

**Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) Meeting
Meeting #1 – 08/31/17**

Committee Members Present:

Mr. Erik Nelson, City of Fredericksburg
Mr. Craig Pennington, Caroline County
Mr. Carter Tatum, King George County
Mr. Jacob Pastwik, Spotsylvania County
Mr. Joey Hess, Stafford County (In at 6:15 p.m.)
Mr. Robert Maple, Fredericksburg Trails Alliance
Ms. Caren Walker, Fredericksburg Triathlon Club
Ms. Kirsten Talken-Spaulling, National Park Service
Mr. Jim Lynch, Potomac Heritage Trail Association

Others In Attendance:

Mr. Brian George, Stafford County Planning Department

Committee Members Absent:

Mr. Dave Jones, Friends of Dahlgren Railroad Heritage Trail
Mr. Stan Huie, Spotsylvania Greenways Initiative
Mr. Jacob Herrman, VDOT

FAMPO Staff:

Mr. Nick Quint, FAMPO
Ms. Marti Donley, FAMPO
Ms. Kari Barber, FAMPO
Ms. JoAnna Roberson, GWRC

1. Call to Order

Mr. Quint called the BPAC meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

2. Member Introductions

All members introduced themselves and stated the organization they represent. Mr. Quint thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting.

3. Bylaws Overview

Mr. Quint advised that BPAC was formed in 2008 for the purpose of updating FAMPO's 2035 LRTP. Mr. Quint stated that when it was initially formed, the committee was more structured. Mr. Quint stated that the committee is now less structured and operates on an ad-hoc basis. For

the development of the 2045 bicycle and pedestrian plan, the committee will meet three additional times after tonight's meeting, with the final meeting likely to occur in January 2018. There was committee consent for meetings to be less structured in nature.

Mr. Quint relayed the purpose of the BPAC committee is to advise the FAMPO Policy Committee on the update to the George Washington Region Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. This plan will be representative of state and local governments, community organizations and the public on transportation planning decisions relating to walking and bicycling projects. Mr. Quint relayed that comments received at the meetings will be forwarded to FAMPO staff and relayed to the FAMPO Policy Committee.

4. Election of Officers

Mr. Quint advised that when the original BPAC committee was formed, officers were elected. Mr. Quint relayed that this process could be re-implemented or, since there are only three more meetings for the foreseeable future, FAMPO staff could preside over meetings.

Mr. Lynch stated that previously, other than presiding over meetings, the officers had limited, if any, additional obligations. Mr. Lynch stated that with the BPAC only meeting approximately 4 times, it would be his recommendation for Mr. Quint to preside over the meetings in lieu of electing officers. Mr. Nelson concurred with Mr. Lynch's recommendation. The recommendation was unanimously endorsed by the committee members in attendance.

5. Introduction to the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

Mr. Quint advised that this is the current FAMPO staff's first time updating the plan, and his strategy is to go through updated sections of the plan and present them one at a time. This way, when the committee is presented with the draft plan, it's not the first time they're seeing everything. Mr. Quint stated the draft documents, analyses and maps are provided for committee review and feedback. Mr. Quint asked committee members to provide feedback by close of business on Friday, September 8.

Mr. Quint relayed that the GWRC region is one of the fastest-growing regions in the commonwealth, and the growth is expected to continue. Mr. Quint advised that the bicycle and pedestrian plan is a requirement of FAMPO's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), a multimodal effort. Mr. Quint stated that, per federal regulations, the LRTP needs to be updated at least every 5 years. Mr. Quint relayed that the 2045 LRTP will be submitted to the FAMPO Policy Committee for adoption in April 2018. Mr. Quint stated that wrap-up of the BPAC committee should be completed by January of 2018. Mr. Quint advised that most of the work will be completed by November and a lengthy and comprehensive public engagement process will take place in early 2018.

Mr. Lynch stated that he understands the regional boundaries involved by focusing on the jurisdictions within PD 16; however, because King George County is also so closely affiliated with the State of Maryland (specifically Charles County), he feels this regional planning organization that represents Charles County should be included as well. There was committee

discussion on Mr. Lynch's request, and no adverse comments were made, so staff was asked to include this regional organization.

Mr. Quint advised that under its present conditions, the GW Region is not conducive to either bicycle or pedestrian travel. With the exception of the City of Fredericksburg, the lack of facilities, ancillary amenities, and continual traffic volumes on local roadways within the region provide for poor cycling and walking conditions region-wide.

Mr. Quint stated that a safe and thorough bicycle/pedestrian network is a vital component for every transportation system. Aside from the health benefits associated with cycling/walking, these activities can also be utilized as a viable means of transportation especially in the urbanized areas. However, with proper planning measures in place and roadway design included, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure can also be implemented within the region's suburban areas.

Mr. Pastwik stated that Spotsylvania County would like to see more emphasis on the East Coast Greenway. Mr. Pastwik relayed he recently attended a meeting in Richmond, and the focus on the growth areas showed a big gap in Central Virginia. Mr. Pastwik asked if FAMPO would consider reaching out to the East Coast Greenway representatives to see if additional support from their committee could be passed on to this region.

Mr. Nelson stated the problem with obtaining support from the East Coast Greenway committee is that this is a non-profit committee, so providing any financial support would be extremely rare or non-existent. Mr. Pastwik stated that even without financial support, just political support would be helpful. Mr. Pastwik stated that he would like to see representatives from the East Coast Greenway present to each locality's Board of Supervisors about how they could help the region implement the plan. Mr. Lynch concurred that an updated presentation to all localities could be helpful. Mr. Lynch also stated that the original route considered through the region might need to be updated based on changes that have occurred since then. Mr. Pennington concurred that specifically for Caroline County, the original route identified by the East Coast Greenway is no longer valid. Mr. Pennington stated that the route is mostly in a rural area that is planned to stay rural, not on Route 1 where most County residential growth is planned. Mr. Pennington stated that with the majority of Caroline County being rural in nature and residents leaving on 20-acre farms, residents of Caroline County would not utilize a trail route because they would need to bike/walk 20 miles before coming to a trail, and he did not see the residents in Caroline County utilizing this type of transportation. Mr. Hess stated that the original routes depicted need to be re-evaluated to also look at the functionality of road safety – just because the route is convenient to trails does not mean it is a safe road for either pedestrians to walk on or ride a bicycle on. Mr. Quint advised that he has contact information for the East Coast Greenway Virginia representative, and he will see if she is available to present to this committee at a future meeting.

6. Review of Vision Statement, Goals & Objectives

Mr. Quint advised that the vision for the GWRC bicycle and pedestrian plan is to develop a comprehensive, destination-oriented network that provides for safe and interconnected bicycle/pedestrian amenities.

Mr. Nelson suggested adding “to improve economic development and quality of life” to the end of the statement. Ms. Walker stated that she is not sure making the issues more political is the right way to proceed. Ms. Walker stated that if the issue is not already supported by a majority of the local Board of Supervisors, then an updated presentation is not going to change the existing thought patterns. Mr. Nelson stated that maybe updated terminology, etc. would be a viable tool. In the City of Fredericksburg, Mr. Nelson advised that city staff no longer refer to bikes/pedestrians as amenities but instead as infrastructure. Mr. Nelson stated that to make it a better political sell, enhancement to quality of life and opportunities for new economic developments could be used as selling points.

Mr. Lynch stated that development/connectivity of trails throughout the region also involves the need to provide bicycle storage facilities. Mr. Quint concurred that storage facilities need to be addressed and will fall under the needs section of the plan.

Mr. Pastwik stated that a lot of standards need to be defined – i.e. commuter parker lots and proximity of lots to trails; transit facilities, off-road facilities. There was committee consent for staff to highlight the importance of connectivity to jobs; the need to distinguish between recreational versus regional impacts; define off-road facilities; etc.

Mr. Quint stated the plan has 4 goals:

- 1.) Develop a complete network of walking and bicycling facilities throughout the greater George Washington Region with connections to facilities outside of the region.
- 2.) Ensure that the network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities is widely accessible and safe for all users.
- 3.) Develop strategies to increase public awareness of bicycling and walking as viable, safe transportation alternatives, as well as the rights and responsibilities of bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists.
- 4.) Assist the George Washington Region’s localities and private organizations in the implementation, design, finance, and construction of the recommended facilities.

7. Existing Conditions

Mr. Quint advised that GWRC’s 2040 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan stated that bike/ped facilities were virtually non-existent throughout the region. Mr. Quint stated the trend is starting to turn as there has been an increase in the interest for implementing bicycle/pedestrian facilities throughout the region. Recent infrastructure improvements have coincided with roadway construction projects, and an increasing number of residential developments are integrating shared-use paths and sidewalks into designs. Mr. Quint stated a goal of this plan is to create recommendations that bind together fragmented sidewalks, bicycle lanes and trails to create a regional bicycle/pedestrian transportation network.

a.) Existing Bicycle Facilities Map

Mr. Quint advised the existing bicycle facilities in the GW Region equal 4.5 miles of on-road bicycle facilities (bicycle lanes and sharrows) and approximately 29 miles of public shared-use paths. These are primarily located within the urbanized area of the region, predominantly in the City of Fredericksburg, Stafford County, and the northeast quadrant in Spotsylvania County. Mr. Quint relayed there are three major bicycle routes through the region: U.S. Bicycle Route 1, the East Coast Greenway and the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail.

Mr. Lynch stated that a fourth trail, the Dahlgren Railroad Heritage Trail (DRHT), should also be mentioned, and he asked staff to consider including this in the plan document. Mr. Quint stated that he noticed the DRHT was missing from the text, and staff can include it.

b.) Existing Pedestrian Facilities Map

Mr. Quint advised that apart from the extensive network of sidewalks throughout the region, the pedestrian facilities are limited. Mr. Quint stated that even though residential developments built over the last 20 years have sidewalks incorporated into their infrastructure, these sidewalks seldom connect to anything outside of the actual neighborhood. Likewise, several commercial developments have sidewalks, but again there is little to no connectivity to the adjacent properties.

Mr. Quint advised that there are numerous nature trails located throughout the region. Most of these established facilities are in community parks that are maintained by localities and volunteer organizations. Mr. Quint stated that the National Park Service also operates and maintains nature trails that are located on their properties throughout the region.

Mr. Lynch stated that he thinks the plan needs to differentiate between a nature trail versus a trail to be used for a transportation mode. There was committee consensus that this is something that needs to be detailed within the 2045 plan.

8. Bicycle Stress & Bicycle Demand Mapping

a.) Methodology

Mr. Quint advised that a bicycle level of stress analysis is a method of rating road segments in the region based on their perceived safety. Mr. Quint stated that the comfort level and risk tolerance for cycling varies among the public. Mr. Quint advised that studies show that the cycling population can be broken into four categories: **strong and fearless** – people that are willing to cycle in nearly any environment including within fast moving and congested traffic areas; **enthused and confident** – people who are avid cyclists but tend to stay on cycling routes that are safe; **interested but concerned** – people who are interested in bicycling; however, have a low level of stress tolerance (approximately 2/3 of the population). This group is more willing to cycle in areas where there is limited interaction with cars; **unable/not interested** – people who are unwilling to bicycle regardless of the infrastructure.

Mr. Quint stated the level of stress analysis rates each road segment on a scale of one to four, with four designating an environment that would not be recommended for cycling and one representing a low-stress environment. Mr. Quint stated that the interested but concerned cyclists would likely bicycle on roads that are rated as one. Mr. Quint stated the analysis covers the following variables: posted speed limits, number of travel lanes and average daily traffic counts. The analysis does not consider other safety concerns such as road slope, presence/absence of a shoulder and the number of curb cuts. Mr. Quint stated that hopefully future data will be able to take into account these variables.

b.) Draft Bicycle Stress & Bicycle Demand Map

Mr. Quint relayed that included in tonight's presentation is draft bicycle stress and bicycle demand maps for committee members to review.

9. Safety

Mr. Quint stated that bike/ped crash data comes from the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles. Mr. Quint relayed that the statewide trends over the last ten years shows the number of fatalities have stayed the same; however, the number injuries has declined slightly. Mr. Quint relayed that injury data is commonly underreported due to issues with capturing data.

Ms. Walker said she thought the numbers were low, based on her knowledge of bike/ped crashes. It was suggested to reach out to local sheriff's offices to see if better data can be obtained. Mr. Quint said he would look into the issue.

a.) Map of Bicycle & Pedestrian Crashes

Mr. Quint advised that in tonight's agenda packet is a map of bicycle and pedestrian crashes for committee members to review.

10. Next Steps

a.) Meeting Schedule

Mr. Quint advised BPAC will meet in September, October and December/January. Mr. Quint relayed that he will be emailing the committee tomorrow to schedule the next meeting.

11. Adjourn

The FAMPO BPAC meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.