

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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Item #8

MEMORANDUM

TO: TPB Technical Committee

FROM: Michael Farrell
Transportation Planner III

DATE: June 20, 2008

SUBJECT: Update on Transportation Safety Activities

This memorandum provides an update on recent transportation safety activities, including the April 29 Regional Pedestrian Safety Workshop, a follow-up resolution by the COG Board of Directors, and a June 23 meeting of the TPB Technical Committee's Transportation Safety Subcommittee.

Background: April 29 Pedestrian Safety Workshop

Pedestrian safety is a growing area of concern for the region, particularly in the wake of a series of pedestrian crashes involving Metrobuses, a spike in pedestrian fatalities in the District of Columbia, and a persistent trend of pedestrian fatalities in suburban jurisdictions. In order to better define the problem and find solutions, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) proposed and funded a pedestrian safety workshop, in partnership with COG and the American Automobile Association (AAA). The workshop was held on April 29, 2008 at the National Press Club. Staffs of WMATA, AAA, COG/TPB, and member agencies worked together to organize the workshop.

The workshop was attended by approximately 200 individuals, including elected officials, transportation agency representatives, and pedestrian safety experts from a variety of fields: transportation, law enforcement, engineering, public education, transit, disability services, planning, health, engineering, schools, public affairs, insurance, military, business, community organizing, and the media. Plenary session speakers emphasized the importance of walkability for economic development, the benefits of walkability particularly for transit users, and the need to sustain and expand existing regional pedestrian safety programs such as Street Smart. Breakout sessions produced recommendations for specific actions to improve pedestrian safety, such as:

1. Establish regional bus stop siting guidance.
2. Develop land use review with transportation (especially pedestrian) in mind.
3. Improve crosswalk design
4. Collect adequate data and use multimodal performance measures.
5. Establish and enforce consistent laws across the region.
6. Improve education for drivers and pedestrians.

COG Board Briefing and Follow-Up Action

A briefing on the April 29 workshop was provided to the COG Board of Directors at its June 11, 2008 meeting. At that meeting, the COG Board adopted Resolution 32-08 (attached) in the interest of taking action following workshop recommendations. COG Resolution 32-08 addresses the major aspects of pedestrian safety: education, enforcement, and engineering, the "Three E's". A number of the recommended actions in the COG resolution are pertinent to TPB activities, including:

- Supporting the continuation and enhancement of the Street Smart pedestrian safety outreach campaign, as well as other education efforts
- Advocating efforts to make the region's communities more walkable, including pedestrian-safe speed limits and traffic calming measures
- Urging increased resources for the TPB's Transportation-Land Use Coordination (TLC) program

The COG Board also asked COG staff to prepare a follow-up work program based upon the recommendations.

Transportation Safety Activities

The TPB process and work program were already active in pedestrian and overall transportation safety. The TPB's Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee has regularly discussed the topic of safety, and has sponsored or participated in numerous events in recent years addressing safety, including seminars on the Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines, Designing Urban Arterials for Walkability, Walkable Communities Workshops, Intersection Design, Trails Management, Pedestrian Safety Enforcement, and Safe Routes to School. The Street Smart Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety campaign has also been stepped up to twice per year, with the most recent wave in March 2008 garnering record publicity and law enforcement participation.

The FY2008 and FY2009 Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWPs) include a Transportation Safety Planning task. The newly formed Transportation Safety Subcommittee is meeting on June 23, 2008. TPB staff will provide a briefing on the outcomes of the June 23 meeting at the June 27 TPB Technical Committee meeting.

TPB staff has also worked in coordination with the state transportation safety planning activities in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia., attending planning meetings for the State

Strategic Highway Safety Plans in the District of Columbia and Maryland, various bicycle and pedestrian forums, and the Maryland Safety Summit on November 30, 2007.

Proposed Follow-Up Actions

COG/TPB staff suggests addressing the actions requested in the COG Board resolution to the extent possible through the ongoing Transportation Safety Planning and Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning programs under TPB and the UPWP. These programs and their associated subcommittees bring together many of the stakeholders involved and interested in tackling pedestrian safety issues. The TPB Technical Committee and other COG and TPB committees will also be briefed as necessary. It will be helpful for Technical Committee members to coordinate with officials and staff in their own agencies and jurisdictions, especially with members of the TPB as well as the COG Board of Directors from their jurisdictions, to help ensure consensus on activities and resources among the involved boards, committees, jurisdictions, and staffs.

Overall, these recent regional activities on transportation safety issues show increased momentum on the topic. These activities will ensure that transportation safety is more fully considered in regional transportation planning, and are hoped to make a true impact in the safety of the region's transportation systems.

**Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002**

**RESOLUTION ENDORSING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVED
PEDESTRIAN SAFETY**

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) and the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board have a long history of supporting region-wide policies to improve traffic safety; and

WHEREAS, despite the extensive work being done in the region to address vehicular and pedestrian safety in the area, there still exists the problem of pedestrian injuries and fatalities; with more than 80 pedestrians killed and over 2,300 injured every year, accounting for one fifth of all persons killed on the roads in the Washington region; and

WHEREAS, a workshop on pedestrian safety was held on April 29, 2008 involving regional leaders and subject matter experts to discuss planning problems and recommend solutions; and

WHEREAS, workshop participants identified walkability, encompassing both safety and access, as important to the economic future of our region, recommended that a higher priority be placed on pedestrian access and safety, and identified a need for the use of pedestrian safety performance measures in transportation and land use projects; and

WHEREAS, workshop participants concluded that compliance with laws requiring motorists to yield to or stop for pedestrians in crosswalks, and requiring pedestrians to use the crosswalks, needs to be improved; and

WHEREAS, workshop participants identified the concern that differences in laws across the region regarding motorists stopping or yielding to pedestrians make it difficult to educate the driving and walking community in the region; and

WHEREAS, local subject matter experts expressed the need for more complete crash data, including the speed at which pedestrians are hit; and

WHEREAS, workshop participants determined that best practices according to the Americans with Disabilities Act are not being consistently followed; and

WHEREAS, workshop participants supported the continuation of the regional Street Smart pedestrian safety public outreach campaign, which has had success at changing driver and pedestrian behavior for the better.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS THAT:**

1. The region supports the continuation and enhancement of transportation safety education efforts, including the Street Smart program, the Safe Routes to School program, and effective driver education (including licensure), with increased targeting of high risk populations; and

2. The region urges sustained efforts by the jurisdictions of the Washington region to enforce pedestrian safety laws, including the deployment of dedicated traffic enforcement units by jurisdictional police agencies, as well as the enhanced compilation and analysis of pedestrian safety data; and
3. The region advocates efforts by the jurisdictions of the Washington region to make their communities more walkable, including pedestrian-safe traffic speeds, ample pedestrian facilities, well-designed bus stops, best engineering practices for accommodating the disabled, and full incorporation of pedestrian needs into transportation performance measurement, engineering, and construction; and
4. In order to accomplish these goals for enhanced pedestrian safety, the region urges the Transportation Planning Board to significantly increase available funding for its successful TLC program.
5. The region urges the Commonwealth of Virginia to amend its transportation safety laws to require motorists to stop for pedestrians, rather than only to yield to pedestrians as the current law states and provide local jurisdictions with discretion to lower speed limits and provide additional traffic calming measures; and
6. Copies of this resolution shall be transmitted to the Governors, the Mayor, the Maryland and Virginia General Assemblies, the Transportation Planning Board and the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority.

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Nicole Hange
Board Clerk