

## MEETING NOTES

### BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE

**DATE:** Tuesday, March 16th, 2004

**TIME:** 1:00 P.M.

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

**CHAIR:** Jim Sebastian,  
District Division of Transportation

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

#### **Attendance:**

Charlie Denney	Arlington County DPW
Michael Jackson	MDOT
Daniel Janousek	City of Gaithersburg
Katherine Kelley	City of Rockville
Chuck Kines	M-NCPPC Montgomery County
Brian V. King	VDOT
Christy Huddle	Montgomery County Executive Office
Jeff Radaw	City of Rockville
Jim Sebastian	District of Columbia
Gail Tait-Nouri	Montgomery County DPW
John Wetmore	Perils for Pedestrians
Maria M. White	City of Alexandria

#### **COG Staff Attendance:**

Michael Farrell  
Mark Hersey

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Andrew Meese

**1. General Introductions.**

Participants introduced themselves.

**2. Review of the Minutes of the January 20th, 2004 Meeting**

Minutes were approved.

**3. Bike to Work Day 2004**

Mark Hersey, MWCOG

Mark Hersey discussed the plans for Bike to Work Day 2004, to take place on Friday, May 7<sup>th</sup>. There will be 18 pit stops this year. The goal is 4,000 riders, and 4,000 t-shirts have been printed. Details and on-line registration are available at [www.waba.org](http://www.waba.org). A question was asked regarding bike to work day and cordon counts. The two aren't connected. A cordon count is held on multiple days, so even if it were held on bike to work day it would only be on that day. The National Congress for Pedestrian Advocates will take place on the same day, May 7<sup>th</sup> in Silver Spring.

- Michael Farrell will forward materials from Mark Hersey to the group.

**4. Regional Bicycle Route-Finding Software: Needs and Budget**

Michael Farrell, MWCOG

Michael Farrell distributed cost estimates for route-finding software from Geoperception, the company that developed the software, as well as an internal estimate from COG's GIS department. The last hand-out showed the history of hits and routes generated at bikemetro.com, the route-finding web site for the L.A. area that Geoperception developed. When the subcommittee last examined this web site shortly after it debuted in June, 2003, it decided to see how it developed, and what kind of success it had, before making a decision on whether to attempt something similar in the Washington region. In the meantime, COG has finished a data-gathering project by gathering all the electronic bicycle route data from the member jurisdictions. We have produced an internal cost estimate to supplement the cost estimate that Geoperception gave us. Internal estimates call for a set-up cost in the vicinity of \$100,000, and recurring costs in the vicinity of \$20,000 to \$30,000 per year. That does not address COG's project management time, or costs of keeping the bicycle route data current. GIS staff prefer hiring Geoperception. Geoperception's costs are higher, in the vicinity of \$120,000 to start, and \$90,000 per year to host and maintain the site. Supporting documents will be posted on the COG web site.

While the costs are high, the performance of the bikemetro.com web site has not been

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overwhelming. Local cyclists gave generally favorable comments; they thought the site provides useful results, although the lack of guidance to rail stations was a complaint. The highest monthly number of routes generated since the site started is 2,420. Annualized, and assuming that every trip generated represents a new bicycle trip, a very generous assumption, 29,100 new bicycle trips should be generated. Considering only Geoperception's recurring cost of \$90,000 per year, the cost per new bike trip generated would be \$3. However, startup costs should be considered, and if a more realistic assumption is made regarding the relation between routes generated on-line and new bike trips, with ¼ of generated routes resulting in a new trip, then the cost per new bike trip would be around \$16. Moreover, the L.A. region is much more populous than the D.C. region, so it is likely that fewer trips would be generated in the Washington region than in L.A.

The number of routes generated has not grown since the site kick-off. In fact, the number of routes generated during the first three months was significantly higher than the number generated in the last three months.

One possible problem is that the site has not been aggressively marketed. The L.A. Bicycle Coalition features it on their web site, but not very prominently. The agency that originally funded bikemetro.com, the Southern California Air Quality Management District, has backed away from it. Their logo is not on the site. Apparently there were liability concerns, although on the other hand local bike planners like the fact that it relieves them of the possible liability of recommending specific routes to cyclists. Geoperception is not actively marketing the use of this site, since they do not get paid more if more cyclists use it.

Another concern is the lack of accessibility to those who don't own computers, particularly in East and South-Central L.A. where there are a lot of Hispanic commuter cyclists. Dial-up modems are likely to have problems with this site.

COG has no money to pay for this. We could do an air quality analysis to compare this project with some of the other TERMS (Transportation Emissions Reduction Measures).

This is a truly regional project. If it is to be done at all, it must be done at a regional level. It should be housed within Commuter Connections, so as to reach people who are not already riding.

Commuter Connections will add static maps of bike routes to their web site, using the data our GIS section has gathered.

Andrew Meese suggested adding links to popular bicycle commuting routes. Cicero Salles was more comfortable from a liability point of view providing static route maps and letting them make their own decision about the specific routes. Michael Jackson expressed concern that only one jurisdiction in the country, and especially no one else in California, has duplicated the

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bikemetro.com web site.

- The subcommittee decided to postpone further consideration of a bicycle route-finding web site, due to apparent disproportion between benefit and cost. Route-finding may be revisited at a later date, if other regions develop it.
- Michael Farrell will investigate putting the static route maps on the web, using data already gathered.

**5. Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Database**  
Michael Farrell, COG

161 projects are in the database as of now. Michael Farrell is still working on entering the data he has received. We should have a full database by the next meeting.

**6. Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Campaign**  
Michael Farrell, MWCOG

The second wave of the Street Smart campaign will take place this April. The kick-off event will take place on Monday, April 5<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m. in Ballston. The Bikewalk Virginia conference is taking place nearby. There is a lighted crosswalk in front of the site. Chris Zimmerman, Chair of the TPB, and the Secretary of Transportation of Virginia will be there, so we hope to have high-level people from the other sponsoring jurisdictions. Speakers will be elected representatives from contributing jurisdictions. The budget for this year will be \$387,500. Hand-outs describing the media plan were distributed. Brochures will be available in Korean, Vietnamese, and Chinese this year, as well as Spanish. Lack of diversity in the campaign images drawn from the federally created Imagine the Impact campaign was a concern, which we have done our best to address.

Funding for this program is not automatic; we have to re-apply every year to the three States and the local jurisdictions. The local contribution is critical to meet the 20% matching requirement for federal funds. The program is scalable, so we could have cuts and still run a useful campaign. Andrew Meese noted that regular COG funds were statutorily limited to planning, and when we venture into operating programs the funding is more ad-hoc.

Charlie Denney noted that funding for FY2005 Street Smart needs to be put into local budgets now, so now is the time for members of this subcommittee to work on that.

Gail Tait-Nouri noted that many locations in Montgomery County lack a crosswalk, but our pictures all show people crossing in a marked crosswalk. The slogan, however, is "Take the time to cross safely". Jim replied that this issue was discussed at length in the working group which is devoted to this program, and that working group will meet to plan next year's campaign next fall.

**7. DC Bicycle Plan**  
Jim Sebastian, DDOT

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Jim Sebastian presented a draft of the DC Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

DC will build a bicycle route network including lanes, trails, and signed routes, such that no resident will be more than ½ mile from a facility. 160 miles of routes, total. DC will also require more bike parking, and possibly build a bike station. Bicycle staff will provide design training to DDOT staff. A bicycle level of service analysis has been done on 400 miles of street, which was a very useful input into the bicycle route network. A map will be produced that will include the bicycle level of service information, which will probably be available in the fall. Goals include increasing the percentage of bike trips from 1% to 5% by 2010, while reducing the crash rate. New development will be reviewed for bicycle compatibility. DC police still fill in crash data on paper, which makes for more errors and increases the amount of time needed to get the information in a useable, electronic database. More information on the D.C. Bike Plan is available at <http://www.bikemap.com/dcbikeplan/>.

## **8. Upcoming Conferences**

Upcoming conferences include

- Bikewalk Virginia, April 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>
- American Planning Association, April 24-28<sup>th</sup>
- National Congress of Pedestrian Advocates, May 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

Jim will be presenting on Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup> at APA. Americawalks.org web site has all the details for the National Congress of Pedestrian Advocates. Bill Smith is organizing it in conjunction with Montgomery County.

## **9. Member Jurisdiction Updates**

Chuck Kines raised the concern that WMATA does not have a bicycle and pedestrian coordinator, who might work with local jurisdictions and agencies on issues of bicycle and pedestrian access to Metro stations. This subcommittee should work to improve bicycle and pedestrian access to Metro, and a bicycle and pedestrian coordinator at WMATA would be helpful. Sharonlee Vogel worked on bicycle parking issues, as does her replacement, Robin McClelland, but no one at WMATA deals with bicycle access. WMATA lacks an internal advocate for bicycle and pedestrian. That person could also be more active in identifying problems and obstacles in the area just outside Metro's property, and working with the local jurisdiction to change them. It may be difficult to get WMATA to spend money on a new position considering their budget situation. Michael Jackson moved that the Subcommittee invite someone from WMATA to discuss the issue of bicycle/pedestrian coordination at Metro stations. Jim Sebastian asked if we get someone higher up. We might want to work through the Tech committee. From a protocol point of view, we should go to WMATA's representative to the Tech Committee, Lora Byala first.

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- Michael Farrell will talk to Lora Byala regarding the issue of bicycle and pedestrian access around Metro stations, and determine the appropriate WMATA representative to invite to the next bike/ped subcommittee meeting.

Michael Jackson distributed copies of new *Bicycling in Maryland* Guides.

Dan Janousek of the City of Gaithersburg announced the development of several new sidepaths.

Local bike/ped coordinators spend a lot of their time in project review and going to project meetings, but that is one of the most effective ways to get bicycle facilities on the ground, as opposed to stand-alone bicycle projects.

Charlie Denney announced that the City of Arlington was hiring a new pedestrian coordinator, as of next Monday.

Rockville is starting a community bike program, and will be producing a bike map.

Montgomery County has nearly finished its bike plan, which should be adopted this summer.

**Adjourned.**