

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission

Pedestrian-Bicycle Advisory Committee

Notes from the October 14, 2009 meeting

Attendees:

Amy Mathison, ACTA

Lynn Manion, ACTA

Lucinda Beattie, Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership

Chuck Imbrogno, SPC

Robin Kamin, TRIC

Gene Slevinski, TRIP and National Skate Patrol

Bill Evans, Beaver County Planning

Chris Ziegler, Butler Freeport Community Trail

Jerry Green, North Side Citizen

Donna Green, North Side Citizen

Adam Marshall, PennDOT

Chuck DiPietro, SPC

Marc Yergin, East End Citizen

Patrick Roberts, City of Pittsburgh

Joey Linn Ulrich, North Side CDC

SPC opened the meeting with a recap of recent activities, including the USDOT Federal Certification Review of transportation planning processes in the region. Generally, the process went well. It was noted that in the on-site meeting summary, the FHWA team indicated that there might be a call for greater attention to cycling in the region, especially as relates to transit service.

The Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ) program application window closed yesterday. This funding program is one in which the MPO (and its members) have a great deal of discretion in determining which projects are funded. In all, 53 project applications were received, and the applications totaled \$142 million in total fund requests. An estimated \$50 million is available through

this program at present. A candidate project evaluation committee has been established, and will be reviewing each proposal. Stephen Patchan of the City of Pittsburgh Department of City Planning is the designated Ped-Bike representative on this Evaluation Committee. Five projects included a significant pedestrian or bicycle component. These projects totaled over \$16 million in funding requests. Final recommendations for funding will be made in December.

The CMAQ project recommendations will be incorporated into the 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program, or TIP. The TIP identifies those projects for which funding will be available over the next four years. The preparation of the TIP is complicated by uncertainties related to funding availability at the state and federal levels, the lack of a transportation reauthorization bill, inflationary costs, and other issues. Nevertheless, the region will adopt a 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program in July 2010. SPC will work diligently with our city and county planning partners, transit service providers, PennDOT and others in the completion of this responsibility.

A public involvement process will accompany the TIP development process, with public meetings likely to be held in December 2009 and in Spring 2010. An additional public comment opportunity is available shortly, with the November 5, 2009 meeting of the State Transportation Commission. They will collect public testimony on transportation needs and issues on that date. The meeting will be held on the 31st floor of this building. Persons wishing to testify should contact Nolan Ritchie at Nritchie@state.pa.us at least one week prior to November 5th.

SPC has been making progress on the regional Bike Suitability Maps. Draft maps for Allegheny and Greene Counties have been completed, and have been posted to the SPC website where they are available for review and comment. Indiana County is largely completed, and should be posted to the SPC website in coming weeks. SPC will be working with cycling groups in Butler/Beaver Counties next.

Presentation on Multi-Mobility Study completed at the Robinson Towne Center Area, by Lynn Manion, or the Airport Corridor Transportation Management Association. According to Ms. Manion, the Study identified five major issues in the area:

- 1) Summit Park Drive over I-376 has no sidewalk; pedestrians use the roadway shoulder; study recommends that lanes and medians be narrowed, and shoulders widened, at an approximate cost of \$150 – 200,000
- 2) Park Manor Boulevard at PNC Bank; the intersection from IKEA/PNS has no signal, making it hard to exit ; Study proposes a jug handle solution, and/or relocation of the IKEA driveway and elimination of the left turn out of PNC; estimated costs are \$214,000 plus the cost of engineering and property; an additional \$120,000 for a traffic signal
- 3) Pedestrian access / amenities enhancement; overall, this facility is not pedestrian friendly, with spacious parking lots and multiple mid-block crossings but few pedestrian facilities. The Study projects costs of \$240,000 for pedestrian crossings, \$31,000 for steps in selected locations, and \$15,000 for other project elements.

- 4) Pedestrian Counts were completed as part of the Study; while no standards for ped counts exist for this type of suburban developments, pedestrian count data and the clear evidence of “goat paths” show the need for pedestrian accommodation.
- 5) Traffic signalization; the Study strongly recommended the expenditure of \$40,000 for a traffic study. It also made interim recommendations for a change in lane assignments at Moon-Clinton Road and Park Manor Road and the addition of walk signals at that intersection. The syncing of traffic signals is an on-going process in the region.
- 6) The Study found signage to be confusing and cluttered and recommended the development of a comprehensive signage plan. The cost of such a study is estimated at \$20,000 to \$40,000, but the implementation of a comprehensive signage plan could cost up to \$1 million.
- 7) Other issues identified include the absence of a transit hub, or Park and Ride facility, and the proximity of, but lack of connection to, the Montour Trail. Access from the trail could be established at Summit Park Drive (shoulder treatments for about \$21,400); or at Robinson Towne Center (switchbacks for about \$250,000).

The Study ranked the priorities as follows: 1) establishment of a walkway across I-376; 2) redesign of the IKEA crossing; 3) relocation/signalization of the IKEA/PNC intersection; 4) New sidewalks/connectivity; 5) Synchronization of signals; 6) Establishment of a transit center; 7) Connection to the Montour Trail (at Robinson Towne Center).

Mark Yergin, Western Pennsylvania Wheelmen, wanted to remind everyone of the January 1, 2010 WPW event “Icycle Bicycle” in which 200 or more cyclists will ride from the South Side Works around town. Everyone is invited to participate. Ride starts from REI at South Side Works (start time of 10 am is subject to confirmation.)

Joey Linn Ullrich, Central Northside Neighborhood Group, announced that a new pedestrian-bicycle committee has been established to look at cycling issues in the northside neighborhoods. They have identified both short term and long term goals, including signage needs, route recommendations, issues with the Casino detour, and the establishment of a connection between the neighborhoods and the North Side Trail to get trail users to local businesses, and a North Side Commons to Riverview Park connection.

Steve Patchan, Ped-Bike Coordinator for the City of Pittsburgh, reported on the status of the City’s new Bike Parking Ordinance, which will require new or redeveloped uses in the City to provide bicycle parking just as they have to meet certain auto parking requirements. The Ordinance was passed by the City Planning Commission in September, and should go to City Council in the next few weeks.

The City of Pittsburgh is also working with Bike Pittsburgh on the development of the Commuting 101 literature/educational program. This graphic intensive publication outlines the a b c’s of bicycle commuting. A new bike rack push is also underway in the City. The City has purchased 100 racks, which are to be positioned around the City. Bike Pittsburgh has also purchased 100 racks, to be placed in front of small, bicycle friendly businesses.

Tomorrow, the City of Pittsburgh will release a bike signage and route RFP. The City has bike routes, but they are not well known. There are also wayfinding signs throughout the City. There is not comprehensive, unified signage system, however. The purpose of the RFP is to identify several corridors with high bicycle volume, then identify them with the appropriate signage to create more useful bike "routes." The City expects the Consultant to be on board in December, and the plan complete in August of 2010.

It was noted that the City has a bicycle plan; and that work will be undertaken in the future to add a pedestrian component. There is a recognition that the existing plan has gaps in the network.

Adam Marshall, TE Coordinator for PennDOT District 10-0, introduced himself, as he is new to that role. He and Alicia, the former TE coordinator, plan to do a tour of the trails in D-10 sometime soon. He can report that the bridges on the Ghost Town Trail have been completed between Saylor Park and Ebensburg; that a one mile extension of the Armstrong Trail is underway; and that construction is now underway on the Roaring Run Trail to the new Edmond Trailhead. Other on-going activities include the Pillow Street Streetscape project in Butler (City) and the Blairsville Safe Routes to Schools Program.

Donna Green, North Side resident, commented on the Great Allegheny Passage "gap" closure, noting that if the economic impact of that trail gap was calculated, elected officials would be quick to make things happen to close the gap.

Jerry Green, North Side resident, noted that in Dublin, the airport has stands that include bicycle maps. We need that sort of visibility/access here.

Chris Ziegler, Butler Freeport Community Trail Association, said that the last trail segment is currently under development and the trail is complete for more than half the distance to the City of Butler. They are awaiting DCNR approval to bring in the heavy equipment for the completion of more trail. The trail segment north of Bonnie Brook Road will take the longest to develop – "how wet is wet" being the pressing question. They are also working with SPC and local cyclists on the identification of bicycle routes in the City of Butler that would connect schools, parks and other amenities (including the trail). Phase II development will create a connection between the Monroe Trailhead and a location two blocks from City Center. They have plans for the intervening site, which may include access to the Connequenessing River. The continuation of the roadway network from the City of Butler to Moraine State Park is a sort of Phase III concept.

Pat Tomes, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, reminded everyone that there is a meeting on Monday evening in Freeport to discuss local connections along the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail.

Bill Evans, Beaver County Planning Commission, noted that efforts among the Ohio River communities to create an Ohio River Trail are underway.

Gene Slavinski, National Skate Patrol, and Robin Kamin, Three Rivers Inline Skate Club, reminded everyone that the inline skaters are supportive of the many trail efforts underway in the region, and ask that pavement be used on the urban trails to permit use by the skating community. Trails that include

rumble strips, paving strips and truncated domes as functional or design elements are less attractive to skaters.

Doniele Andrus, Beaver and Lawrence County Trails and Greenways Coordinator, reported that the drainage work on the Stavich Trail is now complete, and paving will be underway soon. In other projects they are working on the Millenium Boat Access project, and are working with PNDI on the determination/resolution of an issue identified during the environmental review (location of a species of tick at the Industrial Park). In Beaver County the Ohio River communities on the North Shore of the River between the Ohio Line and Rochester all have resolutions in place stating their support for the trail project. An RFP is out for a Trail Feasibility Study on the south shore of the Ohio River from Monaca to Groveton. Five firms are under consideration, and will give formal presentations to the selection committee later this week. Eleven firms had responded to the RFP. Also, the Enhancements projects in Beaver Falls has been let. PennDOT D-11 TE Coordinator, Bob Slagel, does not anticipate any problems in the completion of this project.

Next Meeting Dates: The SPC Pedestrian-Advisory Committee meets on the second Wednesday of March, May, August and October. The meeting dates for 2010 are:

March 10, 2010

May 12, 2010

August 11, 2010

October 13, 2010

All meetings will be held from 10 a.m. to Noon on the 23rd Floor of the Regional Enterprise Tower, 425 Sixth Avenue, Suite 2500, Pittsburgh, PA 15219 unless otherwise noted.

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