



**Safety BPAC Subcommittee Meeting
December 3, 2019 9:30am to 10:30am
Rutgers University
33 Livingston Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ**

Attendees:

State

Angela Quevedo – NJDOT
William Riviere – NJDOT
Jennifer Buison – NJ Transit
Will Yarzab – NJTPA
Sean Meehan – VTC
Haoyun Wang – VTC
Wenshu Lin – VTC

Private

Joe Milanese – Sam Schwartz
Charles Romanov – WSP

Non-Profit

Liz Sewell – Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Arnold Anderson – NJBWC

County/Municipal

Andras Holzmann – Somerset County

Summary:

Meeting began with a round of introductions and safety-related updates.

First order:

Within a relatively loose structure, the group then reviewed New Jersey's first e-scooter fatality incident that happened in Elizabeth on November 20, 2019. The group talked about safety concerns related to e-scooters for the future and discussed measures to counteract the risk of a potential fatality.

Second order:

Liz Sewell, Rails-to-Trails inquired and discussed about reliable sources of crash data and the funding cut on bike and pedestrian projects in 2020.

Third order:

At the end, Subcommittee Chair Jennifer Buison wrapped up the meeting with a quick discussion on the format of future meetings. Building on the presentation shared by WSP in the last meeting, the group agreed to send the Chair any topics or ideas that they would like to share or hear one week ahead of the meetings. The group was also open to answer questions brought to the table by any group member. These topics, ideas or questions could be submitted via text or email.



Long Notes:

Jennifer Buison, Safety Subcommittee Chair, opened the meeting with a round of introductions and updates for the group.

Will Yarzab, NJTPA mentioned a report in the preparation for the City of Newark, for which pedestrian crash data was requested from Newark to launch a corresponding policy. He further mentioned that NJTPA could also collaborate with the Newark Police Department to acquire quality data given the good connection. The Chair asked about any lag time between the actual implementation and the date the report is finished, to which Will responded that it could be from six months to one year. Another group member was interested in whether the report was specifically prepared for Newark and was informed that there was a selection procedure applicable for any municipality that would like to be involved.

Charles Romanov, WSP briefly introduced a recently finished bike and pedestrian plan for Westfield, Union County and an ongoing corridor plan for Route 51.

Angela Quevedo, NJDOT Safety Committee, informed that NJDOT is working on the Strategic Highway Safety Plan for which the first summit was held on November 15, 2019. A group member inquired on by when the plan is expected to be complete, and Angela indicated that at least the draft would be completed by Spring 2020.

Andras Holzmann, Somerset County mentioned that the County was working on a NJTPA subdivision study.

Liz Sewell introduced the organization she was affiliated with – Rails to Trails – as an organization dedicated to establishing a regional trail network, in collaboration with DVRPC. She mentioned that their projects need input from a safety point of view. After the introduction, a group member was curious about whether the trails were separated as current rail and transformed use of rail, to which Liz responded that the organization would distinguish used and unused rails according to the AASHTO standards.

Joe Milanese, Sam Schwartz Engineering, shared that he has been looking at each of the 565 municipalities in New Jersey to list municipalities that enacted a complete streets policy, and the organizations involved in each of them. He is interested in local grass root organizations or special committees that are dedicated to complete streets, and welcomed anyone who wants to collaboratively work on the inventory.

The Chair then provided updates on NJ Transit's internal workshop, "lunch and luncheon", which was set up to educate people on complete streets and public transit using technologies.



After that, there was a developing discussion on the safety issues associated with e-scooter usage as to the first e-scooter fatality in Elizabeth, New Jersey, in which a 16-year-old boy died due to a collision with a tow truck. The tow truck was making a right turn without realizing that a Lime scooter was moving forward to the right.

The initial discussion focused on the question – “Who is to blame?”. The group agreed that the incident could have happened with any kind of road user and the e-scooter was not the main one to blame. A group member inquired on how e-bikes/e-scooters were categorized in NJDOT crash reports. Andy responded that these vehicles were considered as motorized vehicles in crash reports. Andy further mentioned that Asbury Park, where an e-scooter program had been successfully operated, was collecting e-scooter crash data and promoting helmet use, and yet, there is an extra need of education/training in regards to e-scooter usage.

Within the scope of education discussion, several concerns were raised from multiple perspectives. Group members strongly advocated for providing effective user guidance or training prior to allowing them to ride e-scooters. One of the group members suggested referring to any nationwide practice on training for how to use an e-scooter. Another group member mentioned that there were many practices that were disjoint, and suggested that the countermeasures be jointly and comprehensively considered. A group member pointed out that e-scooter training could be incorporated with existing bike training programs, if e-scooter users also consider themselves as bike users. Sean Meehan, VTC responded that relevant training adjustments could be included into the Safe Routes to School program as well. A concern was then raised relating to the boundary between e-bikes and e-scooters, as both vehicles were motorized. It was answered that the boundary has to do with their respective speed restrictions, and a couple of examples from California’s speed regulators were stated to indicate a possible method to address the issue.

Moreover, the Chair raised a question regarding the next step or recommendations, and provided solutions from infrastructure perspectives, such as constructing dedicated lanes or turning existing bike lanes to shared lanes for e-scooters. Commenting on the thought, Sean pointed out that many e-scooter users don’t use bike lanes or other bike infrastructures, provided the fact that most of them share car lanes instead.

Following was an update on an e-scooter workshop, planned by Charles Brown, which would be potentially conducted in Spring 2020. The Chair asked about the topics expected to be brought into the discussion. A group member proposed an interesting format for the workshop like a walking tour, and sessions related to e-scooter safety were highly encouraged for the future.

Liz raised a concern about the GIS accuracy of crash data pulled from NJDOT, and asked about other reliable sources. Will mentioned that Numetrics and Safety Voyager also had accuracy issues as their data sometimes conflicted. Sean added that NJDOT has the most comprehensive data, since both Numetrics



and Safety Voyager could sometimes omit few crashes. Will further suggested to start searching from county level and then county subdivision level.

Given that the committee lacked a format for each meeting, Jennifer encouraged every group member to come up with topics to share as well as volunteer to present in the meetings. The group was also open to discussing questions brought to the table by any group member. These topics, ideas or questions could be submitted via text or email one week ahead of the meetings.