



- MINUTES -

VISION ZERO ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Sonny West Conference Center – Howard Office Building

June 29, 2023

ATTENDEES

COMMITTEE

Christine Irizarry, Joy Andal, Katherine McDonell, Peter Robinson, Shandira Edgecombe, Phillip Peck, Chris Bowe, Jeremiah Wooten, Christopher Sandwith, Hannah Sasscer, and Wesley Smith

STAFF

Jon Boghozian, Anna Dearman, Justin Cole, Ben Vaught, Guneet Saini, Jason Oldham, Matt Goette, Hal Balthrop, Koby Langer, and Madison Fitzgibbon

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Amanda Key, Ben Hubert, Nicole Abernathy, and Carmen Jones

1) Call to Order

- The June 29, 2023, meeting of the Vision Zero Advisory Committee was called to order at 5:00 PM by Chair Robinson.

2) Roll Call

- Present: Chair Peter Robinson, Vice-Chair Hannah Sasscer, Christine Irizarry, Joy Andal, Katherine McDonell, Shandira Edgecombe, Phillip Peck, Chris Bowe, Jeremiah Wooten, Christopher Sandwith, and Wesley Smith
- Absent: Amanda Key, Ben Hubert, Nicole Abernathy, and Carmen Jones

3) Approval of Minutes

- May minutes were approved unanimously.

4) Public Comment

- There was no public comment at this time.

5) Items to be Considered

a) WeGo Transit Stop Improvement Plan

- Ms. Lydia Benda with WeGo presented on their transit stop improvement program for 2023.
 - The transit stop improvement dashboard is now live on WeGo's website.
- In the presentation Ms. Benda provided some before and after examples of bus stop improvements.
 - Ms. Edgecombe and Ms. Andal expressed their thanks for fixing specific locations during this presentation.
- Ms. Andal asked how it is determined which side receives a sidewalk when there is only a sidewalk on one side of the road.
- Chair Robinson asked about the decision-making process between a shared cycle path (ramped bike path) and a bus island (bike lane behind the stop) when adding these to bus stops.
 - Ms. Benda explained that this decision depends on the available right of way. Bus islands require more right of way and therefore a shared cycle track is a better option when there is limited space.
 - Mr. Boghozian added that stormwater and other factors also play into this decision.
- Ms. Andal asked how WeGo obtains the right of way when this space is needed for bus stops.
 - Ms. Benda explained the steps involved when a location is requiring right of way for a project, including a land survey to determine the right of way and sending a request to the land owner. The landowner has the right to refuse this request.
- Ms. Irizarry asked how WeGo determines the number of people who depart at each bus stop.
 - Mr. Cole, formerly with WeGo and now with NDOT, explained this process for counting the number of passengers that depart at each stop. He stated that the process involves manual counting by staff and sensors equipped on buses to count passengers as they board and depart the buses. This data is then run through a program to be cleaned up to determine the final counts.
 - Mr. Wooten asked if WeGo's quarterly reports are based on this fare collection data.
 - Mr. Cole confirmed that they are.
 - Ms. Andal asked if ticket counts minus the cash transactions plays into this data collection.
 - Mr. Cole responded that the ticket data is used to determine where people are transitioning between buses, regardless of the transaction type.
- Mr. Wooten asked if WeGo is leading the charge for the main shelter project along Nolensville Pike and if they are conducting any induced demand post shelter studies.

- Ms. Benda stated their involvement with this project and mentioned some ongoing spot studies but no comprehensive study currently.
- Mr. Wooten also asked about the process of coordinating with developers for new builds looks like.
 - Ms. Benda and Mr. Boghozian explained how the developer is supposed to reach out to WeGo to make sure that if there is an area near their development that requires a bus stop, they need to contribute to these amenities required for a bus stop and fulfil the requirements. This helps WeGo with the funding and right of way requirements that may be needed from the developer.
 - Ms. Dearman added that the guidelines for this coordination lie with Metro, not WeGo.
 - Mr. Wooten commented on the recent litigation stating that Metro can no longer require developers to build sidewalks but suggested that if the sidewalk is part of a WeGo requirement then this could help continue to push for these additional safety measures.
- Ms. Irizarry commented that she noticed the people at Vanderbilt Campus are a large transit contributor and asked if WeGo has any coordination with Vanderbilt.
 - Ms. Benda responded that she is not aware of any special coordination efforts with Vanderbilt.
- Chair Robinson asked how pedestrian crossing locations near bus stops are determined.
 - Mr. Boghozian explained that pedestrian crossing determinations are NDOT projects that work in coordination with WeGo.
 - Ms. Dearman added that WeGo relies on NDOT to complete these and added that Mr. Cole is working on a pedestrian crossing policy to help address these concerns for future projects.
- Mr. Peck asked if WeGo has ever considered adding bollards along bus stop locations on roads with higher speeds to help increase pedestrian safety.
 - Mr. Boghozian mentioned bollards being placed in the downtown area. He stated that while bollards aren't being ruled out for other locations, the infrastructure required to add bollards strong enough for high speeds would require significant investment.
 - Ms. Benda stated WeGo has considered placing bollards behind bus shelters but not necessarily along the sidewalks near shelters.
 - Mr. Oldham added concerns about the adverse effects for cars if they were to hit these bollards while traveling at high speeds. It could potentially launch the car in air and create more harm than good in some cases.
- Mr. Bowe shared his experiences with riding the bus in Nashville. He stated that on several routes he travels, the bus must pull into a clear zone for passenger loading and unloading. The bus then must wait for a large enough gap in traffic to be able to get back onto the road. With the new implementation of the tactical urbanism program, he asked if this area could be considered for additional improvements such as bus islands, curb extensions, or bus bump-outs to allow buses to remain in the travel lane to avoid delays waiting to re-enter the road.

b) NDOT Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI) Draft Policy

- Mr. Oldman introduced Mr. Goette and explained briefly why NDOT brought him on as a consultant. He has been assisting Mr. Boghozian with several vision zero efforts in addition to creating the LPI draft policy.
- Mr. Goette then presented on the LPI draft policy, explaining what are LPIs, LPI considerations, location feasibility, and current assessments.
- Mr. Oldham stated that this LPI draft policy also considers the need for those who are visually impaired as a requirement when assessing areas.
 - Ms. Andal highlighted the need for vibration sensors along with audible crossings to ensure safety for visually impaired pedestrians.
- Chair Robinson commented on the “no turn on left” signals that were in the presentation stating that these will need to be backed up with enforcement to be effective. He has observed that people currently tend to ignore the ones that are in place.
 - Mr. Wooten stated that seeing people crossing at the intersection where LPI is implemented will help encourage the desired behavior associated with the “no turn on red” signs.
 - Mr. Wooten also stated that he believes that LPIs can be most effective at the three-way stop intersections.
- Chair Robinson asked if the duration of LPI is affected by the distance of the crossing.
 - Mr. Goette responded that this is correct, however, there are other factors that play into this calculation as well.
 - Chair Robinson then asked if vehicle throughput timing is another factor that is considered.
 - Mr. Goette responded that delaying and queuing is considered over vehicle throughput time.
- Ms. Irizarry asked why NDOT cannot add LPI at every crossing in Nashville. She then elaborated on her recent visit to Montreal where they have LPIs at all the crossings. She stated that this not only made her feel much safer when walking around but it also made drivers much more aware of pedestrians as they have learned to now expect them at all crossings. She also stated that Washington D.C. has similar practice.
 - Mr. Goette explained that LPI placement is based on data-driven justification. There is a trade off between what makes sense for the driver and what improves safety for the pedestrian. If the LPIs are not placed correctly it could lead to negative results on safety such as drivers changes their route and disrupting other traffic patters or drivers trying to swerve around and drive more dangerously to avoid the delay.
- Ms. McDonnell asked if you can currently request an LPI for a specific crossing location.

- Mr. Boghozian replied that a HUB request can be made to NDOT if you have a location in mind for NDOT to consider and see if it meets the criteria for LPI.
- Ms. McDonnell also asked if bikes can also use LPs. She stated that they recently made it legal in New York City.
 - Mr. Boghozian clarified that it is not currently written into code, but Metro can intervene if needed. He also stated that the upcoming BPAC group may be able to support these efforts.
- Mr. Peck asked if the LPs are automatic or if they are only activated if a pedestrian pushes the button.
 - Mr. Goette confirmed that there will be no vehicle delay unless the button is pushed.
 - Mr. Peck further questioned if one of the E's of Vision Zero is for education then why not place LPs at every intersection to educate drivers and make them aware of pedestrians crossing.
 - Ms. Edgecombe shared her thoughts on the education process. She stated that Nashville is not currently the most walkable city but as we are trying to make it more walkable this would be a good effort to support that increases the safety of pedestrians.
 - Ms. Saini mentioned the upcoming marketing and education campaign will also encourage these education efforts across the city. The safe routes to school program will also help support these efforts in addition to educating students to be prepared to get behind the wheel themselves.

c) Commerce Street Bikeway Discussion

- Ms. Dearman, NDOT bikeway manager, spoke on this topic and gave the group some background information on Commerce Street bikeway project. She stated that Commerce St and 3rd Ave were intended to be used as a pilot street for the bikeway program prior to Covid. Due to the delays associated with Covid, 3rd Ave was never constructed, and Commerce St was partly constructed.
 - 3rd Ave project never started due to push back from the merchant community and Commerce St needs significant additional work, including signal retiming, to be a fully functional two-way protected cycle track, that was in the original plan.
 - The Commerce St repaving project further complicated the situation, creating additional chaos and confusion in the area. At this time, efforts are underway to restore the street to its previous state prior to repaving and without any additional improvements to the area.
 - With all this background given, the decision has been made to pause on the advancement of Commerce St project and reassess all the bikeways and how they connect. Ultimately, the decision is left up to the downtown partnership.
- The reason Chair Robinson initiated this discussion is not just because Commerce St is not currently functioning correctly and creating dangerous situation but also because this is the model street for the bikeway program for the entire city. Getting this bikeway project right can set the tone for the rest of the program in the city.
 - Ms. McDonnell expressed frustration that it was set up to be a core bike lane meanwhile you have cars driving at you within the cycle track.
 - Chair Robinson added that this is really a bigger example of the frustrations the city faces when trying to make things safer due to all the merchant push back and uneven display of power.
 - Mr. Wooten asked why Connect Downtown is leading this charge and why is it taking so long. If this is a safety concern, then why the merchants opinions carry significant weight in the decision making.
 - Ms. Irizarry stated that this road used to be pretty good prior to all the construction, but for the past 5 years it's impossible to get anywhere since the whole area is just one large construction zone.
 - Ms. Dearman acknowledged the frustrations and shared that she doesn't see the construction stopping anytime soon. She also agreed that this is an example of a microcosm of bikeway planning and the dynamics in power, however, the direction of the project lies with NDOT, WeGo, and the merchants.
- Ms. Dearman went on to explain that NDOT was recently invited to a meeting by one of the merchants regarding this project.
 - Ms. McDonnell asked if the public can be invited to future meetings.
 - Ms. Dearman responded that NDOT was invited to this meeting and was not the meeting host, so we were unable to control who else was invited.
 - Chair Robinson suggested NDOT to decline future meetings of this nature and instead invite the merchants to a meeting where the public can also be present, thus ensuring a balanced conversation.
 - Ms. Edgecombe mentioned that merchants would likely attend the meeting if NDOT holds the meeting allowing public input.
 - Ms. Dearman acknowledged that the current dialog is unbalanced.
 - Mr. Wooten recommended against public engagement at this point.
 - Mr. Peck questioned why the original bike plan, which was already approved prior to being derailed during execution, is being re-investigated.
 - Ms. Dearman stated that the study to re-evaluate the bikeway plan was initiated by the mayor.
 - Mr. Cole added that at this stage the plan is needing to be reassessed and subsequently go through the public engagement stage before any further action can take place.
 - Mr. Smith stated that the current situation is somewhat of an echo chamber, with some merchants not wanting bikes and scooters allowed in the downtown area. He noted that the number of scooters being used is increasing because of the demand for it. While there will be some merchants that will never want scooters and

bikes in the area, others just don't think the current plan will ever work. He mentioned that the whole area is in disarray, and the future of this area remains uncertain.

- Chair Robinson emphasized that delaying action in this area keeps unsafe actions in place and the longer it gets delayed, the higher the chances of something resulting from these unsafe measures increase. He stressed the importance of finding a middle ground between the two opposing communities.
- Mr. Peck emphasized that vision zero's primary interest is safety, and it is hard to argue against safety, especially when it is weighed against financial considerations.
 - Mr. Boghozian asked Ms. Dearman if she has any information on the number of reported injuries.
 - Ms. Dearman stated that while there have been numerous reports of near misses, she doesn't have the exact number of reported injuries in the area.
 - Ms. Dearman added that the merchant's primary interest is not safety, but rather how they will manage their deliveries and sustain their business to support their employees and their employees' families.
 - Ms. McDonnell added that there is ample data available on how bike paths are good for businesses.
 - Ms. Edgecombe highlighted the need to prioritize safety to attract business to the merchants.
- Ms. Dearman concluded the discussion by urging the committee to think about how they can be strategic in these conversations going forward during the next stage of engagement with connect downtown.
 - Mr. Peck asked why the responsibility for this section of downtown is separate and falls under Connect Downtown rather than NDOT.
 - Ms. Dearman clarified that all the bikeways will eventually funnel through downtown as this is the center of the city. She re-emphasized the importance of getting downtown right in order to get the rest of the bikeways connected.
 - Mr. Boghozian added that this is part of a much larger master mobility plan.
 - Mr. Cole also stressed that our whole city is constricted of space, but this is particularly challenging in the downtown area. We don't have a lot of space to work with and every decision requires tradeoffs. Ideally, we want to be able to have a more open and honest conversation regarding these tradeoffs but ultimately everyone will need to find balance.

d) Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant Overview

- Mr. Boghozian proposed the committee to change this item to an action item and requested the committee's support in through a letter of support for the grant to the USDOT Secretary of Transportation, by the upcoming deadline of 7/10.
- Ms. Saini then gave the group a presentation overview on the safe streets grant application.
- Mr. Bowe then motioned to have the Chair and Co-Chair draft a letter of support in favor of the grant.
 - Mr. Wooten seconded the motion.
 - The motion passed unanimously.

e) Subcommittee Overviews

- The group confirmed / established chairs for each of the following subcommittees.
- These chairs are as follows:
 - Mr. Smith for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee Subcommittee
 - Mr. Sandwith for the New Member Subcommittee
 - Vice-Chair Sasscer for the Fatal Crash Investigation Subcommittee
 - Mr. Bowe for the Planning and Engineering Subcommittee
 - Mr. Peck for the Strategic Planning Subcommittee

6) New Discussion

- There was no new discussion at this time.

7) Communications

a) Reports from Vision Zero Advisory Committee members and subcommittees

- Mr. Bowe stated TDOT recently released a survey for Dickerson Pike and have invited CM Parker to the next meeting.
 - Mr. Boghozian added that a TDOT representee will be coming to next meeting and he would be happy to follow up with CM Parker to work on coordination.
- Ms. Andal asked if NDOT has a plan in place for pedestrian crossings on Craighead. She is very thankful for the new sidewalks but was curious about the crossing plan.
 - Mr. Boghozian stated that he would connect with Ms. Andal regarding her concerns in this area.

b) Report from director and staff

- Ms. Boghozian stated that the budget surplus was approved and vision zero will be receiving an additional \$12 million in funding. We won't be able to access this money until January, but NDOT will be working on the design phase for the future projects so they are ready to go once the money can be used.
- Mr. Boghozian also stated that he has received recent feedback from our director that council is really bought into the vision zero program and recommends continuing to push for more when it comes to strategic planning.

8) Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.