

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEETING NOTES

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, July 17th, 2012

TIME: 2:00 P.M.

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

CHAIR: Jeff Dunckel
Montgomery County Department of Transportation

VICE-CHAIRS: Michael Jackson
Maryland Department of Transportation
David Goodman – Arlington Department of Environmental Services
Jim Sebastian, District Department of Transportation
Fred Shaffer, M-NCPPC, Prince George's County

Attendance:

Fatemeh Allahdoust	VDOT/NOVA
Justin Antos	WMATA
Jeff Dunckel	Montgomery County
Chris Eatough	BikeArlington
Sherif Elbabbani	Prince George's DPWT
Dave Goodman	Arlington County DES
Arkopal Goswami	Loudoun County (by phone)
Christine Green	Safe Routes to School National Partnership
Kristin Haldeman	WMATA
Michael Jackson	MDOT (by phone)
Allen Muchnick	Virginia Bicycling Federation
Jim Sebastian	DDOT

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Fred Shaffer	M-NCPPC Prince George's County
Charlie Strunk	Fairfax County DOT
Gail Tait-Nouri	WMATA
Debbie Spiliotopoulos	Northern Virginia Regional Commission (by phone)
Rebecca Torma	City of Rockville (by phone)

COG Staff Attendance:

Michael Farrell
Ron Kirby
Andrew Meese
Gerald Miller
Huijing Qiang

1. General Introductions.

Mr. Dunckel chaired the meeting. Participants introduced themselves.

2. Review of the Minutes of the May 30th meeting.

The minutes were approved.

3. "Transportation Alternatives" under MAP-21

Ron Kirby, Director of the Department of Transportation spoke about MAP-21. The new bill will be effective October 1st, and will last for two years. Funding levels will go up slightly to compensate for inflation, with the same ratios for highways and transit. Borrowing authority for the DOT's has been increased; this will benefit projects that have a revenue source such as tolls or development districts.

The "Transportation Alternatives" program is 2% of the highway trust fund, and covers most of the program areas formerly included under enhancements. 50% of the funds are available to the State for obligation anywhere within the State, but 50% is allocated to urbanized areas. Each State or MPO shall create a competitive process which will allow eligible entities to submit projects for funding. Eligible entities are local governments, not States or MPO's.

The administration of this program is still not clear; we are not sure whether it will be administered by the TPB such as JARC and new freedom, or the Transportation Land Use Connections program, or whether the selection process will be run by the States. This will have to be agreed upon with the three State DOT's.

Mr. Sebastian expressed uncertainty as to the meaning of the language in the law. With CMAQ

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the States run a three-State process. In the case of Transportation Alternatives, there is an obligation to sub-allocate, while with CMAQ there is not. If TPB ended up running the competitive process, it could ensure that funds stayed within each State. The bill names the MPO as the entity which is to run the selection process.

Ms. Allahdoust said that VDOT was in the process of analyzing the bill. VDOT has programs in place which this program is replacing, such as Safe Routes to School.

The main thing that TPB has to offer is experience running a competitive program such as MAP-21 seems to envision, which NVTA does not currently have.

USDOT will eventually provide guidance, but we should keep talking to each other. Mr. Farrell asked if the Subcommittee had any interest in TPB running the selection process.

Mr. Muchnick said that NVTA had no competitive process, and not much staff. Could the TA money be used for bike share? Mr. Farrell said that he had posted a definitions section on the web site which included a list of permissible activities.

Another new section is a mandatory sidepath law, which now applies roads with a speed limit 30 mph or greater on federal lands. That would apply to National Park Service land, of which we have a lot in this region. If there is no parallel facility, then you can use the road. But if there is a parallel paved bike path within 100 yards, you are obliged to use it. The objection to mandatory sidepath laws is that side paths are not suitable for high speed bicycle travel.

Another wrinkle is that Safe Routes to School projects are being bundled into Transportation Alternatives, along with Enhancements. A competitive process would have to develop selection criteria applicable to both. Will the same match requirements provide to all types of projects? It doesn't now. The Subcommittee expressed doubt as to whether guidance would be issued within the two year time frame of the law.

4. Jurisdictional Updates

The Montgomery County bicycle program will be expanded, and Capital Bikeshare is being implemented. The goal is to launch in early Spring. There will be a Countystat review of bicycle data on August 3rd.

Prince George's County just had a couple of workshops on transit-oriented development. A safety study was done on the Naylor Road Metro Station. Community workshops will be held on the blue line corridor.

Fairfax County is out of stock of its bike maps. More will be delivered on Thursday. Reston

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Station on the Silver Line will have a bike and ride facility. Capital Bikeshare will come to Reston Town Center. The W&OD Trail is directly adjacent. The Fairfax bike plan is nearly complete.

Ms. Engelhart will likely be on leave until the end of July due to her injuries. The Fairfax County Parkway Path will be paved and widened. It will be a 30 mile path. VDOT has developed a Community Trail Development Guide which can be shared.

BikeArlington has posted a bike share development study on its web site. The information will be of interest to jurisdictions interested in joining Capital Bikeshare. BikeArlington is also working on a bike routing tool, a crowdsourced tool, which should be ready this Fall. Another tool, called rackspotting, will allow users to show the locations of bike racks. Mr. Eatough asked if he could have time on the September agenda to demonstrate these tools. Mr. Farrell asked Mr. Eatough to send him a reminder closer to the date.

WMATA has catalogued all bike racks at its Metro stations, as well as how many bikes were parked at them during good weather. Most of the Metro stations currently have bike parking capacity.

MDOT will fund bike sharing in eight jurisdictions, including Montgomery County and the City of Frederick. At Velomondial two-way cycle tracks are all the rage. Bike sharing is growing worldwide. The Oxon Cove Trail runs from Prince George's County National Harbor into DC, partly on National Park Service land. The NPS has started to enforce a closing time of 4:30 p.m. after a rash of robberies. Two way tracks tend to be on one-way streets. There were often restrictions on right turns for motorists.

The NVRC has updated the bike safety guide for Northern Virginia. There will be a workshop in October on trails and tourism.

Loudoun County has voted for the Metro, and pedestrian and bicycle access to those locations are a high priority, along with means of crossing Route 7.

5. The Regional Transportation Safety Picture

Mr. Qiang spoke to a powerpoint on transportation safety in the Washington region. Mr. Qiang discussed safety data relating to various traffic safety emphasis areas.

Mr. Dunckel asked why the US average was higher than the sample Metro averages. Mr. Farrell replied that high rural fatality rates accounted for the difference.

Traffic death apart from pedestrian and bicycle deaths have been dropping, so the proportion of pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities has increased even as absolute numbers remained flat. Ms. Allahdoust asked whether accidents were decreasing. Mr. Farrell replied that we had been using

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essentially these same tables in our presentations on Street Smart. People inside the vehicles are not dying, but people outside the vehicles are still dying.

Mr. Farrell said that the jurisdictions that do a lot, like Montgomery County, which spends nearly \$4 million per year, are getting positive results. They identify high incidence areas, throw engineering, enforcement, and education interventions at those locations. The high incidence areas account for all of Montgomery County's decrease in serious injuries. Street Smart gives them tools, materials that they can use, but the other elements are critical.

Prince George's and Charles Counties have high pedestrian fatality rates, and Prince George's has not participated in the Street Smart program until very recently.

Ms. Allahdoust asked if deaths per mile of road with higher speed limits could be calculated. Mr. Qiang replied that it would be difficult because our regional data is not geocoded. Ms. Allahdoust replied that for safety planning purposes we should correct for roadways speeds. Mr. Farrell remarked that that seemed like giving yourself credit for a high-speed, unsafe design. Mr. Meese noted that the point is moot for now, since the regional data is not geolocated. We only recently got access to TREDS.

Run of the road collisions have declined, probably due to speed enforcement, including cameras.

Exposure varies by jurisdiction. We know from the COG household travel survey that the District has a high walk mode share. The District also has a high daytime population.

The Transportation Safety Subcommittee provides a forum for discussion of traffic safety issues.

Mr. Farrell said that we can continue to develop this data further and answer more questions. Geocoding would be helpful. Fatalities and injuries can tell a different story – places with low speed limits tend to have fewer fatalities, but may still have many injuries. We could use the mode share to create a pedestrian danger index, which would adjust for population and mode share. To adjust by highway speed limit we would need geolocated data.

High speed highway design is a choice. The District made a choice some time ago not to raise either its design speeds or its speed limits.

Ms. Allahdoust said that speed limit, mode share, etc. are needed to evaluate how well an education program is doing. Mr. Dunckel replied that it would be difficult; even if you have geolocated data and speed limits you won't know if people are adhering to the speed limits. Police reports are not completely reliable either. In Montgomery County they calculated the percentage of level 4 and 5 (serious) collisions and found that there has been a significant decline.

Mr. Jackson asked if any of the crash data came from shared use paths. Mr. Farrell replied that it

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was all from crash reports, which does not include trails. Mr. Jackson asked how we might get such information. Mr. Qiang suggested that the next step should be getting geolocated data. Mr. Muchnick suggested hospitals as a source of trail crash data. In Montgomery County if there is a fatal crash on a trail, there will be a report done. None of the fatalities in Montgomery County were on trails; the number of fatalities on trails is likely fairly small.

Mr. Dunckel suggested that we should look at injuries and collisions more than fatalities, since the numbers are larger.

6. Other TPB Program Updates

Discussion of Street Smart was deferred to September.

Loudoun County has not yet chosen their top priority project; Mr. Farrell proposed that we defer adopting a list until Loudoun County has selected its project, which it will have in September.

Mr. Farrell distributed a draft Complete Streets policy survey. Mr. Farrell requested comments by August 15th.

Ms. Engelhart would have been working on the regional database, and they have by far the largest share of projects. This would be a good intern project if one is available. The database will give us performance measures for Complete Streets as well as other planning efforts.

We have pledged to do a Complete Streets workshop within six months; given the level of experience we should be able to put a good workshop together. Other ideas include workshops on the new NACTO and AASHTO design guides. Mr. Dunckel expressed interest.

The Street Smart consultant selection process is ongoing. McAndrew Company is the incumbent at least through end of September. No decision has yet been made. The selection committee is reviewing the bids.

Ms. Allahdoust said that in her case she had a long-term contractor who had become hard to manage. The contractor has been in place for so long that no one else bids; Ms. Allahdoust urged COG not to get into that trap.

7. Adjourned