

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY GROUP

Wednesday, November 16, 2016

Baltimore Metropolitan Council

1:05 to 2:54 P.M.

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m. by the Chair, Ms. Caitlin Doolin.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Doolin welcomed attendees and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

2. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER MINUTES

The minutes of the September meeting were presented with a motion to approve by Mr. Chris Eatough and a second by Mr. Kwaku Duah. A member submitted several minor corrections prior to the meeting. The minutes were approved unanimously with these corrections.

3. PRESENTATIONS ON SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL (SRTS) PROGRAM

Ms. Marieannette Otero (SRTS National Partnership): The SRTS National Partnership is a nonprofit organization that promotes active, healthy lifestyles, equity and safe infrastructure that supports bicycling and walking. The organization concentrates on school-aged children, but is expanding its focus to include general active transportation advocacy. The partnership seeks to advance policy changes, provides local technical assistance, and shares best practices. The necessity of these efforts is exemplified by the fact that nearly 50% of children walked or bicycled to school in 1969 compared with 13% of children today. In addition, diabetes and obesity rates among children are increasing, particularly in low-income and communities of color.

SRTS programs can comprehensively address many issues including children's health, climate change, air pollution, dangers of crime and violence, and traffic injuries. For example, statistics show that SRTS programs lead to a 35-45% increase in walking and bicycling to school and a 45-75% decrease in pedestrian injuries near schools. SRTS programs also save between \$800 million and \$1.2 million in school bus costs alone, not to mention cost savings due to improved health among children walking or bicycling to school. The organization takes an integrated approach to their work, including the five E's of engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation. They also add equity as an area of focus to address social and economic differences that result in health, education, and

employment disparities. State and regional bodies can help by integrating goals and strategies related to SRTS activities into their existing planning documents such as comprehensive and regional transportation plans, bike/ped plans, complete streets and zoning policies, and vision zero efforts.

The Transportation Alternatives Program is the most obvious source of funds for SRTS activities. However, other federal sources that can be used for SRTS include the Surface Transportation Program, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funds, the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act, and Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery discretionary grants. California serves as a model for funding. The state combines SRTS funding into a larger active transportation plan that includes a dedicated state account.

There are several challenges to implementing SRTS activities. Schools today are more likely to be built further away from where students live and are not as community based as they once were. There are also individual barriers to walking and bicycling to school such as weather and real and perceived dangers such as traffic and crime. Some communities also face issues such as vacant lots and dogs that can contribute to safety concerns surrounding bicycling and walking to school. Garfield, New Jersey and Farmington, New Hampshire serve as models for the successful implementation of SRTS activities. Officials in Garfield involved students in identifying unsafe routes. This information was used by traffic engineers to make improvements and to develop a map that showed safe routes for students to use instead. Farmington, NH officials paired safety education and a walking school bus program with a marked trail utilizing sidewalks that connects neighborhoods to local elementary schools.

[PowerPoints: Safe Routes to School Programs]

Ms. Bobbie Moser (Carroll County Department of Planning): Carroll County currently has two projects that have been awarded SRTS grant funding. The Washington Road (MD 32) sidewalk project involves the construction of approximately 2,000 linear feet of sidewalk on the east side of the road near Robert Moton Elementary School located south of Westminster. The Johnsville Road sidewalk project involves the construction of approximately 800 linear feet of sidewalk on the east side of the road near Eldersburg Elementary School located in southeastern Carroll County.

She outlined project progress thus far and a number of recommendations for project sponsors based on Carroll County's experience thus far:

- Start NEPA early: The NEPA review and approval process can take a long time and should be started soon after the kickoff meeting for projects. The county initiated NEPA for the Washington Road project in April 2015 and received final approval in December 2015. The county initiated NEPA for the Johnsville Road project in January 2016 and received final approval in August 2016.
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): Patience and diligence are required for MOU's with the State Highway Administration (SHA) as they may take longer than anticipated. The MOU process for both projects was delayed due to a requirement that Carroll County submit a separate MOU between the County and the Carroll County Board of Education (BOE). This additional MOU was required because both projects involve building infrastructure (sidewalk or stormwater management facilities) on high school properties

owned by the BOE. For Washington Road, the process from an initial draft to a finalized MOU took from September 2014 to February 2016. The MOU for Johnsville Road is still in process, with an initial draft submitted by SHA in March 2016.

- Involve Stakeholders Early: Stakeholders are important in gaining support for a project, submitting the application, and moving the project forward. Carroll County recommends involving multiple stakeholders including the principal of the benefiting school along with various county departments responsible for the public schools, public works, purchasing, management & budget, grants, and the county attorney.
- Get the project in your Capital Improvement Program (CIP): Having the project in your county's CIP can help demonstrate financial commitment to the project, given that SRTS is a reimbursement program, as well as provides project cost estimates that will be needed for the grant application. The SRTS application must show the county's commitment to fund the project with a letter confirming financial commitment.
- When a problem occurs, involve SHA: Carroll County has encountered multiple funding issues including an award that was less than the estimated project cost and design bids that were significantly higher than anticipated. Involving SHA when problems are encountered helps the project to move forward and to ensure that all federal requirements regarding approvals and procurement are satisfied.

[PowerPoints: Safe Routes to School Program: Carroll County – Lessons Learned]

4. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

- Mr. Patrick McMahon shared that the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) received a \$100,000 Maryland Bikeways grant to start adding full-size bicycle access to MARC cars. These funds will enable MTA to retrofit approximately 1/3 of the MARC fleet so that each car will be able to accommodate two full-size bicycles. MTA plans to apply for more funds in the future to retrofit all of the cars. In addition, MTA held their last public meeting on dedicated bus/bike lanes planned for downtown Baltimore. MTA is working on additional training for bus drivers in association with these lanes. These red-painted lanes currently exist on Pratt and Lombard Streets. Finally, MTA is also moving forward on plans to improve bicycle parking at MARC, metro, and light rail stations, with construction planned for the next several months.
- Ms. Noelle Smith stated that multiple repaving projects are underway in Baltimore County. Once these projects are complete, signage for the Winters Lane bike project is ready to move forward.
- Mr. Chris Eatough said that Howard County received a Maryland Bikeways grant for a pathway connection at Howard County Community College. The county also received a Bikeways grant for ten automated bike/ped counters. The county is also in the final stages of vendor selection for the Columbia Bikeshare Program, with the system slated to launch in Spring 2017. Finally, the Howard County Complete Streets Implementation Team has finished a draft complete streets policy that will soon be shared with stakeholders and the public.

- Mr. E. Scott Hansen stated that the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) is currently reviewing plans for access improvements to Port Covington in association with the planned redevelopment of the area. The pedestrian swing bridge connecting Westport to Port Covington is no longer part of the MDTA plan. MDP will also work with MTA to help with analysis in support of their recent North Avenue TIGER Grant. Finally, MDP staff are working on a transit-oriented development study for planned purple line stations including access, demographics, and analysis of other indicators.
- Ms. Molla Sarros shared that the last two years of data shows that the Baltimore region is in compliance with its ozone standard. The region is also in compliance with the standard for particulate matter.
- Mr. Anikwenze Ogbue mentioned the planned letter from local jurisdiction members of BPAG to SHA administrator Gregory Johnson regarding the recent FHWA revision to the number of controlling criteria. BMC staff are working on drafting the letter.
- Mr. Zach Kaufman said that BMC held a project kickoff meeting on November 3 for the Patapsco Regional Greenway project. Participants included staff from the chosen consultant, Toole Design Group, as well as staff from local jurisdictions and DNR.
- Ms. Doolin shared that this year will be the 20th anniversary of Bike to Work Day in Central Maryland. The goal is to reach 2,000 registered riders. She asked for help in reaching out to potential sponsors for the event. As for Baltimore City, she stated that Baltimore Bike Share launched on October 28 with 20 stations and approximately 200 bikes. Another 30 stations will be installed by spring 2017. The Maryland Avenue Cycletrack is almost complete and early indications show high usage of the facility. The remainder of the downtown bike network will be completed in the spring and will include four additional miles of protected bicycle lanes.
- Mr. Alex Rawls said Harford County did not receive a Recreational Trails grant the county had applied for to build a 550 foot trail segment that would have connected a neighborhood to a park. Harford County and the town of Bel Air reached an agreement with a property owner that will allow the completion of the missing gap in the Ma & Pa Trail. Mr. Rawls also shared that Harford County is working on drafting a complete streets policy and thanked members for sharing policies from their jurisdictions.
- Mr. Jon Mayer introduced the new rideshare coordinator for Anne Arundel County, Ms. Tabitha Ernst. The county is currently interviewing bicycle and pedestrian coordinator candidates and hope to fill the position by January 1. Finally, Anne Arundel County received a Maryland Bikeways grant associated with the design of a connection between the Baltimore & Annapolis Trail and Anne Arundel Community College.
- Ms. Nokomis Ford said that Washington Road SRTS project is currently under design. The draft MOU for the Johnsville Road SRTS project has been submitted to SHA while the MOU with the Carroll County Board of Education has been completed. This additional MOU was required due to necessary stormwater improvements on BOE property. The Carroll County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan is moving forward with a second survey and additional outreach.

5. BALTIMORE BIKE SHARE DEMO

The Baltimore Bike Share program launched on October 28 with 20 stations and approximately 200 bicycles. Interested members went outside to learn about the system and to take test rides on bicycles from the McHenry Row station.

ATTENDANCE

Members

Kwaku Duah - Annapolis
Jon Mayer – Anne Arundel County
Caitlin Doolin – Baltimore City (Chair)
Noelle Smith – Baltimore County
Nokomis Ford – Carroll County
Alex Rawls – Harford County (Vice Chair)
Chris Eatough – Howard County
Molla Sarros – Maryland Department of the Environment
E. Scott Hansen – Maryland Department of Planning
Patrick McMahon – Maryland Transit Administration
Anikwenze Ogbue – Public Member (Bicycle)

Staff and Guests

Regina Aris – Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)
Zach Kaufman - BMC
Anthony Alston – Harford County
Lindsay Donnellon – Federal Highway Administration
Tabitha Ernst – Anne Arundel County
Fred Lippert – Mahan Rykiel Associates
Steve Miller – Bike AAA
Bobbi Moser – Carroll County
Marieannette Otero – SRTS National Partnership
Jessica Shearer – Wallace Montgomery
Clare Williams – Carroll County