

MEETING NOTES

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, January 17, 2006

TIME: 1:00 P.M.

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

CHAIR: Kristin Haldeman
Washington Area Metropolitan Transit Authority

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

Attendance:

Fatemeh Allahdoust	VDOT/NOVA
George Branyan	DDOT
Joshua Bennett	City of Alexandria
Charlie Denney	Arlington DES
Paul De Maio	Arlington DPW
Eric Gilliland	WABA
Kristin Haldeman	WMATA
Michael Jackson	MDOT
Charles Kines	MNCPPC-Montgomery County
Allen Muchnick	Virginia Bicycling Federation
Jim Sebastian	District of Columbia
David Suls	City of Takoma Park
Chris Wells	Fairfax County
John Wetmore	Perils for Pedestrians

COG Staff Attendance:

Michael Farrell

1. General Introductions.

Participants introduced themselves.

2. Review of the Minutes of the November 15, 2005 Meeting

Minutes were approved.

3. Review New Draft of the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Michael Farrell, MWCOG

Michael Farrell discussed the changes in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Two major tasks remaining to be done are the completion of data entry for the database, and a map of planned projects drawn from that database. Since there is not a lot room on an 8.5" X 11" format, and there are over 450 projects in the plan, they should be represented as dots rather than lines. We have some existing GIS data showing planned projects, but it is several years old. Updating the regional GIS map is a worthy project, but it has been suggested that this be a follow-on rather than a part of the bicycle and pedestrian plan. Michael Farrell suggested a February 3 cut-off date for submitting projects for the plan. The reason for a cut-off date is that the maps will refer to a report drawn at a particular point in time.

Charlie Denney noted that he did not have time to put in any additional projects. He asked if instead of a regional database there could be a link. Michael replied that there is a section in the database for links. Michael suggested that sidewalks and bike lanes be combined into single, global projects for the purpose of this plan. Charlie Denney also noted that many VDOT projects in Arlington County were obsolete. Fatemeh Allahdoust offered to check the VDOT projects. Charlie Denney said that he would not have time to maintain this database on an ongoing basis in addition to his own. Charlie Denney asked if the databases could be electronically linked. However, Michael noted that the two databases have different purposes, the Arlington database is meant to allow Arlington DES to track their projects in a detailed way, while this database is meant to track regional totals of different types of facilities, funds spent, and general location.

Fatemeh Allahdoust asked members that if they see a VDOT project is wrong, to please notify her so she does not put incorrect information back in.

Michael Farrell anticipated updating this database by having each jurisdiction update it as they wish. Fatemeh suggested that each time there is a new project the jurisdictional staff could send me Michael Farrell an e-mail and he could input the project data. Michael Farrell replied that he would be willing to do so, but often the person who knows the project can update it more

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accurately than someone getting the information second-hand.

The database has a section showing the last time it was updated. We should update the database, at a minimum, each time we update this plan.

Kristin asked about access control to the database. Michael Farrell replied that we had agreed to start with a free-for-all phase, in which anyone with the password could change anything. The idea was to make it as easy to update as possible. In the future we may implement more stringent access control.

Fatemeh asked if a completion date could be added to the database. We do have a complete date section for each project in the database. But not every project does or will have a complete date. We did not have completion year in the report in 1995.

Kristin asked if the whole database should go in the report. Charles Kines suggested that a plan should have a list of projects, and that the plan should be consistent across the jurisdictions. Chris Wells added that the purpose of the report is to give the policymakers something to look at, rather than going on-line to look it up. Kristin suggested that there should be some clarifying language in the report concerning what the criteria are for including a project in this report, plus a sample entry form and a data dictionary. Michael Farrell agreed to include such language.

It was asked whether only stand-alone bicycle and pedestrian projects were wanted, or if it would be part of a larger project. The database has a field for "included in a larger project". The basic criteria for this list is scale; a project should be large enough to merit inclusion in a regional plan.

This plan should be reviewed by the TPB Tech.

Michael Jackson said that the draft plan is looking better and contains some useful information. Michael asked about projects outside of the TPB Planning area. Michael Farrell replied that only projects within the TPB planning area should be included in this plan. Only the urbanized portion of Charles County is in the TPB planning area.

Fatemeh asked when the TPB was going to be shown the list of projects. TPB has not yet adopted the NVTAs projects. How does this list fit in? Charlie Denny added that the projects from Arlington were only funded projects. Michael Farrell replied that unfunded projects can be included; this is a long-term plan. Not everyone is interpreting this database in the same way, and not every jurisdiction is entering the same types of projects. A list of funded projects only would be duplicative of the list of bicycle and pedestrian projects in the TIP and the CLRP.

Even if not perfect, a list like this is helpful. Jim Sebastian suggested that we explain what each jurisdiction did. The responsible agency is the one that will construct the project.

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The maps were discussed. Jim Sebastian suggested that trails be represented by lines rather than dots. We need to know what the network will look like. Michael Farrell suggested that the major trails be represented as lines, and very small ones as dots. Digitizing every project on this database based on the description is a chore. But it is do-able. At an 8.5”X11” scale the trails do not have to be exact.

- Project submissions to the database should be finished by February 3. Language should be added explaining the guidelines for the types of projects that should be submitted, along with specific caveats about the approach each jurisdictions took place.
- A meeting of the bike plan work group will take place on Tuesday, February 21st.
- Likely submission to TPB Tech in April.

4. Presentation – WMATA Guidelines for Station Site and Access Planning
Scott Peterson, WMATA, Office of Planning

A copy of the presentation was distributed. WMATA has been developing guidelines for Station Site and Access Planning. The purpose of the guidelines is to provide a user-friendly document to assist the process of station area master plans and joint development. Pedestrian and bicycle access is to have first priority, over bus, kiss and ride, and park and ride. The focus is on physical design as well as operation issues, particularly of buses.

Many of WMATA’s stations were designed twenty or thirty years ago, and since then mode shares have changed, and there is a desire to improve pedestrian access, especially in suburban areas where pedestrian access is poor. Conflicts between bus and pedestrian movement are a major issue. In the past, first priority was given to buses, second to kiss and rides, and third to the pedestrian.

Parking and bus service are both costly for WMATA to provide.

A plan to redevelop the access to the Minnesota Avenue Metro station was presented.

Bicycle access needs to be improved, including access paths and lanes, as well as signs, both on and off-site. For pedestrians there should be signs directing them to nearby points of interest. Bike racks are now required to be covered to prevent rust.

Bike lockers cannot be placed under structures. Paul De Maio suggested that bike lockers have small holes or a grill that will allow you to see what is inside. Holes might pose a conflict with weather protection. It was suggested that there be a limit on the distance that bicycle parking is placed from the station.

Michael Jackson suggested that some of the people from the bike parking work group meet with WMATA staff to discuss recommendations. Kristin added that WMATA would soon be looking

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at station access issues, including issues such as mismatch between demand and placement of bicycle lockers.

Chris Wells asked if these guidelines were official policy yet. Scott Peterson replied that they had not been adopted yet. Eric Gilliland asked about differences between the 2002 WMATA rail passenger survey numbers in the guidelines and the numbers quoted in the bicycle plan. Scott explained that the numbers in the guidelines had been adjusted for increased ridership, assuming the mode share percentages are the same now as in 2002. That mode split may no longer be accurate, so WMATA is considering carrying out another rail passenger survey, especially since the hours during which Metro allows bicyclists on board have changed since 2002. In Arlington there has been considerable station-area development, so pedestrian mode share may have increased.

Joint development is not allowed to crowd out other functions such as kiss & ride and bus access. Participants expressed concern about the aesthetics and pedestrian-friendliness of large parking structures and lots.

Based on the presentation that he gave to the TPB on station-area development, Michael Farrell thought that Nat Bottingheimer, the new Planning Director at WMATA, appears to be sympathetic to this subcommittee's concerns. WMATA is still considering whether to name a pedestrian and bicycle coordinator.

- Jurisdictional staff are encouraged to get involved in station-area planning. WMATA cannot implement off WMATA property, but they can plan for a larger area.
- Comments on the guidelines are welcome.
- Staff should report to the TPB Technical Committee at some point regarding this subcommittee's reaction to the Guidelines for Station Site and Access Planning.

The remaining agenda items were deferred due to time.

Adjourned.