

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
MULTI-MODAL ACCESSIBILITY
ADVISORY COUNCIL

VIRTUAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

February 8, 2023

5:30 pm – 6:57 pm

Call to Order

Roll Call

MAAC Councilmembers Present:

Karthik Balasubramanian, Chair

Buddy Moore

Helen Urquhart

District Department of Transportation Staff Present:

Nana Bailey-Thomas, Chief Transportation Equity and
Inclusion Officer

James Carrington, Program Analyst

Zack Gambetti-Mendez, Program Analyst

Sahar Nabaee, Traffic Safety Engineer

Zach Smith, Equity & Accessibility Program Analyst

Mayor's Office of Disability Rights Staff Present:

Susie McFadden-Resper, ADA compliance specialist

Attendees:

Christiaan Blake

Heather Foote

Kelly Mack

Adrian Morrison

Bushira Musa

Kevin Whitfield

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Karthik Balasubramanian, Chair, did not make a motion to approve the January meeting minutes due to a lack of quorum.

New Business

Traffic Safety Input 2.0 Discussion – Sahar Nabaee, Traffic Safety Engineer

Sahar Nabaee presented the new the Traffic Safety Input 2.0 (TSI 2.0) program. Ms. Nabaee stated that the TSI 2.0 program formally replaced the previous Traffic Safety Investigation program (TSI 1.0). TSI 1.0 launched in 2021 with a first-come first-served approach to traffic safety investigation requests from residents. DDOT received many requests for traffic safety investigations when TSI 1.0 launched – many of which were

duplicate requests. Ms. Nabaee stated that because there was no prioritization of TSI 1.0 requests both DDOT and community residents were frustrated with delays in investigation times. In addition, Ms. Nabaee stated that DDOT had equity concerns with TSI 1.0 because many requests were overrepresented in some areas of the District.

Ms. Nabaee presented a brief overview of the prioritization model included in TSI 2.0. Eight-hundred locations will be investigated annually using objective factors, which include (1) a history of crash patterns, (2) proximity to Vision Zero High Injury Networks, and (3) equity measures of income, race and ethnicity and disability status. The model will also take into account proximity to vulnerable road user trip generators including senior centers, recreation centers, transit stops schools and a pedestrian data gathered from the pedestrian master plan. Finally, the model takes into account roadway characteristics that indicate a challenging geometry for users, which could mean an intersection with or without a traffic signal. Ms. Nabaee stated that DDOT will maintain accessibility and transparency of the program with an online dashboard that will include operational performance with the number of locations under investigation and locations with pending investigations.

The Chair asked how DDOT tracks the scores and how are persons with disabilities identified and compared to other groups listed in the equity measures. Ms. Nabaee responded that the equity measure is an equal distribution among the three groups included (disability status, race/ethnicity, and income) and depending on where the TSI is located each factor is scored

against each other and the scores are normalized to produce an overall score to help rank the location for review. In addition, she stated that there is a document on the website with additional information on details around individual criteria used in a score.

The Chair asked if there is a list of all the scores and added that he sent an example of a request that he sent to staff prior to the meeting. Ms. Nabaee responded that not all scores are on the website because a score is not the only determining factor of whether or not a TSI is prioritized. She stated that there are other constraints including a ward minimum to ensure that all eight wards receive work and a classification of the roadways, so a pure score does not translate into why a location was selected to receive an investigation or not. In addition, she stated that all TSI requests will be maintained in a database for consideration in the next cycle of 200 locations.

The Chair stated that he agreed with a prioritization model, but he was concerned with the process because it appears that the onus is on residents to flag issues. Ms. Nabaee responded that the TSI 2.0 program is one of many other programs that DDOT has related to safety including the annual safety improvement program, highway safety improvement program, safe routes to school, reviews related to capital improvements, and other Vision Zero initiatives.

Councilmember Buddy Moore stated that at senior centers that sometimes pedestrians are ignored at crosswalks by motor vehicles. Councilmember Helen Urquhart agreed with Mr. Moore and indicated that pedestrians face adverse conditions at

crosswalks. The Chair added that sightlines at crosswalks are an issue for pedestrians and that a majority of his requests have been for crosswalks with sightline issues. He also stated that DC Code requires twenty-five feet for sightlines at intersections and this regulation almost universally ignored in the District.

Ms. Nabaee responded to the comments and questions by stating that the District is addressing different corridors to ideally fast track safety improvements on a larger scale. In addition, it would not be efficient for DDOT to focus on only one intervention for all areas as opposed to doing a wholistic assessment of what improvements are needed.

The Chair stated that the MAAC should track improvements made at each intersection.

Mr. Moore asked if age was considered in the TSI 2.0 model. Ms. Nabaee responded that age is a factor in the model and depended on available data. She said that DDOT is being proactive reviewing locations near senior centers or schools for signal timing and other efforts outside of the TSI 2.0 program as well.

Mr. Adrian Morrison asked if leading pedestrian intervals (LPIs) are more prevalent near schools or senior centers. Ms. Nabaee responded that there are different criteria that indicate where LPIs should go. In addition, nearly 65 – 70% of LPIs are at traffic signals in our network, and DDOT reviews traffic signals annually.

Bus Priority Network – 7th Street NW – Zack Gambetti-Mendez

Zack Gambetti-Mendez presented on the 7th Street NW Bus Priority Project. The Bus Priority Program is doing a new project on 7th Street NW between Pennsylvania Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue NW in downtown near the Gallery Place Chinatown Capital One area.

The Bus Priority Program has two main goals (1) to increase the reliability of buses operating with the District (2) to improve safety. He stated that the program will take holistic approach to corridors and not only focusing on the bus. In addition, the Bus Priority Program is looking at the entire District.

The Chair stated that the MAAC has discussed issues with Metro vehicles blocking access to the curb for persons with disabilities and that should be flagged for WMATA. Mr. Gambetti-Mendez responded that the Bus Priority team has flagged this issue and will continue to flag any instances of illegally parked vehicles, especially any WMATA-owned vehicles.

Mr. Gambetti-Mendez indicated that there would be some interventions like slowing turning vehicles so they have better visibility and more reaction time for users in the crosswalks.

Mr. Morrison asked about a recent proposal to make buses free and if that was for everyone or just persons with disabilities. Mr. Gambetti-Mendez responded that Council has passed legislation, but it has not been funded.

Mr. Gambetti-Mendez added that the team is still creating

engineering documents for actual construction, which is scheduled in 2024.

Mr. Moore added that the bus lane only project is good idea. There were no additional questions, and the Chair's computer froze.

Mr. Kevin Whitfield provided an overview of the process for testifying at the upcoming Performance Oversight Hearing for DDOT on February 27. He also confirmed that the Metro for DC Bill that was discussed regarding fare-free buses had not been funded. There are funds that have not been appropriated by Council for that purpose and that the current model would be for DDOT to enter a fare buy down agreement with WMATA to do fare-free buses.

The Chair returned.

Mr. Morrison asked how he could testify on February 27. Mr. Whitfield responded that there an individual can be added to the witness list to testify on behalf of an organization. In addition, he stated that written testimony could be submitted.

Public Comment

No public comments.

Adjourn

The public meeting was adjourned at 6.57 p.m. and the MAAC members moved to a private session to discuss their comments for the performance hearing.