

**Coosa Valley Regional
Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force
December 1, 2005, Minutes**

Attending: Bill Moll, Linda Jennings, Scott Greene, Bill Steiner, Jim Powell, Mark Lamade, Susan Carlston, Michael Carver, Peggy Moore, David Kenemer, Tim Jones, David Doss (Chair of DOT Board), Patrick Clarey, Kurt Eichenberger, Donald Oliver, Diane Smith

Invited Speaker:

David Doss, Chairman of the State Transportation Board, provided an update on the impact of the new T21 transportation bill on bike and pedestrian enhancements and made comments on the general state of transportation funding in Georgia. Changing the minimum return rate for donor states to apply before subtracting earmarks means \$287,000,000 per year more for six years for Georgia. However, Georgia transportation needs will still be significantly under funded.

The Safe Routes to School – construction of bicycle and pedestrian facilities within 2 miles of schools – has approximately \$3,000,000 available for 2006 for Georgia statewide. About \$5 million is available for each of the 13 Transportation districts for transportation enhancements. Enhancements include expenditures for bicycling and pedestrian activities, as well as landscaping and other non-motorized vehicle amenities. Each board member has the discretion to see how their portion is spent. January - February is typically when those grants are announced. In the past, grants have funded the Silver Comet Trail.

The discussion after Mr. Doss' prepared remarks covered the addition of bike lanes during road widening projects, the state bike map routes, color coded ratings of routes on the map and the lack of route signage in NW Georgia.

Minutes:

The Minutes of the November 10 meeting were approved as presented.

Bylaws:

The Bylaws were corrected in Article VI, Item 3, line 2 to read "30% of the voting membership will constitute a quorum" and in Item 7 to change "(10)" to "(7)" The Bylaws were then approved with those corrections.

Priorities:

The Task Force discussed the 15 projects prepared from the November meeting. The priorities chosen were
#1. Develop message
#14. Encourage Children to Walk/Bike to School (Safe Routes to School)
#8-11. Bike Maps and connectivity to cities and points of interest

An additional topic was the Tour de Georgia which has Rome as a Host stage finish city and Chickamauga as a Host start city. The Task Force decided that presenting materials at the Tour would be more effective than at a previously discussed spring event in Rome. The intention is to have the first draft of the three priorities available for the Tour events in the RDC, which occur on April 19 and 20. David Kenemer stated that if the draft bike map were available at the February meeting, RDC graphics could prepare and make copies available distribution at the Tour. Mike Carver volunteered to check on requirements for a booth at the Tour expo.

Committee assignments: *(the lack of name cards and poor Chairman handwriting legibility make this a provisional list)*

Develop the Message – Diane Smith and Mark Lamade
Safe Routes to School – Peggy Moore, Linda Jennings and Eric Lindberg
Bike Route Map – Patrick Clarey, Bill Moll, James Powell, Tim Jones, Don Oliver, Scott Greene, Michael Carver, Joe Anderson

David Doss note (12/2/2005) to Task Force regarding questions he wrote down at the 12/1/2005 meeting

I received these answers this morning to the questions raised in your meeting yesterday. I hope these help. sdd

1) Re: private funds for signage.

I'm not sure about this because I'm not aware of this occurring anywhere in the state. The concept doesn't seem a whole lot different than GDOT allowing McDonald's to pay to put their logo on a blue highway sign, so I imagine it would be allowed, they would just need to get the city, county or GDOT to install the signs (depending if it's on a city, county or state road). One thing to keep in mind, if they are proposing signage on a state highway, GDOT generally won't allow anything that is not in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). If there is a particular MPO or RDC that has a proposal to do this - they should contact me. I can follow up with our Traffic Safety and Design Office (they did our State Bicycle Route Signage) to see exactly what the process would be.

2) RE: Produce a state bike map with the routes approved by the RDCs.

Short answer – yes for planning purposes, no for bicyclists. One of the primary reasons we contracted the RDCs to produce regional bike/ped plans was so we could get the GIS data of the proposed routes and put it in one GIS system (along with the state bike routes), possibly TRex, or something web-based. This is an ongoing effort – not sure when it will be complete. However, the primary purpose of this GIS application would be for planning purposes – so our planners and designers know where to include bike facilities in their projects (right now I have to check all 6000+ projects or they have to check with me, either way it's inefficient and cumbersome). The information would also be available to the general public and other planning agencies, local governments, etc.

However, I do not want to produce a map of “proposed routes” for bicyclists. This is the problem we have run into with our existing State Bicycle Route map – it shows the designated bike routes, but it doesn't provide any information on shoulder width, speed limits, traffic volumes, etc. So bicyclists expect to be on low-volume roads, or expect there to be bike lanes, and are pretty shocked and unhappy to find that is usually not the case. Needless to say, the Department has gotten a lot of angry correspondence over this. I think it's much more useful to produce a color-coded and symbolic map that displays shoulder widths, AADT, grades, etc rather than simply showing the locations of designated or proposed routes. This is what we plan to do, starting in the Spring (or possibly sooner depending on RFP process, etc). This does not mean our 14 designate bicycle routes will go away, they will still be in the plan, and will be part of the aforementioned GIS application of proposed routes. Also, the RDCs can produce bicycle maps and materials as part of their contract with us.

3) Re: color-coded bike map.

As mentioned above, we already have plans to do this. The map will use colors and symbology to display shoulder widths, grades, AADT, and possibly other factors. Good examples of this type of map include Iowa, Oregon, Washington, Kansas, Louisiana, and Maine. In the future, after this map is complete, we also may consider doing regional maps (such as a Coastal GA map, or North GA map) that would be more detailed, include tourist info, route descriptions, etc. Maine and North Carolina have done this – I envision it being a partnership with the Dept of Econ Development (Tourism division). Here is an example of the detailed bike tourism map <http://www.exploremaine.org/bike/pdfs/maps/waldo.pdf>. Here is an example of a state map that we want to emulate: http://www.msp.dot.state.ia.us/trans_data/pdf/bikemap.pdf, you can click the map to zoom in.

4) Only 20% of bike paths have signage.

First off, I think there is a mix up on terminology. Paths are multi-use, off-road facilities, like the silver comet trail. I assume they are not talking about this. I think they mean the State Bicycle Route system. If that is the case, they are correct -- 4 of the 14 State Bike Routes are signed, that's 768 miles out of 2942 miles, or 26%.

The reason for this relates to the response to Question #2. Many of the roads which were designated back in 1996 may have been suitable for bicycling then, but are less so now (e.g. Riverdale Rd, P'tree Ind'l, US29&GA20 in Gwinnett, etc). I mentioned the complaints we get when bicyclists find themselves on a multi-lane highway with no shoulder. So, before signing any more routes, we want to update the State Bicycle Plan which will include evaluating each existing bike route for possible changes. We may want to consider altering our whole philosophy behind these routes – perhaps going more towards what Maine has done and sign those routes. In any case, this will be done through a public planning process, and MPOs and RDCs will have input on how and if the routes get changed. The problem is that when this map was done, it was primarily created as a mechanism to get shoulders and bike lanes added to roads, rather than selecting routes based on what roads are best for bicycling. I think we can achieve both of those goals by providing a good bicycle map with info bicyclists need, while producing a Bicycle Plan which outlines proposed routes and improvements to be incorporated into GDOT's construction work program and transportation improvement plans.