

Countywide Bikeway Plan
Steering Committee Meeting Notes
April 5, 2013
12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The project is split into three (3) steering committees: Fixed Route Transit and Pedestrian Accessibility; Commuter Park and Ride; and, Countywide Bikeway System Plan (Toole Design). Each committee will meet 3-4 times. The public involvement will be conducted by Vireo, Toole and URS. The draft study is slated for October 2013 with final project completion at the end of 2013.

Dan Meyers briefed overview of schedule with Jim presenting the Gantt chart schedule and Toole presenting the Powerpoint slideshow for the bike plan.

Salient points:

- Team is already working on first three elements.
- Team has already contacted school officials in the area to solicit their input
- Extensive fieldwork will be conducted during the first week of June.
- There was a particular focus on specific problem areas that had previously been identified through a variety of means, including existing plans such as the Lawrence Comprehensive Plan, the Douglas County Plan, MPO, and Transit (especially in identifying Commuter Facilities).
- Group input is very important to arrive at the vision, goals and objectives for this study.
- The focus of our efforts is on developing a network plan.
- Sent survey out to group previously to identify main issues.

The survey and prior feedback through MPO public involvement efforts resulted in the identification of special focus areas, as follow:

- 6th & Iowa
- Hobbs to Constant Park
- Baldwin City Elementary School
- Eudora Elementary and Middle School

The most pressing needs that were identified are:

- Regional connections such as connections to Kansas University
- Expanding existing facilities that work
- Developing a system that is actually a bikeway system
- Major routes

Goals for the next ten (10) years include:

- Connect Lawrence and Eudora, and reach out to connect Eudora, DeSoto and cities in Johnson County.
- Improvements to incorporate bike user needs into planned improvements

- Bikeways and a pedestrian system that serves these.
- Improve education in the community for cyclists and motorists about how they need to share the roads safely

Thoughts regarding funding

- SRTS funding is limited and not for regional bikeway planning as it generally limits scope to 2-mile radius around neighborhood schools.
- A plan like this will provide a framework to facilitate the request for government funding.
- Coordinating the bikeway plan with existing roadway improvements should help fund bikeway system improvements in tandem.

Additional comments:

- Focus on what is attainable
- Hostility towards cyclists
- Longterm conversion of RR beds
- Opportunity to focus on real plan for future
- Complete Streets Policy in Lawrence

Opened up to comments:

- This plan will be used to support Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) proposals and projects. This study is not a full SRTS study.
- Funding for safe routes to schools program seems limited, are there any other funds available? What is Lawrence doing for schools in the City of Lawrence?
- The plan should address issues of safe transportation to schools for all schools within the MPO and not just Eudora and Baldwin. MPO response: The scope of this study does not include SRTS projects. MPO staff chose a couple of regional projects where issues are well known and can be considered bike destinations / nodes that intersect main roads and/or the bikeway system.
- Focus should be on high schools since parents won't even let elementary school students walk to school, let alone bicycle.
- 6th Street so busy that it is almost impossible to bike on.
- Just having a connection can be good but in some instances it can be worse if safety is not addressed.
- Different bikers (recreational vs. transportation) have different needs. This often leads to a patchwork plan, which must be avoided.
- 6th and Iowa intersection improvements will go out to bid in April or May, so this plan will address longer-term improvements to this intersection, to prepare for later improvements.
- What kind of additional work can we do to improve bikeways in our plan, such as route improvements.
- What is our philosophy of the bikeway plan? Social, recreational, working, health, etc.?
- Are we open to East Hills Industrial area?
- Will we be identifying other problem areas? Yes, as part of the larger, regional analysis.

Team demonstrated online mapping tool and showed Madison, WI example of multi-modal improvements.

Additional Comments:

- What about KU since it probably has the largest biking population? Is this going to tie into all of this? Response: Yes. Also, KU is in the process of updating its Master Plan.
- What does the connection between communities usually look like for a study like this?

Next meeting is the first week of June to coincide with first public meeting. Send out information ahead of time.

The project information will be viewable on MPO website as well as all other already existing social media outlets.

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