



TRANSPORTATION SAFETY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, October 30, 2018
1:00 – 3:00 P.M.
COG Meeting Room 4/5

Acting Chairman: Andrew Meese, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Attendees:

Bala Akundi – BMC (phone)
Pam Beer – Cambridge Systematics (phone)
Cindy Burch – BMC (phone)
Michael Farrell – MWCOG
Matthew Gaskin - MWCOG
Meredith Hill – MDOT
Vanessa Holt – Fairfax County
Rahul Jain – DDOT
Tim Kerns – UMD National Study Center (phone)
Toria Lassiter – MDOT
Taylor Lee – Sam Schwartz Engineering
Andrew Meese – MWCOG
Eric Randall – MWCOG
Richard Retting – Sam Schwartz Engineering
Jon Schermann – MWCOG
Eric Tang - VHB

MEETING NOTES

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Participants introduced themselves.

2. COLUMBIA PIKE PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE STUDY

Mr. Retting and Ms. Taylor spoke to a PowerPoint presentation on the recently completed Columbia Pike Pedestrian & Bicycle Study. This study was sponsored by COG on behalf of Fairfax County through the Transportation-Land Use Connections Program. The objective of the study was to enhance bicycle and pedestrian facilities with respect to safety, continuity, connectivity, and comfort along the Fairfax County portion of Columbia Pike. The study area encompassed a 4.5-mile section of Columbia Pike from Little River Turnpike to the Arlington County border. The corridor traverses commercial land uses on either end (Annandale and Baileys Crossroads) with mainly residential uses mid-Pike. Average traffic varies between 23,000 and 32,000 vehicles per day and there are nine bus routes along portions of the corridor. There are two intersecting marked bicycle routes and trail networks through nearby parks and along Columbia Pike, however there are significant gaps in connectivity.

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Pedestrian and bicycle crashes have occurred throughout the corridor, with concentration in the Annandale and Bailey Crossroads areas. These crashes resulted in two pedestrian fatalities, 12 pedestrian injuries, and three bicyclists injuries between 2014 and 2016. The study team identified and mapped the gaps in the Columbia Pike bicycle and pedestrian networks in both the eastbound and westbound directions.

Several concepts to enhance bicycle and pedestrian facilities for each context zone (Annandale, Mid-Pike, and Baileys Crossroads) were developed. Three nearer-term concepts for the Annandale zone were provided. Each of them included new sidewalks and a study for pedestrian activated signals. Two of them also featured road diets while the third preserved the existing travel lanes. The concept for the Mid-Pike zone included several elements to create continuity in the bicycle and pedestrian network. In the Baileys Crossroads area, the recommendations included added and widening sidewalks, upgrading standard crosswalks to high visibility markings and studying pedestrian-activated signals. Longer-term concepts for the commercial areas had already been developed and documented in both the 2017 Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan and the District Design Guidelines for Baileys Crossroads & Seven Corners.

In response to a question from Mr. Farrell's about next steps, Mr. Retting noted that while some longer-term items would happen with redevelopment, there are also many improvements identified in the report that could be implemented in the near term. In response to a question about how the two pedestrian fatalities compare with other locations in terms of rates, Mr. Retting said that it is very difficult to come up with crash rates for pedestrians because there are no standard ways to come up with the denominator, unlike for automobiles where one can use VMT for example. He also noted that two fatalities in three years seems like a lot and that improved lighting has been shown to reduce pedestrian crashes. One of the recommendations is to upgrade the pedestrian signals to ped heads.

3. MARYLAND HIGHWAY SAFETY TARGETS

Ms. Hill presented information on Maryland's latest highway safety performance targets, the methodology used to set them, and plans and projects for the future. MDOT's goal is to ensure a safe, secure, and resilient transportation system for all users with the objective of reducing the number of lives lost and injuries sustained on Maryland roadways. She noted that the only acceptable number of such deaths is zero and stated that Maryland "Towards Zero Deaths" approach will reduce highway fatalities and serious injuries by at least 50% by 2030, from a 2008 baseline. Ms. Hill then shared the state's interim targets based on 5-year rolling averages for total fatalities, total serious injuries, fatality rate, serious injury rate, and total nonmotorized fatalities and serious injuries. Both the number of fatalities and the fatality rate in Maryland increased in 2017. She noted the relationship between increasing VMT and the number of fatalities and serious injuries and that one of every five traffic fatalities in Maryland is a pedestrian.

She then reviewed the results of applying the statewide target-setting methodology to the Maryland portion of the National Capital Region as it relates to each of the five performance measures and noted that with respect to total serious injuries and the serious injury rate, the region is already meeting the targets.

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Mr. Schermann noted that Maryland’s statewide targets were higher this year than they were last year despite having the same fixed 2030 endpoint and wondered why this was. Ms. Hill replied that because the 2017 data points were higher, the steepness of the exponential curve was greater to still meet the 2030 goal. Mr. Tang asked about the possibility that different regions of the state might have to have more or less aggressive targets in order for the state to meet their overall target. Ms. Hill replied that this was up to the discretion of the MPOs and their decision to set their own targets or accepts the state’s targets. In response to a question from Mr. Randall, Ms. Hill noted that the Maryland Highway Safety Office encourages local jurisdictions to develop their own Strategic Highway Safety Plans and they provide grants and technical assistance to those jurisdictions.

4. UPDATE ON SETTING HIGHWAY SAFETY TARGETS FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

Mr. Schermann briefed the subcommittee on the current status of the effort to develop highway safety targets for the National Capital Region consistent with the target setting approaches of Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. He noted that both the number and rate of fatalities increased between 2016 and 2017 while the number and rate of serious injuries as well as the number of nonmotorist fatalities and serious injuries declined over the same period. Mr. Schermann then showed a series of charts indicating that, because of the 2017 increases in fatalities, it is very likely that the region will not meet the fatality and fatality rate targets set last year.

Mr. Schermann then reviewed two approaches to establishing 2019 safety targets. Option A, which is identical to what was done last year, consists of developing sub targets for each state’s portion of the National Capital Region using the respective state methodologies, and then mathematically combining the three sub targets into a single set of regional targets. Option B is the same as Option A except that no targets are allowed to be higher than what was set last year. Targets derived using each option are displayed below:

Performance Measure*	2015-2019 Target <i>Option A</i>	2015-2019 Target <i>Option B</i>
# of Fatalities	260.6	253.0
Fatality Rate (per 100 MVMT)	0.611	0.588
# of Serious Injuries	2,919.6	2,919.6
Serious Injury Rate (per 100 MVMT)	6.564	6.564
# Nonmotorist Fatalities & Serious Injuries	508.6	508.6

Mr. Schermann noted that next steps included presenting the target setting methodology to the Technical Committee in November, presenting draft targets to the TPB in December, and requesting Board approval of targets at the January TPB meeting.

Mr. Retting noted that it is not uncommon for boards to be uncomfortable with the results from this target setting process. He also noted that the main purpose of setting targets is to encourage decisions that help drive the numbers down and as long as you can show that you are making efforts it is justifiable to go with option B. Mr. Farrell remarked that there are benefits to this process in that

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it brings safety to the board. Mr. Meese noted that MPOs are required to set these targets, but that effecting change is beyond the control of the MPO. Ms. Hill noted that by utilizing each state's methodology, option A reflects what the states are planning to do – there is also confusion that typically arises in this process around the words “targets”, “objectives”, and “projections”.

5. STREET SMART UPDATE

Mr. Farrell briefed the subcommittee on the outcomes of the Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 Street Smart campaigns and on the plans for the Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 campaigns. He noted that in terms of marketing, mass media is a niche where the TPB can add value. Also, Street Smart is one media campaign for one media market and that it's not cost effective for individual jurisdictions to buy their own ads. A key finding presented was that as of 2017, 26% of the region's traffic fatalities were pedestrians or bicyclists. Additionally, Mr. Farrell stated that funding for Street Smart is largely federal, with WMATA contributing some local funds. COG's own administrative expenses are covered out of the COG dues.

Press events have been effective and have generated a significant amount of media coverage. Regarding paid media, the campaign consists of transit, radio, digital, shelters, gas pump toppers, and internet ads. He noted that pump toppers enhance outreach to motorists in areas where there is limited transit service. Mr. Farrell explained that the value of donated media greatly exceeds the paid media budget and that much of it is free exposure on transit agency buses. Also, Street Teams and Enforcement Activations engage the public directly and help generate further press coverage. He explained that enforcement activations take place when staff notify the press about the time and location where the enforcement will be occurring.

Mr. Farrell noted that the program's effectiveness is evaluated via a survey which helps to gauge the degree to which the public is hearing and remembering the messages. Results of the Spring 2018 survey illustrate a decrease in brand awareness. This year's fall campaign will take place between election day and Thanksgiving. The press event will take place on November 8 and the new element of appeal is the Virtual Reality events, which train people to look out for pedestrians. A yellow Camaro is used as an attention drawing prop. The annual report and demonstration of the virtual reality activity will be posted to the TPB tech and board meeting pages.

Mr. Meese noted that we host a best practices workshop for law enforcement where we share with them how data can be used to help them direct their efforts to the greatest effect. Mr. Farrell agreed and noted that this is a great venue where enforcement agencies can share knowledge about what works. Mr. Schermann noted that the materials for the campaign are free for others to use or modify for their own campaigns.

7. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION – SCOOTER SHARE SAFETY

Mr. Farrell began the discussion with an announcement that representatives from the District of Columbia, Montgomery and Arlington Counties, and the City of Baltimore tomorrow to discuss their dockless bike and scooter share programs. Mr. Schermann added that he added this to the agenda to find out what the safety impacts are for these scooter programs – they seem unsafe, but how are the data coded in crash reports – does anyone have any insights on this? Mr. Retting said that they have looked into this and there is not much data yet, but also that there are many different devices

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that are called scooters which is challenging for how to code them in the safety data. He also shared that his firm has started work on a NHTSA research program that includes a review of state laws on this topic. Mr. Jain added that he has monitored scooter deaths in the last few months and there were three fatalities recently. None of the riders were wearing helmets and as soon as they contacted the ground they sustained fatal injuries.

2:55 P.M. 8. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Schermann noted that the next Transportation Safety Subcommittee meeting will be on Tuesday December 18, 2018.

3:00 P.M. 9. ADJOURN

