

NYSAMPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Working Group Meeting

Thursday March 12, 2015 – 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

SMTC Conference Room, Syracuse NY

MEETING NOTES

1. Introductions / Roll Call

MPOS:

A/GFTC – Kate Mance

BMTS - Scott Reigle (chair)

CDTC – Jen Ceponis

ECTC – Scott Shaw

OCTC – Ashlee Long

SMTC – Danielle Krol, Aaron McKeon

UCTC – Dave Staas

NYSDOT:

NYSDOT Main Office – Cathy Kuzsman, Tom Benware, Jim Ercolano

Region 1 – Susan Olsen

Region 2 – Joseph Kaczor

Region 3 – Jeff Sterly

Region 4 – Bruce Cunningham, Steve Beauvais

Region 5 – Greg Szewczyk

Region 6 – Pauline Burns

Region 9 – Mark Bowers

Region 10 – Lanny Wexler

NYSAMPO Staff: Corey Mack, RSG

2. Presentation: Sidewalk Portion of Onondaga County Sustainable Streets Project (McKeon)

The Sustainable Streets Project was initiated at the request of the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA). The project's long-term goal is to encourage the development of streets that both accommodate all users (cyclists, pedestrians, transit users and motorists) and enhance the environment. This presentation focuses on the existing pedestrian infrastructure research and data collection, pedestrian demand modeling, and identification of "Priority Zones"; continued development of the Project will include similar studies of transit and bicycle infrastructure, with application studies to follow.

A compendium of resources for identifying and addressing sidewalk issues and policies was developed: http://walkbikecny.org/?page_id=786

The model was developed with the assistance of summer interns over two seasons as a ModelBuilder weighted overlay model. The process included:

1. Prepared an Existing Pedestrian Facility Inventory

- a. Based on aerial photos
 - b. Existing facilities were rated based on finish surface material, completeness, and gaps
2. Developed a Pedestrian Demand Model
 - a. Based in GIS
 - b. Split study area into thousands of 10m x 10m squares
 - c. Many model layers to estimate demand and generators:
 - i. Generators, such as schools, grocery stores, post offices, etc
 - ii. Demographics, such as population density, car ownership, etc
 - d. Model doesn't account for existing walkways
3. Identified "Priority Zones" based on project highest demand
4. The model requires manual updates when new or updated data layers become available

All the files and processes are available as GIS resources online:

http://walkbikecny.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/20140617_Final_Reference_Manual_a_A.pdf

<http://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=5440285f2a404e249daf66fa96e2b6a6>

The pedestrian demand model is helpful as a planning tool to identify where pedestrian infrastructure is most needed regardless of the existing facilities. The model is limited based on available data, and some situations do not accurately predict demand, such as locations with low population density near high generators such as schools or grocery stores.

The pedestrian demand model could be used to:

- Highlight demand across village / town / state jurisdictional boundaries, documenting demand across political boundaries
- Inform municipalities in the site plan / development review process
- Justify modifications to zoning policy to encourage sidewalk development
- Calibrate the estimated demand to actual pedestrian counts to estimate pedestrian volumes
- Prioritize maintenance activities and plow operations

The slides from the presentation are included as an attachment to the notes. The online model viewer can be accessed here: <https://smtc.maps.arcgis.com/home/>

3. Review of Pressing Issues from MPO Summaries

A/GFTC:

Kate M: Many local communities are having trouble developing small scale bicycle and pedestrian projects using federal funded grant programs. Common issues include using in-kind labor as matching funds, rigorous materials and methods specifications, cost estimating, construction inspection requirements, and other regulations. Considering requiring grant applicants to have experience with the federal project process, bundling projects for a larger project size, and minimum project cost requirements.

The group agreed that small infrastructure projects can be challenging. A minimum project size of \$150,000 was discussed as a reasonable project minimum. Steve B. noted that non-infrastructure projects do not necessarily have the same requirements and smaller project sizes should be allowed for non-infrastructure projects.

Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIP) funds and Community Development Block Grant (CBDG) funds do not have the same federal requirements and may be easier to administer, however the smaller pools of money may need to be saved for several years to accrue enough money.

Kathy C suggested that additional questions could be directed to Mary Harding, since her past role lent her considerable experience in TAP and TEP funding.

CDTC / Region 1:

Susan O.: Several projects underway and near completion; one sidewalk construction project along NY-50 was bid 50% higher than estimated, the project was bundled with an ADA project along NY-32 that included resurfacing, a road diet, and Bus Rapid Transit improvements. The combined project is moving forward.

Running into issues on a different road diet project; after the project was developed and planned with the MPO and DOT, it was rejected by the town board following opposition from emergency services personnel. Tom B suggested following a more traditional NEPA public outreach process; Mark B noted that the combined IPP/FDR can sometimes skip important outreach steps, in these sometimes politically sensitive projects, the IPP should be prepared independently to ensure community engagement. Corey M. noted that pilot test can be used to implement the changes as a temporary measure and let the community test a temporary striping pattern for a period before final paving and striping.

Two new bridges are being reconstructed with pedestrian infrastructure providing important links in Saratoga and Schenectady.

Region 6:

Pauline B presented the Draft Bicycle Route Plan in the region. The plan documents a three year improvement process of placing signs, with each year expanding the sign network. In an effort to save funds, most signs are being placed on existing sign posts by district maintenance staff. The plan also offers the opportunity to coordinate with local bicycle advocacy groups to increase awareness of bicycling in the region.

The plan identifies and documents the routes on paper, and as improvement projects are programmed, the corridors may be upgraded to improve the facilities for bicyclists. The identification of the road as a bicycle route is the first step towards planning for future bicycle facility upgrades or restriping to convert lane space to shoulder space.

Tom B suggested that the final plan should be available online and in mobile app forms, for this region, and statewide.

BMTS:

Scott R. shared interesting bicycle and pedestrian observations from a recent trip to Japan:

- When you purchase a vehicle in Japan, you need to show proof of an off-street parking place, and the vehicle taxes are high
- Helmet use was very low.
- Bicycling was more of a utility and less for sport/recreation.
- Nice streetscape enhancements were noted – colorful and unique manhole covers
- Tactile strips were placed along the entire length of sidewalks in areas with large numbers of pedestrians for guiding the visually disabled people.
- Most sidewalks were wider and shared with bicycles, not as many on the road
- Vehicles back into parking spaces

4. Work Plan Implementation

a. Survey of Past Funding Recipients

Report from Subcommittee: Danielle K reviewed the results of the Federal Funding Recipient Survey; only 8 responses were recorded and it is not statistically significant, but does lend some interesting insight:

- 4 respondents (50%) noted “navigating the federal funding process” as a problem encountered during the project experience
- 6 respondents (75%) would continue to pursue federal funding for bike/ped projects

Steve B. noted that Bob Torzinsky (GTC) may be able to get more participation. **Danielle K. to contact Bob T. and keep the survey open for additional response.**

Kathy C noted that when the survey is completed, it could be shared with NYSDOT central office, and possibly receive DOT support for more responses.

b. Pedestrian and Bicycle Counts

NYBC Report: The NYBC report will be sent by Josh W. when available. Josh W. will be leaving NYBC and will be serving the coalition part time until he takes his new position. **Josh W. to circulate Bicycle Counting Report when available.**

NYSDOT Counting Contracts: Kathy C: NYSDOT enters into traffic counting contracts every year which includes the option for bicycle and pedestrian counts. The contracts are executed in July; there are 5 contracts in 5 zones, with a zone being a combination of regions. On the Counting Contract Bid Sheet, pedestrian and bicycle counts are

included as Item #21. Counting consultants are paid by location for 24 hours, which can include intersections, trails, and other bicycle and pedestrian locations. Each zone allows 20 counts and they are not usually expended each year. The regions can use this contracting mechanism to conduct bicycle and pedestrian counts; talk to your regional representative that manages the traffic counts.

GBNRTC / Region 5: Greg S says they are a part of a pilot program to purchase and conduct more bicycle and pedestrian counts. **Possible topic at next meeting.**

c. Questions of Driving Exam

Questions relating to Bicycle and Pedestrian laws are included in the driver's exam. The proposed legislation from past discussion did not make it out of legislative committee. This work plan item shall refocus to updating the driver's manual to include state of the practice pavement markings, including education on Shared Lane Markings, Bike Lane Coloring, the safe passing law, and other information.

d. Develop Fact Sheet on Bicycle & Pedestrian Laws

The draft Fact Sheet was distributed prior to the meeting. The fact sheet was developed by a subcommittee comprised of the Bicycle and Pedestrian and Safety Working Groups. The group noted the following comments:

- Include Long Island on the map of the State of New York on the cover
- Include "Vehicle" or "Motorist" in the title as the laws are also directed towards the operators of vehicles
- Stronger language than "TIP" is recommended for operating practices that impact bicycle and pedestrian safety, such as checking behind you before opening a car door
- Include a graphic illustration of a countdown timer on the "Crossing the Street" section

Additional comments should be submitted to corey.mack@rsginc.com by the 3/13. All comments will be compiled, reviewed and addressed before being submitted for final approval to the Executive Committee.

e. Economic Benefits Report

The NYSAMPO Bicycle-Pedestrian Working Group website has been compiling a variety of existing reports documenting various aspects of the economic benefit of walking and bicycling from a variety of resources. This list can be viewed here:

http://nysmpo.org/wordpress/?page_id=940

Several other studies were noted: Parks and Trails NY's Erie Canal report, NYCDOT's "Measuring the Street", a report from the National Association of Realtors, WalkScore, and

other sources. Corey M. will update the list and organize into NY Regional, NY Statewide, other states, and national / international publications.

The GBNRTC will be developing performance measures for complete streets, and one measure will be the economic impact. As this project develops, the Working Group will stay connected to follow the progress.

f. FHWA Non-Motorized Safety Performance Measures

Scheduled to be determined by September 30, 2015. Will update Working Group when performance measures are available for comment.

g. Walk-Bike NY 2016

The next Walk-Bike NY Conference is scheduled for 2016; planning efforts are underway. It will likely be scheduled September, 13-14 or 20-21, 2016 in western New York. There is a planning conference call scheduled on March 31.

h. Complete Streets – MPO / Region Initiatives

Scott R. requested information from the Working Group about incorporating complete streets initiatives into Long Range Plans. Working Group to review complete street policy implementation in Long Range Plans and report to Scott R.

5. NYS DOT Initiatives

a. Complete Streets

Checklist Review: Comments due last week; second review process received minor tweaks to the checklist. Revised checklist will likely be available for use in April 2015.

Complete Streets Coalition Workshops for 2015: NYS DOT is looking to sponsor four workshops in 2015 similar to the previous year. The workshops will be held in August – October. Three good candidates for hosting the workshops around the state have been identified; a fourth is still open. MPOs to nominate municipal hosts to Kathy C.

b. Pedestrian Safety Action Plan

A PSAP Workshop was held in Albany with regional groups from around the state, including MPOs, DOT Regions, municipalities, and county representatives. The workshops, and smaller meetings with Traffic Safety, Region 2, and Region 10, PSAP strategy to focus on a tiered system of improvements:

Tier 1: “Low Hanging Fruit”, easy to implement, generally urban signalized intersections on the state highway system, including pedestrian countdown timers, activation buttons, “bright stick” retroreflective posts, and other relatively low cost / low impact projects.

Tier 2: Higher impact projects on the state highway system.

Tier 3: Unsignalized intersections.

An outline of the PSAP has been developed and the components of the outline are underway. The concept of the PSAP is to identify improvements on the state highway system, with a plan for local implementation being the next item for consideration.

c. NYSDOT Bicycle & Pedestrian Program – Office of Traffic Safety and Mobility (OTSM)

Jim E: The OTSM program is investigating how systemic improvements can be accomplished on the corridor level to maximize safety benefits at the lowest cost. An example of this would be the EI on raised vertical elements developed from national guidance, the experience from 17 other states, and departmental input. Similar guidance is being developed for enhanced visibility crosswalks on pedestrian corridors.

Other OTSM goals for 2015 include:

- Education and enforcement discussions, with an educational campaign similar to the marketing efforts for seatbelt use
- Strategic planning and implementation
- Update to the Statewide Bicycle Map; need to determine what information is available

6. NYBC

- a. **Plans for 2015.** No update from the NYBC. Josh W.'s successor will update.

7. Upcoming Events

- a. **Bike to School Day – Wednesday May 6, 2015**
- b. **Binghamton Bridge Pedal – Saturday, August 29 (9-11am) -**
<http://www.bmtsonline.com/bmts/binghamton-bridge-pedal>
- c. **NYSMPO Statewide Conference: June 22-24.** Accepting ideas for presentation or technical session. **Forward thoughts to corey.mack@rsginc.com.**
- d. **NYS Association of Transportation Engineers Annual Conference – June 3-5, 2015 in Hauppauge.** Contact Lanny W. for additional information. <http://nysate.org/site/node/16>
- e. **Syracuse's Cycle the City – Monthly in the Summer**
- f. **Upstate Chapter of American Society of Landscape Architects Meeting – April 26-28 in Saratoga Springs.** Contact Pauline B. for additional information.
<http://www.nyuasla.org/2015-joint-conference.html>

8. Scheduling of 2015 Meetings

a. Conference Call: Thursday, June 11 (10am-12pm)

b. In-person Meeting: Thursday, September 10 or 17 (10am-4pm). Scott R. will prepare a Doodle Poll for the best time and location.