

SPC Pedestrian-Bicycle Advisory Committee
Notes from meeting of May 12, 2010

Attendees:

Tom Klevan, SPC
Dave Totten, SPC
Ryan Gordon, SPC
Gina DelVecchio, Michael J. Baker, Jr., Inc.
Robin Kamin, TRIC
Bill Deguffroy, Indiana County Planning and Development
Chris Miller, ACTA
Jon Smith, Allegheny County Transit Council
Jerry Green, North Side Resident
Doniele Andrus, Beaver-Lawrence County Trails Coordinator
Chris Ziegler, Butler-Freeport Community Trail
Joe Stafford, Bicycle Access Coalition of PA
Kristen Baum, SPC
David Wohlwill, Port Authority of Allegheny County
Jen Thoma, Councilman Patrick Dowd's Office
Sidney Kaikai, LR Kimball Associates
Lynne Scanga, McKees Rocks CDC
Lynn Heckman, Allegheny County
Chris Gostwick, Allegheny County
Tom Baxter, Friends of the Riverfront
Mary Shaw
Roy Weil
Jay Rickenbaugh, CONNECT
Liz Tillman, OTMA
Jason Theakston, Washington County Planning
Lucinda Beattie, Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership
Tracy Stack, DCNR
Ned Williams, Montour Trail Council, Western Pennsylvania Wheelmen
Kristina Keidel, Pittsburgh Department of City Planning
Emily Costello, OTMA

General Comments:

- The Stavich Trail re-opening celebration is scheduled for May 22, 2010. The water trail will be opening soon in Beaver County as well.
- The Port Authority of Allegheny County has submitted a CMAQ application to provide funds so that the Port Authority may equip additional buses with bike racks.
- The DCNR grant application period closed on April 21, 2010; DCNR has asked each County to rank the trail project applications within their county, and determine whether the candidate projects advance local/regional trail or greenway plans. All Counties now have a Greenway Plan.
- The *They Working* grant program is again accepting applications for funding requests that will enable volunteers to complete trail development work.

- Western Pennsylvania Conservancy has a funding program for low impact water access; up to \$4,000. Applications are due by April 7, 2010

Recent News:

- Congratulations to Pittsburgh on its recent receipt of the League of American Bicyclists Bike Friendly City recognition.

Active Allegheny presentation – Gina Del Vecchio of Michael J Baker, Jr., Inc. provided an overview of the Active Allegheny project that they are working on for Allegheny County.

The consultant received their Notice to Proceed at the end of last week, and are now authorized to start on the development of a commuter bicycle and pedestrian plan that will implement elements of the Allegheny County Comprehensive Plan, *Allegheny Places*. This is a PCTI (Pennsylvania Community Transportation Initiative) funded project that loosed to assess and enhance connectivity, accessibility and mobility, and will include an action plan, survey of potential funding programs and a prioritization schedule. The report is anticipated to be completed in the late fall of 2010.

The Active Allegheny Plan will review and make logical connections to other projects/implementation strategies on-going in the County. These include:

City of Pittsburgh Bike Route Signage Plan - Toole Design Group and L. Robert Kimball have been awarded the contract for this project, which is just now getting underway.

Penn Avenue Improvements – Phase I of this redevelopment plan for a stretch of Penn Avenue in Bloomfield/Garfield was completed last year, with input from local residents, the Port Authority and Bike Pittsburgh. Phase II, the development of cost estimates for preliminary engineering work for the provision of pedestrian and transportation enhancements in the worst sections of this corridor, is currently underway.

Public Steps Assessment – Electronic mapping of the County’s public steps and stairways is currently being sought. This includes the City’s steps, as well as public stairways in the outlying communities and those serving transit facilities such as the Palm Garden T Stop.

Erie to Pittsburgh Trail - Friends of the Riverfront report that the 501(c)(3) status has been accomplished for the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, with Friends of the Riverfront taking on the role of Treasurer. Work continues on projects in Allegheny County, including the completion of the missing trail segment between the City of Pittsburgh and Millvale (part of the Route 28 project). Construction is currently underway, and a July trail opening is anticipated.

A trail feasibility study is also underway with DCNR and others to identify possible trail alignments and/or connectivity options between Millvale and the Freeport area. Several public meetings have been held to date, with several hundred trail users and community residents providing input. A final meeting is scheduled for August. All told, the proposed trail route would be 24 miles long and pass through 18 Allegheny County communities.

Access to Montour Trail – Efforts are underway to create a connection between Station Square and the Groveton Trailhead (MP 0) of the Montour Trail (near Coraopolis, PA). A proposed link to the terminal at Pittsburgh International Airport is also nearing reality. PennDOT is currently designing improvements to Route 51 (West Carson Street) between Station Square and Chartiers Creek in McKees Rocks. The resulting project will result in safer and more visible bicycle and pedestrian accommodation along that section of Route 51.

Ohio River Trail – The Ohio River Trail Council is set to release the Feasibility Study for the routing of a trail between Groveton (Montour Trail MP 0) and Monaca, PA via the south shore of the Ohio River. Efforts also continue on the identification of route options along the north shore of the Ohio River between Monaca and the Ohio State Line.

Trail Volunteer Fund – Applications are being accepted through June 1st for Trail Volunteer Funds under the *They Working* program. The focus of the program is to facilitate trail development, but funds could also be used in support of activities that promote bicycle tourism/touring, or the creation of spurs that connect trails the surrounding neighborhoods.

CONNECT – Jay Rickebaugh attended the meeting as a representative of CONNECT, a regional organization designed to bring the City of Pittsburgh, and the 35 communities that share a municipal boundary with the City together to discuss issues that affect the group as a whole. Transportation is one of several focus areas within CONNECT.

Regional Walk Challenge – This summer will see the start of the 4th Annual Walk Challenge. 1,500 people participated last year. This year there will be random weekly prizes for Walk Challenge participants, and a \$1000 gift card for the person logging the most steps. Every Step Counts! For more information or registration, visit www.walk-challenge.org

Montour Trail - The Sports Legacy complex, a several hundred acre recreational complex planned for the area between the Groveton Trailhead (MP 0) and Coraopolis, is a great regional amenity and will create a great trailhead facility/complex. Elsewhere on the trail, the MTC was able to fill a few gaps last year, and continues to work on several fronts: a couple of bridges in Washington County are ready to go out to bid; and the airport spur trail is “coming along.” There is an abandoned road that traverses the airport that can be signed for bicycle use relatively easily. Access to the actual terminal is somewhat more complicated and more costly, with curb cuts, warning signs, etc all required.) Funding for those improvements is still being identified. The only alternative access to the passenger terminal at Pittsburgh International Airport requires travel on an Interstate Highway, which is generally illegal for bicyclists (with rare exception).

Panhandle Trail – The Borough of Carnegie has found renewed interest in the establishment of a formal connection (on road or off road) between the Panhandle Trail Trailhead at Walkers Mill, and the West Busway Station/Borough Building in Carnegie. Many communities in the area that had been served by the Port Authority have lost service following the implementation of the first phases of the TDP, and alternate access to transit is important.

Three Rivers Inline Club (TRIC) – TRIC was established in 1995, and with members of the National Skate Patrol, offer tours through the City twice a week. TRIC members can often be found on local trails and roadways. www.skatepittsburgh.com.

Car Free Fridays – Bike Pittsburgh is sponsoring Car Free Fridays, a program designed to encourage local commuters to use transit, biking or walking for their commute one Friday each month. A different neighborhood is featured each month, with special events planned for that neighborhood. Events typically include a bike breakfast, free (minor) bike maintenance and bike checks, bike tours of the featured neighborhood, etc.

Washington County – Announced that their Greenway Plan is now in place.

Indiana County – Expect to have a first draft of their Pedestrian-Bicycle Transportation Plan out soon.

Friends of the Riverfront Trail Mixer – Friends of the Riverfront will be holding their annual fundraiser at Mogul Minds Studio in Lawrenceville on June 18th.

Allegheny Valley Land Trust – There has been some positive news on the possibility of rail with trail on the Armstrong Trail, which is in the process of being “unrailbanked” and converted back to active rail use. A high level meeting was held a few weeks ago, and DCNR is currently evaluating options for trail connectivity through the corridor. There is a clear pinch point of about 2 miles where a rail with trail might be impossible due to the need for a second rail line to serve as a loading area/engine switching area. But, there is a gas easement and a powerline easement in the area, that may provide routing options. It was also noted that the views from the top of the mountain are gorgeous!

Bicycle Access Council – Joining us today is Joe Stafford of the Bicycle Access Council. He spoke a little about the role and function of the BAC, and summarized his experience with a rail with trail effort in the Hanover Junction/York County area.

PennDOT Ped-Bike Coordinator - Brian Sanders has assumed the position of Ped-Bike Coordinator at PennDOT Central Office. He plans to bring a renewed pedestrian focus to this new area of responsibility. Brian’s email is: bsanders@pa.state.us.

DCNR – Tracy Stack announced that the DCNR is looking at new and creative ways to partner/leverage their activities with local/regional groups. They are becoming active participants in the development and implementation of the Countywide Greenways Plans, working with the local sponsors to identify projects that are “shovel ready,” as well as “active working lists” of projects that are ready to begin now, will be ready to begin within a year, as well as “eventual” projects, or projects that need more attention before they will be ready to deliver.

State/Federal Funding Programs – It has been reported that Pennsylvania can expect to see a new round of Safe Routes to School funding this fall. There are also reports that the Pennsylvania Community Transportation Initiative will also be soliciting applications later this summer/fall. There is no solid information on when we might see a new federal transportation authorization bill, or what might be included in such a bill.

MUTCD Update – The federal Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) is the publication that identifies what signs can be placed along roadways, what the wording and graphics, can be, etc. It is sort of the highway planners’ “sign bible.” That publication was updated in December of 2009, and will now include a few more options for signage pertaining to cyclists and pedestrians. Among other things, they have determined that the concept of “sharrows” or Shared Lane Markings are now an approved signage/pavement marking protocol (they had been an experimental marking subject to review and approval before), and a new “Bikes May Use Full Lane” sign. These and other newly approved signs, sign language and sign graphics will grant PennDOT and local officials with greater flexibility in signing roads for cyclist and pedestrian use.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the SPC Pedestrian-Bicycle Advisory Committee will be on **Wednesday, August 11, 2010.** (Second Wednesday in August).

Subsequent meetings are scheduled for the second Wednesday of October, March and May:

Wednesday, October 13, 2010

Wednesday, March 9, 2011

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

All meetings will be held on the 23rd Floor of the Regional Enterprise Tower, 425 Sixth Avenue, in downtown Pittsburgh unless notified otherwise. Meetings begin at 10 a.m.

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