

State Non-motorized Transportation Advisory Committee

Date: June 21, 2018

MnDOT Central Office

395 John Ireland Blvd, St Paul, MN 55155

Attendees

- Jason Artley, Chair, District 4 Citizen Rep
- Cameron Hintzen, Executive Board, Law Enforcement
- Kurt Franke, Executive Board, District 3 Citizen Rep
- Pete Connor, District 6 Citizen Rep
- Russell Habermann, District 1 Citizen Rep
- CJ Lindor, State Advocacy Org
- Tom Meium, Industry Rep
- Ingrid Schneider, Higher Education
- Danny McCullough, Three Rivers Parks
- Clark Goldenrod, Metro District Citizen Rep
- Tony Drollinger, Metro District Citizen Rep
- Ellen Pillsbury, Dept of Health
- Jen Jevnisek, Pollution Control Agency
- Nick Mason, Bike MN
- Steve Sanders, Former Committee Member
- Jim Dustrude, Former Bike/Ped Coordinator
- Liz Walton, MnDOT Transit & Active Transportation
- Dave Cowan, MnDOT Transit & Active Transportation
- Michael Petesch, MnDOT Transit & Active Transportation
- Lisa Austin, MnDOT Transit & Active Transportation
- Michelle Pooler, MnDOT Transit & Active Transportation
- Amber Dallman, MnDOT Transit & Active Transportation
- Austin Hauf, MnDOT Transit & Active Transportation
- Jim Rosenow, MnDOT Design
- Jake Schutt, MnDOT Transit & Active Transportation
- Ken Buckeye, MnDOT Finance

Legislative Session Recap

- Safe Routes funding - \$2M in bonding
- Some measures passed legislature but were not signed
 - Policy language changes making shoulders part of the roadway for passing

- Allowing bicycling straight through right turn lanes
- Ride as far right as safe
- Q: What was the rationale for not extending the SNTC's sunset date?
 - Majority party decision to reduce government spending
- Q: Were there other state volunteer committees or advisory boards not extended?
 - Uncertain – don't know what other committees were scheduled to sunset

SNTC History and Accomplishments

Nick Mason

- The morning I interviewed for the committee I was in a bike-car crash and that impressed on me the need for a safety education campaign
- That was the year that we began working on the “Share the Road” campaign
- Many great fundraising rides in the past, but not a ride to just celebrate Minnesota
 - Established BAM – now a fully functioning non-profit
- This committee is responsible for starting the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota that came out of a state bicycle summit hosted at Quality Bicycle Parts

Lisa Austin

- Bike Summit was a way to see if we could develop an advocacy group working on evenings, weekends, using personal emails etc. to pull together an event of 115 people

Ken Buckeye

- Was part of the Bicycle Planning Unit in the mid-1980s
- There was a culture of resistance in developing bicycle plans and routes and the aura that surrounded the work propelled us on
- Over the course of my career I think we started to break down some of the resistance to bicycling that existed within the agency
- That has continued to flourish with the work of the committee and staff today
- I often found the work fun, and frustrating! There was a diversity of things that we worked on including mapping, technical assistance to districts and local partners, and working with the DNR
- 1987 State Bicycle System Plan – was an important document that set the stage for thinking about bicycling on a system wide level – where would we make improvements?

Jim Dustrude

- I was told once “we're willing to put bicycling up as window dressing, but not much more.”
- We had fun working through that challenge because we were passionate

- Worked on Plan B (1992) to develop first and foremost a compelling document, but we also put together the best case we could working with the bike committee to encourage Reps. Oberstar and Sabo to continue supporting bicycle infrastructure
- Page 37 of Plan B made it through Congress to support bicycle infrastructure as part of ISTEA
- ISTEA made federal funding available for bicycle facilities nation-wide which was a huge shift
- I went to a retirement party in downtown Minneapolis and only knew three people there – which was such a good feeling. Knowing that this work has expanded to such a degree.
- Had to take a driver retraining class where another class attendee challenge the instructor on bike's right to be on the road – and the instructor corrected him!

Jim Rosenow

- Worked with MnDOT since 2000 in a technical support / project review capacity
- We're in something like the stages of grief – when I started advocating for non-motorized transportation in project designs the reaction we got much of the time was laughter, then anger, and now more acceptance. I keep thinking that we'll get to embracing and we're not there but I do think we'll get there.
- Engineering ultimately bends towards logic and common sense – that's why I'm convinced we'll eventually get there
- I believe we as an agency get nowhere and wouldn't have gotten anywhere without citizen advocacy. We need people and groups to push things like this both at MnDOT and in the legislature. Keep doing what you are doing!

Steve Sanders

- This committee has always been about passionate, committed people doing something good connecting with their counterparts in state government. It's not an obligation, but it's really how things should work.
- My wife would ask, why are you still doing this? But that's really genuinely how I felt about it. It's a good model for bringing passion and advocacy to state government

Lisa Austin

- Joined in early 2002/2003 and served until being hired at MnDOT in 2008
- Big accomplishments then were Share the Road, BAM, and founding the Bicycle Alliance
- Since the Bicycle Alliance was established the nature of the committee has shifted
- Pleased to see the inclusion of advocating for pedestrian issues in the SNTC
- Remember working with Tom Engstrom who learned a ton from the group and went back to Mankato to start a whole number of initiatives
- The connections and inspiration that being part of the group created was so influential
- Looking forward to whatever the next chapter of the group is

Q: How did the committee originally come to be? What was the structure?

- The committee was formed came from Minnesota Coalition of Bicyclists, they were like the millennials of that time
- Phyllis Kahn carried a bill in 1984 that established the State Bicycle Committee
- We used to run an annual conference as a self-paying event that required no budget from the State of Minnesota – that was a powerful device to keep the enthusiasm up (1984-1996)

Kurt Franke

- Loved learning what “ground trothing” was and going out for rides with so many knowledgeable people
- Just became a member again in November and am sorry to see things ending today
- I never was really great at specific plans or smaller things, but this committee did raise expectations for making Minnesota a better place to walk and bike

Tim Mitchell

- It’s an interesting day because this committee has been such a fixture in the state and the idea that it isn’t going to be a thing going forward is strange
- Everything evolves and thinking about where we go from now is another evolution
- Thank you to everyone who was part of the journey of this committee

Jason Artley

- I interviewed with Tim and Michelle for my spot on the committee
- Interesting to see so many different eras and thinking about how this will continue to live on in the future
- Had picked up full speed again and the pedestrian letter that Clark, Tony, and Melissa worked on was huge
 - I got a message from a competing engineering firm who saw the letter and wanted to know about the response
 - I really think that letter will make a massive positive impact on the state

Cameron Hintzen

- Re-wrote the bylaws to provide framework for a more diverse membership group and lobbied AARP to provide a member to the committee
- I’ve been in Federal government a long time, there’s always ebb and flow where good things get ended for the wrong reasons, and then when they’re gone other people might realize that things should be brought back

Future Active Transportation Engagement Work

Question 1 – How would you like to see the SNTC's work continue?

- Right now my world revolves around funds and financing and electric/automated vehicles – it occurred to me that there are a lot of parallels to non-motorized transportation becoming shared, electric, even motorized transportation. Boundaries between modes are blurring.
- Is there an opportunity to transfer the work wholesale into another group like the State Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP)?
- As it stands this is one of the best represented groups that the SNTC has had – few empty seats and an engaged group of people.
- I'd like to know if MnDOT Bike/Ped want or need this state perspective on these things. I have to believe they do and I feel like the need is still there.
- Recent statewide plans have been very focused on engagement which helps to bring people into the conversation.
- The whole idea of having citizen advocates was to push on MnDOT and policy makers from outside for change to occur.
- I wonder whether this committee has the same power/influence if it's outside of MnDOT – would the commissioner respond to us in the same way?
- The scope of the committee is limited by being so attached to MnDOT and limits where we can affect change.
- Could the Local Road Research Board host the committee? They fund research and are comprised much in the same way as MnDOT.
- It's hard for me to think about this aside from shifting – working to become more visible and active with our local decision-makers.
- Could MDH's Active Living committee pick up the work?
- I don't think the people of Minnesota know the impact that this committee going away might have on their quality of life – a lot of the work on this committee was under the radar and focused on policy work that influenced walking and bicycling.
- Before this group disbands the chair should formally ask MnDOT if the agency could support the group going forward into the future.
- Main hiccup would be who has the authority to say yes or no?
- If the committee was rebuilt it wouldn't meet as often.
- Worry that if there's no reimbursement people wouldn't travel to attend.
- Good idea to make a more clear and concise description of the group which includes listing the benefits to the agency and a list of accomplishments and highlights so that it's ready in document form for other funding bodies.
- Join up with other advocacy groups around the state.
- District meetings once per year to have listening sessions on active transportation topics.
- Meet up in places where bike/ped professionals already get together.
- WI has a governor's advisory committee – is that something that we could model after?

- SHIP? AARP as host venue?
- Strategic partnership with Dept of Public Safety thinking about Vision Zero?

Question 2 – How should MnDOT continue to engage with Minnesotans on active transportation topics?

- MnDOT has said that would be beneficial to engage with people at the district level, I think that we were getting close to understanding how we could affect change more centrally.
- I'd like to be a member of our area's ATP which influences the State Transportation Improvement Plan.
- Public input needs to play a role in what projects are designated as fundable, especially in competitive programs.
- How many people even know this committee exists? How do we as advocates be louder and more engaging?
- Does this committee help to reduce the number of open houses that MnDOT needs to have around the state?
- Could SNTC members from greater MN be paired with someone from MnDOT Districts?
 - Could allow more people locally to be connected to the work
- Opportunity for MnDOT to reassert commitment to bike/ped at the district level.
- Strong advocacy groups around the state for highway corridors, but I'm not sure there's anything as strong for Active Transportation.
- Continue implementing Bike/Walk Community Workshops.
- Find ways for people to provide overarching input into MnDOT's policies and procedures.
- Role of advocacy groups in advancing this work (BikeMN) – things are well established for biking but not so much for people walking.
- How many of us are traveling? Could we continue this in a volunteer capacity who can attend remotely as necessary?