

# National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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## MEETING NOTES

### BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE

**DATE:** Tuesday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017

**TIME:** 11 a.m.

**PLACE:** Room 3, First Floor  
777 North Capitol Street NE  
Washington, DC 20002

**CHAIR:** Karyn C. McAlister, Prince George's DPWT

**VICE-  
CHAIRS:**

David Goodman, Arlington Department of Environmental Services  
Jeff Dunckel, Montgomery County Department of Transportation  
Jamie Carrington, WMATA  
Jim Sebastian, DDOT

**Attendance:**

Steven Beavers	City of College Park
James Carrington	WMATA
Henry Dunbar	BikeArlington
Cindy Engelhart	VDOT
Ray Hayhurst	City of Alexandria
Meredith Hill	MDOT
Oleg Kotov	City of Rockville
Karyn McAlister	Prince George's County DPWT
Kelly Pack	Rails to Trails Conservancy (by phone)
Molla Sarros	Maryland Department of the Environment (by phone)
John Wetmore	Pedestrians.org

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**COG Staff Attendance:**

Michael Farrell

**1. General Introductions.**

Ms. McAlister chaired the meeting.

**2. Review of the January 31<sup>st</sup> Meeting Notes**

Meeting notes were approved.

**3. Jurisdictional Updates**

Arlington is about to update the bike element of its transportation master plan. Alexandria adopted Vision Zero in January. There will be a series of community workshop next month and an action plan to be adopted next Fall. College Park is improving the trolley trail. Soon people will be able to travel from College Park through the Whole Foods to downtown Hyattsville and beyond. Perils for Pedestrians is doing a show on Vancouver, BC, which is developing a kids map of the city. Episode 246, which will be up next week, will be on the Frederick County trail system. A new bridge just filled a major gap. It's available on Youtube.

MDOT's scenic trails and recreation program has seen some staff changes. Terry Maxwell has stepped away from that program. Eric Beckett and Samantha Biddle are the contacts for that program. There will be a webinar on Maryland bicycle and safe routes to school funding opportunities following this meeting. Content for the webinar is available at [http://www.mdot.maryland.gov/newMDOT/Planning/Bike/Cycle\\_Maryland.html](http://www.mdot.maryland.gov/newMDOT/Planning/Bike/Cycle_Maryland.html)

Pedestrian road safety audits are ongoing. This Spring will be the kickoff for the Statewide Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, due for adoption in 2019. The SHA administrator, Greg Johnson, is leaving SHA. Greg Slater is now the SHA Administrator. Unfortunately Greg Slater currently holds both the Administrator and Deputy Administrator positions.

Rockville will adopt its updated bicycle and pedestrian plan shortly. The plan will focus on urban design, connectivity, and mainstreaming of bicycling.

I-66 outside the beltway is moving forward. It will include a parallel path for the length of the 26 miles, which will be located between the sound wall and the traffic barrier. Not ideal, but it minimizes homeowner impacts. There will be 14 or 15 access points. All the road bridges over I-66 will have bike/ped facilities. In Prince William County there is enough room to put the trail outside the sound wall.

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I-66 inside the beltway will include a ped and bike bridge for the W&OD trail over Lee Highway in Falls Church. VDOT is doing an inventory of bicycle facilities. Patching of the Fairfax County Parkway is ongoing. VDOT is working on a maintenance policy for trails and sidewalks. Mr. Wetmore suggested that when asphalt is added to a trail some gravel or soil should be added around the edges to avoid an abrupt drop-off.

Prince George's County has drafted a strategic highway safety plan in conjunction with the Maryland Highway Safety Office. The County Executive has recommended some matching funds so that Prince George's can apply for grants for bike sharing.

Mr. Farrell noted that the Governor Nice Bridge is going to be rebuilt, and that it will have pedestrian and bicyclist facilities when it is rebuilt. Mr. Wetmore added that on the Virginia side it is not far from an existing trail. On the Maryland side the network is less developed. The Nice bridge takes US 301 over the Potomac.

Another Maryland project is work to identify the State of Maryland bike spine network, a mapping effort to identify long distance bike routes, led out of SHA by Tony Campbell. It will take place concurrently with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan update. The Nice bridge will be an important connection to Virginia.

#### **4. Mbike College Park Bike Sharing**

Mr. Beavers spoke to a powerpoint.

Mr. Beavers is a Community and Economic Development planner for the City of College Park, and also the bike share coordinator. As a University town, there is a lot of receptivity to this kind of program, but the City has been waiting for the right system. The City and the University received roughly \$400,000 from the State to get the system started. The grant from the State was written as a sole source agreement with Capital Bikeshare. However, the Capital Bikeshare supplier, Bixi, went bankrupt, so no equipment was available, causing College Park to look for an alternate supplier.

With the permission of the State, College Park sought an alternate supplier, with a new RFP. They got three responses – B-Cycle, Social Bicycles, and Zagster. Zagster offered the most competitive economics, with twice the number of stations and two more years of service versus Capital Bikeshare. The contract with Zagster is for three years. With a three year arrangement O&M is paid through 2019, enough time to get the system on a solid footing.

The system launched last year with 14 stations and 125 bicycles. The bike is a Fuji breezer. The stations are “dumb” racks. The system depends on a phone app to rent a bike. The system sends an unlocking code to your phone, which you can use to get the key out of a box on the back of the bike. The bike can be locked anywhere for a short time, but must be returned to a

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station in order to end the ride; you keep paying until you bring it back to a station. You get one free hour, with a small overtime charge. Maximum charge is \$20/day. Goal is to “share” bike, not rent it.

The rental process is a little more complicated than for Capital Bikeshare, since you have to type in a code to get the key. The bike has GPS tracking.

The system include five “accessible” tricycles, and a hand cycle. It’s not currently possible for the app to tell you where these specialized bikes are located; if you see one you can rent it. The accessible bikes can be locked to the regular stations; there are a couple of wider racks for them.

The 14 stations were assembled and installed in one week-end.

There are currently 15 stations, most of them downtown and on the campus. There are two at the Metro stations, and one at the Hollywood shopping center.

Developers, especially student housing developers, are interested in adding three more stations. Stations are concentrated in the densest part of the city.

When developers buy in they pay for the stations, the bikes, and operations.

Zagster handles rebalancing. Each bike is inspected weekly and repaired if necessary.

Day passes, one month passes, and 12 month passes are available.

Most use is downtown, but the shopping centers are popular. People use it to go to grocery stores outside the boundaries of College Park. There is no grocery store in downtown College Park.

The system has had 20,000 trips in the first year. The system launched on May 4, 2016. Summer session averaged 60 rides per day, growing to 175 per day in the Fall. Usage numbers fell way off during the winter break. February had 150 users per day due to good weather.

A question was asked about mode share effects. Mr. Beavers replied that it seems to work well for the lunch rush, and for people coming to and from the Metro station. Getting people to use bikes helps alleviate the lunch time rush, and parking pressures at the businesses.

Bike share is one of the questions on the household travel survey. It may not be fine grained enough to capture College Park specifically.

Zagster is a relatively new company. They just got an additional \$10 million in investor funding.

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Mr. Farrell remarked that for him one of the most attractive features is the ability to lock the bike at someplace other than a station, which increases the effective coverage area. Cost is another advantage. Double the bike stations and system time with Zagster versus Capital Bikeshare for a given amount of money.

From a user point of view greater flexibility about where to lock up, but less ease of use to rent the bike initially.

Ms. Sarros asked about access for people without Smart phones. Mr. Beavers replied that for College Park residents and visitors, the overwhelming majority have Smart phones.

Mr. Farrell asked how sophisticated the phone had to be in order to use the system. Mr. Beavers replied that you can get a bike with just a text. Mr. Farrell and others noted that virtually every cell phone sold these days, including very inexpensive phones with prepaid call plans, has texting capability.

There are instructions at the station that will direct you how to use the web site or the app. You need access to a computer or smart phone to get a membership. Someone could go to a library to use the computer to get the membership, then use the flip phone to send texts to rent the bike.

Regarding flexibility, you may need to pay overage fees for use over an hour, but those are not too onerous. On the week-end you can keep the bike for three hours. It may be possible to get to the grocery store, shop, and get back home within an hour if you're not buying a lot of items.

Cost savings come from less-specialized equipment and lack of need for expensive stations.

Coming up: Bluetooth enabled U locks, rather than mechanical keys. This will improve ease of use. The bikes have rechargeable batteries, which typically last three weeks. The bikes are checked weekly, and the batteries changed if necessary.

## **5. Capital Trails Coalition**

Ms. Pack presented remotely. She spoke to a powerpoint.

The Capital Trails Coalition is a collaboration of public and private organizations working to create an interconnected network of trails in the National Capital Region.

The Coalition has created committees to advance different goals, such as public outreach, steering, and trail analytics. The analytics working group is defining the proposed network, and identifying gaps.

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The Coalition is gathering GIS data on trails from the jurisdictions, and is building an on-line app that will show the trails, existing and planned. This master trails layer will help the Coalition define the network. Trail counts may be part of the app.

Mr. Farrell asked who Ms. Pack has spoken to, and who she needs to speak to. That is addressed in the next slide. DC, Fairfax, the National Park Service, Prince George's, and Montgomery have met with Ms. Pack. Laurel Hammig is the contact at NPS.

Most of the jurisdictions don't have trail width. Ideally each user will be able to click on a trail line and get the associated project information, funding status, etc.

This exercise can be useful for the jurisdictions as well, since it may help them improve the quality of their data.

REI is the funder for the WABA and Rails to Trails Coalition staff who are working on this project.

The next slide showed a screen shot of the on-line application, which will allow the user to query data that is available in the layers. Once the app is ready, there will be trainings available for the jurisdictional staff, so that they can make use of this data in their own planning efforts.

Trails selected for the regional network will be vetted with the jurisdictions.

Mr. Wetmore asked about trail width and standards. Some of the important connector trails don't meet the width requirements. But there is some flexibility.

The Chair called a halt to the presentation for time.

## **6. TPB Program Updates**

The Bike to Work Guide needs a technical update for contact information, etc. – a copy is posted on the web site, and there are handouts. Mr. Farrell will update, but you can send comments. There is a hand-out about the regional household travel survey. It contains a link where you can test the survey. The bike ped database entry form will be sent out to the agencies once it's debugged. The Vision Zero workshop will be delayed until after WABA's workshop. The projects in the National Capital Trail are proposed to be included in the TPB's Long Range Transportation Plan. Those projects are being vetted with NPS and the affected jurisdictions.

## **7. Announcements and Other Business**

The Maryland funding webinar followed the Subcommittee meeting.

**8. Adjourned**