



NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF MPOs BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN WORKING GROUP

December 9, 2021

Teleconference

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

MEETING NOTES

Participating

- A/GFTC – Jack Mance
- BMTS – Scott Reigle
- CDTC – Jennifer Ceponis
- DCTC – Emily Dozier
- FHWA – Nicole McGrath
- ITCTC – Jay Lambrix
- NYSDOH – Jen Hogan
- NYSDOT – Karen Lorf
- NYSDOT – Colleen Smith Lemmon
- NYSDOT – Valerie Deane
- NYSDOT – Lanny Wexler
- NYSDOT – Alexandra Beck
- OCTC – Jessica Ridgeway
- PTNY – Rebecca Murray
- UCTC – David Staas
- WJCTC – Geoff Urda
- Planning4Places – James Levy

1. Introductions

Emily Dozier opened the meeting.

2. Approval of Meeting Notes

The meeting notes from the September 2021 Zoom meeting were approved for posting to the website.

3. NYSDOT Updates

Karen reported that NYSDOT is going with a full RFP for the state Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan. Colleen provided an update on the Complete Streets Checklist revisions. Emily asked how the checklist process works. Colleen noted that the checklist was developed 10 years ago. It is first filled out by planning staff with suggestions for potential features or plans in proximity to the project, and then passed on to design staff who consider it further. Now, staff is revising the format of the checklist and improving the process to lead to better coordination. It is being revised based on feedback from people using the checklist. Emily noted that the coordination piece is key. Colleen noted that there is a good team looking at this.

Emily asked how the online mapped inventory of local bike/ped projects in A/GFTC area, for instance, might be used with the checklist-- does the checklist process involve outreach to the MPOs to identify potential projects from plans? Colleen noted that the checklist should work to identify who to coordinate with during the process.

Scott asked about the data collection process. Colleen noted that it is more for making sure NYSDOT captures features being incorporated into projects. Karen noted that it would be good to have better asset/feature data, but getting the data isn't easy. There isn't a good process to collect data on different levels from different departments. The Department

needs to identify asset management downfalls, which is complicated, and is looking to find an efficient way to collect data and keep information up to date. Scott noted that it is a struggle to keep data up to date locally and hard to create a base dataset.

4. Partner Agency Updates

PTNY - Rebecca noted that in October, many MPOs were involved in discussions about rolling out the Greenway Trails Plan. NYS Parks has shared additional analysis and mapping and is designating EJ areas relative to greenways throughout the state. Going forward, the map will have more layers with a focus on diversity, equity and inclusion. Regarding implementation of the Plan, there was dialogue about what is in the chapter, new ideas, and who can implement each of the recommendations. There is a group that plans to talk quarterly starting in January to continue working on implementation efforts including what recommendations are to be pursued within certain timelines, and to confirm who should be engaged – from PTNY to State Agencies and MPOs.

Regarding advocacy, the last few months have been focused on the State budget. PTNY met with staff and leadership in the legislature. PTNY has joined the Crash Victims Rights & Safety Coalition dedicated to pursuing State legislation. The Coalition has identified 7 priorities. The Coalition plans to start meeting with sponsors soon, then co-sponsors, and will sponsor a lobby day. The Coalition has a sign-on letter open to other organizations. If anyone knows of organizations that want to sign-on, please pass along the information to Rebecca. Rebecca can distribute a draft letter if anyone wants a copy.

The 7 priorities include the following:

- Authorize municipalities to reduce speed limits to 25mph
- Sammy's Law – specific to NYC, this is a law to lower speed limits
- Complete Streets:
 - 1) Increase state funding where a municipality agrees to fund a Complete Street project
 - 2) Close the CS loophole for maintenance – resurfacing, pavement recycling, repaving
- 3-foot passing
- DMV pre-licensing course to educate drivers on vulnerable road users
- Crash Victims bill of rights

PTNY is also working with Trust for Public Land and NYC Greenways Coalition with a major ask being to increase the State's Bond Act. Got positive news that the NYS Department of Budget has passed this ask around and it is looking favorable. Expanding the Empire State Trail to complete the Long Island Greenway and working on the Genesee Valley Greenway are other priorities.

NYSDOH - Jen H. noted that GTSC had an e-bike panel at the Highway Safety conference. The State is busy building a PSAP toolkit of resources. New for the close of FY 2021 are the development of an easy to read bookmark and a distractions bookmark– both will be available online. The toolkit will also include a 'how to' guide on how to develop, sustain and implement a pedestrian safety program in a community. New for 2022 is script development for K-5 ped safety videos. Also, work will be undertaken to expand bookmarks. NYSDOH continues to meet quarterly with GTSC on outreach and education– a quarterly meeting is coming up. Emily will speak about how MPOs can work with health departments on campaigns.

NYSDOH got a 2nd grant from GTSC for a media buy. Working with GTSC, a visibility campaign was run in November with daylight savings time and social media posts were created because most pedestrian crashes happen in Nov-Jan. There will be another campaign in January. Still working with Karen, Scott and others on PSAP 2.0 as the current PSAP ends in December. Emily noted that she watched the new videos and likes them. The link is <https://www.ny.gov/pedestrian-safety/three-es#education>.

In coordination with GTSC, NYSDOH is hoping to develop outreach on the yielding at crosswalks law. Emily asked if there is any work to change the law to require a stop instead of yield. Jen noted that the law is complicated in NYS and that she is not aware of any advocacy for a law change. The See and Be Seen campaign materials can be found online at https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/injury_prevention/pedestrians.htm.

5. Work Plan

Work plan items have been assigned to sub-committees.

i. **Ped/Bike Counts**

Scott reported that the committee has been meeting quarterly since it was established. The Committee will be meeting soon to get updates on recent work. Emily inquired about the installation of counters on the EST by the Hudson River Valley Greenway. Rebecca stated that she knows of the locations but is not authorized to share the list; she will ask Andy Beers if it can be forwarded. She will also make sure that the data is going to the proper agencies. Emily asked if NYSDOT's new ped/bike count EB (EB_20-044) can be shared with the Working Group. Karen stated that she will resend the link.

ii. **Complete Streets Toolkit**

Geoff said the subcommittee discussed initial ideas, and will meet in a few weeks to discuss this effort further. Jim added that 3 toolkits are under development, and they should have a consistent look and feel.

iii. **Cost Estimating Toolkit**

Karen will follow up to get the EST's cost estimates. Jim will forward her the email. Karen will also send the subcommittee a NYSDOT tool.

iv. **E-Bikes Fact Sheet**

Jim provided an overview of the Fact Sheet. Lanny provided comments that the subcommittee will assess. Lanny has also talked with Karen about language related to trails and whether or not e-bikes are permitted without local legislation approving their use. Karen is looking to get a legal opinion. Lanny stated that Long Island has about 40 miles of trails that could be impacted by the determination. Karen noted that the question primarily centers around whether or not state facilities potentially need to be posted differently than others.

Jay noted that he prefers the idea of looking at speed limits instead of e-bike classes. He has an e-bike that allows the maximum speed to be set up to 28 mph. Effectively it can be programmed to switch between the defined classes. He is concerned classes will be meaningless while a focus on speed limits wouldn't be.

Technology isn't going to conform to classes going forward. It was questioned whether or not this type of bike is legal in NYS as e-bikes are supposed to be classified.

The direction NYSDOT wants to see this go is e-bikes and traditional bikes treated the same. Regarding speed, if speed is the regulated factor, speedometers would be needed on every bike (to ensure speed isn't exceeded). This is a complicated enforcement issue. Jay noted that it seems that all e-bikes come with a speedometer. Emily noted that whether or not the current law is seen as adequate, the three classes are what agencies have to work with from a regulatory perspective. Karen noted that the maximum speed was likely set for Class 3 to separate them from mopeds.

Lanny asked about a possible contradiction in laws as NYC had a law permitting e-bikes up to 28mph. The State law now states 25mph. Lanny would like to know if this now means that the City law is void. Does state law supersede City law on this and are all bikes that go up to 28 illegal now? Jen H. noted that a GTSC panelist spoke to this and has fact sheets about e-bike regulations for NYC.

Emily noted that the purpose of the NYSAMPO fact sheet is to provide general information to municipalities. It can always change and be updated over time. Colleen asked if it had been shown to a local official to see if it would be useful. Geoff noted that he will need to be able to justify any regulations to the City Council. His first thought as a municipal employee is that it has to be able to be defended. Geoff will review the fact sheet from a municipal official level and provide input.

6. MPO Projects & Discussion Items

Separated Bicycle & Pedestrian Infrastructure: Jay noted that there is more and more talk about interested but concerned cyclists. These cyclists need more protection – generally this is 50% or more of residents. He noted that this is where design should be focused because that is where we would get biggest mode share shift. This opens up a conversation about where protected infrastructure is applicable. Where do we get to 10% or 20% mode share shift and how do we get there? Jay noted that he doesn't see us getting there with the current design focus. Alexandra stated that with the CS checklist and other topics, there is always a question of is there bicycle activity. There won't be activity if people don't feel safe and it is a build it and they will come type situation. Geoff noted that "service comes before demand."

Karen stated that she lived in Germany for over a year and has family there who ride bikes regularly. They have a density that we generally don't have. She noted that it is generally easier to promote cycling where there is higher density. Part of CS Checklist discussion currently is to consider if it is feasible to not just look at whether or not there are cyclists but is there a density that will result in cycling trips or zoning that could result in such trips. This would be the beginning of where we want to provide enhanced bike/ped facilities – this is where it is logical to provide such facilities. These discussions also have to include a focus on maintenance issues, garbage pickup, mail delivery, driveway access, etc. Can look at situations where the bike lane is at the same level as the pedestrian facility, not physically

separated, but vertically separated. A lot of this is being addressed in the proposed AASHTO guide.

Jay noted that he didn't necessarily agree with the density concept. There are successful rural pathway projects that are used quite heavily. Karen agreed. Geoff noted that he agrees with Karen about zoning – much of the country is single-family zoning that will bring about lower density residential streets. Municipalities need to zone for uses and densities that support this kind of transportation network – it is not just an engineering element. Colleen noted that the goal is mode shift as Jay mentioned, in all areas rural, suburban and urban. Until this is a goal for everyone, these types of facilities will only occur in certain places. Nicole agrees with the density discussion. One measure to use is whether or not a facility is comfortable for biking with small children. Bicycle parking is also an issue. Secure bike parking would make biking more of an option – particularly if using an expensive e-bike.

Jay noted that e-bikes could potentially change the conversation in rural communities because it increases bikeable distances which is important when discussing rural needs & connectivity. Is it not viable because of density or because the protected infrastructure isn't there? On rural roads, vehicles are moving much faster and the question is, would people bike if separated from higher speed vehicles. Karen noted that it is important to remember that many rural roads don't even have a 2' shoulder and NYSDOT is having a hard time putting in a minimum 2' shoulder in many places. This is also a common issue on County roads. Jay stated that this obviously can't occur everywhere. Geoff noted that there is only a certain ROW width so programming in a limited ROW can be tough.

Poughkeepsie 9.44.55: Emily discussed this project located in the City and Town of Poughkeepsie. This is a 2-phased study looking at an interchange and then two arterials. The existing 3-lane one-way arterials are separated by 1-2 blocks. The 85% percentile speeds are high and crash rates are higher than NYS averages. The study assessed road diet options and conversion of both arterials to two-way streets. Emily discussed different options being considered including a raised cycle track (as discussed earlier in the meeting). The public prefers the road diet option. There is concern about how to enforce a one-way bike lane and that people will ride the wrong way because the opposite movement is several blocks away. NYSDOT is pushing back on the road diet because of operational concerns with the reduced lane configuration.

Cycle Track: David discussed the Broadway project in Kingston. There is a buffer for the cycle track but no delineators. Compliance with parking has worked well so far. The amount of cycling in the area has increased. Karen stated that she saw trash bins on the cycle track in the Greenkill area. David agreed that this is occurring, but it is one day a week and hasn't been a major issue. Karen also noticed that there are stop signs at every intersection on the cycle track. People have a tendency to go through them because side street traffic is already stopping. She noted that the priority should be with primary traffic so there are no stop signs along the cycle track unless the primary road has one. David said that this cycle track is part of the Empire State Trail and there were requirements for stop signs on the cycle track.

David showed drone footage of the work in progress. The road had 4-lanes with 2 parking lanes. The project created a two-lane road with a 2-way cycle track on one side protected by on-street parking. There is also a center turn lane. This project did result in the loss of some parking. Green paint has been used at driveways but bike/ped signals have not been installed as the facility is not open yet. There are also bicycle turn boxes at intersections. Karen asked why a 2-way cycle track was chosen instead of 2 individual bike lanes? David noted that there was a concept plan done in 2015 that drove a lot of the discussion about opportunities along the corridor. There were ROW issues because the corridor's width changes. It was determined that this is a more efficient use of the space while still providing a protected bike lane. They couldn't necessarily fit a protected bike lane on each side because the width just isn't available. The cycle track was also a community priority. Jay asked if any travel lanes could be narrowed, and David stated that the lanes were narrowed as part of the project. There was a lot of discussion with DOT about how narrow the travel lanes could be – they are now 11' lanes. Emily stated that this would be a good presentation for the future when the project is completed, maybe with a staffer from the City. David noted that supply chain issues have delayed final work on the project. City staff is hoping it will be open by the end of the year.

Emily asked for any future presentation ideas to be sent to her.

Karen stated that with MPO/consultant work, often it seems like projects are nearly finalized by the time NYSDOT sees them and this creates issues. This is particularly common with traffic studies; not looking at the impact bicycle lanes will have on signals and signal timing is an issue. These items should be reviewed and assessed early-on in a project. With new funding coming online, there are likely to be more considerations for vulnerable users and bike/ped facilities.

7. Action Items

The following items are noted for follow-up:

1. Pedestrian & Bicycle Counts and Complete Streets Toolkit subcommittees to schedule meetings for the next few weeks.
2. Let Emily and Jim know if you have an idea for a future presentation.
3. Geoff will review the fact sheet from a municipal official level and provide input.
4. Karen will follow up to get the EST's cost estimates. Jim will forward her email. Karen will also send the subcommittee a NYSDOT tool.
5. Are e-bikes permitted on trails without local legislation approving their use? Karen is looking to get a legal opinion.
6. The Crash Victims Rights & Safety Coalition has a sign-on letter open to other organizations. If anyone knows of organizations that want to sign-on, please pass along the information to Rebecca. Rebecca can distribute a draft letter if anyone wants a copy.
7. NYSDOT's new ped/bike count EB (EB_20-044) can be shared with the Working Group. Karen stated that she will resend the link.
8. Rebecca stated that she knows of the locations but is not authorized to share the list; she will ask Andy Beers if it can be forwarded.
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