

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEETING NOTES

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, November 19, 2019

TIME: 1:00 p.m.

PLACE: Room 1, First Floor
777 North Capitol Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

CHAIR: George Branyan, DDOT

**VICE-
CHAIRS:**

Jeff Dunckel, Montgomery County Department of Transportation
Jamie Carrington, WMATA

Attendance:

Fatemeh Allahdoust	VDOT/NOVA
George Branyan	DDOT
James Carrington	WMATA (by phone)
Joana Conklin	Montgomery County DOT
Henry Dunbar	BikeArlington
Jeff Dunckel	Maryland Highway Safety Office
Nate Evans	(by phone)
Laura Ghosh	Loudoun County
David Goodman	WMATA
Laurel Hammig	National Park Service
Tiffany Jennings	Prince George's County DPWT
Joe Kelley	Frederick County (by phone)
George Phillips	Prince William County DOT (by phone)
Mitsuru Tanaka	EXP
Eloisa Thring	Loudoun County
Nicole Wynands	Fairfax County (by phone)

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the November 19, 2019 Meeting
Page 2

Alex Waltz	Prince George's County DPWT (by phone)
John Wetmore	Perils for Pedestrians
Nicole Wynands	Fairfax County DOT (by phone)

COG Staff Attendance:

Stacy Cook
Michael Farrell
Greg Grant
Andrew Meese
Jessica Mirr
Jon Schermann

1. General Introductions.

George Branyan chaired the meeting.

2. Review of the September 17 Meeting Notes

The Subcommittee approved the minutes.

3. Jurisdictional Updates

Arlington has increased its on-street e-scooter speed limit to 15 mph, but is reducing the sidewalk speed to 6 mph. Arlington will allow e-bikes on all its trails. The changes will take effect on the first of the year. Arlington is also adding more e-scooter corrals.

National Park Service is wrapping up environmental assessments on Buzzards Point and the first mile of the C&O towpath, and will start another one on Fletcher's Cove in DC. E-bikes but not e-scooters will be allowed on National Park Service trails in the DC area, where-ever bicycles were allowed before. Arlington's ordinance will allow e-scooters and e-bikes on Arlington trails.

Ms. Allahdoust asked about the popularity of e-scooters. Anecdotally, we see a lot of them in Arlington, along with e-bikes. Mr. Farrell added that in the case of San Francisco, e-bikes have been most popular on hilly routes, where e-scooters may have difficulties.

In response to the new state legislation, Loudoun County is about to launch an e-scooter pilot program. Loudoun is also continuing its program to fill gaps in its sidewalk and trail network. Silver Line stations will be opening in Loudoun County in the Fall of 2020.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the November 19, 2019 Meeting
Page 3

Maryland is in the process of updating its Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Two other ongoing projects include its pedestrian and bicyclist fatality review, using 2016 fatalities. Preliminary results will be presented to the TPB's Transportation Safety Subcommittee. Over 100 cases will be reviewed. The goal is to identify common contributing factors, and identify measures that can be taken to reduce fatalities. Maryland recently trained 28 police officers in Baltimore County on crosswalk enforcement details.

Street Smart launched on October 28, and the response has been good so far in Maryland.

Mr. Schermann announced that the Safety Subcommittee meeting would take place on December 10 in this room. The Maryland study and also a regional study would be on the agenda.

DC's pedestrian advisory committee has reviewed the new Street Smart testimonial videos. They've responded very favorably. Mr. Farrell added that a number of people had approached him and spoken about seeing these spots on TV.

DC is working on the Lincoln Connector trail which will connect NE DC to Prince George's County. The Metropolitan Branch Trail is in progress. By the end of 2020 30% design will be completed in Takoma. The Fort Totten section will go under construction next year. The northern sections of the Metropolitan Branch are some of the most difficult.

There are twenty HAWK signals in the District now. Once of them will be converted to a full signal. And there are nine under some stage of design. They're becoming institutionalized.

Signals should be easy enough to understand that they don't require a public education campaign. There's some confusion on the flashing red. Flashing yellow means caution. Solid yellow is followed by red so slow down and prepare to stop. Flashing red means stop but then proceed with caution. This is consistent with other types of traffic signals. The police have done some enforcement. The HAWK signals get 97% compliance on the solid red.

Montgomery County, Maryland is not using the flashing red, which is not consistent with the MUTCD. This creates a challenge in terms of regional education and consistency. Virginia is using the standard HAWK.

Cindy Engelhart has retired as of a few weeks ago and her position has been advertised. VDOT expects to have someone hired by the end of the year. Cindy had been on disability.

VDOT is still working with COG on the count program. Counts will be displayed in a Statewide web site. The Route 1 BRT in Fairfax will include bicycle and pedestrian facilities, as will the Route 7 BRT. VDOT is also working on improving pedestrian access to bus stops. VDOT is also working on a plan of action to reduce pedestrian and bicycle crashes.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the November 19, 2019 Meeting
Page 4

DDOT has 19 rapid flashing beacons. Two have been converted to full signals, and two more are in design. HAWKs only go on streets with four or more lanes and 20,000 ADT and up. The RFB doesn't have an actual warrant, and doesn't include a full red. It's meant for smaller streets. Compliance varies widely. RFB's are much cheaper than HAWKs. There was some discussion of the yield rules in Virginia – whether motorists are required to yield on 35 mph streets. There is still the language on maliciously impeding traffic. Loudoun County is not installing RFB's after an incident in which a pedestrian was hit after activating one. Ms. Ghosh believed that removing the RFB's would make people more reluctant to step out.

Mr. Branyan disagreed, based on his observations. The point of having a crosswalk is that people have the right of way and are allowed to cross, not wait for a gap in traffic. If you're going to wait for a gap, you can do that just as easily mid-block. State law says that pedestrians have the right of way in the crosswalk. Motorists should stop for them. In Virginia however motorists are required to stop, just avoid hitting the pedestrian.

Prince William County is hiring a Planner II for bicycle and pedestrian planning, effective December 16. The County is continuing to expand its bicycle and pedestrian network, including in small area plans for more urbanized portions of the county. The County is asking the state to restore the Bull Run Trail under I-66, which has been closed. Ms. Allahdoust said that that needs to be part of the comprehensive plan. Mr. Phillips replied that he would send Ms. Allahdoust a copy of the Board resolution on the trail, which will go to the Board in December.

Fairfax County is also updating its comprehensive plan, and merge it with the trails plan. Also like Prince William County, Fairfax has small area plans that include pedestrian and bicycle facilities. There will be a pedestrian section in the comprehensive plan that will discuss engineering and safety treatments.

Prince George's County has a new pedestrian and bicycle program manager, Tiffany Jennings. The County recently installed its first green bike lanes in Suitland, with more to follow. Vision Zero was launched this summer. Community meetings will start in January.

Mr. Dunckel congratulated Ms. Jennings, and asked for her contact information. Mr. Dunckel asked her about sites for a Virtual Reality Street Smart event.

MDOT is working on a context-sensitive design manual for arterials, which will be released soon. It will be presented soon to the Montgomery County Council. The full rollout date is still TBD. It should probably be presented to this Subcommittee in January.

WMATA is working on e-scooter policies and parking solutions that would work for an ADA perspective.

Ms. Allahdoust asked Ms. Wynands about Fairfax County's e-scooter policies. Ms. Wynands

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the November 19, 2019 Meeting
Page 5

replied that Fairfax would shortly adopt an ordinance, which has similar provisions to other such ordinances, such as fleet size, speed limits, etc. Fairfax needed to adopt an ordinance in order to preserve its ability under state law to regulate these devices. Fairfax has hired a new staff person to work on e-scooters, who will start at the end of the year. The committee speculated on the number of years of experience needed to be an e-scooter expert, and settled on one year.

Bike and Ride facilities will be completed in Spring 2020 at East Falls Church Metro Station, and at Vienna in late 2020. West Hyattsville, Prince George's Plaza, and Takoma will come later. WMATA is working on an RFP for a contractor to maintain WMATA's bike and ride facilities, bike lockers, racks, etc. It's uncertain when the RFP will go out. Ms. Allahdoust expressed interest in the outcome of the RFP, since VDOT also has bike lockers. Perhaps VDOT could ride on the WMATA contract. APTA has a matrix of costs in its bicycle and transit integration guide.

4. Draft Map of the National Capital Trail Network

Mr. Farrell was unable to call up COG's map, so he spoke to the Capital Trails Coalition map. TPB is expanding the CTC network to the surrounding counties. The paper map was distributed at the last meeting, and Mr. Farrell will post the map again on the web site. COG is still working with Prince William County and Loudoun County to get the necessary metadata for the GIS trail layers in order to determine eligibility. We can't take 6' wide facilities unless they are planned to be widened to 10'. We will accept 8' for existing trails, 10' for planned.

There is some urgency about getting this network finalized, since it is one of the TPB's seven aspirational initiatives in Visualize, and we plan to use it to prioritize TLC and TAP funding.

Loudoun and Prince William are too big not to include. We do have layers from the City of Manassas, from Frederick County, and from Frederick City, as well as Charles County.

We would like to go with a one-year cycle for updating the National Capital Trail Network. However, it's important to get a network adopted now, so it can guide funding. Upcoming plans can be incorporated into the next update. This network has to be approved by this committee at the January 21 meeting. By that time we need the GIS layers, the necessary metadata to determine eligibility, and then a culling of the network to a "long-distance, regional network" that is of roughly equal density across the region, adjusted for population density.

We have GIS layers for all the outer jurisdictions, enough that we'll need to cull some of them, but we'll need the metadata to determine eligibility. We have what we need from Frederick and Charles, we just need the metadata from Loudoun and Prince William.

The suggested deadline for the GIS layers with the necessary metadata is December 16.

Ms. Allahdoust suggested that Mr. Farrell send out the static version that was posted at the September meeting. That map is still valid, only the metadata has changed. COG has been getting VDOT's data as well as the Counties, and it's mostly the same. Mr. Phillips expressed willingness to work with COG to cull the trail network in Prince William County.

5. Draft Highway Safety Targets

Mr. Schermann spoke to a powerpoint. Fatalities and injuries fell in 2018 relative to 2017, but the five year average is up. The region has met some but not all of its transportation safety goals.

The National Park Service considers e-scooters as motorized vehicles, but there is not a regional consensus on that yet. To end up on the crash reports they need to be on a public roadway, and interact with a motorized vehicle.

There is no federal sanction for not meeting these goals at the MPO level.

Mr. Schermann discussed the MPO target-setting methodology. We are not asking the Board to set targets higher than those that they set in a previous year, regardless of the data. There is concern that this rule capping the targets may make these targets less data-driven.

These targets will be presented to the Board tomorrow, and they'll be approved in December.

As of this year we've had 292 fatalities, so we're not on track to meet the target of 253 rolling average. Ms. Allahdoust asked why we're setting a target we know we won't meet. Mr. Schermann replied that the Board did not want to approve higher targets.

There's a tension between these federally mandated data-driven targets and the aspirational Vision Zero goals. However, in some ways that is a benefit, because it brings transportation safety to the attention of the Board, to a far greater degree than they ever were before. The Board is now getting briefed on transportation safety on a quarterly basis. We've also been able to use some UPWP funds to do a regional safety study, which also would likely not have happened if we hadn't set these safety goals.

It would take radical reductions in fatalities next year to allow us to meet our five-year average goal. Board members have asked us what it would take to achieve sharper reductions in fatalities. We're glad that the Board is thinking in those terms.

The states also have statewide targets, but there is no specific target for Northern Virginia.

Virginia is evaluated on its statewide targets, not by how its individual MPO's are doing. There are no penalties attached to failing to meet regional goals, only the statewide goals.

6. 2019 State of the Commute Report

Mr. Franklin spoke to a powerpoint.

The State of the Commute survey is a triennial survey. This is the seventh such survey. Respondents were at least 18 years old and employed. 8200 people completed the survey, mostly on-line. The hard copy will be released in the summer.

Bike/walk commute share of 3.3% includes scooters.

Most people who commuted by bike used a personal bike. Scooters were evenly divided between personal and rented.

The State of the Commute survey covers a broader area than the TPB footprint. Owners of bikes and scooters tended to take longer trips than renters.

Walkers commute an average of one mile each way, bicycles 4.2 miles each way

Has there been a comparison to the previous surveys? Mr. Franklin replied that a couple of slides covered that.

Bike/walk commuters were by far the most satisfied with their commute, and transit commuters the least satisfied. Bike/walk commuters tend to have short commutes, in terms of time and distance, which likely affects their satisfaction. 80% of bike/walk commuters listed getting exercise as a benefit. They also mentioned flexibility, avoiding stress.

A third of federal agencies offered walk/bike services. Larger employers offered more services than smaller firms.

Free parking greatly increases the likelihood of driving to work.

Mr. Branyan apologize for rushing Mr. Franklin's presentation due to time.

7. ITE Curbside Managers Practitioners Guide

Ms. Abel spoke to a powerpoint.

Curbside is the interaction of uses adjacent to the curb.

Scooters and Ride-hailing have complicated curbside interactions.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the November 19, 2019 Meeting
Page 8

Seattle has a curbside management plan. They are an innovator in this field, along with the District.

Geofencing is not accurate enough to geofence the curb versus the sidewalk. It is possible to geofence particular streets. National Park Service uses it in the District to restrict dropping off e-scooters.

There are two open source platforms where you can look at data relevant to curbside management.

Seattle has a curbside treatment selection process, and an evaluation process. NACTO's curb appeal guide is useful. Safety and accessibility are major considerations. Efficiency is also high on the list of measures that are studied in analyses of curbside management.

Micromobility is getting attention because it's new, and unexpected.

Another concept is "switch points" where you go from one mode to another.

Mr. Branyan asked about the curb flow project at the Wharf. Ms. Abel said that it was the pilot project she'd discussed earlier. The curbflow zone used to be metered parking, and they're supposed to be measuring how many people are using it, and how much it reduces double parking.

Micromobility corrals in Alexandria are very effective at keeping people from parking e-scooters on the sidewalk. The providers in Alexandria know to stage them in the corrals.

Mr. Goodman asked how efficiency was measured. Ms. Abel replied that it was in the report. It depends a lot on what data is available. Efficiency measures are different in a commercial zone versus a residential zone.

Ms. Abel said that in the resort town where she used to work was plagued with hotel bikes parked everywhere.

Adjourned