

MEETING NOTES

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, September 17, 2002

TIME: 1:00 P.M.

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

CHAIR: Heather Wallenstrom
Virginia Department of Transportation

**VICE-
CHAIRS:** Michael Jackson
Maryland Department of Transportation,
Jim Sebastian
District Division of Transportation

Attendance:

Shaheer Assad	Loudoun County
Harry Cepeda	DDOT
Charlie Denney	Arlington County
Eric Gilliland	WABA
Ellen Jones	WABA
Bill Kelly	College Park Area Bicycle Coalition
Brian King	VDOT – Planning
Randy Mardres	College Park Area Bicycle Coalition
Rich Metzinger	National Park Service
Allen Muchnick	Virginia Bicycling Federation
Harvey Muller	MSHA
Jenny Pate	FCPA
Steve Pinkus	Grove/Slade Associates
Jim Sebastian	District of Columbia
Katherine Shriver	Baltimore Metropolitan Council
Gail Tait-Nouri	Montgomery County DPWT
Betsy Thompson	Rockville
Sharonlee Vogel	WMATA

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Heather Wallenstrom VDOT, NOVA
Steve Waters WalkDC
Maria M. White City of Alexandria
John Wetmore Perils for Pedestrians
Chris Wells Fairfax County DOT

COG Staff Attendance:

Michael Farrell
Andrew Meese

1. General Introductions.

Participants introduced themselves.

2. Review of the Minutes of the July 16, 2002 Meeting

Minutes were approved.

3. Education: ADA Course

Michael Farrell, MWCOG

At previous meetings it was agreed that our fall educational event should be a one or two-day ADA seminar, targeted at traffic engineers. The Federal Highway Administration has developed such a seminar, which is currently in internal review. We want to have some field work incorporated into the seminar. A one day seminar is the best for attendance. It will take place at the Reeves Center, at the DDOT conference room on the second floor. Ellen Jones suggested that the disabled have some participation in the conference. One concern with a large group is the feasibility of doing fieldwork with a large group. We may either have to have more than one instructor or else cap the number of participants. Charlie Denney observed that there was a lot of interest in ADA, and that many people might wish to attend. The number of people who can attend will be limited by the number of instructors available. No date has been selected, but we should have the seminar sometime in November. Subcommittee members should send their dates of non-availability to Michael Farrell.

- Get the modified Federal Highway Administration ADA course, find instructors, decide on the length (1 or 2 days), pick a location for fieldwork, coordinate with the handicapped community, pick a date in consultation with subcommittee members.

4. Regional Bike Plan Schedule

Michael Farrell, COG

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Michael Farrell distributed a memo with a proposed schedule for the different bike plan elements. The on-line database can probably be put up in December. Members will have an opportunity to view the database and submit corrections. In the long run the database can be used to help select a top ten list. For the moment, however, each jurisdiction should come up with two to three nominations for a regional top ten list, so that such a list can be adopted at the November meeting. The idea of a top ten list is not to list projects already funded, but to list large, high-priority projects that currently have no identified funding. Charlie Denney suggested that projects identified as high priority in the TCSP reports be included. Heather suggested that criteria for selection be selected. Projects should come up from the jurisdiction, and not just from staff. Each jurisdiction should coordinate internally. Andrew Meese noted that we have some selection criteria from the 1995 plan. Michael Farrell promised to distribute those criteria to the group. Michael Farrell suggested October 15 as a date by which to submit nominations for a top ten list. Maria White asked what projects could be included in the list. Heather replied that each jurisdiction should use its own selection criteria. Michael cautioned that the jurisdictions should not submit too many projects. A question was posed about the flexibility of the October 15 deadline. It was decided that since the next meeting would be November 19, and the list would have to go out to the subcommittee one week prior to that, a November 1st deadline would provide adequate lead time.

Ellen asked that jurisdictions in developing their nominations think about the regional implications of their projects.

Heather said that this should be an annual event, that we come together to agree on a regional list of top priorities. We should monitor the progress of the top ten annually, and highlight any progress or lack of progress.

We will not be able to update the comprehensive list of all bicycle and pedestrian projects in time for the TPB's process. We can pick a top ten list, but we will not have an accurate comprehensive list before January.

Charlie Denney asked about including pedestrian projects like the Columbia Pike improvements. Michael replied that multi-use trails were certainly eligible, but that it might be hard to put a regional spin on local pedestrian improvements. Heather suggested that we submit and see what we get.

This plan will be the 2003 plan, which will be paper, static, and not changed very often. The most important part of the plan, however, will be the on-line database, which will be queriable, accessible, and updated on a monthly basis. This database will not be available before the end of December at the earliest.

Heather suggested developing an intermediate list between the top ten list and the

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comprehensive list. There was some debate over how many wishes should be incorporated into the comprehensive list, and whether the wish for bicycle accommodation on all roads be incorporated into general DOT policies. A suggestion was made that the on-line map and database be tied into census and demographic data. Michael suggested that such elements be considered a Phase II or Phase III. Over the short term, we need to produce an update for July 2003. So the actual document needs to be ready by April.

- Michael Farrell promised to distribute selection criteria for top ten projects to the group.
- Member jurisdictions are to submit nominations for the regional top ten bicycle and pedestrian projects by November 1st.

5. **Updated Bike to Work Guide**
Michael Farrell,

Michael Farrell has assimilated the group's comments onto a disk, and anticipated that a new paper copy would be available within several weeks. Jim Sebastian suggested that people wanting large numbers pay. An on-line version is available, and will be updated shortly. The guide has a lot of general information, and would be useable in Baltimore.

- Submit requests for Bike to Work Guides to Michael Farrell.

6. **Rail-Volution Conference October 3 – 6**
Steve Waters, WalkDC

Steve Waters of WalkDC discussed the upcoming Rail-Volution Conference. Railvolution.com lists the conference program. Eric and Ellen will be doing a mobile workshop on October 6, showing off bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the region. There will be an informal meeting of pedestrian advocates at this conference.

7. **BikeDC**
Eric Gilliland, WABA

Nearly 10,000 riders, plus 500 volunteers. A great success. Only two injuries, and good weather. The average age was 37, with 40% minority attendance. The vast majority of participants were from the region. There were lots of child participants. Sprinkle consulting brought maps of D.C. with stickers to ask cyclists where they would like to see improvements in the District.

8. **Member Jurisdiction Updates**

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Gail Tait-Nouri discussed progress on the bike/ped bridge over I-270. Maryland's new bicycle plan was praised, and the group was urged to take a look at it on the web. Sharonlee forecast that bike racks would be installed on all metrobuses well before the end of the year. The whole program of bikes on metro will be called Bike 'N Ride. Sharonlee had free Bike'N Ride fanny packs to give out, and asked the group to send her orders for fanny packs and brochures. Charlie Denney announced that ten miles of bike lanes have been laid down in Arlington County, and a crosswalk with in-road lighting, the first inside the beltway, has been installed. The area is dark and shaded and likely to benefit from such an installation. The cost was \$30,000. Forty intersections have had pedestrian count-down signals installed. One of the benefits of such signals is that they improve pedestrian clearance of the intersection. Arlington's Bike Plan will be updated soon. Harry Cepeda discussed the District of Columbia's Walk to School program. The schools will be provided with walkability checklists, to help them identify problem areas. In Maryland, 20,000 students will be involved in Walk to School Day. Rockville is in the second year of its in-school pedestrian and bicycle safety course. Four schools are signed up for the fall, and five in the Spring. Rockville is also updating its bicycle plan, and with State funding will be monitoring its improved intersections to see how pedestrian and motorist behavior is affected by such changes. Maryland bicycle representatives are discussing standardization of bicycle maps.

7. COG Studies Update

Michael Farrell discussed the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan. One of the items to be included in the final plan will be an inventory of regional trails, identification of their at-grade crossings, and bridges that have pedestrian facilities. The plan is meant to make use of facilities already on the ground, and manipulate signal timings, rather than propose funding new infrastructure. The public will be made aware of the facilities that are already available. If the transportation infrastructure were totally disabled, people will be able to evacuate on foot.

Another major regional initiative is a traffic signal optimization TERM, or transportation emissions reduction measure, which has been funded on a reduced level from what was originally proposed. Traffic signal optimization is tangentially related to bicycling in as much as it involves inspection of equipment to make sure that it is working, that minimum crossing intervals are observed, and promotes an even flow of traffic flow that will discourage speeding. The Traffic Signals and Optimization Subcommittee has been briefed on what Arlington County and the MNCPPC have been doing to improve pedestrian signals. A question was posed regarding optimization and cycle lengths. Michael replied that in some cases optimization could involve increased cycle lengths, which could increase wait time for pedestrians. On the positive side, signal progression can be a powerful traffic calming tool. Downtown Portland, Oregon sets the progression at 12 mph, which allows bicyclists to share the lane, and which prevents pedestrian deaths and injuries. Conversely, if lights are randomly timed, people do race to make the light, which can be dangerous for pedestrians. We cannot guarantee any particular pedestrian priority in the process of optimization, since the process is entirely in the hands of the DOT's and localities. Andy Meese expressed a hope that the program could be a win-win for

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all concerned. Allan Muchnik asked about detection of bicycles at loops. Michael replied that optimization was not a hardware program. Allan replied that in many cases no new hardware would be needed, just a re-tuning of the existing loops. Michael promised to bring the issue to the Traffic Signals and Operations Working Group, in the hope that when this optimization work is done that they will fix the bicycle detection problem. Charlie Denney announced that on Fairfax Drive Arlington County has changed the timing to give more crossing time for pedestrians. Ellen added that the City of Alexandria has made some adjustments to its loop detectors in response to a fatality several years ago. Ellen noted that next week is the first meeting for planning next year's Bike to Work Day. Mark Hersey will be the COG contact for Bike to Work Day. Allan expressed some concern that the interests of pedestrians might be ignored in the process of signal optimization, with its focus on a one-dimensional number. Allan expressed hope that with respect to evacuation planning that some attention would be brought to bridges that lack pedestrian access.

- Michael Farrell promised to bring the issue of tuning detector loops to detect bicycles to the attention of the Traffic Signals and Operations Working Group.

8. Pro Bike Pro Walk 2002 – Slide Show and Discussion
Jim Sebastian, DDOT

Jim praised the Pro Bike Pro Walk Conference, and gave a slide show from some of the mobile workshops. The Twin Cities have a number of rail-trails and trails around their lakes. Wherever there is enough space, bicyclists and pedestrians are separated. At one location in downtown Minneapolis there is a two-way bike lane in the center of the street, with a bus lane on one side of the street, and vehicle lanes on the other. Michael thought these worked reasonably well, since buses and cars do not encroach on the bike lanes. Cars are looking for oncoming buses, so they are likely to see cyclists coming in the same direction. One old stone bridge was converted to bicycle and pedestrians only – a two-way bicycle road in the center, and pedestrians on the side. The bridge is lit up and open all night long, so if you need to cross the Mississippi river at night on a bike, you can use this bridge. On another location the city put in a bike lane in the uphill direction, but a shared lane in the downhill direction. The road was not wide enough for bike lanes in both direction. Road bridges crossing a trail have stairs leading to the sidewalks on the bridge. All bike lanes on one-way streets are on the left side of the road, to avoid conflicts with stopping buses. There is also less of a dooring problem with the bike lane on the left.

Attendees discussed lessons learned from Pro Bike Pro Walk. The next one, Pro Walk Pro Bike 2004, will take place in Victoria, British Columbia. The walking community has moved from fringe activism to the mainstream, with growing participation from the public health profession. There was heavy representation at the conference by political leaders, all saying things favorable to bicyclists and pedestrians.

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9. **Adjourned.**