

Minutes from the August 14, 2008 meeting of the WMPO BikePed Committee:

Members present:

Todd Brohaugh
Brian Ennis
Michael Kirkbride
Paul Martinez
Joshuah Mello, Secretary
Laura Miller
Tom Rivers
Allen Serkin
Dave Staebler
Nolan Smith

Others present:

Lawless Bean
Susan Bullers
Tom Cunningham
Bobby Harris
Greg Little
Marilyn Meares
Bethel Paris
Anthony Prinz

Members not present:

Niel Brooks
Katie Ryan
Mickey Southerland

Agenda

1. Bicycle rental/sharing program

Mello briefed the committee on the city's plans to issue a Request for Information (RFI) for a third generation bicycle

sharing program within the City of Wilmington. This RFI, issued in cooperation with New Hanover County, UNC-Wilmington, and

Wilmington Downtown, Inc. will allow the city to gauge interest in private funding and operation of such a program. No

details regarding the program are finalized. However, the city would be interested in an automated program similar to

SmartBike in Washington, DC with possible locations in city parking decks, near large employers, at UNC-Wilmington and in

selected city and county parks. Paris expressed concern regarding the safety and education of potential riders. Mello

stated that a brief tutorial on bicycle safety could be part of the sign-up process for the program.

2. Bicycle boulevards

Mello explained that the City of Wilmington is looking at developing a network of bicycle boulevards in the Ardmore, Bottom,

Carolina Place, Dry Pond and Old Wilmington neighborhoods as part of the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program, which is

currently studying these areas. WMPO staff received several requests from residents

to improve bicycle comfort and safety in the area during the kick-off meeting for the study.

3. Commuter Challenge

Bean explained the upcoming Commuter Challenge, which will have a pirate theme this year. Arrrrgh! The annual event, to

take place this year from September 15 to October 17, pits different organizations and employers against one another in a

battle to rack up the most trips on alternative modes of transportation. These modes include carpooling, walking, biking and

riding transit. Assorted prizes are awarded randomly throughout the event and the winning teams are treated to a special

celebration at the end. The goal of the Commuter Challenge is to expose as many people as possible to alternatives methods

of commuting, with the hopes that this exposure will lead them to change their long-term behavior thus reducing the number of

vehicle miles travelled in the Wilmington area. If you are interested in helping Bean with this event, visit

www.capefearbreeze.com or contact her at 910-341-4665 or lawless.bean@wilmingtongov.com.

4. West Pender Rail Trail

Bullers, Little and Meares outlined recent efforts to plan and construct a trail along the unused rail line northwest of

Wilmington between the USS North Carolina and Moores Creek Battlefield in Currie. The group has the support of a handful of

local land owners, the East Coast Greenway Alliance, National Park Service, National Rails to Trails Conservancy and Pender

County. The committee agreed to add a multi-use path along US Highway 421 north from the USS North Carolina to WMPO planning

boundary to the Universe of Bicycle Projects study list.

5. Other business

None.

Adjournment



capefearbreeze.com

Background of the Cape Fear Breeze Regional Alternative Transportation Program

Established in January 2002, the Cape Fear Breeze program is dedicated to developing and promoting transportation alternatives for our community's citizens and visitors. The program has built upon previous efforts initiated by concerned volunteers, including representatives of major area employers, the Greater Wilmington Chamber of Commerce, community leaders, and elected officials who shared both the belief that the region's transportation needs could not be met by simply building more roads and a commitment to developing innovative alternatives. After an initial successful partnership with the North Carolina Department of Transportation, the Breeze program is now funded by the City of Wilmington and led by its employer members. Members work together to implement flexible alternatives to a single person driving alone in each car, such as ridematching and carpooling, park-and-ride services, vanpooling, and staggered work hours.

Second Annual Commuter Challenge

On July 24, the Cape Fear Breeze held its first major planning session for the program's Second Annual Commuter Challenge to be held from September 15 through October 17. The Challenge is a contest encouraging employers, employees and the general public to take advantage of alternate methods of transportation. Building on the success of the inaugural event when almost 3500 alternative transportation trips were made by members of 7 teams, the Employer Group's goal for this year's Challenge is to increase the number of employer teams participating and to encourage use of alternative transportation beyond the Challenge period.

The tag line for the Second Annual Challenge is "Looking for Your Lost Treasure? Take the Challenge." Participants will be encouraged in their efforts to recover their treasure—money spent on commuting, sanity, fitness, and a clean environment—by Capt. Carpool and his Mateys, Barnacle Bill the Cyclist, Transit Me Timbers, and Iron Legs Walker. New to this year's Challenge are two (tentative) Saturday events, including a Pirate Peloton and a WAVE Trolley Treasure Hunt, and more internal employer events. A significant number and greater variety of prizes have also already been secured. WECT, the *Wilmington Star-News*, and the Greater Wilmington Chamber of Commerce have signed on as media partners. The Second Annual Commuter Challenge Kick-off is scheduled for the second week of September.

The Employer Group is already making progress toward achieving its goals of expanding participation among area employers and continuing participation beyond the conclusion of the Challenge. Employers already committed to joining the Challenge include Corning, the City of Wilmington, New Hanover County, New Hanover County Schools, UNCW, PPD, New Hanover Regional Medical Center, Cape Fear Community College, Verizon, and GE. Others are considering participation. Members are also working with staff to finalize the use of the Way2Go Club incentive program and its newly developed web component to facilitate the continued use of alternative modes of commuting and participation in the Cape Fear Breeze program.

For more information, contact Lawless Bean, Special Assistant to the City Manager & Program Coordinator at 341. 4665 or lawless.bean@wilmingtonnc.gov. Visit on the web at capefearbreeze.com.

West Pender Rail-Trail, August 14th, 2008

Project Description

The West Pender Rail Trail is a non-profit community initiative to preserve and enhance the quality of life in Western Pender and New Hanover Counties by converting sections of an abandoned railroad corridor into a public recreation, active transportation and community heritage trail.

The trail would run along, or near, an abandoned rail bed from Currie, NC to 421 near Wilmington, with spurs to Moore's Creek Battlefield at the north end and USS North Carolina Battleship at the south end. Future phases include sections from Fayetteville to Currie, which are currently being planned for Sampson County. In addition, this corridor coincides with NC Bike Route 5 and the East Coast Greenway; a National pedestrian and bicycle trail development project stretching from Maine to Florida.

Project Benefits

Public Health

As with the rest of the Country, North Carolina residents have become more interested in health, public recreation, and the environment. Access to public recreational facilities promotes healthier residents, lower obesity rates and a better quality of life. Southeastern North Carolina lags behind in these public resources. This trail will offer public recreation and an alternative transportation route to an area slated for industrial, commercial, and residential development. It is very important, economically and environmentally, that this trail be incorporated into local and regional plans before any more development begins along this corridor. We have a great window of opportunity with this corridor right now!

Community Heritage preservation

The area covered by this trail has a rich local heritage that draws people to the area. It includes Moore's Creek National Battlefield, Point Caswell and at the south end, the Battleship USS North Carolina; the most often visited attraction in the area. The proposed rail-trail project preserves and promotes this rich history, and offers a more involved, low impact, tourism experience.

Economic Impact

In addition to the increased value of living near a recreation trail, these trails draw high income, low-impact tourism to the area, fostering bed & breakfast accommodations, sandwich shops, restaurants, gift stores and small groceries. These types of businesses benefit the local community while preserving the natural beauty and rich heritage. The national and State Rail-to-Trial organizations, outdoor and environmental groups, and travel publications provide free promotion for these trails through travel books, trail guides, websites, and related publications and newsletters.

