

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202 TDD: (202) 962-3213

DRAFT - Meeting Notes - DRAFT

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, March 10th
TIME: Noon to 2 p.m.
PLACE: COG, Room 1, 1st Floor
777 North Capitol Street NE
Washington, DC 20002
CHAIR: Tim Davis, City of Frederick

Attendance

Leverson Boodlal – KLS
Cina Dabestani – VDOT
Kate Elkins – MVA-MHSO
Michael Farrell – COG/TPB
Neil Freshman – Fairfax County DOT (on the phone)
Enrique Gonzalez – Sam Schwartz Engineering (on the phone)
Dan Janousek – MNCPPC
Andre Meese – COG/TPB
Alyce Ortuzar – League of Women Voters
George Phillips – Prince William County DOT
Heather Ruthenberg – Sam Schwartz Engineering
Jon Schermann – COG/TPB
Marco Trigueros – COG/TPB

1. Welcome & Introductions

Participants introduced themselves.

2. Approval of Minutes from December 16, 2013 Meeting

Minutes were approved with no comments.

3. Update on Status of SHSPs

Representatives from Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia presented updates on the development of their respective Strategic Highway Safety Plans.

Ms. Elkins reminded the group that the Maryland Highway Safety Office moved from under the SHA to the MVA. Maryland is in the third iteration of its SHSP – each version has focused on fewer emphasis areas. The state has adopted a goal of “Toward Zero Deaths.” The process is data-driven and evidence-based and employs a model to match emphasis areas, target groups, and countermeasures to improve outcomes. The current plan goes through 2015, and planning has begun for the plan that will begin in 2016. To a question from Mr. Phillips regarding legislation, Ms. Elkins noted that some laws need to be revised after an adjustment phase (e.g. cell phone laws not covering texting).

Transportation Safety Subcommittee - DRAFT

March 10, 2014

Page 2 of 4

Mr. Dabestani discussed the current efforts to establish a district safety initiative for Northern Virginia under the SHSP. The goal is to reduce serious injurious and fatalities. They are identifying strategic locations – currently in the process of collecting data. The next step will be to identify countermeasures through engineering, prevention, or enforcement initiatives. The plan is anticipated to be completed in the summer followed by a comment period, and by November it would be finalized and published. The current SHSP goes through 2016. The plan calls for a 3% annual reduction in serious injuries and fatalities to 2030. Ms. Elkins noted that in Maryland, there is a similar target of 17% reduction over five years.

The group discussed some of the challenges to pedestrian created by engineering focused on vehicular access. Lack of proper sidewalks leads to risky behavior by pedestrians. Similarly, the clearing of snow from sidewalks has not been universal this winter (especially in residential areas), forcing pedestrians to walk on the roadway. However, less construction activity, reduced traffic, and lower speeds diminish conflicts and severity of incidents during winter weather events.

Mr. Boodlal went through the District of Columbia's ongoing process of updating the SHSP. DDOT has been analyzing data beyond just crash data – particularly location of traffic citations and trends in mode share and exposure. The SHSP is in its second draft. The first draft was distributed among the emphasis area experts for comment, and the final draft is anticipated to be available to the public by mid to late spring. The District has been partnering with regional agencies to improve data compilation. The National Park Service has jurisdiction over several roadways (Rock Creek Parkway and the National Mall), and due to the difference in crash reports, some of their data does not make it into DDOT's database. Additionally, they are looking to compare data from different sources – police, EMS, and trauma hospitals – to improve the accuracy of crash data. For example, EMS may transport a pedestrian to a hospital before police reach the site – meaning the incident may not be accurately documented in the police crash database. They have been in discussion with the District's four trauma hospitals (Howard, MedStar, Children's, GW) for eight months to match data from EMS in order to track injury severity more accurately. However, the coordination process is still underway. For the current SHSP, the data will be based mostly on enforcement data with additional transport to hospital information from EMS.

The current fatality reduction goals are more stringent than the ones set in the previous SHSP in 2007 given the improvements made since then. The goal for 2025 set in 2007 has already been met so a new trend line was developed and a goal of 50% reduction in fatalities by 2025 was set – from 30 fatalities to 15.

Five critical emphasis areas have been identified: high risk drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists, engineering/infrastructure, special vehicles, and special target areas (e.g. EMS, occupant protection). Pedestrian and bicycle crashes have been trending up; possibly due to the increasing popularity of active transportation and the associated increase in exposure. Motorcycle safety is an emerging topic given that although not numerous, motorcycle crashes tend to be very serious. There has been some discrepancy between WMATA bus crash data and police bus crash data – for every two crashes recorded by WMATA, only one is recorded by police. However, WMATA data is not readily available for analysis. A seatbelt use analysis was performed to determine who should be targeted,

Transportation Safety Subcommittee - DRAFT

March 10, 2014

Page 3 of 4

and it was found that passengers and commercial vehicle drivers were less likely to be protected. Seatbelt citation location data will be compared to crash location data to determine where occupant protection should be a priority.

Ms. Ortuzar asked whether causes of pedestrian crashes are being documented and if any analysis has been done on which signals are best for pedestrian safety. Mr. Boodlal noted that DDOT works to identify high crash locations and causes of pedestrian crashes. The SHSP does not go to that level. That data would be available through George Branyan.

In response to a question regarding pedestrian counts, Mr. Boodlal noted that it is being performed for bikes, but not regularly for pedestrians. However, pedestrian data is collected when specific projects are planned.

4. Follow-up to 2012 Regional Transportation Safety Picture Update

Mr. Trigueros went over a presentation addressing questions and comments from the safety data presentation at the previous safety subcommittee meeting focusing on the topic of geographic presentation of data. The original presentation consisted exclusively of tables and charts, and committee member requested some geographic presentation of data. The Mid-America Regional Council was identified as an example of what could be done. A map for the Washington region was created to show trends in each of the jurisdictions by comparing current year number of fatalities with the 5 year average. Members were encouraged to consider what performance measures should be illustrated. Mr. Boodlal noted that rates per population would be useful as population increases could affect the total number of fatalities. Mr. Janousek suggested the region be divided into polygons defined by features of the built environment. However, individual comprehensive crash location data is not currently available to COG. Mr. Farrell noted that breaking it down by jurisdiction could be helpful in informing safety programs.

Individual crash locations cannot be mapped at this point as that data is not regularly collected by COG. Mr. Dabestani and Ms. Elkins were not sure about the availability of crash location data or any legal limitations to sharing it but would work to see if it would be possible to obtain for this purpose. Ms. Elkins noted that Maryland is not geocoding crash data comprehensively but is moving towards completely electronic reporting. To a question regarding legal constraints to providing crash location data, Ms. Elkins noted that in the past, MDSHA has been guarded in what it distributes to the public but Montgomery County has been more open. In terms of accuracy, Maryland relies exclusively on police reports – which is not the most reliable source for medical data.

Ms. Ortuzar mentioned that there has been dissatisfaction in Montgomery County with the investigation of crashes. It was suggested that the issue be directed to Jeff Dunckel.

Members suggested other factors to consider including in the maps: home zip code of drivers involved in pedestrian collisions, facility type, functional classification, intersection density, urban vs. rural distinction. Mr. Meese suggested a sub-regional level analysis be considered as well.

Regarding the discussion of increased truck-related fatalities in 2012, Mr. Boodlal noted that in the analysis for DC's freight plan, they noticed there has been an increase in truck traffic on I-295.

Transportation Safety Subcommittee - DRAFT

March 10, 2014

Page 4 of 4

5. Discussion of MAP-21 Safety Performance Measure Guidance

Item tabled until April meeting due to delay in publishing of guidance.

6. Update on Street Smart Activities

Mr. Farrell provided an update on the Spring 2014 Street Smart pedestrian and bicycle safety campaign. The campaign will be launched on April 7th and will consist of outdoor advertising, radio spots, social media, and street level outreach.

Ms. Ortuzar suggested working with insurance companies to distribute safety information to their customers.

7. Adjourn

Next meeting scheduled for April 28, 2014 from 12:00 to 2:00 at COG.