

LAWRENCE-DOUGLAS COUNTY MPO BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes for Wednesday, January 10, 2018 Meeting

Voting Members

David Hamby (City of Lawrence)
Steve Hitchcock (City of Baldwin City)
Bill Anderson (City of Lecompton)
Cameron Jacques (Douglas County)
Jacki Becker (Douglas County)

Non-Voting Members

Chris Tilden (Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department)

Staff

Jessica Mortinger (Senior Transportation Planner)
Ashley Myers (Transportation Planner)
Margaret Campbell (Transportation Planning Intern)

Other

Kirsten Yunuba Stephens
Helen Schnoes (Sustainability Office)

1. Call Meeting to Order, Welcome and Introductions

David Hamby called the meeting to order at 5:00. A quorum was present and introductions were made.

2. Public Comment

No public comment.

3. Action Item: Approval of Minutes from the June 21, 2017 Meeting

David Hamby mentioned the minutes were not listed as an agenda item, but were included in the agenda packet. Thus he would like to include approval of the June 21st meeting minutes on the agenda. Mr. Hamby asked if anyone had changes to the minutes. Steve Hitchcock moved to approve the minutes; the motion was seconded by Jacki Becker; passed unanimously, 4-0.

4. Action Item: Appointment of a representative to fill the Lecompton vacancy

Jessica Mortinger said the City of Lecompton chose not to appoint someone to fill their vacancy. This means that the committee at large must elect a person to fill this vacancy. There are two vacancies open currently, one in Lecompton and one in Lawrence. The Lawrence vacancy will be appointed by the Mayor of Lawrence; the previous appointee resigned due to multiple scheduling conflicts. David Hamby opened the discussion to the public to hear from the Lecompton vacancy candidates. Bill Anderson asked to be considered for the Lecompton position based on past experience serving as the Lecompton representative for the previous BAC. He is also a member of the Lawrence Bicycle Club. Kirsten Yunuba Stephens asked to be considered by the committee. She is also a member of the Lawrence Bicycle Club and developed the Bicycle Friendly Drivers program. Mr. Hamby asked the vote to be done with ballots. Ms. Mortinger tallied up the votes and Mr. Anderson was elected to fill the vacancy becoming a voting member eligible to vote on subsequent agenda items.

5. Action Item: Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2018

David Hamby asked for nominations to serve as Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson during calendar year 2018. Bill Anderson motioned to keep David Hamby as Chair and Jacki Becker as Vice Chair, seconded by Cameron Jacques; passed unanimously, 5-0.

6. Discussion Item: Transportation 2040 Update

Jessica Mortinger explained this is the first time the plan has been updated with dedicated funding for bicycle infrastructure. The plan also includes performance measures with annual data reporting that helps make decisions in policy. T2040 incorporates mode-specific plans, which are updated on a rotating basis. The Bicycle Pedestrian Taskforce report and the Countywide Bikeway System Plan are existing approved plans that make recommendations on bikeway planning that are incorporated into T2040. This plan update integrates the modes in a more multi-modal way to better show the vision of the community and strategies. There was extensive public engagement conducted to solicit input about the community's vision. The first round of engagement returned over 1,500 survey response and the second round of engagement returned 88 responses. The next step is a 30-day public comment period. Comments will be recorded in T2040 (based on the MPO's public participation plan) and then replied to and incorporated as appropriate. The plan needs to be approved by March 21st. Staff asked BAC members to provide comments on the bicycle related content in the draft plan.

David Hamby asked if the Lawrence Loop study recommendations were incorporated in the plan. Ms. Mortinger said once the study was adopted/accepted the routes would be. Staff is also discussing how to include or reference the various community plans and might place all of the plans in the appendix. Jacki Becker said that the draft T2040 plan is well done and represents bicycles well. (She reviewed the plan and was part of the steering committee representing the BAC.) Ms. Mortinger said all the maps in the plan will be navigable ArcMaps, which allow the users to zoom. The maps are covering such a large area that having the ability to zoom will help make the maps useable. Steve Hitchcock asked if the Lawrence Loop study counts as alignments but not necessarily transportation. Ms. Mortinger said that design standards are what separates "trails" from transportation. If a recreation facility was designed to transportation standards such as ADA, then it could be included. Mr. Hamby asked what kind of comments are wanted from the committee. Ms. Mortinger said that informal comments need to be provided to staff by January 16th or wait until the formal public comment period in February.

7. Discussion Item: Countywide Bikeway Plan Update

Jessica Mortinger said there is a countywide bikeway plan update planned for 2018-2019. Staff are conducting conversations with stakeholders to develop a scope of work for the project. To update this plan there are some options to oversee this process: appoint a separate steering committee, use the MPO BAC as the core of the steering committee with additional members added, or to create an advisory committee for outside engagement. She asked how comfortable the members would be helping shape the new plan update. David Hamby asked how much involvement would be needed. Ms. Mortinger said that would depend on the committee. She gave an example of organizing rides through the community and conducting small survey work to engage the public and create community buy-in. It could be in the best interest of the committee to go to meetings and listen to the public in person.

Bill Anderson asked how the countywide bicycle plan is utilized and who uses it. Ms. Mortinger said there are two maps in the plan and mainly the network plan is used to justify projects. Various Public Works departments can consult to make sure projects are consistent with the plan for funding. An example of this is a shared-use paths that were planned around a private site being developed and the developers implemented the planned section of Shared Use Path as part of their development. Mr. Anderson asked if the shoulders on roads in the county are a result of the plan. Ms. Mortinger said the existing plan does call for bike routes in the county, many shoulders are added for their recognized safety impact within the scope of the project budget.

Ms. Mortinger said the current plan does not prioritize facilities and when the bike plan was created it was an entire network plan. At the time there was no dedicated funding for bicycle projects. The plan falls short of how to envision prioritize improvements. Ms. Mortinger said a methodology came before Transportation Commission recently. Mr. Hamby said that prioritization allows priority routes to move ahead of projects that will not help with the future network vision. Jacki Becker asked if the group will decide how bicycle projects will be prioritized; Ms. Mortinger said prioritization could be recommended in the plan, however

project selection would be done by the local committees like the Transportation Commission in Lawrence. Jessica Mortinger noted that when the bicycle plan was created there were not as many nationally recognized bicycle design standards. This means there is a need to revisit design standards and criteria based on attributes and provide options. Mr. Hamby said they cannot be too specific because this prevents better options from being implemented. Ms. Mortinger said referencing national design standards can help decrease liability. Mr. Anderson asked why this would decrease liability. Mr. Hamby said by referencing accepted national standards for design they are falling back on tested methods. Steve Hitchcock said when creating a network they need to allow for the fact there could be future facilities not yet realized. Chris Tilden said providing flexibility allows a plan to stay valid longer. Ms. Mortinger said a plan cannot predict what will happen but should create a framework.

Mr. Hamby led a discussion on how the committee felt about staffing the steering committee. The committee said they would be comfortable. He asked what the scope for the previous RFP outlined. Ms. Mortinger said that MPO staff will write a technical outline instead of an RFP/scope. We want to make the outline more readable to members of the community and to be clear about expectations. She talked about including education, encouragement, and other aspects into the plan. In the Bicycle Friendly Community feedback, Lawrence did not score well in those aspects. Before there was dedicated funding there was not an ability to create SMART goals with programming. The comments and suggestions about the bikeway plan technical outline can be sent by Mid-February to MPO staff. Mr. Tilden asked if they will preface the plan with what planning work has been done. Eudora and Baldwin City have made a lot of progress. Ms. Mortinger said this can be part of plan update discussion.

8. Discussion Item: Bike Rideability Map Update

Jessica Mortinger passed out the current Bike Rideability Map. She said this is the 3rd edition of the Bike Rideability map and the biennial update is in the spring. In the past the BAC has set up smaller subcommittees to establish routing. MPO staff will be seeking contributions and sponsorships to print the map. There are as-builts to add to the map but some of the work has already been completed in anticipation of this update. David Hamby asked who wanted to be part of the subcommittee. Cameron Jacques, Jacki Becker, Bill Anderson, and Chris Tilden volunteered to be on the subcommittee. Steve Hitchcock said he will check to see if there are trailheads to add. Ms. Mortinger said there are new SUPs to show in Baldwin City, but there isn't enough yet to warrant a special map insert of Baldwin City on the map. She said that if the community desired it, they could have a zoomed bike map printed for Baldwin City.

Mr. Hamby asked if there could be a category established for "not suitable for riders" that could be routed on the map. Ms. Mortinger said that the map had been criticized previously for underestimating the necessary rider ability for routes. The committee is made of primarily strong riders, so they need to take this into account. Mr. Hamby asked if it was possible to use GIS data to tie-in the grade of routes to the categorization. David Hamby motioned for the creation of the Bike Rideability subcommittee comprised of Cameron Jacques, Jacki Becker, Bill Anderson, and Chris Tilden, seconded by Steve Hitchcock; passed unanimously, 5-0.

9. Quick Updates

The Lawrence Loop Alignment Study, the MPO engaged consultants BG to conduct this study to analyze alternative alignments to determine feasibility and public preference. The proposed routes to close gaps (Sandra Shaw to Peterson Road and Burroughs Creek to Constant Park) in the Lawrence Loop were studied. They conducted public engagement to see the preferred routes by citizens. For the Sandra Shaw to Peterson Road gap the citizens chose A1 and B1, including an underpass under McDonald Road. This requires working with KTA and acquiring right-of-way. For the Burroughs Creek to Constant Park gap the citizens chose routes D1, E1, and F1. There were technical problems with route F1 and the consultants conducted additional public engagement to choose alternatives. The BNSF informally said they cannot support the current alignment. However, BNSF cannot make a formal comment until design plans and a formal request has been made. The final report has been created analyzing the process and the results.

Ashley Myers said this was the 8th year of September Annual Bicycle & Pedestrian counts. The counts are conducted using the national bicycle pedestrian count methodology. The counts are tracked on an interactive historical bicycle-pedestrian count map. The counts registered were the Annual Average Daily Trips that are calculated from the methodology. The MPO has engaged in sharing automated bike counters with the Flint Hills MPO and Topeka MPO. This will allow the MPO to conduct 24-hr counts and verify the manual counts and projections.

The MPO has purchased the Association of Bicycle and Pedestrian Professionals webinar series. The webinar will be shown in Lawrence City Hall, City Commission room on the 3rd Wednesday at 2 pm. Committee members are welcome to attend.

10. Other Business

Steve Hitchcock said Midland Railway has hired a new executive director. They are discussing selling the right-of-way for rail trails to fund the repairs for lines that were damaged in a flood. Mr. Hitchcock said this is important because it will build trail network connections to other counties.

11. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held in the spring. The meeting adjourned at 6:23 pm.