	Tri County Council for Southern Maryland
Michael Jackson	Prince George's County Planning
Dwight Jenkins	Virginia Highway Safety Office

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Tiffany Jennings	Prince George's County DPW&T
George Kandathil	
Joe Kelley	Frederick County
John Patrick Limbe	
Mackenzie Love	NVTA
Heidi Mitter	VDOT/Northern Virginia
David Patton	Arlington County
George Phillips	Prince William County
Cynthia Spriggs	MDOT
Michael Trinh	VDOT
Jennifer Wampler	Virginia Dept. of Conservation and Recreation
Francine Waters	MDOT
Victor Weissberg	Prince George's County DPWT
Allan Yu	Prince William County

COG Staff Attendance:

Michael Farrell
Charlene Howard
Andrew Meese
Janie Nham
Jon Schermann
John Swanson

- 1. General Introductions.**
- 2. Review of the November 16 meeting notes**

The November meeting notes were approved.

3. Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and Interactive Dashboard

Mr. Farrell spoke to a powerpoint. Mr. Farrell summarized the changes made to the plan since the last presentations to the Subcommittee.

Given the rapid advances in bicycle and pedestrian planning, the 2015 plan is out of date.

The regional bicycle and pedestrian plan gives a big picture of all the plans, projects, and polices in the region, how they are helping the region meet its goals.

The core of the plan is its database of bicycle and pedestrian projects. Since the 2014

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database was out of date, and had no associated GIS data, we started fresh, with a new database, drawing from new jurisdictional plans, with GIS data. The GIS data enables us to map the projects, and determine how well they will serve regional goals, such as equity emphasis areas, activity centers, and Transit Access Focus Areas.

The new database has been combined with the Transportation Improvement Programs database, with the assistance of the consultant-supported Project Infotrak.

The disadvantage of this approach is some lack of continuity. But the advantages of a connection to the TIP rather than a freestanding database, and the ability to map, are worth it. A single database reduces duplication of effort and improves the quality and accuracy of the data.

Assembling the database was a long and challenging process. We've completed the bulk data import phase, and have moved to using the Project Infotrak portal. Agency staff will need to make further changes through the portal.

Projects that help us reach our goals are projects that we prioritize for funding.

Mr. Farrell reviewed the plan contents by chapter. The region has seen dramatic increase in bicycle mode share. The chapter on the planned network summarized the planned facility mileage, as well as the results of a buffer analysis which was done on the "low-stress" facilities which are judged to be suitable for people of all ages and abilities. The network served the various priority areas, such as activity centers, equity emphasis areas, and transit access focus areas well.

The interactive map will enable users to zoom in and click on a particular project. The interactive map and dashboard will be the primary way in which the public will interact with the plan.

TPB mailout is January 27. Comments and corrections are due by January 25. We are not going to make further changes to the bicycle and pedestrian project database at this time.

At this point the plan is complete, pending comments from our committees.

David Edmundson asked with there was going to be an analysis of walk or bikesheds based on this network. Mr. Farrell replied that we had done a buffer analysis on the low stress network, which is shared use paths, protected bicycle lanes, and bicycle boulevards (termed breezeways in the Montgomery County plan). The response from users is that people are most comfortable on these types of facilities. The buffer analysis is simple, as the crow flies half mile buffer, of the low stress network. 70-80% of people, households, and jobs are within a half mile buffer.

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Mr. Edmundson asked if there were any plans to calculate travel time by bike or walk between destinations. Ms. Howard replied that a better network of existing streets would be needed to do walksheds and bikesheds on the whole network. TLC or Maryland Technical Assistance might be able to fund a local effort. We could also provide data for your jurisdiction to do it yourselves. As of now COG doesn't have the resources to do a project like this.

Montgomery County has a multimodal facility database. If their network includes nonmotorized it might be good to have them present to the Subcommittee. At the regional level we're not able to take that on now.

Mr. Farrell added that we know when a TAFE has planned facility within their walkshed. Activity Centers and Equity Emphasis Areas we know if we have facility within their boundaries.

COG currently has a vacancy in its GIS department, so there is limited capacity to take on projects that are not currently in the work program.

Marty Baker asked if I could incorporate the latest and greatest on the planning areas in the IJA bill into plan. Mr. Farrell replied probably yes, but likely not before the TPB Tech mail-out.

The difference between the National Capital Trail Network and the Capital Trails Network is that the NCTN covers the TPB footprint, while the Capital Trails Network, which covers the Washington Area Bicyclist Association footprint. Within that area the networks are largely identical, except in Montgomery County. The Capital Trails Coalition does significant advocacy work for the Capital Trails Network.

Charlene Howard did a demonstration of the on line map and data dashboard. Nearly every project that can be mapped is on this map. There are some residual imperfections in the project descriptions. Ms. Howard encouraged the Subcommittee members to check their project information within the PIT portal. We expect to work with the consultant to make some changes to the mapping function over the coming year.

The charts shows the mileage of projects for each facility type. The zoom tool will give you a better view of particular areas. Various map features can be turned on and off. You can click on projects to see the project information. There is a separate layer for the low stress facilities. TAFE's, equity emphasis areas, and activity centers are on the map. Projects can be filtered based on facility type, lead agency, and National Capital Trail (Network).

Ms. Love asked if there was a way to look at all projects in a jurisdiction regardless of agency. Ms. Howard replied that it can be done in the PIT database, but not on the interactive map. Please send enhancement requests to Michael Farrell by e-mail.

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There was a question on whether projects could be filtered by the price of the project. Ms. Howard replied that it could probably be done. But not all the projects will have a cost estimate; the jurisdiction would have to enter that information.

Ms. Jennings thanked Ms. Howard.

4. TLC Application Deadline

Mr. Swanson announced the February 21st funding application deadline for the TLC program. There was a recent deadline for abstracts, a voluntary element. TLC provides consultant assistance for small planning projects. Projects take 6-8 months.

5. Jurisdictional Updates

Mr. Branyan mentioned that DC had been doing a lot of salting and clearing of bike lanes. For two-way bike lanes DDOT uses pick up trucks with salters, but they've had trouble with the narrower lanes. Mr. Branyan wanted to know if other jurisdictions had had success using ATV's for plowing.

MoveDC has been adopted. In 2021 seven miles of projected bike lanes were built, putting the District over the one hundred mark for bike lanes in the District. Virginia Avenue is nearly done. Kenyon NW is getting an extension. Numerous other bike lanes are in progress. There will be a safety and access study done for Bladensburg Road. Wheeler Road is getting a road diet in April, with a full reconstruction to follow later. There is a new trail called the Malcolm X trail in Southwest DC, parallel to I-295. The Met Branch Trail in Fort Totten is nearly complete. Fort Totten to Takoma is in final design. Two new bike ped planners will be hired soon. A manager of the bike lane program will be hired as well.

Mr. Jackson gave a brief update on the 2009 Master Plan of Transportation update. The consultant recently did a Complete Streets presentation. Three public meetings will be held in January. People are welcome to register for one of the three meetings.

Prince George's County received a Transit within Reach grant from MWCOG for bicycle and pedestrian access to the Suitland Avenue Metro. DPW&T is also updating its Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Plan. The plan is nearing completion and the recommendations will be posted on the Prince George's Vision Zero web site. There will be pedestrian safety audits along Belcrest Road and Sheriff's Road. The kick off will be this week. DPWT has also launched a Vision Zero youth program with the health department. The program will be conducted virtually each Wednesday. The Street Smart shattered lives testimonial wall will be displayed at several locations, including Prince George's Community College in February 1st -3rd.

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Ms. Hipski announced that the Indian Head Trail feasibility report would be released shortly.

The City of Rockville is moving forward with its pedestrian and bicycle master plan.

VDOT has a new resource called bicycle and pedestrian treatments, which shows about 18 different treatments. It includes videos on how these treatments work. There will also be a webinar on it on January 27. On January 25 the state pedestrian advisory committee is scheduled. The Transportation Alternatives projects will be selected shortly.

Virginia's pedestrian fatalities are down by two relative to last year. Grant applications will open February 1st, and the application deadline is February 28. An on line training session is required.

Arlington County has published a Vision Zero engineering toolbox. BikeArlington will host a winter bike event on February 13 called the Winter Bike Games to promote winter biking.

Prince William County will build a couple of interchanges with shared use paths incorporated. The comprehensive plan update continues, including a section on active transportation. Gaps in the trail network are being identified. Two pit stops will be restored for Bike to Work Day.

VDOT's treatments web page is an informational resource, to inform the public about treatments which are showing up on roads. Not all of them are included in the states's road design manual, but other design resources such as NACTO and MUTCD are available.

National Park Service has opened the 15th Street Cycle Track, and the Catoctin Mountain trail plan is available for public comment.

WMATA is wrapping up its inventory of potential project needs around their stations.

Mr. Evans spoke to a powerpoint. Next week Maryland will have their bicycle and pedestrian advisory committee meeting. On February 16 there will a grant workshop. A level of traffic stress for the state will be available soon.

6. Bicycle and Pedestrian Elements of the I-495 & I-270 Managed Lanes Study

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Shawn Eum and Karen Kahl spoke to a powerpoint. The American Legion Bridge will be replaced, and the new bridge will include a shared use path, as well as four tolled lanes. This project will support Visualize 2045 goals. Any existing pedestrian or bicycle facility displaced will be replaced or upgraded. Bridges crossing the highway will also be upgraded to include pedestrian and bicycle accommodation. The project is still in the NEPA phase.

There was a question about a connection between the American Legion Bridge Path and the C&O Towpath. Ms. Kahl is in communication with National Park Service, looking at options. The current proposed connection is to MacArthur Boulevard. There is a trail long MacArthur Boulevard. There will also be new connection on the Virginia side. Connections between MacArthur and the C&O Towpath are very indirect. Mr. Farrell asked if they were exploring a more direct connection. Ms. Kahl replied that they were.

Mr. Hannigan asked if there will be future stages at which the public will be able to weigh in on these plans. Ms. Kahl replied that as the project goes into design, at a minimum the local jurisdictions would have input.

There is no specific connection to the Potomac Heritage Trail, which is at the river's edge, which the bridge trail will connect at Live Oak drive, at a much higher elevation.

7. Regional Roadway Safety Program – Funding Recommendations

Ms. Nham spoke to a powerpoint. The Regional Roadway Safety Program was founded in 2020. The project provides technical assistance in the form of consulting services, valued up to \$60,000 for planning, and \$80,000 for engineering. There is competitive application process. The TPB received 11 applications for the first round, of which five were funded. Most of these projects were relevant to pedestrian and bicycle safety.

The second round of the program kicked off in August of last year, and the selection panel met in October, and the TPB approved the projects in December. All of the selected projects dealt with pedestrian and bicyclist needs.

The third round (FFY 2023) of grant applications opens January 18, and closes February 11. A selection panel will convene in the Spring, and the TPB is expected to approve the selections in May or June.

Mr. Farrell thought it was surprising that so many of these applications were for pedestrian and bicycle safety. Pedestrian and bicycle projects are eligible for this technical assistance programs. This is only the newest of several technical assistance for with pedestrian and bicycle projects are eligible.

Mr. Jenkins asked if these projects were posted on the TPB web site. Ms. Nham replied

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that they were not all in one place, but that she expected to create a repository where all these projects could be found and made easily available.

Mr. Farrell said that that would be really helpful in terms of giving people ideas for projects. One of the things we look for in the TLC program is projects that have applicability outside of the program in question. It would be good if the projects for all of these programs – TLC, Transit within Reach, and the Regional Roadway Safety Program.

8. Other TPB Program Updates

Bike to Work Day is coming up on May 22. Commuter Connections runs it with WABA.

Mr. Farrell encouraged Subcommittee members to send any comments they have on the plan before the deadline.

Adjourned