

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEETING NOTES

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, March 16, 2010

TIME: 1:00 P.M.

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

CHAIR: Jim Sebastian, DDOT

VICE-

CHAIRS: Kristin Haldeman
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Michael Jackson
Maryland Department of Transportation
David Goodman – Arlington Department of Environmental Services
Fred Shaffer, MNCPPC, Prince George's County

Attendance:

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| Fatemeh Alladoust | VDOT Northern Virginia (by phone) |
| David Anspacher | M-NCPPC Montgomery County |
| Gina Arlotto | WABA/Safe Routes to School |
| Monica Backmon | Prince William County (by phone) |
| Eric Gilliland | WABA |
| Kristin Haldeman | WMATA |
| Michael Jackson | MDOT (by phone) |
| Tim Kelley | BikeArlington |
| Bill Kelly | College Park Bicycle Coalition |
| Dan Janousek | Prince George's County |
| Philp Koopman | BicyclePASS |
| Yon Lambert | City of Alexandria |
| Allen Muchnick | Virginia Bicycling Federation |
| Bill Orleans | |

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the March 16, 2010 Meeting**

Page 2

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| Jim Sebastian | DDOT |
| Charlie Strunk | Fairfax County (by phone) |
| Gail Tait-Nouri | Montgomery County DOT (by phone) |
| John Thomas | Frederick County Planning (by phone) |
| Bruce Wright | Fairfax Advocates for Better Bicycling (by phone) |
| Matthew Zych | WMATA |

COG Staff Attendance:

Sarah Crawford
Michael Farrell
Marisa Lang
Andrew Meese
John Swanson

1. General Introductions.

Mr. Sebastian chaired the meeting. Participants introduced themselves.

2. Review of the Minutes of the January 19, 2010 Meeting

Minutes were approved.

3. Member Jurisdiction Updates

WMATA is completing its bicycle and pedestrian accommodation study. WMATA recently completed its budget, which has a significant shortfall. Proposals to remedy the shortfall include fare increases and service cuts. Six public meetings are scheduled to receive comments. The bike locker fee is proposed to go from \$80 to \$200 per year. The fee has not changed since the program began in the early 80's.

Arlington's bike sharing contract negotiations are moving forward. A new sidewalk and trail plan is in process. A new bike map is being prepared.

Montgomery County Metropolitan Branch Trail is making progress.

Eric Gilliland, director of WABA, will be accepting a new position as director of NACTO, National Association of City Transportation Officials. WABA will be looking for a new director.

University of Maryland in College Park will do a traffic safety week on April 5th. Bicycle safety

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the March 16, 2010 Meeting
Page 3

training will be part of that event. The University has a bicycle coordinator.

The Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee met recently. Snow removal was a major item of discussion. SHA does not touch sidewalks. This saves money, but also results in inconsistent clearance of sidewalks. MDOT will take another look at the current policy.

Maryland School administrators are being polled regarding their policies for walking and biking. No school districts ban those modes, but some individual schools do.

The COG Citizens Advisory Committee is interested in the level of information which is provided in the Transportation Improvement Program regarding bicycle and pedestrian projects. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee might be able to provide some assistance.

Fairfax County is having budget cuts; the operating budget has been reduced. Capital projects will still go forward, and staff will not be cut. The greater Tyson's bicycle master plan is going forward, along with bicycle parking guidelines for Fairfax County.

VDOT may have another round of layoffs. Ms. Allahdoust's section has gone from four staffers to two, and there is still no State bicycle and pedestrian coordinator for Virginia. The Millerburg Meander trail pilot study is moving forward. VDOT is commenting on the new AASHTO Guide for Bicycle Facilities, which is being developed by Toole Design.

Mr. Wright of Fairfax Advocates for Better Bicycling promised to meet with the Board to urge restoration of funds for the bicycle program. Ms. Allahdoust noted that Secretary of Transportation LaHood has issued policy guidance giving bicycles equal status with other transportation modes.

Mr. Sebastian suggested deferring discussion of snow.

4. TPB Program Updates

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Project Database and Plan Update

Mr. Farrell spoke to a handout on the bicycle and pedestrian plan update. The database is fully functional, and we are in the process of updating it, and we are about 2/3 done. In response to earlier questions from Mr. Swanson, Mr. Farrell noted that the plan is to include all bicycle and pedestrian projects greater than a certain size, \$300,000. While the database is not prioritized, it contains information which could be used to prioritize projects, such as access to transit, improves pedestrian safety etc. Revisions of the text are in process, on April 20th an advisory group will review a draft. A blog feature on the web site will enable anyone to post comments or

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the March 16, 2010 Meeting
Page 4

suggestions relating to the draft plan.

The update retains the same format as the old plan, but there is a lot new information going into that skeleton, such the new household travel survey. Projects currently in the database can be compared with projects in the 2006 plan, and progress tracked. State, local, and federal policies have changed. Bike sharing, cycle tracks and on-line bike routing are new since 2006. There will be more discussion of TPB programs relating to walking and bicycling, such as the Transportation-Land Use Connections Program.

Goals in the 2006 plan were implicit; it quoted the goals in the 1999 TPB Vision as they related to Walking and Bicycling. The new COG Region Forward 2050 plan, which is in the process of being adopted, mostly echoes the 1999 Vision, but it calls specifically for the rate of implementation of bicycle and pedestrian projects in the regional bicycle and pedestrian plan to be increased. This in turn makes it more urgent for us to bring that plan up to date.

Performance measures are coming into favor. Mr. Farrell suggested a number of them, and asked the group to suggest others.

An annual update of the database would be desirable; it could be used to create an annual progress that could be taken to the Transportation Planning Board. An accurate database could be useful for other purposes, such as generating lists of partially funded projects that might be ready for construction funding, if additional stimulus funds become available.

The paper plan contains mostly information on bicycling trends, policies, etc. which don't change much on a year to year basis. The paper plan will be updated every four years.

Mr. Gilliland said that an up to date database would be a very useful tool. Ms. Haldeman suggested that the the performance measures should be tied explicitly to goals. Mr. Farrell replied that various measures of mode share could be viewed as a performance measure of the goal of increasing walking and bicycling.

Mr. Jackson suggested that goals be Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-Bound. Mr. Jackson has suggested that the focus of the plan should be on what TPB can itself. Mr. Farrell replied that much of what is in the plan will have to be done by the various jurisdictions and agencies. The plan should include what everyone is doing for walking and bicycling, not just TPB. TPB training sessions can be part of the performance measures. Ms. Allahdoust suggested that we emphasize action items. Duplication with local plans is not a bad thing.

Mr. Meese said that many subcommittees were looking for performance measures for different planning areas. The Subcommittees could benefit from some top-down direction from the TPB

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the March 16, 2010 Meeting
Page 5

on goals and performance measures. Mr. Swanson said that we can derive some performance measure from Region Forward 2050, however the goals in the TPB Vision are broad enough that it can be hard to derive performance measures for them.

Mr. Gilliland said that perhaps we should come up with performance measures to flesh out the Vision. Mr. Sebastian said that we need both broad goals for the region and specific goals for the bureaucracy. We can have goals for mode share which could come from this Subcommittee, and go through the TPB Technical Committee to the TPB. If we have specific goals we can go back every year and show how we're doing. Then the TPB and the agencies will have opportunities to adjust policies, or if need be adjust the goals.

Mr. Swanson said that as an agency we were looking to bicycle and pedestrian planning as a laboratory for how this sort of regional planning might be done in other areas. There may be some way of using quantitative measures to try to prioritize project, in addition to the political determination.

The US Census is no longer doing the long form, so census block level information is no longer available. The American Community Survey will provide rolling five year averages, but data suppression may be a greater issue than it was with the census long form.

The existing plan is on line, and successive drafts of the revised plan will be posted. Mr. Sebastian asked if there had been any push back on the goal setting in the 2006 plan. Mr. Farrell replied that there had not been; the Best Practices chapter flew through without direction. We did not flesh out the goals of the TPB Vision, we simply cited the TPB Vision Goals. Mr. Sebastian suggested that this time we might want to flesh out the TPB Vision Goals. Mr. Gilliland asked about Region Forward 2050, did it not have more specific goals. Mr. Farrell replied that Region Forward 2050 was marginally more specific than the TPB Vision. Paul Desjardin of the COG staff might be able to present on Region Forward 2050. Transportation Planning staff did not work on Region Forward 2050.

It might be worthwhile to get a presentation on the Region Forward 2050 plan. Most of the goals in Region Forward 2050 are congruent with what is in the TPB Vision, but they are more detailed.

- Street Smart Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Campaign

Mr. Farrell spoke to a hand-out on the Spring campaign. Walk and bicycling fatalities dropped in 2008, but other fatalities dropped even more, so the walk and bike share of total fatalities has grown, to nearly 25%. The campaign image has gone back the shock-value, "coffee man" type of image. The Advisory Group felt that people know many of the pedestrian laws but are ignoring them. The web site is bestreetsmart.net. Cable and broadcast television will be included for the

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the March 16, 2010 Meeting
Page 6

first time. The official launch will take place on March 23rd at Sligo Avenue and Ritchie Avenue. Success of the public relations is measured by the amount of “earned media” that we get. Participating law enforcement agencies will report citations and warnings. We will be requesting funds for FY 2011 soon, but in-kind contributions, such as law enforcement, and hosting the press event, are just as important. Mr. Farrell showed the Subcommittee the television ad, which is posted on the web site.

Mr. Gilliland noted that at the National Bike Summit there had been a proposal discussed for reducing the minimum speed limit from 25 mph. Mr. Farrell replied that the press event would focus more on speed, and played the test video of a department store dummy being hit, which is what will happen at the press event. The test video may be converted into a full-fledged PSA.

Mr. Sebastian praised the videos, saying that this looks like the best campaign yet. Mr. Farrell added that the Advisory Committee had directed the consultant to do a shock value ad, and they did a very good job. Distracted driving is also in the video, without making it be about distracted driving per se.

- February 18th Seminar – Alta Planning – Advanced Bicycle Facility Design.

This event took place as planned, though due to inclement weather in West Virginia, we lost the keynote speaker for the liability session, which had to be curtailed.

5. Proposal for MWCOG Regional and Long-Distance Bikeways

Mr. Jackson spoke to a hand-out, and distributed a map with a proposed Baltimore to DC route. A task force could identify regional and long-distance bike route corridors and alignments, discuss signing standards, and prepare a report with recommendations. MUTCD has sign standards. Installation costs are low if an alignment can be agreed upon.

Mr. Jackson asked for volunteers for the task force. The Subcommittee agreed that such a task force should be formed. Mr. Jackson will head the effort, Ms. Tait-Nouri will serve, as will Mr. Muchnick, and Ms. Allahdoust, to the extent that she can. Mr. Sebastian suggested that since most of us have bicycle routes in our jurisdictions, it is a matter of identifying and connecting those routes. Mr. Sebastian volunteered, and nominated Mr. Kelley, noting that long distance routing had been a priority for Jay Fisetite when he was Chair of the TPB. Montgomery County has a bike route signing plan in process. Mr. Farrell will work with Mr. Jackson. Bill Kelly of College Park Bicycle Coalition called in and volunteered to provide information for this group.

6. The Transportation Land Use Connections Program – Call for Projects

Ms. Crawford discussed the program. Information is available on the web site. The TLC

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the March 16, 2010 Meeting

Page 7

program was started by the TPB in 2006. FY 2011 will be the fifth funding year. Over forty technical assistance projects have been funded through this program. The program, through its technical assistance projects and through its information clearinghouse, shows how land use and transportation, can be connected. The program provides \$220,000 in TPB funding, and \$100,000 in funding from MDOT for Transit Oriented Development projects. Funding applications are due by May 12th. Projects have included bicycle and pedestrian projects, bus circulators, marketing projects, safety studies, etc. Of the forty projects at least a dozen have dealt mostly with pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Past projects can be viewed on the web site. Applicants must be members of the TPB. Nonprofits should apply in partnership with a TPB member jurisdiction. Project will be approved by the TPB in July following the recommendations of a selection committee.

Mr. Farrell said that it can be surprising how much can be accomplished by this program with a very small amount of time and money, in terms of producing a vision plan. If your jurisdiction is short on planning resources and expertise you may wish to apply for this program.

Mr. Gilliland asked if this program could be used to track what was being accomplished in the bicycle and pedestrian arena, a sort of score card. Ms. Crawford replied that that sounded like a sort of information clearing house, and we could follow up with respect to the best way to accomplish it.

Mr. Thomas asked if there was going to be a “theme” in terms of the types of applications the TPB was looking for. Ms. Crawford replied that TOD projects would continue to be prominent, given the MDOT funding for it, but past projects have been varied.

7. Other Business

Mr. Jackson discussed several incidents with police officers incorrectly enforcing the law with respect to bicyclists. As a result, Maryland State police have agreed to work with the Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee to develop some training materials for law enforcement officers. These materials, when they are developed, will be part of the training for Maryland State Police. In Chicago some training is incorporated into roll calls.

Mr. Sebastian said that DC had similar issues, and was also engaged in creating training materials.

The Subcommittee discussed snow-related issues. Mr. Sebastian felt that for the DOT to take on sidewalk snow removal would be cost-prohibitive, due to oddly shaped sidewalks in the District, which would make it difficult to use equipment, and difficult to move people. Residents are already on site.

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the March 16, 2010 Meeting**

Page 8

Mr. Meese added that the last snowstorm was so bad that even when the jurisdiction intended to clear it sometimes took more than a week to get to the sidewalks. Mr. Jackson added that there was a pedestrian fatality on a State highway which was due to a blocked sidewalk, and failure to clear could become an ADA issue.

Trail clearing is another issue; there is no consistency from one jurisdiction to the next. If trails are transportation facilities, then snow should be cleared. Dusk to dawn closures also create a problem for transportation use of trails.