

MEETING NOTES

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, September 28th, 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:

Marie Birnbaum	WalkDC
George Branyan	MHSO
Lora Byala	WMATA
Charlie Denney	Arlington, VA
Cindy Englehart	VDOT/NOVA
Michael Jackson	MDOT
Brian V. King	VDOT
Allen Muchnick	Virginia Bicycling Federation
Jim Sebastian	District of Columbia
Douglas Stuart	
Kenneth A. Todd	NCBW
John Wetmore	Perils for Pedestrians

COG Staff Attendance:

Michael Farrell
Wendy Klancher
Gerald Miller

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1. General Introductions.

Participants introduced themselves.

2. Disability Awareness Day Event, October 20th
Wendy Klancher, MWCOG

Wendy Klancher announced that October is National Disability Awareness Month. Wendy Klancher is staff to the Access for All Advisory Committee, a committee which advises the TPB on the transportation needs of low-income, minority and persons with disabilities. On October 20th TPB board members will be paired up with a disabled person, who will travel together using a variety of modes to a press conference. The purpose is to educate officials on the needs of disabled people in the transportation system, especially pedestrian access to transit. The message will be that the region has made great progress, but that much remains to be done. Eleven TPB members have agreed to participate. Dick White, the CEO of WMATA, will participate.

Bike/Ped Subcommittee members are welcome to come to the press conference. Pedestrian access is an important component of disabled access.

Michael Jackson asked if TPB members would be using a wheelchair, etc. Wendy replied that the disabled community had opposed such arrangements, since being temporarily in a wheelchair, or temporarily blindfolded, does not give a realistic experience of what it is like to be blind or to use a wheelchair all the time. Being blindfolded is a frightening and disorienting experience for most people, while being blind is not frightening to the blind.

Kenneth Todd asked if COG has presented any views on a new law requiring drivers to stop instead of yield at crosswalks. Wendy replied that COG has not taken a position on any such law.

Jim Sebastian complimented the Access for All Advisory Committee's efforts, and agreed that there was some overlap in our concerns.

John Wetmore asked if he could accompany some of the Disability Awareness Day teams, for his cable access show. Wendy Klancher told him that the press was welcome to accompany the teams (of disabled and TPB member).

- Disability Awareness Day is October 20, 2004. Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee Members are welcome to attend the press at 11 a.m. on that day in the COG Board Room.

2. Review of the Minutes of the July 21st, 2004 Meeting

Lora Byala noted a couple of changes to section 3. Bicycle and pedestrian considerations are always, not "may" be included in station-area plans. Parking facilities are based on land use, among other things. And WMATA is conducting a regional mobility initiative, not a regional activity center study. Michael Farrell noted the corrections. The Minutes were approved.

3. Update on Presentation to the Jurisdictional Coordinating Committee and Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning at WMATA

Jim Sebastian, DDOT

The Jurisdictional Coordinating Committee is a group of officials from each of the member jurisdictions of WMATA that meets on a monthly basis. At the last meeting we determined that someone from our subcommittee should attend to raise the issue of WMATA representation at the Bike/Ped Subcommittee, as well as incorporation of bicycle and pedestrian concerns into WMATA's planning, design, and operations. The JCC members were receptive to the idea of increased emphasis on bicycle and pedestrian access. We broached the subject of additional staff time for this issue, including the idea of a full time bicycle and pedestrian coordinator. Both WMATA and jurisdictions were reluctant to commit someone full time, or someone new, to bicycle and pedestrian planning. But they are willing to reallocate existing staff time to bicycle and pedestrian issues.

Lora Byala clarified that the jurisdictional members were not interested in finding a new person, and WMATA is not prepared to take an existing staff member and make them 100% bicycle and pedestrian. The next step is to find a person internally at WMATA who can devote some portion of their time to being a bicycle and pedestrian coordinator. It will probably be someone in the operations and planning section. The coordinator will be the primary go-to person within WMATA on bicycle and pedestrian issues, and will attend the bi-monthly meetings of the bicycle and pedestrian subcommittee.

The Transportation Research Board is putting together a study on the operations of transit agencies with respect to bicyclists and pedestrians, a "synthesis of bicycle and transit operations". It will be out in the spring of 2005. Michael Jackson asked if this subcommittee could look at this.

Jim Sebastian noted that a lot of us don't have a firm grasp of the inner workings of WMATA, and it would be helpful to have a single point person at WMATA to go to with respect to bicycle and pedestrian concerns. Chuck Kines, who originally raised this issue, wanted to know "Who can I call?" Jim expressed cautious optimism that we are moving towards a solution.

- WMATA will identify a bicycle and pedestrian coordinator among existing staff. This coordinator will devote a portion of his/her time to bicycle and pedestrian access issues and attend meetings of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee to the TPB Technical Committee. Michael Farrell will follow up with Lora Byala.

4. Top Ten Unfunded Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects

Michael Farrell, MWCOG

The Top Ten list is a list of unfunded bicycle and pedestrian priority projects. It is a publicity tool; the TPB blesses the list, but that does not in itself assure funding. Michael Farrell

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distributed an updated version of last year's list. By November this subcommittee will have to adopt a final list which will go to the TPB Technical Committee and to the TPB. Most of last year's projects have not been fully funded, and will probably remain on the list unless the jurisdiction wants to highlight something else. Jurisdictional staff should finish whatever internal consulting they need to do with advisory committees, etc., so that the subcommittee will be able to adopt a list in November.

Cindy Englehart noted that since this list does not contain project identification numbers, VDOT cannot confirm internally that any of these projects have been funded, partially funded, etc. The jurisdictional staff will know, however. All the Virginia jurisdictions have provided updates. Lora Byala asked if projects with partial funding that are removed from the list are still seeking funding. Michael Farrell replied that the jurisdiction may decide, once a project is partially funded, to drop it from the list in favor of another, unfunded project. They may still be seeking funding for the first project, but they may want to spotlight a different project at the regional level.

- Jurisdictional staff should finish their internal consultation so that the subcommittee can adopt a list of unfunded priority bicycle and pedestrian project at its November meeting.

5. Street Smart Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Campaign

Michael Farrell, MWCOG

a. Final Report, Status of Funding

The final report has not yet come back from the printer, so Michael Farrell asked to defer discussion of it. \$58,000 has been promised by MHSO, \$75,000 by Virginia DMV. Fairfax and Arlington Counties will probably renew their commitments. MWCOG will put out an RFP for a consultant to run the campaign. A steering committee will not meet before December at the earliest.

b. Long-term trends in Bicycle and Pedestrian Fatalities

Michael Farrell passed out a couple of charts on pedestrian fatalities and injuries. Pedestrian deaths and injuries have been fairly flat over the long haul, although the number of injuries goes up significantly in the final year. There are numerous confounding factors, such as decreased walking, increased VMT, and increased population. Charlie Denney asked if fatalities and injuries were available by jurisdiction. Michael Farrell replied that it was and promised to sent it to him. Virginia data came from the Virginia DMV. Even at the local level, if a jurisdiction is getting more injuries, the explanation could be more pedestrian traffic, so it is impossible from injury numbers alone to tell how the jurisdiction is doing. However, research shows that beyond a certain level more pedestrian traffic does not lead to more pedestrian injuries. Once large crowds of pedestrians are present, their visibility is much greater, so adding more pedestrians

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where there are already many does not add to pedestrian injuries.

Jim Sebastian suggested that it would be useful to map pedestrian and bicycle injuries. That, however, would be a substantial amount of work. MHSO is having trouble doing it for the State of Maryland. Michael Farrell offered to gather and re-distribute what has already been done in terms of mapping crashes.

It is possible to use modeling to adjust for pedestrian exposure. You can predict pedestrian volumes based on land use plus a sampling of pedestrian counts. The model works best in a grid system. Baltimore and parts of Prince George's County are being subjected to such an analysis by the MHSO and the University of Maryland. The study will be finished by the end of November. The results will be presented at a final meeting. George Branyan will inform Michael Farrell of the time and place of that meeting, and he will inform the group.

The State of Maryland had 120 fatalities in the last year, well over the average of around 100. Most fatalities are not taking place at marked crosswalks, but on wide and high-speed arterials. It is hard for a program like Street Smart to affect the fatality rate, but we can show that people are hearing the message. Cindy Englehart praised the use of languages other than English in the campaign. Allen Muchnick asked if there were similar campaigns in other regions that we could learn from.

Kenneth Todd asked if we could study the effect of changing the crosswalk laws. Michael Farrell replied that we could look for academic studies on the safety effects of pedestrian laws, but that we as a subcommittee cannot lobby to change the law. In light of its failed efforts to change the laws in Virginia, Arlington is asking the Highway Research Council in Charlottesville to update a study that was done ten years ago on the effects of pedestrian laws. What States during this time have made changes, and was there any measurable impact? We will discuss this issue further at Street Smart meetings. Jim Sebastian commented that it does not much matter what the existing laws are if they are not enforced.

- Michael Farrell will look into the progress of pedestrian safety campaigns in other regions
- COG will issue an RFP for a consultant.
- The first Street Smart Meeting will be no earlier than April.
- Funding will likely be somewhat less than last year.

6. Fall ADA Workshop

Michael Farrell, MWCOG

Barbara McMillen has volunteered to teach the latest version of the ADA workshop. Arlington will try to find a space to host it, preferably the library. It will take place during the first week of November. This event will dovetail well with Disability Awareness Day. We can announce it at the Disability Awareness Day workshop, and TPB members can commit to send their staff to the workshop as part of Disability Awareness Month. It is a one-day workshop, intended for engineers and planners. The last time we hosted it we had a lot of consultant engineers in attendance. Since we are not paying the speaker or for the space, the event will probably be free.

Lunch will be provided.

- As soon the date and location are known the group will be informed.

7. Hourly Electronic Bicycle Locker Rentals
Michael Farrell, MWCOG

Michael Farrell distributed hand-outs from a couple of vendors describing hourly electronic bike locker rental systems, and a table showing the number of people riding to metro stations, plus the number of lockers, the number that have been rented, and the number of racks. Existing lockers by Cycle-Safe could be retrofitted so that smart cards could be used to rent existing bicycle lockers by the hour. Studies of bicycle lockers show a high vacancy rate at any given time, in the vicinity of 80%, even when the locker has been rented long-term customer. On any given day, many people don't use their lockers. If lockers could be rented first-come, first-served at high-demand locations, so that any empty locker would be available for use, the occupancy rate could be improved. Hourly rentals could save money over installing additional lockers, and at many locations where space is tight they may be the only realistic option for accommodating more bicycles in lockers. A pilot project could test the concept in the Washington region

However, according to information from WMATA, there are only a limited number of stations with waiting lists for bicycle lockers. On the eastern side of the region especially, the lockers are under-used. According to the last bike to work day survey, 55% of the participants were unaware that the lockers are available. The lockers are not marked as being bicycle lockers.

Charlie Denney noted that since ribbon racks had been installed at the Court House metro, 12-15 bicycles are regularly parked there, versus no bicycles at the Rack III's that were there before the station was redeveloped. Jim Sebastian added that at New York Avenue Metro inverted U's and Rack III's would be installed side by side, which will afford a good opportunity to see which type of rack gets more use. The Rack III's do not fit all bikes or all locks, they are more difficult to use, and because they have a moving arm they wear out more quickly. Many of the Rack III's are near the end of their working lives. The inverted U does not secure the wheel, but people use cables to secure the wheels. Jim Sebastian noted that there seemed to be a consensus that at least some inverted U racks should be available everywhere. The inverted U costs \$100 per rack installed, and each rack parks two bicycles, so the cost is \$50 per bicycle parking space.

The group asked Michael Farrell if he had come to any conclusions regarding whether an hourly locker rental pilot project should be carried out. Michael replied that he had not, and that given the consensus of the group that inverted U racks should be made available at all stations, and the modest cost of doing so, installing bicycle racks should probably take priority.

The electronic rentals might be easier for WMATA to administer. Five locations are full or close to full, so those would be the best locations for a pilot. The group agreed that having

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lockers available to those who do not want to rent a locker full-time would be a good thing. Kenneth Todd suggested valet parking for bicycles. The District of Columbia is working on something along those lines at Union Station. Cheryl Cort of Washington Regional Networks for Livable Communities is pushing to get the racks placed inside the stations, where they will be within view of the station guard.

Michael Jackson noted that many of the stations with no bicycle locker usage were located in predominantly African-American and low-income areas. Possible causes could include access or cultural barriers to bicycling. Cindy Englehart noted that in Virginia the presence of major trails was a strong predictor of use, and that the stations on the Eastern side of the region do not have access to major trails.

Michael Jackson asked if there would be any interest in improving usage of bicycle lockers at underutilized stations. Jim Sebastian replied that there was, but the question was who would do it. Jim suggested that this was a project for jurisdictional staff, not for COG staff. Michael Jackson suggested that there might be some economies of scale in studying all the stations on a regional scale. Access issues could be dealt with at WMATA by a full-time bicycle and pedestrian coordinator. Whose job is it to worry about the fact that no one is riding to certain stations? It's both a local problem and a WMATA problem. During Sharonlee's era, at stations that had excess capacity, they had bike to metro days to try to promote riding to metro. Promotional efforts would need to take income and cultural issues into account.

WMATA has nearly 500 vacant lockers, but high-demand stations often lack space. Hourly electronic lockers are a big space saver. If you increase your occupancy rate from 20% of 80%, you've increased the number of bicycles a given locker can accommodate by four. There is a limited number of stations with excess demand where they could be used. It is probably more important to get inverted U's installed at every station that has bicycle racks. New York Avenue, based in the demographics of the neighborhood, probably doesn't need a lot of lockers.

Lora Byala raised a concern that if a person renting a locker had not registered his/her smart trip card, and used it to place a bomb in a locker, it would be impossible to determine who had rented the locker and placed that bomb. With the existing system, there is only one person per locker. Michael Farrell agreed that such concerns would have to be addressed in any pilot project. Cage or transparent lockers are available, or the lockers could be limited to a fixed number of registered users, and the registrant's address would have to be mailed in. Jim Sebastian suggested that if there was to be any follow-up, that Michael Farrell do it.

- The subcommittee agreed that inverted U's should be installed as an alternative at every metro station that has bicycle racks
- Michael Farrell will investigate further to address the concerns the subcommittee had with regard to a pilot project hourly electronic bike locker rental.

8. Regional Air Quality/TERM Analysis, Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study.
Michael Farrell, MWCOG

There probably will not be a need for TERMS this year.

Michael Farrell distributed copy of a presentation on the Regional Mobility and Accessibility study. This study looks at different scenarios for housing and jobs locations, and makes forecasts on mode shares and travel conditions in 2030. Some scenarios lead to higher mode shares for walking and bicycling. The “high household” scenario, which calls for an additional 200,000 households in the regional activity centers of the inner jurisdictions, leads to an 18% higher level of walking and bicycling commute trips than the baseline scenario. Under only one scenario, “jobs-out”, does the number of walking and bicycling trips fall. COG’s forecasters have a good track record predicting household growth based on zoning, though their employment forecasts have tended to undershoot. The scenarios are “what-ifs” – no specific means are proposed for accommodating an additional 200,000 households in the central areas. This study will be heavily publicized at various forums. The current public version of this presentation is shorter and does not include the forecasts for walking and bicycling. Only transit is specifically tracked. In response to concerns voiced by several subcommittee members, Michael Farrell promised to see if the presentation could be modified to include bicycle and pedestrian forecasts.

- Michael Farrell will work with COG staff members to see if the bicycle and pedestrian forecasts can be included in the public presentation of the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study

9. Spending on Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects in the FY 2004-2009 TIP
Michael Farrell, MWCOG

Michael Farrell distributed a table showing the bicycle and pedestrian projects listed in the FY 2004-2009 Transportation Improvement Program. We have a category in the eTIP for “primarily bicycle or pedestrian project”, as well as a project category for bicycle and pedestrian projects, so we are now able to sort out bicycle and pedestrian projects from the rest of the projects in the TIP. These categories overlap, yet some projects listed as “transit” were also described as “primarily bicycle or pedestrian”. We had, and continue to have, a category for “includes bicycle or pedestrian accommodation”, which many projects do.

The region will spend over \$92 million on bicycle and pedestrian projects during FY 2004-2009. That sounds like a lot, but it’s less than 1% of the \$10.2 billion the region will spend on transportation during the six-year period of the TIP. On the other hand, 40% of the projects in the 2003 Constrained Long-Range Plan include bicycle or pedestrian accommodation as part of a larger project, so there is considerable hidden bicycle and pedestrian spending. 7.4% of CLRP projects are primarily bicycle or pedestrian. The CLRP covers the period from 2003 to 2030, a longer period than the TIP. With VDOT’s new policy of providing routine accommodation for

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pedestrians and cyclists in new projects and major reconstructions, even more pedestrian and bicycle spending will be included in larger projects. Parsing out the share of bicycle and pedestrian spending in a larger project is labor-intensive, and is not something we are likely to do soon for all the projects that have bicycle or pedestrian accommodation.

Now that we have these categories in TIP, COG staff can answer more questions about bicycle and pedestrian spending, including breaking down projects and spending by jurisdiction. Spending can be tracked over time, although we have limited historical data since we have until this year only asked if a project included bicycle or pedestrian accommodation, not if it was primarily a bicycle or pedestrian project. Lora Byala suggested that we use these numbers when Top Ten list goes to the TPB, and tell them how much funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects is in the FY2004-2009 TIP and the proportion of total TIP funding that is bicycle or pedestrian. It will give a context for the funding request in the Top Ten list. Jim added that just two of D.C.'s trails cost more than \$20 million, so perhaps we should be spending more. Mode share for pedestrians and bicyclists is much higher than 1%. Allen Muchnick noted that some of the projects in the TIP have been completed. George Branyan asked why more Maryland bicycle and pedestrian projects weren't included. Any project that uses federal funds should be in the TIP. A jurisdiction may choose to include projects that have no federal funds.

Cindy Englehart noted that some projects listed as pedestrian bridges are no longer pedestrian bridges. Apparently connections aren't being made between some of the people in this room and the people at their jurisdictions who are filling out the eTIP. Michael Farrell promised to run this list by Fred Shaffer in Prince Georges County and see if everything that should be on it and should be classified as bicycle or pedestrian is on it.

- Michael Farrell promised to speak with Andrew Austin at COG and ask about the process of correcting errors of description or omission in the eTIP

10. Bike DC Event Report

Discussion of Pro Bike/Pro Walk was deferred due to time.

It rained on the Bike DC event on September 18th, and turnout was low, at 1800 people less than the 2500 who registered. This compares to 10,000 participants two years ago. Jim thought it was a combination of the rain, and last year's cancellation due to the hurricane. Jim thought it was a good route.

11. Jurisdictional Updates

Charlie Denney announced that Arlington is doing an installation of Durafirm crosswalks at the intersection of 26th Street and North Sycamore, about ½ mile from East Falls Church Metro.

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Adjourned.