

BALTIMORE REGIONAL SAFETY SUBCOMMITTEE

Thursday, March 28, 2024

10:00 - 11:05 A.M.

Virtual meeting

MINUTES

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Debbie Jennings, Chesapeake Region Safety Council (CRSC), called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M.

Ms. Jennings held a moment of silence for those lost in the Key Bridge collapse and thanked first responders for their service.

2. APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 2023 MINUTES

Ms. Jennings asked for any comments or changes to the minutes from the December 14, 2023 Baltimore Regional Safety Subcommittee meeting. Receiving none, the minutes were accepted into the record.

3. PARTNER UPDATES

Ms. Jennings explained that CRSC is a chapter of the National Safety Council, provides trainings from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and conducts other safety programs. She shared information about several programs at the CRSC that involve mock crash educational programs held at high schools, cannabis workshops, and work zone safety. There are several upcoming mock crash programs scheduled:

- Three in Calvert County
- Mount St. Joseph's in Baltimore City on April 16
- Mt. Hebron in Howard County on June 5
- Preliminarily in Baltimore County in October
- Some discussions are ongoing with Harford County

Ms. Jennings also shared that several [cannabis workshops](#) are scheduled for April 1, May 20, June 24, and August 12, 2024.

Lastly, she discussed the [work zone safety pledge](#) on the CRSC website and upcoming Work Zone Awareness Week. The national kick-off events will be hosted in by the Maryland

Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) with a press conference scheduled for Tuesday April 16 that should begin around noon. It will be held on the top of the triple bridges, at the entrance to the park-and-ride from I-70. This will be the same day as the mock crash program at Mt. St. Joseph's which will be a work zone crash scenario.

Mr. Barry List, MDOT SHA, confirmed the time of the Work Zone Awareness Month press conference. The Secretary of the US Department of Transportation has been invited, as well as other government and safety partners. It will also coincide with the Unity Ride traveling under the triple bridges at the end of the press conference.

4. LOOK ALIVE WITH SIGNAL WOMAN

Ms. Kenna Williams Swift, Sherry Matthews Group, provided findings from the Look Alive campaign survey after the 2023 fall events. Those included positive results of campaign recognition and recall. She also shared that Baltimore County will have several enforcement activations for pedestrian safety in April that will have press coordination with Look Alive. Also, a partnership has been established with the Baltimore Orioles with signage kicking off at the second game of the year and running throughout the season as well as two events with the Look Alive Virtual Reality Challenge and Signal People safety ambassadors. Those events will be held inside the park with tentative dates of September 21 and 22.

Ms. Cindy Burch, Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC), noted that this is an election year and we hope that the Look Alive and Signal Woman media will be able to break through that busy media time. She also shared that the Baltimore Orioles partnership was born of one of their executives seeing an advertisement and reaching out because it was captivating.

[PowerPoint: Look Alive Update]

5. FEDERAL UPDATES

Ms. Serena Liu, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), had some technical difficulties and provided the following information about the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM):

- Please visit this link [HSIP Rulemaking | FHWA \(dot.gov\)](#) to view the HSIP NPRM, review Supplemental Materials, and a recording of a FHWA hosted webinar to introduce the HSIP NPRM to the public.
- **All comments must be submitted on or before April 22.**
- General steps for NPRM to Final Rule
 - Agency Prepares the NPRM: The agency drafts the proposed rule with the help of legal and policy experts, ensuring it conforms to legal requirements.
 - Publication in the Federal Register: The NPRM is published in the Federal Register, beginning a public comment period (usually 30-60 days but can be longer).
 - Public Comment Period: Anyone interested can submit comments, supporting or opposing the proposed rule, and can suggest modifications.
 - Agency Review: The agency carefully reviews all submitted comments and may incorporate feedback into their final rule.

- Final Rule Drafted: The agency prepares the final rule. This might include significant revisions based on comments received.
- Final Rule Publication: The final rule is published in the Federal Register, often accompanied by an analysis of the comments and an explanation of changes made from the original proposal.
- Effective Date: The final rule typically includes an effective date, which is the date it becomes legally binding.
- Key Changes Proposed:
 - Focus on Safe System Approach
 - The new HSIP regulations emphasize incorporating the Safe System Approach. This approach aims to achieve zero fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads by anticipating human errors and designing a transportation system that minimizes crash severity.
 - Clarification of Scope
 - The revised HSIP regulations clarify that the program applies to all public roads and for all road users. This broader scope reflects the need to address safety for everyone using the transportation system, including pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.
 - Data Driven Approach
 - The new regulations require States to establish a process to evaluate the effectiveness of data improvement activities for Model Inventory of Roadway Elements (MIRE) fundamental data elements. MIRE data is essential for identifying high-risk locations and prioritizing safety improvements.
 - Streamlined Reporting
 - The HSIP regulations update the required content of the annual HSIP report to focus on progress implementing highway safety improvement projects and the effectiveness of those projects. This streamlined approach should reduce reporting burdens for States.
 - Vulnerable Road User Assessment
 - The new HSIP regulations require each State's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) to include a vulnerable road user safety assessment. This assessment will help identify specific safety needs for pedestrians, cyclists, and other vulnerable users.
 - Systemwide Safety Risk Assessment
 - The new HSIP regulations require each State to conduct a systemwide safety risk assessment as part of its HSIP data analysis process. This will provide a comprehensive understanding of safety risks across the State's transportation system.

6. REGIONAL PROGRAMS

Ms. Charlene Mingus, BMC, shared information about a recently launched consultant project at BMC. Originally titled Vision for a Regional Bike Network, the project has been renamed Bikeable Baltimore Region – A Plan for a Safe and Connected Biking Network.

The purpose is to create a regional network of trails and bicycle facilities that is equitable, safe, and comfortable for users of all ages and abilities. After kicking off in December 2023, the project is in the analysis and discovery phase. This project will build off work already done throughout the region by engaging local partners and an advisory committee. The project will include public engagement efforts such as in-person, virtual, and pop-up public meetings, handlebar interviews, meeting-in-a-box materials, online materials, and surveys. The safety analysis will utilize the Vulnerable Road User Assessment and the 2050 Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. Crash data from 2019-2023 will be analyzed and presented in heat maps, statistics, and a crash severity index map. It is scheduled to be completed in June 2025.

Ms. Shayna Rose, Baltimore City Department of Transportation, inquired about using Baltimore City's local planning efforts. Ms. Mingus explained work with local partners over the last year to update the Regional Bicycle Facilities Inventory schema to align with the state schema and incorporate existing plans and databases.

Ms. Burch asked if the safety analysis outputs will be available to local partners during or after the project is completed because it would be valuable for local safety efforts. Ms. Mingus said that the story map would launch in May and the analytical findings would be available for local partners.

Ms. Rose asked if this project would make any recommendations about planning, communications, and education. It's a great suggestion and Ms. Mingus will ensure it is discussed with the project team.

[PowerPoint: Bikeable Baltimore Region]

7. LOCAL STRATEGIC HIGHWAY SAFETY PLANS

Ms. Burch shared a brief update on the local SHSPs in the region:

- In Anne Arundel County, the Vision Zero team continues working to develop an action plan.
- Baltimore City is utilizing funding from the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program for vulnerable road user safety improvements. Ms. Burch noted that bike lanes are a topic in the mayoral race and the Police Department recently announced a plan to increase enforcement through the summer.
- The Baltimore County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T), is working with a consultant to develop a Vision Zero action plan and a kickoff meeting was held with the County SHSP team.
- The Carroll County Strategic Traffic Safety Plan (STSP) team is working on a lot of data analysis and using that information to coordinate enforcement efforts at the county and municipal levels.
- The Harford County Traffic Team continues to coordinate enforcement plans using a data-driven approach. The County partners have also been meeting to develop a proposal for Round 3 of SS4A.
- The Howard County team continued working on data access through the update to the crash reporting system. Ms. Burch shared that significant changes were made to the data system and the [fatal crash dashboard](#) was recently updated with 2024 data.

The system is back to being updated nightly and the [public data download site](#) will be ready soon with 2024 data.

- Queen Anne's County was awarded SS4A funding to build a local SHSP and have secured a consultant for that work.
- Ms. Burch shared some information about the SS4A Round 3 announcement, including that there are now three rolling application dates. That will allow any rejections from the first date to have time for revision and resubmission at the subsequent dates. She also recommended using the [US DOT website](#), that it's up-to-date and comprehensive.

Ms. Burch invited Community Engagement Program Managers from the MDOT Motor Vehicle Administration's Highway Safety Office (MHSO) to share any program updates with the group. Ms. Julie Kwedar and Mr. Michael Bomgardner, MHSO, discussed the child safety seat program and the CarFit events for older drivers that are happening throughout the region. Ms. Kwedar noted that MHSO will be participating in Bike to Work Day at a Howard County location. Mr. Bomgardner also discussed the employer safety education programs occurring throughout the state. He also shared that [Otto](#), an educational talking robot used with children, has been rebranded to Cruise and should be available for programs beginning in the summer.

8. TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Ms. Burch shared information from the National Center for Rural Road Safety and different free online trainings offered by that group. She noted that the trainings apply beyond rural roads. She will share the monthly announcement email with this group going forward.

Ms. Jennings shared that CRSC trainings are listed on the [website](#). She also shared about an upcoming conference to be held on September 26, 2024 in Baltimore County.

9. FUTURE OF THE COMMITTEE

Ms. Jennings reminded the group that a committee roster was shared with the meeting announcement and all members are encouraged to review the list and suggest any new partners. Ms. Burch will resend the roster and request all suggestions be submitted by the end of April.

10. OTHER/NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Jennings asked for any new business from the group and shared a legislative update about the ignition interlock legislation that is being considered by the Maryland General Assembly. Known as Noah's Law, the current bill aims to update the policy to require ignition interlocks be used by drivers that receive Probation Before Judgment (PBJ).

No other discussion was had and Ms. Jennings adjourned the meeting at 11:02 A.M.

Attendance:

Amy Beall – Harford County Department of Public Works (DPW)
Michael Bomgardner –MDOT Motor Vehicle Administration’s (MVA) Highway Safety Office
(MHSO)
Debbie Jennings – Chesapeake Region Safety Council
Erin Kuhn – MDOT State Highway Administration (SHA)
Julie Kwedar –MHSO
Barry List – MDOT SHA
Serena Liu – Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Tom Morehouse – Baltimore County Police Department
Walter Phillips – MDOT SHA
Shayna Rose – Baltimore City Department of Transportation
John Rotz – MDOT SHA
Kenna Williams Swift – Sherry Matthews Group
Nicole Waldheim – Fehr & Peers
Jennifer Woo – Howard County DPW

Staff:

Regina Aris – Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)
Cindy Burch – BMC
Todd Lang – BMC
Anna Marshall – BMC
Charlene Mingus – BMC