



**BPAC General Meeting
June 17, 2020 10:30 am to 12:00 pm
Zoom Online Meeting**

Executive Council:

Elise Bremer- Nei | Charles Brown | Andy Anderson | Cassidy Boulan | John Boyle | Jen Buison | Brandee Chapman | Janna Chernetz | Eric Heitmann | Keith Hamas | Alan Huff | Larry Lindstrom | Yvonne Mikalopas | Jessica O'Connor | Linda Rapacki | Sonia Szczesna

Subcommittee Chairs:

Jennifer Buison, Chair, Safety Subcommittee, JBuison@njtransit.com
Betsy Mastaglio, Chair, Design & Infrastructure Subcommittee, bmastaglio@dvrpc.org
Sonia Szczesna, Chair, Legislation and Policy Subcommittee, sonia@tstc.org

Summary:

The meeting was brought to order by Charles Brown and all participants introduced themselves via the chat function on the Zoom meeting platform.

First Order

Charles introduced the new Executive Council Members - Andy Anderson, John Boyle, Jen Buison, Eric Heitmann, Larry Lindstrom, Yvonne Mikalopas (not in attendance), Linda Rapacki, and Sonia Szczesna. New Executive Council Members introduced themselves by order.

Second Order

Elise Bremer- Nei stated that NJDOT is working very hard to advance equity. She also mentioned the upcoming State Highway Traffic Safety Plan Summit #3, scheduled on Friday later in the week. Elise also thanked everyone for participating in the BPAC focus groups, and for sharing their thoughts and opinions.

Third Order

Subcommittee chairs discussed previously held meetings and noted how each subcommittee will proceed in the near future. **Betsy Mastaglio** provided information on the interim Design and Infrastructure Subcommittee meeting held in May, followed by **Jennifer Buison** who informed the group about the Safety Subcommittee's discussion earlier in the morning, and lastly **Sonia Szczesna** noted the Legislation and Policy Subcommittee's concerns and challenges.

Fourth Order

Susan Blickstein presented on the "NJBPAC: Roundtable Discussion Feedback & Best Practices," from the focus groups and her research, along with suggestions and recommendations for the group.

Fifth Order

Jerry Foster presented on “Vehicle Miles Traveled and Traffic Fatalities: The COVID-19 Natural Experiment,” discussing about its reliability as a measure for Vision Zero.

Sixth Order

Bettina Zimny, Rachana Sheth and Mike Dannemiller presented on NV5’s recent efforts to advance “People-focused Streets: Rapid Response & Resources.”

Seventh Order

The meeting is open for public discussion and comments. Charles closed the meeting.

Long Notes:

Charles Brown welcomed everyone to the first virtual BPAC General Meeting, and began by introducing the new Executive Council members – Andy Anderson, John Boyle, Jennifer Buison, Eric Heitmann, Larry Lindstrom, Linda Rapacki, and Sonia Szczesna – who introduced themselves in the given order. Yvonne Mikalopas will be introduced at the September meeting.

Elise Bremer-Nei noted that NJDOT is working very hard to ensure equity issues are addressed in all of their programs. She thanked everyone who participated in the BPAC focus groups and shared that she was happy to see all of the thoughtful comments that were provided during the focus groups. She then added that the TAP grant would be out soon, and briefly talked about how the NJ SRTS program is different than Safe Routes to School Partnership and NJDOT has no intention to similarly drop the “e” for enforcement. Lastly, she mentioned that the State Highway Traffic Safety Summit #3, to be held on June 19, 2020, will include an opportunity for discussion on both equity and enforcement.

Subcommittee Reports:

- Design and Infrastructure Subcommittee
 - o **Betsy Mastaglio** shared that the subcommittee had an interim meeting in May at which time the subcommittee discussed ongoing bicycle and pedestrian efforts in response to the pandemic. The discussion from the meeting was translated into a BPRC blog article which highlighted 15 responses noted during this meeting. Betsy noted they would schedule their next call soon and asked that anyone who wants to join can email her at bmastaglio@dvrpc.org.
- Safety Subcommittee
 - o **Jennifer Buison** mentioned that the group met in the morning and reflected on the function and role of the safety subcommittee in detail.
 - They came up with ideas on what pertains to safety, and planned to include public health representatives in the team, including the new Executive Committee member, Yvonne Mikalopas.
 - The subcommittee also plans to assess the risk of exposure associated with biking and walking during the pandemic, and provide guidelines for safety to inform and educate New Jersey residents.
- Legislation and Policy Subcommittee
 - o **Sonia Szczesna** informed everyone that the group is currently on hold, awaiting the feedback from the BPAC focus groups. In the meantime, Sonia discussed the need to push for the Bicycle Commuter Benefits Bill (HR1507) as part of the INVEST in America Act of 2020. Individuals or organizations can send a letter of support to Sonia so that she can then forward it to federal contacts. Please contact her via email sonia@tstc.org.

Susan Blickstein presented her findings from the “NJBAC: Roundtable Discussion Feedback & Best Practices.” She mentioned that many people participated in the BPAC focus groups, which were organized in late May and June. During the discussions, participants talked about BPAC’s strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats. The findings from reviewing BPAC’s mission statement indicated that the current mission:

- implies a one-way relationship
- left out other agencies/entities/groups, and
- minimized the role of walking and biking as an essential exercise or activity
- is missing critical elements such as equity, resiliency, public health, and a related panel of experts

Susan also reviewed the role of BPAC’s Executive Council and recommended specific improvements such as expanding the Executive Council to include other agencies and groups. There was also a discussion regarding increasing the frequency of BPAC general meetings and subcommittee meetings. Susan also noted participant interest in improving the work of subcommittees by providing more resources to handle and track tasks.

- Comments/questions
 - **William Yarzab** suggested adding equity to all the subcommittees work rather than just safety, education and equity group. Susan added that equity would be an overarching concept that will be incorporated all of BPAC’s work, but they are also open to a broader discussion on changing that.
 - **Jennifer Buison** informed everyone that the safety subcommittee is thinking of expanding to include both behavioral and enforcement aspects.
 - **Cassidy Boulan** questioned the purpose of expanding the Executive Council when their role and purpose is currently unclear. Susan responded that this decision also goes back to the core mission, and how it ties into coordination and implementation at state level, as it is hard to do that without an opportunity for all the groups to participate.
 - **Sonia** noted that if the legislative subcommittee is tasked with educating NJDOT and legislators, there is no actionable way to implement this without taking a stance on policy issues and legislation.
 - **Janna Chernetz** expanded on this point, adding that not being able to take a position on legislation is a substantial barrier for the legislative subcommittee in their ability to do anything of value on an issue.
 - In response, **Susan** referred to the role of the legislative subcommittee within the Oregon BPAC as an example of a legislative subcommittee that prepares relevant materials on issues. **Susan** highlighted that there is a careful boundary in their work and this subcommittee needs more clarity on where that line is.
 - **Andy Anderson** suggested that the group could help other organizations who can act with an insider voice that can help them navigate through the NJ politics to have their voice heard.
 - **Susan** agreed that other groups are more well-positioned to take actions and strategies, but they need both insider and outsider support that is aligned. Having a boundary in BPAC does not mean that their knowledge cannot help support groups who can take actions.

Jerry Foster presented on “Vehicle Miles Traveled and Traffic Fatalities: The COVID-19 Natural Experiment” using data from INRIX. The analysis looked at the relationship between traffic fatalities and volume, and found that even as traffic volume reduced by more than half during the stay at home order, overall, the number of traffic fatalities did not change. Hence, reducing traffic volume and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) did not reduce traffic fatalities. The finding indicates how death rate per VMT confuses the relationship between VMT and fatalities, and does not tell anything about the actual number of deaths, and hence, is irrelevant as a measure for Vision Zero.

- Comments/questions:
 - o **Charles Brown** talked about equity and stated that we should have more information on the drivers involved in crashes. He stated that currently we do not know anything about who they are and where they come from.
 - o **Keith Hamas** added on the importance of data in Vision Zero, including bicycle and pedestrian volumes, injuries, and referred to the work done by the Data Emphasis Area as part of the State Highway Traffic Safety Plan in addressing these concerns.

Bettina Zimny, Rachana Sheth and Mike Dannemiller from NV5 presented on “People-focused Streets: Rapid Response & Resources.” The presentation looked at how transportation planners and designers can best contribute during the pandemic, address new needs, and leverage short-term tactical solutions into long-term “new normal” practices. This presentation talked about using the current situation as an opportunity to look at equity and economics. It is also an opportunity to develop best practices and guidebooks that continue to accelerate addressing these issues. The presentation referred to NACTO’s “Streets for Pandemic Response and Recovery Guide” as an example of such an effort. They added that NV5 is currently working to develop guidance and conduct outreach and engagement for clients, including the City of Milan. They hope that this planning guidance for the response and recovery effort with NJDOT moves forward as a technical assistance project. Here is a resource list shared by the presenters:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1xUeyGIHAddxMCgbvGVP8iPqGACXDVEBMLebmuf1uw_g/edit?usp=sharing.

After the presentations, the meeting was open for a discussion as members posted the following updates in the chat window:

- Street Smart NJ Pedestrian Safety program is offering, as budget will allow, to get Street Smart materials to your organization. Please email me at wyarzab@njtpa.org or cell- 908-229-4018 if you wish to learn more.
- RideWise is sponsoring a Love to Ride Challenge in Somerset County - Love to Ride Somerset is a free, community-wide event for new and existing riders to celebrate the benefits of biking. We ride solo or with our family, but come together virtually with neighbors, friends and coworkers to support and inspire each other. Participate as an individual, or on a workplace, school, community or social group team. Create a team profile to boost morale, focus on health, and stay connected while we're apart. <https://www.lovetoride.net/somerset>
- Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia: Camden - Market and Federal Streets Stakeholder Meeting will be held on June 25th: https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUsdu2hrDMpG9R0a4FT5bT9A3V692S2p9_L
- An article from Mio Vision about decreasing traffic volumes without an associated improvement in safety outcomes was shared: <https://miovision.com/blog/decreasing-traffic-volumes/>

- Cross County Connection released a funding guide last month that may be helpful for communities with TAP coming out <http://www.driveless.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2020/05/CCCTMA-Funding-Guide-2020.pdf>

Meeting adjourned by **Charles Brown**.