

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202 TDD: (202) 962-3213

MEETING NOTES

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, March 20, 2007

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 DES
Michael Jackson
Maryland Department of Transportation
Jim Sebastian, DDOT

Attendance:

Fatemeh Allahdoust	VDOT/NOVA
Dennis Frew	Fairfax Advocates for Better Bicycling
Peaches George	WMATA
Eric Gilliland	WABA
Michael Jackson	MDOT
Carol Kachadoorian	WMATA
Charles Kines	MCNPPC – Montgomery County
Allen Muchnick	Virginia Bicycling Federation
Carrie Sanders	City of Rockville
Jim Sebastian	DDOT
Chris Wells	Fairfax County DOT

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the March 20, 2007 Meeting
Page 2

COG Staff Attendance:

Michael Farrell
Andrew Meese

1. General Introductions.

Jim Sebastian chaired the meeting. Participants introduced themselves.

2. Review of the Minutes of the January 16, 2007 Meeting

Minutes were approved, with one change on page 8, to substitute the word “bicycle” for “pedestrian”.

3. Status of Electronic Bicycle Route-Finding (bicycle.org)

Michael Farrell, COG/TPB

Michael Farrell distributed an action item which was adopted by the Transportation Planning Board at its January 17 meeting, on the recommendation of the TPB Technical Committee put \$33,000 for a bicycle route-finding web site in the FY 2007 Unified Planning Work Program. TPB staff and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee were charged with finding the most cost-effective means of developing the system.

A follow-up meeting and conference call was held on January 25 with representatives of the Commuter Connections program including Nicholas Ramfos, Jack Hirt of the Bicycle Federation, Eric Gilliland of WABA, and Michael Farrell and Charlene Howard of COG/TPB. At the meeting it was determined that what Commuter Connections had in mind was not a true mapquest-style route-finding system, but rather a static display of a map showing bicycle routes. The GIS information that COG already has on hand would be useable for a bicycle route-finding system. And it was explained that bicycle.org was cheaper than other alternatives because bicycle.org uses google maps.

Due to the size of the contract, the need for prompt action to get some work done in FY 2007, and since MWCOG is able to justify a sole-source agreement with WABA, it was decided that WABA would be given the contract on a sole-source basis.

At this point MWCOG is waiting for a revised proposal from WABA, which will serve as a basis for the agreement.

Jim Sebastian expressed concern that nearly two months had passed since the TPB resolution funding this project, yet we still do not have a signed agreement with the contractor.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the March 20, 2007 Meeting
Page 3

4. WMATA Pedestrian and Bicycle Issues
Carol Kachadoorian, WMATA

Carol Kachadoorian discussed the results of the recent WMATA workshop on Pedestrian Access.

Chris Wells and Charles Kines expressed concern that despite a letter from Dan Tangherlini, Interim General Manager, sent on March 21st, 2006, a full year ago to Michael Knapp, Chair of the TPB, promising to designate a pedestrian and bicycle coordinator at WMATA within a year, none had yet been designated. Chris Wells reiterated that it would be highly beneficial to have a staff person solely focused on that mission. WMATA has hired a consultant to re-evaluate WMATA's structure and staffing. Jim Sebastian suggested that the consultant might want to see a copy of the letter from Dan Tangherlini, and hear some of this subcommittee's comments.

The consultant may be producing her recommendations as early as April.

Michael Jackson made some comments on format of the WMATA workshop. Michael Jackson had requested that there not be outside speakers, but instead to use the time for working group outcomes, recommendations, and consensus-building. Michael Jackson felt that more time should have been spent on determining how specific recommendations coming out of the subcommittees would be implemented. Fatemeh Allahdoust asked if the recommendations of the subcommittees would be included in the plan. Carol Kachadoorian replied that they would be. The communications team has been working on better materials for the bike locker program, including an on-line locker rental program. New racks and lockers are in the works. Fatemeh suggested that WMATA should provide a summary of the recommendations which WMATA is already implementing. WMATA should take credit for what it is already doing.

Charles Kines suggested that a lot of the work building relationships is lost if WMATA does the plan first, and then hires the coordinator. The eventual coordinator will have a learning curve, which could be shortened if that person were designated before the plan were done. Jim Sebastian said that he was grateful to have Carol Kachadoorian working on pedestrian and bicycle issues. Carol Kachadoorian agreed that it would be better to designate the pedestrian/bicycle coordinator sooner rather than later. Jim Sebastian noted that leadership within WMATA on this issue was coming from customer service.

5. Best Practices in Bicycle and Pedestrian Wayfinding in the Washington Region –

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the March 20, 2007 Meeting
Page 4

Survey Results

Michael Farrell, COG/TPB

Michael Farrell spoke to a powerpoint on Bicycle and Pedestrian Wayfinding in the Washington region. Some of these materials have been presented to the subcommittee before, but for the benefit of those not attending previously they were included in the powerpoint. The new material is the results of the survey of member jurisdictions and agencies, and some additional photos. Bicycle signage is guided by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). There are no national or State standards for pedestrian wayfinding signs, but they tend to fit into the broad categories of directional arrow signs and more elaborate map signs.

Michael Jackson has been part of the NCUTCD, which has adopted recommendations which are forwarded to the Federal Highway Administration. The most recent recommendations of the NCUTCD have not yet been adopted into the MUTCD.

Michael Jackson mentioned that he did not care for the Chicago system, since the lettering is small. The Chicago signs will not abolish the old MUTCD bicycle signs; they will just be a new option. Michael Farrell commented that he thought the Chicago changes made sense, particularly the elimination of the words "Bike Route" in favor of a bicycle symbol. The space thus freed up can be used for other purposes, such as making the print larger.

National Park Service has its own trail sign standards. Other agencies use either MUTCD or in the case of Alexandria the NCUTCD recommendations, which are not yet part of MUTCD. Carol Kachadoorian asked if there would be a move towards iconic rather than English bicycle signs. Michael Farrell replied that the MUTCD signs and the NCUTCD signs were already fairly iconic, consisting of an arrow, a destination name, a bicycle symbol, and a number indicating distance, none of which would be translated. Some of the NPS trail signs convey a great deal of information in English, and would not be understandable to a non-English-speaker.

Ten agencies responded to the bicycle survey – Alexandria, Arlington, College Park, DDOT, Frederick County, Loudoun County, MDOT, Montgomery County, National Park Service, and VDOT. All respondents had some kind of program except Loudoun County. Frederick County has a very limited program. Chris Wells remarked that Fairfax County did not respond, informed the group that Fairfax County did not have a bicycle signage or wayfinding program, but announced that one of the new bicycle coordinator's, Charlie Strunk's tasks would be to create a bicycle plan, and that one of the plan's components might be a bicycle wayfinding or signage program.

WMATA was not polled. Michael Farrell had been thinking in terms of long-distance routes, rather than internal signing systems for campuses, hospitals, metro stations, etc. However, since WMATA is a regional agency with signage that could and perhaps should be integrated with that

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the March 20, 2007 Meeting
Page 5

of the surrounding jurisdictions, perhaps WMATA should have been polled.

Fatemeh Allahdoust suggested that the Northern Virginia Regional Parks Authority should have been polled.

Loudoun has no miles of signed on-street routes, Frederick has one mile. Alexandria reported 69 miles of signed routes and bicycle lanes. Definitional issues arose – signed bike lanes often lack a wayfinding component. The survey asked for miles of signed bicycle routes, existing and planned, without defining a signed bicycle route. Andrew Meese asked if we were dealing with centerline miles or directional miles. With signed routes only centerline miles make sense; it hardly makes sense to count the miles of signed bike route twice, once for each direction. The centerline issue comes up more often with bike lanes, which are sometimes found on only one side of the street, and are always on only one side in the case of one-way streets. However, with bicycle lanes we also ask for centerline miles, for the sake of simplicity. The key is to be consistent.

Andrew Meese asked if we knew the number of signs that each jurisdiction had. Jim Sebastian remarked that that went back to standards. Michael Jackson said that he was not sure how relevant that might be, since a rural route with a low route density might not require many signs, while a dense urban area with many intersecting bicycle routes might require far more signs per mile.

The question should have been more exact, asking for example for the number of centerline miles of signed on-street bicycle routes with a directional or wayfinding component. That would eliminate bicycle lanes that are signed but which lack a wayfinding component. Off-street bike routes with a wayfinding component could be accounted for separately. Responses to the survey were cut and pasted into a table which has been made available, so you can see exactly what each respondent said. Eric Gilliland asked if there was any national effort to tabulate mileage of signed bike routes. Michael Farrell suggested that he might follow up to clarify some of these issues. Jim Sebastian suggested that we should not get too bogged down in definitions. The purpose of this survey was to find out what was being done in different jurisdictions in terms of wayfinding standards, not to tabulate the exact number of miles of signed routes. What we have gives us a general sense of what is going on. Andrew Meese said that he did not think the exact mileage of signed routes was not a critical conclusion for the purpose of the report, which is to document the signage that are being used. The point is the wayfinding signs. Where Arlington has 62 or 69 miles of signed bike route makes no difference for that purpose. Michael Farrell said that he added the question to provide some context.

Signs are typically placed where routes cross or change direction.

Jim Sebastian noted that many of the bike lanes in DC are not in a signed route, and most are not even signed, but just have pavement markings. Some bike routes do not have any wayfinding

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the March 20, 2007 Meeting
Page 6

indicators, just a sign saying “bike route”, and no pavement markings. Share the Road signs would not qualify as any kind of bike route; they are warning signs.

Most agencies do not budget separately for bicycle signs. DDOT estimate it take $\frac{1}{4}$ of an FTE to plan its bicycle route network, which encompasses 60 miles of signed routes in dense urban area. That is an indicator of the scale of planning resources needed for an active and extensive signed bicycle route program.

Interjurisdictional coordination is good – DC and Arlington align their routes with routes in other jurisdictions, and signs indicate destinations in other jurisdictions. Jurisdictions cooperate with organizations promoting long-distance routes. The State DOT’s are also developing statewide bicycle routes. There is also an effort underway to create national bicycle routes based on the statewide routes. Allen Muchnick noted that Bicycle Route 1 in Virginia is not well signed, and part of it needs to be re-routed due to closures of certain roads.

For pedestrian results, five of the ten responding agencies have pedestrian signage and wayfinding signs. Except for multiuse paths, there are no long-distance pedestrian routes. Arlington presumes that all streets are walkable and does not sign pedestrian routes. Alexandria is planning a comprehensive system of signs to replace the current “menagerie” of signs. The new system will include both directional signs and maps, and will reflect Alexandria’s historical character and identity. Arlington will also change the way its signs are constructed to make it easier to add new information. The new DC guideline, not yet adopted, suggests that there be no more than three destinations per sign.

As far as deciding where to place signs, Alexandria places signs near rail stations and in tourist areas. Arlington places signs near rail stations and major pedestrian attractors. Alexandria and Arlington are both attempting to develop more systematic ways of deciding where to place signs. DC considers priority neighborhoods, importance of the destination as numerically ranked using scoring criteria, community requests, level of pedestrian activity, and absence of existing signage. Higher-ranked locations get more signs, and farther away.

Costs vary depending on the size and elaborateness of the sign. Map signs cost significantly more than directional signs.

Arlington estimates that the staff time needed to plan an improved network of pedestrian wayfinding signs at $\frac{1}{8}$ FTE.

Interjurisdictional coordination is very limited. There are no long-distance routes, except for multi-use paths. There is no coordination on the types of signage used. Arlington and DC will sometimes list a destination on a pedestrian wayfinding sign that is outside their jurisdiction if the destination is close by.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the March 20, 2007 Meeting
Page 7

For bicycle signage and wayfinding, MUTCD provides the standard for on-road bicycle signage, and TPB members are engaged in the process of informing the MUTCD, interjurisdictional coordination of short and long-distance bicycle routes is good; each jurisdiction that has a bicycle signage and wayfinding program coordinates with the next.

There is little coordination of pedestrian routes or wayfinding, but little expressed demand or apparent need. Most pedestrian trips are short. Multi-use paths can serve long-distance pedestrian trips. Some of our jurisdictions seem to be facing a similar challenge in terms of pedestrian sign design and placement – the District of Columbia, Arlington, and Alexandria are all re-thinking their pedestrian signage and placement standards. However, each jurisdiction has its own reasons and its own priorities for putting in signs. The City of Alexandria wants signs that match its historic character; others may want something different. The District of Columbia has developed an elaborate set of placement criteria which other jurisdictions may or may not want to adopt.

The feedback from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee so far has been that regional standards for pedestrian signage and wayfinding are not necessary.

Possible actions could include better documentation of current efforts as they develop, and sharing of that information between jurisdictions. Pedestrian and bicycle wayfinding and signage might be a good topic for one of our periodic one-day training events. Local speakers could present on the best programs in the Washington region, possibly joined by an outside speaker. By sharing information we may converge on the same practices, without having to agree on a uniform standard that may not conform to local priorities.

The next one-day seminar, by prior agreement, will be on multi-use paths. If the Subcommittee agrees, however, the following seminar can address Pedestrian and Bicycle Wayfinding. It would have to take place after July, probably in Fall 2007.

Michael Jackson offered to provide a couple of examples of signs from Ireland, which marked distance in minutes from destinations.

Jim Sebastian said that the traffic engineers are not very interested in pedestrian and bicycle signage issues.

Another issue is the standard of spacing signs, height, etc. Jim Sebastian replied that MUTCD addresses those issues. However, the engineers are not always familiar with the MUTCD standards for bicycle signage. Jim Sebastian said that his office designs and plans its bicycle routes, and relies on engineering to paint and install them, sometimes sending someone from the planning office to supervise while the signs are installed. Either that, or Jim Sebastian's office creates very detailed diagrams showing exactly where each sign shall be installed. Don't rely on the engineering department to plan your signed bicycle route network. DC staff typically ride the

routes before the signs are put in.

Michael Jackson plans to implement a bicycle and pedestrian partnership planning. One of the areas he is interested in is implementing regional bicycle routes.

6. Street Smart Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Campaign

Michael Farrell, COG/TPB

Lots of turn-out at today's press conference. Eric Gilliland got cited for jaywalking. Carol Kachadoorian asked for enforcement at 16th and East-West highway, where motorists were not yielding to pedestrians. Michael Farrell complimented DDOT for creating a place where Eric Gilliland feels safe jaywalking his bike. Michael Farrell asked if Jim Sebastian could send him a before and after aerial of Thomas Circle.

Not everything has been smooth sailing on this program. Since Congress authorized DC's money late, the transit advertising will start late.

There will be a month of activities. Fifteen law enforcement agencies signed up to receive materials.

For next year, we may want to expand the program. Chris Zimmerman keeps suggesting that the program be expanded. We would need \$600,000 to do two 2-3 week waves, one for the Fall, one for the Spring, to coincide with daylight savings time. Virginia and Maryland have been getting us our contracts in August, so we can use those funds to pay for a Fall campaign, and the DC funds to pay for Spring. Eric Gilliland proposed that Street Smart could sponsor the Bike to Work Day campaign. Chris Wells was skeptical about the prospect. For Street Smart the benefit would be to get the logo out inexpensively. All three States will be asked for \$150,000. That may or may not be realistic, but there is more political pressure these days to do something, and the answer to that question is often Street Smart. Honda provided \$10,000 this year, and we may be able to get more funds for a Fall Campaign. We might hire a professional fundraiser. Fatemeh Allahdoust suggested that with increased funding might come more scrutiny. Virginia DMV has counted on VDOT to monitor the campaign. Fatemeh Allahdoust suggested that the advisory group should have more time to comment on materials. There should be fewer decisions made between MWCOG and the consultant, and more made by the advisory group. Michael Farrell replied that the advisory group decided at the advisory meeting on what the concept would be, and they were able to review draft materials in January. But when it came down to iterations of the exact images, deadline concerns did not permit review of the final materials by the full advisory committee. We can correct that, we hope, by starting earlier, pushing the planning process back to November. The contract for the consultant will also be re-bid, and VDOT and Virginia DMV will have the opportunity to sit on the selection committee. Fatemeh Allahdoust asked if she could see the distribution list for the advisory committee.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the March 20, 2007 Meeting
Page 9

Michael Farrell replied that Gaylynn Abrams of VDOT was on the distribution list.

Chris Wells said that he had mixed feelings about the change in direction in the tone of the ads. On the issue of corporate sponsorships, Chris Wells thought that Honda was an appropriate sponsor, since they emphasize pedestrian safety in the design of their automobiles. However, he noted that our ads show a Chrysler running down a pedestrian, sponsored by Honda. Chris Wells spoke in favor of a biannual campaign, but asked whether local contributions would be increased. Michael Farrell replied that we have already sent out requests for funding based on the old figure, and we have a resolution allowing us to do that, while asking for more would require a new resolution. With the current level of contributions we can still meet our match requirements. Fairfax uses some of the Street Smart materials in October already. Can we meet the logistical challenges? Michael Farrell replied that for this Fall we would use the current materials, just buying more ad time.

Michael Jackson asked whether Design House has the ability to make last-minute changes. Michael Jackson asked if he could review new bids, and if a factor of responsiveness to last-minute changes could be added. Michael Farrell replied that there is definitely an appetite for more review, especially of the final products. Rather than require Design House to turn somersaults to make last minute changes, it would be better to push the planning process forward six weeks. By the same token, it is important that everyone attend the early meetings so that they can provide the proper input at the appropriate time. People get their juices flowing and want to make changes, but the farther the process advances the more technically difficult and costly that becomes.

Carol Kachadorian suggested that another time to promote pedestrian safety might be New Years.

Andrew Meese suggested that one of the factors complicating get this done early is the timeliness and flexibility of the funding provided, as well as the administrative requirements associated with it. Staff time that could be spent on more substantive issues and timely review is being spent re-writing contracts to accommodate the flow of funding.

Items 7, 8, and 9 had to be deferred due to time.

Adjourned