National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEETING NOTES

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, September 16, 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:

Fatemeh Allahdoust	Virginia Department of Transportation
Cheryl Cort	Coalition for Smarter Growth
Tim Davis	City of Frederick
Charlie Denney	Alta Planning
Jeff Dunckel	Montgomery County
Melissa Esposito	Arlington County DES
David Goodman	Arlington County DES
Kristin Haldeman	WMATA
Jeffrey Hermann	Fairfax County DOT
Michael Jackson	MDOT
Yon Lambert	City of Alexandria
Larry Marcus	ATCS, PLC
Allen Muchnick	Virginia Bicycling Federation
Jim Sebastian	DDOT
Charlie Strunk	Fairfax County

John Thomas   Frederick County (teleconference)
John Wetmore   Perils for Pedestrians

COG Staff Attendance:
Michael Farrell
Andrew Meese

1. General Introductions.

Ms. Haldeman chaired the meeting. Participants introduced themselves.

2. Review of the Minutes of the July 15, 2008 Meeting

Approval of the minutes was deferred to the next meeting.

3. Member Jurisdiction Updates

Arlington will submit a grant application for the Route 50 bike trail project. Arlington last week took part in a national bicycle and pedestrian data collection program, with staff and volunteers doing bicycle counts. Arlington will revise its bike map soon. The Four Mile Run trail connection will open in April. Arlington will install some covered bike parking in Clarendon.

WMATA has funded 300 new racks. WMATA continues to study its station areas to improve pedestrian access.

Frederick County will incorporate complete streets policies into the County comprehensive plan. Walk to School events are being planned. Frederick City is looking at bicycle parking. A bike map project is in the works.

Car-Free Day is September 22nd. DC will be closing a street near Gallery Place. The Union Station bike station will start construction next week.

4. Multimodal Performance Measures

Mr. Marcus spoke to a powerpoint presentation on multimodal performance measures for new developments, a project which is being done for ITE.

Impact analysis for development currently focuses on motor vehicle traffic. Development review and adequate public facilities ordinances prohibit smart growth or transit-oriented development, because the current models usually predict excessive congestion.

The City of Rockville is adopting a more comprehensive approach, which will give credit for expected mode shifts to walk, bike, and transit in a transit-oriented development.

Rockville is a suburban area becoming an urban area. Rockville needed performance measures for pedestrian safety, accessibility, and connectivity.

Master plans often say the right things but lack teeth. Rockville has adopted specific goals and performance measures for each goal. Development must adhere to those goals, and meet certain requirements for pedestrian safety and accessibility.

This development review process, as opposed to a typical traffic impact study, looks at off-site effects for all modes of transportation, not just cars. Depending on the scale, a new development may be required to improve pedestrian safety and access within ¼ mile.

In Arlington off-site pedestrian improvements may be paid for by developers, but on a more ad hoc basis, as a part of negotiations.

Pedestrian accessibility can be measured by the software, based on the pedestrian network. It takes into account delays at the intersections based on signal timings.

Bike accessibility is the hardest to model, due to varying speeds or various facilities. Mr. Farrell suggested that sidewalks not be modeled as bicycle facilities in central business districts due to heavy pedestrian traffic.

Town centers have higher requirements for pedestrian access than other areas. Town centers also allow higher congestion levels.

The City of Rockville web site has the full methodology.
http://www.rockvillemd.gov/residents/traffic/ctr.htm

5. Top Priority Unfunded Bicycle and Pedestrian Project List

Mr. Farrell spoke to a handout with a revised list of top priority unfunded bicycle and pedestrian projects. The major change is that the columns in the table now add from left to right. The title of the Frederick County project was changed to Phase I Monocacy River Greenway project. Any further technical changes should be sent to Mr. Farrell by September 23rd. A further caveat will be added stating that this project may not include all work being done on the facilities. Ms. Allahdoust suggested that cost estimates should be stated as being in dollars of a specified fiscal year. Costs will be stated in FY 2008 dollars. Mr. Sebastian was pleased that this form records progress on long-term projects such as the Metropolitan Branch Trail.

This list will be presented to the TPB. This will be a chance to highlight elements of the projects, such as perhaps the disagreement with SHA over the use of drainage tunnels under I-495 for the Henson Creek Trail in Prince George's County. If the tunnels can't be used for a trail, then the project probably can't be connected to the Suitland Metro station or any future Suitland Parkway trail. Mr. Jackson offered to follow up with Fred Shaffer on that issue.

Mr. Muchnick suggested that the project descriptions be modified to name the staff person who suggested the project. Ms. Allahdoust suggested that more context be added in terms of naming the specific plans which include each project.

6. **Other TPB Program Updates**

- Update on the Bicycle Route-Finding Project

TPB and Commuter Connections Staff have made significant progress working out the data issues for this project. In order to improve the accuracy of the trail data. Mr. Farrell retraced the routes of all the bike trails using a tool known as Google pedometer. We hope to have a viable web site running fairly soon. In the long run, we hope that Google will solve our problems by creating a national bicycle route-finding tool, similar to Google walk.

Ms. Allahdoust suggested that the bicycle and pedestrian subcommittee review the web site before it is released to the public. Mr. Farrell replied that we certainly would do so, although this program will soon be primarily a Commuter Connections program, which will host and maintain it. The web site will be labeled as Beta model with appropriate cautions.

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Project Database

The publicly accessible database is posted as part of the long-rang transportation plan on the COG web site. In response to comments, we have made the agency ID number visible, and generated a COG ID number for each project as well.

There is a password-protected link which can be sent out, which will allow the recipient to modify any of the projects in the database. Changes will not be made to the public database until COG staff reviews them.

Information in the database is currently more than two years old. It should be updated. DDOT will update its projects first. Once we have made sure that everything works, the other agencies will be asked to update their projects.

In terms of value-added, we can use this updated database to show what has been done since the plan was adopted, in terms of projects completed, funds expended, etc.

Mr. Sebastian will update his projects by October 1st.

Any comments on the format or the search function should be submitted to Mr. Farrell by October 1st.

Once the new list has been completed, Mr. Farrell will run a query between the old list and the new list to see what has changed.

- Street Smart

Radio will run for two weeks starting November 9. By September 26 all orders for materials should be submitted. The press event will be scheduled based on Montgomery County officials' availability. As far as funding, we are on track to match last year, which was $738,000. We will present the results of last year's campaign to the TPB in October. We can also use the occasion to remind agencies that have not contributed that they still have the opportunity to contribute.

Mr. Goodman announced that Arlington has put its bicycle map onto Google earth. The user has the option to activate bike lane layers, etc. It can zoom to almost any level of detail.

Mr. Farrell replied that it might not be possible to scale such a project up to the regional level. Mr. Sebastian suggested putting the ADC Map data onto Google Earth. Mr. Farrell replied that we do not have that data in GIS format. We mark up maps and send them to ADC the Map Company.

Mr. Sebastian suggested that COG digitize that data. With the pro version of Google Earth shape files can be uploaded easily.

Mr. Meese expressed concern about the possible cost of digitizing and creating new shapefiles for the ADC Bike Map bike facilities. Mr. Meese pointed out that COG has still not successfully completed the bike route finding web site, despite expenditure of much time and resources.

7. **"A Level Playing Field at Last: Equal Footing for Bicyclists and Pedestrians in the Highway Capacity Manual"**

Mr. Farrell briefly discussed a presentation given at Pro Walk Pro Bike on multimodal level of service in the 2010 Highway Capacity Manual. Pedestrian level of service will not simply be a measure of pedestrian congestion, but will use quality of service measures developed by the Florida DOT. Multimodal level of service will also be incorporated into the software, so agencies will get a multimodal level of service automatically. We will have a way of measuring not simply whether pedestrian facilities are being provided, but how good those facilities are.

The Principals listed on the powerpoint, and can be contacted for further information. Mr. Wetmore observed that this new highway capacity manual is very timely, since there is a growing emphasis on using performance measures to justify projects.

8.   Announcements and Other Business

Car-free day has a steering committee. Members are encouraged to promote participation. 3300 people have signed up so far. The goal is 10,000.

9.   Adjourned