

Fairfax County Sidewalk and Trail Committee  
Minutes of the April 11, 2007 Meeting

Members Attending: Deborah Leser (Sully District), Brent Reynolds (Braddock District), Wade Smith (Dranesville District), Bruce Wright (Hunter Mill District), Peter Christensen (Mount Vernon District), Roger Diedrich (Providence District), Roy Brooks (Mason District), Dennis Frew (WABA), Jenny Pate (FCPA), and Ann Pimley (Fairfax Area Disability Services Board).

Staff Attending: Chris Wells (DOT), Charlie Strunk (DOT), and Sheng-Jieh Leu (DPZ).

Guests Attending: Philip Latasa and Duane Murphy (Friends of the Accotink).

The meeting was called to order at 0730 by Mr. Reynolds. Guests, Philip Latasa and Duane Murphy from the Friends of the Accotink were introduced and thanked for their work in the Accotink Stream Valley.

Minutes of the March meeting were approved unanimously with one change. The Tour de Lee was actually the Lee District Open House.

**Discussion of the Vision Statement.**

Initial discussion centered on the purpose of the vision statement. The committee members decided by consensus that the statement is designed to focus the activity of the committee during the next year. Subcommittees will be established to evaluate items included on the list and speakers will be asked to address the committee to help gather information helpful to the committee in evaluating the county's needs for sidewalks and trails.

The following elements of the vision statement were determined to be best addressed by the creation of two broad topics - Best Practices for Bicyclists and Best Practices for Pedestrians:

1. All intersections should have 2 curb ramps at each corner. ALL intersections should have crosswalks painted; preferably four ways.  
Crosswalks should be painted with the most visible pattern, which is the zebra or ladder crosswalk. VDOT and the county should use a consistent pattern everywhere.
4. New developments should address and make a priority of bike and pedestrian access and connectivity with surrounding neighborhoods to include showers and lockers in commercial buildings, and secure, covered bicycle parking. Arlington County requires these facilities in all new buildings above a certain size, and bike racks in almost all new commercial and retail developments.

5. Paved surfaces are preferred for most bike facilities and for sidewalks and multiuse trails. However as construction methods and technology improve permeable surfaces should be considered.

8. Develop county standards for bicycle racks. DC and Arlington Co recommend use of the inverted U racks for all new bicycle racks.

11. Fairfax County should advocate for Best Practices for Pedestrians, such as crosswalks on all four sides of intersections, with two curb cuts at each intersection corner, "Rest in Walk" which is automatic activation of pedestrian signals along the main line of major corridors, using countdown pedestrian signals as the standard, construction of sidewalks on both sides of all roads, accessible sidewalk connections to bus stops, etc., median refuge islands with curb cuts, adequate lighting of sidewalks and crossing locations, and audible pedestrian signal buttons."

The remaining elements listed below will be addressed individually by subcommittees:

2. ALL metro stations should FIRST address bike and pedestrian access as a priority, then bus access, after which auto access is addressed.

3. In the modified transportation policy plan: "Integrate non-motorized transportation projects into the programming of construction and maintenance projects and improve bicycle level of service with road reconstruction projects." EVERY re-paving of county roads should result in an on-road bike lane paved and marked on the shoulder.

7. Designate commuter trails that get special maintenance and snow removal and fund the year-round maintenance of them.

10. Allow quick-take authority for priority trail projects. Currently this is only available for road projects, not trails. It's one reason that trail projects are stalled even with adequate funding.

There will therefore be six subcommittees. One each for items 2, 3, 7, and 10 and one each for Best Practices for Bicycles and Best Practices for Pedestrians. Mr. Reynolds will contact the committee members by email during the next month to establish the subcommittees.

Other topics discussed for the consideration of the committee during the next year were:

- The current PFM
- The need for more money and staff for maintenance
- Are existing checklists being used by staff?
- The need to consider the tree canopy in Fairfax County when designing trails.

## **Web Site**

The committee discussed their findings after reviewing the web site during the past month. A subcommittee was established to review and make recommendations for changes. B. Wright, W. Smith and D. Frew are the members of this subcommittee.

Fairfax County has a new webmaster. Committee and subcommittee members are alerted to the fact that he may make significant changes to policies and procedures involving the web sites.

A. Pimley requested that the committee use word documents rather than PDF's as much as possible on the web site since software designed to "read" the documents do not work with PDF documents unless there is a text background.

## **Chairman's Report**

B. Reynolds testified on behalf of the committee for trails in the new budget. DPW had trails in the budget submitted to the County Executive but these were removed before the budget was forwarded to the Board of Supervisors. The best place for committee input at this point is with individual supervisors.

C. Wells will send to each committee member the link on the county website that describes the budget process.

The process is confusing and involves a number of people and agencies. Three groups take requests for funding: DPW, DOT and FCPA. The committee members would like for staff to inform the pertinent district representative of requests for trails.

C. Strunk is planning a summit of people who are involved with planning, building, and maintaining trails. He will inform the trail committee of the time and place of the summit.

## **Staff Report – C. Wells**

The HOT lane development process is presenting difficulties with trail construction. Although trails are on the county plan and in some cases on the ground, private developers who are building roads are not being required to build the trail. This will result in barriers to pedestrians and cyclists at the site of privately built roads.

The Street Smart Program and the Safe Crossings programs are now underway. The Street Smart program is an educational program for pedestrians. The Safe Crossings Program is an effort by the police department to watch for drivers who are putting pedestrians in jeopardy. DOT is considering making the Street Smart Program a twice a year push – spring and fall.

### **Staff Report – S. Leu**

S. Leu is continuing to work on updating the web site and the county trails map.

### **Staff Report – C. Strunk**

The county is putting bike racks on busses. There are 300 racks available. They will be unveiled on Bike to Work Day. Fairfax and Reston will have the racks first. Eventually 100% of the fleet will have the racks.

Bike to Work Day is May 18<sup>th</sup>.

There will be a Bicycle Rodeo in Culmore.

Signage for cyclists on the Fairfax County Parkway is being improved.

There will be a meeting about interim routes while improvements are being done to Clairmont Drive. Interested parties should contact C. Strunk.

Bicycles are now available at the Herrity Building for county employees to use to move among the county buildings. Over 200 comments have been received, most of them positive.

### **New Business**

In April there will be a meeting of bicycle stakeholders to discuss bicycle lanes on the newly widened Stringfellow Road. Interested parties should contact B. Wright.

The guests from the Friends of the Accotink are attending committee meetings in order to discourage tree loss and paving of trails in sites they find inappropriate.

Committee members are encouraged to respond to trail waivers quickly as well as to continue reviewing the maps of their districts and sending their findings to S. Leu.

The meeting was adjourned at 0932.