



**BPAC Policy Subcommittee Meeting
January 31, 2024 10:25 am to 11:10 am
Online Zoom Meeting**

Attendance:

- Elise Bremer-Nei, NJDOT
- Tim Evans, NJ Future
- Mackenzie Piggott, NJDEP
- Corey Hannigan, TSTC
- John Boyle, Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
- Debra Kagan, NJ Bike & Walk Coalition
- Lisa Serieyssol, Lawrence-Hopewell Trail
- Anne Heasley, Sustainable Jersey
- Kathleen Ebert, Greater Mercer TMA
- Ayla Schermer, Bike JC
- Jessica O'Connor, NJ MVC
- Joe Rapp, NJDOT
- Lindsey Sigmund, NJ Future
- Sutapa Bandyopadhyay, FHWA

Responses to general meeting presentations

- The hesitancy around counties planning for and implementing separated bike lanes may continue to be a misinterpretation of statewide Title 39 regulations.
- Counties are reluctant to build separated or protected bike lanes when maintenance requires specialized equipment, such as smaller snowplows. In Burlington County, trails installed by the County include separated bike facilities and are maintained using Bobcats.
- Not all counties are fully aware of their options regarding separated bike facility maintenance, costs, and legality. More resources are needed to educate county and municipal officials on these topics and let them know what solutions are available.
- There is also sometimes a lack of coordination between transportation and parks departments. There may be opportunities to combine snow removal for parks and trails with on-road bike facilities to save money.
- The question was raised: Why have temporary open streets not been made permanent in more locations? One reason may be that these changes are framed as temporary from the outset. To create lasting change, there needs to be a clearer understanding and discussion of both the purpose of a change as well as whether the change met the stated goal. Defining success is essential.

- With Vision Zero plans, safety is explicitly the main priority. This does not seem to be the case in many places.

Constraints related to data collection, resources, and grant funding

- Findings from Hannah Younes' presentation on walking and cycling during COVID are relevant to the work NJ Future is conducting on updates to the NJ State Plan. Journey to work questions on the Census should be made more precise to collect more granular data. More travel data is needed, but there are challenges. One example is that the federal Office of Management and Budget must approve changes to the Census Bureau's questions.
- DVRPC tracks bicycle and pedestrian counts in their region. There should be a discussion of how to share this data and other related resources more widely, especially with the other MPOs.
 - DVRPC is structured differently from the other New Jersey MPOs. They receive funding from two states and are able to hire more staff.
 - NJDOT hosts MPO collaboration meetings, which could provide opportunities to share resources related to active transportation planning and data collection.
- Bicycle and pedestrian counts do not include information on where a person lives, which would provide a more complete picture of travel patterns.
- New Jersey receives fewer federal grants than other states relative to population. There seem to be fewer federal grant applications submitted by New Jersey counties and municipalities. At this point, there is a lot of federal funding available. The challenge is a lack of staff at the local level, which is necessary to draft grant applications and to implement projects.
 - PennDOT created a staff position at DVRPC with the explicit purpose of seeking out grants and assisting with applications.
 - NJTPA's Complete Streets Technical Assistance Program may serve as a model for how to provide planning-related technical assistance.
- Capacity limitations at MPOs are also evident in trails planning. Perhaps there is a way to share resources between MPOs without the need for new staff positions.
- Limited municipal staff and resources hinder the ability to apply for NJDOT Local Aid funding. Many New Jersey municipalities are small and not structured in a way that allows them to easily apply for funding.
 - Municipalities often lack the capacity to even search for grants and determine which funding opportunities to apply for. In addition to the NJ Local Aid Resource Center, more resources should be developed to assist municipalities with searching and applying for grants.
- There should be more guidance on the entire grant application process, including how to read a NOFO, how much money to apply for, and how to execute a grant once it is awarded. Perhaps NJDOT and FHWA could co-host a session at the League of Municipalities on this topic.
- There may be an opportunity to provide best practice training or peer-exchange on the topic of Complete Streets and bicycle facility design to counties who receive MPO technical assistance with planning studies. This could be tied in with NJDOT Complete Streets trainings.

Other comments

- Concerns were raised regarding sentencing guidelines for vehicular homicide and whether there are public resources available on this topic. Families for Safe Streets NJ is working on a Crash Victims' Bill of Rights and may have access to additional relevant resources.
- Concerns were raised about municipal ordinances related to e-bikes and e-scooters. Several shore towns are drafting restrictive ordinances that limit micromobility usage. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Resource Center at VTC is currently developing a Micromobility Guide for New Jersey that is anticipated to include research related to model language for municipal micromobility ordinances.
- Atlantic City is conducting a re-paving and re-striping project that includes a road diet. The project is being met with some criticism.
- Sustainable Jersey is hosting the Sustainability Summit on May 3rd.