

Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
October Meeting Minutes
Friday, October 10, 2008
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, Maryland

Members Present

Vincent Browne, Jr.
Richard Cushwa
Janet Harrison
Greg Hinchliffe
Michael Mason
Kevin Racine
Marci Ross
Eric Schmitt
Patrick Sheehan
Jeff Springer
Jim Swift
James G. Titus
Ann Walsh
Neal Welch
Michael Jackson (staff)

Members Absent

William Burd
Susan Mele
Carl Rebele
Beverley Swaim-Staley
Cari Watrous
John Wetmore

Visitors Present

Barry Childress, *Baltimore Bicycling Club*
Judith Grillo, *Talbot County citizen*
Stephen Miller, *Rails to Trails Conservancy*
Peter Moe, *Maryland State Highway Administration*
Kelly Pack, *Rails to Trails Conservancy*
Caron Whitaker, *America Bikes*
Stephanie Yanovitz, *Maryland State Highway Administration*

Chairperson Jim Swift began the meeting at 9:30 AM.

1. Approval of the August Retreat Minutes

Marci Ross moved and Dick Cushwa seconded her motion to approve the August Retreat meeting minutes. The minutes were unanimously approved.

2. Subcommittee Reports

A. Commuting and Transportation – Subcommittee chair Jeff Springer discussed progress on creating a Maryland version of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Commuter Connections, *“Biking to Work in the Washington Area: A Guide for Employers/Employees.”* Marci recommended that the guide also be written in Spanish. Greg Hinchliffe had a concern that Spanish speakers were not the target audience since employers are likely literate in English and that Latino immigrant workers are already commuting by bicycle. Barry Childress felt it was more important to translate Safe Bicycling in Maryland guidebook into Spanish. Peter Moe said use of icon graphics were popular to communicate to Spanish audiences since some folks are not literate in their own language.

Jim Titus brought up the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission’s proposal to allow bicyclists to apply for permits to ride through park property when parks are officially closed in order to facilitate commuting trips. After a discussion of the merits and drawbacks discussion was shelved on the grounds that no committee action was warranted at this time.

B. Education and Awareness – Vincent Browne, E&A Subcommittee chair, discussed their revised mission statement, work plans and goals. Ann Walsh provided information on the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene’s “Walking Toolkit.” This material that takes advantage of action by the Maryland General Assembly that declares walking as the State’s official exercise. Ann noted that people need to feel safe while walking. The Walking Toolkit is a product of the Fitness Council, an advisory council to the DHMH Secretary.

Michael Mason said that every school system is required by State law to have a wellness policy. He said schools can develop their policies from a 13 or 14 item menu. Michael Jackson informed the members that school principals in Maryland reportedly flatly refuse to allow students to walk or bike to school or will not provide support for bike safety education programs. In response a proposal to survey attitudes of school principals and administrators toward student walking and biking and publishing the results is being considered. Michael Jackson also mentioned that Nancy Breen, a researcher at the National Institutes of Health, provided information on a possible NIH grant to fund such a study.

In response to Jim Titus’s question if there were studies that tied student academic achievement to increased physical activity Ann said studies have been done. However many other factors affect student academic performance so findings that correlate increased student physical activity to improved academic performance are inconclusive. Michael Jackson recommended that the E&A Subcommittee oversee development of the attitude survey and said he would set up an E&A subcommittee meeting in the near future to address this matter.

C. Legislative and Government Affairs – L&GA Subcommittee chair Patrick Sheehan noted the upcoming fourth annual Maryland Department of Transportation Accessibility Conference. Patrick and Kevin Racine plan to attend. Patrick noted that the State Highway Administration was pretty much on schedule retrofitting intersections with Accessible Pedestrian Signals. He said that SHA's Ed Paulus has scheduled a Quiet Cars Task Force meeting next week. The purpose of the task force is to review the impact of hybrid cars that run silently on the safety of persons who rely on engine noise to detect the presence of motor vehicles. Patrick is a task force member.

L&GA Subcommittee 2008-09 work plan has been submitted. Patrick noted that the Montgomery County Commission on Disabilities scheduled a walk-thru of the Silver Spring Transit Center in late September to make sure the temporary transit arrangements are accessible to all users. The center will be renovated and the numerous buses that serve the transit center had their bus stops relocated. Patrick said the project manager receive a lot of input.

Greg expressed uncertainty whether a bill that would increase penalties for vehicle drivers convicted of violating right-of-way laws that cause death or serious bodily harm because he has been told conflicting stories. Peter reassured Greg that this legislation indeed was enacted into law this year.

D. Tourism and Product Development – Marci Ross, T&PD Subcommittee chair, discussed the Trail Towns concept used in Pennsylvania and felt this would be useful to implement in Maryland, particularly along the C&O Canal/Great Allegheny Passage corridor. Trail towns offer amenities that appeal to trail users such as bicycle parking facilities. Marci will arrange for someone from the Potomac-Allegheny Alliance to present the concept at a future MBPAC meeting.

Dick stated that he is a member of a Washington County citizens' committee that is investigating the possibility of an Antietam Creek bike trail that would connect the C&O Canal National Park to the Antietam National Battlefield.

There was discussion of the impact of the widening of MD Route 404 on the ability of users of the planned Easton to Clayton Rail-Trail project to safely cross the highway. Neal Welch moved and Dick seconded his resolution that MDOT ensures there will be a safe crossing of MD 404 by the Easton to Clayton Trail and that MDOT should be encouraged to consider placement of a grade-separated crossing to achieve this purpose. The resolution was passed.

3. Three Feet for Bicycles Campaign

Peter explained that SHA will develop and launch a \$50,000 social marketing campaign to tell motorists that bicyclists are legitimate roadway users and should be treated with courtesy. The three foot reference is that motorists should at least allow a three foot clearance when passing bicyclists. Peter showed campaign ad mock ups and said he would send electronic pdf files to Michael Jackson for distribution to and comments from

MBPAC members. The League of American Bicyclists and the Washington Area Bicyclist Association have pledged assistance in campaign development and implementation.

Jim Titus expressed concern that the three foot reference may mislead motorists in only providing 3 feet when they may already provide cyclists a wider passing birth. Barry suggested stating 3 plus feet when passing.

4. Grand History Trail

Kelly Pack and Stephen Miller from the Rails to Trails Conservancy gave a presentation on RTC's concept of developing a bicycle tour that focuses on historic sites between Washington, DC and Gettysburg, PA. The Grand History Trail would follow shared use paths, separate from motor vehicle traffic through central and northern Maryland communities including the cities of Baltimore and Annapolis. Maps were distributed showing route alignment details through Frederick and Prince George's counties and the cities of Baltimore and Annapolis. A map key showed existing trail segments, planned and proposed trail segments and trail segment gaps.

5. Hatem Bridge

In light of recently enacted legislation that allows the Chairman of the Maryland Transportation Authority to permit bicycle and/or pedestrian access on toll facilities on a case-by-case basis Greg Hinchliffe noted there is public interest to open the Hatem Bridge to bicycles. This bridge carries US 40 traffic over the Susquehanna River and connects Harford and Cecil counties. The East Coast Greenway organization, which is promoting a bicycling and walking route from Maine to Florida, is seeking bicycle access on the bridge. MBPAC passed a resolution strongly urging MdTA to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians on the Thomas Hatem Memorial Bridge through engineering and policy enhancements.

Kevin Racine was featured in a news article that depicted him standing next to a sign on the Hatem Bridge prohibiting non-motorized traffic. The article, that discusses his work as an advocate for transit and non-motorized travelers, was distributed to the attendees. Kevin lives in Havre de Grace in the shadow of the bridge and has long stated that it should be modified so that bicyclists and pedestrians may use it. He also advocates sidewalk installation that supports access to transit stations and for bus transit service between the Aberdeen Proving Grounds and Wilmington, Delaware with connections to Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority (SEPTA) commuter rail trains. Kevin also calls for more bus shelters at bus stops.

6. Non-Motorized Issues for Upcoming Transportation Reauthorization Legislation

Caron Whitaker, Campaign Director for America Bikes, gave a presentation on what provisions for bicyclists and pedestrians her organization is lobbying for in the upcoming Transportation Reauthorization bill. She said the next reauthorization bill is expected to

be significantly different than the current legislation. America Bikes wants to see the next reauthorization bill produce green jobs to rebuild America “right”. This includes having a complete streets policy, funding for Safe Routes to Schools and Safe Routes to Transit programs and a declaration that bicycles are transportation vehicles. This declaration is intended to nullify state laws that do not give bicycle riders legal protections enjoyed by motorists and their passengers. There should be an emphasis on fixing what already exists including moving sidewalks located at the edge of roadways so as to provide a buffer space between motor vehicles and pedestrians.

America Walks will advocate a Fair Share for Safety provision. Given that 13 percent of traffic fatalities are bicyclists or pedestrians there should be a set minimum percentage of funding dedicated to improving bicycle and pedestrian safety. Non-motorized access should be provided across interstate highways such as tunnels. There should be use of a “health indicator” that ties the availability of non-motorized travel opportunities to the fitness level of residents.

Peter recommended that the proposed reauthorization bill provide priority attention to transportation system preservation including bridges. Barry said there should be compatibility between transportation improvements that benefit bicyclists and pedestrians. This would avoid situations such as the use of curb bulb-outs that reduce the width of roadways, thus reducing the distance that pedestrians are exposed to vehicular conflicts but increases risks of bicycle/motor vehicle conflicts because this design forces bicyclists to merge with motorists. Another recommendation was that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration be required to collect crash and injury statistics from shared use pathways.

7. Other Business

Michael Jackson passed out flyers announcing the annual Anacostia Trails Heritage Area Fall Foliage bike ride scheduled for October 25th. Greg asked Stephanie Yanovitz to look into concerns regarding the lack of opportunities for bicyclists to cross I-795.

8. Adjournment

Jim Swift adjourned the meeting at 12:25 PM.