

27 November 2007

**To:** Sally Hanley, NOACA,  
NOACA BAC

**From:** Anthony Ratajczak, Medina County Representative to the Bicycle Advisory Council

**Subject:** Comments on the July 2007 Draft NOACA Regional Bicycle Transportation Plan

I have a considerable number of concerns regarding the subject plan, most of which center on the fact that it is being presented (and therefore subject to final edit and approval) in December, but is written from the perspective of and with data from mid-2005. This conflict introduces confusion on the subject of the current status of bicycle transportation in the NOACA region and more importantly, results in erroneous conclusions and projections regarding future regional bicycle transportation infrastructure development and funding.

My specific comments are detailed as follows according to each section in the Plan.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

4<sup>th</sup> Bullet: NOACA's Bicycle Facility Plan is variously referred to in the text as the Priority Plan, Priority System or transportation plan. Use the same title consistently in the text or explain the difference between the "plan" and the "system". In many instances, the term "system" is a more apt description of the matter under discussion. Also, from the list of definitions, a "facility" includes bicycle parking and storage, but there is no reference to or discussion of either of these "facilities" in the Plan.

Para 6: Didn't the BASC also participate in development of the Priority Plan?

**BICYCLE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS:**

Luther Stevens is listed as both a member and former member. Has he resigned and is this an instance where the 2005 perspective and 2007 reality collide?

**I. STATUS OF BICYCLE FACILITIES AND PLANNING IN THE NOACA REGION**

"Status refers to the present (unless otherwise noted) but in fact here apparently refers to 2005.

1<sup>st</sup> Para: First sentence refers to the Bicycle Plan and the last sentence refers to the "regional bicycle system."

2<sup>nd</sup> Para: Again specific reference to the “system”. Further, the ‘evaluation’ is purported to be for the “total” system which should encompass all five counties in the region, but is in part only for Cuyahoga County.

List of Definitions: I would suggest also defining/explaining the Federal Aid System.

### **EXISTING BICYCLE FACILITIES IN THE REGION**

“Existing” as of what date? Here is an instance where the 2005 perspective collides with the 2007 reality. This list should be updated to include projects completed through at least mid CY 2007.

Facilities (from definitions) includes more than bikeways, but none other than bikeways are listed.

Update list of county projects noted here as “increases”.

MAP 2 – this map should be updated to late 2007 status. Progress would look better.

TABLE B: “Existing” as of what date? To the casual reader, this would imply the present. Update to at least mid CY 2007.

### **EVALUATION OF EXISTING BIKEWAY SYSTEM:**

TABLE C and the accompanying text for this section should be updated to mid or late CY 2007.

### **CUYAHOGA COUNTY BICYCLE COUNTS:**

Bicycle counts were conducted in all five counties. The data and discussion for all five counties should be here and in Appendix B. Planners in the other 4 counties should be made aware of the status in their respective counties so as to gauge progress and direct facility improvements.

### **BICYCLE RELATED ACCIDENTS IN THE NOACA REGION:**

These data (TABLE E) should be updated to as close to the present as possible.

Where is the data for 1997 through 1999?

### **PROGRESS IMPLEMENTING THE 1997 BICYCLE PLAN STRATEGIES:**

1<sup>ST</sup> bullet: It should be noted that the maps are based on ADT and fieldwork “noting highway pavement conditions, presence and width of shoulders, and sight distances.”

5<sup>th</sup> Bullet: I believe it would be informative to note how many BASC/BAC recommendations, either by number or by percentage of projects completed, were implemented. “Some of the recommendations have been implemented” implies a paltry number.

6<sup>th</sup> Bullet: “Projects that don’t accommodate cyclists and pedestrians **may** be required...” This requirement is not noted in Appendix F, Policy, and in either case, I thought it is a “requirement” to explain why bikes and peds are not being accommodated.

## **2004 STATE OF THE REGION REPORT:**

Is there not a more recent report?

Under Programs and Policies, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph, it should have read”.. Adopted bike **facility** design guide lines.”

## **II. PLANNED AND PROPOSED BICYCLE FACILITIES:**

There are numerous references to the Priority Plan and the Priority System. There is a need to use consistent terminology.

### **PROJECTS IN NOACA’S PLAN AND TIP:**

The first paragraph sets the tone for the confusion and data conflicts that ensue between this document’s 2005 perspective and 2007 reality.

MAP 5 “, .. Existing and Planned Bikeways” is labeled “May 12, 2006” which is in conflict with the 2005 perspective of the Plan.

MAP 6 “...Proposed and Conceptual Bikeways” is dated April 13, 2005

Summary of TIP bikeways programmed for 2006 – 2009 (p21):

#### Cuyahoga County:

Bullets 5, 6 and 8 are completed, I think bullet 4 is also complete, and a portion of bullet 9 is near completion.

Geauga County Bikeway: complete

Lorain County Waterfront Walk: I think this project is complete.

Other projects may also be complete.

Other Planned Projects:

Medina County:

Chippewa Rail Trail – complete

Roscoe Ewing Shared Use Trail – Phase 1 – complete

Projects listed for the other counties may also be complete.

#### **PROPOSED AND CONCEPTUAL BIKEWAYS:**

First sentence should state reference date for “currently”.

Table F should be updated and the date of update noted.

Since we are well into 2007 and the Medina County Bicycle Transportation System that I am working on is almost ready to go to the County Commissioners for final approval, it should be included in the Planned Routes for Medina County. The system comprises approximately 210 miles of routes, most of which are on roadways.

#### **IV. FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT OF COST OF BICYCLE INFRACTURE:**

Is there a reason for using the term “infrastructure” in the title of this section? And, in the first sentence, the reference should be to the “Regional Bicycle **Transportation** Plan”.

I have 2 major concerns with this section: 1) that it does not reflect 2006 or even 2007 data, and 2) how it is organized.

First, I believe the analyses leading to the conclusions in tables H, I and J are seriously flawed because of the omission of bikeway data through 2007 and estimating mileage from 1997 to 2005 when bikeway activity was in its infancy. Considerable recent activity is thus omitted. These errors lead to serious under estimates in bikeway funding forecasts which could undermine future bikeway activity. I have therefore developed new bikeway estimates using data from the NOACA 2007 Annual Summary Report.

Attachment 2A displays the NOACA 2007 data in the first 2 tables. In the third table I have calculated the average miles constructed from data year to data year. And in the fourth table I have calculated the average annual miles constructed from 1997 through 2006. Tables 1, 2 and 3 are shown in graphic form in attachments 2B, 2C, and 2D.

Transposing data from Attachment 2A tables 3 and 4 to my revised Tables H-1 and H-2 (see Attachment 1) results in a substantial increase in the forecast growth in bikeway miles over the next 25 years and implies a consequent increase in forecast funding (I will leave it to you to insert these data into tables I and J).

Forecasting funding requests is a tricky business and annual funding requests and subsequent obligational authority are always less than long term projections. History is

often not a good basis for forecasting and I believe that to be the case here. Given the ever rising fuel costs, increased attention on global warming and increasing highway congestion, I believe this report should focus on data showing the more recent growth in bikeways as the basis for its funding forecast.

Second, the discussion of how bikeway costs are determined should be separated from the discussion of bikeway mile and bikeway cost estimates. I suggest the following organization for this complete chapter (your chapter titles and first few words from accompanying paragraphs):

**IV. Financial Assessment of Cost of Bicycle System Infrastructure** (to use your terminology)

This financial assessment .....

Bikeway Mile Estimates

The priority system.....

According to the *Estimated*.... I would suggest putting these data in a table, see my attachment 1.

Bikeway Costing Estimates (note terminology change)

Recent costs.....

From the data gathered.....

Wide ranging costs.....

Estimates of Costs For Bikeways On the Priority Plan

Ideally, all 331 miles.....reconstructed **over the next 25 years** would ....(note change from **annually**).

The following assumptions.....(my comments below in italics)

Regarding these assumptions:

*First Bullet: I believe 20% is too low. Consult with the county engineers.*

*Second Bullet: I believe 80% is too high. Consult with county engineers.*

Using these assumptions....

Estimating Costs for Bikeways Not on the Priority Plan

Retain the rest of the original organization.

**ESTIMATING COSTS FOR BIKEWAYS ON THE PRIORITY PLAN:**

The data in the second paragraph would more easily understood if it were in a table (see my attachment 1).

**ESTIMATING COSTS FOR BIKEWAYS NOT ON THE PRIORITY PLAN:**

Consider revising this section to reflect the data in my discussion above.