

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEETING NOTES

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, July 19, 2011

TIME: 1:00 P.M.

PLACE: COG, 777 North Capitol Street, NE
First Floor, Room 1

CHAIR: Kristin Haldeman
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

VICE-

CHAIRS: Michael Jackson
Maryland Department of Transportation
David Goodman – Arlington Department of Environmental Services
Jim Sebastian, District Department of Transportation
Fred Shaffer, MNCPPC, Prince George's County

Attendance:

Fatemeh Allahdoust	VDOT/NOVA
Gina Arlotto	WABA
Tim Bevins	NPS-GWMP
George Branyan	DDOT
Don Briggs	NPS-PHNST
Jeff Dunckel	Montgomery County (by phone)
Cindy Engelhart	VDOT
David Goodman	Arlington County
Arkopal Goswami	Loudoun County Planning
David Hayes	National Park Service
Michael Jackson	MDOT
Philip Koopman	Bicyclepass (by phone)
Dustin Kuzan	MDSHA
Allen Muchnick	Virginia Bicycling Federation
Mike O'Connell	NPS-NCR

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the July 19, 2011 Meeting
Page 2

David Patton	Arlington County
Jim Sebastian	DDOT
Thomas Sheffer	NPS – GWMP
Debbie Spiliotopoulos	Northern Virginia Regional Commission
Heather Strassberger	Baltimore Metropolitan Council
John Thomas	Frederick County (by phone)
Pat Turner	Loudoun County Citizens for Cycling
John Wetmore	Perils for Pedestrians
Matthew Zych	WMATA

COG Staff Attendance:

Michael Farrell
Wendy Klancher
Huijing Quiang

1. General Introductions.

Mr. Jackson chaired the meeting. Participants introduced themselves.

2. Review of the Minutes of the May 17, 2011 Meeting

No minutes available due to lack of recording of the meeting.

3. Jurisdictional Updates

Loudoun County is creating a list of bicycle and pedestrian priorities for the County, which will be taken to the Board of Supervisors. Of those two or three are likely to be funded. Loudoun County will also participate in the Street Smart program.

The Baltimore region is working on its own version of the Street Smart program.

Ms. Allahdoust announced that the position of bicycle and pedestrian coordinator for VDOT-Northern Virginia was being passed on from her to Ms. Engelhart. Ms. Engelhart has been working with Ms. Allahdoust on bicycle and pedestrian issues.

Virginia now has a state bicycle and pedestrian coordinator, John Bolocek. He will be in the Richmond office.

The National Park Service will be studying safety and traffic flow on the Mount Vernon Trail. Crashes are reported to the EMS, not National Park Service.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the July 19, 2011 Meeting
Page 3

The Virginia Bicycling Federation will have a statewide conference on legislation.

Arlington County is putting in automated 24/7 counters on its trails. Three count stations will be installed on the Mt. Vernon Trail, including one on the Crystal City connector. The counters will help fill a long-felt need for better data. The County Board has been supportive. These are directional counters; passive infra-red detectors to count bodies with loop detectors to count bicycles. The oldest counter has been there for 20 months, so they can now do year over year on the Custis Trail.

Mr. Kuzan is working in cooperation with the Governor's Office on a Cycle Maryland promotional campaign. A survey is being done to determine cycling patterns and find out about preferred facility types. MDSHA is still taking surveys, so please distribute it to your Maryland contacts. Defects on the major highways in Northern Prince George's County are being inventoried.

WABA's 50 states ride will take place on September 4th. WABA will hold County bike summits in November. WABA is working with DC Council on a contributory negligence statute. WABA is doing mobile bike workshops east of the river, as well as adult learn to ride classes.

WMATA recently completed its survey at all 86 stations for unmet bicycle and pedestrian needs, and is coming up with a list of projects that will be prioritized. Please send WMATA any bicycle or pedestrian projects within three miles of a Metrorail station. There will be an enclosed bike room in College Park with capacity for 100 bikes. This prototype may eventually be adopted at other stations. WMATA did a bike census of all bikes parked at Metro stations, approximately 2000 bikes. The Subcommittee will be briefed in full in September.

WMATA will examine crowding and evaluate hours of prohibition for bicyclists, and may change the requirement that folding bikes be enclosed in a bag. Folding bikes are allowed at all times but must be enclosed in a bag.

Capital Bikeshare will open 32 additional bikeshare stations this fall.

Ms. Engelhart said that VDOT would likely be pulling back from involvement in local planning due to personnel cuts. VDOT will do a travel time study comparing travel time by bike on I-66 from the TR Bridge to the beltway.

Randy Dittberner has been promoted to head of the section. Mr. Dittberner is a bicyclist.

Ms. Engelhart will be on a panel for innovative traffic counting methods. Ideas are appreciated.

Mr. Jackson said commuters have been cited for travelling after dark on bike trails. These restrictions are counter to MDOT's policy that linear park trails should be treated as

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the July 19, 2011 Meeting
Page 4

transportation facilities, as well as facilities crossing a park that connect two communities. Legislation is being considered.

Thanks to WABA's protests, MDOT will now develop guidelines for the use of the "bicyclist may use full lane" sign.

Arlington will install directional signage on the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor within a month. Additional signs will be installed each year. Pedestrian safety improvements have been put in place in the Shirlington area. Arlington has a Complete Streets policy several years ago, and will spend \$350,000 a year on projects that fall under that category. The Custis Trail has bicycle signals at two locations on roadway crossings.

4. Process to Develop a Regional Complete Streets Policy

Mr. Farrell spoke to a powerpoint.

The TPB was briefed on the CAC's proposal for a regional Complete Streets policy at its June 15th meeting. There were no adverse comments. The TPB Technical Committee was also briefed at its July 8th meeting. Copies of the CAC recommendation were distributed.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee is to take the lead in developing this policy.

It is cheaper to build a street with pedestrian, bicycle and transit access built in from the beginning. A Complete Streets policy would also be congruent with and promote many goals that the TPB has long espoused.

The region should adopt a Complete Streets policy by 2014. We should take the National Complete Streets coalition guideline as a model. Projects in the Transportation Improvement Program should document how pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users are being accommodated. Exceptions to the Complete Streets policy should be documented to the TPB by the implementing agencies. Documentation requirements would apply to projects in the TIP but not projects in the CLRP.

There is currently not federal Complete Streets policy, but FHWA guidance approaches a complete streets policy. There is a federal Complete Streets bill which would apply to MPO's, but it has not yet become law. The language is fairly stringent.

The District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia have Complete Streets policies. Maryland's policy is the weakest on paper, and it does not use the word Complete Streets, but actual policy, according to Mr. Kuzan, is now amounts to a Complete Streets policy.

VDOT has the oldest Complete Streets policy, as well as a policy on secondary street acceptance that requires connectivity and sets standards for including sidewalks.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the July 19, 2011 Meeting
Page 5

DC recently adopted a complete streets policy requiring that the network as a whole, but not necessarily every facility, should serve all users.

Mr. Farrell thought that the outlines of a regional complete streets policy were fairly clear based on the federal complete streets bill, the FHWA guidance, the Complete Street Coalition recommendations, and numerous other precedents. The major choice is how voluntary such a policy should be. Broadly speaking, Mr. Farrell saw three options:

- A voluntary policy without any documentation requirements
- A voluntary policy with documentation requirements
- A mandatory policy along the lines of the federal complete streets bill.

Mr. Farrell thought that a voluntary Complete Street policy with reporting would be most consistent with the CAC recommendation. The CAC recommendation is not binding, but it has been presented to the TPB and the TPB Technical Committee without any objection.

In any event the TPB would urge its member jurisdictions to adopt their own Complete Streets policies along the lines recommended by the National Complete Streets Coalition by 2014.

Mr. Muchnick asked how we could consider a project to be noncompliant, since one size does not fit all. We should ask the agencies to document how they are complying with that policy and document how they are complying. For example, the ICC did include a bicycle route, though not in the right of way.

Mr. Farrell suggested that it might be good to interview agencies like Wilmapco to see how their Complete Streets policy, which was adopted in 2007, has worked out in practice. Mr. Farrell will put together a draft resolution or Complete Streets policy which will be made available on line. The goal will be to have this Subcommittee approve language at its September meeting, and to get a resolution adopted by the TPB in October.

Mr. Kuzan said that since many projects in the TIP have not yet been designed, it may be hard for the agency to determine if it needs an exemption from the Complete Streets policy. Mr. Kuzan said that as far as MDOT was concerned, a Complete Streets policy was already in effect in practice, regardless of what the language might say.

Mr. Farrell said that disentangling the cost of accommodating pedestrians and bicyclists in a larger transportation project might be difficult. Mr. Kuzan and Ms. Engelhart replied that MDOT and VDOT were working on procedures to estimate those costs. VDOT has put a sentence on all of its projects saying that bicycle and pedestrian projects shall be accommodated. That sentence allowed VDOT to get pedestrian and bicycle accommodations on the new beltway crossings associated with the HOT lanes project.

Mr. Farrell suggested that the agencies should, as Ms. Engelhart suggested, declare an intention to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists in each project in the TIP. If later in the design process it proves necessary for the agency to claim an exception, that change can then be reflected in the TIP. An agency may also choose to take an exception not allowed for in the regional complete streets policy, in which case its project would remain in the TIP as a “noncompliant” project.

Mr. Austin, who is in charge of collecting data for the TIP, thought it would be possible to do this on every project going forward.

There was some concern over the cost exception for accommodating pedestrians and bicyclists, and the potential abuse of that language in rural areas. Mr. Farrell replied that the federal guidance was that everything over 1000 vehicles per day should have shoulders. Ms. Engelhart said VDOT had developed its own clarifications on the appropriate use of the exceptions.

Comments can be emailed to Mr. Farrell.

In the interests of time, Item #7, Maryland’s Explore and Visualize Crashes (EVC) system was deferred until September.

5. Potomac Heritage Trail

Ms. Spiliotopoulos spoke to hand-out on the Potomac Heritage Trail in Northern Virginia. The Potomac Heritage Trail will extend via the C&O Towpath all the way to Pittsburgh. It’s an 830 mile network, all locally owned and managed. It includes established trails such as the Mt. Vernon Trail.

The most recent work has been a gap analysis which is currently available at novaregion.org.

The benefit of the study is to provide a larger context and show the connectivity which some of the short segments may provide from a regional or national perspective.

There are major historical and environmental assets to be found on the Potomac Heritage Trail.

NVRC works with a land managers group to identify projects to complete local segments. Ms. Spiliotopoulos reviewed the progress being made in various sections of Northern Virginia. There is a gap at Fort Belvoir. Prince William County has been making significant progress. Linkages to VRE, neighborhoods, and ferry service are being studied.

Mr. Goodman said that Arlington is not all built out; there is a desire to extend the Mount Vernon Trail north from the Key Bridge along the Potomac River up into Fairfax County. Ms. Spiliotopoulos asked for the project description. A Park Service representative suggested that

January 2012 would be a good time to submit proposals.

Mr. Wetmore suggested that an American Legion Bridge Crossing should be part of the plan, since together with the proposed west bank trail and the C&O Towpath it would form a complete loop. Ms. Engelhart suggested that before showing an American Legion Bridge connection on an NVRC map, Maryland's permission would be needed since most of the bridge is in Maryland. Mr. Kuzan said it would OK with him.

There is a new program on the C&O Canal whereby one can rent the lock houses for the night. This program is intended for long distance bicyclists.

6. TPB Program Updates

- **Regional and Long Distance Bikeways**

The task force met just prior to this meeting. Meeting notes will be posted.

- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Project Database**

VDOT now has the staff it needs to complete its projects, so a reminder will go out soon to the other agencies to complete their projects.

- **Street Smart**

WMATA will renew its contribution, and Loudoun County will contribute for the first time. Arlington and Alexandria will also contribute their full suggested amounts. If funding applications to the States are successful, the budget for FY 2012 will be slightly larger than for FY 2011, allowing both a Fall and Spring campaign wave. Spring 2012 campaign materials will likely be vetted through some sort of focus group. It is Maryland's turn to host a press event, which will be held in Montgomery County.

- **Top Priority Unfunded Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects**

A new list of top priority projects should be prepared, to be adopted by the TPB in December. A reminder notice will go out prior to the September Subcommittee meeting. Subcommittee members should pay special attention to projects that have a regional character, like expansion of the Capital Bikeshare program or a regional long-distance bikeways signing project. Such projects might be selected as regional priorities in the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan which is to be developed over the next two years, and submitted for competitive federal funding

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the July 19, 2011 Meeting
Page 8**

such as TIGER grants.

- **TIGER Federal Grant Application**

A new round of federal TIGER grant funding will be announced at tomorrow's TPB meeting. Projects should be designed to improve pedestrian or bicycle access to transit. Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee members are encouraged to propose projects.

7. Adjourned