National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

MEETING NOTES

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, February 5th, 2014

TIME: 1:00 P.M.

PLACE: Rooms 4/5, First Floor
777 North Capitol Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

CHAIR: Jim Sebastian, District Department of Transportation

VICE-CHAIRS:
David Goodman – Arlington Department of Environmental Services
Jeff Dunckel, Montgomery County Department of Transportation
Kristin Haldeman, WMATA
Carrie Sanders, Alexandria Department of Transportation and
Environmental Services
Fred Shaffer, M-NCPPC, Prince George's County

Attendance:

Michael Alvino	National Park Service
Fatemeh Allahdoust	VDOT – Northern Virginia (by phone)
Kevin Belanger	City of Rockville (by phone)
Greg Billing	WABA
Jeff Dunckel	Montgomery County DOT
Chris Eatough	BikeArlington (by phone)
Kate Elkins	Maryland Highway Safety Office
Kristin Haldeman	WMATA
Michael Jackson	MDOT (by phone)
Bill King	Loudoun County DOT (by phone)
Philip Koopman	Bicyclespace (by phone)
Rene Lord-Attivor	Prince George's County DPWT

David Patton   Arlington County
George Phillips   Prince William County (by phone)
Carrie Sanders   City of Alexandria
Debbie Spiliotopoulos   Northern Virginia Regional Commission
Charlie Strunk   Fairfax County DOT
Pat Turner   BikeLoudoun (by phone)

COG Staff Attendance:

Andrew Burke
Michael Farrell
Ben Hampton
Andrew Meese
John Swanson
Patrick Zilliacus

1. **General Introductions.**

Participants introduced themselves.

2. **Selection of the 2014 Subcommittee Chair**

Mr. Jim Sebastian was selected as Subcommittee Chair for 2014.   Carrie Sanders chaired the meeting in his absence.

3. **Review of the November 19th Meeting Minutes**

Minutes were approved.

4. **Jurisdictional Updates**

National Park Service is working on updating its regional trails plan, which was last done in the 1990's. NPS is working with DDOT on signed routes on and around the Mall, as well a bringing a Circulator route to the Mall.

Arlington County is planning cycle tracks for Crystal City. As of today Arlington has 68 Capital Bikeshare stations.   Arlington has applied for Round 2 of the green lane project, and is moving ahead on its bike counting network.

DDOT will put out its 2014 bike lane plans soon, and has plans for a few automated counters.

VDOT is starting the Fairfax County Parkway maintenance project.

Prince William County is preparing a bicycle-friendly community application.

Loudoun County working on study of pedestrian facilities around future Metrorail stations.

Ms. Allahdoust asked for details on the bicycle friendly communities application.   The League of American Bicyclists is the sponsoring organization.   It's not a grant application.

Maryland recently submitted its annual bicycle friendly states survey to the League of American Bicyclists.   MDOT will soon install its first automated bicycle and pedestrian counter.   A number of bills are coming up for consideration affect bicyclists.   MDOT is also examining the impact of the bankruptcy of Public Bikeshare System PBS on launching the remaining bike share programs in Maryland.   The State Highway Administration is considering guidelines for the installation of bicycle signals. Maryland recently released its updated. Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

The City of Alexandria recently completed the first phase of the Potomac Yards Trail which connects the bicycle facilities in Arlington with the Braddock Road Metro Station.   Phase II will be completed in the next few months.   The revised Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan for the City will be released soon.

Montgomery County's bikeshare stations are all installed and working.   Pedestrian crashes will be up for 2013, fatalities went up from six in 2012 to 13 in 2013.   A Metro bus tried to stop a rolling Metro bus. There were a lot of anomalous crashes, but Montgomery County is still below its long run average which is around 17.   High incidence areas have continued to be low; the increases are coming elsewhere.   A Countystat meeting is coming up on April 23 with more analysis.   Fall saw a robust education campaign, including the Street Smart campaign and a parking lot safety campaign.   Property owners have been very cooperative.   Montgomery County has also launched a high school education campaign, and is taking bids for creating a web based tool box for high school safety education.   The Latino-oriented ads have been well received in the Spanish-speaking community.   Enforcement actions were suspended this winter, but will be resumed in March, in anticipation of the Spring Street Smart campaign.   Ms. Sanders expressed interest in the Spanish language campaign.   Mr. Farrell said that a full presentation on it might be valuable.   Montgomery County is an example of a successful jurisdiction-level presentation.

5.   Regional Green Streets Policy

Mr. Farrell spoke to a hand-out. This Subcommittee last saw a draft of the Green Streets policy in September, and there have been significant changes.   At VDOT's suggestion, the policy

template has been eliminated, and replaced with Green Streets Resources sheet, which lists a number model policies, design manuals, etc.   The TPB Technical Committee has reviewed this policy and is supportive.   It will likely be adopted by the TPB this February.

6. Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Project Database/Bike-Ped Plan Update

Mr. Farrell spoke to a powerpoint.   Mr. Farrell reviewed the history and purpose of the regional bicycle and pedestrian plan.   The most recent plans were adopted in 2006 and 2010.   We are approaching the deadline to complete the plan within FY 2014.

The plan development process is under the purview of this Subcommittee.   Projects are submitted by state and local staff, into an on-line database. Projects in the database should be of a certain size or scope, and they should be in the agency's plan.

The plan and database show us what is planned for pedestrians and bicyclists over the long run, and lets us track what is being built.

Cost estimates a rough ballpark estimates, since most of the projects have not yet been designed.

The 2014 plan update will allow us to show progress made since 2010.

Structure and purpose of the 2014 plan will be the same as for 2010.   The 2010 plan is already surprisingly obsolete.   Who remembers Smartbike, one of our notable projects from 2010.

The database is the core of the plan; it is what gives us our big picture.

Due to committee and calendar time constraints, it will be necessary to convene a work group in April, especially to review Best Practices, to ensure that everyone is comfortable with those.

Staff members should use their judgement regarding whether a plan is far enough along that it can be counted as adopted for the purposes of the regional plan.

Direct entry is probably the most accurate method of updating the database. Another option is to give the the long range plan and capital improvement program, and let me enter the data. But those documents will not contain information on projects completed since 2010, so I will still need some help with those. Last and least desirable would be for TPB staff to enter a few prominent projects that have sufficient information posted on line.   This option would leave out many projects.

Ms. Sanders asked what the goal of database is.   Mr. Farrell replied that it is a publicly available, searchable database, so it might be of use to the public if it is up to date.

Ms. Sanders asked how it relates to COG's Complete Streets policy. Mr. Farrell replied that Complete Streets means that every transportation projects, with certain exceptions, will include pedestrian and bicycle features. So most of our pedestrian and bicycle projects will not stand alone; they will be part of a larger project. For our purposes we will disaggregate the pedestrian and bicycle elements. This database will be one measure of whether Complete Streets policies are being implemented.

For projects like sidewalk retrofit programs, I ask that people aggregate those into jurisdiction wide projects. The purpose of this database is to give a global sense of what is being accomplished, not a listing of every tiny improvement.

The database mechanics are somewhat cranky. Anyone who has the password can edit any project. And the database does not record who changed it, or when. There is a line for the person and date, but it does not auto-populate. So for now, for at least one of your projects put in the date it was last changed.

There is a project in the works to improve this database, but I cannot be sure when the new featurs will be operational. Mr. Meese asked if we make historical copies of the database. Mr. Farrell replied that we do. Mr. Farrell has sent numerous emails explaining the mechanics of entering the data.

Ms. Allahdoust said that she could not see the presentation on the screen. Mr. Farrell hit the "share screen" button on Webex so that people participating by Webex can see the screen.

DDOT only chose to put in sixteen projects last time. DDOT will enter more projects than that this time. Ms. Allahdoust asked whether an update done last year was good enough. Mr. Farrell replied that it probably was in most cases. Ms. Allahdoust asked for the deadline for the database update.

Mr. Farrell explained that the Unified Planning Work Program calls for an update of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan in FY 2014. The last update was adopted in October 2010. To allow the TPB to adopt a new plan in FY 2014, the database would need to be updated by March 1st. The full Subcommittee would approve in May, so it could go to the TPB in May as an information item, and to the TPB in June for approval. There is some potential for slippage, but we need to be substantially done in June to make the case that we've fulfilled our obligations under the UPWP, and to stay on a four year update schedule.

Only about half the jurisdictions have entered their data so far. The largest jurisdicitons have the biggest job. The smaller jurisdictions we can live without if need be.

Mr. Dunckel said that Montgomery County now has an approved CIP budget they can work on this.

There appears to be a limited appetite for annual updates.   Jim Sebastian has suggested doing it every two years.   The problem with doing it every four years is that it becomes too big a task, and you start losing institution memory, not to mention a having database that is obsolete most of the time.

Mr. Farrell has given guidance on what elements of the database are critical. We need facility type, length, status.   Project manager name, etc. is not critical.

Four years is probably best for updating things like Best Practices, so a major update every four years is best.

7. **2013 Central Employment Core Cordon Count of Vehicular and Passenger Volumes**

Mr. Burke spoke to a presentation on the cordon counts.

The cordon line has been expanded this year to take in growth in employment areas.   Bicycles are counted but not pedestrians.

Mr. Dunckel asked if single occupant vehicle numbers were falling because people were moving into the District and walking to work.

Mr. Zilliacus said that we do not count pedestrians, in part because many of them are recreational runners. We are counting everything except pedestrians, including bus passengers and car passengers.

Mr. Meese said that the cordon counts came out of traffic modeling, which is concerned with inter-zonal trips. Most pedestrian trips are not inter-zonal.

The bridges are counted both ways for both highway traffic and transit.

Counts are all one-day counts.

Pedestrians coming across the 14th Street Bridge is almost all joggers, mostly military people.

Mr. Dunckel said that there seems to be a trend of people moving closer to work, and walking to work.

The full report is available on the web site.   It's over 300 pages. Ms. Sanders asked when the household travel survey will be done again. Mr. Meese replied that it might be done again in couple of years, depending on funding. There are micro-scale surveys that are done more

frequently.   Ms. Sanders said that the household travel survey data was more useful in many ways for bicycling and walking than the census data.

8.   The Regional Transportation Priorities Plan

Ben Hampton substituted for John Swanson.   Mr. Hampton spoke to a powerpoint. The TPB approved the plan at its meeting on January 15th.

The purpose of the plan is to identify strategies that give us the best chance of dealing with regional challenges. It's not project-specific.   The plan is intended to be within reach, both financially and politically.   We did a survey to determine which strategies could garner broad political support.

Strategies are divided into short, medium, and long term.   Three "building block" priorities were identified.   Meeting our obligations to maintain the existing system in identified as a building block.   Public confidence and accountability was a second building block.   Lastly moving people and good more efficiently was a third building block.

Improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, access to transit, and circulation (mostly pedestrian) within activity centers were identified as a strategies.

Mr. Dunckel asked how the 495 toll lanes were working out. Mr. Hampton said that transit was not realized, but the project had gotten the beltway rebuilt on the Virginia side, an expensive job which needs to be done on the Maryland side.

Many of the strategies in the RTPP are pedestrian and bicycle focused.

The next steps are to bring the plan to more audiences, and to at option for examining the CLRP with to evaluate how well it implement the priories in the RTPP.   The powerpoint for the RTPP will be uploaded to the bicycle and pedestrian subcommittee web site.   A question was asked about the relation to the regional bicycle and pedestrian plan.

Mr. Farrell said that the regional bicycle and pedestrian plan is a comprehensive look at everything we are doing for pedestrians and bicyclists. There is a check box in the database to show whether a project provides access to transit, as well as other measures that are priorities or strategies under the RTPP.   So we may be able to examine how well the regional bicycle and pedestrian plan implements the RTPP.

Mr. Dunckel said that counting pedestrians is a major gap; pedestrian counts are needed as a measure of success. We can count incidents, but we don't know the exposure level. Mr. Hampton said that the focused surveys capture walking data in selected areas.   Mr. Zilliacus said that the cordon counts do have a time series going all the way back to 1974 showing modal

shares coming into downtown Washington.

Mr. Swanson said that we have copies of the RTPP in the back of the room if anyone wants one.

9. Other TPB Program Updates

The top priority unfunded bicycle and pedestrian project list was presented to the TPB in January. Minutes aren't available yet, but when Mr. Farrell was speaking about the Rhode Island Avenue Trolley Trail one of the members asked how people could be made more aware of the trails. Mr. Farrell suggested Google bikes. But the TPB member seemed to still be interested in something like additional routes, something this Subcommittee has looked at before and back-burnered. To make additional routes useful there would need to be a project to sign them. Given the ease of discovering bike routes and trails with on line mapping, Mr. Farrell expressed skepticism about the benefits. But he will look at the minutes when they come out.

Ms. Allahdoust said that the Arlington County TPB member had mentioned something about a bicycle beltway. When the minutes come out we'll look at the exact comment.

Ms. Allahdoust suggested that such a project could be included in the regional bicycle and pedestrian plan, perhaps as a goal. Mr. Jackson recently responded to a request about providing pedestrian and bicycle access on the American Legion Bridge.

Mr. Sebastian suggested at the last meeting that we hold a training on the NACTO urban street design guide. Mr. Farrell attended a session on the NACTO guide at TRB and was favorably impressed. There will also be an implementation workshop related to the regional Green Streets policy, which will focus on local experiences.

Ms. Sanders suggested bringing someone in from New York to present on NACTO. We have some budget to pay for speakers. However, we try to use local speakers when possible. The Subcommittee members were in favor of a NACTO workshop.

Mr. Dunckel asked about use of Pepco right of ways for walking and bicycling. Mr. Farrell said that we don't have good institutional links with the public utilities here at COG. We could certainly put something in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan on it. Mr. Zilliacus mentioned the WB&A Trail in Anne Arundel County, which is a Baltimore Gas and Electric right of way. It's a former inter-urban line that was abandoned in 1935. Mr. Farrell said that the Schuylkill Valley Trail has power transmission along much of its length. Rails to Trails might be a good source. John Wetmore has accumulated considerable information on trails on utility right of ways, at Perils for Pedestrians. Fred Shaffer at Prince George's Parks and Planning might be a good resource.

10. Adjourned