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MEETING NOTES

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE

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DATE: Tuesday, July 18, 2006

TIME: 1:00 P.M.

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

CHAIR: Kristin Haldeman
Washington Area Metropolitan Transit Authority

**VICE-
CHAIRS**:   Charlie Denney
Arlington County DPW
Michael Jackson
Maryland Department of Transportation
Jim Sebastian, DDOT

Attendance:

Fatemeh Allahdoust	VDOT
George Branyan	DDOT
Cheryl Cort	WRN
Charlie Denney	Arlington DES
Eric Gilliland	WABA
Matthew Greene	Montgomery County Executive Office
Kristin Haldeman	WMATA
Michael Jackson	MDOT
Chuck Kines	M-NCPPC Montgomery County
Yon Lambert	City of Alexandria
Bill Michie	PPTC
Allen Muchnick	Virginia Bicycling Federation
Jeff Peel	WABA
Joseph Pelaia	Maryland Highway Safety Office
Jim Sebastian	District of Columbia
Burl Self	George Mason University
Gail Tait-Nouri	Montgomery County DPWT
Robert Taylor	MPDC
Chris Wells	Fairfax County

John Wetmore   Perils for Pedestrians

COG Staff Attendance:

Michael Farrell
Andrew Meese

1. **General Introductions.**

Participants introduced themselves.

2. **Review of the Minutes of the May 16, 2006 Meeting**

Minutes were approved, with the caveat that the prediction made on page 3 of the minutes that
the WMATA board would allocate $200,000 to buy new bike racks in June had been proven
incorrect; the WMATA board did not end up allocating funds to buy new bike racks. The group
discussed briefly whether that fact should be noted in the May minutes or in the current
meeting's minutes. Andrew Meese suggested that the fact be noted in parentheses in the May
minutes.

3. **Final Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the National Capital Region**
    Michael Farrell, MWCOG

*   Review of changes in the final draft

    The plan is finished and will go to the TPB tomorrow. Copies of the resolution adopting
    the plan are available. The public comment period closed July 10. The number of
    projects has been reduced to 353, to adjust for certain duplicate projects, projects from
    Transaction 2030 that were removed at the request of the Northern Virginia Office, and
    corrections to the maps. Corrections requested for the maps in Arlington and Prince
    William have been made. On page 6-3, a project category has been added to the list of
    mapped projects.

    On the hand-out labeled Item 3, a paragraph will be inserted into Chapter 5, committing
    the TPB to compile and report on best practices for bicycle and pedestrian wayfinding in
    the Washington region. This amendment is being adopted at the suggestion of Jay
    Fisette, Chair of the Arlington County Board. Charlie Denney spoke in favor of the
    suggested language. Chris Wells asked if exploring guidelines would commit us to adopt
    regional guidelines. Charlie Denney replied that it would not. Michael Jackson
    commented that he thought a best practices report was an excellent idea. This project
    would involve documentation of what is already being done. Michael Farrell will do an
    interim report in September, documenting what had been gathered so far. Michael Farrell

though that December was a realistic deadline for completing the report. Allen Muchnick suggested including some best practices from outside the region as well. Gail Tait-Nouri asked if it could include a cost matrix, showing what each element might cost. For a large jurisdiction such as Montgomery County signage and mapping could be a major expense. A discussion of problems encountered or lessons learned would be useful. Just siting bike route signs can be a job in and of itself in a large jurisdiction. Maintenance and vandalism issues should also be discussed.

Chris Wells asked if the goal was regional standards. Michael Farrell replied that this report is the first step; the goal is to document what is being done, not to achieve agreement by December.

Gait Tait-Nouri suggested that we show all the current practices in the jurisdictions, not just "best practices". Michael Jackson volunteered to assist Michael Farrell in this project.

Andrew Meese asked if the language of the proposed amendment would be acceptable to Jay Fisette, or whether Mr. Zimmerman might ask for something stronger, such as a mandate for regional standards. Charlie Denny did not believe that that would be a problem; however subcommittee members might want to talk to their TPB members about this issue. There is no way of enforcing regional standards. Chris Wells said that Fairfax County could not commit to adhering to regional standards within a short time frame.

The subcommittee adopted the suggested language for insertion into Chapter 5, with the caveat that some best practices from beyond the region should be included in the report.

There will not be a subcommittee for this work item until and unless we decide to create regional guidelines.

- Schedule for updating the plan

  Michael Farrell said that at previous meetings the group had agreed that once per year would be a reasonable schedule for updating the database. If the database is updated, updating the plan as well would not be too difficult. Every July, the TPB could be asked to approve an updated plan. Updating it annually will keep the plan fresh, and it will allow it to serve as a tracking tool. By updating the database we can figure out how many projects have been completed since the previous update, and report that to the TPB. Michael Farrell thought it would not be much more work to do a light update annually rather than a re-write every five years. Staff turn-over can make updating the database difficult if it is not updated often enough.

Chris Wells thought that the current plan update was difficult, and it is still not fully accurate. Michael Farrell replied that the main work item from the point of view of the jurisdictional staff is the project information in the database. TPB staff will re-do the maps and make any necessary text changes. Chris Wells expressed concern over the number of projects and the amount of work needed to update the project database. Tracking which projects from Fairfax got consolidated or eliminated is difficult. Michael Farrell replied that there was a scale filter for including projects in the plan, and he had removed many projects that did not meet the criteria for inclusion in the regional plan. Updating the project list is a major work item, but it is necessary if there is to be a regional plan. Chris Wells suggested that we have a map for each individual jurisdiction, and show more projects. However, annual updates may be too ambitious.

Kristin Haldeman noted that WMATA was working on a regional bus stop study, and gathering data. Kristin suggested that local and regional databases be combined, which might involve more up-front work.

Michael Farrell replied that he had been asking jurisdictions not put in every project from their capital plan, but select those projects that are big enough to be regionally significant. The fewer projects in the regional plan, the less work it is to keep it up to date. In the past we discussed doing a map for every jurisdiction, but decided not to, because if we had a map for every jurisdiction we would be doing in effect a jurisdictional bicycle and pedestrian plan for every jurisdiction in the region.

Charlie Denny agreed that annual updates were too ambitious. Arlington County did not submit all of the projects in its capital plan.

Allen Muchnick noted that Appendix E, with projects completed from the 1995 plan, contained a number of errors.

Kristin Haldeman asked how often we should update the plan. Allen Muchnick favored more frequent updates.

Fatemeh Allahdoust wanted the ability to access and modify the database. This regional plan is not really a plan the projects in it are already in some sort of program. Unfortunately, VDOT's long-range plan is not ready, so those projects could not be included in this regional plan.

Michael Farrell said that the database would be made available again in a password-protected format, so that the Transaction 2030 projects could be put back in. Michael Farrell suggested that, if an agency is having trouble keeping its list of projects up to date, it could reduce the number projects it submitted for the regional plan to something more manageable. Fatemeh Allahdoust said that wouldn't be desirable, because she

would prefer to put everything in, and have COG be responsible for screening out projects that are not large enough to be regionally significant. Michael Farrell suggested that we could raise the scale filters to weed more projects out. Fatemeh replied that the database should include every project. A supervisor might take offense if a project important to him or her were not included. Andrew Meese said that considering that COG and TPB are membership organizations, and VDOT is a member, that it was odd for VDOT and TPB to have different criteria regarding what should be included in a regional plan.

Kristin Haldeman asked if the group had ever tackled the issue of regional significance in a project. Chris Wells said that any bus stop could be considered regional. Kristin said that there needed to be criteria. Michael Farrell replied that there were criteria. Fatemeh said that length and cost should not be the only criteria for regional significance. Michael Farrell replied that if a jurisdiction believed that a small project were regionally significant, it could still be included. Eric Gilliland asked if the selection criteria were included in the plan, or any disclaimer that the accuracy depends on the jurisdiction. Michael Farrell replied that the selection criteria were listed in the text of the plan, and on the maps. Chris Wells expressed concern that he might have very many small projects rather than fewer large ones, and it was important that those efforts be recognized. Chris noted that the jurisdictional staff would have to review the new text and maps if the entire plan is updated. What is the level of expectations from the update process? Michael Farrell replied that the main work item for jurisdictional staff is Appendix A, the project database. It would be very desirable to have new maps to go with that database, and new summary text describing what is in the database. Those are work items for TPB staff, though the subcommittee would have to review them.

Jim Sebastian suggested that we try to update the database annually, but not the maps and text. We would still do an annual top ten list, and have the database as the basis for that short list. We could present a summary memo based on the database to the TPB, but a full update would be too much work.

Gail Tait-Nouri suggested transcribing Appendix E into the database. Andrew Meese suggested that, since the 1995 list is so old, that Appendix E is not a comprehensive list of bicycle and pedestrian projects that have been completed. We would prefer to start with a clean slate. The new database will eventually produce a list of completed projects, as projects are completed.

Andrew Meese mentioned that one reason why we have tried to keep the list of projects in the regional plan limited is that it is so hard to keep it accurate. We have encouraged people to submit a narrow list of projects that have regional significance. We have also offered people the option of submitting group projects such as a county-wide sidewalk program. Michael Farrell said that it seemed contradictory to say that it is too difficult to

update the database, but that we should include every project in the database. Chris Wells suggested that most policymakers do not look at Appendix A, they will just look at the maps and the list of projects on the map. The database is a lot of work, but we'd like to take credit for all the work we're doing.

Kristin Haldeman asked Michael Farrell to come up with some alternatives. Michael Farrell replied that he would, but that he was afraid that if we show policymakers an updated database, that they might ask for maps. Jim Sebastian suggested not showing policymakers the database. Andrew Meese asked Jim what he thought was a reasonable schedule for updating the plan. Jim Sebastian replied that every five years would probably work; every ten years was too long because we lose too much institutional memory in that time frame. Andrew Meese replied that we update the CLRP every four years; it might be good to do the bike/ped plan update just prior to the update of the CLRP.

- Powerpoint presentation for the TPB, July 19

  Michael Farrell spoke to the draft powerpoint to be given to the TPB on July 19. The powerpoint will remain silent on the subject of the frequency of plan updates.

Action Items:
  o TPB staff will prepare a report on best practices on wayfinding and signage for bicyclists and pedestrians for the Washington region
  o TPB staff will prepare some options on updating the database of bicycle and pedestrian projects and the bicycle and pedestrian plan

4. **Report on the July 12 WMATA Bike N' Ride Summit**
        Kristin Haldeman, MWCOG

Attendance was good. There will be a six-month time-frame to produce outcomes. One purpose of this summit was to get a bicycle and pedestrian coordinator hired, and to develop a work plan for that person. Another issue is where in the organization the person should work.

Carol Kachadoorian announced that a summary of the meeting will be available on Friday. Each working group should meet no later than the end of next week and produce an action plan.

Michael Jackson suggested that each jurisdiction provide input to WMATA regarding what kind of powers and expectations the bicycle and pedestrian coordinator should have, and given that input WMATA can decide the best place in the organization for that position. Eric Gilliland agreed that we need to decide what this person's responsibilities should be.

Chris Wells praised WMATA's change of approach. WMATA could become the regional leader

in promoting pedestrian and bicycle safety. Charlie Denney praised the work WMATA has done in organizing this summit.

5. **Educational/Training Events**

   a. Safe Routes to School Seminar. Will take place in Arlington County Board Room on September 12. The three State Safe Routes to School Coordinators will be present, and possibly another subject matter expert. It will be an all-day seminar. More detailed information will be made available later.
   b. Possible topics for another seminar include:
      i. ITE Manual for Context-Sensitive Design. It talks about how surrounding land-use is used as a cue to trigger different design standards. Cheryl Cort suggested this topic. Cheryl Cort suggested that this seminar would help educate Department of Transportation staff. A likely guest speaker would include one of the report authors. Michael Jackson had some criticism of the photos used in the fact sheet on the Manual. Cheryl Cort praised the manual. The powerpoint presentation and manual are available on-line. This consultant has helped Arlington incorporate these concepts into its plan. Fatemeh Allahdoust added that VDOT was also interested in context-sensitive design.
      ii. Shared-use pathway design and management issues. Michael Jackson argued that there was a need for a workshop on these issues.

   Michael Farrell thought that based on guidance from the TPB that there was a need to make street design more context-sensitive and pedestrian-friendly, to support the kind of redevelopment that is increasingly being proposed.

   - Michael Farrell will organize a Safe Routes to School Seminar in September, 2006, and announce the details when they become available.

   - Michael Farrell will explore holding a Context-Sensitive Solutions seminar at some point in Fall of 2006

6. **On-line Route Mapping**
   Eric Gilliland, WMATA

On-line route mapping is progressing rapidly. Jeff Peel from WMATA spoke to a powerpoint

presentation on on-line bike route mapping. There is a lot of demand for mapquest-style bike route information. Right now we have the ADC Bike map, an on-line network of commuter mentors, and assorted regional maps. We would like something that can be updated rapidly to allow for construction, track bike crashes even where a police report is not filed, and something that is easier to use than a pdf map. We'd like something innovative, that can set a trend. Most cities are still using pdf. maps. LA county is using bikemetro.com, which has mapquest-style routing. Bikemetro is very useful, but expensive to set up. The ByCycle.org trip planner used in Portland works fairly well. It uses a google platform, which allows you to zoom in closely. There is a hybrid available using google earth that shows aerial photos but with the street names. It will produce a cue sheet. Bycycle.org is estimated to cost considerably less that bikemetro.com. No source of funding has yet been identified. We need to better identify the data that are needed, and determine whether the agencies have that data available. WABA needs help collecting the data, and getting funding to do the work. Chris Wells expressed doubt that Fairfax County most of the data that was needed in GIS form.

Eric Gilliland promised to come back with better information. Jim Sebastian suggested that we might be able to make this part of the Commuter Connections program. Michael Jackson urged WABA to bring this presentation back in September with refinements.

- WABA will identify the GIS and other information needed to make the ByCycle.org route-finding system work

7. Jurisdictional Updates

Fairfax County now has a dedicated bicycle planner.

Adjourned.