

December 14 Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Panel Meeting Notes

Great Lakes Way presentation – Tom Woiwode & Dr. John Hartig made a PowerPoint presentation about the Great Lakes Way. Tom explained the Great Ways Initiative and its history, purpose and projects. John explained the vision of the Great Lakes Way and displayed a map showing the location of the Way. He said that 38% of it is completed and 64% of it is usable. He talked about branding for the trail, eventually getting a national designation for it, and what the next steps are for the Great Lakes Way.

Lucie said that the map should now indicate that there is a plan in place for the gap shown on the map in Monroe County. Lance from TMACOG said that this is the first time he has heard of the Great Lakes Way and it fits in with what the Toledo region is now doing.

Sue asked about whether a trail would be best to fill in the route gap or whether it could be tied to the on-road bicycle routes. John said that a trail would be ideal and safety is the most important thing. Tom said that the line on the map is a template but not the exact route and talking to communities is important when it comes to setting the best route. He said that it should follow the waterfront, but there may be spurs off of that.

Paul asked if there are any past plans in Monroe County that we should be working off of and about specific routes already planned in Monroe County. Tom said he doesn't know about missed opportunities in the County, but that there was a discussion in the past about what should be done and that created the template for SEMCOG's regional survey. Paul mentioned that Frenchtown is working on updating its Master Plan currently and would like to incorporate the Great Lakes Way into the Plan.

John mentioned coming up with a partnership agreement that could be signed by local communities. Tom mentioned that this will always be a continuing project, and mentioned hoping to eventually work on connections with Canada. Florence said that the Great Lakes Way fits in with the Monroe County Link Plan.

Jim asked about opportunities for local businesses. Tom said that the brand will attract attention that businesses will be able to capitalize on.

Florence thanked the presenters. Lucie addressed Paul's comment and stated that the current Bike and Pedestrian Plan addresses the work from the past that Tom was mentioning.

Monroe County Loop Trail – Lucie said that the County and the MCRC have received official notice about the grant. She mentioned that involving local communities will also be important. She said that there are no issues at the moment and that they are in fundraising mode. She said that there will be a lot of paperwork and reviews now and that it will take until 2023 to start construction on the trail. She said that the fund raising will be coordinated by the County and that they will be looking for contributions mostly from the local communities.

Equity Planning Grant – Florence said that the grant deadline was in December. Lucie said that it is now finalized and that the Plan and the Signage Plan have been transmitted to the County. She said that the Road Commission has commented and that the first round of comments have been addressed. Dori said that the Road Commission staff is now conducting a second review and will update the Signage Subcommittee on December 15 hopefully.

Florence said that she talked to Scott at the bicycle shop and that he suggested that the people who ride the route should be able to look at where the signs will be placed and to make suggestions. Al agreed with this and said that the signs should be easy to follow. Bill said that it is important to give adequate notice of turns when placing the signs. Dori said that the placement of signs should be confirmed upfront as changing it later could affect funding. Jim said that there are examples from nearby counties about how to best do this. Bill suggested putting a link to the sign plan online and allowing people to comment on it.

Florence asked if we know for sure what will be on the sign. Lucie said that there won't be much deviation from what is already in the Plan, but that they are still looking at possibly placing a medallion on the sign. Florence clarified her question and asked specifically about branding for the sign. Dori said that it is important to know what the branding will look like and where it is located on the signs.

Lucie showed the Panel the current signs and the sign plan map. Bill asked if this document could be shared. Lucie said that she will send the latest version to him and will talk to the County to make sure that they put it on their website. Brian asked if there is a possibility that the route itself would change. Lucie said that she would have to confirm this with the Road Commission but right now the route is at the refinement stage. Brian asked if the stakeholders have been involved. Lucie said that the local cycling club has not been involved yet but that she will get the plan out to them. Brian asked if SEMCOG has received the plan yet. Lucie said that she sent it to Jeff at SEMCOG already and can also send Brian a copy of the sign plan and a final version of the trail plan.

Lucie stressed the importance of raising funds at this point for the Plan. Jim mentioned availability for funds from the US Fish & Wildlife Refuge. Florence said that a subcommittee will be needed to address fundraising.

Municipal Presentations – Florence said that these will start in January. She mentioned that there should be fundraising presentations in addition to the initial information presentations.

Trail Projects – Florence mentioned the chart that Sue and Mary have been working on. Sue said that she sent a rough draft to Florence already for her to look at.

City of Monroe – Mayor Clark said that Lucie made a presentation to the City's Trail Advisory Committee. He stated that they are still getting off the ground and stressed that connectivity of the bicycle and trail network will be important.