MEETING PURPOSE: 2011 BPAC Term Announcements, Pro Walk/Pro Bike Update, U.S. DOT Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations, Mobility 2035: The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Bicycle and Pedestrian Chapter Update, Regional Veloweb Update.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Welcome and Introductions – Chair, Renee Burke Jordan
   Renee Burke Jordan welcomed attendees and asked for everyone in the room to introduce themselves.

2. 2011 BPAC Term Announcements – Deb Humphreys
   Deb Humphreys introduced David Boski as the 2011 BPAC Chair; Dave Carter has been appointed Vice-Chair. Their respective bios were included in the handouts as Reference Item 1. Deb noted that historically either Chair position is represented by the east and west. The 2011 BPAC Meeting Schedule and topics for webinars have been confirmed. The designation for 2011 members would be mailed to STTC members.

3. Events and Training – Vice Chair, David Boski
   David Boski announced upcoming webinar and training opportunities. He asked for interest in APBP’s upcoming webinars. He noted that the Pedestrian Safety Focus States Web Conference was on Tuesday, November 23. November 30 is the “Making New Places for Play – Joint Use Agreements Between Schools and Parks“ web conference. The 10th Annual New Partners for Smart Growth Conference will be held February 3-5, 2011 in Charlotte, NC. NCTCOG is hosting a Pedestrian Safety Workshop Series February 28 – March 4, 2011. David asked the Committee if they had other events or training opportunities to share.

4. Update on Pro Walk/Pro Bike 2010 – Deb Humphreys
   Deb provided an update on the recent Pro Walk/Pro Bike Conference she attended in Chattanooga, TN in September. She noted there were very few representatives from Texas. The conference included over 650 participants, 72 panel presentations, and 100 poster sessions. Notable presentations of particular interest were Southern Success Stories from Lexington, KY.; Innovative Bicycle Facilities from Roswell, GA.;
Introducing Bike Planning to Planners and Engineers; and several Safe Routes to School presentations.

5. **U.S. DOT Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations – Deb Humphreys**
   Deb presented on the U.S. DOT Policy Statement that came out from Secretary Ray LaHood in March. The policy statement was provided in the handouts. Deb highlighted the purpose and rationale of the Statement, recommended actions for State DOTs, as well as TxDOT. Deb attended the TxDOT Bicycle Advisory Committee Meeting on November 2. State Bicycle Coordinator Paul Douglas spoke on the current work on an internal draft Policy response to the U.S. DOT Policy. It is currently being reviewed by FHWA. Components will include discussion of the 14 foot wide outside lane policy TxDOT currently utilizes for routine accommodations. TxDOT will also be adopting Part 9 of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) in full – this will include the section on shared lane markings. TxDOT has until January 2012 to adopt their own MUTCD, and at that time we can begin to use shared lane markings on TxDOT facilities when appropriate.

Comment: I believe TxDOT said that you could utilize shared lane markings now if you applied for permission from the design engineer.
A. DH – They stated you can if you would be using federal funds, but they did not say that would be true on a State highway or other facilities, so you still have to go through the approval from the design engineer prior to going to design. It is an option if you are not using federal money, but I’m not sure if they would approve it for a state highway project. Dave Carter clarified that as a municipal person, on a city street, we have the authority to utilize the MUTCD and we don’t have to wait for TxDOT to approve their state manual. Deb said that on local roadways with local funds you have a lot more flexibility to implement different types of facilities. Renee reminded attendees that time was very tight and if they had more questions to submit them via the comment sheet provided on the back of the agenda.

6. **Mobility 2035: Bicycle and Pedestrian Chapter Discussion – Natalie Bettger**
   Natalie Bettger spoke on Mobility 2035: The Metropolitan Transportation Plan, and reminded the Committee that this information had been brought before them on June 24, and a separate workshop was also held to provide more input into the policies and programs for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Chapter of Mobility 2035. Reference Item 4 was an outline of the Plan chapter with information being addressed today regarding existing goals and policies.

Natalie focused on the proposed goals for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Chapter of Mobility 2035 as Committee feedback was important on this item. She pointed out which overall long-range Mobility Plan goal the proposed goals listed in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Chapter supported. The first proposed goal is to Increase accommodation and planning for bicyclists and pedestrians. The Mobility 2035 Goal is Improving the availability of transportation options for people and goods. The second proposed Bicycle and Pedestrian Chapter goal is to Improve safety and mobility for bicycle and pedestrian transportation. The Mobility 2035 Goal is Ensuring adequate maintenance and enhancing the safety and reliability of the existing transportation system. Bicycle and Pedestrian Chapter proposed goal three is to Increase bicycle and pedestrian use in the NCTCOG region as an alternative to
vehicle trips. The Mobility 2035 Goal is Preserving and enhancing the natural environment, improving air quality, and promoting active lifestyles.

Proposed policies are 1) Promote bicycle and pedestrian transportation, safety, and education, and 2) Incorporate bicycle and pedestrian modes in regional planning efforts and programming of funds. For each of the proposed policies, there are recommended policy actions – How are we going to make this policy work? What are we going to do to support this particular policy? All recommended policy actions are available in detail in Electronic Reference Item 3. Natalie next reviewed the Existing Programs and highlighted the 17 proposed programs.

Natalie explained the timeline for Mobility 2035. Draft Goals, Policies and Programs were initially presented to the Committee in May 2010. A supplemental BPAC meeting for Mobility 2035 feedback was held in June. Draft chapter write-ups were turned in to the Mobility Plan team in October, and finalized draft Goals, Policies, Programs and Projects would be finalized in the next few weeks. Comments from the Committee are due by December 10, so any additional adjustments and considerations could be made prior to public meetings. Public meetings are scheduled for January 2011; members were encouraged to attend and provide feedback at those meetings as well. Information taken to the public meetings would be based on comments received by December 10. Local adoption of the Plan was anticipated in March 2011, and Federal approval sought in Summer 2011.

Q. Will there be any active participation as far as the safety campaigns for the region, or is it just a support to the cities to promote that?
A. NB – What we are putting in here is in support of that type of campaign. As that campaign comes up we would bring that back to this Committee for input and active correspondence and assistance. The long-range plan is really to look at what types of things we are promoting or supporting, that is the general type of language we use in there for policies. Individual projects would be brought back to the Committee to see what our role needs to be within the region.

Q. Can you explain how this chapter is being integrated with the rest of the Mobility 2035 document, and what the relative priorities are looking like right now?
A. NB – Natalie noted that Chad Edwards, Program Manager of the Mobility Plan team would discuss specifically what their group is doing – in general they look at how the chapter goals are integrated with the Mobility 2035 goals, which were outlined through this initiative, and obviously the financial side of things is still to be determined. Chad explained that the Mobility Plan as we are used to it is going to change. Currently the Plan is broken up into modal chapters and not user-friendly. It is being looked at and rewritten in a way that provides a transportation system approach, so it is all levels trying to implement a seamless perspective of the transportation system. So it includes a lot of the bicycle and pedestrian modes, but not separated in its own little group. It will show that there is an interaction between bicycle and pedestrian modes of transportation, the roadway and transit. It also talks about the financial constraints of the Plan. The money identified in the current Mobility 2030 Plan will not be available for Mobility 2035. A lot of projects will have to be cut, and that is where the effort is being made to “balance the books” on the amount of money expected. The types of projects we are hoping not to impact negatively are bicycle and pedestrian projects and any other safety or Travel Demand Management (TDM) projects.
Deb briefly went through the Regional Veloweb Map Update presentation. Veloweb maps were also available in the room for Committee comments. The Regional Veloweb is an interconnected network of off-street trails designed to provide safe, efficient mobility to pedestrians and cyclists. It does not include on-street facilities. However, it is encouraged to have on-street facilities connect to the Regional Veloweb facilities. Detailed information of design considerations are provided in Electronic Reference Item 4.

The existing Regional Veloweb map has recommended and candidate veloweb routes. Recommended routes were selected through a process according to destination proximity, density, and the amount of users the facility was anticipated to generate. Candidate routes were included in the Veloweb network, but did not score as high a priority. The planned Regional Veloweb does not include recommended or candidate distinctions for trail facilities. The Veloweb is subject to approval by the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) which only allows for updates of the map when the Mobility Plan is updated. Over 20 meetings have been held in the past two years on the Regional Veloweb update. Deb highlighted the goals and methodology for updating the map. The methodology for going through this update was to inventory all comments and suggestions from workshops; incorporate recommendations from the workshops; and make sure routes are consistent with city and county plans. If you think about the intent of the Regional Veloweb, it may help to understand that not all requested trail ideas can be incorporated. Trails included as part of the Regional Veloweb must serve a transportation purpose, as transportation dollars are being used to fund the Regional Veloweb. The existing Veloweb incorporated only four of the nine counties in the MPA; with the expansion of the MPA boundary to include twelve counties, the proposed Veloweb now extends into ten of the 12 counties. Detailed information is again provided in Electronic Reference Item 4.

Phase I changes to the Regional Veloweb were brought before this Committee in May. Phase I results ended with 1,135 miles of Veloweb trails. Comments from that meeting through June 30th were incorporated to create Phase II. The Phase II map recommendations were identified. A Phase II map was available in the back of the room for Committee members to view and comment on. Phase II results were presented with an end total of 1,644 miles of Veloweb trails. Cost assessments from local bids, engineers, and DOTs were taken into consideration for an estimated cost of $500,000 per mile of to construct the Regional Veloweb. Bringing down the figures for each mile from the previous amount of $1.5M has actually allowed us to not have to prioritize trails as recommended versus candidate as in the existing Regional Veloweb, as mentioned previously. The timeline for the next steps were presented and the meeting was opened up for questions or comments.

Q. You stated that all of the trails have equal priority. How does that work out in reality?
A. DH – Different types of funding programs have different criteria. For example, projects funded with Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) funds have to show an air quality benefit, so a project might be a higher priority if they demonstrated a better air quality benefit versus another. So we don’t determine a trail’s priority on the Regional Veloweb, but various funding programs will dictate priority projects through the established criteria and requirements.
Comment: I believe $500,000 per mile of trail is way too low; I believe it should be more like $1M.
DH – Thank you, we will make note of that. We have heard $1M, and we have also heard $200,000/mile so we try to estimate an average. Natalie Bettger asked members to send in their estimates and a catalog could be prepared to be useful for people.

Comment: You should not specifically exclude bridges as far as trail cost goes. Perhaps set a standard, for example, include a bridge for every mile and a half. But one bridge can easily cost $100,000 depending on where you cross, and the size of creek you are crossing. It is reasonable to at least incorporate some level of cost for bridges and retaining walls, just pick an average number per mile and go ahead and reflect that.

Comment: Earlier in your presentation you were talking about the unfortunate incident that happened on the Katy Trail and maybe adjusting design speeds of trails. As unfortunate as that was, that was one incident. There are far more crashes, pedestrian fatalities and bicycle fatalities on streets than there are on trails, even on mixed-use trails. One thing to keep in mind is the design speed on trails is really what sets the minimum radius of a curve. All the mid-block sections, all the straight-aways, it is an unlimited design speed based on how fast you can pedal. Artificially reducing the speed at a curve is not going to improve the safety of anybody everywhere else other than at the curve. All you are doing by reducing the minimum design speed is increasing the probability that a bicyclist is going to have a crash or not be able to negotiate around a curve. I would not recommend reducing the minimum design speed.

Comment: You may want to survey cities and find out what their speed limit is, if they have one. Some cities don’t have a trail use speed limit, but some do. Some enforce it and some don’t. I don’t see a point in designing something at 25 mph in my city when my speed limit is 15.

Comment: Maybe the region needs to be mute on what the speed limit should be and let the cities decide for themselves, unless it is on the Regional Veloweb and they are paying for the project.

DH – The recommendations for the Regional Veloweb are not requirements. We look at every project individually, so the speed limit presented is merely a recommendation. For example, we have funded trails on the Veloweb that are less than 12 feet wide, even though that the recommendation is for a minimum of 12 feet wide. Each project has different circumstances.

Q. Are trails wider than 12 feet allowed as part of the Regional Veloweb?
A. DH – yes. Once again the 12 feet is a recommendation, but obviously in specific areas of trail that have an extremely high amount of users, there might be a recommendation to have separated facilities for bicyclists and pedestrian. Ultimately the decision is made by the city, and each project is different. But you are correct, there are certain places when 12 feet is not enough.
All the projects currently on the Veloweb are provided in the handouts (Reference Item 5). This is from data received from the cities and what NCTCOG has on file. Deb encouraged the members to review the information and inform her of any needed corrections by December 10. Certain trails are listed as a collection of smaller segments, but that is due to the mapping. This is a list of projects that will be included in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Chapter of Mobility 2035. Projects currently in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and projects that have been completed that were included in the TIP will also be included. We don’t have the data to support specific sidewalk and on-street bicycle facilities, so that is why we created the programs that serve as place holders for these various projects; if projects arise that are in need of funding we can rely on these program to support implementation.

Comment: Another design approach could be to design all of the elements so that the speed of the trail was limited by the design elements continuously, in other words, you don’t have long tangent straight-aways, which can be done to try to help do that. You are not going to limit it by setting a speed limit, you can limit it by the elements that are involved in it. If there is a 10 mph curve hooked up to a 600 mph straight-away, it is not going to do much. On the separation, the same thing that complicates motor vehicle and bicycle and pedestrian interactions complicates trails where you try to mix the two different things. There is a lot of work being done now to look at separations on trails that are more than just lines. It looks like the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Pedestrian and Bicycle Council will soon come out with a report about physical separators between the bicycle lane and pedestrian walkway. That is also something to look at in certain circumstances.

Deb reminded the Committee that maps were available in the back. She asked for comments to be submitted via e-mail, standard mail, fax or phone to her by December 10.