

# National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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## **Transportation Safety Subcommittee**

**DATE:** Monday, December 16<sup>th</sup>  
**TIME:** Noon to 2 p.m.  
**PLACE:** COG, Room 3, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
**CHAIR:** Tim Davis, City of Frederick

### **Attendance:**

Pam Beer – Cambridge Systematics  
Cina Dabestani – VDOT  
Tim Davis – City of Frederick  
Kate Elkins – MHSO  
Michael Farrell – COG/TPB  
Neil Freschman – FCDOT  
Enrique Gonzalez – Sam Schwartz Engineering  
Thomas Grogan – HDR  
Daniel Janousek – PG-MNCPPC  
Rene Lord-Attivor – Prince George’s County DPW&T  
Andrew Meese – COG/TPB  
Vijay Perincherry – HDR  
George Phillips – Prince William County DOT  
Marco Trigueros – COG/TPB

On the phone:

Carol Kachadoorian – Toole Design Group  
Lyn Erickson – MDOT

## **AGENDA**

### **1. Welcome & Introductions**

Participants introduced themselves.

### **2. Role and Activities of the Transportation Safety Subcommittee (Michael Farrell)**

- **Topics addressed in previous years**
- **Topics for 2014**

Mr. Farrell discussed the duties of the Transportation Safety Subcommittee according to the UPWP:

- **FY 2014 Unified Planning Work Program**
  - Traffic Safety Data Compilation and Analysis
  - Maintain Safety Element of the Constrained Long-Range Plan
  - Coordinate with State Strategic Highway Safety Plans
  - Support the Transportation Safety Subcommittee
  - Coordinate with “Street Smart” Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program
- **Emerging Topics**

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- Regional Transportation Priorities Plan
- Transportation Safety Performance Measures under MAP-21

In the past, there has been interest in developing a regional crash database, but was not pursued due to the high costs and level of sustained work the effort would require. However, the subcommittee noted that having a regional database would be desirable.

Ms. Elkins and Ms. Beer discussed the documentation of crashes in parking lots – recordkeeping is highly dependent on crash severity and jurisdictional procedures. Although Montgomery County is trying to collect this data due to the large number of incidents in parking lots, this type of crash is usually not included in MARS reports.

Mr. Farrell discussed the importance that transportation safety – especially regarding pedestrians and cyclists – had on the development of the RTPP.

Ms. Beer noted that MAP-21 requires consistent performance measures across states and MPOs. The four measures defined by FHWA are: number of fatalities, fatality rate, number of serious injuries, serious injury rate. Maryland and Virginia both have target reductions of around 3% per year – toward zero deaths.

- **Suggestions from the Subcommittee Members**

Presentations by the states and the District regarding SHSP updates will be scheduled in upcoming meetings.

### **3. The Regional Transportation Safety Picture: 2012 Update – (Marco Trigueros)**

Mr. Trigueros presented a compilation and analysis of various traffic safety emphasis areas in the National Capital Region.

The group discussed the gap between national fatality rates and regional fatality rates – rural areas tend to have higher crashes due to different road types and travel patterns. The higher than average number of fatalities in Prince George’s County – particularly among cyclists and pedestrians – was also noted.

Ms. Elkins noted that the data analyzed does not include bicycle crashes that do not involve a motor vehicle – even though a bicycle crash on a trail could result in serious injuries or even death. Mr. Farrell noted some ideas as to the low injury rates among Capital Bikeshare users – a major factor being the heavy, slow, highly visible bikes.

Regarding the compilation of crash data, it was suggested that crash location data be collected by COG – whereas it is not presently collected in a consistent manner. The issue of standardizing data across multiple jurisdictions came up, and Ms. Beer suggested we discuss with the Mid-America Regional Council in Kansas City – a bi-state MPO that compiles this sort of data.

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The group noted that presenting county-by-county data could help illustrate any underlying trends – particularly in the case of heavy truck crashes where there was a spike in 2012.

Ms. Elkins noted that occupant protection data was not included in the table on slide 23 even though it is an emphasis area shared by all three jurisdictions – the presentation will be modified to reflect this.

The question arose as to why distracted driving has not been defined as an emphasis area. Ms. Beer noted that we currently have neither the data to analyze nor the countermeasures to address the issue. Ms. Elkins noted that the definitions and documentation have not been standardized and therefore is not easily captured. As an emerging area, some jurisdictions across the country are implementing innovative efforts to address this growing concern.

The group discussed the relationship between bicycling injuries and deaths given the large number of injuries but relatively low number of fatalities. Cycling speed, quality emergency services, and the increasing popularity of cycling in the region were all discussed as potential factors.

Mr. Davis noted that it would be helpful to show City of Frederick data separate from the county given that it represents 35% of the county's population. Ms. Elkins noted that, keeping with historical trends, Montgomery County leads in bicycle and pedestrian injuries while Prince George's County leads in fatalities. The group noted that the infrastructure may have a lot to do with these statistics. Prince George's County sees a lot of injuries along arterials which combine slower traffic accessing local businesses with high speed commuters and do not have consistent lighting along the length of the roadway. The group expressed interest once again in presenting the data geospatially to determine where the problem areas may be.

Regarding the charts of crashes per 100,000 population in slide 32, the question arose as to why the City of Falls Church has such a high crash rate. The group acknowledged that it was to be expected given the high through traffic and the relatively small resident population.

The presentation will be modified to specify that the mode share in slides 33 and 34 for small jurisdictions is not available – data for the surrounding counties is used as a proxy.

Ms. Beer mentioned that Maryland has been studying the corridors with the highest crash rates to measure the effectiveness of certain countermeasures. Ms. Elkins noted that Montgomery County has some before and after data from improvements implemented at their pedestrian high incident areas.

There was discussion on data collection in Maryland. Maryland is implementing ACRS – an online tool to improve documentation of crash data by police.

#### **4. Benefit Cost Analysis of Behavioral Highway Safety Countermeasures (Vijay Perincherry, HDR Decision Economics)**

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Mr. Perincherry, with the economics and finance group at HDR, presented his research project to the meeting attendants.

HDR is developing a benefit-cost analysis framework and software tool to help assess the merits of investments in behavioral countermeasures such as automated speed enforcement, sobriety checkpoints, DUI counseling programs, measures to discourage distracted driving etc. As a part of this project, HDR would like to conduct some case studies to help assess some of these initiatives in one or more of the jurisdictions around DC. The project is funded by an NCHRP grant.

The goal is to create a framework and software tool for evaluation of behavioral traffic safety programs that will help local agencies conduct such evaluations and prioritize their programs.

Specific insights HDR is looking for include:

- What data is readily available to the decision makers?
- What output metrics are the most useful?
- What ongoing data gathering efforts are needed to continuously maintain such as framework?

NCHRP 622 identified behavioral countermeasures and classified them based on their perceived effectiveness. This project took those measures and used the previous classification to calibrate the tool. Although the report identifies countermeasures, there is currently no way to quantify the associated benefits.

The project is looking mostly for county level participation. Participants were interested in knowing exactly how much effort would be required. The participant would have to make data available to the consultant team and attend three half-day sessions to discuss the tool and potential output. These case studies will be carried out in the next three or four months.

### **5. Jurisdictional Roundtable (All)**

VDOT – The state is compiling data for reports and maps for each jurisdiction for each SHSP emphasis area.

Fairfax County – Neighborhood traffic calming is being implemented at citizens' requests – includes before and after speed studies.

Prince William County – The trails and blueways council will be putting a survey together to get input from multiple stakeholders to identify safety concerns regarding pedestrians and cyclists. The county has been working with Cindy Englehart at VDOT to pave shoulders along certain routes to improve cycling infrastructure – funding available for June construction.

Maryland Highway Safety Office – Nighttime seatbelt enforcement effort at freeway off-ramps has resulted in several citations for seatbelts and DUIs. Pedestrian enforcement efforts in Prince George's County have been upheld by courts and are ongoing.

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Prince George's County – New safety task forces have assembled in the county. The health department assembled one, and one was formed by the county council – a multidisciplinary group similar to other task forces that are currently active in the region. It was requested that some of the active task forces around the region present to the Transportation Safety Subcommittee this year.

City of Frederick – The city is working with MWCOG's TLC program to improve access and connectivity for cyclists and pedestrians along their "Golden Mile."

**6. Other Business**

The next meeting was set for February 24, 2014 at 12:00pm and will recur on a semi-monthly basis on the fourth Monday of the month.

**7. Adjourn**