

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEETING NOTES

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, March 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:

Tim Davis	City of Frederick (by phone)
Jeff Dunckel	Montgomery County (by phone)
Eric Gilliland	Washington Area Bicyclist Association
Dan Goodman	Toole Design Group
David Goodman	Arlington County DES
Kristin Haldeman	WMATA
Jeffrey Hermann	Fairfax County DOT
Michael Jackson	MDOT
Jessica Juriga	Parsons Brinkerhoff
Yon Lambert	City of Alexandria
Matthew Lesh	FTA
Jim Sebastian	DDOT
Fred Shaffer	Prince George's County
John Thomas	Frederick County Planning (by phone)
Pat Turner	Bike Loudoun, Friends of W&OD

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Chris Wells Fairfax County
Stephanie Yanowitz MDSHA

COG Staff Attendance:

Michael Farrell
Andrew Meese
Clara Reskovsky

1. General Introductions.

Participants introduced themselves. Mr. Shaffer chaired the meeting.

2. Review of the Minutes of the November 18, 2008 Meeting

The minutes were approved.

3. Selection of a new Chair for 2009

Mr. Farrell remarked that he felt it was a good practice to rotate the Chair annually. Ex-Chairs usually become Vice-Chairs. The Chairmanship rotates between the three States and WMATA.

Ms. Haldeman asked if we should rotate at the jurisdictional rather than the State level. Currently WMATA's turn comes up every four years. Mr. Farrell replied that we have not been strict about rotating between jurisdictions, if for no other reason than that some jurisdictions are closer. It would be difficult for someone from Frederick County, for example, to serve as Chair. Mr. Meese added that most Subcommittees rotate between States.

David Goodman of Arlington Department of Environmental Services was selected as the new Chair for 2009, effective at the next meeting.

4. Member Jurisdiction Updates

Prince George's County is working on a bicycle and pedestrian element of its master plan of transportation. Mr. Shaffer has been working with the Westphalia center and several other agencies to implement a section of the Cabin John trail. Konterra and Woodmere town centers will also provide attractive streetscapes, wide sidewalks, and designated bike lanes. Through the TLC program there will be a safety study of Cheverly. Another project currently in design is an extension of the Rhode Island Trolley Trail through Riverdale Park and Hyattsville. It would link up several local town centers with the existing trail in College Park.

The National Bike Summit recently concluded. WABA received an award for advocacy

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organization of the year. A benefit auction will take place next week. Mr. Gilliland will be going to Helsinki, Finland to examine bicycling conditions there.

Ms. Turner mentioned that Loudoun has no bicycle coordinator or committee, but it does have a bicycle plan, which she would like to get the Board of Supervisors notice.

Fairfax is building bicycle lanes on Gallows Road. Bike racks and pedestrian projects are also likely.

DDOT is working on proposals for the stimulus bill, and projects for Safe Routes to School

Alexandria is working on a number of small projects, including bike parking.

Arlington is close to finishing the Shirlington-Four Mile Run trail connection. Arlington also has an RFP out for a bike share program. A new edition of the bike map will be available in the Fall. \$250,000 in spot pedestrian improvements will be carried out.

Mr. Jackson is trying to get Maryland's ranking as 35th most bicycle friendly state changed. Mr. Jackson is working with Toole Design to work on a survey of attitudes towards walking and bicycling to school. Certain school principals are opposed to having any students walk or bike to school. Montgomery County College in Rockville recently closed its campus to pedestrian and bicycle access, in an effort to prevent students from smoking in adjacent neighborhoods, since smoking on campus was recently banned. However, neighborhood reaction to removing bicycle and pedestrian access to the campus (with a fence) has been unfavorable.

Frederick County is trying to get some bicycle and pedestrian components into its transportation plan, including a complete streets component. A Safe Routes to School program is being started, and needs for routes to school will be identified.

Montgomery County recently passed its budget. Pedestrian projects will be eligible for speed camera revenues, so the budget has increased by \$4 million. A lot will go towards engineering, but there will be some education and enforcement components as well.

5. WMATA Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Planning Study

Ms. Haldeman gave a presentation on Metro's upcoming bike and pedestrian planning study. This study seeks to improve bike facilities at rail stations, as well as to identify station areas where pedestrian connections are 'missing.' In the short term, Metro will be replacing 350 deteriorated Rack-IIIs with inverted U style racks and adding another 300 U-racks in the coming year - hopefully installing a good number of those in the next couple months. That schedule will depend on staff availability. Unfortunately, the maintenance division lost 9 staff members in the RIF, which may

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affect the installation schedule.

Over the next 15-20 years, Metro expects rail ridership to grow to more than 1 million trips per day. With the existing system infrastructure constraints – e.g., single-track system; platforms unable to accommodate more than 8-cars; cars already packed; limitations on land available to build more auto parking – Metro’s capacity is limited and every ounce of space will be needed to accommodate passengers. Where we do have capacity to improve bike access is at the station level.

The first task of the study is to conduct a needs assessment – evaluating current and potential demand. The study will then identify best practices and make recommendations for appropriate facilities at stations, with an implementation plan to help inform Metro’s next capital funding cycle with respect to bike and pedestrian facility investments. Some concepts to explore are: bike cages in garages, double-decked racks, electronic lockers, potentially a bike station. This will be a six to nine month study, with opportunities for public input through a public workshop at WMATA early in the study and via the web. This subcommittee will receive regular briefings and be asked for feedback and input.

Ms. Haldeman reviewed Metro’s existing bike facilities, including the locker program, which is underutilized at certain stations. Staff plans to step marketing for the program, including providing an on-line locker rental capability, then re-evaluate demand. Where appropriate and if space is available, lockers may be moved to stations with greater demand. Racks are being systematically replaced. Even with the existing facilities, though, cycling to rail is growing. Current high bike mode of access stations are: Union Station, West Hyattsville, Foggy Bottom, Woodley Park and East Falls Church.

Subcommittee members discussed the locker issue, noting that lockers take up more space than racks, which limits where they can be placed at some stations. Mr. Farrell asked if locker utilization data could be gathered, at least opening lockers to see if they are in use. Ms. Haldeman said WMATA has verified that rented lockers are in use, but it is more difficult to determine how often they are being used. Just opening and inspecting the lockers is a major undertaking with 1,300 lockers systemwide. Ms. Allahdoust noted that it is possible to tell if a locker were rarely used due to dust, etc. Surveying locker renters might be a way to gather data on frequency of use. Lockers with transparent plexiglass could help overcome some of the security issues and assist with a use survey.

Mr. Farrell asked if it would be possible to place bike racks in the fare gates at some locations. BART has piloted that practice. Ms. Haldeman said she would talk to BART about their experience. That said, Metro does have policies regarding when bikes are allowed on rail, and placing racks inside the fare gates could create an enforcement issue. Cyclists do try to take bikes on crowded trains during rush hour, which creates problems in terms of passenger space. Mr. Sebastian suggested that there could be bike racks placed inside stations but NOT inside the fare gates. Mr. Jackson suggested that 2-tier parking could help provide more capacity. There is always some extra

space in garages that might be suitable for bike parking.

6. TPB Program Updates

- Street Smart Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Campaign

The Spring budget is about \$400,000. The kick-off event will take place at 10 a.m. on March 25 at the Reeves Center in Washington DC. The advisory group has been meeting regularly, and the revised materials have been finalized. All orders for materials should already have been placed, though we can take late orders. With the help of DDOT we did another workshop on best practices in pedestrian enforcement. Attendance was much lower than the nearly 60 who had registered for the original date, March 2nd, which had to be cancelled due to snow. 25 police officers attended on March 10th.

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Project Database

The database of projects is at least two years old. Since it is the basis for the regional bicycle and pedestrian plan, it needs to be updated. The only filters for projects to be included in the regional plan are, first, that the project be included in a local or agency plan, and second, that it be at least \$250,000 in cost and/or one mile in length. To keep the numbers of entries manageable, we ask that people list consolidated projects. For example, if ten miles of sidewalk retrofits are planned in dozens of locations, show the sidewalk retrofit program as a single project, rather than as multiple microprojects. The project need not be funded, though it may be funded.

Mr. Gilliland suggested that an updated list would be very useful in terms of showing what projects could have been funded if money were no object.

Priority and shovel-readiness are two different things.

We have archived the older list, so once we have a new list we should be able to say what had been built since the plan was first adopted. The status bar refers to funding status – fully funded, partially funded, unfunded.

Ms. Allahdoust suggested that VDOT would need at least a month to update all its projects.

Mr. Farrell will send an e-mail to the group with a full set of instructions.

Comments can be provided in whatever way is easiest. Mr. Farrell will send out what would have been the electronic entry form, which will show how much information should ideally be

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provided for every project.

Mr. Meese noted it would be beneficial to get this project list updated in advance of the next big Constrained Long-Range Plan update.

Mr. Farrell said that he felt that we need an up-to-date database of projects, so that people can see what the universe of planned projects is. It also lets us report progress to the TPB. It can also serve as input into the scenarios studies, and provide a ballpark estimate of what it would cost to build out all the projects in the plan.

- Addition of Blog Capability to the Subcommittee Web Site

This is likely to be done soon on a COG-wide basis. Committee members will be able to post comments on the web site.

- Bike to Work Day

Bike to Work Day will take place Friday, May 15th. For the first time there will be two pit stops in the District of Columbia. Due to a quirk of the calendar the TPB will make a proclamation in April.

- Safety Subcommittee Activities

Subcommittee met on February 12th. The University of Maryland CATT lab is working on a data mining and visualization tool, which utilize both the traffic management center or CHART data, and the police crash report or MAARS data. The tool looks like it will be very useful. It is relevant to this committee in that it will make it easier to query and display pedestrian and bicycle crash data. VDOT and DDOT representatives were present and the Subcommittee meeting, and expressed willingness to make their data available to the CATT lab, which opens up the possibility of a regional data mining and visualization tool. Mr. Jackson asked if the database would include crashes on trails. Mr. Farrell replied that if the crash is in a police report, it will be in this database.

- Education/Training Events

Toole Design has agreed to do a half-day training seminar on the new AASHTO bike design guide in June. Staff will also organize a seminar on liability and bicycle facilities for June as well.

7. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Stimulus bill)

Mr. Farrell distributed a summary hand-out and discussed the American Recovery and

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Reinvestment Act briefly. The DOT's are submitting lists of projects. One of the requirements is "shovel-readiness", which typically means that design work should be complete. DDOT has not done design work for bicycle and pedestrian facilities for which no construction funding had been identified, which means that it is relatively short on "shovel-ready" bicycle and pedestrian projects, as opposed to bridge projects, several of which were designed without any source of construction funding being identified.

There is one long-term element of the stimulus bill, a competitive discretionary grant for regional multimodal projects. The TPB has directed the Scenarios task force to develop a regional application for those funds. The project which is being proposed is a regional Bus Rapid Transit project. Bus Rapid Transit projects may include a pedestrian access/safety component.

8. Adjourned