

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEETING NOTES

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, May 19, 2009

TIME: 1:00 P.M.

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

CHAIR: David Goodman – Arlington Department of Environmental Services

VICE-

CHAIRS: Kristin Haldeman
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Michael Jackson
Maryland Department of Transportation
Jim Sebastian, DDOT
Fred Shaffer, MNCPPC, Prince George's County

Attendance:

Fatemeh Allahdoust	VDOT
Monica Backmon	Prince William County DOT
George Branyan	DDOT
Charlie Denney	Alta Planning
David Goodman	Arlington County DES
Kristin Haldeman	WMATA
Michael Jackson	MDOT (by phone)
Dan Janousek	MNCPPC-Prince George's County
Michael Kelly	Greenology/Bike Bank
Philip Koopman	
Allen Muchnick	Virginia Bicycling Federation
Jeff Olson	Alta Planning
Bill Orleans	
Fred Shaffer	Prince George's County
John Thomas	Frederick County Planning (by phone)

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COG Staff Attendance:

Michael Farrell
Andrew Meese
Wenjing Pu
Clara Reskovsky

1. General Introductions.

Participants introduced themselves. Ms. Haldeman chaired the meeting.

2. Review of the Minutes of the March 19, 2009 Meeting

The minutes were approved, with the note that Allen Muchnick had been in attendance.

3. Member Jurisdiction Updates

DC is putting in HAWK (High-Intensity Activated crossWalk) signals, at Georgia and Hemlock. The HAWK, which is proposed for the new Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, rests in dark until a pedestrian appears. If the application is a success more are likely to be installed.

The stimulus has provided some funds for sidewalks, about \$3.5 million, plus about \$4 million for Safe Routes to School. Twelve pilot schools are getting bike parking.

Ms. Haldeman asked if WMATA could see a copy of the list of sidewalks to be added, and provide input on missing sidewalks near bus stops. The pedestrian plan looked at roadway segments based on density, transit stations. Every street in the city was divided into low, medium, and high pedestrian potential. Almost every street with a bus stop has at least medium potential. Ms. Haldeman will send Mr. Branyan a list of bus stops that lack sidewalks or have incomplete sidewalks.

Virginia Bicycling Federation has a Rails with Trails petition. VRE now allows bikes on certain rail cars, effective last Friday. On June 6th the Woodrow Wilson Bridge path will be dedicated. The path opens at 1 p.m.

Frederick County is updating its adequate public facilities ordinance to include some bike, pedestrian, and transit provisions. The Countywide comprehensive plan will include a Complete Streets policy.

Rails to Trails is holding a conference today. Arlington's Four Mile run trail will open at 10

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a.m. on Saturday, May 30th. Mr. Farrell will forward an invitation.

Arlington has put together a list of tips for sharing trails with bicyclists and pedestrians.

Arlington has applied for a TLC grant to regularize and clean up inconsistent trails controls on the W&OD. Bike rack installations are ongoing. Bike shelters will be built in Shirlington and Ballston. Arlington is collecting bicycle and pedestrian data on behalf of a national bicycle and pedestrian documentation project. Mr. Goodman encouraged other jurisdictions to participate.

Mr. Jackson announced that the League of American Bicyclists has re-evaluated Maryland's standing among bicyclist states. Maryland is now ranked 16th, up from 35th. Maryland is working with Toole Design to create a state-wide survey of school administrators with regard to walking and bicycling to school.

4. Bike Sharing: Smartbike

City Manager Dan Tangherlini, who had been a bike sharing advocate, is moving on to a position with the US Treasury Department as Assistant Secretary, and Neil Albert will be the new City Manager. Nonetheless, bike sharing in the District of Columbia will soon be expanded dramatically.

DDOT is negotiating a contract with Clear Channel to go to 90 bike stations with 1200 bicycles. However, due to reduced ad revenue in the recession Clear Channel is hesitant to expand the program. Currently DDOT is proposing to run the program themselves through a licensing agreement with Clear Channel.

Should these negotiations fail, a fall-back option might be to deploy a system that was recently launched in Montreal, called Bixi. Bixi has some attractive features, such as lower installation costs.

However, that is not the preferred option, since DDOT would prefer not to have two systems, Smart Bike and Bixi, running side by side. DDOT is speaking with Arlington and Alexandria to explore the potential for a regional bike sharing system. The bike sharing expansion will be funded by a combination of stimulus and CMAQ, \$6 million.

Mr. Goodman asked what the logistics of making bike sharing regional might be. Mr. Branyan replied that he was not sure what Jim Sebastian's thinking was on the topic. Chris Hamilton in Arlington and Jim Sebastian at DDOT are the most knowledgeable about the status of talks regarding compatibility. Bike sharing systems such as Smart Bike and Bixi are proprietary, and the bike docking systems are not compatible.

One potential problem with bike sharing is the tendency for bicycles to be left at docking stations at the bottom of the hill. In Barcelona the pricing structure has been changed to counter that problem.

One possibility might be to get a nonprofit to operate a bike sharing program interjurisdictionally.

Smart bike membership plateaued during the winter. Every bike is used once per day on average. WABA has suggested that short-term memberships be allowed, for the benefit of tourists. The Montreal system has the ability to buy a one-day membership with a credit card. However, that system may require a certain kind of chip in the credit card, which not all credit cards have.

The Smartbike bikes are well-maintained; only one has been stolen, and they serve a range of users well.

Mr. Farrell suggested that it would be good if DDOT would obtain a clear license for the system from Clear Channel, so that it could be expanded without participation from Clear Channel. Mr. Denney suggested that employers such as the federal government could purchase Smartbike memberships for their employees.

5. General Services Administration Study: “Bicycling to the Future Federal Workplace”

Mr. Olson and Mr. Denney spoke to a powerpoint presentation. About a year ago the General Services Administration put out a call for a visioning for the future federal workplace in the Washington region. Alta will be working on proposals relative to bicycling to the federal workplace. One of the tasks will be to re-form the federal task force on bicycling and walking, which will serve as an advisory board for this project. WABA is surveying federal workers. The hope is to get responses from non-cyclists in the federal workplace, with the assistance of the Office of Personnel Management. One of the results so far is that 15% of respondents said they would bike to work if their boss did.

Alta is reviewing existing programs and policies, and reviewing best practices. Current programs are largely employee-driven; there are no policies requiring bicycle parking. The outcome will be a set of recommendations for the General Services Administration to adopt for federal facilities in this region, but the recommendations will likely have broader applicability. Requirements and design standards for bike parking, showers, etc. are likely products. Bike sharing within the federal government will also be examined. Fleet bicycles could help increase use of bicycles by federal workers to go to meetings, etc. Many federal governments in the District of Columbia are within easy bicycling distance of one another. Better trail access to suburban federal facilities is another possibility, which in some cases could be provided just by unchaining a gate. Commuter Connections will also be asked to provide input to the project.

The survey is currently on WABA’s web site, and federal employees are encouraged to fill it out.

Ms. Allahdoust asked for a copy of the powerpoint. Mr. Farrell replied that he would post a copy on the web site.

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Mr. Cole of Montgomery County Parks and Planning announced that NIH will provide land for trails around its property.

Federal agencies have not yet implemented the bicycle commuting benefit. The benefit is small (\$20/month), people find it cumbersome, and employees are not eligible for both bicycle and transit commuting benefits in the same month. Alta Planning has not been able to implement this benefit.

The military will be included in this study.

Barriers to bicycling will be part of the survey.

A report was recently released on barriers to bicycling on federal public lands, primarily natural parks. Mr. Branyan noted that even in an urban context, near Metro, it was difficult to get the National Park Service to provide sidewalks.

6. COG Household Travel Survey

Ms. Reskowsky spoke to a powerpoint presentation. The survey was done in the TPB modeled Washington region, on 11,000 households, plus 3,000 in the Baltimore region for a total of 14,000. A higher sample rate was done in areas with high pedestrian volumes. An address-based sample was used to overcome the problem of households without land line telephones. The survey took place over 14-month period, between February 2007 and March 2008. This survey has a much larger sample size than 1994's. Group quarters such as dormitories, prisons, and barracks are excluded. Discrepancies between distance, mode, and speed were used to detect erroneous responses.

Short bike trips were often part of a trip chain, which tended to artificially bring down the average bike trip distances. Mr. Muchnick asked if we knew by how much trip chaining reduced average bike trip distances.

People seem to be more flexible about switching between non-driving modes than switching out of driving to another mode. DC's walk commute mode share has decreased relative to 1994. DC has more people reverse commuting by car to the suburbs. Jurisdiction-level numbers conceal wide variations within the jurisdiction. Bicycling to Work increased in the central jurisdictions, and in Frederick County.

Mr. Farrell asked how much of a difference was statistically significant. Exact values have not been calculated for all the jurisdictions, and sampling rates are not the same in all jurisdictions.

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The Del Ray community (as an origin) and the new US Patent and Trademark Office (as a destination) showed major increases. There tend to be long trips to the District of Columbia along the Mt. Vernon Trail.

In some areas walk and bike numbers are increasing rapidly due to increased density, such as at Columbia Heights, where the new Target store has been built.

Week-end travel is under-documented. New York City is contemplating a week-end travel survey.

The form had a category for “loop trips”, such as dog walking.

The survey asks people what they did on a particular day. Mr. Branyan was one of the people surveyed.

More processing will be done on the data, and documentation will be created on how to use it.

Carpooling is declining, both in the region and nationally. Subsidized Smarttrip cards have drawn people into transit. Flex time tends to disrupt car pools. And changed work arrangements, with more people serving as contractors and changing employment locations frequently, also tends to work against car pools.

Mr. Goodman suggested that we may want to hear a follow-up in a few months.

Getting information on smaller jurisdictions may be difficult due to small sample size. In addition, the data is broken down by Traffic Analysis Zones, whose borders do not always coincide with political boundaries. It would be possible to break down counties into large sections, such as Prince George’s inside and outside the beltway.

TPB Program Updates

- Street Smart Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Campaign

The campaign has been completed. Arlington, Alexandria, the District of Columbia, Fairfax, and Montgomery have reported on their enforcement efforts, and we hope to hear from Prince William as well. Enforcement data will be compiled and included in the annual report.

TPB Chair Charles Jenkins suggested at the TPB Technical Committee that the resources currently devoted to Street Smart go to hard improvements. Mr. Farrell said that he promised to bring that idea back to the bicycle and pedestrian subcommittee. It could work something like the Transportation Land Use Connections program, whereby we would hand out funds on a competitive basis for planning for site-specific improvements.

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Mr. Goodman added that Mr. Zimmerman was concerned that not all jurisdictions are contributing. Mr. Farrell replied that he felt that a concern about free riding was not justified, except in the case of Prince George's. We do not purchase any transit advertising in Frederick or Loudoun, and Loudoun does not get most of the radio. For the most part we are spending money in the jurisdictions that are contributing. Mr. Goodman said that Mr. Zimmerman felt the program needed to be expanded by an order of magnitude. Mr. Meese noted that even if all TPB member jurisdictions provided their full suggested amount, that would not increase the budget by an order of magnitude unless federal funding were increased proportionately, which does not seem likely.

Ms. Haldeman asked if any action was needed. Mr. Farrell replied that he wanted a reaction to Mr. Jenkins' proposal.

Mr. Jackson noted that he was on TRB's bicycle committee, and he suggested a workshop on social marketing to promote bicycling. Perhaps the McAndrews could present on the effectiveness of Street Smart in promoting bicycling. If we were able to put on such a workshop, it might overcome some skepticism to social marketing.

Mr. Muchnick felt that any safety campaign needs a balance between education and engineering, so he was opposed to eliminating public education in favor of more engineering. But what NHTSA says is that education is not effective without enforcement, so enforcement needs to be stepped up. Ms. Allahdoust also spoke against eliminating public education. There are spin-off benefits of this campaign; it encourages other jurisdictions and agencies to use these materials in their own traffic safety campaigns.

Mr. Farrell noted that it is part of the Maryland State Highway Safety plan to expand the Street Smart campaign, and the Baltimore region will spend \$100,000 using the Street Smart materials. In general, the agencies that are providing funding are happy with the program and find value in it, while those that are not tend to be critical.

Mr. Meese suggested that we try to tell a positive story, that jurisdictions with a multifaceted safety approach have better numbers. Mr. Farrell said that agencies that contribute to Street Smart tend to do other things to promote safety as well.

Mr. Branyan agreed that it would not make sense to spend education money on hard improvements, since it would buy so little. However, to bring fatality numbers down we need more enforcement, and more publicity about enforcement.

Enforcement numbers are being gathered, and they will be presented to the TPB. Mr. Muchnick suggested that we get more funding for enforcement. Mr. Farrell replied that that would require an order of magnitude increase in the budget. Hitherto we have relied on voluntary contributions

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of enforcement. To fund significant enforcement we would need to double the overall budget, and in order to do that we would need to double both the State and the local contributions. It would also recast the program, and require more administrative cost.

Mr. Branyan suggested that pedestrian safety enforcement should not be an overtime-only event. Even in Arlington it's just a reallocation of resources for a short period of time. Perhaps the enforcement waves should come more frequently. Perhaps we could bring the enforcement seminars on the road, taking them to local jurisdictions. Mr. Farrell suggested that perhaps we could do three, one for each State. Leadership from the top of the law enforcement community is obviously important. Mr. Farrell noted that he was asking the TPB, the CAO's and other groups for more enforcement. Is there a better way to quantify that? Mr. Branyan suggested we could ask the police departments to block out a certain amount of time, perhaps one week per quarter. Mr. Farrell noted that the media model had been to have simultaneous enforcement and media. Also, kick-off events cannot be done more than twice per year. Perhaps we could do a press release for the quarterly events, to get a note in the media, along with contact information for police officers who would be available for interviews.

- Addition of Blog Capability to the Subcommittee Web Site

This is likely to be done soon on a COG-wide basis. Committee members will be able to post comments on the web site.

- Bike to Work Day

Bike to Work Day took place Friday, May 15th. 8000 people registered, and more than that probably showed up since it was a nice day. Record numbers appeared at the various pit stops. It would be helpful to track actual participation over time, as well as numbers of registrants. The goal for next year will likely be 10,000 participants.

- Education/Training Events

Toole Design has agreed to do a half-day training seminar on the new AASHTO bike design guide in June 15th, from noon to 5 p.m. It is on the COG web site and you can register for it now. An agenda will be made available later.

Mr. Farrell spoke with Jamie Bridges on liability and bicycle facilities. The Baltimore Metropolitan Council did a good event, with a paid speaker, but only ten people showed up. Mr. Farrell asked the group for their feedback on the amount of demand for an event like this. Mr. Branyan said that the District was not interested. Mr. Farrell suggested that we could do a medium type of event, such as scheduling one of the local speakers to present to a regular bicycle and pedestrian subcommittee, to help gauge interest.

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Mr. Jackson said that attendance in Baltimore suffered because it was scheduled on December 11th, which was a bad time. Mr. Jackson said that there was interest in this topic on a national level. Mr. Farrell said that he would follow up with Mr. Jackson to see if a good panel of local speakers could be put together.

Ms Allahdoust asked if Ms. Englehart could present to the bicycle and pedestrian subcommittee in July on her findings from her European tour of pedestrian facilities.

Another suggestion for an education topic for next year is how to reach minority communities.

7. Adjourned