

## Notes from SPC Pedestrian-Bicycle Advisory Committee

May 13, 2009

### **Attendees:**

Liz Namm, OTMA

Amy Camp, Trail Town Program

Lynn Heckman, Allegheny County

Scott Brillhart, Upper St. Clair Township

Ryan Gordon, SPC staff

Anthony Boule, Pittsburgh Parking Authority

Mary Shaw

Roy Weil

John Haven, Butler Freeport Community Trail

Chris Gostwick, Allegheny County

Robin Kamin, Three Rivers Inline Skating Club

Chuck Imbrogno, SPC staff

Gene Slevinski, Three Rivers Inline Skate Club

Jerrold Green

Doniele Andrus, Beaver/Lawrence Counties

Alicia Kavulic, PennDOT

Seth Gernot, Venture Outdoors

### **Meeting Opening/Introductions**

SPC opened the meeting with a general welcome, and review of the agenda. Meeting notes from the November 2008 meeting were distributed for review. It was noted that the March 2009 meeting had been cancelled due to scheduling conflict. Meeting participants were asked to introduce themselves, as the first item of business.

## **SPC Presentation on CMAQ Program (Chuck Imbrogno)**

CMAQ is a federal program that provides funds for transportation programs that demonstrate air quality benefits. The program is updated every four years, in conjunction with the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). SPC anticipates that we will be soliciting applications for the CMAQ program in 2009, in conjunction with a 2010 TIP adoption.

Many types of transportation projects are eligible for CMAQ funding. Under the recently updated CMAQ project evaluation criteria, projects which provide pedestrian/bicycle enhancements, include diesel engine retrofits, or traffic signal enhancements are eligible for “bonus points.”

Unlike previous funding cycles, where the focus of most efforts was simply to get projects funded, the goal of this program cycle is to get projects funded, then get them on and off the TIP quickly – through the efficient implementation of the CMAQ projects.

It must be remembered that as a FHWA program, the CMAQ application and implementation processes are time consuming, and require a lot of “processing.” In that senses, this is not a terribly “beginner friendly” process.

We expect the application window to open in mid-August, with applications due by the end of September. Air Quality reviews, and application review would then be completed in the fall, with a prioritized list of candidate projects ready for review in early 2010. The successful candidates would be included in a draft TIP by May 2010, with TIP adoption in June 2010.

This schedule is subject to change in light of several transportation funding issues at the state and federal levels, and the expiration of SAFETEA LU (transportation authorization) in September, 2009.

CMAQ questions:

What is the funding allocation process? The SPC region has typically received about \$100 million for a four year program, or \$25 million per year. This money is available for projects that demonstrate congestion relief and/or air quality enhancements in the region. They may be highway projects, transit projects, diesel retrofit projects, ped-bike projects, etc.

A “how to” guide for the CMAQ program would be nice to have.

What is the representation on the project evaluation committee? A project evaluation committee has been established. In recent months, they have worked diligently to complete an update of the CMAQ evaluation process, most notably reaching consensus on the technical evaluation criteria that will be applied to each application. Each of the ten counties in the SPC region and the City of Pittsburgh have a representative on the Committee. Three transit agencies are represented. There is a freight representative, a ped-bike representative, and an environmental representative (from the PA Department of Environmental Protection). One of the region’s three TMA’s is represented, as is PennDOT. The ped-bike representative on the Committee is Steve Patchan of the City of Pittsburgh.

### **Safe Routes to School Program**

An estimated \$21 million in Safe Routes To School funds remain “unreleased” in Pennsylvania. These funds can be used to enhance the physical safety of a child en route to school (sidewalk programs, walking school busses, etc) or for the development of educational programs aimed at elementary and secondary school student safety.

### **Stimulus funding for Ped-Bike Improvements**

In District 10, the Roaring Run Trail project will be extended along the Kiski River, and some amenities added (toilets) completed using stimulus (ARRA) funds. This \$780,000 project is to be let in June.

### **PCTI Funded Projects**

This two year, \$60 million dollar program is intended to advance smart transportation projects. More than 380 applications, totaling more than \$300 million, were submitted in response to this funding opportunity statewide. 92 applications were received from the SPC region, requesting \$142 million.

A final decision on project funding should be forthcoming from PennDOT shortly.

### **Bicycle Commuting Webinar**

SPC’s CommuteInfo program will be producing a webinar on Safe Bicycle Commuting on June 25, 2009. Bicycle commuting strategies will be discussed, as will the overall health benefits of bicycle commuting, safety issues, navigational aids and techniques and bike pool opportunities in the region. Your suggestions as to webinar content would be welcome. Contact Lisa Kay Schweyer at (412) 391-5590, ext. 375 with your ideas.

### **Downtown Bicycle Parking**

The region will soon be one step closer to having secure, well lighted and safe bicycle parking in the downtown area. The Century building project will include new sheltered bicycle parking facilities, to be located adjacent to the Seventh Street Grille on Seventh Street (between Penn and Fort Duquesne Boulevard.) Registration will be required in order to access the facility, which will operate on a key fob system.

Car Free Fridays will kick off on June 12, 2009. A bike marshall system has been established to provide convenient meeting locations and times throughout the City to provide mentors to new riders who might share a commute route or part of a commute route. Ride marshall locations and times are available on the Bike Pittsburgh website at [www.bike-pgh.org](http://www.bike-pgh.org). Many area businesses are offering discounts for riders who cycle on June 12<sup>th</sup>. Free breakfasts in Oakland and downtown (to those who show a helmet) will be among the special events held that day. Car Free Fridays will continue throughout the summer.

Other notable events in the coming weeks are the Venture Outdoors Festival and Pedal Pittsburgh. Details on these events are provided in the meeting handouts.

## **Bike Suitability Mapping Update**

SPC continues to refine the Bike Suitability Maps for Allegheny County, and has initiated mapping efforts in Beaver County. Pdf versions of the maps are available at the door, and are available for review at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org). Cyclist input on these maps is strongly encouraged.

## **Regional Updates**

*Alicia Kavulich*, PennDOT District 10, says that the design of the Freeport Bridge, which spans the Allegheny River between PennDOT Districts 10 and 12, remains on track. The design of the bridge retains the 6 ft., 6 inch pedestrian-bicycle accommodation that had been negotiated with local bicycle interests. Pedestrian and bicycle access across the Freeport Bridge is crucial to the eventual networking of the nearby Butler-Freeport Community Trail, Rachel Carson Trail, Baker Trail, Tredway Trail and others in the area. Discussion of bicycle accommodation from the Freeport Bridge into the community of Freeport is on-going.

*Doniele Andrus*, Butler and Lawrence County Trail Coordinator, The contract for drainage repairs on the Stavich Trail in Lawrence County has been let. The contract for trail resurfacing is still pending. In Butler County, there is a new community based initiative to create a bicycle friendly link from Route 51 to Monaca, as an alternate mode of access to the City. There is access through a Keystone Opportunity Zone (perhaps). An application has been submitted to DCNR for the completion of a feasibility study. There is strong interest in the creation of a connection to the Montour Trail at the Groveton Trailhead. A meeting with Crescent Township, Moon Township, Coraopolis Borough and the Friends of the Riverfront is scheduled for next week. Kennedy Township and Stowe Township have also been contacted and appear interested.

Beaver County is also exploring options to connect with the Great Lake to River Greenway, which borders Beaver County for part of its length. The community of Ohioville (Beaver County) expected to connect with the trail in 2010, and the County hopes to extend that link from Ohioville to Beaver and on to Monaca, along a routing that would include Vanport, Midland, Industry and Beaver.

*Robin Kamin/Gene Slevinski*, TRIC, remind everyone that inline skate season is upon us, and to be mindful of skaters on the trails. They continue to promote paved trails, as skaters use the trail system extensively and are unable to use unpaved surfaces. More information on their activities can be found online at [www.skatepittsburgh.com](http://www.skatepittsburgh.com)

*Seth Gernot*, Venture Outdoors, announced the start of a big cycling season with Venture Outdoors, including several bike tours. He indicated that they had received tour inquiries from as far away as Denmark.

*Jerry Greene*, expressed concern about missing links in the regional trail network, including the GAP between Pittsburgh and McKeesport, and around the Casino. He also expressed his concern that the relatively recent advent of sidewalk dining in the region has crowded out pedestrians in some areas.

*Dave Wright*, Allegheny County Department of Public Works, reports that the Panhandle Trail in Carnegie has been resurfaced, and the construction of the new Montour Bridge at Triphammer is underway. An agreement has been reached on a trail connection between the Montour Trail and the passenger terminal at Pittsburgh International Airport. A PCTI application has been submitted for that project. On the Steel Heritage Trail, work is progressing on two bridges over the NS rail line, one at West Mifflin and one at Port Perry. He noted that Norfolk Southern has been very cooperative in these efforts.

*Scott Brillhart*, Upper St. Clair Township, said that the Township continues to work on the development of a trail between Boyce Mayview Park and Baker Elementary School/Recreation Center. They also hope to update their sidewalk and bikeways plan in 2010. That plan was initially developed in about 1996. USC also working with the Montour Trail Council on the extension of the Arrowhead Trail at Valley Brook.

*Stephen Patchan*, City of Pittsburgh, announced that the City is now working on the development of new bike lanes on Forbes Avenue, from Braddock to Dallas Avenues. An engineering analysis is required to determine if the roadway is of sufficient width to accommodate bike lanes, or if Shared Lane Markings will be used. The City has recently acquired the eradicator equipment which allows them to remove the old bike lane markings (such as on Beechwood Boulevard) and to install the new thermoplastic markings.

*Lynn Manion*, ACTA, announced the start of the Pittsburgh Walk Challenge, an effort supported by all three TMAs in the region: Airport Corridor Transportation Association (ACTA), Oakland Transportation Management Association (OTMA) and the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership (PDP). More details may be found at <http://www.walk-challenge.org/>

*Amy Camp*, Pennsylvania Trail Towns Program, said that the program is now in its third year of helping communities along the Great Allegheny Passage maximize the economic opportunities available along the trail. As part of that effort, a trail user survey has recently been released. A recent Economic Impact Study showed that there was \$12 million in annual direct spending on trail businesses, supporting an additional \$3 million in wages.

*Mary Shaw*, Trail Advocate, reminded trail supporters in the region of the availability of the Trail Volunteer Fund, which provides small grants to volunteer groups for equipment needed to maintain existing trails. A June 1, 2009 deadline for applications has been announced. They are also working on the development of guidelines for trail volunteers.

*Scott Bricker*, Bike Pittsburgh, reported that Bike Pittsburgh recently released its "Bike the Vote" edition on the upcoming City of Pittsburgh mayoral election. They've sent emails to approximately 3,500 email addresses, and have received more than 900 website hits. This grass roots effort provides clear evidence that safe streets accommodate all users.

The Bike Pittsburgh offices are buzzing with activity as staffers and volunteers work to complete plans for Bike to Work Week, as well as the arrival of the Urban Velo Film Festival (July 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>), and Bike

Fest activities in Mid-August. Pittsburgh joins an elite group of cities with the arrival of the Urban Velo Film Festival, which has previously been shown in New York, London, Tokyo, Los Angeles and Chicago. Bike Week events will include a criterion race downtown, with routing that will include the Sixth and Seventh Street Bridges. Bike Pittsburgh is also pleased to announce that a local foundation will match membership dollars on a one for one basis for the coming months. Double the value of your membership, become a member today!

*Chris Gostwick*, Allegheny County, announced that the County has submitted an application for PCTI funding for the Active Allegheny program. They are also pursuing DCNR funding for a feasibility study for a trail project along 26 miles of the Allegheny River.

*Patrick Roberts*, City of Pittsburgh, announced that he joined the City as a Transportation Planner a few weeks ago. He was formerly with PennDOT.

*John Haven*, Buffalo Township Supervisor, reported that the Buffalo-Freeport Community Trail group recently learned that arsenic has been discovered in the soil in the immediate vicinity of the trailhead at the north end of the trail (near Father Marinaro Park, in Butler). The cost of remediating the arsenic could run to \$10 million or more. This is breaking news, so stayed tuned for more information. The trail group is also working on a lighting scheme to be used at road crossings. A bridge construction project will consume some of the trail's right of way at the bottom of the trail. A use easement will be provided to the trail, and they are in discussions with PennDOT re: replacement parking. John mentioned that an eagle has been sighted several times at milepost 35. Upcoming events include a half marathon in October which will bring in about 300 participants. They hope to host a full marathon (26+ miles) upon the completion of the full 21 mile length of the trail. Trail development continues, with an application having been submitted to DCNR for \$380,000 to complete 4.5 miles of trail. The trail group is also pursuing options that may lead to the availability of primitive camping in the park adjacent to the trail at Monroe Road.

The meeting concluded with a reminder of the next meetings dates:

Second Wednesday in:

August 2009: August 12, 2009, 10 a.m.

October 2009: October 14, 2009, 10 a.m.

March 2010: March 10, 2009, 10 a.m.

May 2010: May 11, 2010, 10 a.m.

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