

# National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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## MEETING NOTES

### BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE

**DATE:** Tuesday, March 20, 2018

**TIME:** 1:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** Room 1, First Floor  
777 North Capitol Street NE  
Washington, DC 20002

**CHAIR:** Cindy Engelhart, VDOT

**VICE-  
CHAIRS:**

Jeff Dunckel, Montgomery County Department of Transportation  
Karyn C. McAlister, Prince George's DPWT  
Jamie Carrington, WMATA

**Attendance:**

James Carrington	WMATA (by phone)
Henry Dunbar	BikeArlington
Cindy Engelhart	VDOT
Oleg Kotov	City of Rockville (by phone)
Laurel Hammig	National Park Service
Katie Harris	Washington Area Bicyclist Association
Karyn McAlister	Prince George's County DPWT (by phone)
David Patton	Arlington County
Jim Sebastian	DDOT (by phone)
John Wetmore	Perils for Pedestrians

**COG Staff Attendance:**

Michael Farrell  
Matthew Gaskin

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Andrew Meese  
Jon Schermann  
John Swanson  
Lori Zeller

- 1. General Introductions.**
- 2. Review of the January 23 Meeting Notes**

Meeting notes were approved.

- 3. Jurisdictional Updates**

Arlington is updating the Bicycle Element of the Transportation Plan by the end of the year. Prince George's will launch Capital Bikeshare soon. WABA has been working with Prince George's County to extend the WB&A Trail along Route 704. The County received a TLC grant for the project.

- 4. Visualize 2045**

Ms. Zeller spoke to a powerpoint.

The new plan will include unfunded elements for the first time. The seven major initiatives that have been endorsed by the TPB will include bicycle and pedestrian access to high capacity transit, and the National Capital Trail.

There will be a performance chapter that will compare various scenarios.

Additional elements will describe the various other planning efforts such as freight, bicycle and pedestrian, and equity.

Visualize 2045 will be relatively brief and accessible. Details will be available in other documents.

The plan document will be presented to the Board in September. An early draft will go to the TPB Technical committee in July. October is the target date for approval of the plan.

## **5. Capital Trails Coalition**

Ms. Harris spoke to a powerpoint. A map was available.

The Capital Trails Coalition is planning and advocating for a regional paved trail network. This spine network will be usable for both transportation and recreation.

The Coalition includes local governments, nonprofits, and Business Improvement Districts. It is housed at Washington

In 2017 the Capital Trails Coalition met with each jurisdiction within its footprint and gathered the trail data which they had available. Capital Trails put the data into a standard GIS format, and selected a network based on its criteria. CTC is now checking the data with the jurisdictions to make sure that it is precise and accurate. CTC has also created a web mapping app which allows agency staff to edit the trail layers themselves, which was demonstrated to this Subcommittee at the last meeting.

The Steering Committee of the CTC is working on a list of priorities within the network. The first step has been to ask the jurisdictions what their priorities are.

Mr. Farrell added that we are getting very close to a finished product which can easily be pitched.

One of the things that COG has been considering is how to refer to the Capital Trail Network in our plan, Visualize 2045. The National Capital Trail, which is part of that network, is one of the seven initiatives that have been endorsed by the TPB.

However, the National Capital Trail idea originated with the TPB, and it was something that we developed within our own planning framework. The Capital Trail Network is the result of an outside effort, and it does not include all the TPB member jurisdictions. The Capital Trail Network is very new, and the TPB has not yet been briefed on it. We will likely refer the Capital Trail Network in Visualize 2045, but for now the TPB is not likely to endorse it as one of its regional initiatives.

Mr. Schermann asked about the East Coast Greenway and other long distance trails. Ms. Harris replied that the East Coast Greenway is part of our coalition, and the East Coast Greenway passes through our region. We may add long distance trails that extend beyond the CTC planning footprint to the map, perhaps with dashed lines.

Mr. Swanson asked why up-county Montgomery County did not have any trails in the Capital Trails Network. Ms. Harris replied that the upcounty trails were not connected to the others, and

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one of the requirements for inclusion was that a trail have a continuous connection to the network.

Mr. Wetmore asked about the Pepco Trail. Ms. Harris replied that the Pepco Trail was a natural surface trail, and we don't include natural surface trails in our network. If the Pepco paved trail is funded, CTC will include it in their map.

The Prince George's trails are from their plan. CTC puts projects on the map only with the approval of the jurisdiction.

Mr. Farrell added that he was part of the conversation on the criteria for trail inclusion, and the geographical extent. The CTC effort is funded by REI, and housed at WABA with a full time trails coordinator, and at Rails to Trails, with a half time GIS person. Mr. Farrell suggested using the COG footprint, but the Steering Committee decided that extending the project to the entire COG footprint would not be feasible with the available resources. The core jurisdictions were the most logical starting point. The footprint could be extended in the future.

Mr. Swanson asked if the Circuit in Philadelphia had a footprint that coincided with the footprint of the MPO. Mr. Farrell replied that it did. The William Penn Foundation funded the planning, but the effort was led by the MPO, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, in partnership with the Philadelphia Bicycle Coalition and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council.

Mr. Swanson noted that the COG geography is an odd one from a bicycle planning point of view, given that it does not contain Anne Arundel County, but does contain Frederick County. Mr. Swanson thought that including the Capital Trail Network in our regional plan at some point would be a good idea, especially if it came to encompass the entire region. We are currently considering the National Capital Trail when allocation Transportation Alternatives and Transportation Land Use connections funds. In the future we could do the same for the Capital Trail Network. Ms. Harris replied that she would love for the Capital Trail Network to be included in Visualize 2045.

Mr. Swanson noted that there will be other references to Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning in Visualize 2045, including a regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan which is being updated. If the Capital Trail Network is referred to in Visualize 2045, we may consider it when making funding decisions for trails.

Mr. Wetmore noted that the Capital Crescent Trail should be demoted to "planned".

Mr. Farrell added that the TPB Technical Committee and the TPB have not been briefed on the Capital Trail Network. At some point the TPB Technical Committee should be briefed, and they could decide whether to bring it to the TPB as an information item.

Extending the footprint of the Capital Trail Network to the entire COG/TPB membership would involve a significant amount of data gathering, data clean-up, site visits, and participation by the outer jurisdictions in the Coalition meetings. Connectivity of trails in some of the outer jurisdictions to the core trail network could be an issue.

## **6. Regional Transportation Safety Picture**

Mr. Schermann spoke to a powerpoint.

At the last meeting Mr. Schermann briefed the Subcommittee on our first ever regional safety targets. At today's meeting Mr. Schermann will present regional safety data in detail.

Our serious injury target is higher than our current serious injury number, which raised attention at the board. One benefit of having regional targets is that it brings the safety issue to the attention of the board on a regular basis.

Mr. Meese noted that today's tables show actual numbers, not five-year rolling averages as was the case for the regional goals presented last month.

Maryland fatalities are consistently higher than those in Maryland. Mr. Meese asked about the effect of VMT bumps.

The fatality rate for the Washington region is lower than the national average, though we are more urban than the national average. Our rate has also held steady while the national numbers have increased.

Many crashes involve more than one contributing factor. Ms. Harris asked if pedestrian as a contributing factor implied that the pedestrian was at fault. Mr. Schermann replied that it did not. He will consider using a more neutral descriptor. It's hard to find a descriptor that fits all categories. Mr. Farrell suggested "crash factors".

Mr. Meese asked about research on clothing color and the pedestrian being struck. Mr. Schermann was not sure whether that information is in the crash reports.

Mr. Farrell asked whether we have enough non-urbanized area within our region to have a significant number of pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries in the non-urbanized. Mr. Wetmore asked about the distinction between urban and suburban. Mr. Farrell replied that we use the census definition of urban, which includes suburban. Mr. Farrell suggested that one way of getting at such distinctions would be to look at speed limits.

Mr. Patton asked about geolocating of crashes. For fatalities we have that, from FARS. For

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Virginia you can get geolocated data through a web app. DC will make geolocated data available. Maryland has the data and will do analysis for you but won't share the data itself. Mr. Wetmore asked in the FARS data included speed limits. Mr. Schermann said it probably did. Mr. Meese said that the speed limit data sets are not very good. It would not include construction zones.

Prince George's has made progress reducing fatalities, while Fairfax has increased.

Reduction in driving during the recession was concentrated in rural areas and among young people, both of which are risk factors.

Mr. Schermann said that it's hard to get causal information from this data. Montgomery County had the biggest reduction in serious injuries.

Montgomery, Prince George's, DC, and Fairfax have the most bicyclist fatalities. Serious injuries are fairly stable.

There are a lot of ways to analyze this data, and we need to consider what questions need to be answered.

Mr. Patton said that one source of error is the presence of multiple police forces within a single jurisdiction, such as a the Park Police. Mr. Schermann said that that data is reported to the State, and shows up on an annual basis, but it won't be available in real time.

Pedestrians have more fatalities relative to injuries, so they account for a higher percentage of fatalities than injuries. Washington region fatalities are roughly on par with the Maryland statewide numbers.

New York City has overall very low traffic fatality rates. If you correct for exposure, it's safer to walk in New York than in most places, and your overall likelihood of dying in a wreck is much lower in New York City than the national average. One of the safest places in the country to raise children is lower Manhattan.

## **7. Other TPB Program Updates**

- **Bike Ped Project Database.**

It's a good time to update the regional bicycle and pedestrian plan, since we have some major bike plans currently being updated including Montgomery and Frederick.

- **Street Smart**

April 17 Kick-off, at Ridge Road SE. Enforcement workshop date TBD.

- **Vision Zero**

WABA's Vision Zero Summit was good enough that we don't need one of our own.

- **Dockless Bike Share Workshop**

Mr. Farrell has spoken with Kimberly Lucas at DDOT. We will have a regional Dockless bike share workshop in late May. It's a timely topic.

- **Arlington Low Stress Bicycle Network Workshop**

Arlington is applying FHWA sponsored two-day workshop with consultant support and outside speakers. This could be a co-sponsorship opportunity for the Subcommittee. We could promote it and provide meeting space if needed. Mr. Swanson added that this is building on a TLC project, so we would like to see this workshop happen.

Mr. Patton added that the consultants created the product, but did not do much staff training, leaving Arlington without a good way of using the information.

This would be regional event, with speakers from Montgomery County, which is making use of LTS in its bicycle plan. It is a promising tool for project prioritization.

FHWA recently announced new techniques for bicycle and pedestrian counting.

Ms. Engelhart suggested exploring what happens to crash rates as you build out the system.

Mr. Swanson said that this event could be part of TLC program peer exchange. Mr. Patton noted that this would be more involved than a typical TLC peer exchange.

## **8. Announcements and Other Business**

- **Harry Nice Bridge Update**

Current proposed accommodation is inadequate.

The TPB made a couple of comments on an earlier proposal: that the level of the bridge be raised, and that pedestrian and bicycle accommodation be provided.

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The current proposal offers two bicycle alternatives: an 8' shared use path with walls on either side, and a shared lane. The proposed 8' lane is not consistent with AASHTO, which calls for 10' clear width. To allow 2' of shy distance on either side, the total wall to wall distance will need to be 14'.

The alternate proposal is a shared 12' travel lane for bicycles and motor vehicles. The shoulders are only 2' wide. The probable speed limit will be 55 mph, the maximum grade is 6%, and there will be heavy truck traffic. The proposal cites the Hatem Bridge over the Susquehanna river, which is much flatter, as an example. The Hatem Bridge is also nearly 100 years old.

Typical speed on the uphill phase of the Tour de France is 10-12 mph. A typical bicyclist is not going to maintain a 55 mph speed on a 6% uphill grade.

The MDTA will send a representative to present their design to this Subcommittee on May 15. The Subcommittee will have an opportunity to provide comments and technical input at that time. The TPB may choose to provide additional input at a later point.

The current Nice bridge does not allow bicycle or pedestrian crossings. It has four lanes with no shoulders. The Hatem allows bicyclists in a shared lane during limited hours, but only fanatical bicyclists are likely to use it, not the family rider.

Mr. Wetmore said that the current proposal is the result of value engineering or cost-cutting efforts.

Mr. Patton said that the Chickahominy Bridge on Highway 5 between Richmond and Williamsburg includes a shared use path.

Ms. Engelhart suggested cantilevering the shared use path, with a barrier.

Mr. Meese asked if the bidders could propose ways of accommodating pedestrian and bicyclists, rather than ruling them out a priori.

Mr. Wetmore said that there is a bill in the Maryland State Legislature is considering a bill that would apply Complete Streets requirements to MDTA.

Ms. Engelhart suggested tolling bicyclists. Mr. Farrell noted that this is an EZ Pass facility. And the toll authority in Philadelphia declined an opportunity to collect tolls from bicyclists because it would require keeping the path open all the time. The Philadelphia Bicycle Coalition proposed the tolls.

Ms. Engelhart suggested that Subcommittee members could prepare questions or

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comments in advance of the May 15 meeting.

Mr. Meese suggested that Mr. Farrell compile the questions in advance and forward a synopsis to MDTA. Mr. Meese added that MDTA is likely to send a messenger not a decider.

Ms. Engelhart asked if the Subcommittee would forward comments to the TPB Technical Committee. Mr. Farrell said that we have some time to provide comments to the TPB Technical Committee; no decision will be made in May.

The TPB specifically asked for coordination at the technical level, so they are likely to be interested in the Subcommittee's comments.

The Charles County representative to the TPB Technical Committee asked that bicycle and pedestrian accommodation be provided.

The current proposal will keep the bridge at the same height as the current bridge.

The Wilson Bridge is lower than the Nice but the Wilson has a drawbridge.

- **TLC Applications are due April 3<sup>rd</sup>**
- **WABA Bicycle Choice Awards**

The speaker was good, a woman who had been hit by a bicyclist. Ms. Engelhart recommended attending the next Bicycle Choice Awards Dinner. The audience was highly engaged.

Mr. Sebastian said that the benefit for DDOT staff was that they got to see who they were doing their work for – it was a motivator.

- **TRB Conference Highlights**

Mr. Farrell was impressed with a paper that showed that due to stopping and starting distance as well as the vehicle size, larger vehicles occupy more space on the roadway. This is relevant to areas experiencing major shifts in the fleet from small to large vehicles.

Mr. Schermann announced that the Transportation Safety Subcommittee was planning a tour of the SW Waterfront, likely in late May.

MDOT is having a funding meeting next week on March 28<sup>th</sup> in Westminster MD. Mr. Farrell asked to get a copy of the announcement to forward.

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At a future meeting we can have someone from MDOT to present on the update to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

**9. Adjourned**