



Steering Committee Meeting Notes

Subject: Steering Committee Meeting

Project: Charlottesville Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

Date: April 3, 2014

Participants: Amanda Poncy (City of Charlottesville), Wendy Phelps (City of Charlottesville), Jeff Ciabotti (TDG), Katie Mencarini (TDG), Hannah Twaddell (Twaddell Associates), steering committee members

Introductions

Amanda Poncy, Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator for the City of Charlottesville began the meeting by providing a brief orientation to Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan project to the steering committee. Amanda introduced the City staff and the consultant team. She also included a brief explanation of the role of City staff, the consultants and steering committee in the development of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. Members of the steering committee introduced themselves to the consultant team.

Background Information on the Plan Project

After introductions, Jeff Ciabotti, project manager for the consultant team gave a presentation providing relevant background information and an overview of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan project. Listed below are the topics covered in that presentation.

- National trends in bicycling and walking
- Study priorities
- Project work plan overview
- Project timeline
- Known challenges for walking and biking in Charlottesville
- “Tools in the toolbox” for improving walking and biking conditions
- Introduction to bicycle “stress” level analysis
- The study’s approach to improving conditions for pedestrians
- Planned public involvement opportunities

- Introduction to the online interactive map
- Next steps for the project

A PDF of the presentation is included as an appendix to these notes.

Discussion of Vision, Goals and Objectives

Katie Mencarini, deputy project manager for the consultant team led a discussion of the draft vision, goals and objectives with the steering committee. The purpose of the discussion was to edit the draft text, identify additional goals and/or objectives that were needed and to remove any goals or objectives as appropriate. While the discussion was focused on the draft goals and objectives, feedback on the existing state of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and the existing culture towards walking and biking were also discussed. The steering committee provided feedback during the meeting. Highlights from that discussion are included below:

Feedback on Goals

- The Plan should focus on improving and expanding the existing walking and biking networks in such a way that they encourages more people to walk and ride their bikes, rather than catering to those who are already walking and riding on a regular basis.
- When choosing facility types, the more vulnerable users should be given priority, pedestrians, children, less confident bicyclists.
- While the focus of the Plan should be expanding transportation options, improving the network for health, fitness and recreation trips should also be considered.

Feedback on Objectives

- There needs to be an objective that addresses needs for bicycle parking.
- All users (pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists) need education and reminders on their responsibilities and rights.
- Outreach to police, motorists, bicyclists, students, and others will be needed to foster a welcoming bicycle and pedestrian culture.
- Economic incentives for bicycling should be included as an objective or strategy.

Feedback on Vision

- Include words such as “attractive”, “welcoming” and “appealing” for the long-term vision of Charlottesville’s walking and biking networks.

The steering committee was given an additional two weeks to submit feedback on the vision, goals and objectives to be incorporated into the Draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

Discussion on Stakeholder Outreach

Hannah Twaddell, the lead on public and stakeholder engagement for the consultant team led a discussion on strategies for stakeholder engagement. The purpose of the discussion was to identify people and groups that should be included in focus group discussions for the Master Plan. Additionally, Hannah asked the steering committee to suggest opportunities to “piggy-back” on existing gatherings, meetings, events, and communication outlets to reach people who are not traditionally involved in walking and biking issues. Highlights from this discussion are included below

- Law enforcement departments and agencies should be included in Plan discussions.
- The University of Virginia has many stakeholders such as students, faculty, and staff, and all will benefit from improved walking and biking conditions throughout the City.
- Merchants and chambers of commerce should be engaged as they could play a role in improving bicycle parking and/or pedestrian comfort.
- It will be important to reach out to groups of all races, ethnicities, and economic backgrounds. Churches, the International Rescue Committee and home owners associations may resources to broaden outreach efforts.
- The County, MPO, and VDOT staff should be informed and engaged throughout the Plan development process.
- Upcoming festivals and events are opportunities to broaden public outreach of the Plan. Perhaps a booth could be set up with handouts and other giveaways that provide information about the development of the Plan.

Steering committee members were encouraged to submit further ideas on people to engage and opportunities for outreach to Amanda.

To conclude the meeting, Amanda and the consultant team asked the steering committee to continue providing feedback on what was discussed during the meeting. They were also asked to test the online interactive map and provide feedback before it is launched to the public. The next steering committee meeting will be scheduled for the summer of 2014.