

City of Takoma Park Safe Roadways Committee
Monthly Meeting, January 17, 2017

MINUTES

1. The meeting convened informally at 7:30pm with the following members in attendance: Mike Moore, Joe Edgell, Kacy Kostiuk, John Gorman, and Frank Demarais. Mark Sherman arrived at 8:20pm.
2. Joe announced that Nick Finio and Liz Cattaneo have resigned from the committee.
3. Mike moved to approve the proposed agenda; Frank seconded the motion to approve the agenda. All voted in favor of approving the agenda.
4. Attendees introduced themselves. Non-committee members included: David Anspracher, transportation planner for Montgomery County; John Rider, who works for the Montgomery County Planning Department and is also a Takoma Park resident; Jamee Ernst, a planning intern with the city of Takoma Park; and Ros Grigsby, community development manager for Takoma Park.
5. There were no public comments.
6. David gave a presentation about the Montgomery County Bike Master Plan.
 - a. His aims in the presentation were to describe the approach to the master plan and talk with the committee about draft recommendations.
 - b. David showed the committee the Bicycle Master Plan website. The framework report is available on the website and describes the whole process of the plan. The website also includes a “bike stress map” which includes a level of stress on each road based on traffic stress.
 - i. Joe asked how to get to the site from the planning website. He recommended making it easier to find from the main planning website.
 - ii. Bike stress map: Joe asked how this data was reviewed. David said that a staff member reviewed the information on Google Maps looking at traffic volume, speed, and many other factors. They hope to achieve a “low stress level” for adults and a “very low stress level” around schools and recreation centers for children.
 - iii. A look at Takoma Park on the stress map shows that the main thoroughfares are higher stress (which makes some sense). Joe used 410 as an example of a road that people want to ride on but is high stress. David noted that there isn’t a lot of space on that street to make changes. This was tabled to be discussed later.
 1. David pointed out that many of the low-stress roads are very hilly and thus difficult to ride and not appropriate for everyone.
 2. The map also allows for looking at slope – how steep or not the roads are.
 - iv. There are also three bicycle networks: white flight, life sciences center, and downtown Silver Spring.
 - c. David noted that the plan will be a long-term implemented project and will take time and money.

- d. David discussed the master plan framework report that he distributed to committee members. He discussed the different types of bikeways. He noted that trails get a lot of riders but that in many cases, the older trails have substandard designs (width, sight lines, etc.).
 - i. Kacy asked if the parameters for when to use different types of bikeways are being recommended in the master plan or if this is an existing guideline already (i.e. roads with 6,000 vehicles per day or more would be appropriate for separated bikeways). David said that these are the recommendations put forth from the master plan.
 - ii. John asked about the issue of moving bike lanes to the other side of parked cars to reduce on-street parking turnover issues. David said that they could be moved, and then would become a “separated bike lane.”
 - iii. He said that there is a new type of bike lane called an “advisory bike lane,” which are used in residential areas where there is a road without a center lane but with striped bike lanes on both sides. There is an example of this in Alexandria, Virginia.
 - iv. Joe asked if they have considered barriers other than flexposts. David said that flexposts are a temporary solution that should be transformed into a more permanent solution such as parked cars, planters, concrete curbing, a raised bike lane with curbing, etc. David that this is unlikely to be implemented in the next few years, as the county is still doing sample locations to prove their effectiveness.
- e. David discussed the bikeway recommendations for Takoma Park.
 - i. He encouraged the committee to combine their feedback and share it by **February 22, 2017.**
 - ii. This is the first time the staff has shared recommendations with people in the county. They are working with the official community advisory committee for the bike master plan. No one on this advisory group is from Takoma Park.
 - iii. Frank mentioned that there is an existing bicycle map for Takoma Park. He said that he keeps reviewing it with a look at destinations – schools, community centers, etc. He would like to see “corridors” that can get people to destinations where they want to go. He asked if that is imbedded in the thinking of the master plan. David said that it is and that future maps will try to include destinations. He noted that they are targeting users who are not riding on most roads right now because they aren’t comfortable.
 - iv. The advisory group will review the existing recommendations on February 1. He said that the recommendations from the SRC are very important, especially for Takoma Park.
 - v. He said they did a ride with Joe, Wren, and Erkin previously and worked with a design firm and met with city staff and had some initial recommendations. Then they took feedback from the city and revised their recommendations to what they are now.
 - vi. Joe asked how separated bikeways would fit on New Hampshire Ave. David that the consultants and the master plan staff are recommending separated bike

lanes on New Hampshire, but the city staff seems to be moving in a different direction. If the city continues to move in its current process direction, the bike master plan's recommendations would have to change.

- vii. Mike asked what role SHA plays in making these decisions. David said that SHA is slowly accepting the recommendations. He noted that they require bike lanes on any road that is rebuilt. It takes a lot of pressure for them to change their thinking, but they do seem to be changing. As part of the purple lane change on University Boulevard, there will be a bike lane on it. Joe asked if there was room for a separated bikeway. David said that there is room for bike lanes but not separated bikeways. As a result, the master plan will recommend separated bikeways, perhaps that start as a side path shared between pedestrians and bikes, but that perhaps it could be divided out more. Joe asked about considering using flexposts when there isn't a separation but just a painted line, which is not as ideal but would provide more separation. David said that there is a typical minimum is 3 feet but could go down to 2 feet, but there are sometimes examples where there is 1 foot with little curbs. This can be done, but ideally there would be more. Joe said that New York City has some "waiting areas" that are holding areas for bicyclists going the opposite direction so they can change directions in the bike lane. David said that on University Ave and New Hampshire Ave, they are currently recommending two-way bike lanes. He is concerned about pushing people over with flexposts because people usually shy away about 1-1.5 feet from the posts. The recommendation is BRT on both sides, and they are adding two bikeways – one on each side (plus 4 lanes of cars). Mark asked if there would be a verge on New Hampshire like in the pictures; David said that there is no existing design or "plan," but hopefully the separation would be large with curbs and landscaping.
- viii. David discussed Carroll Ave: the areas where there is no space to do anything would remain shared roads.
- ix. Flower Ave: the design for the upgrade does not include bike lanes, so the recommendation is for shared roads and then they make recommendations for Greenwood as a parallel route (though it is steeper).
- x. Maple Ave: recommendations for shared roads but separated bike lanes on the portion by the community center and schools. Kacy said that it looks on the map like they are recommending separated bike lanes for two blocks on 410 to connect Maple with the elementary school. David said that the recommendation would widen the sidewalk. Joe said it doesn't seem like there's room there now. David said they would recommend cutting into the hill in front of the elementary school.
 - 1. Joe asked about narrowing lanes for traffic, and David said that narrowing the lanes for cars is more expensive. The committee was confused; he explained that it affects things like drains and infrastructure. Frank noted that most people use Grant Ave from what he's seen to access the schools. Erkin made the bike lane recommendation on 410 originally. Joe said that this does not allow for

connectivity. David explained that this would be a separated wider sidewalk for bikes and pedestrians. Another option might be to put a bikeway by the parking lot of the community center.

- xi. John asked about Maple Ave and a separated bike path up the residential area from Philadelphia to downtown Takoma. David said that this could be considered but that it is fairly narrow. They had talked about a climbing lane possibly because some separation helps with slower people. Joe noted that the speed bumps are hard for bikes, too.
- xii. Mark asked about the recommendations for Carroll Ave. David noted that there isn't much space to do anything. They are recommending conventional bike lanes.
- xiii. Kacy asked about whether how the recommendations balance a sense of being aspirational vs. resigned to situations where change is unlikely to happen. David said that they are aware of and concerned about overpromising things that probably won't happen but also want to make recommendations that can be considered. It is difficult to balance this.
- xiv. Frank asked about sharing with the sidewalk to widen a sidewalk to make it work as a bike lane. David said that may be possible but that they are looking at continuity of people riding on one side of the road in one place vs. switching sides. Frank said that could be a useful model.
- xv. Mark asked if they are considering sidewalk issues and pedestrian safety as well as bikes. David said that the plan is a bike plan and is focused on bikes but they aren't ignoring others – traffic, pedestrians – and that they want to do things that will work for them, too.
- xvi. Joe said that most of Ward 3 has been left out. He suggests adding some things there. David said that many of these roads are excessively steep but that they will look into it.
- xvii. Joe noted that there is no current recommendation for 410 from the Junction to New Hampshire. He said that the 410/New Hampshire intersection is being restructured and will involve bike lanes. He suggested a way to get people on 410 or on an alternative to 410 from New Hampshire to the Junction.

7. Traffic calming recommendations:

- a. Joe has asked Mayor Stewart for time on the agenda at the Council meeting on March 22 or 29. There is a Safe Roadways Committee meeting on March 21. Joe set a deadline for approval or disapproval of the traffic calming recommendation for March 21.
- b. The next step is to look at what Joe has sent and provide edits and comments. He has incorporated everyone's comments except that he has not removed the graphic from the American Heart Association (which Mark had recommended removing), but he did make a note next to it about where it came from.
- c. Committee members should send edits and comments to Joe about the recommendation by **January 31**. Joe will try to return a new version by the end of this weekend. There will be a draft final for discussion at the February meeting.

8. 2016 annual report:

- a. John and Mike are going to edit and put together the report. John will work on editing it in the **next couple of weeks**.
 - b. Mark and Kacy wrote the section about the street festival that Mark sent to the committee.
9. Mark said that he would like to work on a sidewalk master plan inspired by the idea of the bike master plan. Joe reminded the committee that pedestrians are one of the committee priorities set forth for the coming year.
10. Mark said that he is interested in having a discussion about how to empower people on issues. Joe said that it can be added to a future agenda. He recommends that Mark think about it and lead the discussion.
11. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm.