

**REGIONAL BIKEWAY-WALKWAY PLANNING MEETING**  
**New River Valley Planning Commission**  
**March 29, 2006 at 1:00 p.m.**

Attendees:

Dennis Anderson, Virginia Department of Forestry-Floyd  
Joe Powers, Montgomery County Planning and GIS  
Michael Clark, Montgomery County Parks and Recreation  
Brad Buchanan, Montgomery County Parks and Recreation  
Bruce Mahin, Pathways for Radford/NRV  
Shawn Utt, City of Radford  
Nichole Hair, City of Christiansburg  
Barry Helms, City of Christiansburg  
Art Price, Christiansburg Parks and Recreation  
David Clarke, VDOT  
Anthony Akers, Pulaski County Parks and Recreation  
Peter Huber, Pulaski County  
Debby Freed, Virginia Tech  
Matt O Toole, New River Valley Bike Association  
Patrick Burton, VDOT  
Abigail Convery, NRVPDC

## **BW-WW Planning Updates**

### VT-Blacksburg

Debbie Freed outlined Virginia Tech's current and future plans for increasing pedestrian and bike transportation commuting options on the campus and it's surrounding communities. The map she brought showed accepted projects into the transportation enhancement program (i.e. a link to the Cranwell Center, Smithfield Plantation and more). She also highlighted the upcoming collaborative project that VT and the Town of Blacksburg are working on which will connect the Heathwood community to the Huckleberry Trail. VT's Bike/Pedestrian Plan Map: [http://facilities.vt.edu/documents/ot/Bike\\_Trail\\_Master\\_Plan\\_1205.pdf](http://facilities.vt.edu/documents/ot/Bike_Trail_Master_Plan_1205.pdf) .  
For more information contact Debby Freed at (540) 231-1737

### Bike 76 Route Planning

The Bike 76 Project is a group that is interested in creating a program for supplementing and/or replacing Bike 76 Signage in the NRV. Originally the idea was to try to design a more colorful logo for the signs as well as add signs that would show additional amenities along the route for lodging, food, showers, etc. The group has had their first meeting, where Michael Clark of Montgomery Parks

and Recreation agreed to take lead on the project. Topics at the meeting included: role of VDOT and Adventure Cycling in adding/changing signs, criteria for additional signage, installing informational kiosks on the route when entering the localities, etc.

Since the meeting, Michael had the following information to report. One of the locations that was discussed for a Kiosk along the route was actually owned by the Town of Blacksburg, not Montgomery County. Talks are ongoing about the potential kiosk site. According to VDOT there is nothing happening at this time on changing the Bike 76 sign in the state. Brad Buchanan reported that he had contacted the group, Adventure Cycling (instrumental in creating Route Bike 76 /Marketing) and found that there was no nationwide movement to add additional signage or change original logo for the 30<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the route. Therefore, if the localities were interested in pursuing the signage, they appear to be the only effort present in the nation at this time. It would also mean that the localities would have to buy signs, market and promote it themselves. The comment was made that this may be something Roanoke Valley may be interested in participating in. For more information on this project or if you would like to get involved, please contact: Michael Clark at 540-382-6965.

## Media Planning

Matt O' Toole is heading up a public education campaign which focuses on promoting Bike/Pedestrian projects and issues in the Valley. He is putting together a list of media contacts, basics on constructing a press release, and other material that would be helpful for different projects to get out their events. Matt also said that if a project would like media coverage that he would be happy to help write the press release or arrange for that story to get to the appropriate media outlet. Something similar to the Montgomery Co. Public Information Officer. David Clark suggested that it would be important to have one contact person for the job. Conversation turned to the story that was done on the regional trail by Ch. 7 at [http://www.nrvtoday.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=3813&Itemid=56](http://www.nrvtoday.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3813&Itemid=56) with Barry Helms and Wil Orndorff. Barry said that he would sign autographs after the meeting. If you would like more information on media the project please contact Matt O' Toole at [mattotoole@letterboxes.org](mailto:mattotoole@letterboxes.org)

## Conference Planning

Abigail Convery talked about the planning efforts for a regional trails conference that the New River Valley will be hosting in April-May 2007. This conference is being funded by the VA Department of Forestry. Two planning meetings have been held to date. Support for the conference planning is composed of volunteers, VT Service Learning Students, locality and agency support. To date,

a timeline/tasks have been developed for the planning process, the conference program developed, venue selections, and identifying speakers. The next meeting will be held on April 28 at 2p.m. here at PDC. For more information or if interested in helping, please contact Abigail Convery at 540-639-9313 x205.

### Regional Bike Group

Bruce Mahin spoke about the new regional bike group being formed to address regional bike issues in the NRV. Three meetings have been held with a core group of 30 volunteers working on this effort from all corners of the New River Valley. Members are currently developing an information piece and a web site aimed at increasing awareness about the organization. Volunteers are working with the PDC media committee and the conference committee to assist these efforts.

At the April meeting (7 p.m. on 4/20 in the Montgomery County Government Center Board Room) the organization will formalize its organizational structure and make plans for distributing information at bike events scheduled in May. For more information, please contact Bruce Mahin at 540-831-6174.

### Regional Connections

#### Pulaski County

Pete Huber talked about the planning efforts for the regional trail in Pulaski Co. Currently, the proposed corridors are being evaluated whether they are feasible or not. Since the next planning stage requires contacting landowners, progress will slow down considerably due to the sensitivity of the process.

Joe Powers spoke about the current dilemma that is occurring with developers and the Huckleberry trail. An issue that is worthy of discussion in the next committee meeting.

#### Montgomery County

Joe Powers talked about meeting with some property owners along the proposed route. There were some concerns raised about what type of trail it would be (i.e. mountain biking/hiking trail verses something like the Huckleberry/NRT). Once they heard we were interested in something like the NRT, they became more positive about potential easements. Joe stressed there is still a lot to be done. Sensitivity about landowners came up and the potential ways that the process could become very difficult rapidly.

#### Radford

Shawn Utt talked about how Radford had most of their trails already built so their situation was a bit different than the Counties. The proposed corridors fall within

landowners that the City is already working with so things are looking promising on their end.

### Assorted Business

Abigail Convery handed out an overall timeline for ongoing regional efforts. She also presented the draft outline of topics that the feasibility study will be covering. Participants were asked to look over the topics of the outline and make sure that there were no topics missing that they would like to see in the feasibility report. Additionally, she announced the VA Bike/Walk Conference which will be held April 30-May 3<sup>rd</sup> in Lynchburg, which will also have workshops on Safe Routes to School Program and Pedestrian/Bike Accommodations.

If there are any comments or suggestions please contact Abigail Convery at 540-639-9313 x205.

## Committee Formalization

Please see attached sheet for protocol. Participants agreed to formalize the Regional BW-WW Committee will request to be a sub-committee to the regional transportation advisory committee (TAC). The scope of the committee is:

- Provide input and guidance on the regional bike trail planning and implementation process/future studies.
- Serve as a steering committee for regional trail.
- Serve as a forum for information exchange among localities and groups.
- Identify and help address pedestrian/bike/trail needs/studies in region/area.
- Bring results to TAC, Planning Boards, etc for comments.

Three positions were thought to be necessary, a chair, vice-chair, and a media contact person. Shawn Utt of the City of Radford will serve as Chair; Michael Clark, Montgomery Parks and Recreation will serve as Vice-Chair; and Matt O' Toole will serve as the Media Representative for the Committee.

## Next meeting's Topic

A work session will be a facilitated among members on **Monday, April 24; 1:30** to select: 1) guiding criteria for prioritizing route selection for the regional trail; 2) criteria to determine what sections of the regional trail are appropriate for which trail user groups; 3) If trail surfaces change and limit specific users groups, what amenities will be provided to make the change safe and workable; and \*4) how to approach landowners and the sensitivity of this stage. A discussion of strategies

and what is needed by the counties in order to help make their jobs easier. This special work session will take place at the PDC and will last 2 hours. \* #4 above may be moved to the **next formal committee meeting (May 16; 11:00 at the PDC)** depending on available time.