

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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TRANSPORTATION SAFETY SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, April 28th
TIME: Noon to 2 p.m.
PLACE: COG, Room 2, 1st Floor
777 North Capitol Street NE
Washington, DC 20002
CHAIR: Tim Davis, City of Frederick

Attendance:

Leverson Boodlal – KLS
Cina Dabestani – VDOT (on the phone)
Tim Davis – City of Frederick
Lyn Erickson – MDOT
Michael Farrell – COG/TPB
Neil Freshman – Fairfax County DOT
Darren Flusche – League of American Bicyclists
Enrique Gonzalez – Sam Schwartz Engineering
Taran Hutchinson – MATOC
Dolores Macias – USDOT/FMCSA
Andrew Meese – COG/TPB
George Phillips – Prince William County (on the phone)
Jon Schermann – COG/TPB

1. Welcome & Introductions

Participants introduced themselves.

2. Approval of Minutes from March 10, 2014 Meeting

The group approved the meeting notes with clarifications previously issued by Mr. Boodlal.

3. Discussion of MAP-21 Safety Performance Measure Guidance

Mr. Trigueros presented on the Map-21 rulemaking and the group discussed their specific concerns with the process outlined. MDOT, MD HSO, VDOT, and DDOT will be submitting comments to the docket independently and will share those with the subcommittee as they become available.

Mr. Meese noted that there has been some discussion at the state level over the ability for NHTSA to judge whether state targets are adequate or not, given that the targets need to be identical to those stated in the state's SHSP.

Ms. Erickson noted that another concern involves the rule's requirement that data include all public roads even though the state may not control a lot of those roads.

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Mr. Boodlal added that recent improvements in crash reduction would result in tougher targets for the future. Since the introduction of the SHSPs, fatalities have decreased. The concern is that states will not have an incentive to reduce their fatalities and serious injuries because this will lead to even tougher targets in the future that may be harder to reach. There was some discussion of uncontrollable factors could cause an unexpected spike in crashes or rates (e.g. weather, population changes). Ms. Erickson also pointed out the difficulty in making forecasts in states that span different regions including coastline, cities, and mountains.

The group discussed the process by which the MPO would make decisions regarding the performance measurement process. Two options are available for MPOs: supporting the states' targets or setting unique targets for the region. A list summarized the issues associated with each of the choices. Mr. Meese suggested that the subcommittee would meet and make a recommendation that would be presented to TPB for a final decision. Ms. Erickson added that the fact that federal funds cannot cross state lines makes it hard for the Washington region to act as a whole and could be counted towards the cons of the MPO setting its own targets. At the same time, it allows the TPB to promote its own priorities and educate the public on what safety investments are being made – as opposed to them being buried in some line item in the TIP.

So far, the rules have not specified what, if any, repercussions the MPO would face if it does not meet its targets.

Mr. Flusche added that the MPO setting its own target is an opportunity to lead in the area of bicycle and pedestrian safety by developing non-motorized targets as well. To a comment regarding the issue of increased crashes due to increasing popularity of biking and walking, Mr. Flusche replied that this could also be an opportunity to improve data collection in order to find a good measurement for ped/bike exposure. Ms. Erickson noted that a drawback would be that states would be held accountable for crashes on roads that they do not directly control and cannot program projects on.

Mr. Boodlal discussed the difficulty in categorizing serious crashes and the need to move towards CODES before 2020. Currently, injury data is compiled by enforcement agencies and is not linked to hospital records that may present a more complete and accurate picture.

Mr. Boodlal also suggested that states be rewarded if they achieve set goals, specifically if their fatality or serious injury rates fall below a set threshold. In DC specifically, the historical trend line is approaching zero very rapidly and may not be a realistic base for target setting. Mr. Schermann brought up the issue that rural states would be at a disadvantage if thresholds were set since rural roads tend to have higher crash rates than urban roads. Additionally, if FHWA is looking for uniformity across the 12 performance measures, setting national – as opposed to state-specific – targets may not be desirable.

Regarding the inclusion of non-motorized targets in the federal process, Mr. Flusche thought it would be a good way for the TPB to show national leadership in the issue where other members noted that including these as part of the federal process would give us less flexibility in our reporting requirements. We are already tracking these measurements, and tying it to the federal process would

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make it harder to spend the federal funds. It could lead to states setting conservative targets in order to avoid the penalties outlined in the rule.

4. Briefing on the Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS)

Mr. Hutchinson gave a demonstration on the features of RITIS as it relates to transportation safety. In coordination with regional DOTs, the online tool catalogues and disseminates information on traffic incidents and response. The focus is mainly on the freeways due to the regional importance of that network. However, some events are entered by VDOT's signal control group and MATOC will alert DOTs whenever they hear of an incident through other sources. The group members had questions regarding the availability of data on local roads. There was discussion regarding the potential linkages between RITIS incident data and crash data being reported and about the ability to identify and single out secondary crashes that occur in the queues caused by primary incidents. Currently, MATOC will alert DOTs when they notice secondary crashes, but there is no automated way to search for them in the archive.

5. Update on Street Smart Activities

Mr. Farrell provided an update on the Spring 2014 Street Smart pedestrian and bicycle safety campaign. The press event was held on April 17th in Woodbridge, Virginia at the site of a recent crash that resulted in a pedestrian death. Speeches were given by two Prince William County Councilmembers, Sam Zimbabwe from the District Department of Transportation, and the victim's family. The street teams were also present at the event. These street teams will be replacing the radio booth events as the lower costs allow for more events and the mobile format allows for more interaction with passersby. We have received more than \$200,000 worth of donated media, primarily from transit properties.

6. Jurisdictional Roundtable

7. Other Business

8. Adjourn

Next meeting is scheduled for June 24, 2014.