

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEETING NOTES

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, September 19, 2006

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
Paul DeMaio	Arlington DES
Charlie Denney	Arlington DES
Eric Gilliland	WABA
Kristin Haldeman	WMATA
Michael Jackson	MDOT
Rich Metzinger	National Park Service
Allen Muchnick	Virginia Bicycling Federation
Jeff Peel	WABA
Jim Sebastian	District of Columbia
Charlie Strunk	Fairfax County
Chris Wells	Fairfax County

COG Staff Attendance:

Michael Farrell
Gerald Miller

1. General Introductions.

Participants introduced themselves.

2. Review of the Minutes of the July 18, 2006 Meeting

Minutes were approved, with “agency staff” under item 4 changed to “attendees” at the suggestion of Kristin Haldeman.

3. On-line Bicycle Mapping and Route-Finding

Jeff Peel, WMATA, Jack Hirt, Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin (by teleconference)

Jeff Peel and Jack Hirt discussed the features of bicycle.org, an on-line bicycle route-finding software. Portland, Milwaukee, and Seattle use it. WMATA provided a hand-out summarizing the data needs, cost, and schedule to implement bicycle.org in the Washington region. According to Jack Hirt, the necessary data to evaluate the suitability of a road for bicycling exists in GIS format, but it would need to be standardized. Kristin Haldeman asked if the Navtec street layer was too expensive for this region. Jack Hirt replied that the Navtec layer lacked some needed information, such as speed limits, width, and traffic volume. You would have to join those layers to the Navtec data, and that would have to be done every year when the Navtec data is updated. Moreover, Navtec is expensive. Navtec is not suitable due to cost and high maintenance expense. WMATA has the Navtec data and uses it internally, but probably does not have permission to make it publicly available.

Eric Gilliland asked what road data the Council of Governments had. Michael Farrell replied that tiger files were in use, but that he was not sure exactly what was being used by Commuter Connections. Jack Hirt replied that tiger line data is fairly complete, and free, but that it is not very positionally accurate. The tiger lines won't precisely correspond with the lines on google maps or mapquest. So if you use tiger lines in many cases the route generated by a tiger line will not exactly match the roadway. Another problem is that you have to join the other base attributes that are needed, such as traffic volumes, speed limits, and whether the road has a bike lane. The easiest way to add the data is through a spatial join, but due to the spatial inaccuracy of the tiger files, that join is difficult, and introduces another possible source of errors.

Charlie Denney said that for Fairfax and Loudoun VDOT has a road layer. Fatemeh Allahdoust replied that VDOT had a GIS data layer, but that it was not yet complete. Jack Hirt said that

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reducing the number of data sources for this effort will make it less complicated. One advantage of using VDOT data is that Virginia is divided from the rest of the region by the Potomac river, so there are not too many connections to worry about. Paul Demaio of Arlington added that he had sent Jack Hirt a data CD. Jack Hirt said that the Arlington data was fairly complete, except for the fact that the bike trail layer was separate from the road layer. Another problem with putting bike trails into the road layer is that every intersection does not provide access to the trail. The access points would need to be identified and made part of the layer. WABA volunteers could provide some of this information.

The next step is to see whether COG wants to fund this project. WABA has provided a cost estimate. Michael Farrell said that provided the data exists, and the cost is acceptable, that he can make the case that COG should fund it. The likely cost is about \$10,000 up front to gather the data and get it in a format usable by bicycle.org. Monthly maintenance would cost \$500 - \$1,000.

Eric Gilliland asked if the site could be hosted with Commuter Connections, and made a part of their web site. Jack Hirt replied that it was definitely possible.

Kristin Haldeman asked if anyone had more questions for Jack Hirt. Chris Wells asked if grade or terrain were one of the data elements needed. Jack Hirt replied that in Milwaukee they did not have that data available, and Milwaukee is flat. It could be incorporated, but Charlie Denney felt it would not add much value in the D.C. region. Bicycle level of service is typically available in some jurisdictions and not others. Moreover, Milwaukee is not always happy with the level of service ratings. It doesn't take into account trip generators, or a wide outer lane that provides space for bikes.

Charlie Denney asked how much time it would take to get this running. It will take Jack Hirt 200 hours to do the base GIS work, but once that it done bicycle.org can put it up within a few days. But the site should be tested and tweaked before it is made available to the public. In terms of calendar time we need five months.

Michael Farrell suggested that we should have a follow-up meeting devoted to this issue, including representatives of WABA, Commuter Connections, Jack Hirt, and some of the interested jurisdictional staff.

It would be ideal to have this system in place by Bike to Work Day 2007, due to the surge of interest and new bike commuters.

- Michael Farrell will meeting with Nicholas Ramfos, who heads the Commuter Connections program, to discuss the possibility of Commuter Connections funding for a bicycle.org capability in the Washington region.

4. Dutch Bicycle Routes and Wayfinding
Eric Gilliland, WABA

Eric Gilliland spoke to a presentation of photos of this bicycle trip through Holland, Belgium, parts of Germany, and Luxembourg, which took 15 days and covered 1200 kilometers. Eric was impressed with the quality of the facilities. The quality and ubiquity of the signage made it easy to navigate. In the Netherlands a map was not really necessary. Every city had significant bike or ped only areas in the centers.

Bikes took precedence over cars in most places. Very few people wore helmets. Bike racks are ubiquitous. The scale of everything was about 20% smaller than in the U.S. Many people carried children on their bicycles. Bicyclists were law-abiding; they obeyed the rules and indicators. The quality, extent, and attention to detail of the bicycle facilities is equaled nowhere else. Bicycle route markers typically had route numbers, destinations, and sometimes distance. Jurisdictions in the Washington region could follow the European example in terms of types of signage and continuity of bicycle routes between jurisdictions. Fatemeh Allahdoust asked if this presentation could be posted on the web site. Michael Farrell promised to do so.

- Eric Gilliland's presentation will be made available on the web site

5. Follow-on activities to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

- **Draft List of High Priority Unfunded Bicycle and Pedestrian Project to be presented to the TPB in December, 2006**

Michael Farrell distributed a list of the priority projects for 2006. Only two projects from the last list were fully funded, the Silver Spring Green Trail and the Centreville Road underpass. All the other projects are holdovers except the Falls Road multi-use path in Montgomery County. Arlington County will pick a different project, since the old project may have been funded, but by the November meeting a final list will be available for the subcommittee's approval. Fatemeh Allahdoust asked what the "funding requested" item meant. Michael Farrell replied that it was the balance of funding still needed. Fairfax would like to do a sidewalk/trail on both sides of Route 1, but currently has funding only for one side, so the project remains partially funded.

The issue was brought up as to whether projects such as the Loudoun County parkway should be included if they are being built as part of concurrent highway construction. Staff in Prince William and Loudoun Counties wanted to retain those projects. Fatemeh Allahdoust said that if the project is part of a highway project, it already had priority as part of the highway, so we lose a line-item. Michael Farrell said that we could consider confining this list to projects with minimal or no highway or transit component. Allen

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Muchnick spoke in favor of that approach.

Michael Farrell promised to follow up with Loudoun and Prince William regarding their projects. Even though there is a routine accommodation policy, there are exceptions, so those jurisdictions may still want to make the statement that these are the highest priorities.

The projects in the CLRP (Long-Range Transportation Plan) for the Washington region are the projects mapped in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. These are “major” projects funded in the CLRP, rather than “priority” projects.

The Centreville Road project was funded by Fairfax County, so it should be listed as being funded by Fairfax County. Michael Farrell agreed to note that in the table and description.

- Fatemeh Allahdoust and Michael Farrell will speak with Shaheer Assad of Loudoun County and Rick Canizales of Prince William County regarding their priority unfunded bicycle and pedestrian projects.
- **On-line project database**

Currently on the web site is a summary of the plan, with a link to the pdf of the full plan. In addition to that, we will post a queryable database. We will pick four or five things that can be queried, such as State, Jurisdiction, Agency, cost, project type, etc. It will be an in-house project, so not all fields can be queryable. Other queries can be done on request. This will be the list from June, 2006; it will not be editable. It can be done within a few months.

6. Bike to Work Guide Update

Michael Farrell, Transportation Planning Board

Michael Farrell put out a request a few weeks ago for comments on the Bike to Work guide, both for accuracy and style. 20,000 copies were printed in April, and they are nearly gone. Most were distributed with Bike to Work Day. Attendees were invited to take a copy, mark it up, and mail it back to Michael Farrell. Jim Sebastian suggested that a full stylistic update wait for the 10-year anniversary. The bicycling laws have changed, but this is a summary; it has to fit on one page in the same format. All comments should be submitted by October 3rd.

7. Other COG Updates:

- **Educational/Training Events**

The Safe Routes to School seminar was done in Arlington on September 12. 23 people attended, plus instructors and staff.

Another idea for a seminar would be a course on the ITE manual on context-sensitive design. It gives specific design guidelines for different types of land use. Carina Ricks at DDOT is interested in hosting it at the old council chambers at One Judiciary Square. Michael Farrell proposed that only one event be held, based on likely attendance. The Council Chambers have the advantage of being on the red line, and hence more accessible. If there is enough interest generated by this event, we could always do follow-up events. Or agencies such as VDOT could do their own follow-up, in-house training. There is limited interest from Montgomery County.

Michael Jackson asked about the content of this course. Much of the discussion at other courses had little relevance to pedestrians. Michael Farrell replied that the title of the course was “Designing Urban Arterials for Pedestrians”. This is urban, not rural context-sensitive design. The primary audience will be traffic engineers.

The event will be held sometime in November, or possibly early December. The possible dates will be run by some of the subcommittee members, to avoid major schedule conflicts. We will give at least 30 days notice, to give people adequate time to schedule a full day. Jim Sebastian suggested not calling the presentation “context-sensitive design”. It should be called something else. Some local agency speakers will be invited, in addition to the speaker from California. TPB will pay for this seminar. The speaker should be given some background and photos on local issues so that he can incorporate them into his presentation.

Michael Jackson suggested that we consider sponsoring workshop on shared-use path design. Trail safety is a worsening problem as trail use increases. Michael Farrell said that he was willing to have one if the subcommittee wanted it. Kristin Haldeman asked if Michael Jackson had anything specific in mind. Jim Sebastian said that it is a lot easier to have a workshop if a finished “in the can” workshop is available. Toole Design might have one. Eric Gilliland mentioned that WABA may have a trail safety campaign in 2007, so the timing would be good.

Michael Jackson added that there is not good record-keeping on trail safety.

Eric Gilliland asked if there might be a training focused on law enforcement and bicycle crash reporting.

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Kristin suggested adding this topic as an item to next month's agenda.

- Michael Farrell will arrange a date for the ITE manual training, and provide at least 30 days notice.

- **Funding Status for 2007 Street Smart Campaign**

Michael Farrell distributed a table showing the funding history of the program, and a suggested 2007 contribution list. You can see in the 2007 column of the funding history table to show which commitments have been received. At some point in the fall Michael Farrell will brief the TPB on the outcome of the 2006 campaign and the funding status for 2007, which may serve as a reminder to some TPB members to contribute.

Charlie Denney asked when the funds had been requested. Michael Farrell replied that a letter had been sent in March to the political leaders and the CAO's asking for funds for 2007. Charlie Denney replied that sending the letter early created confusion.

For simplicity, the only jurisdictions listed in the funding history table are those that have ever contributed funds. Loudoun and Frederick have refused to provide funds. Chris Wells asked which funds required match. Jim Sebastian said that 402 safety funds did not require local match. Michael Farrell promised to look into that; he believed that 402 funds did require match.

Gerald Miller said that local match was not the main issue; the main issue is insufficient effort. Results from 2005 are not finalized, but we had to cut the media to three weeks from four weeks in 2004, and we got worse results. We need to keep this program above \$400,000 for effectiveness. Design House has suggested some price points for private sector sponsorship. There is potential for sponsorship, given the size of the campaign.

Charlie Denney asked Michael Farrell to re-send the March letter to him. Michael Farrell promised to do so. Gerald Miller agreed that that was the correct procedure, and suggested that we refer to the reply that was received.

- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Wayfinding and Signage Questionnaire**

Michael Farrell asked if the subcommittee could send him any comments by October 3rd, so that it can be sent out and follow-up phone calls made. Eric Gilliland offered to ask WABA members to take photos of local bicycle and pedestrian wayfinding signs. Michael Farrell thanked him for the offer.

8. Jurisdictional Updates

Arlington has put in a bicycle oasis in Rosslyn, and a contra-flow bike lane on Lee Highway.

VDOT will have a CTV presentation on bicycle and pedestrian accommodation on October 11, and will unveil a State bicycle map.

Charlie Strunk, Fairfax County's new bicycle coordinator, is present.

Michael Jackson announced that a section of bicycle trail on the BWI trail had been named after John Overstreet. It is now the John Overstreet connector.

DC will be having bicycle tours.

Arlington will have a bike rodeo on Saturday as part of BikeArlington.

WMATA is doing some construction at Wheaton and will be moving some lockers and racks.

Adjourned.