



**Legislative BPAC Subcommittee Meeting  
December 3, 2019, 12:15 pm to 1:35 pm  
Rutgers University  
33 Livingston Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ**

**Attendees:** Sonia Szczesna (Sub-Chair), Liz Sewell, Mike Viscardi, Leigh Ann Von Hagen, Lisa Cintron, Bruce McCracken, Wenshu Lin

**Summary:**

Meeting began with a round of introductions before Subcommittee Sub-Chair, Sonia Szczesna brought the meeting to order.

**First Order:**

The group discussed ways in which a new NJDOT staff person could be an asset to trail building in New Jersey.

**Second Order:**

A discussion was started regarding a possible trails conference or summit.

**Third Order:**

The group discussed opportunities for working with NJ Transit with regard to using art in a public right of way. A draft policy will be discussed at the next meeting for attendees to sign onto.

**Fourth Order:**

The subcommittee members discussed inviting new attendees and raised the possibility of meeting in the morning rather than the afternoon.

**Long Notes**

Sonia Szczesna noted that there is a new NJDOT Resource Center within Local Aid and that a good contact may be Julie. Sonia raised the point that it may be helpful for the Legislative Subcommittee to make some recommendations to NJDOT regarding possible positions within the resource center. The conversation included the following suggestions:

1. Bring more people to Local Aid, including but not limited to entry-level professionals.
2. DVRPC may be able to send specialist to train Local Aid staff.

The subcommittee then turned to grants and funding with a discussion around municipal aid funding. Sonia noted that the funds have grown, but detailed items have not. Several suggestions were raised:

1. Include trails in the Strategic Highway Safety Plan
2. Spend TASA funding on design and planning
3. Transit villages: Pennsauken is a candidate but the parking lot is over designed; Highlands funding may be possible

Liz Sewell noted that Rails to Trails would like to coordinate an ask for NJDOT to make trail building easier and faster in the state. Suggestions for the ask included:



1. Create new positions at NJDOT to help manage trail projects
2. DVRPC serves as support for PennDOT in vetting projects
3. New dedicated trails positions may not be likely given current Local Aid staff shortages, but it may be possible to develop an employee training targeted towards trail projects

Subcommittee members provided an overview of the NJDEP Trails Council Meeting for those who were unable to attend. Members then discussed a potential New Jersey trails summit or conference. The group suggested possible titles including *Multi-Use Trails and Greenways Summit*, *Multi-Modal Transportation in New Jersey*, and *Getting People Places Off-Road on Foot and Wheels*.

Mike Viscardi noted that trails are beneficial to commuters, as well, and they should not be limited to one use (such as bike lanes), because they are extensively used. E-scooters can be allowed on trails, but their speed should be limited, perhaps under 12 miles per hour. He also noted that cities can be connected by greenways, not just trails, and their increased use can alleviate parking demands. NJ Transit is taking the lead but still needs support from MPOs. Lastly, Mike Viscardi stated that PSE&G rights of way may be relevant to the conversation and so they should be invited to the summit as well.

Possible trails summit topics included:

1. Micro-mobility, scooters, other trail uses
2. DEP Regulatory – wetlands, flood plains, riparian corridors.
3. County trails master plans (potential form: panel discussion)
  - Mercer
  - Somerset
  - Monmouth
  - Middlesex
4. Circuit (DVRPC) | SJTPO NJTPA
  - Connect trails from the south with those in the north
5. Aim to increase the number of people who live within a 10-minute walk to park: Morris County is trying to connect all municipalities within the county using safe greenways
6. NJTPA – trail intersection report
7. Funding (DVRPC)
8. Precedents in other places (PA Philly, NYC Empire trail, DC)
9. Definition of trails/greenways
10. ADA
11. “Getting to the Trailheads”
  - Where are they located?
  - How to cross a trailhead?

Sonia requested suggestions for possible summit which included Trenton (Barracks, War Memorial Thomas Edison University) or Rutgers (Camden or New Brunswick). The subcommittee also discussed possible attendees or invited guests to include: PSE&G, Public utilities, JCP&L, NJDEP, NJDOT. The timing for the event would be full day in May or June. Leigh Ann Von Hagen noted that if the event is held at Rutgers, it should be planned for after classes end and graduation is on May 17<sup>th</sup>. Potential sponsors for the event included NJDEP, NJDOT (could include the Greenways Guide), NJM, and the



Dodge Foundation. It was suggested that joining with other summits could be useful, such as the New Jersey Bike and Walk Summit or the Land Rally. The group determined the first year of the summit should be small and grow from there. The summit can also be used as an excellent way to bring together counties and municipalities to discuss trail plans so they can identify ways to align and connect trails across jurisdictions.

The conversation then turned to several miscellaneous topics. First, Mike Viscardi will work with Sonia Szczesna to draft a policy for art in the right of way for NJ Transit.

Sonia asked that Subcommittee members think about additional members to invite to participate, which included Corinne from AHA, Ed Goodell from NJBWC, and others from groups who are able to advocate and participate in sign-on's.

Subcommittee members asked if it was possible to convene the Legislative Subcommittee in the morning or even rotate which subcommittee meets in the afternoon for future BPAC meetings.

The group noted several topics to discuss at the next meeting including bicycle and pedestrian bills, topics for the 2020 Legislative Subcommittee workplan, and perhaps convening via conference call in between BPAC meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:42 p.m. by Sonia Szczesna.