

Bismarck/Mandan Bike Commuter Meeting
January 22, 2007
Bismarck Public Library, Room C

In Attendance

Brian Beattie, Loren Carson, Dale Heinert, Ben Kubischta, Mark Liebig, Ron Luethe, Anita Thomas

Meeting Summary

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the pros and cons of developing 'Safe Zone' legislation for North Dakota, review two educational brochures for 'Bike to Work Week' (BTWW), and examine maps and assess guidelines for bike commuting routes for Bismarck and Mandan.

'Safe Zone' legislation was briefly discussed after reviewing guidelines developed in Arizona, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Utah, and Wisconsin. The guidelines (more or less) stated that motorists need to provide a safe distance between a motor vehicle and a bicycle traveling in the same direction. This 'safe distance' is set at three feet. Violations resulting in a collision between a motor vehicle and bicycle are \$500 (for serious physical injury) and \$1000 (for death of the bicyclist) in Arizona and Oklahoma. Difficulties associated with enforcing the three foot 'safe distance' and the token nature of the violations seemed as primary motivators to table a 'Safe Zone' legislative effort (for now) and instead focus on increasing awareness of bicyclists by motorists on roadways through educational efforts.

Drafts of two educational brochures were shared with the group to obtain input on content, organization, and style. Suggested edits to the 'Bike To Work Week' brochure included to add a sentence on the use of reflective ankle straps for the 'Gear for your Body' section, deemphasize the need for a puncture kit, extra tube, frame pump, and multi-tool in the 'Gear for your bike' section. Suggested changes to the 'Bike Safety Basics' brochure were limited to switching the placement of the 'Safety: Before you ride' and 'Sharing the Road: Motorists' sections and remove verbiage in the 'Ride Predictably' section regarding signaling for a stop. It was also recommended to add the North Dakota Department of Transportation website as a contact/resource for bicycle commuters on the back page of both brochures.

Loren Carson shared the 'Bike Month' brochure developed for Basin Electric Employees in 2006. It contained much of the same information as the drafted brochures, and provided an excellent example on how to format a brochure for excellent readability.

Commuter route maps and guidelines for Bismarck were presented by Dale Heinert and Brian Beattie. Dale shared a bike commuting route map for Bismarck developed in the early 1980s by a consulting firm from Denver. The map – though dated – should provide a good starting point from which a more up-to-date map could be developed. Two other maps depicting Bismarck roadways and current bike paths were shared. Brian reviewed a potential color coding system to rate potential bike commuting routes as 'good', 'fair', and 'poor'. Brian and Dale agreed to

work together prior to the next meeting to merge a map with a coding system for Bismarck. A similar effort is needed for Mandan.

Ben Kubischta shared information regarding the potential construction of a bicycle/pedestrian path extending south from UTTC to University of Mary. Currently, the county is considering not participating in the path, which would mean it would not be built. Burleigh County Commissioners are requesting input on the potential path. Ben offered to forward an e-mail to the commuter group about this issue, along with contact information for the commissioners.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 19th, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Bismarck Public Library (Room C). A tentative agenda for the meeting includes a 'final draft' review of the educational brochures and a 'first draft' review of the commuting route maps/guidelines. Additional activities related to promoting BTWW will also be discussed.