Draft Meeting Notes

Bike/Ped Subcommittee

7/15/2014

Item 7

Bicycle Beltline Work Group

June 17, 2014

**Attendance:**

Kevin Belanger City of Rockville (by phone)

Cindy Engelhart VDOT/NOVA

Will Handsfield Georgetown Business Improvement District (by phone)

Michael Jackson MDOT

Philip Koopman Bicyclespace/BicyclePASS

Adam Lind (?) Fairfax County DOT (by phone)

David Patton Arlington County Department of Environmental Services (by phone)

Debbie Spiliotopoulos NVRC

**COG Staff:**

Michael Farrell

Andrew Meese

**Goals:**

* Create a vision for a regional bicycle loop route, including the goals, objectives, and characteristics of such a route.
* Select one or more potential loop routes that would serve the goals outlined in the vision, and highlight them on a map.
* Identify major gaps and some of the projects already planned for those routes.
* Identify next steps and resources for next steps
* The Work Group’s recommendations will be reported back to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee at its July 15th meeting.

1. **The Vision**

The Work Group identified the following elements as part of a vision for a bicycle loop route in the Washington Region:

* Loop Shared-Use Path(s) connecting the region’s radial shared-use paths
* Connect major attractions, Activity Centers, and Transit Stations
* Attract both visitors and residents
* Useable by persons of all ages and abilities
  + Principally off-street, with high-quality on-street connections and crossings
  + Avoid steps and steep grades
* Clear and consistent wayfinding
* Good connections to surrounding communities
* All weather facility
* Achievable or “within reach” financially and politically
  + Short-term: 5 years
  + Long-term: 30 years
* Uses existing Right of Way and existing facilities
  + Fills the gaps
* Maintained in a State of Good Repair

1. **Potential Loop Routes**

* **Inner Loop**

With respect to routes, the group agreed to start with the route proposed by Dan Malouff of Arlington County Department of Environmental Services, which would use the Capitol Crescent Trail, with a future multi-use path along the Purple Line connecting the Sligo Creek, to the Anacostia River Trail, follow the future South Capitol Street Trail to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Trail, then follow the Mount Vernon Trail back up to the Key Bridge and connect back to the Capitol Crescent Trail.

The South Capitol Street Bridge trail, with a short on-street connection to the SW Waterfront Trail, and the 14th Street Bridge Trail would provide a short-cut for people who do not want to ride all the way down to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge.

Outstanding gaps in this route and proposed solutions are as follows:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Gaps** | **Planned or Proposed Solutions** | **Potential Obstacles** |
| Capitol Crescent Trail to Sligo Creek Creek Parkway Trail | Will be finished as part of Purple Line Light Rail | Cost may be a concern, as with the ICC Trail |
| Anacostia River Trail from Prince George’s to DC | Grant awarded in 2012 to finish. Construction imminent. | None foreseen. |
| South Capitol Street Trail | In DDOT’s MoveDC Plan, but not funded. | Unknown, currently not a high priority. |
| Key Bridge to Capitol Crescent. Currently a very low quality on-street connection, with heavy high-speed traffic on M Street, or an off-street route that includes long staircases where bicycles must be carried. | The Georgetown 2028 Plan envisions an iconic Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge connecting the Georgetown Waterfront to Theodore Roosevelt Island, which is connected by pedestrian bridge to the Mount Vernon Trail.  MoveDC includes a K Street Cycle Track, which will provide and an off-street connection from the Georgetown Waterfront to the Capitol Crescent and the Rock Creek Trails.  Together, a TR Island Bridge and the K Street Cycle would eliminate the climb up to and down from the Key Bridge, and fill a major gap in the trail system. | Georgetown 2028 identifies cost, environmental, legal issues and stakeholders relating to the Theodore Roosevelt Island, where bicycles are currently not permitted. |

The principle objection to this routed, voiced by Ms. Engelhart, is that it is mostly finished, or well on its way to being finished. On the Virginia side it amounts to promoting a route, the Mount Vernon Trail, that is already heavily promoted and used, and is already part of multiple long-distance routes, which would further complicate signing and wayfinding. Bicyclists coming down the Capitol Crescent or Rock Creek Trails can cross the river further south, at the Memorial or 14th Street Bridges.

Mr. Farrell argued that choosing this route would have a number of important benefits, including:

* Greater assurance that planned connections, such as the Purple Line multi-use path, will actually be built, and are not cut for cost reasons.
* Incentive to improve aging and substandard facilities that are part of this route, notably the Sligo Creek Parkway Trail.
* It also provides a stronger rationale for building a Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge to Theodore Roosevelt Island, which would eliminate a terrible on-street route, unite the National Park Service Trails on either side of the river, and provide pedestrian access from Georgetown to Theodore Roosevelt Island.
* The fact that the route is so nearly finished makes it “achievable” to finish it. This route fits the Vision criteria well.

The group agreed that this route would make a good short term priority.

* **Outer Loop**

Ms. Engelhart and Mr. Jackson expressed a wish for a route that would serve communities farther outside the urban core, and which would include a multi-use path on the American Legion Bridge.

Ms. Engelhart had a route in mind, that would largely run on VDOT right of way paralleling the beltway between the American Legion Bridge and the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. Ms. Engelhart volunteered to map out an Outer Loop route on the Virginia side.

No clear loop or circumferential route was immediately obvious on the Maryland side of the region. Mr. Jackson and Mr. Koopman volunteered to confer further and propose an outer loop route on the Maryland side.

Mr. Koopman mention Ride with GPS as a tool that could be used to map bicycling routes.

1. **Next Steps**

The group’s recommendations, including the vision and the proposed loop routes, will be reported to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee at its July 15th meeting.