

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEETING NOTES

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, November 17, 2009

TIME: 1:00 P.M.

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

CHAIR: David Goodman – Arlington Department of Environmental Services

VICE-

CHAIRS: Kristin Haldeman
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Michael Jackson
Maryland Department of Transportation
Jim Sebastian, DDOT
Fred Shaffer, MNCPPC, Prince George's County

Attendance:

Fatemeh Alladoust	VDOT Northern Virginia
Chris Eatough	BikeArlington
David Goodman	Arlington County DES
Kristin Haldeman	WMATA
Jeffrey Hermann	Fairfax County DOT
Michael Jackson	MDOT
Dan Janousek	Prince George's County
Tim Kelley	BikeArlington
Erik Kugler	Mount Rainier, MD
Larry Marcus	ATCS
Allen Muchnick	Virginia Bicycling Federation
Bill Orleans	
David Patton	Arlington County Division of Transportation
John Thomas	Frederick County Planning (by phone)
John Wetmore	Perils for Pedestrians

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the November 17, 2009 Meeting

Page 2

Bruce Wright
Jakob Wolf-Barrett

Fairfax Advocates for Better Bicycling
Revolution Cycles

COG Staff Attendance:

Michael Farrell
Andrew Meese

1. General Introductions.

Ms. Haldeman chaired the meeting. Participants introduced themselves.

2. Review of the Minutes of the September 15, 2009 Meeting

The minutes were approved.

3. Member Jurisdiction Updates

WMATA completed most of its station area case studies. Arlington has been working on improvements to bicycle parking at Ballston station. The Columbia Pike project just had a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Bicycle education will take place in the Arlington schools as part of physical education. Arlington will be involved in bike sharing. Mr. Farrell asked if Arlington would participate in DDOT's program. Arlington has an RFP and is finalizing the contract, but cannot discuss the details. The regional TIGER grant which would fund bike sharing for the region has not yet been announced.

Montgomery County has cut bikeway maintenance funding. Debris is a concern. Maintenance of sidewalks and paths is an issue with adjacent homeowners.

Montgomery County College will offer bicycle training classes. The Maryland School Administrative study will survey all 24 school districts in Maryland regarding their policies for bicycling and walking. In each District there will be an interview with a statistically valid sample of school principals. There will also be a study of the BWI Trail to identify deficiencies and produce recommendations. The Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission will be represented on the Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. Model complete streets language for local plans is being developed in cooperation with the Maryland Department of Planning.

The Virginia Bicycling Federation held a training in Richmond. The Virginia Board of Transportation will give out safety awards. MWCOG has applied for this award repeatedly but has never won. Mr. Muchnick suggested that COG should apply again.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the November 17, 2009 Meeting
Page 3

The Fairfax County Board has agreed to the concept of a bicycle master plan. The Fairfax Advocates for Better Bicycling is looking for funding. The School system has no interest in Safe Routes to School. They say it needs to come from the bottom up, but without support from the top down it would be possible for interested parents to get something going. Mr. Farrell noted that there is funding attached to Safe Routes to School for both hard and soft improvements. Fairfax County has applied for and received \$17,000, a pittance for such a large school district. Mr. Wetmore suggested started a Safe Routes to school listserv.

Mr. Thomas mentioned that in Frederick County the zoning update will go to public hearing on December 16th. Additional Safe Routes to School funding has been obtained. New racks are being installed at the MARC stations and central library. One of the jurisdictions has passed a helmet law for all ages. Mr. Thomas suggested that Mr. Farrell looking at the Frederick County Comprehensive plan for Complete Streets language.

Ms. Allahdoust announced that Gaylynn Abrams had been laid off, one of many lay-offs. A State bicycle map is being developed. A laws of Virginia brochure will be created, covering bicyclists and pedestrians. It will be made available in Spanish. Virginia will likely have a pit stops in Prince William County at the next bike to work day.

4. TPB Program Updates

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Project Database and Plan Update

The deadline has been pushed back to April 1st, together with the rest of the Constrained Long-Range Plan. The concept is to keep the design the same, but update the content. A small advisory committee will review the draft revisions. A link to the plan has been distributed, and comments are welcome.

Most jurisdictions have updated their projects in the database, but some have not. This list will be a good source of information for the updated bicycle plan. It will show us what we've accomplished since 2006. Mr. Farrell will continue to follow up with all the jurisdictions to make sure they have everything in the database that they want to have included in the regional plan. Mr. Farrell suggested that fewer, bigger projects would be more manageable than many very small projects. Ms. Allahdoust noted that small projects may get built, so it is hard to lump them with other projects that are not getting built. \$300,000 in cost and/or one mile in length is the test of significance.

Mr. Thomas asked whether a Safe Routes projects consisting of many tiny projects amounting to

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the November 17, 2009 Meeting

Page 4

just over \$300,000, should it be included? Mr. Farrell replied that it should be, preferably as a single project.

- Top Priority Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects for 2009

Mr. Farrell distributed a hand-out. The Town of Herndon submitted a project, the Folly Lick Trail. A description is attached. No project from 2008 was fully funded. Mr. Farrell will delete that section of the table.

Mr. Jackson noted that sections of the Macarthur Boulevard bike path involved 3 foot wide shoulders, which does not meet AASHTO guidelines. Mr. Jackson added that Maryland requires bicyclists to use shoulders and bike lanes where available. A cyclist was recently killed in St. Mary's County, and was originally considered to be at fault because there was a 3' shoulder, and the cyclist was not using it. Cyclists are not required to use the shoulder if the shoulder has hazardous conditions, such as debris. The law is not clear about shoulder width.

Mr. Wetmore added that MacArthur Boulevard was problematic, due to inconsistent width, historic issues, etc.

The list will go to TPB Tech and TPB in December, and they will be advised that this list has been compiled by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee, using certain prioritization factors, as being of regional significance. The idea is to identify a short, achievable list of unfunded or partially funded projects. The practical import is that this list will call attention to projects that are in a position to use funding.

Mr. Muchnick noted that the type of bike rack being replaced is the Rack III, not the type III. Mr. Farrell suggested that the bike parking language could be revised to reflect newly available projects, such as was brought to our attention at the September meeting. Bike cages and modular storage sheds would be more space-efficient and have a higher rate of use than bike lockers. Ms. Haldeman agreed to put together some revised language that would offer more flexibility.

Mr. Jackson said that he had received a call from a Cycle-Safe representative, who believed that some of the remarks made by the presenters from Mobis at the September meeting were inaccurate. Mr. Farrell noted that Mobis is a competitor to Cycle-Safe. An RFP process would put a test to marketing claims from Mobis or anyone else.

Mr. Farrell asked that the committee adopt the list, with the proviso that there may be some changes to the descriptive language and budget numbers. There will be a WMATA bicycle parking project, with details to be filled in. Mr. Farrell suggested that pictures and maps would make the presentation for the TPB more vivid. It will be an information item at the December TPB meeting. The Subcommittee approved the project list, with the proviso that some details

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the November 17, 2009 Meeting
Page 5

and budget numbers might change.

- Possible Education/Training Events

Mr. Farrell suggested two possibilities: Trails and Liability, which Mr. Jackson has organized before in Baltimore. The second possibility would be a mid-February presentation by Steve Durrant of Alta Planning. Alta has half-day and one-day seminars which they can do on a number of topics, including bicycle boulevards, benefits of trails, encouragement programs, bikes and rail transit, and innovations in bicycle infrastructure. Alta is a reputable west coast planning firm which is trying to establish an East Coast presence.

Mr. Jackson said that he might be able to offer one of MDOT's staff attorneys for a liability event. Engineers can be reluctant to do something if it is not in AASHTO. Attorneys can explain other means of protecting against liability than just doing what is in AASHTO. This can be broader than just trails. Mr. Wetmore added that Rails to Trails had experience with liability. Mr. Farrell suggested that a Rails to Trails representative could be one member of a panel.

Mr. noted that the work program calls for a minimum of one event per year, but nothing says we can't do two. It might be beneficial to hear from an Alta representative. Toole is a fine firm, but more competition might be beneficial.

Mr. Farrell promised to follow up with the members. He suggested doing two seminars, one on avante-garde bicycle facility design in February, which could incorporate bicycle boulevards. Mr. Muchnick thought that would be a good idea. A liability seminar could be done later in the year.

- Street Smart Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Campaign

There was a press event October 30th. The press showed up, but the zombies didn't. We recruited some tourists to serve as Zombies, who did a pretty good job texting and walking and hamming it up for the cameras.

Law enforcement participation, by early indications, has been pretty good.

We are spending relatively little this Fall. It is almost like an experiment to see how little we can spend and still move the numbers. The Spring budget will be comparable to last year's. Fairfax County cut its contribution. The first advisory group meeting will be on December 2nd, and the next meeting on January 15th after the TRB conference. The likely start time is no later than the second week of March.

5. Multimodal Performance Measures and their Role in the Transportation Planning Process

Mr. Marcus asked if he could start with an interactive conversation with the group on multimodal performance measures. Mr. Farrell suggested that Mr. Marcus go through his powerpoint first, show the group what he is doing, so the group will have something to react to.

Mr. Marcus spoke to his powerpoint. Mr. Marcus used to work for the City of Rockville, and encountered there the challenge of creating performance measures for walking and bicycling. The practice in Rockville at development review was to look almost exclusively at motor vehicle traffic. Growth management tools have more teeth on the Maryland side than in Virginia.

Sidewalks, crossing distance, traffic volumes and pavement conditions are used. Safety and connectivity are two measures, and you must provide better facilities in an activity or Metro station area. Higher traffic congestion is allowed in those areas, but pedestrian and bicycle access must be better.

Mr. Marcus asked how these types of measure could be integrated into an adequate public facilities ordinance. Mr. Marcus's experience was that developers did not fight back too hard against pedestrian or bicyclist improvements.

Ms. Allahdoust suggested that within activity centers one can ask for a high level of connectivity for pedestrians, but not worry too much about long-distance pedestrian connectivity. For bicycle trips the planning has to be more regional in scale. Loudoun County is focusing more than it did on pedestrian access.

Mr. Farrell asked about the 2010 Highway Capacity Manual, which the Transportation Research Board will publish. It will incorporate a multimodal level of service.

Mr. Wetmore suggested that in the new transportation bill, when one is passed, there is likely to be a greater emphasis on performance measures. If pedestrians don't have a performance measure, then they won't be served.

Mr. Marcus's contact information will be made available.

6. Eagle Scout Centenary Project

Mr. Mason introduced himself. He is a former Chair of the Transportation Planning Board.

A recent article in the Washington Post found that 75% of the male youth between the ages of 17 and 24 would not be eligible for the military, partly because of criminal records or failure to

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the November 17, 2009 Meeting
Page 7

graduate from high school, but in many cases because of obesity. We need to get people walking and biking again.

Boy Scouts of American are celebrating their 100th anniversary in 2010. The National Capital Area Council is looking for projects for the Eagle Scouts of the Washington region, of which there are 15,000. Initial discussions have focused on service projects that go beyond required service projects, such as helping with the trail development of the region. The Eagle Scouts can contribute labor to build and maintain trails. Mr. Mason asked for the group's comments on the feasibility of setting up a large-scale volunteer program, perhaps guided by a plan of projects that could be done by Eagle Scouts.

Mr. Wetmore suggested that Mr. Mason start by talking to groups such as the Appalachian Trail club that have experience building trails. Potomac Appalachian Trail Council, the Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts, the East Coast Greenway Alliance are possibilities. Mr. Wetmore asked if we were thinking of dirt trails or paved trails. Mr. Mason said it was a good question; he was not sure to what degree the Eagle Scouts could help with heavy construction. But ancillary items and maintenance could certainly be done by Eagle Scouts. The East Coast Greenway Alliance is a coordinating body; they do not do any construction. The Eagle Scout project would focus on the Washington region.

Mr. Muchnick suggested that Trail Managers at the Park Authorities would be the right people to talk to, and they are not here today. They have been in the past. Most parks agencies have severe maintenance needs, and the Eagle Scouts could help. Mr. Mason asked how he could meet such people. Mr. Farrell replied that we have trails managers on our distribution list, but without more lead time it was difficult to get them to attend. However, Mr. Farrell offered to convene a meeting/conference call of trails managers. Mr. Farrell felt that this topic would be a good draw, since what Mr. Mason is proposing would likely be of interest to the trails managers. Northern Virginia versus Maryland has far more Eagle Scouts.

Another possible project would be wayfinding signs; since many trails are very poorly marked. Ms. Allahdoust agreed. Fairfax Trails and Streams also does trail building. Rails to Trails Conservancy may have contacts in our region that would be useful. Most of the Trails have "Friends of" groups that might welcome assistance.

Mr. Wetmore added that with paved trails trimming vegetation is an ongoing need.

John.mason35@cox.net is Mr. Mason's e-mail address. Mr. Mason asked for a venue in which to bring his first meeting together.

7. The Regional Transportation Safety Picture

This presentation was deferred to the next meeting.

8. Announcements

FTA is proposing to change the eligibility standards for spending transit funds on pedestrians, so that if an improvement is within a given radius of a transit station, it is automatically eligible for transit funds. Ms. Haldeman encouraged everyone to read through the proposed guidance and provide comments.

9. Adjourned