

# National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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## **DRAFT MEETING NOTES**

### **BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Tuesday, March 19, 2019

**TIME:** 1:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** Room 1, First Floor  
777 North Capitol Street NE  
Washington, DC 20002

**CHAIR:** George Branyan, DDOT

**VICE-  
CHAIRS:**

Jeff Dunckel, Montgomery County Department of Transportation  
Cindy Engelhart, VDOT  
Jamie Carrington, WMATA

#### **Attendance:**

Marty Baker	MDOT
James Carrington	WMATA (by phone)
Adrienne Dealy	Sherry Matthews Marketing
Mike Doyle	Alexandria Families for Safe Streets
Henry Dunbar	BikeArlington
Jeff Dunckel	Maryland Highway Safety Office
Cindy Engelhart	VDOT
Laura Ghosh	Loudoun County DOT (by phone)
Eli Glazier	Montgomery County Planning
Laurel Hammig	National Park Service
Katie Harris	WABA
Joe Kelley	Frederick County
Christine Mayeur	City of Alexandria (by phone)
Karyn McAlister	DDOT
Peter Sotherland	MDSHA (by phone)

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John Thomas  
Janet Walker

Montgomery County DOT (by phone)  
George Mason (by phone)

**COG Staff Attendance:**

Michael Farrell  
Charlene Howard  
Andrew Meese (by phone)  
Jessica Mirr  
Jon Schermann  
John Swanson

**1. General Introductions.**

**2. Review of the January 24 Meeting Notes**

Minutes were approved.

**3. Jurisdictional Updates**

Mr. Swanson announced some upcoming solicitation periods for grants. DDOT will open its solicitation for Transportation Alternatives grants on March 6, and it will end in mid-May. Kelsey Bridges in DDOT will be working on that. For Maryland the application period will be from April 15 – May 15. Virginia is on a different schedule, but there will be a workshop on April 24 in Culpepper. Virginia is requiring a pre-qualification application to be submitted, which will be due on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Virginia is on a two year cycle, so if you want TA money in Virginia you should apply.

Mr. Swanson announced the opening of the application period for the TLC program, which funds small planning assistance grants that promote bikeable, walkable communities. The application deadline is April 2. MWCOC has its own regional priorities, and projects that serve those goals are more likely to receive TLC funds. Mr. Swanson distributed a brochure describing the program and the regional priorities.

DDOT has some new hires, including Karyn McAlister, formerly with Prince George's County, who is filling in for George Branyan today. Will Handsfield has been hired away from the Georgetown BID to work for DDOT as a bicycle and pedestrian program specialist. Linda Bailey, former director of NACTO, has been hired to head the Vision Zero effort.

DDOT has also launched two new livability studies, which evaluate transportation in two small areas. Rock Creek far west and Rock Creek far east are the areas. The Palisades Trolley Trail

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feasibility study is under way, including the reconstruction of the Foundry Branch trestle bridge. This project received Transportation Alternatives funding. Go to the project web page for a public survey.

DDOT will put its 2019 bikeways work plan on its web site soon. Bike lanes on Stanton and Wheeler Roads in SE, a contraflow bike lane on 8<sup>th</sup> Street NW, and gaps on Kansas and 13<sup>th</sup> Street are slated for completion.

Ms. Engelhart asked how many new bike ped staff DDOT has. The Vision Zero Office has three people, but that's in the Director's office, and then there are another six in the Active Transportation Division at DDOT. Including other divisions, there are nearly 50 people working in DC on things relating to walking and bicycling. Mr. Dunckel expressed envy over staffing levels in the District.

Mr. Kelley introduced himself as the staff of one for bicycling and walking in Frederick County. The County has formed a bicycle and pedestrian advisory committee to assist with the implementation of the County trails plan. Priorities include a rail trail from Frederick to Woodsboro, and the New Design Road Sidepath, which will connect the City of Frederick to the C&O towpath. The County is sponsoring a study of ways of connecting all the main street communities with each other by shared use path or bikeway.

The National Park Service is releasing a study of Prince William Forest Park comprehensive trail environmental assessment for public comment.

MDOT is in its solicitation period for grant funding. MDOT has been doing a series of grant workshops across the State. The bicycle and pedestrian plan has been completed. The legislature is considered bills to increase funding for complete streets and bikeways.

Mr. Sutherland thanked those who had attended the grant workshops. For grant applications for construction funding, sponsors must complete 30% design plans. The focus is on projects that are closer to shovel-ready. For design plans, sponsors must submit a completed design concept, for which the State offers guidance. A concept includes plan-level drawings, right of way impacts, and demonstrating direct contact with all local property owners, and rough cost estimates and material needs.

All these requirements are available in written format. Mr. Sutherland will send the details to Mr. Farrell.

WABA will introduce shorter rides that will be more inclusive, such as the Sprouts ride on April 28, a five mile ride oriented towards children and families. The Vision Zero event went well. This is the third year WABA has hosted such an event.

Montgomery County planning is working the Veirs Mill Road master plan which focuses mostly

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on pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, as does the Aspen Hill study, with focuses on the intersection with Connecticut Avenue. The County looking to develop a pedestrian low-stress network, analogous to the bicycle low-stress network. The County is also doing systemic crash analysis to determine crash causes, and pro-actively fix locations that have such design features. The County is also working on models of pedestrian volume, to compensate for the shortage of pedestrian counts. The County will share the results with its partners and the State.

Alexandria Families for Safe Streets is pedestrian-focused. The members are crash survivors and family members. Bicyclists are more heavily represented in planning circles than bicylists. AFSS has a six hundred person mailing list, and is a coalition partner with the schools, the police department, and Alexandria Complete Streets. AFSS is interested in promoting safer behavior across the region. AFSS is also studying near-misses, crowdsourcing data on its web site.

Ms. Engelhart thanked Mr. Coyle for his work, and suggested that AFSS work with the Street Smart program. The program needs to put a human face on crashes.

Mr. Dunckel noted that Maryland Highway Safety Office is seeing an increase in transportation safety funding applications. MHSO expects to take another round of applications in Mid-May. The Maryland Highway Safety Summit will be on April 17. The bicyclist numbers are down, but the pedestrian numbers are up. Most of that increase is not in the Washington region but in the Baltimore region. The Baltimore Metropolitan Council has created its own version of Street Smart for Baltimore. June 3 is the target launch date.

SHA Office of Traffic Safety is now permitting the provision of location-specific crash data to local partner governments. We can now see crashes on the map. This is a very new development. Maryland feels a sense of urgency about improving traffic safety, and location-specific data is critical.

MHSO has pulled together a pedestrian-bicyclist fatality review team to study pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities. Police, engineers, planners, etc. will study the crash reconstruction reports, aerials, etc. to identify factors that contributed to the fatal crash, and potential counter-measures. This is a critical step to getting towards Vision Zero. Less concerned about establishing fault, more concerned about identifying contributing factors. This effort may provide insights with lessons beyond Maryland. Results are expected within the next year.

I-495 NEXT project is the extension of I-495 to the American Legion Bridge. Bike/Ped facilities will be provided on the crossing bridges as well a parallel. So there will be connecting facility when the American Legion Bridge is rebuilt.

VDOT has access to streetlight data from cell phones. This data is available for multi-use paths and side paths. Everything will be undercounted, just like with Strava, but it will indicate where people are riding.

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Mr. Carrington noted WMATA's more accommodating rules for bikes on trains, anticipating increased use as the weather gets better.

Mr. Dunbar announced that the Bicycle Element of the Transportation Master Plan for Arlington will be approved on April 23. This has been a two year process. The public space master plan will also be approved. Renee Moore who used to work for WABA will head BikeArlington. As part of the Amazon package, a pedestrian bridge connecting National Airport with Crystal City has been approved.

Loudoun County has held a stakeholder meeting on a natural surface trails study. Loudoun is also studying its sidewalk gaps.

Alexandria is looking into repurposing some lanes on Seminary Road. Bike Month is May, and there will be series of events. Vision Zero year one report will be released in April.

**4. Expansion of the National Capital Trail – Update**

Ms. Howard and Mr. Farrell have visited Rails to Trails to be briefed on their methodology for gathering information. Going forward, staff will visit the outer jurisdictions and gather their GIS data.

Mr. Farrell spoke to a handout on the selection criteria, comparing the Bicycle Beltway and Capital Trails Coalition criteria, with proposed new criteria for the Expand the National Capital Trail project.

Off-road, useable for people of all ages and abilities is major theme.

The selection criteria are not a critical path issue, since we won't be using them until after we get the jurisdictional data, but Mr. Farrell asked the Subcommittee to look at them prepare any comments in time for the next meeting.

We are required to report progress to the TPB in June.

**5. Other TPB Program Updates**

- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update**

The update will proceed in tandem with the Expand the National Capital Trail project, using the National Capital Trail data gathering effort as an input.

- **Dockless Workshop III – May 30**

Speakers have already been lined up for this half-day workshop which will feature both scooter and bikes.

- **Arlington/US DOT Peer Exchange Event - April 10-11**

This event will focus on methods for identifying low-stress bicycle networks.

- **TPB Traffic Safety Study**

\$100,000 for a safety study which will look at serious injury crashes across the region, locations, and action recommendations for the TPB Board and our jurisdictions. We've received the proposals from the RFP. We hope to complete the study by December.

- **Bike to Work Day May 17**

## **6. Safety Challenges in the Washington Region – DDOT**

Mr. Rogers spoke to a Powerpoint.

Reducing VMT is one element of Vision Zero, so things like restoring WMATA's late night service matter.

DDOT has had three pedestrian fatalities so far this year. Fatalities have been trending up in the last several years. Serious injuries are more statistically significant, and they have been trending down. Pedestrians and motorcyclists are disproportionately represented among fatalities.

Mr. Farrell asked if DDOT tracked the type of motorcycle involved? Mr. Rogers replied that the major crash unit keeps track of make and model. They are primarily racing motorcycles, not dirt bikes or Harley-type cruisers.

Data on scooters has to be collected by hand from the crash descriptions. There's no check box for them on the crash report.

Mr. Schermann asked if there was a special category for Vespa 49cc type scooters. Anything capable of going faster than 30 mph on flat ground is classified as a motorcycle. After 49cc they typically go to at least 125cc, which will definitely go faster than 30 mph on flat ground.

With crash report there is some concern about making the form too long and onerous, since it will affect officer workload and compliance, leading to incomplete crash reports.

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DDOT has a consultant that reads every narrative, with the help of an algorithm that seeks key words.

47% of DC fatalities are nonmotorized. It's hard to measure exposure. DC uses journey to work from the census.

Locations are not a surprise – the big fast roads.

Last summer the Mayor launched the Vision Zero Working Group, which gives the safety issue a much higher profile at the Deputy Mayor level. The working group meets monthly. DDOT is preparing a pedestrian safety action plan.

A Council Report will identify Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Areas. Ms. Harris asked if the report would identify specific locations. Ms. Delphy replied that the report would name four such areas in 2019.

So far DDOT is not proposing major arterials for shift in modal priority. Ms. Harris asked whether we would redesign the major arterials for bike and ped, or do we encourage people to avoid them? Ms. Harris said that many bicyclists would use the major arterials, and expressed support for making them more walkable and bikeable. Ms. Delphy said that was possible that some arterials could get higher priority for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Mr. Farrell mentioned MoveDC, under which different arterials were assigned different “modal priorities”. He noted that a whole series of major streets, such as 14<sup>th</sup> Street NW, have been redesigned to reflect walk and bike priority. Even 13<sup>th</sup> Street used to have rush hour parking restrictions. Those were eliminated many years ago, which had the effect of calming traffic and reducing crossing distances. Sherman Avenue NW has had a road diet, and Maryland Avenue NE will get one soon. Many arterials are getting road diets and becoming more walk and bike friendly, to make them consistent with the modal priorities in MoveDC. But not all of them will be, because that's not the plan. New York Avenue NE is a traffic sewer, and it always will be.

Ms. Harris replied “unless we decide that it's not”. Mr. Farrell replied that there was probably some irreducible demand to get in and out of town by car, bus, or truck, that needed to be accommodated. Ms. Harris replied that when we choose to leave certain streets the way they are, we are making a trade-off, and the trade-off is safety. Mr. Farrell said that in the case of New York Avenue NE, it runs parallel to the rail line, which has limited crossing opportunities. Putting a major road there doesn't add much more of a barrier to pedestrian movement than what Amtrak already is.

Ms. Dalphy said that the arterials are a hot topic of conversation, in terms of redesigning them to serve neighborhood connections better, in addition to commuters. Road diets are coming. Mr. Farrell asked if Wisconsin Avenue NW was on the list. That is not currently on the list.

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Ms. Engelhart said that handicapped vans are needed to get handicapped people in and out of their houses, which could conflict with pedestrian-only streets. Ms. Dalphy replied that such access would be maintained.

Mr. Dunckel said that the arterials often have short segments with a lot of pedestrian and bicyclist activity, so targeting shorter segments might get more bang for the buck.

Right turn on red is another hot topic. Currently 101 locations are being considered for eliminating right turn on red. DDOT has hardened 15 left turn locations, and is planning 85. Left turns account for a high proportion of fatalities and serious injuries. Identify a dangerous characteristic, and eliminating that hazard.

Mr. Farrell praised this effort, noting that COG had a staff member who was hit and badly hurt by a left-turning vehicle that cut the corner and crossed the centerline. Currently DDOT is using flex posts. Mr. Farrell suggested that the concrete dividers should have some kind of reflectivity. Flexposts don't cause cars to go airborne, which is an advantage. Flexposts are in expensive.

DDOT is putting in 15 mph slow zones around schools etc.

Lead pedestrian intervals are being added wherever possible. HAWK signals are being added as well. Photo enforcement will be moved from MPD to DDOT.

“Traffic gardens” are being added to the schools to train schoolchildren.

Ms. Engelhart asked about posting the presentation. Mr. Farrell replied that he had just gotten this presentation but that he would post it on the web site.

## **7. Baltimore Street Smart Pedestrian Safety Campaign**

Ms. Dealy spoke to a powerpoint.

Baltimore has a strong sense of its identity. They wanted their own ads. Sherry Matthews organized two focus groups, one city and one suburban. Baltimore suburban residents identify with the city, and expect to see pedestrians in the city but not in the suburbs. Mr. Dunckel noted that Montgomery County had much less identification with DC as their city.



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The Baltimore concept is “signal woman”, from the walk signal. She tells people how to use the crosswalk. It’s funny, and avoids finger-wagging. Signal woman is a real person. There will be a 30 second TV spot featuring her. The crosswalk is the central theme. The creative tested well with the focus group. And the concept is versatile, working well in multiple settings and with multiple messages. Chris Eatough of Howard County disliked tired faces but likes this campaign. It launches June 3.

**8. Announcements**

**Vision Zero Summit.** WABA’s Vision Zero was a big event this year. The listening session at Anacostia offered an opportunity to hear from that community. Ms. Harris said that the event is a major lift and needs sponsors to sustain it. Mr. Dunckel asked if it was supported by a DDOT grant. Ms. Harris said that it was supported partly by the highway safety grant but not entirely. Mr. Farrell noted that there was a \$50 registration fee.

**April 17 Maryland Highway Safety Summit.** Mr. Dunckel said that there would be three concurrent sessions. He encouraged people from outside Maryland to attend. Mr. Farrell promised to distribute the registration link.

Mr. Farrell announced that our Street Smart campaign will kick off on April 23 on Richmond Highway at Lockheed Boulevard. The “Camaro challenge” has been very popular. Maryland has supported additional events in Maryland. One will happen at the Montgomery Mall on Saturday.

When people are waiting in line, they watch the screen, and it teaches them where they need to look for pedestrians. They pay close attention because they want to get good scores.

The events involve the Camaro, the VR headset, a screen, and four staffers. Any jurisdiction can sponsor an event directly with the contractor for about \$5,000. The jurisdiction has to fine the venue and get the permissions, and then the contractor will show up and do it. Texas and the Washington region each have their own Camaro, because these events are in such demand in both places.

**Adjourned**