

## MEETING MINUTES

Philadelphia *Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan*  
 Steering Committee Meeting  
 September 29, 2008  
 2:00 – 4:15 P.M.

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**Consultants in attendance:**

Toole Design Group

Jennifer Toole, Principal  
 Nick Jackson, Project Manager  
 Jake Aftergood

Campbell Thomas & Co.

Bob Thomas

Steve Spindler Cartography

Steve Spindler

**Steering Committee members in attendance:**

Alex Doty	Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
John Boyle	Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
Sarah Clark Stuart	Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
Kyle Gradinger	Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
Hans Van Naerssen	Bicycle Club of Philadelphia
Peter Hecht	Philly Walks
Bob Groves	Philadelphia Senior Center
Kenneth D. Smith	Philadelphia Department of Public Health
Kate Brower	Design Advocacy Group
Marisa Waxman	Design Advocacy Group
Spencer Finch	Pennsylvania Environmental Council
Greg Krykewycz	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Ben Ginsberg	Central Philadelphia TMA
Trish Ellis	Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA)
Charles Carmalt	Mayor's Office of Transportation and Utilities
Charles Denny	Streets Department – Traffic Engineering
Darin Gatti	Streets Department – TEPS
Stephanie Craighead	Fairmount Park Commission
Darren Fava	Fairmount Park Commission
Roger Margulies	Mayor's Commission on People with Disabilities
Robert Allen	Green Plan Philadelphia
Laura Spina	Philadelphia City Planning Commission - Community Planning
Michael Pini	Philadelphia City Planning Commission - Urban Design
Alan Urek	Philadelphia City Planning Commission - Director, Strategic Plng and Policy
Anthony Santaniello	Philadelphia City Planning Commission - Strategic Plng - Transportation
Carolyn Johnson	Philadelphia City Planning Commission - Student Intern
Deborah Schaaf	Philadelphia City Planning Commission - Project Manager

## 1) Welcome & Introductions

Deborah Schaaf started the meeting, and asked attendees to introduce themselves and answer the question: *“In your personal opinion, if this plan could only accomplish one thing, what would it be and why?”*

### Responses:

- “Create a higher level of predictability among all users on the roadway.”
- “Establish sidewalks as a public realm.”
- “Enhance trails and bikeways as a means to promoting active living.”
- “Gain recognition for Philadelphia as a leader in ped/bike planning, both nationally and internationally”
- “Achieve better non-motorized connectivity among Philadelphia parks and recreation areas.”
- “Make the City more visibly pedestrian and bike friendly.”
- “Create more space on sidewalks for vulnerable pedestrians and wheelchair users, and ensure proper maintenance so that cracks and bumps are mitigated.”
- “Return the sidewalks and streets to the neighborhoods in which they are located.”
- “Formulate a set of non-motorized policies that will serve as a prod for the rest of the City’s transportation and government agencies.”
- “Create more bike paths with connectivity to one another.”
- “Make it possible to bike to any destination on the roadway, as opposed to on the sidewalk. Bicycling on roadways should be made particularly accessible for young riders.”
- “Create a vision (and reality) of sidewalks and streets as public spaces.”
- “Make Philadelphia a platinum-level Bicycle-Friendly Community (awarded by the League of American Bicyclists).”
- “Pedestrian realm should become a place to sit and enjoy.”
- “Foster a symbiosis between all travel modes in Philadelphia – further, the plan should be implementable and a model for other cities.”
- “Spur an increased ground swell of support for pedestrian and bike issues, and not only among advocates, but among the general public, too.”
- “Improvements to keep seniors safe from bicyclists traveling on the sidewalk.”
- “Raise issues around enforcement of rules governing pedestrian, bicycle, and motorist travel.”

## 2) Consultant Presentation

Jennifer Toole introduced the project and the team and Nick Jackson presented an overview of the consultants’ scope of work, deliverables and project schedule.

- Task 1: Existing Conditions Analysis
- Task 2: Public Outreach and Development of Goals and Objectives
- Task 3: Connectivity Needs Assessment Study
- Task 4: Review of steering committee recommendations
- Task 5: Street Classification
- Task 6: Physical Improvements
- Task 7: Implementation Plan
- Task 8: Final Report

NOTE: PowerPoint presentation will be available for download from the FTP website.

**Steering Committee Questions for the Consultant on Scope of Work & Deliverables:**

1. *Will you be considering roads that have excess capacity, utility corridors, and rail corridors as you strategize the expansion of the ped/bike network?*

“Yes, we will. These corridors serve as valuable rights-of-way for trail planning around the country, and it will be interesting to see how they might serve Philadelphia’s trail users.”

2. *How will you meet the needs of individual neighborhoods, as local needs may vary from one part of the city to another?*

“We will conduct an input session with the Steering Committee in order to identify the most pressing pedestrian and bicycle needs within each of the six planning analysis sections (PAS). The 2 rounds of public meetings and the public survey will also be critical to getting input from the different neighborhoods.”

3. *Will you look at connectivity through private rights-of-way, in addition to public rights-of-way?*

“While property rights may dictate how much we can work with private thoroughfares, we will do our best to look at all feasible route and network options. Where appropriate, the steering committee should also look at government codes that regulate certain aspects of private properties.”

4. *What role will issues like automobile parking supply and parking provision requirements play in this planning process?*

“Those issues do play an important role, since we know the effects that parking supply, pricing, and policies have on non-motorized mode splits. For example, higher prices for parking and more restrictive parking policies tend to encourage more walking and bicycling, especially in dense, urban areas. Also, we will need to look at how automobile parking supply physically obstructs critical pedestrian pathways, such as crosswalks and curb ramps. However, we also need to keep in mind that as pedestrian and bicycles transportation is impacted by so many different factors it will be tempting to go in lots of directions. It will be important for the committee and the consultant to be efficient and stay focused on the scope.

5. *As community gardens and farmer’s markets are becoming more popular, how will you address the obstructions that these programs pose to pedestrians and bicyclists in Philadelphia? (sidewalk blockages, heavy truck travel along roadways, etc.)*

We will address these obstructions from agricultural programs as we would any other obstruction to the pedestrian and bicycling network. If needed, we will invite program coordinators to discuss with us possible solutions, so that all parties can give their input.

6. *Bike sharing will soon be studied as a potential option for Philadelphia. Will this plan address bike sharing? How could this plan help pave the way for bike sharing in Philadelphia?*

“Advocates and promoters of bike sharing in Philadelphia should not wait for the completion of the *Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan* before proceeding with their efforts. Given that bikeshare has launched in Washington, DC, officials in Philadelphia can learn from that experience. The plan should document efforts to start such a program, or even its actual launch.”

7. *Will this plan address pedestrian and bicycle capacity issues at bottlenecks, over bridges, as well as inadequate bicycle parking?*

“Yes. What is nice about working in Philadelphia is that in many neighborhoods there is a strong mode split for cyclists and pedestrians, and one major consideration for this plan will be to accommodate these growing numbers of safely and conveniently.”

8. *As you see it, what are the biggest obstacles to the successful implementation of this plan?*

“The key is going to be achieving strong and unanimous support from the steering committee for what goes into the plan. This process will require some tough decisions that not everybody will agree with and we all need to keep the big picture in mind. This will also be important as we will need to build a groundswell of support among the city at large to achieve all of the recommendations.”

### 3) High-level plan goals brainstorming session

Jennifer opened a discussion of the plan’s goals by talking about the goals of similar plans in other cities. Many other communities have set goals to reduce crashes and increase the number or percent of people walking and cycling. Other frequently cited high level goals, besides safety and mode shift, include health, quality of life, and connectivity. The Steering Committee was then polled for suggested broad goals for the plan, with the following results:

- Enhance mobility for all
- Enhance livability and quality of life, by diversifying mode access
- Enhance safety, reduce traffic congestion. No one can argue with these goals.
- Correlate to Mayor Nutter’s six strategic results: Healthy and sustainable communities, public safety, jobs and economic development, education, ethics, and high-performing government.
- Equal access to all modes, at all times
- Non-motorized transportation should stand out as an economically advantageous mode choice, both for the user and for the City as a whole
- Safety
- Build respect among all users

### 4) Steering Committee brainstorming session on pedestrian and bicycle issues within Planning Analysis Sections

The Steering Committee was then asked to list specific issues in each of the six Planning Analysis Sections in the Study Area.

#### Center City

- Need enhanced East-West and North-South bicycle corridors
- Capacity issues for pedestrians – narrow sidewalks, crossing streets at peak hours is difficult
- Sidewalk closures during construction
- Sidewalk cafes, street vendors, and food carts encroaching on other users – too narrow, especially for pedestrians w/ disabilities
- Lay-by lanes taking away sidewalk space
- Bridges out of Center City (both directions) need better access for pedestrians and cyclists
- Senior safety and walkability is a big issue

- Ped crosswalk countdown times are too short
- Lack of amenities for pedestrians – need more benches and shade
- Crosswalk intrusions by cars and bikes
- More bike parking needed
- Access to schools – pick-up and drop-off congestion

### **South Philadelphia**

- Parking EVERYWHERE, blocking curb ramps, in bike lanes, on sidewalks
- Immigrant communities constitute much of the “bicycle to work” mode share; health insurance issue
- Clear sidewalks of snow!
- Trolley tracks are hazards in the roadways, and pose a maintenance issue
- Sidewalk quality less than ideal – maintenance/tree roots
- Insufficient bike parking, especially on commercial corridors
- Traditional narrow streets; commercial neighborhood districts have space and capacity issues
- Need better N/S and E/W artery of bike lanes (Broad Street?)
- Largest recreational spaces are isolated (FDR park)
- Major destinations at southern end are hard to access by bike or walking (stadiums, Navy Yard)
- Access to schools – pick-up and drop-off congestion

### **Lower North Philadelphia**

- Many of the same issues as South Philadelphia, except for parking
- 33<sup>rd</sup> Street is such a barrier to Fairmount Park (as well as Kelly Drive)
- Need for pedestrian-scale lighting
- Many high-crash locations at subway stations
- Sidewalk maintenance is a big need
- Abandoned buildings/vacant lots – safety
- Big hole in bike network
- Impact of return of Girard Avenue Trolley
- Commercial corridors dispersed – need better connectivity
- Big institutions – growing campuses – need better access
- Kelly Drive barrier to river
- Access to schools – pick-up and drop-off congestion

### **Upper North Philadelphia**

- SPEEDING – Streets are wider
- Broad/Olney/Erie – enhance pedestrian safety to transit (north of Lehigh)
- Beautification needed – need a nicer walking environment
- Remote and hard to connect to, especially three large high schools (+ ped safety)
- Sidewalk snow-clearing needs to be enforced, as residents are not shoveling snow
- Look at road safety audits – Lehigh and North Broad
- Fern Rock – end of subway line safety issues
- No information at the transit stops (no maps, schedules, etc.)
- Access to schools – pick-up and drop-off congestion

### **Roxborough / Manayunk**

- Hills
- Making people aware of pleasant walking routes via advertising – also, promoting use of the Schuylkill River Trail
- Narrow streets (e.g. Main Street) hard to bike on
- Connections needed to adjacent jurisdictions (Lower Merion) & Fairmount Park
- Plan should reinforce recommendations of the Gateway Plan and other plans

- Some of the same parking problems as South Philadelphia
- Wissahickon transfer station – safety of all users, crossing streets, red light running on ped signal
- Traffic patterns/peak pedestrian flows at movie theater on Main Street
- Lots of bicycling on trails late at night – need lighting, also at transfer station
- Ridge Avenue – needs bike parking, wider sidewalks, and address pedestrians darting across street
- Pedestrian intersection issues
- Sidewalk crowding in Manayunk
- Upper Roxborough attracts many shopping trips, but it was built with automobile travel in mind. Need to make pedestrian access easier
- Access to schools – pick-up and drop-off congestion

### **Germantown / Chestnut Hill**

- Access to schools – pick-up and drop-off congestion
- Belgian blocks are problematic for bicyclists
- Very little bike parking
- Wissahickon Ave. is a barrier to Fairmount Park, lacks sidewalks or shoulders
- Germantown Ave. – can't bicycle along it, need parallel route
- Personal safety at train stations (esp. vacant stations)
- Sidewalk maintenance is a problem
- Sidewalk crowding issues in Chestnut Hill
- Less dense, and thus less of a critical mass of pedestrians
- Promotion of trail network in Park from the street
- Identifying best community options and connections to Mont. Co.

## **5) Wrap-up/Next Steps**

Deborah Schaaf announced that Existing Conditions Analysis will be the first task for the Plan.

Any relevant electronic literature/materials may be disseminated to the Steering Committee by project FTP website, created and managed by Toole Design Group.

Schaaf named the sub-committees and recommended that information for the sub-committees may be circulated by email, in the interest of convenience. She also stated she will be responsible for scheduling and will be present at the meetings.