



BPAC General Meeting

July 26, 2023, 9:30 am to 11:30 am

Zoom Online Meeting

Executive Council:

Elise Bremer- Nei (NJDOT) | Leigh Ann Von Hagen (Rutgers-VTC) | Karen Alexander (NJTIP) | Cassidy Boulan (DVRPC) | John Boyle (BCGP) | Jen Buison (NJT) | Michael Dannemiller (Middlesex County) | Keith Hamas (NJTPA) | Anne Heasley (Sustainable Jersey) | Alan Huff (SJTPO) | Debra Kagan (NJBWC) | Loretta Kelly (NJDOH) | Peri Nearon (NJDOH) | Byron Nicholas (Hudson County) | Jessica O'Connor (NJMVC) | Mackenzie Piggott (NJDEP) | Linda Rapacki (RideWise TMA) | Mike Viscardi (NJT) | Open Position (DHTS) | Open Position (Environmental Justice/Equity)

Subcommittee Chairs:

Aimee Jefferson, Chair, Safety Subcommittee, ajefferson@njtpa.org
Thom Stead, Chair, Design & Infrastructure Subcommittee, tstead@dvrpc.org
Hailey Graf, Chair, Policy Subcommittee, hgraf@njtransit.com

General Meeting Notes:

The meeting began at 9:30 am with **Leigh Ann Von Hagen** welcoming everyone and summarizing the agenda.

Elise Bremer-Nei shared updates from the NJ Department of Transportation on the following topics:

Federal Safe Routes to School Grants

The federal Safe Routes to School grant program for the 2024 fiscal year has been announced. NJDOT mailed the solicitation letters to municipalities and school districts on July 17, 2023. The due date for applications is November 17, 2023. For this funding round there are three notable changes. First, the student arrival and departure tallies are no longer required. Second, a one-on-one application meeting with NJDOT's Division of Local Aid is mandatory prior to submittal of the application. Finally, the grants may now be used to improve biking and walking conditions around high schools, as well as near elementary and middle schools. Registration is now open for any of the three, free application information webinars, which are scheduled for August 10, September 7 and October 4, 2023.

Other Grants Awarded

The Biden-Harris Administration has announced the awarding of more than \$2.2 billion from the RAISE discretionary grant program to 162 different infrastructure projects across the country, including funding for three projects in New Jersey. These include \$25M for the Gateway Tunnel [project](#), \$19M for [Camden County](#) to help build a 34-mile trail beginning at the Ben Franklin Bridge, and \$48,000 for the Borough of [Manville](#) to improve railroad crossings.

In addition, NJDOT has awarded grants to several communities through the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program. [Medford Township](#) has received \$1.4 million for improvements to Main Street, including a north/south bike and/or pedestrian connector consisting of bike lanes, sidewalks, crosswalks, shade trees, benches, and signage. NJDOT has also awarded \$1.5 million in funding for the Rahway Valley Rails-to-Trails [project](#), which will create multi-use trails along the abandoned Rahway Valley Railroad through Kenilworth and Roselle Park.

Current federal grant solicitations that are still open include the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) [grant program](#) and the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) [program](#). The PROTECT [program](#) provides funding to ensure surface transportation resilience in response to natural hazards including climate change, sea level rise, flooding, and extreme weather events through supportive planning activities, physical improvements, evacuation routes, and at-risk coastal infrastructure. The program offers two types of awards: planning grants and Competitive Resilience Improvement Grants. Applications will be accepted until August 18, 2023. The most recent BPRC [newsletter](#) included a blog article about applying for PROTECT grants.

The Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) [program](#) issued by USDOT, combines the Reconnecting Communities Pilot and Neighborhood Access and Equity programs. The RCN program offers three types of grants – Capital Construction, Community Planning, and Regional Partnerships Challenge – and applications must be submitted by September 28, 2023.

NJ Motor Vehicle Commission Updates

The New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission will be updating their Driver Manual to include new language about the Safe Passing Law. The suggested language was based on recommendations from the 2020 New Jersey Strategic Highway Safety Plan Ped-Bike Action Team led by Deb Kagan, as well as work done by the NJ Bike and Walk Coalition and the NJ Bicycle and Pedestrian Resource Center.

The Safe Passing Law [video](#) produced by the Safe Routes Resource Center and Civic Eye Collaborative is now running in all 37 New Jersey MVC Centers. This is a major accomplishment for the Action Team members, especially Jessica O'Connor from MVC.

NJDOT-Sponsored Summits this Year

Dates for NJDOT-sponsored events this fall:

1. The New Jersey Safe Routes Academy will be held Thursdays in September as a series of lunch and learn webinars. [Registration](#) is now open, so please visit the NJ Safe Routes website for more information.
2. The next NJDOT Safety Summit will be held in-person at the Brower Student Center on The College of New Jersey campus on October 24.

3. The 2023 New Jersey Complete Streets Summit is scheduled for Wednesday, November 1. This year's summit will be in-person at the Rutgers College Avenue Student Center with an online streaming option. [Registration](#) for the summit is now open and seats are limited, with seats being reserved for NJDOT staff and for Complete Streets Excellence and Complete Streets Champion award winners.

NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan Updates

NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan Emphasis Area update meetings will be happening in the next couple of weeks and updates will be given at the next Safety Summit.

NJDOT Local Bike-Ped Planning Assistance Updates

The Vision Zero Action Plan in West Orange and the bicycle and pedestrian planning studies in Long Branch and Palmyra are reaching their conclusions.

BPAC Subcommittee Chair Updates

Hailey Graf has stepped up as the new Policy Subcommittee chair. Hailey is a Principal Facilities Planner for NJ TRANSIT and has been an enthusiastic participant in BPAC meetings for some time. We thank her and also Loretta Kelly from the New Jersey Department of Health, Bryon Nicholas, the Chief of Planning at Hudson County, and Anne Heasley from Sustainable Jersey, who are joining the executive council to fill vacant seats.

Additional Announcements:

MUTCD Updates

Installation of all traffic control devices for roads of any type, irrespective of jurisdiction, should adhere to the guidelines set forth by MUTCD. In cases where a device is not authorized according to the general MUTCD guidelines, organizations have the option to seek permission from FHWA for their installation as experimental measures. In New Jersey, this has been done for green bike lanes.

NJTPA's Regional Active Transportation Plan

Keith Hamas, Principal Planner at the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA), presented on the soon-to-be-published Active Transportation Plan (ATP). Slides are available [here](#).

- The plan focuses on connecting individuals with various destinations through biking, walking and micromobility.
- It details an array of existing programs under NJTPA for multimodal safety planning, including initiatives like the Complete Streets Technical Assistance program, a growing share of Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding for engineering enhancements, and the demonstration project library initiative.
- The ultimate objective of the active transportation plan is to establish a secure and functional regional network for active transportation.
- The plan aims to:
 - Build consensus around active transportation safety through a system-based approach
 - Create seamless and dependable connections
 - Enhance equity by expanding access to biking and planning infrastructure
 - Foster engagement

- The plan's methodology encompasses data compilation, analysis, and overlaying safety and equity considerations.
- Technical analyses were conducted to pinpoint areas where improved biking and walking infrastructure is required. Efforts were also made to identify hazardous intersections, particularly where roads merge with multi-lane highways, to create a safer biking and pedestrian networks across various counties.
- The central focus is on developing an active transportation network through a data-driven approach while incorporating input from stakeholders and the public.
- The ATP's strategy guide suggests emphasizing capacity building, interjurisdictional and multidisciplinary collaboration, as well as equity and environmental justice.

Updates on Subcommittee meetings:

Safety Subcommittee

- The meeting featured two presentations. The initial presentation covered NJTPA's Complete Streets Technical Assistance program, discussing how the studies were used in applications for Transportation Alternatives Program funding.
- The subsequent presentation highlighted Title 39 trainings that are being conducted in collaboration with the Brain Injury Alliance for police officers.
- Updates were provided regarding a Life-Saving Lighting Guide project, which is a collaboration between VTC and Rowan University.

Design Subcommittee

- Keith Hamas from NJTPA delivered a presentation focusing on best practices for bike and pedestrian design within highway interchanges, culled from the soon-to-be-released ASHTO Bike Guide.
- Matthew Zochowski presented on the Mercer County Mobility Plan. His presentation covered the county's challenges and their plan for implementing changes on county roads devised in collaboration with NJTPA.
- On August 5th, 2023, DVPRC will host an event for the Trenton Bike Plan at the East Trenton Collaborative. The event includes activities such as a bike rodeo and tactical urbanism.
- SJTPO is in the final stages of their study on the Northern Cape May Trail. Additionally, they will be issuing an RFP in the fall for an Active Transportation Plan.

Policy Subcommittee

- New Jersey Future discussed efforts to make changes to the Residential Site Improvement Standards.
- Conversations revolved around the numerous federal grant programs currently available.
- Discussions focused on the overdue MUTCD and the challenges arising from the lack of updates.
- Safe Streets for All Action Plans were due July 10, 2023. Montclair, Hoboken, and Jersey City have submitted applications so far.

Other Updates

- [Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Program Project Development Guidelines](#) have been recently published by FHWA.
- The [Equitable Transportation Community Explorer](#) tool has been released by USDOT.

- NV5 is collaborating with Agency Landscape and Planning for the initial engagement phase of the Essex-Hudson Greenway project. The first public workshop is scheduled for July 27th, with two more planned for August.
- The NJ Division of Disability Services has launched the [Inclusive Healthy Communities Grant Program](#).

Next BPAC Session:

September 27, 2023: Use the link below to register for the next BPAC meeting.

<https://njbikeped.org/join-the-next-meeting/>