

Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
March Meeting Minutes
Friday, March 7, 2014
Maryland Department of Transportation
Hanover, Maryland

Members Present

Steve Carr
Richard Cushwa
Robert Gaston
Scott Hansen
Greg Hinchliffe
Jon B. Morrison
Erin Penniston
Carl Rebele
(Jennifer Jones for) Marci Ross
Fred Shaffer
Patrick Sheehan
Carol Silldorff
(Michael Jackson for) James T. Smith, Jr.
John Z. Wetmore

Michael Jackson (staff)

Visitors Present

Janice Arnold, Maryland State Department of Education
Patrick McMahon, Maryland Transit Administration

Acting Chair Dick Cushwa began the meeting at 9:30 AM.

1. Approval of December meeting minutes

Carl Rebele moved and Greg Hinchliffe seconded this motion to approve the December meeting minutes. They were unanimously approved by the members.

2. Subcommittee Reports

A. Education and Awareness – Erin Penniston submitted a written report. She described its contents which included the anticipated release of the first US Surgeon General’s Call to Action on Walking in May, 2014, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene’s free access to technical assistance from the Safe Routes to Schools National Partnership as part of a Community Transformation grant and publicizing an upcoming webinar on pedestrian safety.

Members Absent

Kevin Racine
Michael Tagliaferri
Jennifer R. Terrasa
James G. Titus
Cari Watrous

B. Tourism and Product Development – T&PD Subcommittee Chair Dick Cushwa submitted a written report. Carl said efforts are underway to work with Garrett, Allegany and Washington counties to update the Land Preservation and Recreation Plan for the Department of Natural Resources. The Canal Towns Partnership is sponsoring a 4 day, 3 night, 76 mile, C&O Canal towpath bicycle ride between Hancock and Point of Rocks in June. The ride is geared toward casual bicyclists who want to experience the communities along the way. Robert Gaston said there is a discussion underway to designate a portion of the Mason Dixon Trail corridor between North East and Elkton as the East Coast Greenway involving Elk Neck State Forest and officials of the Cecil County government if an upgraded trail segment can be provided.

There was discussion of a MDOT proposal to develop a Maryland touring bicyclist guidebook similar to those in Minnesota and Wisconsin. The Office of Tourism Development would be willing to provide technical assistance and promote the final product. This guidebook would provide information on both on-road and off-road bicycle tourism opportunities and include maps and attractive photographs. Advertising opportunities would be offered to stakeholder businesses who might want to reach this guidebook market. The guide would be available on-line and hopefully stocked in State welcome centers. Steve Carr recommended going to trailinks.com to download trail maps. The T&PD subcommittee would work with MDOT and Fred Shaffer offered his assistance as well.

C. Legislative and Government Affairs – L&GA Subcommittee chair Patrick Sheehan submitted a written report. He noted that Carol Silldorff had provided a more updated report regarding legislation and cycling issues and invited Carol to present her report. She provided updates on HB 52, the Bicycle Duty bill (withdrawn to avoid an unfavorable report), HB 241 allows crossing double yellow line when safe to pass bicyclists by 3 feet (unfavorable report in House Environmental Matters Committee) and SB 520, which legalizes bicycle travel on portions of roadway segments posted at 55 mph or greater when bicycle shoulder use is permitted (passed the House of Delegates, awaiting a Senate vote). Carol noted that although HB 241 did not pass out of the Environmental Affairs Committee MDOT changed its position from unfavorable in 2013 to “neutral” in 2014 and the trucking industry changed its position from unfavorable in 2013 to favorable in 2014.

Carol also mentioned several items regarding government affairs, including:

- Bike Maryland’s coordination with MDOT of its 2014 Bicycle Friendly States survey response;
- MDOT’s completion of its updated State bicycle and pedestrian master plan in January;
- The passing of a Complete Streets Resolution in Baltimore County

She urged MDOT to purchase additional bicycle/pedestrian automated counters; support for study of a shared use path as part of a new/renovated passenger railroad bridge crossing of the lower Susquehanna River; that the Maryland law enforcement bicycle safety training video be required viewing for Maryland law enforcement officers and for a bridge to carry an extended Gwynns Falls Trail over MD 122 within the existing Interstate 70 corridor.

Steve noted that DNR had purchased a number of ped/bike counters for use in state forests. Greg requested that MDOT provide the Commuting and Transportation Subcommittee updates on the numbers of BWI Trail users once the automatic pedestrian/bicycle counter is operational. John Wetmore

attended the 2014 League of American Bicyclists annual bicycle summit meeting in DC and described three bills LAB is promoting at the federal level.

There was also discussion regarding Maryland House Bill 205 which would define electric bicycles and explicitly state that electric bicycles are not mopeds. Michael Jackson expressed a number of concerns he had with removing electric bicycles from the moped classification. Jon Morrison was uncomfortable with the concept of mopeds being classified as bicycles and thus being allowed to ride on sidewalks and shared use paths. Michael explained that although State law has classified mopeds as bicycles for many years, there are restrictions that apply to mopeds which do not apply to non-motorized bicycles.

D. Commuting and Transportation - Greg submitted a written report as C&T subcommittee chair. The report noted that MBPAC member Jim Titus had discussed HB 52, the Bicycle Duty bill, with State Highway Administration Administrator Melinda Peters and had provided testimony in Annapolis, and Bob Gaston is working to promote off road bicycling in Cecil County and Greg has met with both elected and appointed officials in Baltimore City regarding legislative changes to that city's law on sidewalk bicycling as it applies to shared use paths. He discussed an issue in Baltimore City regarding a bicyclist being issued a citation for riding in a crosswalk that carried the Jones Falls Trail across a roadway.

Greg moved and John seconded his motion for MBPAC to adopt a resolution urging MDOT Secretary James T. Smith, Jr. to direct MDOT staff to consider bicycle and pedestrian accommodations as part of the design of the Amtrak bridge project across the Susquehanna River. Michael mentioned that MDOT staff was already doing so. The resolution passed with no nay votes and two abstentions.

Greg also mentioned that he attended a community meeting on March 5th regarding the design of the planned Red Line light rail train in the vicinity of the I-70 corridor between the existing Park and Ride lot at the eastern terminus of I-70 and the Social Security headquarters complex. Greg noted that Delegate Shirley Nathan-Pulliam, Henry Kay of the Maryland Transit Administration and Greg Slater of SHA were in attendance and the issue of extending the western terminus of the Gwynn's Falls Trail across MD 122/Security Boulevard was discussed. A key design issue regarding the trail extension is whether it should cross MD 122 at-grade or grade-separated. Greg Hinchliffe favors a grade separated approach to improve trail user safety. SHA plans to tear down the existing I-70 bridge over MD 122 but Greg Slater said SHA could look at retaining a portion of the existing bridge to carry the extended Gwynns Falls Trail over MD 122. Greg Hinchliffe introduced a motion that MBPAC supports the most safe and direct alignment for the trail extension and which asks MDOT Secretary Smith to ensure that MTA and SHA consider all options in this regard including retaining a portion of the existing I-70 bridge over MD 122 to carry the trail. Carl seconded this motion which passed with no nay votes and two abstentions.

3. Red and Purple Line Bicycle Considerations Presentation

Patrick McMahon of MTA gave a presentation on bicycle considerations and amenities along the planned Red and Purple light rail transit lines in the Baltimore and Washington metropolitan areas respectively. He said there would be space for four bicycles to be carried on-board per rail car, described planned bicycle parking facilities and noted how bicyclists would likely fare when sharing the road with light rail trains when such trains travel within a roadway right-of-way. John noted that LRTs do not pose a problem for informed bicyclists but an education program would be needed to teach bicyclists not to cross the tracks at a shallow angle (i.e. less than 45 degrees) to avoid the risk of falls resulting from the bike tires getting snagged by the tracks.

4. Other Business

Bikesharing -Michael provided an update on bicycle sharing noting that Montgomery County bikesharing program was well underway and that the bankruptcy of Public Bikesharing Systems Company (PBSC), which produces the bicycles and bike docking stations used by Capital Bikeshare has delayed the planned spring 2014 starts of bikesharing programs in Baltimore City, College Park and the University of Maryland at College Park indefinitely.

Shared Use Paths in Utility Corridors - John gave an update on efforts to persuade the Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO) to allow shared use paths to be built along their power line rights-of-way. He is working with a group of stakeholders including Delegate Aruna Miller and would like to see two pilot projects along utility corridors connecting Cabin John to Seneca state park in Montgomery County and along another power line right-of-way in Prince George's County. John said so far PEPCO shows no signs of agreeing to these proposals. Dick asked if these utility corridors were owned in fee simple by PEPCO. John said yes. Dick suggested seeking a 99 year lease from utility companies for a dollar. He also joked that, "*the job of electric utilities is to move kilowatts not people.*"

New Maryland State Department of Education representative – Janice Arnold introduced herself to the members. She attended the March MBPAC meeting in place of former MSDE representative Michael Mason who retired from state government on February 28th. Janice is a contract employee and thought she might attend the MBPAC meetings as the MSDE representative until further notice, possibly later this year. She was welcomed by the members.

ADA Accessibility Interpretation – Fred Shaffer, as a senior planner with the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, reviews development permits in Prince George's County. He brought up a vexing issue of a McDonald's restaurant application for renovation where the restaurant owner has been advised by their attorneys to rip up an existing sidewalk that serves both restaurant and thru pedestrian traffic because the sidewalk is not ADA compliant. A new sidewalk which would be ADA compliant would connect a street corner to the renovated McDonald's but disrupt the existing thru pedestrian traffic flow by forcing out of direction travel past the accessible entrance to the restaurant. The intent of this design, proposed by McDonald's legal counsel, is to ensure that their client is not exposed to claims of violating ADA requirements by keeping the existing non-compliant sidewalk. Fred asked if anyone could offer insight. Michael said he would contact a colleague at the US Access Board to see if he could offer advice.

5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 AM

