

# National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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## MEETING NOTES

### BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE

**DATE:** Tuesday, May 17, 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:

George Branyan	DDOT
Lisa Campbell	BikeLoudoun
Mike DePue	NOVA Parks
Nate Evans	MDOT
Alex Freedman	Takoma Park
Seth Garland	WMATA
Annaly Galeas	Montgomery County Parks
Laura Ghosh	Loudoun County
Laurel Hammig	National Park Service
Yolanda Hipski	Tri County Council for Southern Maryland
Michael Jackson	Prince George's County Planning
Tiffany Jennings	Prince George's County DPW&T
George Kandathil	Tri County Council for Southern Maryland
Mackenzie Love	NVTA
Regina Moore	VDOT
Kevin O'Brien	Washington Area Bicyclist Association
David Patton	Arlington County
Chloe Ritter	City of Fairfax
George Phillips	Prince William County
Cynthia Spriggs	MDOT

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Jennifer Wampler

Virginia Dept. of Conservation and Recreation

**COG Staff Attendance:**

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

- 1. General Introductions.**
  
- 2. Review of the March 15 meeting notes**

The March meeting notes were approved.

**3. Wrap-Up of the Voices of the Region Public Engagement**

Staff briefed the subcommittee on the final public engagement activities for Visualize 2045, which included three phases that have been collectively branded “Voices of the Region.” The final phase was a public engagement campaign conducted last summer called “Aspiration to Implementation.” That campaign solicited input using posters and QR codes. Staff will also gave the subcommittee a demonstration of a new GIS Story Map that combines and displays public input received through all phases of outreach.

Comments on Priority 6 Expand Walk and Bike Access to Transit, and on Priority 7 Complete the National Capital Trail Network were robust and overwhelmingly positive. Trails should be useful for transportation and not just recreation. Full quotes are available in the report.

Ms. Howard presented the story map. The story map shows selected comments and quotes, showing geographically where the participants were from. There were quite a few comments on transportation options being limited and the need for more active transportation options. There was one Spanish-speaking focus group. People everywhere care about equity, climate, safety. You can filter comments on the map by subject.

Focus groups were organized around equity, safety, and climate.

Subcommittee members were encouraged to share links to the story map. Ms. Jennings asked if the Subcommittee members could get a copy of the story map. Mr. Farrell replied that he would post the presentation on the Subcommittee web site.

#### **4. Jurisdictional Updates**

NVTA is currently in its public comment period for its six year program through May 22. People are encouraged to provide comments on this multimodal plan.

VCR has an active ground for the recreational trails program through May 26.

DDOT is promoting Bike to Work Day. The Mayor will announce that DC hit 100 bike lanes. There will be six open streets events.

Mr. Jackson of Prince George's Park and Planning announced that the master plan of transportation is being update; this will likely be approved sometime in 2023. The Carroll Highlands Safe Mobility Study is under way. This study is looking at ways of improving mobility including pedestrian and bicycle mobility. The community lacks sidewalks. Lastly, a notice to proceed on a study of bicycle and pedestrian behavior, and how equity weighs on those choices, and how behavior by pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists contribute to crashes.

Prince George's has ten pit stops for Bike to Work Day. Street Smart Lives Shatter on Impact testimonial wall has also toured the county at Tangier outlets. The Street Smart campaign and testimonials have been well received in Prince George's County.

Prince George's has also partner with elementary schools to host bike safety events.

Prince George's has also received a Roadway Safety grant from TPB for safety studies at high crash locations. A raised crosswalk has been installed at Carrington Avenue in Capitol Heights.

City of Takoma Park was able to receive two TLC grants for the Met Branch Trail and the New Hampshire Avenue New Avenue Bikeway.

Mr. Farrell noted that jurisdictions are not obliged to provide updates at every meeting, since it sometime happens that not much has changed from one meeting to the next.

#### **5. Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update**

Mr. Farrell did a dry run of his powerpoint for tomorrow's TPB meeting, where the TPB will be asked to adopt a resolution approving the plan. The TPB last saw the plan at its March 16,

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and they made a number of comments, including accessibility to children, e-bikes, and design for pedestrians.

The plan emphasizes a low street bicycle and pedestrian network, which means accessible to people of all ages and abilities. Such a network is designed for speeds not greater than 20 mph, a speed at which an e-bike typically loses its pedal-assist power. Electric motorcycles are a different story and typically not permitted on shared use paths. The Subcommittee will monitor these types of issues as they unfold.

We say quite a bit out design for pedestrians in the best practices chapter, and we also have the transit access focus areas

There were also questions about project prioritization, to which we replied that we have priority areas, such as the National Capital Trail Network, the activity and equity emphasis areas, etc, but that we leave the choice of particular projects to the jurisdictions, who are typically better informed about their own projects than we are.

Every project in the plan is already in a local, state, or agency plan. We did not create new projects for this plan.

We added a brief note on rails with trails since there was a comment on that.

As issues develop, like Microbility, we will address them through the subcommittee process.

The projects are listed in Appendix A. The database is a snapshot in time. We will update the database and the accompanying interactive map on an annual basis.

The plan will be posted in the Publication section of the COG/TPB web site. The interactive map will go live soon.

There was a question about Rails with Trails. A rail-trail uses a disused railway right of way. It uses a right of way that is no longer in rail use, like the Capitol Crescent Trail. Rail with Trail is something more like the Met Branch Trail, which has an active railway, and then a trail running alongside it, separated by a fence. The federal government has a manual on Rails with Trails, and I provide a link to it in the plan. Since the region, especially in Virginia, is added commuter rail, so there may be opportunities to provide trails. That said, freight rail companies tend to view trails as a potential interference with their railway operations, while commuter rail agencies may be in need of additional property and may be reluctant to buy more right of way than they need for rail purposes.

Rail with Trail is often done, especially in Europe. But there are safety concerns, which can be mitigated. Mr. Meese added that the conversation we've had is significantly longer than what we have in the plan. The Washington region is not particularly blessed with disused or

under-used rail lines compared to some other parts of the country.

This plan has been a long time in the making. It has coincided with the development of Visualize, which is updated every four years, and we intend to update this plan on the same cycle. The database and interactive map will be updated more frequently, on an annual basis. We currently have several large jurisdictions that have major plan updates in the works, so by the end of the year the time will be ripe for another project database update.

There was a request to make the data downloadable from the interactive map. Mr. Farrell promised to look into that. The Project Infotrak database is not a public facing database. We have permitted users who can view and edit the data, but the database is connected to the TIP, which is a funding document.

In terms of exporting the data, we do have map data that is associated with all these projects that are mappable. Exporting that or making it accessible should be possible.

Ms. Jennings expressed interest in getting access to the data.

## **6. Commuter Connections Bike to Work Day**

Mr. Sheehan briefed the Subcommittee on Commuter Connections preparations for Bike to Work Day.

Links to the Bike to Work Guide and the regional Bike Map were posted in the chat.

<https://www.commuterconnections.org/wp-content/uploads/Bike-Guide-May-2022-Combined-Final.pdf>

The biggest overhaul was probably in the bikes on transit section. Printed copies are available. They can be ordered through the Commuter Connections web site. They'll also be available at the Bike to Work Day pit stops.

[https://www.commuterconnections.org/wp-content/uploads/Bike-Map-v2-April-2022\\_Reduced\\_Size.pdf](https://www.commuterconnections.org/wp-content/uploads/Bike-Map-v2-April-2022_Reduced_Size.pdf)

The other resource is the regional bike map. We've prepared a new version which shows where the major trails are in our region. We simplified trail designation, so there are now only two, all trails are either on-street or off-street. Several trails were added to the map. It's been a popular product. The maps will also be available at the bike to work day pit stop, and you can also order them on the Commuter Connections web site.

To order copies of the Bike Guide or Map go to  
<https://www.commuterconnections.org/order-brochures/>

This is the first time since 2019 that we've been able to have a full in-person event.

There was a question on registrants this year versus last year. There are 10,000 registrants so far, and there are typically a lot in the last few days before the event. We hope to get close to 2019 numbers, and we will greatly exceed last years. Lisa Campbell asked what the 2019 numbers were but Mr. Sheehan did not have them at hand.

Mr. Jackson complimented Commuter Connections on the new regional bike map and bike to work guide. It's easy to follow. It's nice that the trails don't end at the edge of the region.

Ms. Jennings asked if there were any through to producing an app to accompany the map. Mr. Sheehan replied that if you register to Commuter Connections there is a route planning tool based on the map, but not a smart phone app.

Ms. Jennings complimented the map. Mr. Sheehan thanked the Subcommittee for providing input and information for these products.

Mr. Farrell expressed appreciation for Commuter Connections putting in the effort and the dollars for a regional paper bike map, which is something the region had not had since the demise of the old ADC the Map company bike map.

## **7. Maryland Highway Safety Summit Highlights**

The Maryland Highway Safety Summit occurred in person this year, in April. There was an app for the summit. There was an excellent keynote speaker suggested that we say, "be the driver you want your kids to be". Tim Kerns gave a presentation on the Safe Systems approach, followed by a panel on the four E's. For the afternoon sessions there were four breakout areas. Each breakout track had three sessions.

Tiffany praised the summit; she found the vulnerable user track to be very useful. Mr. Farrell mentioned that he had also attended the Virginia Highway Safety Summit, where he presented on Street Smart at a session for PIO's. Another presenter ran the Twitter account for VDOT, where she spoke as a character called "Ma Ma". This is presented as the account of an individual VDOT employee, so her Tweets could be more personal and individual, less "institutional". This allowed her to respond to issues in a timely manner.

## **8. Other TPB Program Updates**

- Street Smart

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Street Smart kick-off was held on April 26 in Arlington. Mr. Farrell was interviewed by Kurdish television, who were interested in the concept of traffic enforcement.

Benjamin Gates, the guest speaker, was a professional cellist, and a crash survivor. One of his biggest fears was to no be able to play again, but he was able to perform at the event. We will try to use his speech as one of our testimonials.

Next Fall it will be DC's turn to host an event.

- Regional Roadway Safety Program

Mr. Schermann briefly discussed the regional roadway safety program. It is a technical assistance program, similar to TLC, and it was established in July 2020. Three of them are roadway safety audits. The initial round for FY 2021 selected five projects, which are in process and should be concluded by June 30.

The second round, FY 2022, also includes five projects. These projects are just getting started.

For the third round, FY 2023, the application process is under way. The selection panel will meet on Thursday. Announcement of the project selections will be made at the June TPB Technical Committee.

The next application period for FY 2024 will take place in January. We condensed three years worth of applications into two, but henceforth it will be an annual process.

- Workshops

We will resume our regular Micromobility meetings. Also, in coming months we will have more information available on new funding opportunities in the federal transportation bill.

Mr. Schermann said that NHTSA has just released its fatality numbers from 2021, and the numbers are up significantly.

Mr. Jackson suggested that one possible explanation is that the drivers during Covid were younger and less risk-averse than average. Mr. Schermann said that he had read the same paper.

Mr. Farrell added that we do have the numbers, from Doug Mowbray, on citations in the State of Maryland, over the last ten years. For example, DUI enforcement fell by half during that period, with the steepest decline in the last couple of years.

Mr. Farrell's sense of the speaker sentiment at the two highway safety summits that he

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attended was that there was a need to move on from awareness-raising programs, to motivating programs, such as traffic enforcement. People already know what they shouldn't be doing.

Mr. Jackson said that we should do another workshop on Micromobility and expressed interest in attending. Mr. Farrell agreed to set up such a workshop.

**Adjourned**