



BPAC Policy Subcommittee Meeting
July 31, 2024 10:10 am to 11:05 am
Online Zoom Meeting

Attendance (in chat):

- Lyndsey Scofield (Chair), City of Jersey City
- Mike Manzella, City of Jersey City
- Ayla Schermer, FTA
- Peter Bilton, NJTPA
- Leigh Ann Von Hagen, Rutgers VTC
- Jon Dugan, Rutgers VTC
- Steph Brody, Rutgers VTC
- Mackenzie Piggott, NJDEP
- Zeke Weston, NJ Future
- Tim Evans, New Jersey Future
- Anne Heasley, Sustainable Jersey
- Betinna Zimny, NV 5
- John Mascaro, Walk & Bike Haddon Township
- Jonathan Gray, Bridgewater Twp. Resident, UPS Retiree
- Debra Kagan, New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition
- Paul Mickiewicz, New Jersey Bike Walk Coalition
- John Boyle, Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
- Samantha DeAndrea, NJ Department of Community Affairs

Agenda:

- **Topic Discussions**
 - The subcommittee returned to the discussion of the challenges and barriers facing Complete and Green Streets policy adoption and helped prioritize topics to include in the September 17 Webinar, [Crafting an Effective Complete and Green Streets Policy](#)
- **Complete and Green Streets**
 - Upcoming webinar in September on “How to Adopt a C&GS Policy”
 - Webinar is NJDOT-sponsored in partnership with NJTPA and Sustainable Jersey.
 - 70 people have registered for the webinar so far and more are expected.
 - VTC is working with NJDOT to decide which information is best to include in the webinar and could use feedback from the policy subcommittee members.
 - NJTPA provided a recap of the September 2023 discussion.

- [At the [September 2023 BPAC Policy Subcommittee meeting](#), VTC staff led a discussion of successes and barriers with adopting Complete Streets Policies and/or ordinances. The discussion was held to inform NJDOT Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) Action 1.A.1.b about identifying best practices to overcome barriers to adoption and implementation of Complete Streets policies.]
- Key takeaways include:
 - Champions are essential for policy adoption and provide accountability when other staff or consultants are not invested in implementation. Many policies were adopted 10 years ago and the champions from that time may have moved on.
 - Having a policy and checklist does not necessarily result in implementation without a structure for reporting tracking of exceptions. There is an over-reliance on champions to ensure that the policy is being followed.
 - Participants asked whether funding agencies could require/incentivize municipalities to not just adopt policies but implement Complete Streets.
 - Multi-jurisdictional projects are important to create a complete network, but individual towns can veto Complete Streets elements of regional projects.
 - Participants discussed how to integrate Complete Streets with the Safe System Approach.
- What information would be helpful?
 - When recapping the September 2023 discussion, NJTPA expanded on multiple topics.
 - Complete Streets policy adoption and implementation are overly dependent on champions and local leaders.
 - Local champions tend to get the CS process started and ensure that policy adoption happens.
 - They provide accountability; they are a local presence and this enables them to ask local officials about progress and concerns as well as report on the project to others.
 - There are concerns regarding this dependence – people get fatigued or move on. There is an equity component that people with agency and time can be champions, leaving lower income communities at a disadvantage.
 - Sometimes champions are residents, staff members, or elected officials. Sometimes they are all three (ex. Metuchen).
 - The importance of multi-jurisdictional projects.
 - When it comes to multi-jurisdictional projects, decisions tend to get made town by town, and individual towns may veto CS and bike/ped elements of projects.

- Towns also have the power to veto elements of county or state plans, and both county and state authorities strive to respect local wishes.
 - The State and County do not want to encounter political disputes or pushback for installing bike lanes, traffic calming measures or general CS elements.
 - Sometimes all it takes is one town disagreeing for an entire regional project to scale down and remove important bike/ped elements. This is a challenge.
- It is vital to understand how Complete Streets fits in with the current Safe System and SS4A planning approach in the long term.
 - Where does CS fit in with safety planning and initiatives and which should be prioritized?
- There is a flip side to the multi-jurisdictional issue.
 - During NJTPA's Active Transportation Plan process, they spoke to county and municipal leaders about leadership, data tracking and how powerful cross-border collaboration is.
 - Neighboring towns working together to create the best project and do more than they can do alone is an important flip side and improves capacity building.
- NJTPA is interested in understanding challenges; the concerns of a mayor council, business administrators or consultant/staff planners.
 - What questions do they need answered regarding complete streets policy adoption?
- Jersey City staff shared that elected officials are concerned about costs and capacity.
 - Most municipalities do not have dedicated planning staff, they rely on consulting engineers for road maintenance.
 - Not all municipalities have the champion capacity to push things through.
 - A big question is, "How can regional and state level planning and funding be changed to include better Complete Streets implementation?"
- There are uncomfortable questions, such as "Why isn't DOT or the County taking the lead on these projects?" and "Why can't funding agencies better support policies by requiring CS elements of projects with no exceptions?"
 - NJ Bike & Walk Coalition mentioned that this question came up recently at the Hudson County Vision Zero Task Force action plan policy meeting. The Task Force has been pondering which agency has the ability to overturn anti-CS mayoral decisions.
 - Adopting CS policy can be a struggle for municipalities with low capacity.

- Current CS decision-making methods are not working. The Hudson County Vision Zero Task Force believes something new is needed.
 - Agencies are locked into a decision-making structure that reinforces old methods.
 - One issue is that it is not known who has the authority to say that an action plan to reduce fatalities on a high injury network corridor must be prioritized over one mayor's perception.
 - The concept of how federal funding and the Safe System Approach can be tied into prioritizing safety should be explored.
 - The champion reliance issue is why projects must have some sort of CS accountability body which includes local officials (CS checklist **must** be reviewed).
 - Is bottom-up planning for Complete Streets happening that is contradictory to the top-down planning that NJDOT provides for motor vehicle-focused transportation decisions?
- A large issue pertaining to Complete Streets policy is when the county builds infrastructure and forces the municipality to maintain it.
 - Unfair that this does not apply to county roads but does apply to bike/ped projects.
 - Maintenance agreements are required by the state and counties.
 - There is always money for infrastructure construction but no money for maintenance.
- There was an update to the NJDOT-sponsored Complete Streets training last year.
 - People were interested in case studies and practical examples.
 - Group polls and Q&A's were helpful. Attendees could piggyback off of questions and create a larger discussion.
 - People enjoyed hearing about benefits and opportunities of CS policies.
- The same 8 counties have had complete streets policies in NJ since 2016.
 - Several Morris County mayors are crafting a letter to send to the Morris County Commissioners to adopt CS policy.
 - Meanwhile, fairly soon every county will have a safety action plan.
 - **There is a disconnect of where CS policies fit into safety action plans.**
 - There might be an opportunity for counties to reconsider their work. Since 2016 there has been more effort made to address equity, public health, green infrastructure and economic benefits.
 - The Montclair Vision Zero resolution includes a provision to update their CS policy.
 - Montclair could be used as a model.
 - It could be emphasized that there is money that the town is not receiving because they have not adopted CS policies.

- Verona is going through the process of writing a C&GS policy for the first time.
 - Verona was awarded Complete Streets technical assistance.
 - Great opportunity for local residents to learn more about CS.
 - People like short and simple explanations.
- A question was asked about how towns can push back on engineering firms looking to simplify or scale-down projects by eliminating ped/bike safety infrastructure.
 - Jersey City adds that at the end of the day engineering firms must please their clients, and having accountability at the municipal level can be helpful.
- VTC help desk questions are more about Vision Zero and less about Complete Streets.
- Is Complete Streets more viable than Vision Zero?
- The Safe System Approach is currently being heavily promoted by the FHWA.
 - The national policy could be used as leverage, i.e. “There is a national policy to eliminate fatalities on all roads. How about your town, too?”
- There was a discussion about the NJ Energy Master Plan.
 - The master plan finally mentions Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) reduction.
 - Scenario Modeling is mentioned in the DEP 80% CO₂ Emission-Reduction-By-2050 Plan.
 - New Jersey is not going to hit emissions targets only with electrification; motor vehicle use must also be reduced.
 - Making non-motorized travel safer is key to reducing motorized traffic.
 - It was argued that those are statewide issues, and without a statewide CS policy that discusses this, it comes down to municipalities and counties, and VMT/greenhouse gas reduction is not a local issue.
- CS concerns are mostly regarding high injuries and fatalities.
 - Using Vision Zero as a pathway to Complete Streets is important.
 - Many fatal and serious injury crashes are pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users, meaning that including Complete Streets in the Vision Zero conversation is **essential**.
 - Many federal funding opportunities are Vision Zero driven.
 - **There are strong concerns that a focus on safety will leave out neighborhood traffic calming, green infrastructure and other benefits of Complete Streets.**
 - Advocates and agency staff do not want the broader benefits of Complete Streets to be washed out by an over-focus on safety. A balance is needed.
 - Work to make streets that are **safe and livable**, not just safe.

- A simultaneous pathway that is a low-stress network needs to be created.
 - The comment was made that high-crash corridors will always be high-crash corridors: they cannot be the only priority.
- There does not have to be one pathway.
 - There are various ways that municipalities can approach complete and green streets.
 - Checklists can be very effective, resolutions are not always required for success.
 - Both NJTPA and DVRPC have low-stress bicycle network mapping.
 - Part of addressing safety is about making it comfortable i.e. adding tree shade and addressing quality of life.
 - Quality of life is somewhat addressed in Complete Streets whereas it is addressed very little in Vision Zero and the Safe System Approach.
- In many cases, municipalities have more control over a low stress network.
 - In the past year, the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) has been supporting community energy plans as an attempt to get municipalities to think about Greenhouse Gas reduction at a local level.
 - BPU has been funding the implementations of these plans up to \$500,000.
- Non-traditional funding should be added to the webinar.
 - Ex: Hoboken paid for pedestrian curb extensions through green infrastructure rain garden environmental stormwater management funding.
- When conducting focus groups with engineers, their first concern when discussing Safe Routes to School infrastructure is dealing with the stormwater.
- It was mentioned that a local engineering firm called the green infrastructure element of Complete Streets “pointless and ineffective.”
- NJTPA adds that it is important for the webinar to include clear information on necessary complete street project elements and optional.
 - C&GS policy updates in the works – NJDOT’s will be different (internal process-driven) than those from municipalities and counties.

Topics deferred to the next meeting:

- **Personal Conveyance & E-Mobility Consistency**
- **RSIS Update**
- **Speed Camera Updates**
- **Legislation Updates**
 - Personal Conveyance Definition - Signed by the Governor!
 - SENATE, No. 349 https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/bill-search/2024/S349/bill-text?f=S0500&n=349_S2
 - “personal conveyance” includes, but is not limited to, a low-speed electric bicycle, a low-speed electric scooter, a manual wheelchair, a motorized wheelchair or a similar mobility assisting device used by persons with physical disabilities or by persons whose ambulatory mobility has been impaired by age or illness, an electric personal assistive mobility device, a motorized scooter, a skateboard, a motorized skateboard, roller skates, or any other device used by a person for transportation.
 - What does this mean in practice?
 - Target Zero
 - E-Bike Bill
 - Others
- **Subcommittee Goals for 2024**
 - Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS) Updates
 - Status: In Committee
 - Complete and Green Streets
 - Update model policy with language about Complete Streets for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Action Needed: none until final product from NJDOT
 - Opportunity to provide best practice training or peer-exchange in Complete Streets and bicycle facility design to counties who receive MPO technical assistance with planning studies. This could tie in with NJDOT’s Complete Streets policy update. Action Needed?
 - E-Bike Safety, Best Practices, and Policy
 - VTC is currently developing a Micro Mobility Guide for New Jersey and model language for municipal micro mobility ordinances is intended to be a part of the guide. Updates: more legislation is being brought forth.
 - Statewide Trails Planning
 - Next Actions: continue
 - Transportation Primer
 - Next Actions: continue
- **Subcommittee Goals from 2023**
 - Share a policy and legislation tracker for relevant bills in the NJ Legislature.

- Study and provide insight into the new federal legislation (BIL/IIJA) and its impact on future policy.
- Work with the Strategic Highway Safety Plan Complete Streets Task Force on Adopting a Complete and Green Streets Ordinance Toolkit.
- Develop or update a primer about various policies and legislation in NJ that regulate bicycle and pedestrian transportation issues, including Residential Site Improvement Standards, Municipal Land Use Law, Title 39, Access Code, and the Functional Classification System.
- 2022 year-end BPAC report: <https://njbikeped.org/wp-content/uploads/BPAC-Year-in-Review-2022.pdf>