



BPAC Safety Subcommittee Meeting
May 15, 2025 10:30 am to 11:10 am
Online Zoom Meeting

Attendees:

- Linda Rapacki, RideWise TMA
- Jen Farris, DVRPC
- Andrew Lappitt, Michael Baker International
- Hannah Younes, VTC
- Emily La Polla, Avenues in Motion TMA
- Charlie Romanow, WSP
- Syd Chan, Newark Traffic Safety Coalition
- Jessica Johnson, Avenues in Motion TMA
- John Wheeler
- Dorothy McCullum
- Pritesh Prajapati, NJDOT
- Katrina Budischak, McCormick Taylor
- Liza Betz
- Kenneth Wedeen, Somerset County
- Jonathan Eagle, Somerset County
- Anya Saretzky, Cross County Connection TMA
- John Niesz, Bayonne School District
- Jelena Lasko, NJDOT
- Linnea Goderstad, Cambridge Systematics
- Sean Meehan, VTC
- Alan Huff, FHWA-NJ
- Bettina Zimny, NV5
- Keith Hamas, NJTPA
- Astha Negi, Middlesex County

Discussion Topics

Goals for 2025

- The subcommittee discussed continuing coordination with counties on Comprehensive Safety Action Plans. Members also explored integrating the needs of neurodivergent individuals, particularly those with autism spectrum disorder, into transportation design and safety strategies.
- RideWise TMA shared their experience in providing travel training for adults with autism, emphasizing challenges faced when navigating intersections. Poor signal design and confusing crossings can create significant stress for neurodivergent individuals, who have diverse needs and reactions.
- NV5 stressed the importance of maintaining infrastructure such as sidewalks and crosswalks in good condition, citing benefits to stability and safety. NV5 also noted their involvement in drafting an action plan to improve infrastructure for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and suggested sharing findings in a future meeting.
- The committee generally agreed that improvements designed for neurodivergent individuals often benefit a wide range of users.

Target Zero Working Group Feedback

- NJTPA recommended that the Target Zero Action Plan include a Universal Access framework that would encompass neurodivergent users.
- Union County noted that a lack of awareness among public officials and residents about crash locations contributes to a lack of urgency or action at the local level.
- NJTPA reiterated the importance of Automated Speed Enforcement. While some organizations are unable to advocate for legislation, it was proposed that a survey could help gauge public support and correct misconceptions about the technology.
- Somerset County emphasized the need for a stronger educational component, suggesting coordinated messaging with input from marketing and traffic safety experts. They proposed creating tools such as community-specific crash maps and report cards to help local officials take ownership of safety issues. They also noted the need to improve understanding of Vision Zero among the general public and to better communicate the localized impacts of crash concentrations.
- Middlesex County discussed gaps in post-crash care, advocating for more participation from public health professionals to improve emergency response systems.
- Cross County Connection questioned the content of the driver's test, raising concerns that drivers may not fully understand pedestrian and cyclist rights. They suggested this as an area for further review and improvement.

Future Topics and Additional Comments

- NV5 recommended that each action item in the plan be accompanied by clear performance metrics to track progress.
- RideWise TMA raised the issue of rural road safety and asked whether the action plan would address these areas.

- Cross County Connection proposed integrating technology-based solutions into the action plan to support safe driving behaviors.

2024 Safety Subcommittee Goals

Continuing Goals from 2023:

1. Support actions in the Strategic Highway Safety Plan:
 - Coordinate with NJ TRANSIT on pedestrian and bicycle integration and safe bus stop design.
 - Review school zone speed enforcement and recommend strategies for New Jersey.
 - Develop guidance for implementing traffic safety education in elementary schools.
 - Report comprehensively on current SHSP-related efforts.
2. Establish a statewide, county, and local road safety reporting system.
3. Expand support for Zero Deaths Initiatives throughout the state.

New Goals for 2024:

4. Host presentations and discussions on the following topics:
 - Connecting bike facilities across jurisdictions.
 - Signal phasing, pedestrian intervals, and countermeasures at intersections.
 - Best practices for e-bikes and e-scooters, including battery safety (with the Policy Subcommittee).
 - ASE and Right on Red policy considerations (with the Policy Subcommittee).
 - Trail crossing design.
5. Assist local governments as they progress with LSAP development and public engagement.
6. Provide updates on public education campaign challenges.
7. Share developments from safety programs in southern New Jersey.

Meeting Summary

- NJTPA presented updates on Vision Zero and Target Zero implementation efforts.
- Middlesex County raised challenges related to modifying state roads within High Injury Networks. NJTPA suggested creating joint committees to improve coordination between state and county agencies, with the aim of reassessing state road design in key downtown areas.
- EZ Ride initiated discussion on a school zone design guide addressing speed enforcement. They cited success stories from New York City, where reduced speed limits and automated cameras have significantly lowered crash rates. Participants noted that while red-light cameras are widely unpopular in New Jersey, speed cameras are somewhat more accepted due to their effectiveness.
- NJBWC emphasized the importance of formally proposing enforcement solutions to state agencies. They also advocated for a proactive approach to planning, suggesting a focus on locations that may become high-crash areas.
- NJTPA and SJTPO described efforts to implement systemic safety strategies by identifying corridors with characteristics similar to High Injury Networks.

- Concerns were raised about the impact of high fines on public perception, and the group explored the potential for pilot programs. The difficulty some planning organizations face in engaging in legislative advocacy was acknowledged.
- Greater Mercer TMA referenced a survey indicating 81% public support for speed cameras, while noting possible selection bias in the results. It was agreed that broader outreach could help accurately capture public opinion and inform policymaking.
- The experience of Baltimore, Maryland was cited, where drivers often slowed only at camera locations. Participants noted that combining enforcement with driver education and on-the-ground police presence could be more effective.
- Discussion included vehicle safety technology as a strategy. Examples included speed limiters and seatbelt and airbag systems. It was proposed that vehicle tech strategies be piloted in public-sector fleets.
- A paper from the Vision Zero Network was shared with recommendations for equitable and community-supported enforcement strategies. Participants emphasized that revenue use, fairness, and public trust must be central to camera implementation. It was agreed that improving safety will require a comprehensive effort, combining education, enforcement, and engineering approaches.