

NYSMPO/NYSDOT

Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Staff Meeting Notes

Thursday, June 16, 2011

10 AM – 3:30 PM

SUNY Oswego Metro Center

Syracuse, NY

ATTENDEES

Scott Reigle, BMTS

Jason Purvis, CDTC

Jim Arey, ECTC

Kelly Dixon, GBNRTC

Bob Torzynski, GTC

Matt VanSlyke, HOCTS

Fernando de Aragón, ITCTC

Danielle Krol, SMTC

Cathy Kuzsman, NYSDOT Main Office

Eric Ophardt, NYSDOT Main Office

Gerardo Mendoza, NYSDOT Main Office

Jim Ercolano, NYSDOT Main Office

Mary Harding, NYSDOT Main Office

John Franchini, NYSDOT Region 1

Bob Hetzler, NYSDOT Region 2

Sharon Heybner, NYSDOT Region 2

Andrew Murphy, NYSDOT Region 3

Dan Powers, NYSDOT Region 3

Erin Cole, NYSDOT Region 3

Jeff Sterly, NYSDOT Region 3

Bruce Cunningham, NYSDOT Region 4

Stephen Beauvais, NYSDOT Region 4

Jeff Spencer, NYSDOT Region 6

Lynn Godek, NYSDOT Region 7

Lisa Mondello, NYSDOT Region 8

Mark D. Bowers, NYSDOT Region 9

Mark Maglienti, NYSDOT Region 11

David Saladino, RSG

Steven Gayle, RSG

MEETING NOTES

1. Introductions

Jason Purvis opened the meeting with introductions and noted that one of the main goals of this meeting was to re-start the bicycle and pedestrian planning coordination efforts that were conducted in 2007-2008. The purpose of this group is to provide better coordination and communication between MPOs and NYSDOT and advance statewide bicycle and pedestrian planning efforts.

2. Regional Updates

a. NYSDOT Main Office

Gerardo Mendoza provided the following updates:

- Bicycle Webpage: The NYSDOT Main Office is currently working on finalizing content, links, etc. A final draft of the website is currently under internal review.
- Pedestrian Webpage: The development of this webpage will begin following completion of the bicycle webpage and will follow the same procedures and format as the bicycle webpage.
- Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Council: The Main Office has received requests to re-convene this group and is discussing this internally. The SAGE Commission is currently reviewing the role and authority of various statewide boards.
- NYSDOT Safety Steering Committee: The internal team is currently meeting and will be taking bicycle and pedestrian issues into account.

Cathy Kuzsman provided the following updates:

- Program Update Instructions: The instructions are still being drafted and guidance is expected in late June / early July. The instructions will focus on maintaining existing facilities and includes an emphasis on sustainability/smart growth.
- Complete Streets Bill: Assembly vote expected on Friday June 17th.
- Smart Growth Infrastructure Policy Act: This policy requires that ten smart growth criteria be examined prior to initiating projects.

Mary Harding provided the following update:

- The Safe Routes to School manual is currently being updated for Federal Aid projects.

Gerardo Mendoza provided the following updates:

- NYSDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Policy: Issued in April 2010
- NYSDOT Rumble Strip Policy: NYSDOT is currently consulting with stakeholders to update the policy. The policy may be limited to facilities with speeds greater than 30 miles per hour, shoulders greater than 6 feet, specific AADTs, etc. Matt VanSlyke asked what the current policy was on rumble strips. Gerardo Mendoza responded that the current policy applies only to limited access and interstate facilities.
- NYSDOT ADA Transition Plan: An inventory of sidewalks and ramps is currently underway statewide.
- Chapter 17 & 18 of Highway Design Manual: Chapter 17 is currently on hold pending the update to the AASHTO *Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Bicycle Facilities*.

b. NYSDOT Region 11

Mark Maglienti provided the following updates:

- Region 11 is currently acquiring data from the NYCDOT on bicycle routes for use on the Region 11 bicycle webpage.
- ADA Transition Plan: Region 11 was not surveyed in the past. They have an intern starting soon to complete the inventory and ratings this summer.

NYSDOT Region 10: Not represented at the meeting

c. NYSDOT Region 9

Scott Reigle provided the following updates:

- BMTS has completed an update to their bicycle route maps
- BMTS last updated their Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan in 1995. They have separated the modes and are currently working on an update to the Pedestrian Plan with the Bicycle Plan to follow.
- The City of Binghamton awarded a \$10,000 mini-grant to look identify low-cost bicycle and pedestrian and smart growth related improvements.
- BMTS is continuing to work on the Greater Binghamton Greenway with one section under construction now and two more sections expected to be under construction next spring.

Mark Bowers provided the following updates:

- The regional bicycle and pedestrian advisory committee is actively meeting
- Region 9 is currently working on a Long Range Comprehensive Plan.

d. NYSDOT Region 8

Lisa Mondello provided the following updates:

- Currently updating data for bicycle route map update.
- Making progress on ADA facility assessment review

e. NYSDOT Region 7

Lynn Godek provided the following updates:

- Region 7 has noted that the bicycle and pedestrian design checklist is being utilized more by designers.
- The Fort Drum Connector project is currently underway. Sidewalks have been incorporated into the design.
- Region 7 is currently investigating the use of “sharrows”. They note that regional traffic engineer is concerned about liability and confusion when installed. Jim Ercolanos suggested looking at what SUNY Plattsburg has done. Jason Purvis noted that the City of Albany is also currently using sharrows (see <http://www.capitalcoexist.com/>). Mark Bowers requested that NYSDOT prepare a consistent policy/message for use of sharrows statewide. Gerardo Mendoza suggested that the NYSDOT Main Office can serve as the coordinating body on sharrow information transfer. Jim Arey noted that local communities are already moving forward with sharrows without official Main Office guidance and that it would be helpful to have timely guidance from the Main Office to assist his local communities.

f. NYSDOT Region 6

Jeff Spencer provided the following update:

- Jeff notes that Pauline Burns is the new regional bicycle and pedestrian coordinator.

Jim Arey provided the following updates:

- NYSDOT is currently considering the use of a planned utility corridor from the new Route 17/I-86 highway to the river for use as a potential trail.
- Construction on portions of the Catharine Valley Trail are ongoing.
- Jim Arey noted that MPO staff should volunteer to upload regional bicycle information on the state’s 511 website. Mary Harding asked for any event information links to be forwarded to her to upload to the 511 website.

g. NYSDOT Region 5

Kelly Dixon provided the following updates:

- The GBNRTC is currently in the process of moving regional bicycle and pedestrian map online with amenities and services added to the routes. The map will be linked into the 511 website.
- The Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus received funding through the Job Access Reverse Commute program to investigate alternative commute options, including bicycle/pedestrian improvements, transit, and public outreach.

h. NYSDOT Region 4

Bob Torzynski provided the following updates:

- There are six active trail feasibility studies currently underway and two RFPs currently out, funded through their UPWP.
- The GTC is currently finalizing their regional Coordinated Transit Plan, which includes a regional mobility management system and ADA access to bus stops.
- Bicycle routes maps have been made available on Google Maps and in .KML format.
- Currently updating rideshare database to include transit route information and bicycle route maps.

- The CDC community Transformation Grants cover active transportation, pedestrian action plans, and crime prevention through environmental design.
- Environmental Justice grants are also another potential source for funding active transportation studies.

Stephen Beauvais provided the following updates:

- Bruce Cunningham will be taking over the bicycle program at Region 4.
- Region 4 currently has 5 trails and 4 sidewalks currently under construction.
- Using CMAQ funds for bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

Bruce Cunningham provided the following updates:

- Bicycle Route 19 recently added sharrows based on general MUTCD guidance.
- They have also been doing some road diets, in which a 4-lane cross-section is reconfigured to include 2 travel lanes, a center turn lane, and bicycle lanes.

i. NYSDOT Region 3

Danielle Krol provided the following updates:

- SMTC bicycle suitability map to be printed in June, with a large-scale paper map, and a smaller 12" x 18" weather proof version.
- A Creating Healthy Places grant was used to facilitate the Cycle the City bike ride, which included 150 participants, and to purchase 25 bicycle lane signs for Syracuse.
- SMTC hosting the CNY Pathways webpage to find information about trails.

Erin Cole provided the following updates:

- The ADA Transition Plan is based on a 2005 database of conditions. Region 3 staff is currently driving the region to update the database.
- Region 3 is working on the Erie Boulevard Pedestrian Study.

Dan Powers provided the following update:

- Region 3 is currently working with Syracuse University to improve campus bicycle and pedestrian accessibility.

Fernando de Aragón provided the following updates:

- The regions bicycle suitability map is on the ITCTC website.
- The Upstate Transportation Forum will take place in Ithaca on September 22-23 and will include an alternative transportation forum.
- The ITCTC Planning Council is looking at Complete Streets as projects are submitted for funding, and identifying good candidate streets for potential enhancement.
- Actively introducing bicycle infrastructure into the City of Ithaca, including bicycle boulevards and neighborhood greenways.
- ITCTC is working with the City of Ithaca on a proposal to develop and designate a bicycle network.

j. NYSDOT Region 2

Matt VanSlyke provided the following updates:

- HOCTS currently distributing regional Bicycle Atlas.
- Utica Safe Schools includes a "build a bike" event to repair and distribute donated bicycles. The program has distributed over 500 bicycles to date.
- HOCTS is continuing their sidewalk inventory, with Utica and Rome to be completed this summer. Staff is interested in more efficient, automated process to maintain this inventory.
- A Canalway Trail Roundtable Meeting found 20 miles of gaps in the region, including a missing link in Rome. A follow-up group is working with the Canal Corporation to connect missing links.

Sharon Heybner provided the following updates:

- Two Safe Routes to School projects to be constructed this summer.
- Region 2 is encouraging bicycle and pedestrian improvements during site plan review
- ADA transition plan is in place. Interested in a post-construction checklist to ensure proper elements included in final construction.

k. NYSDOT Region 1

John Franchini provided the following updates:

- Region 1 is noticing more pedestrian checklists being used by design staff and more bicycle/pedestrian detour routes being developed by the traffic group.
- Region 1 has a working version of a regional snow storage design guideline

Jason Purvis provided the following updates:

- The canal way trail is ongoing with a potential tunnel under railroad tracks being considered.
- The CDTC Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force is continuing to meet monthly.
- Capital Coexists celebrated its one year anniversary in April 2011. They have partnered with Radio Disney to better target younger kids. They have also established a discussion forum to facilitate information transfer.
- The CDTC has coordinated with the Capital District Transportation Authority to provide bicycle racks (\$50,000) and bicycle lockers at train stations. Questions related to bicycle racks at train stations include: how much to charge, who maintains lockers, who keeps the money, etc.
- Looking to update Regional Bicycle Maps. Want to maintain paper maps and provide in atlas format to provide sufficient detail to users.

3. Revisiting the 2007-08 list

The 'Brainstorming List' developed at the Fall 2007 Bicycle and Pedestrian Working Group Meeting in Binghamton was distributed (attached).

The following comments were made:

- Gerardo Mendoza noted that NYSDOT will be revising their annual work plan and can integrate the list of priorities from this working group. He stressed that this working group should be clear on their priorities – items that are important to NYSDOT, MPOs and communities, items that are low cost and high benefit, etc.
- Jason Purvis requested that NYSDOT provide more timely responses and guidance, even if not "formal" response.
- Sharon Heybner asked how to best convey bicycle and pedestrian accomplishments to the NYSDOT Main Office.
- Gerardo Mendoza said the group needs to identify the best way to transmit accomplishments – including newsletter, website, etc.
- Matt VanSlyke asked if there are other modal groups currently summarizing accomplishments to the Main Office and the Commissioner.
- Gerardo Mendoza replied that he produces monthly reports on various modes for the Commissioner.
- Mark Bowers suggested that the working group present a cohesive message to top managers at NYSDOT to increase funding for bicycle/pedestrian projects and tie the enhancements to improving safety, which is the Department's highest priority.

- Jim Arey asked why bicycle and pedestrian projects can't get a dedicated "line" in the Program Update.
- Eric Ophardt noted that his goal was to better align bicycle and pedestrian issues into traffic safety. He noted that bicycle and pedestrian crashes account for 24% of all fatalities statewide, but NYSDOT feels that the issue is too broad to dedicate funding to specific bicycle and pedestrian projects.
- Fernando de Aragón noted that this working group may have a role in educating NYSDOT management on bicycle and pedestrian needs, funding levels, and safety impacts. He noted that most bicycle and pedestrian work occurs at the local level. He requested that the state lay the groundwork to allow MPOs to operate more efficiently – for example, completing Chapter 17.
- Mark Bowers noted that all MPOs have long range plans in place, but NYSDOT only has a Long Range Comprehensive Plan, which doesn't include specific details on bicycle and pedestrian elements and doesn't inform capital programming.
- Jason Purvis noted that the 1997 Bicycle Master Plan needs a comprehensive update and that this should be a priority of the this working group. The working group confirmed that this was a priority.
- Jim Arey noted that the update of this Master Plan would provide a great opportunity to provide input and feedback to the Commissioner.
- Jason Purvis confirmed that another high priority of this working group should be to provide all necessary bicycle and pedestrian data to the Main Office so their website can go live.
- Eric Ophardt noted that NYSDOT has all trails in the state mapped, but that they need specific data on the trails (photos, surface type, parking, length, etc.)
- Jason Purvis asked Eric Ophardt if he could re-send a request for necessary bicycle and pedestrian information to all MPO and Regional contacts.
- Fernando de Aragón expressed concern that a full update of the statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan would take too long and suggested that an interim step would be for NYSDOT to provide a broad statement of policy for MPOs to work from.
- Eric Ophardt noted that NYSDOT has a Bicycle and Pedestrian Policy in place since April 2010.
- Jason Purvis asked Eric Ophardt if he could send around the current NYSDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Policy to the group.
- Stephen Beauvais expressed concern that a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plan would just "sit on the shelf" and not be put into action and suggested instead to focus on a statewide bicycle and pedestrian vision.
- Mark Bowers suggested the need for a strong educational campaign to let people know about the importance of bicycle and pedestrian facilities and active transportation in general.
- Jason Purvis noted that data sharing was an issue. NYSDOT staff have access to the p:/ drive, but access not currently available to MPO staff.
- Mark Bowers asked whether data sharing should be a priority and suggested that a committee could be formed to identify the highest priority data to be shared between NYSDOT and MPOs.
- Jason Purvis noted that the municipalities and MPO staff are typically the ones driving sidewalk policy requests.
- Mark Bowers noted that he sees Smart Growth as an important policy change mechanism and that opportunity exists to address the gap between the Initial Project Proposal (IPP) and the project development process. He noted that many problems with project cost overruns and schedule delays are due to poorly developed IPPs.

4. Moving Forward

Jason Purvis that he would like to see this working group return to four meetings per year, with two meetings occurring in person (fall and spring) and two meetings occurring via conference call (winter and summer). He suggested that the in-person meetings have more detailed agendas, while the conference call meetings would have shorter, more direct agendas.

The working group agreed that the next meeting would occur in the Hudson Valley on September 15th with the time TBD

The meeting ended at 3:20 PM.

ACTION ITEMS

- Eric Ophardt to re-send a request for necessary bicycle and pedestrian information for the new website to all MPO and Regional contacts. After this request is sent, the MPOs and Regions will do their best to supply Eric with the information in the desired format.
- Eric Ophardt to send around the current NYSDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Policy

IDENTIFIED PRIORITIES

- Complete a comprehensive update of the Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan
- Update regional trail data for NYSDOT statewide bicycle and pedestrian webpage.
- Identify specific bicycle and pedestrian data sharing needs.

Meeting notes prepared by David Saladino, P.E. (RSG) on June 25, 2011.