

Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
March Meeting Minutes
Friday, March 12, 2010
Maryland Department of Natural Resources
580 Taylor Avenue, Conference Room C-1
Annapolis, Maryland

Members Present

Steven H. Allan
Vincent J. Browne
Richard Cushwa
Judith Grillo
Janet Harrison
Greg Hinchliffe
Michael Mason
Kevin Racine
Marc Ross
Fred Shaffer
Patrick Sheehan
Jeff Springer
Jim Swift
James G. Titus
Missie Wakefield
Ann Walsh
Neal Welch
John Z. Wetmore
Michael Jackson (staff)

Members Absent

Carl Rebele
Beverley Swaim-Staley
Cari Watrous
Elbert Whiting

Visitors Present

Mary C. Davidson, Maryland State Highway Administration
RJ Eldridge, Toole Design Group
Patrick McMahon, Maryland Safe Routes Partnership
Gregory Slater, SHA
Sandi Trent, Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Chairperson Jim Swift began the meeting at 9:30 AM by introducing and welcoming new citizen member Missie Wakefield of Harford County.

1. Approval of December Meeting Minutes

Dick Cushwa moved and Fred Shaffer seconded the motion to approve the December meeting minutes. The minutes were unanimously approved.

2. Subcommittee Reports

A. Tourism and Product Development – T&PD Subcommittee Chair Marci Ross deferred to subcommittee member Neal Welch. Neal, in turn, introduced John Wilson, State Trails Coordinator for the Department of Natural Resources. He discussed an initiative, assigned to DNR by the Governor's Office, to create a one stop website that would serve as a comprehensive resource for trail information in Maryland. The primary audience would be trail users but the site would also provide information for trail professionals. DNR seeks to create a vision for trails that combines both recreational and utilitarian travel purposes. DNR has joined the Maryland State Department of Education in an initiative called Children and Nature. This program seeks to expose youth to the wonders of nature and one of the strategies is to bring the children out on trail trips. John stated that this vision extends beyond the creation of this website to all aspects of trail development and operation.

DNR is interested in receiving input from other agencies and the general public in shaping their trails vision. One of their objectives is to hold a day-long conference, tentatively scheduled for September. Prior to this conference DNR would host four regional workshops in which the public would be invited to provide input. DNR seeks assistance from MBPAC. Jim Titus, Greg Hinchliffe, Ann Walsh, Fred Shaffer, Dick Cushwa, Judy Grillo, Jeff Springer and Jim Swift volunteered to work with DNR. Neal also introduced Sandi Trent, who serves as the logistics coordinator. She provided her contact information for all.

Dick discussed a unique trail proposal in Washington County. Residents living on the south side of Antietam Creek in the community of Antietam will lose direct access to nearby Sharpsburg via Harper's Ferry Road because Washington County will close the Harper's Ferry Road bridge over Antietam Creek for a two-year rebuilding project. The residents have asked that a 950 foot long segment of new trail be built along the south bank of the Antietam Creek. This would provide a non-motorized trail connection to the C&O Canal and trail aqueduct that crosses Antietam Creek west of and parallel to the soon to be closed Harpers Ferry Road Bridge. Antietam residents living south of Antietam Creek would keep their vehicles in an adjacent National Park Service parking lot on the north side of the creek. Residents would then travel by bike from their homes to the parking lot and then proceed in their motor vehicles to Sharpsburg. Dick joined local residents in a meeting with NPS staff to present the proposal. He reports Canal staff were receptive to the proposal on the grounds of safety.

Fred said the Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commission is expanding natural surface trails, particularly adjacent to the Patuxent River in Prince George's County.

B. Commuting and Transportation – Subcommittee Chair Jeff Springer invited C&T Subcommittee members to give brief updates. Greg reported that Baltimore City was working to update the Baltimore bicycle map using GIS technology. He said the funding for Phase 5 of the Jones Falls Trail has been cut. This is the planned segment that extends

into Mt. Washington and which has been opposed by a significant number of residents. Greg also reported trying the new Google bike routing on-line program and found the route alignment choice offered to be unsatisfactory, based on his personal knowledge of roadway conditions.

Kevin Racine reported that the Mayor of Elkton supports lifting the prohibition on bicycle access across the Thomas J. Hatem Memorial Bridge, which carries US 40 across the Susquehanna River, and supporters of bike bridge access were seeking similar endorsements from the mayors of Havre de Grace and Perryville. Kevin reiterated his past support of providing transit bus service over the Hatem Bridge as well. Michael Jackson mentioned that the Town of Elkton had asked the Wilmington Metropolitan Area Council of Governments to develop a town bicycle plan. Dick said the City of Hagerstown had presented their draft bicycle plan to the Hagerstown City Council on March 2nd with strong public support. Their city council is scheduled to vote on accepting this plan later in the month. Dick also mentioned the City recently installed marked bicycle lanes on South Prospect Street and that residents reported lower motor vehicle speeds since installation of the bike lanes. Jeff conveyed his appreciation for Hagerstown's efforts.

C. Legislative and Governmental Affairs – L&GA Subcommittee Chair Patrick Sheehan distributed a written report which summarized the status of several legislative bills being considered by the Maryland General Assembly. He reported that the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority has submitted budget cuts intended to close a \$190 million budget shortfall in FY 11 and said details can be found on WMATA's website. Proposals include raising fares, cutting bus service frequency and eliminating bus routes. Public hearing are being scheduled include one on April 1st in Rockville.

The Maryland Quiet Car Task Force expects to issue its findings to the Maryland General Assembly and Governor Martin O'Malley by the end of March, after considering anticipated recommendations from Japanese auto manufacturers and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The purpose of the task force is to address concerns that hybrid and electric cars pose new dangers for pedestrians due to reduced or eliminated engine noise. Pedestrians, particularly pedestrians with visual disabilities rely on engine noise to help determine whether it is safe to cross a roadway. Expected recommendations from the Maryland Quiet Car Task Force include:

- Any required noise making devices must make a car sound like a car (e.g. no car ring tones).
- Any required noise must provide information cues like whether the car is accelerating or decelerating.
- The car noise must be generated all the time while the engine is running and not be dependent on conscious driver activation.

Patrick thanked Martin Harris, MDOT's State Legislative Officer for providing the legislative update. Greg noted that the Manslaughter by Motor Vehicle bill was reported to have died in legislative subcommittee. John Wetmore said during the National Bike

Summit that took place in Washington, DC earlier in the month there was great interest in the federal transportation reauthorization proposal that included Complete Streets and an expansion of the Safe Routes to Schools program to include high schools. Congressman Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) was reported to wanting to know what MDOT's position is on these matters.

D. Education and Awareness Subcommittee – E&A Subcommittee Chair Vincent Browne introduced RJ Eldridge of the Toole Design Group who was present to provide a status update on the Maryland School Administrators Study. The purpose of this study is to determine whether district-wide bans on (K-12) student commuting to school by walking or bicycling existed, and whether such prohibitions occur at individual public schools. While a final report is not expected until later this spring, RJ provided MBPAC with some preliminary findings which included learning that no district-wide prohibitions on walking and bicycling to school existed such prohibitions did exist at a minority of the sample schools surveyed. Liability concerns seemed to be the primary reason for restrictions on bicycling and walking. Toole Design Group is conducting the survey at the behest of MDOT with assistance from the Maryland State Department of Education, as coordinated through Michael Mason, and the E&A Subcommittee. RJ also introduced Patrick McMahon who has been hired by the Washington Area Bicyclist Association to help organize a Maryland Safe Routes to Schools Partnership Program. There is keen interest in the report's findings.

Sgt. Janet Harrison of the Maryland State Police provided a summary of a meeting that occurred the previous day between herself, her colleagues at the Maryland State Police Training Academy and Michael Jackson regarding a proposed training curriculum for law enforcement personnel on Maryland traffic law relating to bicyclists. This training would be intended to assist Maryland law enforcement agencies in better serving roadway users by improving officer understanding of the rights and responsibilities of bicyclists. She reported that the proposal was well received by MSP training officers. They want a training curriculum that would not take an excessive amount of time to complete and was Maryland specific. The E&A Subcommittee along with Missie and Greg agreed to assist Janet and Michael in this effort. It was also suggested that Peter Moe of the Maryland Highway Safety Office should be contacted for assistance as well.

3. MBPAC Review of SHA's Customer Service Regarding Pedestrian and Bicycling Matters

Michael Jackson led this discussion by providing a background summary regarding the rationale for the creation of a feedback tool for SHA's evaluation of their degree of success with addressing their bicycle and pedestrian related performance measures and observance of their Customer Bill of Rights by MBPAC. He then introduced Gregory Slater, SHA's Director of Planning. Gregory discussed recent staff reorganizational changes in SHA's approach to addressing bike and pedestrian issues and pledged his support in working with MBPAC members on developing the framework of this annual review process. He also offered to serve as a point of contact in addition to Mary Davidson, SHA's Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, who was also present. Michael

earlier mentioned that the annual review should also include an opportunity for SHA to include any accomplishments regarding bicycling and walking projects.

Patrick suggested that SHA's accomplishments with installing Accessible Pedestrian Signals at signalized intersections should be highlighted in such a report. Jeff noted that often SHA provides a critical link between pedestrians' points of origins and destinations and public transit stops and stations, particularly for pedestrians with disabilities. The C&T Subcommittee will represent MBPAC in working with SHA and MDOT on this matter. Fred Shaffer and Judy Grillo also will serve as well. Michael agreed to set up the first meeting.

4. Snow Removal Policies

John Wetmore led a discussion on problems affecting pedestrians as a result of current snow removal policies and passed out recent news stories regarding snow clogged sidewalks. Steven Allan noted that failure to keep pedestrian facilities accessibility could rise to a federal civil rights violation. Jeff said that sidewalk design may play a role and urged that sidewalks be designed with a buffer zone between the roadway edge and the sidewalk which could serve, among other purposes, as a snow dumping zone. Gregory replied that buffered sidewalk designs are preferred by SHA.

John will lead an effort to analyze pros and cons of existing snow removal policies as well as any alternative snow removal policies under consideration. MBPAC would review these findings and then issue a report along with recommendations to MDOT and SHA to consider.

5. Adjournment

Jim Swift adjourned the meeting at 12 Noon.