

MEETING NOTES

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, October 16, 2001

TIME: 1:00 P.M.

PLACE: COG, 777 North Capitol Street, NE
First Floor, Room 4/5

CHAIR: Michael Jackson
Maryland Department of Transportation

ATTENDANCE:

Don Barclay, WalkDC
Eric Gilliland, WABA
Michael Jackson, MDOT
Ellen Jones, WABA
Jenny Pate, Fairfax County Parks Authority
Tom Robertson, MNCPPC/ Montgomery County
Jim Sebastian, DC DPW
Ritch Viola, Arlington DPW
Sharonlee Vogel, WMATA
Heather Wallenstrom, VDOT NOVA

COG STAFF ATTENDANCE:

Michael Farrell

ACTIONS:

1. **General Introductions.**

Participants introduced themselves.

2. **Review of the Minutes of the July 17, 2001 Meeting**

Minutes were approved without comment.

3. **WABA's On-line Commuter Assistance Project**
Eric Gilliland, WABA

Ellen Jones and Eric Gilliland explained WABA's on-line Commuter Assistance Program. This web site matches would-be bicycle commuters with volunteer mentors, of whom WABA currently has 79. The mentor addresses are geocoded, both by origin and by destination. The site guides the inquirer to a list of mentors who live in his area, with their work destinations. The web site saves WABA staff time matching people over the phone. The web site, of course, is available 24 hours a day. WABA has had 2600 visits to the page in three months, and plans to send a survey to its mentors to see how many people have been in contact with them. WABA plans to do more outreach to publicize the availability of the system.

Heather Wallenstrom asked whether it would be possible to build a web-site similar to mapquest, that would provide the best route by bicycle between two points. Eric Gilliland replied such a service would require Bicycle Level of Service Analysis for all the relevant roads, as well as development of software that would respond to level of service. Level of service is being developed in conjunction with numerous bicycle planning efforts. The principal obstacle or expense would come on the software side. Once the software is developed, it can be replicated in other jurisdictions. We might partner with a software firm to develop the software, perhaps using some public money to defray part of the cost of developing the software, the remainder of which the firm might recoup by selling the software to other regions.

4. **Briefing on the Cross-County Trail**
Jenny Pate, Fairfax County Parks Authority

Jenny Pate discussed the progress of the Cross-County Trail in Fairfax County. This trail will eventually be nearly forty miles long. Portions of it are already in existence, while others are in planning. Not all sections are funded, nor is all the right-of-way acquired. Not all of it will be hard-surface, road-bikable trail, even in the long run. Difficult Run in the north particularly will probably always be soft-surface. Surfacing issues are still unresolved. Crushed limestone is a maintenance problem in areas subject to water flows. Michael Jackson described a trail/road intersection projects, including zebra strips, street signs for the trail, and destination signs.

5. **Maryland Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan**
Michael Jackson, MDOT

Michael Jackson discussed the progress of the Maryland Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. This plan is mandated by the legislature to be finished by October 2002. MDOT is in the middle of a three-phase project, of which Phase II, inventory, is currently under way. In Phase I

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MDOT developed a draft model ordinance for nonmotorized facilities. As part of Phase II, consultants are analyzing pedestrian and bicycle levels of service on 5000 miles of state highways. This map will provide a baseline for measuring future progress. Level of service is a tool, not the sole determinant of priorities. The consultants are also looking at how different state agencies deal with bicycles and pedestrians. The end products will be a prioritized list of roadway improvements, a bicycle/pedestrian model ordinance, a final master plan report, and new state policies for accommodating nonmotorized users. Michael Jackson and the consultants have finished a series of sessions at the different highway districts. Generally the rural districts had less interest in pedestrian facilities. The group had some questions about the prioritization process, which is apparently not fully determined as of yet, and how it might affect funding. MTA has had some involvement with the Maryland Bike Plan.

6. Washington Regional Bicycle Plan

Michael Farrell discussed a proposed outline for a regional bicycle plan, and asked for feedback from the group. Michael explained that there have been a number of developments which he thought would improve a regional bicycle planning. The first is the development of bicycle level of service. There has also been an improvement in the availability of accident data. Finally, better use could be made of census data. Unfortunately, in this region, accident data is not in a format that would be friendly to GIS, and a considerable budget and time would be required to put it in such a form. D.C. has done this, but it took a consultant. Michael explained the uses of accident data using example from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's regional bicycle plan, and his own work in Delaware County, Pennsylvania. However, the states are in the process of putting that data into something more useable, so it may eventually become available. Someone suggested limiting data to fatalities, but Michael disagreed on the grounds that we have too few fatalities to show patterns. Jim Sebastian said the two issues were how many crashes, and where. He suggested that we start by getting the gross numbers by jurisdiction and for the region. Another person suggested that items 9 through 13 were the essentials of a regional bike plan, whereas the other items were interesting but not necessary. Jim agreed, arguing that it is enough of a task to do those items, though he liked item four. Generally, the group agreed that we should do the minimalist version of a plan, excluding useful but nonessential items or items that are included in other documents such as the AASHTO guidelines. We want to avoid using graphics, due to time and expense, and you cannot explain facility types without graphics. Bob Brown suggested that we try to use the plan to encourage uniform signs. The group disagreed, suggesting that the MUTCD or the State DOT's was the proper place to address sign uniformity questions. COG lacks the authority to tell its constituent members what signs to use. We could include examples from the MUTCD, or just refer readers to the MUTCD. Heather Wallenstrom suggested that Michael Farrell solicit written comments. Heather asked that we set a schedule for completing the plan, and for contributions that Michael expects for the committee. Another person suggested that accurate funding and implementation information would be the most useful element. We need to track both funding and implementation of facilities. Just getting that information is a lot of work. The group agreed that we should confine ourselves to major multiuse trails, not sidewalks. However, Jim mentioned that COG

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did poll agencies and ask if highway projects included bicycle or pedestrian elements. The policy should be that there nearly always is, but there were a lot of negative responses.

Jim said that the plan is not intended to show the best locations for bicycle facilities. That is done at the local level. The plan should consist of a list of projects, with funding and progress towards implementation.

Andy Meese suggested that the plan should consist of projects, ideally mapped in a GIS format, which will show people what progress is being made on a regional level.

Michael Jackson suggested that the plan include a section on parking, beyond parking at transit facilities, as well as construction and maintenance work zone policies. Jim Sebastian warned against adding items to the plan, in the interest of finishing it in a timely manner. We were supposed to do this plan concurrently with the CLRP, though there was no legal mandate to do so, and we missed that deadline by a year. It would be nice to finish this in 2002. Jim suggested that we add incremental improvements at best.

Michael Farrell asked if it was the committee's wish to do the small version or the large version of the bike plan. Heather suggested that Michael solicit comments from members not present. Heather also asked for a schedule, and Michael replied that he expected the schedule to depend on the scope. Once the scope of the plan was determined, then it would be possible to set a schedule and ask for specific items at specific times from committee members.

In the interests of time, items 7-9 on the agenda were postponed. The next meeting was set to take place on Tuesday, November 20, as scheduled.

10. Other Business.

Michael Jackson announced that he had won a prize of a ticket to the Velo-City conference for a paper which he wrote. Some committee members remained and discussed the bike rack TERM.

Michael Jackson adjourned the meeting at approximately 3 p.m.