



**BPAC Policy Subcommittee Meeting
September 27, 2023 10:20 am to 11:10 am
Online Zoom Meeting**

Attendees:

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| ● Hailey Graf, NJ TRANSIT (chair) | ● Denise Nickel, Middlesex County |
| ● Leigh Ann Von Hagen, Rutgers-VTC | ● Ward Kradjel, Jersey Shore Touring Society |
| ● Colin Roche, Rutgers-VTC | ● Lindsey Sigmund, NJ Future |
| ● Sam Rosenthal, Rutgers-VTC | ● Tricia Dunkak, NJ Future |
| ● Debra Kagan, NJ Bike & Walk Coalition | ● Monika Pal, Cambridge Systematics |
| ● Mike Manzella, City of Jersey City | ● Elizabeth Ward, NV5 |
| ● Lisa Serieyssol, Lawrence Hopewell Trail and Princeton Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee | ● Joe Rapp, NJDOT |
| ● Elise Bremer-Nej, NJDOT | ● Jason Kelly, HDR |
| ● Michael Dannemiller, Middlesex County | ● Peter Kremer, Michael Baker International |
| ● Ayla Schermer, Bike JC and Hudson County Complete Streets | |

Discussion: What are the successes and barriers to adopting Complete Streets policies/ordinances?

VTC led a discussion to assist NJDOT with completion of an action for the Strategic Highway Safety Plan Pedestrian and Bicyclist Emphasis Area team. Guided questions are available here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cV998MAR5znCphiptqK1h_JuRvC3MHyM/edit

1. The moderator provided background on model policy language for Complete and Green Streets ordinances and ensuring everyone's familiarity with the language. Participants commented on their personal experience with the following 3 variations of adopting CS policy:
 - Resolution
 - Resolution with checklist
 - Ordinance
2. Asbury Park successfully updated their Complete Streets resolution with a checklist.

3. West Orange and Essex County have enacted policies with checklists, but implementation has become a struggle.
4. Middlesex County has adopted a Vision Zero policy.
 - Ensuring that all Department of Planning and Transportation documentation begins with their Vision Zero pledge to ensure safety is prioritized over capacity and speed. “Getting there is more important than getting there fast.”
5. Montclair created a Vision Zero task force that acted as a vehicle to usher in Complete and Green Streets policy.
 - Despite this policy being enacted in 2009, there appears to have been little implementation.
 - Participants are curious about how implementation can be enforced.
6. The moderator asked if complementing policy with checklists is helpful, or if it's still not enough to enforce implementation?
 - Where should municipalities start if the existing transportation department isn't taking the lead on Complete Streets?
 - Accountability for different departments and institutional processes may be a blind spot, especially in local governments that have limited resources.
 - Who can champion Complete Streets internally?
 - How do towns ensure an ongoing process with community engagement? Who leads that? A Complete Streets Council? A non-biased group?
7. Participants underscored the importance of accountability for this policy.
 - If there isn't a Complete Streets champion (regardless of their role) it doesn't happen, especially in smaller towns.
 - Consulting and engineering firms that do repaving jobs aren't going to change their processes without intervention.
 - Without consequences, Complete Streets becomes a “volunteer” initiative.
 - While it may not be realistic in the short term, what if NJDOT withheld a federal aid grant because a town wasn't considering multi-modal design?
8. The importance of Complete Streets champions was highlighted. Many Complete Streets policies were enacted over 10 years ago and many of the champions who ushered them into existence are no longer active in government.
 - Current officials might not even realize what Complete and Green Streets ordinances are or why they are important.
 - The League of Municipalities seems like an ideal launching pad to engage with this topic.
9. A participant referenced a research assignment that revealed that the champion is the key to the implementation of a Complete Streets policy.
 - Even municipalities without official Complete Streets policies have successfully implemented projects.
 - The policy and checklist may not be necessary since - without a champion - it's a document that no one enforces.
10. A participant referenced NJDOT's exemption procedure as a filter for how the Complete Streets policy cannot easily be bypassed and asked if this could be enforced at county and local levels.

- The most important thing about granting an exemption is that - when one is granted - it's documented and published transparently. Failure to do this has been an issue in the past where exemptions are granted, and then several years later, people don't know why the exemption was given.
 - How can the group help a town with no champion get a Complete Streets policy passed?
11. Are there ways to leverage funding to incentivize more engagement with Complete and Green Streets policies?
 - Comments included, "The state should be a leader in the bike and pedestrian movement, and funding requirements can be an incentive."
 12. A participant offered a counterpoint to funding incentives, which would be to create penalties for not engaging with Complete Streets projects. Ex. "Not enacting this policy will get you sued" instead of "doing this will get you rewarded."
 - This may be more effective for county and local departments.
 - The willingness to complete walk audits is a good example of this mindset since municipalities often don't want to complete them for fear of officially documenting a dangerous roadway that they'd be liable for not re-engineering.
 - Adjacent to this topic, Princeton has an ongoing debate over a possible ordinance that would ban e-scooters and e-bikes on sidewalks, yet the central area of Princeton has no bike lanes. The council seems to be reacting to the possibility that they might get sued by residents who get hit by an e-bike/e-scooter on the sidewalk, rather than proactively building the infrastructure.
 13. A participant pointed out a seeming double standard for liability regarding auto infrastructure vs. bike/pedestrian infrastructure.
 - Ex. No one points out highway widening as dangerous despite the reality that many people die in auto crashes daily. However, bike/pedestrian projects often undergo increased scrutiny because they are potentially "dangerous."
 14. A participant suggested a process for creating more champions, like a "champion training."
 - SAFE network outreach (NJBWC) could be helpful for this.
 15. Projects that cross multiple towns pose challenges. However, these types of projects are the ones that ultimately create a comprehensive regional network.
 - All it takes is one dissenting mayor to kill a project that has strong support from the surrounding region.
 - Could Vision Zero or the Safe System Approach help with this?
 - County-level Vision Zero action plans may be the "lowest hanging fruit" as they have greater jurisdiction than municipal plans.
 - NJ is a home-rule state, which creates a significant barrier to regional transportation plans/initiatives.
 - There's an opportunity to create a handbook/training to get more local champions and educate newcomers on this topic.
 16. Equity is a component of this topic that needs to be emphasized as well. This aspect sometimes gets overlooked.
 17. How can we use the Safe System Approach to elevate Complete Streets policies?

- Maybe Complete Streets policies should evolve to encompass the same language as the Safe System Approach.
- There needs to be a more comprehensive piece that codifies Complete Streets policy.

The following topics are postponed until the December BPAC Policy Committee meeting:

1. Review of previous agenda items

- a. Legislative Tracker
- b. Current Bills
 - i. Adult Helmet Law
 - ii. Parking Reform ([A4984 Calabrese](#))
- c. [Proposed Updates to the NJ Residential Site Improvement Standards](#) (RSIS) next steps (NJFuture)
- d. SHSP 1.C.2.a. - Develop recommendations for education and outreach on recent updates to laws and regulations related to pedestrians, bicyclists, and scooters - led by Debra Kagan, NJ Bike & Walk Coalition.
 - i. Updates from MVC
- e. Complete Streets and Persons with IDD and Autism law updates (VTC & NV5)
 - i. Planning a session at the NJ Complete Streets Summit
- f. Primer about various policies and legislation in NJ that regulate bicycle and pedestrian transportation issues, including RSIS, MLUL, Title 39, Access Code, and the Functional Classification System. (Sustainable Jersey & NJ Future)
 - i. Resources so far:
 - A Citizen's Guide to Better Streets: How to engage your transportation agency
<http://880cities.org/images/resource/park-space-arti/citizen-guide-better-streets.pdf>
 - The Master Plan: Smart Growth, the Master Plan & Environmental Protection (ANJEC)
http://anjec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SG_MasterPlan.pdf
 - Get Active NJ Walkability Toolkit (NJ Prevention Network)
- g. Title 39 review and action strategy (Jim Hunt & Will Yarzeb)
- h. SHSP Action for Complete and Green Streets Ordinance Adoption Toolkit (VTC/Sustainable Jersey)
 - i. Who is interested in helping review draft?

2. Additional topics:

- a. NJ Future VMT Reduction Initiative
- b. Insights on new federal grant programs (SS4A, RCP, ATIIP, earmarks, etc.)
 - i. SS4A - was due July 10. Who applied?
 - ii. NJDOT Safe Routes to School Grant solicitation - due Nov. 17
 - iii. Reconnecting Communities - due Sept 28
 - iv. PROTECT - due Aug 18
 - v. Any insights?