

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY GROUP

Wednesday, July 20, 2016
Baltimore Metropolitan Council
1:11 to 3:09 P.M.

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 1:11 p.m. by the Vice Chair, Mr. Alex Rawls.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Rawls welcomed attendees and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

2. APPROVAL OF MAY MINUTES

The minutes of the May meeting were presented with a motion to approve by Mr. Steve Cohoon and a second by Ms. Molla Sarros. One addition was submitted prior to the meeting as well as two minor corrections noted at the meeting. The minutes were approved as amended.

3. REGIONAL ON-ROAD AND OFF-ROAD TRAIL PRIORITIES – PROGRESS UPDATE

Members agreed at the May BPAG meeting to have regular project progress updates on priority on-road and off-road bicycle facilities for the region. Priority projects for the region were discussed at the March BPAG meeting as well as at a trails workshop in April led by the Maryland Recreation and Parks Association and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The progress updates will focus on those priorities that emerged from both discussions. Mr. Zach Kaufman distributed a list of these projects prior to the meeting along with the BPAG member responsible for updating the group. The updates were as follows:

- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge across the Patuxent River connecting Anne Arundel and Prince George's Counties:** The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Anne Arundel County and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) has been executed and signed. The MOU between Anne Arundel County and the State Highway Administration (SHA) is anticipated soon. These grant agreements will allow design work to commence utilizing Maryland Bikeways funds. The county has held a pre-bid meeting in association with the request for proposals (RFP).
- **Complete multiple projects that are part of the Patapsco Greenway Trail System, connecting the Grist Mill Trail, Ellicott City, BWI Trail, Gwynn's Falls Trail, and the Baltimore City trail**

network: BMC staff and staff from local jurisdictions met with DNR regarding a draft RFP for a concept plan for this project. The RFP is anticipated to be issued within the next week, with consultant selection and the commencement of work on the project anticipated by October. This trail concept is funded for preliminary planning through the BRTB Unified Planning Work Program. The multi-jurisdictional nature of this project necessitates bringing together a wide variety of stakeholders. Funding for the study includes \$100,000 for a consultant to be managed by BMC as well as \$15,000 each for local jurisdictions, including Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, and Howard County. The concept plan will evaluate existing conditions, preferred and alternative alignments for the trail, and a phased implementation schedule for each project segment as identified in the plan.

The current administration at DNR is not supportive of a transportation style trail upstream of Ellicott City, though they are more supportive of a transportation style trail downstream from Ellicott City. Their concerns are primarily about preservation of the character of the park and the tree canopy in particular. The portion of the trail upstream from Ellicott City will remain a part of the concept plan. A student group at the University of Maryland is looking at options for a spur from the BWI Trail to the Grist Mill Trail in Patapsco Valley State Park.

- **Develop the missing link of the Ma & Pa Trail north of Baltimore:** Harford County Parks and Recreation is still in negotiation to acquire the private property needed to complete the missing link of the Ma & Pa Trail in Bel Air. The county will move forward with funding the design of the missing link once property acquisition is complete. A second section along the Maryland & Pennsylvania rail line north of the existing Ma & Pa Trail has FY 2021 funding in the county budget. The plan is to implement both of these sections in a similar timeframe. This funding could be delayed if property acquisition doesn't move forward.
- **Develop the Cromwell Bridge Trail and link to the Towson Spokes Trail:** Cromwell Bridge Road is part of the Towson Spokes project. It will include share the road signage, but no separate facilities due to right-of-way and other physical constraints. The trails workshop in April noted the idea of connecting a facility on Cromwell Bridge Road to the Ma & Pa railroad corridor in Harford County.
- **Develop the BGE Northeast Region Trail:** The Rails to Trails Conservancy has been holding coalition building meetings surrounding the Baltimore Beltline, a 35-mile loop of bicycle facilities around Baltimore City. A portion of the BGE Northeast Trail is a component of this loop. Thus far Rails to Trails has received design funds for other portions of the trail, but the BGE portion is not included in those funds. The group had a productive meeting with BGE regarding that portion of the trail, but no commitments have been made at this point.
- **Governor Frank Brown Trail:** Carroll County is still waiting to hear if the National Guard Readiness Center can accommodate the planned alignment for the trail. Multiple members of the public have expressed interest in the project moving forward.

4. DISCUSSION ON POTENTIAL PEDESTRIAN ISSUES

The group has focused primarily on bicycle-related topics as of late, so the group used this time to discuss potential pedestrian-related topics and presentations they would like the group to address. Items discussed at recent meetings include presentations on pedestrian crash data (included as a part of this agenda) and a trail ambassador program to help mitigate conflicts between bicyclists and pedestrians on off-road trails. Ms. Dawn Thomas will follow up with a representative from a trail ambassador program in Anne Arundel County to see if they would be willing to make a presentation at a future BPAG meeting.

There were several topics discussed including:

- Evaluation of local ADA plans once they are complete. They could serve as a source of regional recommendations for pedestrian facilities.
- Design guidance, including conflicts in design guidance from different sources, as well as design as required by federal guidance versus design that is comfortable for people to use. Mr. Cohoon expressed interest in learning more about where complete streets type improvements would or would not be required based on the urban or rural character of the surrounding land uses. Baltimore City and Baltimore County currently have complete streets policies while Howard County is currently working on one.
- The use of innovative pedestrian features such as the hawk beacon, a pedestrian actuated crossing signal useful in situations where a traffic light is not warranted. This is not currently approved in Maryland, but is approved by FHWA.
- What communication is happening between the state and local jurisdictions in projects involving state roads.

At the close of the discussion, two primary topics of interest were identified by the group:

- Safe Routes to School: There is interest from the group in learning about eligible funding categories for the SRTS program, success stories of what has worked elsewhere, resources for making the case for improvements, and barriers to the implementation of improvements. These barriers could be tangible items such as lack of funding or cultural barriers such as perceptions that walking is unsafe. How do we make SRTS a priority for schools, PTAs, and parents? Possible presenters include a representative from the Safe Routes to School National Partnership, Ms. Jessica Shearer from SHA, and a local jurisdiction staff member that has experience with guiding a SRTS project through the implementation process.
- Sidewalk maintenance policies: Maintenance can often be a barrier to getting sidewalks built. Members expressed interest in collecting information regarding sidewalk maintenance policies in each jurisdiction to aid in identifying barriers and best practices. Information collected will include what party is responsible for maintaining sidewalks, planning strategies to prioritize pedestrian improvements, and snow removal policies. Mr. Kaufman asked for volunteers to draft categories of information to be collected from each jurisdiction. These

categories will be distributed to all members for comment prior to collecting this information from each jurisdiction.

5. PRESENTATION ON BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN CRASH DATA

Ms. Crystal McDermott, GIS analyst at BMC, presented an overview of crash data with a focus on bicycle and pedestrian attributes of that data that was recently made publicly available for the first time. She began by distributing maps summarizing the location and severity of pedestrian crashes on foot in 2015 for each jurisdiction. These maps serve as an example of the kinds of products BMC staff can provide to local jurisdictions. She introduced the group to two crash data sets, where each can be accessed online, and how the data is organized. The Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) includes all fatal crashes in the United States since 1975, with calendar year 2013 the most recent year for which this data is available. The Maryland State Police (MSP) vehicle crashes data includes all crashes in Maryland that have a complete police report. This data was first made publicly available in 2015. The MSP data has the advantage of including all crashes, as opposed to only fatal crashes in FARS.

Both data sources are accompanied by additional files that define data elements and decode data attributes. For example, the MSP "Pedestrian Type Code" attribute describes the role of the pedestrian involved in the crash and includes items such as pedestrian on foot, bicyclist, other pedalcyclist (ex: recumbent bicycle), rider of animal, etc. In 2015, there were 61,970 crashes in total. Of those, 499 or 0.8% involved cyclists and 2,006 or 3.2% involved pedestrians on foot. The MSP data comes in excel spreadsheet form, with x-y coordinates included for each crash to allow mapping of those crashes. Other files that can be related to the crash file allow data users to identify additional attributes and characteristics associated with the crash. Attributes relevant to crashes involving bicyclists and pedestrians are quite extensive and include items such as the road name, where on the road the crash occurred, the road condition, weather, the level of injury, the location of the pedestrian at the time of the crash, their movement at the time of crash (crossing at an intersection, crossing not at an intersection, walking/riding with traffic, walking against traffic, etc.), clothing type, whether they were wearing safety equipment, whether drugs or alcohol were involved, and time of day. The accuracy of these attributes will depend on the level of detail of the police report.

Ms. McDermott and BMC staff are going to continue learning about this data and ways that it can be used to help local jurisdiction staff, potentially through an interactive map. She is available for the creation of mapping products and to answer questions regarding use of the data.

[Handout: Crashes Involving Pedestrians on Foot in 2015 for each county]

6. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

- Ms. Sarros shared that she attended an event in Philadelphia associated with the USDOT Every Place Counts Design Challenge. The event brought together government representatives, urban planners, designers, and residents to brainstorm solutions for neighborhoods disconnected by

the Vine Street Expressway. Recommendations fell into three main themes – to incorporate green infrastructure, open space, and landscaping; to enhance safe, comfortable, and balanced connectivity and mobility; and to support equitable and inclusive opportunities for growth and new investment. In regards to her work at the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), she shared that air quality monitors in the region have recently shown violations of the EPA's 2015 ozone standard. The MDE Alternative Transportation group is planning on bringing a model MTA bus bike rack to the MDE offices so that staff can familiarize themselves with using the rack. They are also planning a meet-and-greet to facilitate carpooling and other alternative transportation options among agency staff.

- Mr. Russ Ulrich said that this year's Bike to Work Day had a record number of registrants at 1,804. There were events at 34 locations throughout the region. The nearly \$20,000 in sponsorship dollars covered most of the event's expenses. The first planning meeting for B2WD 2017 is scheduled for August 18 at BMC.
- Mr. Anikwenze Ogbue shared that in May the USDOT reduced the number of controlling criteria for low and high speed federal highways. The number of criteria for high speed highways decreased from 13 to 10 while the number for low speed highways decreased from 13 to 2. Fewer controlling criteria may make it easier to implement bicycle and pedestrian facilities because fewer design exceptions will be required. It would be beneficial for a bicycle and pedestrian voice to be at the table when SHA has discussions regarding the reduction in the number of controlling criteria.
- Mr. Chris Eatough stated that Howard County is currently drafting a complete streets policy and incorporating it into their design guidelines. The pedestrian master plan is moving forward, with the consultant working on a final draft. The bicycle master plan has been completed and approved. Funding has been secured for a bikeshare program in downtown Columbia. County staff are working on a bikeshare RFP and anticipate launching in spring of 2017.
- Mr. Rawls said that Harford County's request through the SHA Fund 79 for a shared-use path extension along MD 24 has moved into feasibility and alternatives analysis with SHA. They expect to hear back from SHA in October. Harford County also submitted a Recreational Trails Program application for the Prospect Mill Trail connection. The trail is a paper street that connects a neighborhood to a local park. The Hatem Bridge, carrying US 40 over the Susquehanna River, opened to bicycles on July 1. Crossings are restricted to certain times of the day, with bicyclists instructed to push a button prior to crossing that activates a warning signal for drivers alerting them that bicyclists are present. Harford Transit offered free bus rides on Dump the Pump Day in June as a means of promoting alternative transportation.
- Ms. Mary Lane shared that a design contract has been awarded for the Washington Road SRTS project. The MOU with SHA has been executed for the Johnsville Road SRTS project.
- Ms. Thomas said that design of Phase I of the South Shore Trail is currently being reviewed by SHA. Phase II is at 60% design. Anne Arundel County has started a feasibility study to explore how the South Shore Trail might cross MD 3. Phase 2 of the Broadneck Peninsula Trail is at 95% design.

- Mr. Cohoon shared that the Cross County Connector Trail requires an additional review from SHA since the trail includes a bridge over a wetland. They anticipate that the project will go to bid this spring. A tract of land recently donated to the county has been identified as the location for a pedestrian overpass over US 50 that will connect trails running east-west and north-south on Kent Island.
- Ms. Caitlin Doolin stated that construction on the Maryland Avenue Cycletrack, connecting Pratt Street to 29th Street, will start on July 25. This is a part of a larger project that includes an additional 8.5 miles of bicycle facilities throughout the downtown area. Community meetings are underway for bikeshare, with the launch expected in early October. Phase I will launch with 30 stations in the fall, followed by an additional 20 stations in the spring.
- Ms. Noelle Smith shared that Baltimore County is currently working on getting new contractors on board for signs and road markings associated with three bicycle projects. These projects are ready to go once the selection of a contractor is finalized.
- Mr. Kaufman said that the review team has finalized their recommendation for Transportation Alternatives funding. There were five applications requesting a total of \$4.7 million dollars. The recommendation is to fund a stormwater management facility in Carroll County at the amount available to the Baltimore region. The award will cover \$980,000 of the \$1.235 million request. Carroll County has confirmed that they are able to move forward with the project with partial funding. This recommendation was approved by the Technical Committee and will go before the BRTB on July 26.

ATTENDANCE

Members

Dawn Thomas – Anne Arundel County
Caitlin Doolin – Baltimore City (Chair)
Noelle Smith – Baltimore County
Mary Lane – Carroll County
Alex Rawls – Harford County (Vice Chair)
Chris Eatough – Howard County
Steve Cohoon – Queen Anne’s County
Molla Sarros – Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE)
Anikwenze Ogbue – Public Member (Bicycle)

Staff and Guests

Regina Aris – Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)
Zach Kaufman – BMC
Crystal McDermott – BMC
Russ Ulrich – BMC
Nokomis Ford – Carroll County
Clare Williams – Carroll County
Marieannette Otero – SRTS National Partnership