

REGIONAL BICYCLE-PEDESTRIAN PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday August 25, 2009, 10:00 a.m.
Middle Georgia Regional Commission Conference Room

Attendees:

Jon Anderson, Central Georgia Cyclists
Karen Bailey, City of Hawkinsville
James Basley, Twiggs County Board of Education
Mary Beth Bass, Hawkinsville-Pulaski County Archway Partnership
Mike Beecham, City of Perry
Jacob Cox, Houston County
Danny Elmore, City of Eatonton
Dr. Aaron Geter, Wilkinson County Board of Education
David Gowan, Bibb County Board of Education
Adam Heagy, Bicycle Club of Milledgeville
Loraine Khoury, City of Fort Valley
Kari Kitchens, Bibb County
Dr. Heather Langston, Oconee River Greenway Authority
Dr. Jim Lidstone, Georgia College and State University
Larry Moore, Putnam County
Doug Oetter, Georgia College and State University
Laurie Pippin, City of Forsyth
Tim Pitrowski, Jones County
John Wagner, City of Warner Robins
Belinda Washlesky, Milledgeville Main Street
Benny Watson, Bicycle Club of Milledgeville
Phil Clark, Middle Georgia Regional Commission

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Phil Clark at 10:00 a.m. He welcomed all in attendance and self-introductions of all persons were made. He explained that the Georgia Department of Transportation has contracted with the Middle Georgia Regional Commission to update the *Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan for the Middle Georgia Region* prepared in 2005. The Middle Georgia Regional Commission has established an advisory group to represent the interests of a broad cross-section of stakeholders from local governments, Main Street and Better Hometown Programs, trail and greenway organizations, transportation planning organizations, boards of education, colleges and universities, health and environmental organizations, designated scenic byway groups, and bicycle clubs.

Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Clark began by first explaining the purpose of the Plan Update project and the role of the Plan Advisory Committee. Following this, Mr. Clark proceeded to review the current plan beginning with the focus of the study. The current plan includes bicycle/pedestrian plans for Baldwin and Putnam Counties—two communities thought to have the best opportunity to implement effective bicycle/pedestrian programs. In addition,

these were considered pilot plans with the hope of gaining interest from other communities in the region to develop local bicycle and pedestrian programs. Based on the outcome of these studies, individual plans are not going to be included in the updated report. Mr. Clark indicated that he did not have any problem, however, including in the implementation strategy specific bicycle/pedestrian projects that have received substantial buy-in from the respective local governments. Mr. Clark then opened this issue to the floor for suggestions. Several members requested that improving accessibility should go beyond the downtown areas, and should also include major retail, industrial, and greenspace areas. Another member requested that the RC staff and the Planning Advisory Committee consider ways to gain the support of the business community in the development of bicycle/pedestrian facilities in the region.

Following this discussion, Mr. Clark reviewed the Vision Statement with the Committee. Those in attendance felt that the current Vision Statement was satisfactory, but should in some way reflect some of the new terminology, such as “active transportation” and “complete streets.” It was decided that instead of eliminating certain words from the Vision Statement, that these new terms would be placed in parentheses to help with the transition. With this in mind, it was agreed that the new Vision Statement would be as follows:

“THE MIDDLE GEORGIA REGION WILL BECOME A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE CHOOSE TO MAKE WALKING, RUNNING, AND RIDING A BICYCLE (ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION) A PART OF THEIR EVERYDAY LIVES BY DEVELOPING ACCESSIBLE, CONVENIENT, AND SAFE BICYCLE/MULTI-USE TRAILS AND ROUTES AND ROADS (COMPLETE STREETS).”

Mr. Clark then outlined the goal statements for the major areas of the current plan: facility construction, safety, health and fitness, safe routes to school, and marketing and outreach. Mr. Clark requested that the area of health and fitness be eliminated from the plan, since it is now considered to have little correlation with the transportation aspect of the study. The Committee agreed with this change and also decided to use the remainder of the current goal statements.

Mr. Clark took a break from the PowerPoint presentation and moved over to the display of the Facilities Plan Map. This map illustrated the bicycle and multi-use routes recommended in the current plan. Mr. Clark pointed out first the state bicycle routes and the alterations that were made to those routes to improve the safety and the travel experience of the bicyclist. He then explained that all of the counties in the region were interconnected by the recommended routes. There was a question from the floor on the use of the local roads as part of the regional system. Mr. Clark answered that the primary aim was to use the state highway system as much as possible, but that local roads were used to provide connectivity and add a scenic quality to the plan. Mr. Clark agreed to e-mail each of the members present a pdf copy of the map to review and make suggested changes.

Mr. Clark concluded the PowerPoint presentation by identifying the major accomplishments since the current plan was completed and the next steps in the Plan Update process. One of the accomplishments Mr. Clark discussed was the development of the regional bicycle/pedestrian website. After establishing the link on the internet, Mr. Clark showed the Committee the website and its major sections. He requested the Committee’s assistance in recommending changes to

the website to make it more user-friendly, in providing information on upcoming bicycle/pedestrian events, and in getting the word out to bicycle and pedestrian advocates throughout the region and state. One of the attendees made a suggestion to have the owners of the bicycle stores in the region to add this link to their websites, thus gaining notable exposure among bicycle enthusiasts.

There being no further business or questions from the floor, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.