Complete Streets
Planning and Design Guidance Updates

Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP)

Design Guidance Emphasis Area (EA) Team

Support to Action Item 1.B.1.a

Purpose of Action Item 1.B.1.a

- **Design guidance support to Strategic Highway Safety Plan**
  - Recommend strategies to improve design guidance for the state, counties, and municipalities …
  - … to improve movement, safety, and visibility of pedestrians and bicyclists, and …
- **Support updates to …**
  - Complete Streets training materials
- **Assemble potential changes and updates to …**
  - New Jersey Complete Street Design Guide
- **Based on a diversity of comments, experiences, issues, etc.**

Task Summary

- **Exploratory Interviews**
  - Understand key issues and concerns
  - Assemble interview questions and discussion topics
  - Assemble list of interview candidates

- **In-Depth Interviews**
  - One-on-one
  - 30-40 minutes

- **Discussion Group**
  - Facilitated discussion and debate
  - 90 minutes

Interview Candidates

- **Diversity of Representation and Responsibilities**
  - Engineers, planners, elected officials, other stakeholders
  - Regional/MPO, county, municipal, consultant, advocacy

- **Completed 10 interviews**
  - County planner (1)
  - County engineer (2)
  - County director of transportation (1)
  - Municipal engineer (3)
  - Municipal traffic engineer (1)
  - Municipal council (1)
  - Consulting engineer (1)

Discussion Group – Roundtable Format

- **Identified 30 candidates, Invitations to 16**
  - MPO planner (1)
  - County planner (4)
  - Municipal planner (4)
  - Municipal engineer (5)
  - Municipal council (1)
  - Citizen advisor (1)
- **8 participated**
- **LIVELY DISCUSSION!**

Discussion Questions and Topics

- **Policies, Checklist, Etc.**

- **Complete Streets Training**

- **New Jersey Complete Street Design Guide**

- **Related Plans, Studies, Policies, Etc.**

- **Project Development and Capital Programming**

- **Zoning and Land Development Review**

Summary Comments

- **Complete Streets Policies**
  - Most, but not all have a policy
  - Beneficial, but not a necessary condition for good planning and projects
    - Focuses attention on new, innovative project and concepts
  - Some limited use and application of performance measures and metrics
  - Confusion and frequent misconceptions:
    - What is a CS policy is and what format it should take?
    - Which is better: Policy, resolution, or ordinance?
    - What is meant by equity, inclusion, sustainability, resilience?
    - Confusion about being locked into "expensive improvements that don't fit the local context"
  - Most interested in updating and enhancing policies, assistance welcomed
  - Awareness but limited application of recent NJ Complete +Green Streets
  - Need new justifications and drivers for continued policy adoption

Summary Comments

- **Complete Streets Training**
  - High level of interest
  - Need to target diversity of jurisdictions, disciplines, area types
  - Need a diversity of proven case studies with demonstrated results
    - Preference for successful examples that look like New Jersey and also reflect our local context and issues (look for case studies)
  - Significant interest in much more than design
    - How to write, adopt, update policies
    - Benefits of Complete Streets
    - Project development
    - Implementation other than just design
    - Basic understanding of liability
    - Design examples should be place- and context-based not strictly by functional classification
  - Need for partners and instructors to promote and provide training

Summary Comments

- **New Jersey Complete Streets Design Guide**
  - Most are familiar with
  - Frequently viewed as a pattern book of design example and templates
  - Most do not use to use to guide project development and design
  - More guidance desired on selection of appropriate design elements
    - When and where to propose traffic calming
    - Road diets
    - Roundabout instead of signal or stop-control
    - More flexibility for bicycle facility selection
  - Confusion as to its purpose – Planning? Design? Other?
  - Include content for liability
  - Include content for freight-specific design
  - Designing for: equity, inclusion, green, sustainability, resilience, etc.

Summary Comments

- **Related Plans, Studies, Policies, Etc.**
  - Master Plans & Elements, Bike-Ped, Parking, Safe Route to School, etc.
  - Many use these as resources when developing projects
    - Noted as significant and beneficial to project development and capital programming
    - Need a rationale and justification for design decisions
  - Frequently missed opportunities
    - Limited consideration of Complete, Safe, Green, Equity, etc.
    - Many circulation elements are still inventory-based and congestion-driven, lack specific references to CS and related issues
    - Mobility considerations in affordable housing locations

Summary Comments

- **What is CS Implementation?**
  - What is implementation?
  - Zoning and land development reviews
  - CS-specific and multimodal-specific zoning are the exception not the rule
  - Affordable housing - access and mobility considerations
  - Update master plans and element
  - Complete Street training
  - Safety education and demonstration projects

  - Bottom Line: Can't make Complete Streets the default way of doing business if our plans, policies, procedures are not updated

Summary Comments

- **Project Development and Capital Programming**
  - Most use some form of asset management
    - Includes crash, pavement, bridge conditions, etc.
    - Complaint-based and problem-driven methods commonly used
  - Technical and citizen committees noted as beneficial
  - Frequent concerns and observations:
    - Potholes, bridges, and congestion capture most attention & $
    - Unfamiliar and innovative designs often controversial and can sometimes derail and delay projects
    - This is frequently due to poor explanation and misinformation
  - Clarity and defined procedures needed at every level from federal and state down to county and local
  - Comprehensive coordination, collaboration essential at earliest phases
  - Training and outreach are opportunities to overcame these obstacles

Current Status & Next Steps

- **In tandem with CS Policy best practices research by Susan Blickstein**

- **Interviews, outreach, research completed**

- **Presentations to EA Team completed**

- **Draft summary memorandum under review**

- **Incorporate findings and recommendations into Complete Streets training materials**