

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, January 19, 2010

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 Alladoust	VDOT Northern Virginia
Gina Arlotto	WABA/Safe Routes to School
Emma Chapman	WMATA
Eric Gilliland	WABA
Elliot Gluskin	BicyclePASS
Michael Jackson	MDOT (by phone)
Tim Kelley	BikeArlington
Dan Janousek	Prince George's County
Philp Koopman	
Yon Lambert	City of Alexandria
Larry Marcus	ATCS
Allen Muchnick	Virginia Bicycling Federation
Bill Orleans	
Jim Sebastian	DDOT
John Thomas	Frederick County Planning (by phone)

COG Staff Attendance:

Michael Farrell
Andrew Meese

1. General Introductions.

Mr. Sebastian chaired the meeting. Participants introduced themselves.

2. Review of the Minutes of the November 17, 2009 Meeting

A quorum was not yet present, so approval of the minutes was deferred.

3. Selection of a New Chair for 2010

Past practice has been to rotate the Chair between the three States and WMATA, and it is the District of Columbia's turn to provide a Chair. Mr. Sebastian has volunteered to serve as Chair. As bicycle coordinator at the District of Columbia, former Chair and Vice Chair of this subcommittee, and former TPB staff to this subcommittee, he is amply well qualified. Absent a quorum, Mr. Sebastian was accepted as acting Chair until such time as there is a quorum. The holiday may have suppressed attendance; attendance at this subcommittee is usually pretty good.

Mr. Gilliland asked if there was a requirement for attendance. Mr. Farrell replied that attendance by TPB member jurisdiction representatives was strictly voluntary. Since the TPB does not hand out money, attendance cannot be anything but voluntary. If anything, this is one of the better-attended Subcommittees. Subcommittees and working groups have multiplied over the years, and now many of our members are not facing staff cutbacks, which leaves fewer people to attend meetings. The jurisdictions that are not attending also have less active pedestrian or bicycle programs, and hence less need for coordination.

4. Member Jurisdiction Updates

WMATA has completed its case studies for its bicycle study, and will be holding focus group meetings next week, which will be wrapped up by the end of March.

Alexandria is moving ahead with its Chambliss crossing, which will connect with the Fairfax County trail system. The Eisenhower Avenue tunnel project construction will also move forwards soon, which will connect the Holmes Run Trail with the Eisenhower Avenue Trail.

Arlington will hold a forum on bicycling. The bike sharing program is making progress. There

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the January 19, 2010 Meeting

Page 3

will be a third pit stop for the bike to work day, and there will be a bicycle friendly business program.

WABA is settling into its new offices. WABA has hired two new people, including a Safe Routes to School Coordinator, Ms. Arlotto, who will coordinate a regional Safe Routes to School network, and encourage more jurisdictions to buy into the program. The goal is to reduce childhood obesity rates. Ms. Arlotto was active as a parent in the District of Columbia's Safe Routes to School program prior to being hired by WABA.

One of the District of Columbia's schools in Ward 3 won an Oberstar award for achievement in Safe Routes to School. The section of the Metropolitan Branch Trail to Franklin Street will be finished by August 30th.

Frederick County now has a bike parking section in its zoning ordinance, and the new comprehensive plan is nearing completion. Safe Routes to School will fund several sidewalk projects.

Mr. Jackson attended the National Committee of Uniform Traffic Control devices. Mr. Jackson requested that he address Item #7 on the agenda, regional signed bicycle routes. Each jurisdiction plans for its own needs, but cyclists may want to travel longer distances, though multiple jurisdictions. Mr. Jackson has been asked by Adventure Cycling to come up with a bicycle route 1 in Maryland. Mr. Jackson proposed establishing a working group of this subcommittee to identify recommended routes for long-distance, signed bicycle routes, and that such recommendations be issued by the end of 2010.

The subcommittee had addressed signage consistency of couple of years ago. Mr. Farrell felt that the issue of bicycle signage consistency was best resolved, and was being resolved, through the MUTCD. This is a different issue; the establishment of recommendations for specific signed routes rather than for uniform bicycle signs. Right now each jurisdiction is developing its own set of routes, but there is less attention being paid to long-distance, multijurisdictional routes.

This would be a different planning exercise than the regional bicycle plan, which is largely an additive exercise. This would involve the creation of routes over and above what is in the local plans, though the long-distance signed routes may certainly coincide with local recommended routes. It would also involve a non-trivial commitment of time both from TPB staff and from this subcommittee; since if these proposed routes are to have legitimacy they will need the active participation of the subcommittee.

Mr. Muchnick supported the idea. There is a US bicycle route network through AASHTO, and Virginia has had two routes signed. Bicycle Route 1 should be continued through the District of Columbia and Maryland. Routes could be on or off-route, or hybrids. The involvement of the State DOT's is key. US bike route 1 through Northern Virginia has been broken for nearly ten

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee Notes from the January 19, 2010 Meeting

Page 4

years. Beyond that, we may wish to identify regional routes beyond the national and the state routes. Mr. Gilliland offered to serve on a working group to help identify regional routes. Mr. Gilliland asked if this might help push forward some of the projects in the regional bicycle plan. Mr. Jackson replied that he hoped it would. With park trails, there has been an emphasis on recreation, and designation as a regional route might spur agencies and jurisdictions to improve bicycle routes signs, as well as encourage jurisdictions that are not currently signing bicycle routes to do so.

Mr. Sebastian suggested that Mr. Jackson chair this working group. Mr. Jackson volunteered to do so. Ms. Allahdoust agreed to serve on it. VDOT has been pursuing bicycle route 1, but had gotten into a bottleneck with AASHTO, which had not approved a list of requirements, even though VDOT's application was finished. VDOT is currently having budget difficulties and numerous layoffs.

Mr. Jackson agreed to draft an announcement and have Mr. Farrell send it out. Mr. Gilliland asked if this had anything to do with a "Making the Connections" report by MDOT. Mr. Jackson did not recognize the project, but offered to look into it.

Another effort under way is the East Coast Greenway, and the American Discovery Trail. Mr. Sebastian suggested that this regional effort would be above and beyond the East Coast Greenway, Bicycle Route 1, or the American Discovery Trail, though it could include them all. "When times are tough, signs are cheap".

5. TPB Program Updates

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Project Database and Plan Update

The on-line database of bicycle and pedestrian projects incorporates projects that are at least \$100,000 in cost or greater than one mile in length. The database is publicly searchable. There is a corresponding private database which is password protected, where members can modify their project information, or add new projects.

The most recent draft was completed in July 2006. We have an April 1st deadline to complete a strong revised draft, which will be a part of the general update of the Constrained Long-Range Plan. We are not doing a radical revision, but all the information in this plan should be accurate, up to date, and reflect plans adopted since July 2006. The project database is the heart of the plan. One of the recommendations of COG's new regional vision is to speed up the rate at which projects in the bicycle and pedestrian plan are being implemented. In order to do that, we need to know at what rate we have been implementing projects. Member jurisdictions are strongly

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the January 19, 2010 Meeting
Page 5

encouraged to update their projects. A working group will review a first draft once it is finished. Since so much of the information in the plan is currently not correct, Mr. Farrell would prefer to prepare a draft first, then have the working group review it, rather than soliciting comments on the plan as it is.

Much of what is in the plan text is dependent on revisions to the database, but much of it is not. Mr. Gilliland asked how the changes would be presented. Mr. Farrell replied that the new database can be compared with the old database, and a list of projects that have been completed since 2006 can easily be created. That will tell us a great deal about what has been done.

Mr. Muchnick suggested that we do an annual revision and compilation of projects that have been completed, so that the TPB and the general public can see what is being done and what is not being done. Mr. Farrell agreed. Mr. Farrell thought that since the projects have been entered, revising them is not that onerous a work item – Mr. Sebastian was able to revise the DDOT projects in 15 minutes. Once the database is updated comparing project status this year with status last year is fairly straightforward. An annual status report on implementation of the regional bicycle and pedestrian plan could be presented to the TPB.

Mr. Sebastian suggested that the next steps would be for member jurisdictions to update their projects, and Mr. Farrell to create a draft revised plan.

Mr. Farrell noted that currently the information in the publicly searchable database is the same as in the password-protected database.

Most projects in the plan are unfunded. Bicycle parking projects are included. Projects for which federal funding is needed should be in this plan.

Mr. Sebastian said that the process of updating projects had been made much easier than it used to be.

Mr. Lambert asked if the public database was exportable into Excel – Mr. Farrell promised to look into it. The database is in Access, and we make pdfs from Access. Excel can be easier to work with.

Ms. Allahdoust said that the VDOT section of the database was up to date. Mr. Farrell agreed that to the best of his knowledge it looked correct, but he promised to take another look at and let Ms. Allahdoust know if he had any questions.

- Education/Training Events for Spring 2010

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the January 19, 2010 Meeting
Page 6

Alta planning will do an advanced bicycle facility design training on February 18th, which will be held in Rooms 4/5 here at COG. Cost is still unknown, but is not expected to be a problem. If anyone has a larger/better room available, that would be welcome. Mr. Sebastian suggested theatre seating instead of tables to fit more people.

Liability and Bicycle Facilities is the next event that should be held. Mr. Muchnick suggested that Liability would be a good combined event with a seminar on innovative bicycle facility design. The Subcommittee agreed that a full-day combined seminar would be a good idea. Mr. Farrell agreed to try to make it work; not all the speakers may be available on February 18th, when the Alta speaker is available. The Alta speaker is from the west coast, and he will be here only for that week.

Mr. Muchnick suggested that someone from Federal Highway who is familiar with the experimental facilities should attend. Mr. Gilliland noted that NACTO, National Association of City Transportation Officials, through their cycling for cities program, will be doing similar types of seminars. A lot of the people active in NACTO may be attending the national bike summit.

- Street Smart Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Campaign

A meeting was held in December to give direction to the consultant, McAndrew Company. They returned last Friday with concepts, which will be further refined for a meeting on February 2nd. Greater detail for the Spring campaign is available in the marketing plan, which was handed out to the group.

Street Smart is going back to more of a shock value type of ad, and less of an instructional approach than was taken last year. There will be a video component, since we have sufficient budget for Spring for cable TV. We will send out letters within a few weeks requesting funds for FY 2011.

- Bike to Work Guide Update.

Commuter Connections staff have indicated that they would prefer to do an update only for accuracy, not a major redesign. We are coming to the end of a print run, so we should provide some suggestions. Mr. Muchnick suggested changing the cover.

Mr. Gilliland asked if the guide was funded though the ADC regional bike map. Mr. Farrell replied that ADC was having some financial problems, but it is probably time to check with them regarding the royalties we are owed on the ADC bike map. Mr. Sebastian said that the ADC Map has been a good resource, and we hope that it will continue to be available, and that a new version will eventually be produced. Maps are normally done every five years. Mr. Meese noted that a combination of State funds and CMAQ funds Commmuter Connections. Ms. Allahdoust

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the January 19, 2010 Meeting
Page 7

noted that the 2010 work program contains \$15,000 for the Bike to Work Guide, including printing costs, which should come to about \$5,000. Mr. Sebastian asked when a design update will be done. Ms. Allahdoust noted that the language calls for updating the bike to work guide.

Ms. Allahdoust suggested that this subcommittee should guide Commuter Connections to update the guide. Mr. Farrell replied that as long as there is a budget, there is no reason they cannot do what can be done within that limit. Mr. Farrell promised to speak to Nick Ramfos about the issue. Mr. Meese suggested cost of an update could be shared between two fiscal years. The project could be started in 2010 and continued through 2011. That would provide \$20,000 for the redesign instead of \$10,000. Mr. Farrell suggested that Ms. Allahdoust could convey the gist of this discussion to the Commuter Connections Committee. Ms. Allahdoust promised to do so at the State TDM meeting.

6. The Regional Transportation Safety Picture

Mr. Farrell spoke to a powerpoint. The Transportation Safety Subcommittee has been meeting approximately three times per year. The Subcommittee is currently looking at a possible regional data mining and visualization tool, which is currently being developed by the University of Maryland Center for Advanced Transportation Technology lab for the State of Maryland. It will provide a user-friendly web-based tool to access and analyze crash report data.

The DDOT representatives expressed strong interest, the VDOT representatives somewhat more guarded interest. DDOT does not currently have anything comparable.

One alternative would be to have a regional tool, which would involve reconciling differences in State safety data. Another approach would be to have three separate databases, each using the same software. That would probably work well enough for most users, but would be somewhat less adequate for region-level analysis. More data, such as bus stop data, as long as it is geocoded, can be loaded into this system. Completing the Maryland portion of the system cost \$170,000.

Then next step would be to do a scoping study to analyze the different databases. Cost of the scoping study would be \$15,000. DDOT may have funds available, possible federal funds. Another option would be to fit it into the regional transportation safety planning line item, but it is a little too much.

Mr. Gilliland asked if this effort could be used to promote uniformity in police crash reporting. Mr. Farrell replied that 100% uniformity is probably not attainable given differences in State laws, and in any case for this effort it would be easier to work with the data that is already there, rather than change the way it is collected.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
Notes from the January 19, 2010 Meeting
Page 8

The transportation safety element of the Constrained Long-Range Transportation plan will be a fairly short, web-based document, but more detailed information will be available, which is included in the powerpoint. Most of the data is NHTSA traffic fatality data, while injury and crash data is provided by the States.

Prince George's County has not contributed to the Street Smart pedestrian and bicycle safety campaign, but they do receive funds from the Maryland Office of Highway Safety for overtime enforcement for pedestrian safety.

The transportation safety element is required by the federal government. Mr. Muchnick suggested that we should be tracking the spending of highway safety funds, as well as the section 402 highway safety grants.

7. BicyclePASS – Bicycle Parking and Sharing Solutions

Mr. Koopman spoke to a powerpoint and handout.

8. Adjourned