

Transportation Working Group Breakout Session Notes

INTRODUCTION:

After a brief introduction from all attendees, including 14 working group members, three facilitators (Sam Zimbabwe – DDOT, William Handsfield - OP and John Heermans - OP) and three senior staff (Harriet Tregoning - OP, Brendan Shane - DDOE, Patricia Zingsheim - OP), the group went through some details on the planning process, timeline, ground rules and time commitments.

Working Group Attendees:

Kelly Bickers
Alex Block
Christine Burgess
Micah Cohen
Jon Conner
John Mann
Andrea Peet
Kate Reese
Jennifer Riddell
Annita Seckinge
David Thomas
Megan Van de Mark
Stacy Weisfeld

BRIEF BACKGROUND:

The group was briefly introduced to transportation planning in the city and some of the major authorities, nuances surrounding funding and taxation and unique conditions that affect transportation planning in the District.

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and the District Department of Transportation all play equally important roles in the city's transportation networks, infrastructure and policies. Most plans from DC's transportation authorities operate on a 30 year time frame due to funding, policy and land use issues involved in upgrading, maintaining or constructing transportation systems.

One of the major factors affecting DC's transportation system is the large commuter population that travels from Maryland and Virginia daily. Due to the city's unique state and tax status, it cannot derive revenue from these commuters, even though they put enormous strains on the city's transportation infrastructure. While tolls, parking and other user fees have been used, the city's lack of representation in Congress means surrounding states can effectively squash any proposal to generate revenue from people who work in but do not live in the city. Besides planning for increasing density in the city and improving inner-city connectivity, DC's transportation planning strategy must account for non-resident commuters. Given these current conditions within the city, the group discussed what a sustainable transportation system would look like in DC's future.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY IN TRANSPORTATION?

- Only special trips require a car. All basic needs can be met without having to drive. Someone mentioned “connectivity” to accompany this idea.
- “Resiliency” in the transportation system, which refers to a system that can handle changes in gas prices, damage to the metro rails or any other disruption affecting one or multiple modes.
- Attractive transportation that is convenient, wanted and easy.
- Efficient and reliable.
- A system that reaches all areas of the city and thinks beyond the 30 year time frame.
- Everyone within a ten minute walk of all basic needs, schools, recreation, groceries, jobs for example.
- No more than a ten minute wait for any public transportation, including bus, metrorail, streetcar.
- Get anywhere in the city in 10 minute.
- Affordable or free transportation.
- The needs of non-resident commuters can be met without overburdening the transportation needs of city residents.
- Establish a canoe share and expand boat-taxi services.
- The next generation of car share allows weekend long trips without being restrictively expensive.
- Make all cars in the city available to everyone so that everyone co-owns, co-pays for and can use when they need. This could operate somewhat like a car co-operative.
- Increase access to convenient transportation, including cars, which would decrease the cost of cars per household (access without ownership).
- Further refine carpool systems so that multiple riders pay for distance shared. This could operate as an incentive program for drivers who take more riders or for riders who carpool less distance.
- Include more modes of transportation in the range of options to plan for, including electric bikes, scooters, small cars, motorcycles and mopeds.
- Develop technologies and alternate fuels to promote cars that have zero emissions or run, are more efficient, run on renewable or electric energies.
- Make all taxi cabs electric and centrally programmed to find quickest and shortest routes.
- Analyze some of the city’s large fleets, such as the DC government fleet, delivery trucks, utility trucks to reduce burdens during peak travel hours, reduce loads on small roads for example.
- Adopt a “No-Idle” policy.
- Adopt a “Zero Traffic Fatality” policy.
- Insert a ‘driving with bikers’ section into driver’s license testing.
- Develop a multi-modal education program that trains transportation users from early ages about commuting with all other forms of transportation.
- Provide better separation bikers and drivers.

- Allocate street space proportional to the modes of transportation we need to build a multi-modal, resilient, efficient system.
- Create a system that would allow city residents to evacuate by bike (or other modes) in emergency situations.
- Build a transportation system that makes 'doing the right thing' the best and easiest option for commuters.
- Create safe, convenient, good spaces for increasing mode share and areas where people want to be.
- Improve the visibility of metro stops, add character to metro stations and increase the safety at all stops.
- Make transportation system construction and maintenance more environmentally friendly, energy efficient and sustainable.
- Build covered bike lanes or bike tunnels so that people will still bike in adverse weather.
- Align the health benefits of biking or walking with an incentive (through health insurance for example) to get people out of cars.
- Corral, tame and manage tourism buses more efficiently and so that they are not so obtrusive to streetscapes.
- Adopt a program similar to the 2x2012 program in Columbus, OH, where employees all biked or walked to work on the same day twice a month. The program was popular enough that employees exceeded the twice a month goal.
- Improve connectivity to and from Wards and neighborhoods west and east of the Anacostia River.
- Improve connectivity between Wards and neighborhoods on the east side of the Anacostia River.
- Build more pedestrian bridges to cross the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers, similar to the 11th St Bridge plans.
- Mandate a large percentage (or all) cars in the city meet high emission, fuel efficiency standards.
- Incentivize fleet share.
- Make bike lanes more visually distinctive to delineate the separation between car space and bike space.
- Allow the ole 'Idaho Stop' for bikers who can safely roll through stop signs and red lights.
- Ensure all pedestrian buttons work and are conveniently timed.
- Enforce mandatory vehicle stops at crosswalks occupied by pedestrians.

NEXT STEPS:

- Working group members are encouraged to provide and share background research and information on some of their ideas.
- Facilitators and Sustainable DC staff will develop a process to share goals and recommendations with overlapping topic areas.
- The group prefers meetings are metro and bike share accessible and are scheduled no earlier than 6:00pm.

NEXT MEETING: Rm 1114, 1 Judiciary Square, NW. December 15th at 6:00pm.