

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEETING NOTES

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, July 20, 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:

Fatemeh Alladoust	VDOT Northern Virginia (by phone)
Gina Arlotto	WABA/Safe Routes to School
Monica Backmon	Prince William County (by phone)
Tim Davis	City of Frederick (by phone)
Jeff Dunckel	Montgomery County DOT (by phone)
Kristin Haldeman	WMATA
Jeffrey Hermann	Fairfax County DOT
Michael Jackson	MDOT
Angela Koch	Revolution Cycles
Phil Koopman	BicyclePath
Dustin Kuzan	MDSHA Acting Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator
Allen Muchnick	Virginia Bicycling Federation
Bill Orleans	
Jim Sebastian	DDOT

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Pat Turner	BikeLoudoun
John Thomas	Frederick County Planning (by phone)
Matthew Zych	WMATA

COG Staff Attendance:

Michael Farrell
Andrew Meese

1. General Introductions.

Mr. Jackson chaired the meeting. Participants introduced themselves.

2. Review of the Minutes of the May 18, 2010 Meeting

Minutes were approved, with a couple of minor changes.

3. Jurisdictional Updates

WMATA is finishing a study on pedestrian and bicycle access to Metro, including an inventory of unmet needs to guide the capital improvement program. Ms. Turner announced that Loudoun County had recently adopted a transportation plan that included a chapter on bicycles and pedestrians.

WABA is working on a regional walk to school day in October which will coincide with international walk to school day. WABA is also developing a regional platform or resolution that the Council of Governments would endorse.

Fairfax County recently completed a pedestrian and bicyclist bridge connecting Vienna with Tysons and Dun Loring. Gallows Road phase II bicycle lanes project is in progress, to be finished early next year. 150 racks are being placed in various locations around the county, and a contract will be signed soon for 48 lockers. Toole Design is starting a bicycle master plan for the county.

Revolution Cycles has increased its commitment to advocacy, sending representatives to meetings such as this one.

Mr. Dunkel announced that the Montgomery County bicycle and pedestrian program had been cut by 25%, mostly by zeroing out the education component, with the exception of half of the Street Smart funding. However, there is \$3.7 million left in the pedestrian safety initiative. Traffic calming will continue, as will enforcement which is funded by speed cameras. Revenues

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from cameras drop off over time as compliance improves. There are about sixty speed cameras in the county now.

Prince William County has submitted an application for a grant from the Transportation-land use connections program to develop pedestrian facility standards for mixed-use development.

Frederick County will update its bikeways and trails master plan soon. It will be done in-house. A county bicycle parking ordinance was adopted in February 2010. SHA has agreed to assign some highway design staff to the safe routes to school program, which will help all the jurisdictions receiving safe routes to school grants.

MDOT has nearly completed its Maryland School Administrators study regarding school policies for walking and bicycling. None of the school districts restrict walking and bicycling at the District level. 60% of schools neither encouraged nor discouraged walking and bicycling, while the remaining schools were evenly split between those that encouraged and those that discouraged or prohibited walking and bicycling to school.

Mr. Dunckel noted that there was a conflict between traffic calming and bicyclists where traffic calming entailed reducing traffic lane and shoulder width. Mr. Muchnick suggested sharrows and "bicyclists may use the full lane" signs. Dale Drive is a particular problem due to its narrow right of way.

4. Bicycle and Pedestrian Project Database and Plan

Mr. Farrell spoke to a hand-out. This plan is an update to the plan adopted in 2006, which replaced a much older plan.

The plan identifies the major projects that the region would like to carry out by 2035. It includes both funded and unfunded projects. It incorporates goals and performance indicators for walking and bicycling from the TPB Vision and the COG Region Forward 2050 plans.

Projects in the plan were submitted by agency bicycle and pedestrian staff. Projects had to be of a size and scope large enough to be considered regionally significant, but are not otherwise ranked or prioritized. Projects may be viewed online.

Mr. Farrell summarized the planned projects, and the projects completed since 2006.

We know which projects are rehabilitation projects rather than all-new facilities.

Partially completed projects are not reported.

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If a project is split into multiple phases, with each phase reported as a separate project, then when a phase is completed it is reported. If a project continues to be reported as a single project, then we do not credit it as completed.

Mr. Thomas said that tracking year to year should be easier than tracking over longer periods of time.

Mr. Meese asked where the 2035 target year came from. Mr. Farrell replied that he had just moved the target year five year forward. There is not much planning for projects which would take place from 2035 to 2040, so we may want to call this the 2040 network for consistency with the CLRP.

A number of significant projects have been completed since 2006, including the Woodrow Wilson Bridge trail, a good example of a complete streets policy at work. Under “complete streets” bicycle infrastructure is built concurrently with auto infrastructure.

The Union Station Bike Station is a high profile, high cost project, but it may lead the way to more modular bike parking structures that will provide a similar level of security and access. The 15th Street protected bicycle lanes are the first of their type in the region, as is the Smartbike bike sharing program, which was a precursor to the Capital Bikeshare bike sharing program which will open this Fall.

Mr. Farrell discussed mileage of facilities completed since 2006, and imputed cost for projects. Real cost estimates are not available for most of the projects since they have not been designed. Cost estimates are also not available, either before or after the fact, for projects which are part of larger transportation projects.

Mr. Muchnick expressed skepticism that the region had only 56 miles of bike lane in 2005, since he believed that Arlington alone had 23 miles of bike lane in 2005. Mr. Muchnick suggested that the bike lane mileage be broken down by jurisdiction. Mr. Muchnick also thought the shared-use path estimates were high, and in many cases the cost would be borne by developers, since in most cases these are sidepaths along roads. Mr. Farrell promised to go back and look the projects to see if a lot of the proposed paths were likely be paid for by developers, and take another look at the estimated per-mile cost.

Mr. Muchnick also thought that the plan to increase the number of bike lanes by a factor of ten seemed high. Mr. Farrell replied that the planned number of bike lanes was a soft number, since much of the mileage consists of routes for which a final decision has not yet been made as to what type of facility will ultimately be provided. Many could end up as signed routes only. Mr. Muchnick suggested that planned facilities be broken down by jurisdiction.

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Mr. Thomas suggested that the figure for multi-use path could be either high or low depending on the right of way needed. Mr. Farrell replied that given the uncertainty with imputed costs it might be best to give a range, with a high and low estimate for what these facilities will cost. For pedestrian intersection projects the estimated cost should be adjusted based on the number of intersections involved. Mr. Farrell replied that that had been done, but he would take another look at the project descriptions to make sure.

Not all the projects came with good descriptions. It is difficult to get information that is uniform across all jurisdictions, since some jurisdictions provide much less information than others, and the information is usually not available on the web or from published sources.

Mr. Meese thought that as an order of magnitude \$1 billion worth of projects sounded about right.

Mr. Farrell noted that most bicycle and pedestrian facilities are being provide either as part of larger projects, or by developers. Under new requirements, notably in Virginia, new developments must be connected to the street system in a way that enhances transportation capacity, allowing short auto, bike, and pedestrian trips to take place on local streets instead of forcing all traffic on the arterials. All new developments must accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists, and traffic calming is encouraged on local streets. There will be more grid-type and fewer cul-de-sac developments. It is difficult to sum up these changes in dollar terms, yet they are likely to be increasingly important.

Goals have been drawn from the Region Forward 2050 plan, with suggested supporting indicators added on the right in Table 5-1. Indicators are meant to be regularly, easily available data. Mode of access to transit is one example of data that is gathered regularly. We should add the a.m. peak period mode of access as well, since it is a good indicator of how people get into the Metro system.

Ms. Allahdoust informed the group that the Virginia Governor has ordered maximum use of teleconferencing. Meeting materials should be available on-line to facilitate participation by teleconference. Mr. Farrell replied that all materials were available at least as of the morning of the meeting, and a call-in option is always available. Mr. Meese suggested that we ask people to RSVP if they want to call in. Mr. Farrell suggested that in the future he may request that people RSVP for the meeting.

Not all the data for indicators is truly universal. Enforcement data comes from the evaluation of the Street Smart program, while education indicators come from the Safe Routes to School program, which do not track progress in uniform way.

Mr. Jackson asked if the goals could be made more specific. Mr. Farrell replied that the decision

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that had been made so far was to adopt the goals from the TPB Vision and Region Forward 2050 plans. In Region Forward 2050 the decision was made not to set specific numerical targets, and as long as Region Forward 2050 does not use numerical targets, then we should not either. Mr. Jackson asked if we could suggest that numerical targets be adopted. Mr. Farrell replied that the Region Forward 2050 group had considered using specific numerical targets, but had decided against it. Mr. Farrell suggested that as long as a baseline was established, and progress measured and reported regularly, people can decide for themselves whether adequate progress is being made.

Mr. Muchnick agreed that the data and reporting were most important.

Ms. Allahdoust asked about the baseline rate of construction indicator. Mr. Farrell said that we take a baseline date such as 2006, then measure the number of projects built since that date according to the bicycle and pedestrian project database. Sources of baseline data are listed on the far right of Table 5-1.

The amount of bike lane reported as built since 2009, only 9 miles, is probably too little. Ms. Allahdoust noted that VDOT is also paving shoulders for bicycle use. Mr. Farrell said that back in 2006 we had decided not to track paved shoulders, unless they are striped as bike lanes.

Road diets that add bike lanes count as new facilities.

Mr. Muchnick asked if we could develop some sort of complete streets indicator. We could look at the TIP as see what % have a bicycle and pedestrian element. Mr. Farrell replied that that information was available and would be added to the plan.

Appendices A, B, and C show the plan projects. The report in Appendix A is broken down by agency. It is the same information as the on-line database of bicycle and pedestrian projects, but abbreviated.

Ms. Allahdoust asked if the TPB Technical Committee had been briefed. Mr. Farrell replied that they had seen a version of the powerpoint which is one of today's hand-outs.

Walking trips are growing as a mode share, while bicycling is growing in the core and shrinking on the periphery. In the outer counties bicycling has declined from a low initial level. Mr. Farrell speculated that increased traffic volumes, lack of facilities, and bicycle-unfriendly development patterns accounted for the change.

There are lots of very short auto trips in the Washington region, which indicates that there is scope for shifting some auto trips to bike and walk trips. Very short auto trips are mostly found in the inner jurisdictions.

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Maps of projects need to be completed, as well as some minor items such as the credits page, bibliography, and a new cover. A map from last year has been included in the draft plan for illustrative purposes. An inside and outside the beltway map will be included. Projects completed since 2006 should be shown, perhaps on a separate map.

Photos for a cover are welcome.

In Chapter 6: Best Practices I added a section on encouraging walking and bicycling. Best Practices are not meant to be lists of what we are currently doing, but a general guide to best practice. Language on putting bicycles on Metrorail at rush hour has been changed at Kristin Haldeman's request.

It was suggested that there should be language on bicycle access on commuter rail, both in the trains and at stations. There is already language recommending improving bike parking at "Metro and commuter rail stations.

Mr. Meese recommended using generic language such as "commuter rail, rail transit, light rail" etc rather than naming specific agencies such as VRE.

Mr. Muchnick suggested that bicycles should be accommodated inside streetcars, since they don't have bike racks on the front. Minneapolis has bike hooks inside their light rail cars.

Mr. Farrell promised to incorporate the suggested revisions, finish the maps, and schedule a conference call before the plan goes to the TPB Technical Committee in September. Mr. Meese suggested that the Chair or one of the Vice-Chairs attend the TPB Technical Committee meeting on September 2nd.

Comments on the plan can be sent via email or using the blog function. TPB staff has to approve blog comments. Mr. Muchnick said that the part of the blog showing the section on which he was commenting was missing from his blog post.

A listserv is currently functional. Anyone on the listserv can send messages to anyone else. Our Chair requested it because he wanted a means of pushing messages out to the group. Mr. Farrell prefers not to approve every comment on a 200-person listserv. Information on the listserv has not yet been sent out pending a reaction from the Chair and Subcommittee.

Mr. Jackson asked if there was a list of Subcommittee members and contact information. Mr. Farrell replied that there was a sign-in sheet which is posted periodically, and the Outlook contacts which can be provided on request. Contacts are seldom removed from the sign-in sheet, so many people listed there are not active.

5. TPB Program Updates

- **Street Smart**

Mr. Farrell gave a brief update on the Street Smart program. Funding is slightly less than last year's, due to a reduction in local funding. It is anticipated that there will be sufficient funds for a Fall campaign.

- **Capital Bikeshare/Tiger II Grant Application**

Mr. Farrell distributed a hand-out on Capital Bikeshare. Another TPB staff member, Monica Bansal, is preparing the federal funding application. The deadline for adding participants to this funding application has passed.

6. Adjourned

Meeting on Long-Distance and Regional Bicycle Routes followed 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.