MPO BOARD ENGAGEMENT THROUGH TARGET SETTING

Using the Federally Required PM1 Target Setting Requirements to Engage MPO Board Members On the Topic of Safety

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The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Washington, DC region.

- **Multistate MPO:**
  - District of Columbia,
  - Northern Virginia, and
  - Suburban Maryland

- Population: ~ 5.4 million
- Employment: ~ 3.2 million
Beginnings...

- Federal requirement for MPOs to set regional highway safety targets
- TPB Staff preparations:
  - Outreach to our member state DOTs (MD, VA, DC)
  - Educating the Transportation Planning Board and Technical Committee
- Focus: *How to meet the new requirements*
Preparing for the First Set of Targets

- Understanding our state’s differing target setting methodologies
- Developing and vetting our regional methodology
- Focus: Ensuring our methodology was defensible
Safety Target Setting
Methodology

• Apply Maryland’s approach to identify a “sub-target” for the Maryland portion of the National Capital Region (NCR)

• Apply Virginia’s approach to identify a sub-target for the Virginia portion of the NCR

• Incorporate the District of Columbia’s target as a sub-target for the DC portion of the NCR

• Combine the three sub-targets to create the regional target
Board Discussion & Staff Response

• **Board member concerns:**
  - Concerned about the “high” numbers
  - Desire for more aspirational targets

• **Staff responses:**
  - Federal regulations specify data-driven targets
  - New “whereas” clauses added to the resolution
Resolution Language

• WHEREAS, safety of all modes of travel is an important element of TPB’s Vision, and a regional priority, with many its member jurisdictions having adopted aspirational safety goals associated with Vision Zero and Towards Zero Deaths; and

• WHEREAS, the TPB encourages every member jurisdiction in the region to adopt similar aspirational goals and calls on the transportation agencies of the region to redouble their efforts to develop projects, programs and policies to achieve dramatic reductions in fatalities and serious injuries; and

• WHEREAS, the TPB remains focused on achieving its aspirational goals and will use the annual regional highway safety targets and the target setting process to evaluate the region’s progress toward achieving its aspirational goals; and
Prefering for the 2nd Set of Targets

• Redirected some UPWP funds for a Regional Safety Study to:
  • Understand what factors contribute to crashes in the region
  • Determine where crashes are over-represented
  • Identify and recommend proven effective solutions
  • Provide the TPB and member jurisdictions specific suggestions to improve safety

• Modified target setting methodology to “cap” new targets

Preparing for the 2nd Set of Targets
Board Discussion: 2nd Set of Targets

- **Board member input:**
  - Some support for more aspirational targets...
  - Even more support for finding ways to reduce fatalities
  - High level of interest in the regional safety study
  - Directed our state DOT members to update the TPB quarterly on their safety efforts

  “…we need to add something to the resolution that says we need to be more aggressive than the goals we have been presented…”

  “…I would agree we need to be as aggressive and aspirational as possible with these goals, but I would also argue that our goals are fairly meaningless unless we actually have the policies and the initiatives to achieve said goals…”

  “What keeps going through my mind is that we just have the numbers, don’t have the “why” behind the numbers…”
2019: Safety Engagement

- State DOT Safety Updates:
  - March, April, May, September, October
- Regional Safety Study:
  - June kickoff
  - Benchmarking three peer MPOs
  - Crash data acquisition and analysis
- Vision Zero at member jurisdictions
- #DrivingItHome
Safety Is On the Agenda!

TPB Safety Agenda Items

Source: TPB staff analysis
Why Did This Happen?

• Requirement to set targets put safety on the agenda
• Fatalities were going in the wrong direction + news coverage of crashes
• Topic hits close to home for some board members
Parting Thoughts

• TPB is not a special case
• Put safety onto your policy board’s agenda
  ○ Set numerical regional safety targets
• Do not be afraid
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