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MEMORANDUM

To: T.J. Nee, Jason Dupuis, Stateline Area Transportation Study (SLATS)
From: Tim Gustafson, Kristen O'Toole, Alta Planning + Design
Date: June 15, 2017
Re: **SLATS Bicycle and Pedestrian System Plan Update | Steering Committee Meeting #1**

Main points:

- Reviewed scope, engagement plan, schedule
- Revised schedule is included in this document
- Press release included in this document
- Detailed meeting notes follow at the end of this document

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN UPDATE BEGINS

[ENGLISH] DO YOU WANT TO MAKE WALKING AND BICYCLING BETTER IN THE BELOIT AREA?

We need your help to make walking and bicycling in Rock and Winnebago Counties easier and safer. The Stateline Area Transportation Study (SLATS) is working to improve sidewalks, bike lanes, and trails. Do you live or work in the City of Beloit, Town of Beloit, Town of Turtle, City of South Beloit, Town of Rockton, or Town of Roscoe? We want to hear from you!

Join us at the Beloit Farmers Market or the Flying Pig on Saturday, June 24 to share your ideas. We also invite you to provide comments using an interactive map online survey [web URL for both will be combined into one].

Do you work with a community organization in the area? We'd love to talk with you about your group's needs for walking and bicycling in the region. Please contact us at [kristenotoole@altaplanning.com].

[ESPAÑOL] ¿QUIERE MEJORAR CAMINAR Y BICICLETAR EN LA ZONA DE BELOIT?

Necesitamos su ayuda para hacer más fácil y seguro caminar y montar en bicicleta en los condados de Rock and Winnebago. El Estudio de Transporte de Área de Stateline (SLATS) está trabajando para mejorar aceras, carriles para bicicletas, y senderos. ¿Vive o trabaja en la Ciudad de Beloit, Ciudad de Beloit, Ciudad de Turtle, Ciudad de South Beloit, Ciudad de Rockton, o Ciudad de Roscoe? ¡Queremos escuchar de ti!

Acompáñenos el sábado 24 de junio para que comparta sus ideas durante el Beloit Farmers Market o el Flying Pig. También lo invitamos a que nos de sus comentarios a través de una encuesta online con un mapa interactivo. [URL web para ambos se combinarán en uno].

¿Trabaja con una organización comunitaria en la zona? Nos encantaría hablar con usted sobre las necesidades de su grupo para caminar y montar en bicicleta en la región. Póngase en contacto con nosotros en [kristenotoole@altaplanning.com]

Engagement Strategy & Schedule

| Task | Target Audience/ Participants | Purpose/Intended Message | Specific Tools | When | Where |
|---|---|--|---|------------------------------|---|
| Steering Committee Meetings (4) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TAC/project steering committee representatives (list TBD) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vet goals, objectives Discuss coordination needs Provide input on public involvement plan Review recommendations Hear specific concerns and answer questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated discussion topics Presentations and exhibits Small group discussion | June, August, September 2017 | To be determined by group, likely Beloit Public Library |
| Engagement at Beloit Farmers Market and the Flying Pig (1) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All stakeholders/ members of the public | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The event will offer an opportunity for the public to learn more about the project and provide input Introduce the study and discuss opportunities and constraints to walking and bicycling in the study area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Display boards and an opportunity for written comments Comment tracking document | June 2017 | Beloit Farmers Market, Flying Pig |
| Community Events/Small Group Meetings (1) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All stakeholders/ members of the public | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide project information to residents Discuss findings from the existing conditions analysis Discuss preliminary recommendations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation Small group, facilitated meetings Boards with maps, etc. | August 2017 | To be coordinated with specific groups and sponsors. The meeting should aim to reach groups who experience environmental injustice. |
| Public Open House (1) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All stakeholders/ members of the public | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss infrastructure and programming recommendation Discuss project prioritization and implementation next steps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation Boards with maps or other project information Project team on hand to actively listen, answer questions, and facilitate discussion | September 2017 | To be coordinated with specific groups and sponsors. The meeting should aim to reach groups who experience environmental injustice. |

| Task | Target Audience/ Participants | Purpose/Intended Message | Specific Tools | When | Where |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|--|--|------------------------|
| Open House Summaries/ Comment Log | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize comments (both verbal and written) Track comments and responses – provide transparency to stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comment tracking spreadsheet Number of attendees/comments | Following each public input event, online comments, and comments received via email or phone | Included in final plan |

Meeting Notes

1. Introductions

Notes:

- Tim Gustafson introduced the plan’s schedule, and main tasks.
 - The plan presents an opportunity to identify things that are going well and items to improve in terms of planning processes and potential projects. The Planning Board and TAC are evidence of processes/committees that can help with plan implementation.
- Tim discussed the “Five Es” of pedestrian and bicycle planning: engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation. Many jurisdictions are adding economic development and equity.

2. Review Project Scope and Schedule

- Public Outreach Strategy

Actions:

- Alta will revise the schedule based on this meeting’s date.
- Jason and T.J. to confirm the June 24 Beloit Farmers Market date and booth availability.

Notes:

- The steering committee will have a week to review the deliverables before the next meeting.
- We are working on assessing existing conditions and are working on collecting data to evaluate the study area.
- June 24: This is the tentative date for tabling at the Beloit Farmers Market. After public involvement activities, we will identify potential improvements.
- Public Meeting #2: The meeting will occur in a small group setting to help with recommendation vetting.
- The plan will conclude in November.
- Alta will keep a copy of the schedule available for T.J. and Jason.

3. Status of data collection efforts and GIS contacts by municipality

Action:

- Alta will follow-up with Jason regarding data needs

Notes:

- Because this is a regional plan, we want to obtain data from each municipality
- Jason gave us data from the City of Beloit, but we need other municipalities/counties.

- We have Winnebago County (IL) crash data. We need data from Rock County, from WisDOT
 - All data will flow through Jason (Winnebago County, WinGIS, city and county data)
- The group reviewed the project boundaries using T.J.'s SLATS MPO map
- The group expressed Interest in interconnectivity throughout the MPO planning area.

4. Discuss planning context, preliminary thoughts, opportunities, and constraints

Notes:

- Interested in interconnectivity
- The committee discussed existing bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly routes and routes that are currently challenging to walk and bike.
- Park Avenue is a key connection
- Stone Bridge Trail
- The committee would like to see recommendations that can continue past the SLATS boundary line. The committee members recognize a desire to connect outside these boundaries and into neighboring MPOs (Janesville, Rockford)
- Afton Road, Big Hill Park
- Rock Trail Coalition is involved in making regional connections
 - Cross Town Line Road, a mixture of on-street facilities and trails (crushed limestone in some places)
 - Entry into Big Hill Park – to Goose Creek Bridge
 - Paved path in Big Hill Park (0.8 miles) using DNR funds (\$300k for this stretch)
 - Shared use path
 - The money will hopefully be used to connect to the trail networks in and around Beloit
 - The route shown above is based on a 2012 plan with the support of private investment (done by Schreiber Anderson, now Ayers Associates)
- Bicyclists want paths to get out of the city and into the countryside. Doing so now means running into challenging/dangerous roads that are not comfortable.
- Bicycle organizations have an interest in connecting the libraries by way of a bike share system:
 - Rick is talking with Regina Duncan from Beloit Health Systems
 - The potential system supports the idea that bicycling should be available to people of all income levels.
 - The system may allow patrons to rent a bike using a library card
 - The group discussed the system's possible challenges, given that many streets are not designed for safe and comfortable bicycling.
- A path through Big Hill Park is moving forward. The Planning Board voted for an extension. The project is now in the hands of City Council.

5. Goals and objectives exercise

- The large group broke into smaller working groups composed of three to four people. Each group discussed positive aspects related to walking and bicycling in the region as well as connectivity and safety challenges.
- The notes below represent key takeaways learned from the group as a whole:

Things you like about **walking** in the region:

- Lots of very attractive areas to walk around and to
- Downtown, Beloit College, Riverside Park

- Replicate this high-quality feeling in the neighborhoods – what can we do to get people into the neighborhoods?
- Walking maps: The group likes the existing neighborhood architecture walking maps, such as the East Side Historical map (Bluff Street)
- Integrating walking and biking in downtown Beloit and surrounding neighborhoods
- The committee discussed a desire for residents to be able to live and work in Beloit and be able to walk a few blocks to work. Three blocks from downtown, your comfort and safety changes considerably
- The riverfront and bridges feel comfortable due to the lack of roadway crossings.

Things you like about **bicycling** in the region:

- Some groups stated that they used this topic to talk more about potential improvements than existing, comfortable roadways.
- Stateline Road IL 251/Willowbrook Road not wide enough for cars to safely pass bicyclists, resulting in a low feeling of safety.
- Improvements over the bridge disappear after you enter the Town of Turtle
 - Stateline Road is scheduled for overlaying this year
 - Cooperation across municipal boundaries, including across historic annexation boundaries, is sometimes difficult.
- Some committee members would like to work one-on-one more often with people on Town Council, so they can experience bicycling on roadways under their jurisdiction.
- The group would like to expand and replicate the Riverside Park experience
- Maps for on-street facilities – make it clearer about where you can go
- Connections from neighborhoods into commercial areas – people want to get there by bicycle and on foot
- We don't want to treat subdivisions as their own, disconnected entities. Plans need to ensure that neighborhoods connect to each other and to important destinations.
- Everyone should be able to get to the riverfront. This came up several times.

Want to **walk** or **bike** somewhere but cannot or don't feel safe/comfortable:

- Some neighborhoods within the City of Beloit are disconnected from downtown. These areas feel isolated from their own city.
- Not many routes feel comfortable to bike with children.
- Sometimes the shortest routes are blocked by two interstates.
- Community organizations would like to extend the Milwaukee Road path. However, inter-city cooperation has been difficult to achieve.

Things that most impact your comfort and safety while **walking**:

- WI 81 acts as a barrier, especially when traveling with children.
- Despite also serving as assets, Interstates and floodplains are some of the biggest barriers
 - The committee would like to fill gaps and create improved crossings.
- IL 2 to to the Nature of the Confluence is not suited for walking and bicycling. The center's grand opening is the weekend of June 17, but there are concerns about how people could reach the area on foot or by bicycle.
 - Industrial area – has lots of forklift traffic
 - The sidewalks stop on the east side and do not connect to the IDOT-owned bridge.

- IL Highway 2 will is not on IDOT's high-priority project list.
- The Nature of the Confluence does not connect to the 5th Street path?
 - A railroad crossing is also a barrier.
- The group discussed the plan for sidewalks on sections of Milwaukee Road:
 - Shared use path on the south side
 - Sidewalk gaps will be filled on the north side.

Things that most impact your comfort and safety while **bicycling**:

- When facilities change condition, jurisdiction, or designation
- Roadways were not designed with bicyclists in mind. This attitude is changing and can be seen in more recent roadway designs and plans.

Things that most impact your comfort and safety while **driving**:

- Bicyclists not sharing the road
- Pedestrians walking the wrong way
- Congestion

6. Confirm next steps

- In-person engagement at Beloit Farmers Market: Saturday, June 24
 - Action: Alta will prepare a press release and will send to TJ and the Steering Committee. Alta will perform outreach at the Beloit Farmers Market and the Flying Pig on June 24.
 - Might need to do more outreach to meet with a representative sample of the area's racial, ethnic, and income-level diversity.
 - Challenges: Information about how to engage with planning efforts are often under-publicized. Past public involvement events have had difficulty reaching a diverse array of residents.
 - The planning team has the opportunity to reach out to a number of community groups that work with clients who traditionally have been marginalized.
 - Stateline Literacy Group: This would be a good venue for a public meeting
 - Flyer, in-person visit
 - YMCA: A good opportunity to have a table to discuss the plan with patrons. Monday nights are best.
 - Community Action
 - Possibility to attend Back-to-School nights In August & September
 - National Night Out
 - Mini articles for ethnic newspapers
 - Flying Pig: Very popular and attracts a diverse population. Alta will bring the project flyer and host a table to collect residents' ideas about the places they would like to walk and bike in the planning area.
 - Existing conditions report, slated for early July, pending data collection completion.

7. General comments:

- Project implementation is challenged by funding availability. A project may be listed in a planning document, but will not be constructed if the implementing agency does not have money assigned to the project. Prioritization is difficult due to lack of funding.

- It's challenging to compel communities to implement certain types of street designs that facilitate safe walking or bicycling.
- In some situations, one project could use a given program's budget for 5-15 years.
 - Both states find this challenging, especially Wisconsin.
 - City of Beloit and Beloit Township have historically been project champions.

In Attendance:

| | | |
|-------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| T.J. Nee | SLATS | neet@beloitwi.gov |
| Jason Dupuis | City of Beloit Engineering | dupuisj@beloitwi.gov |
| Summer Marcum | BMHS | no email |
| Mike Flesch | SLATS / City of Beloit Engineering | fleschm@beloitwi.gov |
| Otis Johnson | Stateline Spinners, Plan Commission | otis.ignite@gmail.com |
| Nancy Forebeck | Beloit City Council | nancy@beloitwi.gov |
| Drew Pennington | City of Beloit | penningtond@beloitwi.gov |
| Tom Jenkins | Rockton Township | rocktontownship@gmail.com |
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