**MEETING NOTES**

**BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE**

**DATE**: Tuesday, March 19, 2024

**TIME**: 1:00 p.m.

**PLACE**: VIRTUAL

**CHAIR**: Heidi Mitter, VDOT

**Attendance:**

Bryan Barnett-Woods City of Rockville

Bryce Barrett Prince William County DOT Bike/Ped Coordinator

Sandra Brecher Montgomery County

Andrew Bossi Montgomery County DOT

Hannah Cacner Fairfax County

Alexandra Carroll City of Alexandria

Presley Connor DDOT

Mary Dallou Director of Active Transportation, Arlington Commuter Services

Lauren Delmare,

Active Transportation

Section Chief Fairfax County DOT

Mike Doyle Alexandria Families for Safer Streets

David Edmondson City of Frederick

Nate Evans Active Transportation Planner, Maryland Department of Transportation

Seth Garland WMATA

Elwyn Gonzalez Transportation Planner, Arlington DES

Frank Griffin NVTA

Laura Ghosh Loudoun County DOT

Michael Hackman City of Gaithersburg, Long Range Planner

Wade Holland Montgomery County

Tiffany Jennings Bicycle & Pedestrian Program Manager, Prince George's County DPW&T

Jill Kaneff Northern Virginia Regional Commission

Joe Kelley Frederick County

DPW&T

Kalli Krumpos Capital Trails Coalition

Brian Leckie VDOT

Heidi Mitter VDOT NOVA District Bike/Ped Coordinator

Kevin O’Brien Washington Area Bicyclist Association

David Patton Arlington Division of Transportation

George Phillips Prince William County

Chloe Ritter City of Fairfax

Shane Sarver MDOT SHA

Cynthia Spriggs MDOT/MVA/MHSO, Pedestrian/Bicycle/Speed Program Manager

Brian Shelton Active Transportation Manager, Arlington County

Ann Welch DDOT

Nicole Wynands Fairfax County

Meg Young MDOT

Ryan Yowell WMATA

**COG Staff Attendance:**

Michael Farrell

Pierre Gaunaurd

Andrew Meese

Janie Nham

Jessica Storck

John Swanson

1. **General Introductions.**
2. **Review of the November meeting notes**

January 30 meeting notes were approved.

1. **Jurisdictional Updates**

Fairfax is in the process of updated bike parking requirements. Fairfax has silver status as a bike friendly employer. PWC is updating its design manual including bike parking and multimodal and a Safe Streets for all Action Plan. Loudoun County is also kicking off a Safe Streets for All Action Plan. The VA Trails Office will release new state trails plan soon.

Meg Young has joined MDOT as the Deputy Director for Active Transportation.

Prince George’s County will participate in Bike to Work Day. The Prince George’s Bike and Pedestrian Network Plan is now live and public. Updated link to Access the Prince George's County, MD Bike and Pedestrian Network Plan. <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/1412a742ad244514b26ff688615cb81e>

Cheswick the Crab Story Book is being released in Montgomery County public schools. Monday May 13 will be the MD Highway Safety Summit.

Montgomery County is sponsoring eight additional Bike to Work Day pit stop. There will be a survey on Micromobility in Montgomery County by Populus. Gaithersburg will change one of its pit stop locations. Gaithersburg recently complete a Safe Routes to School Study. City of Rockville was awarded a grant for a feasibility study for a pedestrian/bicycle bridge. There are also two new TAP projects starting. The city has also received a bid for bike/ped counters. May 11 is safety day in Montgomery County. It will be held at 800 Hungerford Drive. Street Smart will be present.

Mr. Swanson of COG announced that MDOT would open the solicitation process for TAP on April 1 and close on May 15.

DDOT has just kicked off its strategic bike plan process, which will lead into its longer term 5 year bike plan. DDOT will soon release a web site showing its bike projects. The bike lane project on K Street NE between 6th and 8th is complete. Other important connections were recently completed. Maine Avenue has recently received temporary tactical sidewalk for cherry blossom season.

Ryan Yowell is new to WMATA; he will be working on active transportation issues.

The regional trail count program is still active; Laurel Hammig of NPS is still the contact. We may invite her to present to this Subcommittee soon.

1. **Alexandria Vision Zero/Duke Street Project**

Alexandra Carroll screen spoke to a powerpoint. Alexandria had no traffic fatalities in 2023. Alexandria’s low numbers of fatalities and serious injuries make it more difficult to identify unsafe locations and win support to make changes.

On Duke Street the slip ramp was a point of contention, but due to high traffic volumes and the need to accommodate large right-turning vehicles, the city retained the slip ramp, but reducing it from two lanes to one lane.

Alexandria has numerous safety and multimodal projects under way, such as road diets, corridor improvements, and intersection crash safety audits. All the information is available on the Alexandria Vision Zero web page.

Ms. Mitter noted that the deadline for Smart Scale in Virginia is Spring-Summer. Mr. Farrell remarked that he had seen numerous interesting proposals coming out of Alexandria recently, including this project which won Capsite’s project the year award. Mr. Farrell asked if there had been any public pushback on some of these innovative projects, especially those slowing traffic. Ms. Carroll replied that there was a spectrum of responses. It's the responsibility of the city to explain why it is proposing what it is proposing. Alexandria is a well-educated city so reason often prevails.

1. **Arlington Trails Dashboard**

Mr. Gonzalez spoke to a Powerpoint on the Arlington Trails Dashboard and Pavement Condition Index. Ms. Mitter expressed her support and interest in this dashboard, which provides information for trail maintenance. Pavement condition is rated based on the number of irregularities, as measured by a laser mounted in a vehicle. Pavement conditions helps prioritize maintenance. Tree roots are the biggest factor in trail deterioration. Nonetheless trails tend to need resurfacing less often than roads.

Ms. Mitter about the names of the contractors. Atlas 10 and Euro Veritas. There are not a lot of contractors who do this as a specialty.

Are tree roots a speed mitigation strategy? No, the intent is to move trails further from the trail so as to avoid damaging the pavement, while maintaining shared. Bumpy pavement is an unsafe feature.

Mr. Farrell said that a lot of the old trails were built pretty thin. Would it be effective to put down thicker pavement? That’s true, but it would increase cost.

Mr. Farrell asked how much money was being spent on this evaluation effort versus paving?

The cost of the study is about $12,000. Not sure how it compares to the rest of the budget. It would be helpful to be able to tell people what percent of the maintenance is being spent on the pavement index and study.

Ms. Brecher asked about studies of safety treatments for trails, such as wider trails or guardrails. This study doesn’t cover those issues. Ms. Brecher asked about pavement materials and environmental friendliness. There will be some examination of trail surface in a study of the Custis Trail, especially in areas that flood frequently.

DDOT sometimes uses permeable pavement. Can this pavement index assess other pavement types? As of right now, Arlington is just looking at asphalt. But they may consider other materials in the future.

Ms. Mitter suggested that if DDOT or another agency want to share information on maintenance, we’d be happy to hear it. Ms. Mitter said that pavement thickness usually follow standard. However where vehicles are expected to drive on the shared use path, those segment would be thicker pavement.

1. **National Capital Trail Network Adopted**

The TPB adopted the National Capital Trail Network in February as described in the web page. The NCTN web site includes an interactive map. TPB also instructed TPB staff to allocate more technical assistance funds towards projects that will advance the National Capital Trail Network. TPB staff is also instructed to provide a status update every two years, or less. We will likely update the NCTN again once a better mapping tool is available, so in less than two years. TPB also expressed a desire for an increased rate of progress in implementing the planned National Capital Trail Network.

Mr. Farrell suggested that staff attend the relevant funding workshops that the States are holding on the new federal funds that are available. Another idea is to develop a list of “shovel-ready” projects that would advance the National Capital Trail Network. Robert McCartney, formerly of the Washington Post, held a podcast recently on the National Capital Trail Network. Heidi Mitter put a link in the chat to the National Capital Trail Network web site. Ms. Mitter said that the web site and interactive map were helpful in her work. A fully connected network will give us better mobility than disconnected projects.

Mr. Farrell mentioned that the Capital Trails network was able to coordinate a RAISE grant applications for a series of projects around the eastern edge of DC, which involved DDOT, Montgomery Parks, and Prince George’s County. Another possibility would be for COG to facilitate grant applications, though we would likely need a new staffer for that. Ms. Mitter said that a funding informational workshop might still be helpful. VDOT hosted a funding workshop a couple of years ago but hasn’t done one this year. Highlighting a list of shovel-ready projects would also be helpful.

1. **Other TPB Program Updates**

The air-quality conforming phase of Visualize 2050 has gone out for public comment. Not a lot of bicycle and pedestrian projects in this phase. Comment period is through the end of March.

FY 2025-26 TAP project recommendations will be presented to the TPB tomorrow. They’re posted on the meeting page of the TPB. Mr. Swanson said that there are 15 projects. There are a lot of Safe Routes to School projects. VDOT was helpful in vetting the projects. The list has been pasted into the chat.

Mr. Farrell spoke to the brief powerpoint on the spring Street Smart campaign. The Spring campaign has a smaller budget than last Fall’s campaign. Fall is the peak period for pedestrian crashes, and we are also setting aside some funds to develop new campaign materials.

The paid media for Spring will be bus ads. Bus ads have good recall rates, at 41%. The other paid element is the Virtual Reality challenge events, an element that we stopped during Covid. There will be three events, on in each state. Typical locations are shopping malls. We put out a car with a virtual reality course which highlights typical high risk situations, and get the drivers to see how many pedestrians they can spot. What the driver sees is projected on a screen for the audience. The testimonial wall is also present. Because this is a staff event, it is higher cost than just the testimonial wall. We will try to use these events to drive media coverage.

To make room in the budget, with the consent of DC, we did not hold a traditional press event in the Spring. We will hold one event on Sunday April 21 at the Springfield Town Center. The others have not yet been finalized. Typically the host jurisdiction and location decide on the locations. The consultant proposes possible locations, often locations that they have worked with before. Ms. Brecher said that the Maryland event will likely occur at the May 11 Safety Day event that Wade Holland mentioned.

The pedestrian enforcement workshop will take place in May. The Micromobility event has not yet been scheduled.

Ms. Mitter announced that May meeting would be held in person, on Tuesday May 21. There will be a hybrid option. Bike racks are available in the basement. Use of transit is encouraged. Parking in the basement is $15/day. The meeting information will be sent out closer to the event, with an RSVP for lunch. We have several rooms available that can accommodate hybrid.

1. **Announcements and Other Business**

VDOT will hold a Spring public hearing on April 22 in Leesburg.

Ms. Ghosh had a question about width of the trail versus buffer from traffic for trails. Mr. Farrell said that while in area with light pedestrian and bicycle traffic, you can get by with a narrow facility, for National Capital Trail Network purposes the standard is 10’, or 8’ for existing facilities. Ms. Mitter said that there was no prohibition on reducing the buffer zone, but there are issues with eliminating it, since signs, etc. may need to be placed near the curb.

Ms. Brecher had a question about sidewalk riding. In Maryland sidewalk riding is not allowed unless the jurisdiction permits it. What are the policies in other jurisdiction regarding e-bikes on the sidewalks? They are prohibited in Montgomery County.

**Adjourned**