

Complete Streets Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

October 25, 2012
2:00 – 5:00 p.m.
Capitol Commons Building

Present:

Bill Shreck (for Kirk Steudle), Lt. Gary Megge, John Niemela, Kelli Kavanaugh, Gary Piotrowicz, Suzanne Schulz, Karen Kafantaris, Barbara Schmid, Steve DeBrabander, James Tischler, and Rory Neuner.

Not Present:

Carolyn Grawi, Megan Olds, Ken Fletcher, Linda Miller-Atkinson, Rochelle Hurst, Andrea Brown, and Christopher White

Welcome – Suzanne Schulz

Chairwoman Suzanne Schulz welcomed everyone to the Complete Streets Advisory Council (CSAC) meeting. She informed the group that there would be a public comment period at the beginning as well as at the end of the meeting. Those wishing to speak were asked to fill out a public comment card and return it to a staff member. Suzanne also stated that there was a conference line available for those who would like to listen to the proceedings. Public comments can be received by email at MDOT-CompletestreetsAC@michigan.gov. Suzanne also asked members to introduce themselves.

Correspondence

In Andrea Brown's absence, Ms. Schulz brought the council members' attention to a letter from Chairman Jung of the State Transportation Commission, which thanked the Council for identifying a set of model complete streets policies and ordinances.

Public Comment

No public comment at this time.

Discussion

Rob Balmes was introduced as a new manager at MDOT. He facilitated discussion on the council members' efforts to communicate the new complete streets policy to their constituents. Mr. Balmes presented four questions to the council; their responses are below.

1. Describe the efforts you took to communicate the policy to your constituents.
 - a. Updated management teams on policy and projects that have been completed.
 - b. Kelly Kavanaugh stated continued implementing projects in Detroit.
 - c. Posted policy and information in local publications, monthly newsletters, magazines and on websites
 - d. Presented complete streets and related material at conferences and meetings
 - e. Used education to direct every day activities, questions and concerns among staff.
 - f. Incorporated complete streets concepts into new research.

2. How do you think the policy was received?
 - a. Depends on who you are talking to and which road, as they all operate differently.
 - b. Safety was a concern, specifically the treatment of a bike lane as a driving lane, or turn lane. Education is needed in the community to inform what the lane is for.
 - c. The department's policy was treated as a sample or a model.
 - d. There is still a need to convey what complete streets look like, and define optimal designs and context, especially in relation to rural, suburban, neighborhoods or downtown areas.
 - e. Emphasized the need for constituents, advocates, the staff and designers and political support to make things happen.
 - f. Dozens of community members came out in Lansing to celebrate the policy and a recently completed complete streets project. People in communities want walkable neighborhoods.
3. What types of positive insights/challenges have you experienced in communicating the policy?
 - a. Surprise to see what some of the more experienced people still had to learn about the policy. Educating the general public, those who do not believe in sharing the road with bicyclists and staff of organizations is a challenge. [CSAC members] still have a lot to do.
 - b. Data collection is needed to track how changes affect motorists as well as cyclists and the adoption and acceptance level of motorists of new facilities. Progress, and the use of facilities, needs to be supported by data.
 - c. Alignment of staff and leadership
4. What are your next steps, or what you have been thinking about on how to move forward in the next 3-6 months?
 - a. Present information on state government place making initiatives to CSAC.
 - b. Determine what we can do with what roads.
 - c. Education efforts at the planning, engineering and policy making levels. Try to relay the complete street message through [CSAC member and other] organizations. Educate general public, secretary of state, enforcement agencies, and local communities. Start holistic educational program that incorporates bicycles, pedestrians and motorists, to encourage cooperation not hostility, and people looking at the road differently. Example: "Respect." Also, commuter safety classes are being offered in southwest Detroit to help people become more comfortable with aspects of bike riding on the road.
 - d. Strengthen the complete streets coalition website.
 - e. Adapt traffic control devices and engineering, to create the safest roadway.
 - f. Battle the idea of perception versus reality. Change perception, through education.
 - g. Let people adapt.
 - h. Holistic approach. Maximize the efficiency and safety of the road, intertwining political, emotional and engineering concepts.
 - i. Collect more data. Be broad. Compare like variables.
 - j. Promote and engage in early conversations with local entities, to understand what can be addressed throughout the project process.
 - k. Suit adaptation to all counties and townships, based on geography.

- l. Continue implementation efforts in Detroit, using art or murals that promote education.
- m. Use DNR funds for trail connectivity. One of the goals the governor has is to make this the trail state, and [complete streets] fits in with this initiative. Meet with the trail designers/ managers to make them aware of what [CSAC / complete streets is] doing.
- n. Resolve challenges with MPOs, and adjust local polices that are impediments.
- o. Survey local communities who have already passed complete streets policies to understand impediments to implementation.
- p. Overcome pedestrian and bike issues, within a car driven society. Facilitate transition from cars and balance other modes of transportation.
- q. Share MiPlace research and findings. Build on current market demands, and transit oriented development trends.

Approval of Minutes

Approval of the July 26, 2012 draft meeting minutes was waived initially due to the lack of a proper quorum. When it was noted that Carolyn Grawi had indicated her approval of the minutes and the annual report when she sent her regrets about the meeting, it was moved and seconded by Gary Piotrowicz to accept her vote on the minutes by proxy. Gary Piotrowicz then moved that the July draft meeting minutes be approved and Lt. Gary Megge seconded the motion. Ms. Schulz announced that draft meeting minutes are posted on the website: www.michigan.gov/completestreets. The final minutes replacing the draft minutes will be posted next week at that website.

Presentations

Darrell Harden, Co-Chair of MDOT's Complete Streets Internal Team, explained the development of implementation guidelines and team's progress. The adopted mission statement was read by Mr. Harden. The team desires uniformity of application and consistency on the exception process and guidance documents being developed. They also desire flexibility, but want to ensure that exceptions are being granted only after the department makes its best effort to find solutions. They hope to update scoping documents and develop guidance documents to enable design engineers and staff to make good complete street decisions. The context sensitive solutions process is integral to this effort. The deadline for the implementation guidelines is December 2013, and internal team progress will be reported to the council as needed.

Brad Peterson and Josh DeBruyn added to the conversation, speaking on behalf of MDOT. Brad, referring to the context sensitive solutions process, stated webpages were being updated and expanded. Josh stated that in relationship to flexibility, chapter twelve of the MDOT road design manual was being updated in accordance with the 2012 AASHTO bike guide.

Annual Report

Polly Kent presented a draft 2012 report of the Complete Streets Advisory Council's proceedings over the year. The members reviewed the report and approved it, with Carolyn Grawi's proxy vote. Rory Nuener moved and Gary Piotrowicz seconded the motion.

Meeting Schedule

A roster of dates for four meetings in 2013 was presented for approval and discussion. Members discussed whether or not the council had successfully completed its charge and whether additional meetings were still necessary, but no agreement was reached. The group agreed to meet on February 28, 2013, and discuss the issue further as an agenda item at that meeting.

Wrap Up

Suzanne Schulz asked what the council would like to accomplish in the next year, and their function now that MDOT has adopted the policy. Possible agenda items include future reports from Darrell on the implementation team's progress, Jim Tischler's MiPlace presentation, and reports from each member on the progress of complete streets.

Public Comment: No public comments were made.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for February 28, 2013, from 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. at the Capitol Commons Building.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:11 p.m.