

# **National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board**

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## **MEETING NOTES**

### **BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Tuesday, May 20, 2008

**TIME:** 1:00 P.M.

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

**CHAIR:** Fred Shaffer –  
MNCPPC, Prince George's County

**VICE-  
CHAIRS:** Kristin Haldeman  
Washington Area Metropolitan Transit Authority  
Michael Jackson  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
Jim Sebastian, DDOT

#### **Attendance:**

Gaylynn Abram	Virginia Department of Transportation
Monica Backman	Prince William County
Cheryl Cort	Coalition for Smarter Growth
Eric Gilliland	WABA
David Goodman	Arlington County DES
Mike Goodno	DDOT
Kristin Haldeman	WMATA (teleconference)
Lauren Hassel	Arlington County DES (teleconference)
Jeffrey Hermann	Fairfax County DOT
Michael Jackson	MDOT
Sean Kennedy	WMATA
Yon Lambert	City of Alexandria (teleconference)
Peter Moe	Maryland Highway Safety Office (teleconference)
Allen Muchnick	Virginia Bicycling Federation
David Patton	Arlington County DES

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Tom Pogue	Montgomery County (teleconference)
Jim Sebastian	DDOT
Fred Shaffer	M-NCPPC, Prince George's County
David Suls	City of Takoma Park
John Thomas	Frederick County (teleconference)

**COG Staff Attendance:**

Michael Farrell  
Andrew Meese  
Gerald Miller

**1. General Introductions.**

Participants introduced themselves.

**2. Review of the Minutes of the March 18, 2008 Meeting**

Minutes were approved.

**3. Member Jurisdiction Updates**

Mr. Jackson announced a proposal from Dr. Sarah Newman, Director of Risk Management at the National Park Service, to create trail crash and injury data. The proposal is to enlist the aid of the students at the Uniformed Services Health Sciences University to collect data, which could be done at low cost. She would like MWCOG to sponsor this study. The study would include a survey and one or two focus groups. The study should take place during the summer, when trail use is most intense. COG and WABA could provide names of users of the trail to participate in focus groups. The only cost would be payment of focus groups, which would only be a few thousand dollars.

Mr. Farrell asked what MWCOG's participation might add other than funding for the focus groups. Mr. Jackson said that the study sounded promising, and suggested that the group continue discussions. Mr. Farrell suggested that if we receive a proposal, it could be posted on the web site for further discussion. Mr. Jackson said that there was little for COG to do other than lend its name to the effort. Mr. Gilliland expressed his interest, but suggested that the study should include design as well as behavioral issues.

Mr. Shaffer is still working on the bicycle and pedestrian element of its transportation plan. It will identify not just needs but also a list of projects which can be implemented in the short term.

Toole Design is working on a plan to make Prince George's Plaza more pedestrian-friendly. Parks will bid on its section of the Anacostia River Trail this summer. At the next meeting we may brief the Subcommittee on the topic.

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Mr. Wetmore announced that he will be doing local interviews for his cable access show. The Woodrow Wilson bridge bicycle facility will be finished by the end of the year.

Virginia will have 11 pit stops for bike to work day. The Northern Virginia Bikeway and Trail plan will be updated for the first time since 2002. A State bicycle advisory committee has been formed, and will meet for the first time in June.

Takoma Park is working on a Takoma-Langley sector plan.

WMATA may focus on standards for bus stop placement. WMATA has replaced 700 bike racks to date, and has 900 to go. The 2007 rail ridership survey shows an increase of 60% of people bicycling to the rail system versus 2002. It is still only .5% of daily ridership, but it is a trend nonetheless, so WMATA will step up efforts to plan for bicycle access to Metrorail. The project will likely be kicked off in mid-June.

Mr. Muchnick announced that the funding for Street Smart from Virginia DMV would be reviewed on Thursday, and that he was a member of the review committee. Mr. Muchnick noted that COG had applied for only \$100,000, which put him in a weak position to argue for more. Tonight is the second of two meetings on the beltway HOT lane projects; provision of bicycle and pedestrian facilities across the beltway is an issue. The Statewide bicycle committee will meet quarterly and produce a State bicycle plan, which will include long-distance routes. Mr. Muchnick suggested that the TPB adopt a Complete Streets policy for the MPO, although that is not yet required. Mr. Muchnick suggested that the committee could review the language in the bill.

Arlington County has hired another staff person to work on bicycle and pedestrian issues, David Patton, which brings the number of bicycle and pedestrian staff in Arlington to two. Arlington will continue its restriping efforts and update its bike map to reflect new bike lanes, as well as stepping up its efforts to count pedestrians and bicyclists. The bike lockers at Clarendon might be replaced with new bike shelters and racks. The six lockers are currently rented out. The Arlington bicycle committee has not taken a position.

The District of Columbia has updated its bicycle registration procedure. The DC Council has changed the registration system to a voluntary one, with the national bicycle registry, effective June 1<sup>st</sup>. The national bike registry is an on-line national database, accessible to police all over the country. The registry has helped re-unite bicyclist with their owners. Cost is \$10 at [Nationalbikeregistry.com](http://Nationalbikeregistry.com). WABA supports the change, and the police are supportive as well. Liquidation.com sells the unclaimed stolen bicycles which DCMPD has. The bicycle registration requirement had been used to harass suspected drug dealers, but it was sometimes used against bike messengers, etc. In other news DC has been identified by Bicycling magazine as most improved city for bicycling.

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Bike to Work Day met its goal of 7,000 riders, and there was plenty of press coverage. On Friday there will be another event, called the bike prom. WABA has been working with the Sierra Club and other organizations to oppose the re-opening of Kingle road in Rock Creek Park. DC Council has also approved \$1.5 million per year for bicycle and pedestrian safety work, and \$18,000 to WABA to conduct a PSA campaign.

Mr. Farrell asked how much the rain may have depressed Bike to Work Day turnout. Mr. Gilliland replied that we may have lost some new people who aren't equipped for rain, but that the Freedom Plaza crowds had been good.

Mr. Moe of the Maryland Highway Safety Office mentioned that the University of Maryland is working on a method for modeling pedestrian behavior. Maryland also has a task force on hybrid vehicles, which will examine safety issues with hybrids and the visually impaired. The legislature is examining a "three feet for bikes" campaign.

Mr. Pogue announced that the Council had finished its budget. \$800,000 was allocated for pedestrian safety, as well as \$1 million for sidewalk construction and \$200,000 for trail maintenance. The Falls Road bike trail will be deferred two years. A replacement for Matt Greene, the pedestrian coordinator, will soon be announced.

Mr. Wetmore announced that a Maryland bill has been passed that will remove the blanket prohibition against bicyclists on toll bridges in Maryland.

The group discussed the HAWK signal as an alternative to full traffic signals. Mr. Wetmore suggested that education would be needed with a new application. The DC pedestrian plan discusses the HAWK signals. Mr. Sebastian announced that DC would be using rapid flash beacons, which have been shown at one location to improve driver compliance from 20% to 60%. Rapid flash beacons cost \$20,000 versus \$45,000 for a HAWK signal. On smaller, lower-volume roads compliance can be pushed to over 90% with the rapid flash beacons.

Alexandria will be doing a bicycle ambassadors program. The bike path over the Woodrow Wilson bridge will be open in 2009.

**4. Proposal by the District of Columbia to host 2010 Pro Walk Pro Bike Conference**

An exploratory committee met this morning. The application is due June 9<sup>th</sup>. DC is poised to become a great bicycle city and region, so it's time for it to host this conference. DDOT is looking for support from its neighbors in creating mobile workshops and providing speakers. One outstanding issue is accommodation – a convention hotel has not yet been identified. The

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conference hotel must be able to meet the government reimbursement rate. The application is available at bikewalk.org. DDOT will also provide funding for the conference. A planning meeting for the application will take place in two weeks. Also in September there will be a number of complementary events, including the Walkingtown DC event, as well as the BikeDC Bike ride, as well as Carfree Day. Pro Walk Pro Bike will take place closer towards the end of September, rather than around Labor Day week-end.

Mr. Gilliland suggested that the conference could be considered a regional event, so COG could ask for contributions, as with Street Smart. Mr. Farrell replied that even for Street Smart, many of our outer jurisdictions choose not to contribute. Pro Walk Pro Bike will necessarily focus on DC and the inner jurisdictions, and thus would be a harder sell.

**5. April 29 Pedestrian Safety Workshop at the National Press Club**

Mr. Farrell spoke to a summary sheet on the event. Over 200 people attended. The recommendations from the workshop may form the basis for a COG Board resolution, which will take place on June 11<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Farrell asked for the subcommittee's comments on the conclusions from the workshop, as well as suggestions as to who might take on these actions. Bus stop guidance would probably be a WMATA initiative.

Mr. Farrell announced a tentative date of June 11, before the COG Board meeting, for the Transportation Safety Subcommittee meeting. The role of this subcommittee is at a minimum to oversee the safety element of the Constrained Long-Range Plan. It will also give the State highway safety planners an opportunity to speak to each other, as well as discuss possible regional initiatives, such as greater consistency in crash data collections across the States.

Mr. Muchnick noted that a Virginia Safety Conference will take place that week in Portsmouth. Mr. Farrell thanked Mr. Muchnick for the reminder, and noted that the meeting would probably have to be held some other week.

**6. Draft Top Priority Unfunded Bike/Ped Project List**

Mr. Farrell spoke to the hand-out. In response to comments from the TPB Technical committee columns for additional information have been added, including total funding allocated to the project, and estimated total costs. The list is not yet complete. The list should be adopted at the next meeting of the Subcommittee, and go to the TPB in July.

**7. TPB Work Program Updates**

- **Electronic Bicycle Route-Finding Projects**

Technical issues are being resolved. We will have a Beta version out by the end of the fiscal year, June 30. Mr. Gilliland volunteered to provide testers. Mr. Goodman asked if Google maps might provide such a service. Why are we not waiting for Google? Mr. Farrell replied that it would be helpful if Google decided to provide this service, but that we had funding in our work program to provide this route-finding web site. For Google to do it would be our preferred option, since we have long-term maintenance problems with this web site in addition to short-term development problems, specifically funding to renew the Navtec data. Mr. Wetmore added that the biggest problem with doing bicycle mapping on Google is lack of underlying data in many jurisdictions. Mr. Farrell noted that some meaningful routing can be done even just with the Navtec data, using speed limits.

- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the National Capital Region**

- Schedule for Updating On-Line Project Database

The on-line database is available now. Mr. Muchnick noted that many of the projects were old or no longer valid. Mr. Farrell noted that if we update this list, we could also create a list of projects which have been implemented from this list. Mr. Farrell suggested that if the members could look at the list and send any corrections over the next two or three months, he could correct the database. Mr. Muchnick noted that there is no project number in the on-line database, and the lack of a number makes it hard to refer to a specific project. We had had a long number for each project, but did not display it. Perhaps it could be possible to display a shorter number. Perhaps a four-digit number with a decimal place after it, to allow for projects that are split.

- ADC Bike Map

Copies of the new ADC Bike Map were distributed. The next edition will be put out in five years. It was mentioned that some of the streets on the map don't exist. Mr. Farrell said that he would be happy to forward any such comments to ADC The Map Company. The base layer of streets comes from them. WABA sells these maps through its web site.

## **8. "Washington Area's Mean Streets"**

Ms. Cort spoke to a powerpoint on the Coalition for Smarter Growth's "Mean Streets" Pedestrian Safety report for the Washington region. This report uses a pedestrian danger index developed by STPP and modified by the Coalition for Smarter Growth, which looks at pedestrian fatalities per 100,000 and divides it by pedestrian exposure, which is derived from census walk to work data and bus to work data. Many pedestrian safety reports say that there are more pedestrian crashes in urban areas. But there is much more walking in urban areas. Adjusted for exposure, the most dangerous places to work are in the suburbs, specifically Fairfax County. Prince George's County has the highest rate of fatalities per 100,000, but Fairfax has a lower

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walk/bus mode share, so ends up having a higher pedestrian danger index. It was difficult to pull together comparable data between the three States. A majority of fatalities are on State roads.

The percentage of pedestrian crashes that are fatal is 85% on 40 mph roads, versus 45% on 30 mph roads, and 5% on 20 mph roads.

Due to changes in demographics, demand for walkable communities is growing. Ms. Cort suggested that speeds for pedestrian safety design speeds should not exceed 30 mph where pedestrians are present.

Mr. Wetmore said that 11% of pedestrian fatalities are on limited-access highways, and half of those entered the road in a vehicle.

The last table shows what each jurisdiction is doing to promote pedestrian safety in five key areas. Fairfax is doing a lot of those things, but has a high pedestrian danger index.

Ms. Cort suggested that resources allocated to sidewalks were inadequate. Mr. Sebastian replied that under Complete Streets policies, new streets and bridges will have bigger and better sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities than before. Mr. Wetmore agreed that Complete Streets policies, if carried out, were probably more significant than retrofit programs. Nonetheless, we should not neglect retrofits where needed.

Mr. Farrell added that one of the recommendations was that a higher priority be given to pedestrian safety. That could be operationalized by narrowing or reducing the number of travel lanes to provide sidewalks, or calming traffic.

No one in the region does performance measures for pedestrians systematically.

**9. Adjourned**