

Massachusetts Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Board Meeting Notes
Wednesday, November 17, 2021, 1:00 – 3:00 PM
Teleconference

*****NOTE***:** This meeting was originally scheduled to take place in person. Due to circumstances related to COVID-19, all large out-of-office MassDOT meetings are now being held remotely via the ZOOM app until further notice.

Welcome & Introductions: Pete Sutton, ex-officio, called the meeting to order, called roll and motioned to accept minutes from the previous meeting.

Update on MassDOT's statewide bicycle survey

Anna Gartsman - Director of Strategic Research, MassDOT/MBTA Office of Performance Management & Innovation (OPMI) provided an overview (attached) regarding results obtained from MassDOT's recent statewide bicycle survey. Survey data provides detailed insight to determine why people do things and how they make decisions:

- Eventually, if we want people to change their behavior, we need to talk to everyone about how to encourage that
 - e.g. one more trip type for someone who already cycles; a very first cycling trip for a new cyclists
 - Including people who don't think of themselves as cyclists
- This first survey is an initial test to see how hard it is to survey cyclists, which groups we need to do follow-up outreach for, and where we are likely to have holes in understanding
- Current focus on pandemic-behavior information

The survey provided a snapshot in time over the summer of 2021:

- Pandemic (August 2021) ridership:
 - Riders: type of bike, frequency, reasons for choosing a bike, trip purposes
 - Non-riders: why not?
- Typical summer month pre-pandemic: frequency, type of bike, trip purposes
- New Normal: frequency, barriers
- Demographics

Some questions and comments included:

- Other MassDOT data indicated that in most areas of the Commonwealth bicycle and pedestrian activity increased during the early stages. How do you reconcile the drop in bicycle activity by respondents?
 - Depending on how you look at it, there was an increase in biking for non-commuting reasons, so I think that the decrease is most likely due to not biking to work - there was more recreational riding. I also think that in the early stages of the pandemic (in 2020), there was a lot more recreational riding. Our survey took place this past August so it's kind of recent, and I think that recreational riding pattern has lessened a little bit
- Is the summary posted online yet?
 - Not at the moment, these results are still preliminary, but we intend to write up a post on the OPMI data blog for public review
 - Most municipalities saw an increase in bike travel but Boston and some of its college areas saw decreases - those are areas where the bulk of cycling happens
 - Who responded to the survey is likely playing a role in this: I wouldn't be surprised if a lot of people pulled out bikes from their garages over the pandemic were casual infrequent riders
 - The vast majority of survey respondents were people who biked regularly (pre-pandemic)
- How many total survey respondents were there?
 - Over 6,000 respondents
- Back when MassDOT Planning did our surveys for the bicycle plan back in 2017, we got 3000 respondents and that was pretty phenomenal. It's amazing to see that in just four short years the number of people interested in responding and taking part has pretty much doubled. We had 2000 survey respondents and an additional thousand people who also made comments to the interactive map.
 - There are a lot of parallels to this current survey. Obviously, we didn't have a pandemic back in 2017 so the answers skew a lot different, but some of the constants that are still popping up

- The main reason why most people aren't biking is just for their own personal safety and lack of appropriate infrastructure. With those two main points, we decided that that was going to be the focal point of our bicycle and pedestrian plans
 - We updated the plan in 2019 and happy to report that this new survey is confirming all that good work and actually getting even more respondents for making the case
- Are you matching this with the hard data that comes from trail counters or other straight numbers that are happening? e.g. looking at bike counters, one out in Westfield where they saw their ridership on the Columbia Greenway go up 300% versus one in Kendall Square where it went down about 80%.
 - We will use the most appropriate data for the questions that were answering though it is really hard to get the full picture to match up the automated counters with the survey data
- Where do we think we need to expand the outreach to get riders who might not be captured? This is obviously a self-selecting survey and what can we do as advocates or otherwise, to reach populations, whether it's by age, race or geography: who are we not reaching?
 - One example are people who bike, but do not own a bike (and just use bike share)
 - Younger people and limited-English proficiency are also under-represented groups
- Were there incentives – such as a gift card or any other perk - for filling out the survey?
 - No. We also would've like to have conducted more outreach, such as mailings to all the gateway cities to get better representation than just around metro-Boston
- Were there any survey results that surprised you?
 - The fact that so many respondents have established cycling as part of their new routines
 - Convenience being an overriding factor especially for Boston inner-core cyclists
- Will this survey be featured at the upcoming Moving Together conference?
 - Yes, along with the bike count data and mapping the statewide bike infrastructure - all on the same session. Gateway cities will also be featured prominently
- The Mass Healthy Aging Collaborative can help with outreach to older adults, if there is an opportunity
- As a regular cycling commuter, it has been slow for some to re-establish pre-pandemic bike routines, while others took advantage of working from home and flexing their scheduled to ride more
- Maintenance concerns continually rank high on the survey, especially keeping infrastructure clean after a storm (tree branches, leaves or snow and ice)
- Any incentive in partnering with professional survey organizations such as MassINC, such as including a question related to cycling to one of their surveys?
 - Yes, it would certainly broaden our outreach: we still don't have a good sense overall of who rides bikes

Overview on MassDOT's bicycle counting program

Ian Adams gave a brief background on his job description within the MassDOT Highway Division Transportation Technology Group. His role is primarily to coordinate the new non-motorized traffic counting program: communicate with consultant, vendors, and other groups key to the non-motorized counting project, monitor the counters and counter data and be the point person to contact about bike/ped counters. His overview presentation (attached) included:

This is officially a pilot program comprising 8 locations and 13 counters:

- Acton, Boston, Brockton, Cambridge, Fall River, Lowell, Medford and Salem
- Mix of pathway and counter types
 - Trails, intersections, roadway shoulders, bike lanes, side paths, sidewalks
- Benefits of the Program
 - Initial round of data, practice with managing counter data
 - Building a knowledge base
 - Lessons on counter placement, implementation, and applications of different types of counters

Some questions asked and comments included the following:

- How many permanent count locations does MassDOT hope to eventually have?
 - We're hoping to add 8-10 more in the coming year, pending funding
- Is the non-motorized counts tab available yet on the internal MassDOT MS2 site?

- Yes, just made public in mid-December:
<https://mhd.ms2soft.com/tdms.ui/nmds/dashboard?loc=mhd>
- With respect to Eco counters and others that use cellular service to gather data remotely, can this data be directly fed into MS2 or does this require a manual download?
 - Yes, that data does go directly to MS2. Getting that application programming interface (API) set up was part of the steps for this pilot program. Once API was set up for all our vendors, we could deploy anything that uses a cellular modem sent directly to MS2
 - That also applies to detection equipment – such as cameras at intersections that have cellular modems connected to them. For example, we use Miovision cameras that are often used for detection, but we are also using them to count and those also have an API set up so that they can feed directly into MS2
- Could these counters be susceptible to weather-related damage, such as snow?
 - Case-by case basis: counters typically function in snowy conditions however they could be affected if they're solar-powered (with the panels covered by snow)
- Is MassDOT comparing this data to (traffic data provider) Streetlight data yet?
 - Not yet, thought existing Streetlight data did inform selection of locations used in this pilot program and will likely inform future locations
 - This [link](#) to the MassDOT Mobility Dashboard - specifically to the bike and pedestrian activity. That data draws from Streetlight: one of the main purposes of the counter program was to be able to compare and contrast that data so that we can extrapolate data from a smaller subset of on-the-ground counters to provide checks and balances to the big data set and then figure out how we can have better, improved data across the entire state
 - There have been previous goals of a counter on every street or every trail, but that might not be the end goal anymore now that we have access to new and different data through Streetlight and other sources - that's just the journey that we're on - to figure out kind of the complimentary data sets that give us the best information both for projects, as well as statewide perspective (along with the surveys)
 - In terms of picking the exact locations, it was a combination of facility type to match to different technology, all originally on state-owned property (within our jurisdiction) that we could operate and maintain. Geographic representation and the potential for people walking and bicycling were also important factors to calibrate against other data we have
- Were most of the other potential sites also located on state-owned roads?
 - Yes, and feasibility was also a major factor in decision-making: there were some locations that MassDOT couldn't physically locate a counting device
- Can Miovision pick up all types of vehicles, including recumbent and cargo bikes?
 - Not right now, but these alternative forms of riding – along with scooters - could be incorporated in the future as demand warrants
- Has there been any issues discerning the difference counting cyclists vs pedestrians?
 - Not on a large scale; it's more of a counter placement issue: sidewalk infra-red counters can't tell the difference compared to loops installed within the pavement
- Have you done literature searches to see if any other state DOT are conducting similar types of work around the country?
 - MS2 conducts non-motorized counts throughout New England as well as Oregon
- Will the next phase of the Neponset Greenway have a counter installed during construction?
 - Not at this time, but would be a prime candidate in connecting to trail sections, similar to the counter set up near the future Bruce Freeman Rail Trail bridge over Route 2 in Concord
- This is really encouraging from point of view of somebody that deals with a lot of project designs. This is an area that I found to be very deficient over the years to have good data for non-vehicular users of the road. We would never start a design project without having traffic data counts. No engineer would ever design a signalized intersection without knowing how many vehicles are traveling through that intersection broken down by hour
- We've always been lacking the sort of data for bikes and peds and a lot of our decisions that we make sort of generalize categories: e.g. this project is in an urbanized area on an arterial road. We're still making an awful lot of project level decisions for how to accommodate all the users in the space that's available and there's trade-offs on almost every job and having good data is going to help us make those decisions
- Whether or not separated like facilities are really needed or whether or not an eight-foot facility is adequate, whether we need 10 feet, whether a five-foot sidewalk is adequate, whether it should be seven or eight, so this is this is very encouraging - the more data, the better
- MassDOT may want to consider getting more bike/ped counts on the existing non-limited access roads that already have vehicle counters set up

- Both are on the same MS2 platform so it is possible. A lot of our past short-term vehicular traffic counts picked up bike/ped counts at the same time. Now that we've modified our modules, we're able to port some of that older data over to the new platform
- Is there a ballpark cost associated with a temporary count device to get preliminary data to inform project design? We always take vehicular counts up front - a lot of them are done manually when somebody goes in and put some wires out for a week. I'd love to see this just built into the routine data gathering process when anybody is taking on a design of a corridor where there is mixed-use travel
 - Yes, when we go through the turning movement counts - those short 48-hour counts for any design projects - we can now pull that into our non-motorized vehicle database as short term count programs
 - On the new program that we've built out, we did pre-authorized some vendors and we're trying to establish master service agreements with those vendors right now to offer, such as lesser cost equipment to anyone on the state by the combine system. That's in the works - it's been delayed because of COVID and outages with personnel
- Bike and ped counts don't always represents the potential traffic with a good design and it's not always a direct prediction
 - Agree. MassDOT hopes attendees will share more information, ideas, best practices or things you're doing in your own region or your own community. One of the major focuses of the bicycle and pedestrian statewide plans that were done between 2017 and 2019 looked at tackling this exact issue and coming up with the potential for walkability and bikeability based on number of factors
 - There's many layers here: who's using it today, who might be, what's the potential in the future, what is the safety data, different land use demographics - there's a lot of information. Another thing that is the potential for walking and biking came out in 2019 and we're going through a bi-annual process to also update that data and information as there's constantly new inputs as well

Update on MassDOT's speed management project

Jackie DeWolfe provided an update regarding MassDOT's ongoing Speed Management to Prevent Serious Injuries and Fatalities project. Thanks to all MABPAB members who provided input since this previous meeting. We are now taking the comments received and incorporating them into our next draft. Findings will be presented at the next meeting in January. Questions asked included:

- Is there a way for non-MABPAB members to provide additional feedback?
 - Yes, feel free to send along comments directly to either Pete or Jackie
- What kinds of comments have been received so far?
 - Some basic language changes, for example the word *countermeasure* is used often internally though the general public may not be as familiar with the term
 - Organizing and streamlining the content to make it more user-friendly

Closing thoughts: There was a lot of questions about safe systems and throughout the process, we talked about the hierarchy of safety: you have safety, a safe systems approach and speed management is a component. This was zeroing in on speed management and so we want to frame it in the same systems approach - but it's not meant to be everything about safe systems approach. We're looking at other processes - to figure out kind of a larger context of safe systems: to incorporate vehicle technology, roadway post-crash care - every single thing in a much broader sense. One of the tensions within speed management is every time you introduce a new concept, you also have to explain it: we're trying to figure out that hierarchy in terms of content coming off of all the comments we received

Other Announcements

- MassDOT's [Shared Streets and Spaces](#) funding program next round opens January 10
- [2021 Moving Together](#) virtual conference taking place December 7-8-9
- [MassTrails grants](#) next round is now open until February 1
- Dementia-friendly design guide for physical infrastructure nearing completion. Contact James Fuccione for additional info: james.fuccione@mahealthyaging.org
- Next MABPAB meeting on Wednesday, January 26, 2022
- List of board members in attendance (see below)

- Other attendees:
 - Amber Vaillancourt (MassDOT)
 - Ben Muller (MassDOT D6)
 - Max Pavlov (MassDOT)
 - Alyssa Zimmer (MassDOT OPMI)
 - Christian Milneil (StreetsBlog Mass)
 - Laura Hanson (MassDOT D2)
 - David Loutzenheiser (MAPC)
 - Beth Giannini (FRCOG)
 - Casey Claude (CTPS)
 - Ed Sinofsky (Cape Cod Cycling Club)
 - Michaela Boneva (MassDOT)
 - Doug Cornelius (MassBike)
 - Bob Seay (WGBH Radio)
 - Fay Rhault (CMRPC)
 - David Nolan (CCC)
 - Barbara LaChance (MassDOT D5)
 - Cheryl Ann Senior (MassDOT D5)
 - Nicholas Russo (BRPC)
 - Lee Toma (Bike Milton)
 - Will Glebus (MassDOT D1)
 - Chris Timmel (FHWA)
 - Andrew Jennings (LRTA Advisory Board)
 - Carrie McInerney (MassDOT)
 - Josh Grzegorzewski (FHWA)

MA BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY BOARD
Board Member Sign-In Sheet
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Member Name	Attended	Notes
Tom DiPaolo MassDOT-Highway	yes	
Prachi Vakharia MassDOT-MBTA	yes	
Pete Sutton MassDOT-Planning	yes	
Kurt Gaertner EOEEA	yes	
Gerald Autler DCR	yes	
Jackie DeWolfe MassDOT	yes	
Rebecca Han DPH	no	
Phyllis Cahaly MOTT	no	
Jeff Larason EOPSS	no	
Jeff McCollough MARPA	yes	
Betsy Goodrich MARPA	yes	
Jackie Jones MARPA	no	
Bryce Hoffman – public member (Lowell Bike Coalition)	yes	

Keith MacDonald – public member (South Coast Bikeway Alliance)	no	
Galen Mook – MassBike	yes	
Karin Goins – public member (Walk/Bike Worcester)	yes	
Seun Oluwole – public member	no	
James Fuccione - public member (Mass. Healthy Aging Collaborative)	yes	
Cheryl Casper – public member	yes	
Sam Squalia – public member (Fitchburg City Council)	yes	
Stacey Beuttell - WalkBoston	yes	
Maureen White - public member	yes	
Meg Robertson – public member	yes	
Alice Brown – public member (Boston Harbor Now)	yes	