

**City of Takoma Park Safe Roadways Committee
Monthly Meeting, December 16, 2014**

MINUTES

1. The meeting convened at 7:33pm with the following committee members in attendance: Sheryl Gross-Glaser; Kacy Kostiuk; Joe Edgell; Ryan Morden; Wren Rogers; and Mike McCabe.
2. The committee reviewed the draft agenda and proposed a few additions. Ryan requested adding time to discuss little free libraries, and Kacy requested time to discuss the Carroll crosswalk. Sheryl moved to approve the updated agenda. Ryan seconded the motion. All present committee members voted to approve the updated agenda.
3. Joe introduced Wren Rogers, the newest member of the committee. She is a member of Ward 3 and an enthusiast of safe roads.
4. There was a discussion of the meeting minutes from the October and November meetings. Kacy asked Joe for clarification about a statement regarding the traffic signals that was in the November minutes. Kacy agreed to make a change in the minutes to say that “the county had taken or will take control of the traffic signals on 410 in Takoma Park.” Ryan moved to approve the October and November meeting minutes. Sheryl seconded the motion. All present committee members voted to approve the minutes.
5. There were no members of the public in attendance and no public comments.
6. Ryan discussed the situation with bikeshare.
 - a. Ryan discussed an outline of a proposal he had created to the city council. The goal is to increase bikeshare membership and use in 2015. The goal in 2014 was to get the stations at the Metro and at WAU, which was accomplished.
 - b. Ryan reported that there is data on annual usership of bikeshare; he will check with Erkin to find out what the numbers are. Sheryl asked if Erkin also has numbers of the use of stations. Ryan said that he believes he does and will ask when he talks with him.
 - c. Ryan said that he has divided the proposal into three portions:
 - i. Recruiting new members
 - ii. Retaining existing members and increasing usage
 - iii. Making recommendations that might result in increased use (this could also include things that might increase general bike use, such as changing the law).
 - d. Ryan said that the stations in Takoma Park were the result of a grant from MDOT and funds from the county. The city did not pay for these stations. Ryan said to install a station and bikes, it costs about \$60,000, and it costs about \$27,000 for one year to maintain a station. Mike asked what that includes, and Ryan said he does not know all the details but that that it does include rebalancing the bikes and moving them to different stations as needed.
 - e. Joe asked about recommended locations for new bike stations.
 - i. Ryan said that he thinks the bikeshare bikes seem useful for that “last mile” from the bus to your home, so having them in close proximity to where people live is important. He suggested possibly adding a station at the intersection of Piney Branch and 410.
 - ii. Joe noted that he had sent around a study on bikeshare stations previously. He wondered if there was data on how far people would walk to use a bikeshare station.
 - iii. Kacy noted that there isn’t a station at Piney Branch and Flower.
 - iv. There is also not one at Langley Crossroads, which might be useful when the transit center is installed. Joe asked if Ryan knew if there was one planned for the transit center. He suspects so but did not know.

- f. Ryan discussed what the county does for bikeshare outreach. He said he discovered that they primarily target business owners, although he suspected that targeting individuals would be a better route. He suggested making this a suggestion in the committee's paper. In 2015, the county's promotional plans seem to be similar to 2014 – bus wraps, advertising, etc.
- g. Ryan asked for ideas to stimulate increased usage:
 - i. Sheryl said that improved biking infrastructure would help people feel safer.
 - ii. Joe noted that simply having more stations might increase usage and push the city council to take action regarding bike safety and infrastructure.
 - iii. Joe asked for two pieces of data: What is the average distance for bike that are being used, and how far will people walk to get to a bikeshare station? Sheryl noted that the techies group is doing a lot regarding data on bikeshare.
 - iv. Joe suggested blanketing the city with stations as a way to encourage usage, but he suggested having data on how far people will walk before making this recommendation.
 - v. Ryan noted that Takoma Park is often called a “suburb for people who don't like suburbs.” Most bikeshare networks are within cities, so Takoma Park is somewhat unique in this regard.
 - vi. Joe noted that hills are a challenge for usage. Are there any possibilities to add gears to the bikes? He said that the bikeshare system in Seattle has bikes with 7 gears. The Seattle bike stations are sponsored by companies through advertising.
 - vii. Kacy expressed concerns about logistics, such as what exactly is the advantage of the bikeshare system for residents and why they would choose to use this instead of using a personal bicycle.
 - viii. Ryan suggested doing outreach to people in Takoma Park about the creative ways they are using the bikes. Ryan and Joe both noted using the bikes coming back from Nationals games.
 - ix. Ryan wondered if the city could sponsor an annual city event related to bikeshare to foster the community of users.
 - x. Joe suggested offering one year of free membership to anyone who wants it and is a resident of Takoma Park.
 - xi. Ryan suggested trying to partner with WAU to create a subsidized membership for their students. Montgomery College might be another possibility, but it might be more difficult because there are campuses in Takoma Park and Rockville. Sheryl noted the possibly providing a general student discount. Joe said that if students use the bikes during college, they may be more likely to remain cyclists throughout their lives.
 - xii. Mike asked about membership for high school and middle school students. Credit cards are a possible issue, and it seems likely that kids are not supposed to use the bikes – only adults.
 - xiii. JARC is a program that allows free bikeshare membership for low income residents in Montgomery County.
 - xiv. Joe noted that usage in lower income communities has not increased, in part because people feel “poor” riding a bike. Sheryl did a report related to this at work; one barrier is a credit card, but it's also problematic that the bikes are usually located downtown and in tourist areas, which are not necessarily where poorer people are going or living. Minneapolis is doing the best job in the nation of breaking the barrier into lower income communities, but they are still struggling despite these efforts. They have not required credit cards, have done outreach, and given free helmets.

- xv. Joe noted that in Seattle, helmets are required, so the bikeshare stations offer helmets wrapped in plastic and have a return slot.
 - h. The next steps are to think of ways to increase usership. Ryan has an outline with bullet-points of ideas. Joe advocated the “blanketing of Takoma Park.” Let people name the stations or sponsor the stations; Ryan noted that it may help to give Takoma Park residents a feeling of ownership by asking neighborhood associations to name the stations. He will send an outline of the draft to the committee for review.
7. Joe discussed the county road code. Joe sent an email around regarding a new county code that narrows lane width and discusses creating bike paths, etc. It is way ahead of where Takoma Park is. Joe suggests working this into the committee’s recommendations on improving intersections. Joe suggested using more creative thinking for the future, and he thinks that the county road code has a chance of doing this. There are safety issues for pedestrians and bicyclists. Mike asked how long before municipalities have to comply; Joe noted that probably the cities do not need to comply, and the state roads are exempt.
 8. Ryan discussed little free libraries and pedestrians. Ryan said that a walk from two points is more pleasant if it includes something like this. He has counted about nine little free libraries in the city. Ryan asked about looking for holes for these and seeing if it would be possible to partner with the library to set these up and stimulate more pedestrian traffic.
 - a. Kacy noted that there is a national association for these little free libraries and that if people register them online, they will be added to a map of little free libraries that is available on the website.
 - b. Joe asked how many of the libraries are on sidewalks. Perhaps these could be used to make an argument for giving priority to the building of certain sidewalks.
 - c. Kacy suggested adding the little free libraries to city maps – perhaps to the bike maps or online.
 - d. Wren noted that it’s hard to find the bike maps, even though Erkin apparently has a huge stack of them. Kacy suggested adding bike maps to the bikeshare stations. Sheryl suggested that having little libraries at the bikeshare stations would also be a good idea.
 - e. Joe said that he previously emailed the creator of the TransIt App to suggest adding the bikeshare stations to it, and this was very quickly done after he made the request.
 9. Joe previously sent around Erkin’s Nov 19 email recommendations. Ryan suggested adding a note about successfully installing bike contraflow lanes in the annual report.
 - a. Joe noted that it’s important to think about maintenance, not just installing new things (such as sharrows).
 - b. Joe said that the committee did not include measures of success in our annual report; this is something to think about in the future.
 - c. Erkin asked for data collection – counts, surveys, etc. – to demonstrate the need for certain projects.
 - d. Joe asked for a volunteer to follow up with Erkin to get a copy of the grant application and award letter. Mike offered to do this; Joe will send him Erkin’s contact information.
 - e. Joe suggested working these things into improvements to the annual report before finishing.
 - f. Ryan is acting as the lead on bikeshare recommendations. Joe noted that we will need someone to step up to lead the work on sidewalk policy.
 10. Sheryl reported on ADA lawsuits regarding sidewalk issues. Sheryl read the lyrics of a Christmas carol but said that snow on sidewalks is not something cheerful. Snow on sidewalks becomes a major issue for people with disabilities. The ADA only allows for “equal rights,” which means that if a city has no policy related to snow clearance for pedestrians in general, people with disabilities have no additional rights.
 - a. If there is good snow clearance on roads but not sidewalks, ADA doesn’t require having a path for someone without a car.

- b. Roadways are usually controlled by a city or county, whereas sidewalks are usually the responsibility of a homeowner or business owner. The major problems are the curbs, where the line is often blurred.
 - c. There have been many complaints related to curbs. People living or owning businesses at the corners probably don't even think about this being their responsibility.
 - d. Joe noted that councilmembers were uncomfortable fining people for not clearing sidewalks.
 - e. Sheryl found only one small appellate decision in New Hampshire that doesn't relate to the Takoma Park situation related to pedestrian sidewalks and snow.
 - f. Joe proposed a small tractor with a heated cab and brushes that the city could use to clear priority sidewalks. Ryan suggested that there might not be as many qualifications required of drivers for these vehicles, allowing plow drivers to focus on roads and others to do this.
 - g. Joe suggested that people with disabilities could register with the city so that their pathways could be cleared first. Prioritizing could be done – maybe 10 priority routes that need to be cleared first. Perhaps this could be decided based on:
 - i. Committee-suggested locations
 - ii. City-staff- and council-suggested locations
 - iii. Registration process for disabled citizens
 - iv. Wren added the suggestion of routes to school
 - h. The WalkBoston site and the Easter Seals Project Action are great resources, Sheryl said.
 - i. Ryan asked whether we would include this in the larger sidewalk policy paper. Joe suggested including this in a follow-up paper or email related to snow removal.
11. The committee discussed the 2014 annual report. Ryan sent a final version to Joe. Joe would like to see some additional photos for the section on upcoming priorities. Joe has not written the text for his portion on the county roads but will do so. The committee needs to finish the report and send it to the city council.
- a. Ryan asked about deleting a misplaced heading in the document. Everyone agreed to remove the text, as it appears to be unnecessary.
 - b. The committee agreed to a change the label “introduction” to “about the safe roadways committee.”
 - c. Ryan found a great quote from former mayor Sam Abbott. There was a consensus by the committee to add it to the report.
 - d. Ryan will send the report around for review. He will add the photos. Joe suggested an email vote on the final report.
 - e. The committee will present the report to the city council at 7pm on January 12, 2015.
12. Joe suggested that committee members adding bullet points to the end of the agenda so that the committee can start discussing different topics at future meetings.
13. Mike moved to extend the meeting by 5 minutes; Kacy seconded. All voted to extend the meeting by 5 additional minutes.
14. Wren reported on the progress on Lincoln/Carroll crosswalk. SHA is considering a crosswalk on Carroll not at Lincoln (due to safety issues regarding the curve there) but at Boyd or further up by the Junction. SHA does not appear interested in traffic calming. Wren reported that there are plans to add a streetlight at the Lincoln/Carroll intersection and also by Boyd. People have also been discussing moving the traffic camera to the Lincoln/Carroll intersection instead of at the Boyd/Carroll intersection. There has also been discussion of moving the bus stop back so that it is a little safer at the intersection for cars crossing or turning if other cars try to go around a stopped bus. Sidewalks on Carroll have not been addressed and are bad; the engineer felt that SHA was not responsible for these.
15. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05p.m.