

Meeting Summary
Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee Meeting
May 18, 2011

Subject:	Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) Meeting	Meeting Date:	May 18, 2011
Participants:	David Boski, Chair Dave Carter, Vice Chair Deb Humphreys, NCTCOG Karla Weaver, NCTCOG NCTCOG Staff, BPAC Members and BPAC Partners	Location:	NCTCOG Transportation Council Room
		Time:	3:15 pm

MEETING PURPOSE: Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Survey; Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program; Developing a Regional Complete Streets Policy

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Approval of February 16, 2011 Minutes – Chair, David Boski
The minutes of the February 16 meeting were approved as written. Dave Carter (M); Keith Helms (S). There was no discussion and the motion was carried.
2. Events and Training – Vice Chair, Dave Carter
Dave Carter encouraged participation in the upcoming May 20, 2011 Bike to Work Day. He announced the upcoming webinar and training opportunities, including APBP's Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Design within a Constrained Right-of-Way on June 15; and Crosswalk Policies, Design, and Signals on July 20. Additional opportunities included the May 25 NACTO Urban Street Design Guide and May 31 Great Ways to Include Bicycling in your SRTS Program. Congress for New Urbanism (CNU) will hold their annual conference on June 1-4, 2011 in Madison, WI. The 3rd Safe Routes to School National Conference is scheduled for August 16-18, 2011 in Minneapolis, MN. Rail-Volution is scheduled for October 16–19, 2011 in Washington, DC.
3. Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Survey – Deb Humphreys, NCTCOG
Deb outlined the purposes of the survey.
 - 1) Improve data collection; staff needs to determine if cities have plans and NCTCOG doesn't have access to them, or if cities don't have plans and need assistance.
 - 2) Update existing regional data; to get a better understanding of existing conditions and regional needs, and determine if cities need technical assistance developing plans.
 - 3) To improve mapping applications for bicyclists and pedestrians.
 - 4) For future planning efforts; is the Regional Veloweb successful in connecting jurisdictions with existing and future plans cities and counties have created.

The intended respondents were local government (town/city/county) representatives that have access to the data and can answer survey questions. The intention of the survey was to compile information from local governments to assist with regional data

collection efforts. Once the existing conditions have been identified, future opportunities for input by community members will be provided. The survey was to be live on the BPAC webpage until June 17, 2011. Deb was to provide the link via email to committee members, and they were asked to forward the survey link to other jurisdictions they knew of that weren't represented on the BPAC. Karla Weaver added that performance measures would also be created using the data collected. Having all the information would help to standardize processes throughout the region.

Q. Is the aggregated survey data going to be passed along to national organizations?
A. That is one intent of the survey although no one has been approached yet.

4. Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program – Kathryn Nichols and Krista Sherwood

Kathryn Nichols and Krista Sherwood provided an overview of the RTCA program available in Texas. The RTCA implements natural resource conservation an outdoor mission of the National Park Service (NPS) communities across America. RTCA is an arm of the NPS, working primarily outside of parks. Planning and technical assistance is provided through the program. The idea for the project is generated by local applicants. RTCA is not a grants program, it is not about dollars. The program is available to non-profits, local, State, and federal agencies. The program works by bringing partners together – cities that want to engage citizens, or citizens that have a project and want to get governmental departments to work with them. The kind of work done is based on how needs are identified. Types of assistance include building partnerships to achieve community-set goals; assessing resources – the quality or which ones are out there; developing concept plans; engaging public participation – what are the best ways to get people to come to the table and generate ideas of how to complete a project; and identifying potential sources of funding, although the funding is not directly from NPS. Program staff can help with event planning and public outreach, to develop surveys, organizational development, or how to get 501(c)(3) status to be a viable non-profit organization.

Several examples of current projects were provided: Greens Bayou Corridor in Houston and Harris County. A number of governmental partners, user groups, and conservation organizations are involved in trying to get a corridor-wide plan compiled. Montopolis Tributary Trails: a 1.5 – 2 miles green space going from private to public hands in an underserved neighborhood in Austin. Assistance provided included where the trail might go and overcoming the governmental permitting processes. The Northeast Texas Rail Trail is partly in this region, from Farmersville to Paris to New Boston – 140 miles of rail trail with only a few pieces developed. Poteet Middle Camino Real Recreation Trail is just south of San Antonio. The project is to develop a two mile non-motorized multi-use recreation trail in the heart of the Poteet community. The Trail will enhance recreation opportunities, and the health and wellness of the community.

The application process begins with a Call for Applications in the spring. Applications are due August 1. Applicants are asked to call with project ideas to determine if there is a role for RTCA involvement. Project selection is announced in September. Projects are ranked and assistance begins in October. Typically assistance is provided for one year, but it can be continued on to two years if necessary. Krista detailed what the applications included. The strategic initiatives include providing physical connections among resources- both natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation; partnering with a NPS area; partnering with a health organization;

and engaging youth. Projects that address these strategic initiatives receive the greatest amount of weight in the application process. A competitive project will have specific partner-defined goals and tangible conservation or outdoor recreation results. It will also protect, improve or enhance natural resources or outdoor recreation; it will include roles and contributions of partners, display evidence of broad community support; and have a clearly stated and appropriate RTCA role.

Q. How many applications are received and, of those, how many do you select?

A. Each staff member can typically work on about four projects. Projects are throughout the State of Texas and also in Oklahoma.

Q. Do you work on any Texas tourism trails established by the Legislature, and how is success measured?

A. RTCA had a consultation role on the Old Texas 150 between Houston and Austin, helping with a workshop. Nationwide, success is measured by miles and acres, usually whether there are new trail miles on the ground, miles of river protected, or acres of open space protected. Some kind of measure needs to be developed of what RTCA has achieved on some on-road projects. Informally, RTCA measures dollars that have been contributed, organizations that have been formed or assisted. Up until now, RTCA has been looking mainly at projects putting in new miles or improved acres on the ground.

Q. Could you give us information on types of conservation projects RTCA has worked on and what was the role in that type of project?

A. RTCA has had a couple of projects where the purpose of the land being protected is primarily conservation. We have helped some land trusts get started and helped determine what the priorities would be for the kinds of lands they want in their mission.

5. FHWA Pedestrian Safety Courses – Deb Humphreys

Deb Humphreys recapped the information given at the FHWA-sponsored Pedestrian Safety Workshops held at NCTCOG in March. Two workshops lasted two days each. Over 50 participants attended either one or both workshops. The courses offered instruction on geometric design, operations, safety considerations, etc. A field exercise addressed built environment; what are the types of infrastructure improvements that need to be addressed; what are the types of policies that should be addressed. After the field exercise, a “selecting a high-priority policy change” exercise was held. In the Developing a Pedestrian Safety Action Plan workshop, the number one policy priority was “capital overlay projects requires sidewalks (public investment)”. The second priority was “new construction and redevelopment requires sidewalks along frontage (private investment)”. In the Designing for Pedestrian Safety workshop, the number one policy priority was “adopt a complete streets policy.” After the policy priorities were determined, there was a recommendation to take them to BPAC. The majority of the policies need to be addressed at the local level. Policies that would have to be addressed at the regional level include a Bicycle and Pedestrian Best Practices Design Guideline- currently being developed in partnership with the 2011 Dallas Bike Plan; and developing a Complete Streets policy for the region- to be addressed in the next presentation.

6. Developing a Regional Complete Streets Policy – Deb Humphreys

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee is being tasked with developing a regional complete streets policy. Deb provided a thorough presentation and then opened the topic for committee input and discussion.

What are Complete Streets? Complete Streets are safe, comfortable, and convenient for travel for everyone, regardless of age or ability – motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation riders. How are the needs of all users being addressed? What Complete Streets are Not – they are not Prescriptive; a bike lane on every roadway; or something that happens overnight. How can a roadway benefit our community?

Fifty-five percent of Americans would rather drive less and walk more. Statistics from a 2009 Federal Transit Administration survey show that transit use is growing faster than population or highway travel. Nearly one-third of Americans don't drive. Just in the State of Texas, the population without a driver's license is 36 percent, up four percent from the national average. The Mobility 2035 Survey conducted in 2009 showed that only about three percent of North Central Texans are satisfied with current transportation options while 39 percent want more options. The general consensus was that more options are needed. A second survey question asked if respondents would like to have access to different modes of transportation. Eighty percent of the region agreed they would like to have access to more transportation options. A third question asked what the respondent would like better access to. The number one answer was trains with over a 70 percent response. There is definitely a need in the region for more options, but are these needs being addressed?

The 2011 Dallas Bike Plan Public Survey had almost 1,400 respondents. The number one response to the question "Which of the following improvements influence you to bike more often?" was *More bike lanes on major streets*, with 941 responding very likely. From a Future of Transportation National Survey (2010), 66 percent of Americans want more transportation choices; 73 percent feel they have no choice but to drive as much as they do.

Incomplete streets are unsafe. More than 40 percent of pedestrian deaths in 2007 and 2008 occurred where no crosswalks were available. Fifty percent of pedestrian deaths occurred on arterials. Funding is disproportionate: twelve percent of trips are taken by bicyclists and pedestrians; 13 percent suffer fatalities. Yet only one percent of federal funding is received to implement bike and pedestrian facilities. Fifty percent of all U.S. trips are less than three miles; 28 percent are under one mile or less. Walking is the second most common form of travel representing 10.9 percent of all trips.

Slide presentation topics included Elements of a Policy; Why Have a Policy?; New Changes; The Growing Movement; and A Few Policies Across the Country. Several slides demonstrated vast improvements of previously unsafe bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Deb continued with some statistics. As of April 2011, over 200 communities have committed to a complete streets approach. Across the U.S., 24 states, 24 MPOs, 24 counties, and 131 cities have adopted Complete Streets policies. There has been growing movement in the number of policies adopted from just under 50 in 2009 to almost 80 in 2010.

After this review the topic was opened to the group for discussion of how the region should go about implementing this policy.

Discussion topics:

“Is a resolution supporting a local adoption of a complete streets policy favored over a regional complete streets policy?” Deb defined the two types of policy. At the local level, the MPO would advocate that local governments adopt their own complete streets policies. A regional complete streets policy would encompass the entire region. A regional policy wouldn't necessarily determine how local funds were spent.

By show of hands, BPAC members demonstrated they would prefer a regional complete streets policy over local adoption, with over 14 hands raised.

Q. From a design standpoint, would the regional policy also incorporate design elements or is that a general policy statement?

A. It is a general policy statement. It would basically include determining bicycle and pedestrian facilities as needed on all roadway projects, and then going through the different lists just presented.

The suggestion was made that maybe a hybrid policy could be done. Cities could adopt a regional policy and then within that would be encouraged to go even farther and create something very tailored for their communities.

Dave Carter commented that he would like to see all cities have their own policy. Every city's character is a little bit different. Some are more suburban, some more rural and then there are those that are more urban and clearly more developed. All have different needs and financial constraints. With an overarching policy or guideline, some examples could be adopted that meet local jurisdictions. Provide the framework of a policy or resolution to give the locals a starting point to expand and adopt on their own. All start from the same place and each meets one city's own needs.

Deb informed the committee of the long-term plan for today's discussion. A Fast Fact will be presented to the Surface Transportation Technical Committee (STTC) initially to determine interest in moving forward on a complete streets policy at the end of May. NCTCOG staff will spend the next couple of months developing comments heard at today's meeting into a draft regional policy. That draft policy would be brought back to BPAC at the August 17 meeting for further review. Eventually the policy would go to STTC and the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) for information, to BPAC again for approval, and then again to STTC and RTC respectively for approval and action.

Lorie Grinnan commented that Rockwall County is a small county. Cities are at different developmental levels and different capabilities in terms of planning. Having some sort of template would be of benefit. Lorie was uncertain what statutory abilities a county has to actually get involved in the planning level. A county could adopt a policy but it would be of benefit to have a more regional approach.

Dave Carter said he would like to relate this to how the federal government has the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), and then every state has the ability to adopt that as it is, or go through a process to make revisions and adopt their

own. In this particular case, Dave didn't think there would be a mandate that NCTCOG could dictate to any one jurisdiction that it had to be done a certain way. This is not a comprehensive plan or an edict.

Karla said this was more in line with RTC adopting the regional sustainable development policy, where they support our programs associated with mixed-use developments, walkability, etc. There are similar RTC policies associated with air quality.

Eric Fladager commented that one thing that was not pushed very hard at all in the presentation and really needed to be addressed was the role this plays in Mobility 2035, which is the vision as to how this region is going to accommodate the population growth anticipated through the next 25 years and it looks very carefully in terms of its vision and underlying principles at exactly this kind of activity in order to create more livable communities that expand out to rural areas. We need to be modifying the way we approach our transportation investments. We also have the issue of essentially running out of money for transportation improvements. This really is a very important facet of implementing anything. From the stand point of long range planning, a regional policy makes an awful lot of sense. It is not mandating activity on anyone's part, but it is setting the 30,000 foot view at the regional level that should be tied very carefully to Mobility 2035 implementation.

Deb agreed. Everything that was talked about at today's meeting does support Mobility 2035, which has the Active Transportation section in it. Staff is building on the goals from feedback from BPAC and the region. How is NCTCOG implementing complete streets is a common request. The discussion at BPAC will help determine what works for the region and how NCTCOG can help benefit our local communities.

Q: Is it the notion of future project submittals that the regional policy would recognize? Perhaps adopting a local complete streets may play a role in decisions of project submittals, evaluations, etc.

A: This is the very beginning, we haven't gotten that far into it. If that is something BPAC members want to see, it can be discussed internally, but at this point, there has not been any internal discussion.

Max Kalhammer commented that he thought if there was a regional complete streets policy, it should recognize the efforts that are ongoing or done previously by individual jurisdictions and municipalities. Cities can claim they already have their own complete streets policy that would qualify them for any federal funds coming through NCTCOG for complete streets. It makes sense that a policy should recognize that this is a trend that has already started and is ongoing. There are cities and counties in the region already doing something about it, including the City of Dallas.

The suggestion was made that local statistics, including good and bad examples, and maybe even some local images be added to the presentation.

Deb responded that a complete streets policy had yet to be adopted in the region so there was not any data to date. There are no local "before" pictures available to compare to an "after" complete streets implementation.

It was pointed out that there was some U.S. data in the presentation on percentages of people living within a mile of their work, and some crash data.

Q. If I understand this is really between a bottom – up vs. a top - down type of approach. From the regional side, if it is so tailored and specific to every single community, the region almost acts as a clearing house or dissemination of information so it can serve other people. But the burden really falls on the local municipalities or entities to adopt their own policies and then act as consortium, or NCTCOG.

Dave stated that the City of Richardson does not have a complete streets policy or guideline but did have a number of transit-oriented developments (TOD) and sustainable development communities actually on the ground that utilized the techniques learned in webinars, courses and conferences, and he felt it was very beneficial. Going through the process of having a guideline would be really good. If there was not a regionally-minded policy stating all modes of transportation - pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists – had to be accommodated, there would always be missing links in the network. Not all complete streets have to be in an urban TOD sustainable-type development. Every street could be more complete whether it meets the category of examples from the presentation.

Deb explained that this policy was coming from the 2010 policy issued by Ray LaHood, Secretary of Transportation, stating that MPOs have a responsibility to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian and all modes of travel in all projects. NCTCOG is trying to tailor a policy that allows flexibility for city and local governments to implement this within their municipalities, while encouraging from the beginning that the needs of all users are met. NCTCOG is not making the statement that this must be done in order to get funding, and funding is not being taken away. Specific statements such as, 'if you have an urban roadway you must have bike lanes and sidewalks' would not be made. The policy would just ensure that diligent efforts were made to include community members, what was implemented fit the community, and all needs were met.

Deb continued with the next discussion topic.

What elements do you feel are critical to include in a regional policy?

Max Kalhammer repeated what he had said previously about recognizing what is already going on in municipalities and the federal guidance above the region.

Eric Fladager stated that this has been done at the Integrated Storm Water (iSWM) level. A lot of cities did not have the ability to dedicate the time and effort it would take to bring about these types of policies. There is a regional policy in the iSWM manual but cities were given the ability and opportunity to tailor the policy for its own jurisdiction, to make it more or less stringent, or take it out completely. The policy probably wouldn't have happened if it wasn't done at the regional level.

Dave suggested borrowing policy ideas from Austin or San Antonio for example. Start with their examples and expand upon them for the DFW region.

Are there any elements that you feel should be explicitly omitted?

I was thinking more of the ones that should be included – conference and planning – intergovernmental coordination is essential for that – you go through communities and some have elements and some don't – encourage intergovernmental coordination as an element of the overall policy.

John Quinn stated he would like to see complete streets or pedestrian access within a mile to three miles of transit stations. The biggest complaint of the study that was recently conducted on DART was the fact that home and work are not well connected in the DFW region. If you go to a little bit further radius around the transit stations, you can create that kind of element. Not every city has a transit authority – but around our stations you can find suddenly you go from accessing 200,000 jobs to well over a million jobs within a three mile hike or bike. But again, it also increases the ability for people from all around the region to access destinations from where they live. Can you include that somewhere in the regional policy?

Deb: we can work on that.

Next steps: Over the next few months NCTCOG staff will draft a regional policy from the comments and present it at the August BPAC meeting, opening it up for feedback, comments and modifications. The draft policy will go to STTC in October and RTC in November for information. The policy will come back to BPAC in November for approval and on to the next scheduled STTC and RTC meetings, respectively, for final approval.

Deb asked that any other comments or feedback be e-mailed to her in the next few days. She reminded the committee of the position to make this a regional policy and something that will benefit the entire region.

7. Other Business/Open Discussion

John Quinn noted that DART was replacing the bike lockers at its stations. At least 180 bike lockers were available on a first-come first-serve basis.

Deb mentioned that Bike to Work Day was Friday, May 20. DART and the T were to be at CentrePort Station on Thursday with REI handing out breakfast to bicyclists and pedestrian commuters. The T will host an event on Friday at the Intermodal Center.

John Quinn asked if NCTCOG would be in charge of contacting Google about missing links on Google maps. Specifically, the Cottonwood Trail is a missing link on the Google Maps page. Anyone can contact Google now and draw in the missing links. This is something BPAC should be involved in.

Deb confirmed that this was a survey goal. NCTCOG will coordinate with those agencies to send in the most accurate data to Google Maps.

Jared White mentioned that the City of Dallas has launched a new campaign on trail safety. Go to happytrailsdallas.com for more information. Additionally, the ribbon cutting ceremony for the final segment of the Cottonwood Trail was Friday, May 20 at 10:30 am.

4: 40 PM- Meeting Adjourned. The next BPAC meeting is Wednesday, August 17, 2011.