

**STREETS AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
CITY OF REHOBOTH BEACH**

October 14, 2011

The Streets and Transportation Committee Meeting of the City of Rehoboth Beach was called to order at 11:03 a.m. by Chair Pat Coluzzi on Friday, October 14, 2011 in the Commissioners Room in City Hall, 229 Rehoboth Avenue, Rehoboth Beach, DE.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Pat Coluzzi, Cindy Lovett, Lorraine Zellers, Kathy Osterholm, Jim Ellison, Dennis Diehl

Absent: John Gauger

Audience: Police Chief Keith Banks, June Embert of Parking Department, Mike Peterman of Parking Department, Commissioner Bill Sargent, Carol Everhart of Rehoboth Beach/Dewey Beach Chamber of Commerce, Karen Zakarian of Boardwalk Plaza, Richard Kirchhoff, Paul Kuhns, Alex Moore of The Avenue Inn and Spa, Ryan Mavity of Cape Gazette

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Lorraine Zellers made a motion, seconded by Kathy Osterholm, to approve the Agenda as written. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the September 30, 2011 Streets and Transportation Committee Meeting were distributed prior to the meeting.

Kathy Osterholm made a motion, seconded by Lorraine Zellers, to approve the September 30, 2011 Streets and Transportation Committee Meeting minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

PRESENTATION by Delaware Greenways of Technical Memorandum No. 1 –The Existing Pedestrian and Bicycle Situation.

Pat said that Technical Memorandum No. 1 is the first of four memorandums that will be produced. Technical Memorandum No. 2 is Gaps, Opportunities and Constraints, No. 3 is Proposed Infrastructure Improvements and No. 4 is Proposed Management and Policy Actions. She noted the procedures for this portion of the meeting.

Jeff Greene, Transportation Planner for Delaware Greenways gave his presentation. Delaware Greenways had been asked to put together the Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan for the City. The Project Team consists of Jeff Greene, Mark Chura, Executive Director of Delaware Greenways and Christine Thomas; and the Streets & Transportation Committee is the supervising committee. The Stakeholder Committee consists of Police Chief Keith Banks; Carol Everhart, President/CEO of Rehoboth Beach/Dewey Beach Chamber of Commerce, June Embert, Parking Department, Mike Peterman, Parking Department, Anthony Aglio, Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator of Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT); Crystal Nagyiski of DNREC Energy Office, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control; Annmarie Westerfield, Executive Director of Rehoboth Beach Main Street; Mike Mitchell, Owner of Bike To Go; Alex Moore, President/COO of The Avenue Inn and Spa; Christine Hastings, Owner of Jolly Trolley; David Dooley, Planner and Bicycle Specialist of Delaware Transit Corporation; Karen Zakarian of Boardwalk Plaza Hotel; Tim Bamforth of Rehoboth Running Club; Alison Blythe, Owner of Go Fish Restaurant; Preston Littleton, Planning Commission Chairman; and Mel Craig, Public Works Department. Transit is an important issue because so many people have the opportunity to attach their bicycles to the bus and come into the City from the Park and Ride lot. If the number of people who have to drive into the City can be reduced, there would be less cars and more room for bicycles and pedestrians. This is an organizing principle. Parking is needed because it is one of the City's revenue sources, and it is what keeps people coming to the City. Parking takes up space in the public right-of-way, and the public right-of-way has to be balanced with travel lanes, parking lanes and sidewalks in order to make the Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan a success. The Planning Commission has a big say in regard to the Plan because it is the Manager of the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP). In regard to the Project Schedule, it is expected that the technical work for this project will be completed and the funds

expended by the end of May 2012. Between now and May 2012, the goal is not only to complete the Plan but to manage its adoption through the Board of Commissioners. This Plan will be a companion plan attached to the CDP. Task No. 1 which inventories the current pedestrian and bicycle physical, management and policy infrastructure will be completed by October 31, 2011, after which a final existing conditions document will be published. In November, the comments from today's meeting, etc. will be used to create goals and objectives, look at missing links, make sense of all the problems and do a synthesis of them, and present it in a public venue where everyone will prioritize the things which have been learned. This will help in writing a vision statement. In December 2011, January and February 2012, the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan will be written. Infrastructure items include improvements in engineering, education and enforcement, management and policy. One of the key things to be addressed is what policies should be implemented so that bicyclists and pedestrians have their place on the public rights-of-way. In February 2012, a public meeting will be held to present the draft elements of the Plan. In March, April and May 2012, the Project Team will work with the Commissioners and the public on the Plan, and it is expected that a formal public meeting will be held in April 2012 by the Commissioners to get the Plan adopted. Eight organizing principles have been identified by Jeff. These are principles which need to be adhered to:

1. Measurably increase the number of pedestrian and bicycle trips while reducing the number of auto trips within Rehoboth Beach.
2. Shift the balance among the modes of transportation within the public right-of-way for a walking and biking city.
3. Fix broken and weak links that impede walking and biking.
4. Improve non-motorized connections to points beyond the city.
5. Consider the role of transit and parking policies in reducing auto usage.
6. Emphasize education over enforcement.
7. Bring bicycle shops, restaurants, even organizers and hotels into the discussion.
8. Identify a high value, low risk action to demonstrate early success.

Police Chief Banks and Barbara Brittingham had helped Jeff with compiling the pedestrian and bicycle crash data. In the study period from January 1, 2009 to August 31, 2011, there were 561 total crashes in the public right-of-way of which 54 were pedestrian and bicycle crashes, 27 caused injuries, 12 were pedestrian crashes, 31 bicycle crashes and 12 were moped/scooter crashes. Thirty-six or two thirds of all pedestrian and bicycle crashes occurred in the downtown area on Rehoboth Avenue and going westward to the circle. The incidents consisted of reported and non-reported crashes. Close-call incidents are missing from the totals because they were not reported. Police Chief Banks noted that the police respond and take a report on private and public property. The incidents with private property are included in the above-mentioned figures.

Jeff noted that in June, July and August the crash totals were higher. Crashes were a little higher in January, probably due to snow. During the street level interviews, 50 individuals were spoken with at random on July 29th on Rehoboth Avenue, September 6th at the Farmers' Market and October 4th around the City. They were conversational style interviews with no statistics involved. Visitors and seasonal and full-time residents were involved in the interviews about bicycle and pedestrian conditions, and what mode of travel they use around the City. Of the 50 people who were interviewed, 44% were visitors, 30% were part-time residents and 26% were full-time residents. Cyclists said that they have issues with angled parking on Rehoboth Avenue; the circle is a problem to navigate; DART service between the Park and Ride lot and downtown could be better with more bike racks and more service; more bike racks are needed in the City; bike lanes are needed; Bayard Avenue is too tight for cyclists to ride; and better access is needed to the J & B and Gordon's Pond Trail. Dennis Diehl said that the State is looking at a possible future trail at Thompson Island, and he suggested that a bike path to the parking lot at Thompson Island should be included in the Plan.

Jeff noted that a number of people cannot understand why the bike lane on Rehoboth Avenue outside the City limits is not carried across the bridge. It was suggested that DelDOT needs to be pressed to do something about it. This could possibly be a short-term improvement. Pedestrians said that vehicles do not yield in the circle even with crosswalks clearly marked; education is needed to promote pedestrian safety; the City does a good job with seeing sidewalks are repaired fast; and street without sidewalks seem alright to walk on. One of the policies that may need to be looked at is signage regarding bicyclists on the sidewalks. Pat said that there are missing sidewalks throughout the City that need to be put in. There are places that do not have sidewalks at all. Some people on Henlopen Avenue who would say they are not needed.

Jeff noted that the challenge is reconciling crash patterns with street level interviews. The approach for cycling is to review each City street for pedestrian and bicycle generators, the amount of traffic and congestion, the function of each street through the eyes of a cyclist, the level of usage by cyclists, and the comfort level for cyclists. A neighborhood to neighborhood connectivity review was done. A pedestrian and bicycle generator is a business,

institution or residence that attracts a significant number of bicycle or pedestrian trips. Hotels, public parks, downtown area, beach and Boardwalk, school, museum and Convention Center are specific generators. The only data available for usage levels of traffic is from DelDOT, and these average annual daily traffic counts for Rehoboth Avenue, Surf Avenue, Lake Avenue, Olive Avenue, First Street, Second Street/Bayard Avenue, State Road, Stockley Street, and Scarborough Avenue Extended will not be used. The approach to motorized traffic conditions was to talk to people and ask them which roadways have more traffic and/or congestion than other roadways. Rehoboth Avenue was classified as high road congestion. Some of the blocks between First Street and the Boardwalk have congestion on them.

During the meeting, the following were suggested changes made by the Committee to the conditions to be considered: 1. Hickman Street in Country Club Estates should be considered at least moderate congestion from State Road to King Charles Avenue. 2. Congestion on Baltimore and Wilmington Avenues is due to being narrow streets, the restaurants and deliveries. 3. All of Second Street should be noted as high traffic. 4. Lake Avenue should remain as moderate congestion. 5. Sussex Street should be considered as moderate congestion. 6. Columbia Avenue should be considered heavier in congestion than Henlopen Avenue due to the amount and speed of traffic. Bill Sargent suggested that Olive Avenue should be considered high congestion. Christine Thomas noted that in terms of speed on Columbia Avenue, signs as well as a police car had been set up to slow the speed down. Pat said that it has helped to curtail speed, but the data from the signs has not been received to date. Police Chief Banks said that a grant is available for true counters and speed of vehicles and bicycles. The data from the signs will be provided in the near future. Jeff suggested getting the full capability for the counters to include registering volume, speed, type of vehicle, etc. so a database can be built. Richard Kirchoff said that Lake Avenue connecting to Olive Avenue can be busier in season when a left turn cannot be made onto First or Second Streets from Rehoboth Avenue. Traffic diminishes when those left turns can be made in the off-season.

Jeff provided a map that classifies how bicyclists use the streets. Streets entering/exiting the City are considered bicycle arterial; streets between neighborhoods are considered bicycle connectors; and streets used for local trips are considered local bicycle streets. King Charles Avenue, Rehoboth Avenue, State Road are considered bicycle arterials. Paul Kuhns suggested that King Charles, Bayard and Scarborough Avenues should be noted as bicycle arterials.

Jeff provided a map that classifies how many bicycles use each street. The bicyclists on Rehoboth Avenue were the benchmark, and the numbers go down from there. It was felt that there are more bicycles on Bayard Avenue than on King Charles Avenue. In regard to questions raised by Mark Chura about whether there are a significant number of bicyclists entering the City who go to use the Gordon's Pond Trail from the Junction Breakwater Trail and what their primary route is, Pat assumed that people who are on the Junction Breakwater Trail know about it and know which way they should go. It is a problem that there is no on-street signage to direct people. Henlopen Avenue would be the preferred route in regard to classification by function. Carol Everhart said that a map provided at the Visitors' Center is the number one requested map which directs people to the Junction Breakwater Trail. Bill Sargent added that the families who bicycle need to be thought about when coming up with solutions. Mark Chura said that families and people who bicycle need to be educated as to the path to the trails. Kathy suggested that a way should be found to get visitors from Rehoboth Avenue to all different places with signage that lets them know where to go.

Jeff provide a map that classifies which streets are bicycle friendly. Columbia, Rehoboth, Bayard, Baltimore, Wilmington and Lake Avenues and First and Second Streets are deemed as uncomfortable to ride a bicycle on. The consensus of the Committee was that Christian Street is uncomfortable because of the head-in parking and the Senior Center. Bill Sargent suggested that First Street, Lake Avenue and Surf Avenue should be included as uncomfortable. He also suggested that State Road should be included as uncomfortable.

Jeff provided a map with various neighborhoods. Issue were raised as to the impediments to go from one part of the City to another, whether a bicyclist can easily overcome the impediments, and if crossing an uncomfortable street is considered a bad link to be looked at. The links and connections which were not good were identified. Pat said that for the most part, the connection from Henlopen Avenue to Gordon's Pond is easy. The worst area is at the bridge.

In regard to pedestrian issues, Jeff noted that pedestrian connectivity is related to the presence of sidewalks, whether it is still safe to walk where there are no sidewalks, and if it is comfortable to cross the street at intersections and at mid-block locations. Questions are whether the crosswalks are in the right place and if they should be provided with additional protection such as yellow tripods, etc. Sidewalks are present throughout much of the City except for the north side. Many intersections have striped crosswalks. A list was provided of pedestrian access

issues such as on Columbia Avenue, there is no clear area to walk; there is no access to Gerar Park from Henlopen Acres on Second Street; there are no sidewalks on the Gerar Park side and no marked crossings to the park on Lake Avenue, etc. Lorraine noted that there are no crosswalks on State Road from Country Club Estates to Canal and Grove Streets. Jeff pointed out the pedestrian access issues in areas with sidewalks such as First and Second Streets where the usable sidewalk are too narrow for the business area; Surf Avenue where there are no marked crosswalks between Park and Lake Avenues to the beach; Rehoboth Avenue circle where the north side crosswalks are not where the demand is for pedestrians to walk to Henlopen Avenue; and King Charles Avenue where there is one marked crosswalk for this very wide street. Bill Sargent said that in regard to King Charles Avenue, the Commissioners are undertaking the changes to a lot of the intersections to make them ADA compliant. He suspected that those intersections will be marked in the process for crosswalks.

In regard to Complete Streets, Jeff noted that it is the movement which tries to make the best use of the public right-of-way for all modes of traffic. Of the total sidewalk width from the building to the curb in the downtown area, there are three parts: 1. Shy area of approximately 1.5 to 2 feet where people walk away from buildings, door sills, etc. 2. Clear sidewalk width. 3. Paved buffer. The Code does not talk about dimensions other than a minimum five foot wide sidewalk or matching the existing width of the sidewalk. In looking at the downtown area, the sidewalks should be increased by 1.5 to 2 feet and have at least five feet to be ADA compliant. If there is a bench which takes up three feet in the buffer area, there is hardly enough room for a wheelchair to go around it. These issues need to be thought about for the ADA transition plan and the pedestrian plan. In regard to wayfinding, it is needed to be known what the sign is for along with a detailed plan. Cindy Lovett thought that the information booth on the Boardwalk needs to be relocated near the Bandstand.

Jeff noted that all comments can be forwarded to jgreene@delawaregreenways.org and copied to Pat at pcoluzzi@cityofrehoboth.com. The deadline for comments is October 21, 2011.

Pat said that a significant amount of comments were received from the Preston Littleton, Chairman of the Planning Commission. In regard to the area at Oak Grove, \$20,000.00 has been set aside to improve that area. This area should be kept in mind regarding pedestrians and bicycles. There is a three year deadline for this money to be used along with restrictions. In the future when policies and ordinance changes are discussed regarding enforcement of tree trimming, roots of big trees breaking sidewalks, discontinuous sidewalks, etc., the Commissioners need to consider strengthening some of the ordinances which relate to them.

An unknown person from the audience commented regarding incorporating the infrastructure and what the ordinances should be in the future. He asked if in developing a sidewalk system and perhaps a separation between bicycles and the vehicles, whether drainage issues would be looked at as far as putting in rain gardens which would then incorporate trees that would not be so big but to tie it all in together and perhaps would help with funding for that infrastructure improvement and would help with the bike path. He asked, in regard to the amount of pedestrians on Rehoboth Avenue during the summer, if any thought has been given to a hub where all bicycles would park and from that point on to the Boardwalk, the person would have to walk. This could clear up some of the congestion because there is not enough room for everyone. The central hub would be easy access to shopping and the Boardwalk. Jeff said that in regard to developing a sidewalk system, this may be an issue for the Planning Commission to delve into. As far as the Plan is concerned, it adds the question of whether or not there should be a sidewalk and if it should be wider than the standard width. There are design standards which should be available for the City to take action on it.

Dennis Diehl said that while making Rehoboth a much safer town for bicyclists, a large population is being missed which is on the other side of the highway. Consideration needs to be taken to get people across the highway at one or possibly more places. Mark Chura commented that under another grant with DNREC and DelDOT, Delaware Greenways is doing an activities study to look at how to bring people from the west side of Route 1 to the east side and on to the Junction Breakwater Trail. This is an important point which needs to be addressed. Kathy noted that bicyclists are not aware they can use Glade Road to come into the City. Jeff said that one of the recommendations being worked on is a better system of crosswalks and sidewalks.

A presentation will be made to the Board of Commissioners on October 21, 2011.

Discuss items to be included on future agendas.

Items to be included are a snow removal policy and options for planting flowers in the City.

Set next meeting.

The next meeting date and time will be determined at a later date.

There being no further business, Chair Pat Coluzzi declared the meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

(Ann M. Womack, City Secretary)

**MINUTES APPROVED ON
OCTOBER 31, 2011**

(Pat Coluzzi, Chair)