

Delaware Pedestrian Council | Meeting #6

April 17, 2025 - Meeting Notes

Meeting Title: Delaware Pedestrian Council | Meeting #6

Date: April 17, 2025

Time: 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Attendees:

Council Members Present

Name	Position	Email
John Sisson	CEO of the Delaware Transit Organization, Alternate Chair for Maureen Kelley	John.Sisson@delaware.gov
Sharon Bryson	Alternate for Joshua Bushweller, Office of Highway Safety Director	Sharon.Bryson@delaware.gov
Thomas Nickel	DeIDOT ADA Title II Coordinator	Thomas.Nickel@delaware.gov
Bill Payne	Governor Appointed Resident from Sussex County	ublcreek@icloud.com
Jamie Whitehouse	Sussex County Planning and Zoning	Jamie.Whitehouse@sussexcountyde.gov
Brian Goff	Governor Appointed Resident from Kent County	bgoff@chpk.com

Members Absent

Name	Position	Email
Maureen Kelley	Alternate for Shanté Hastings, DeIDOT Secretary	Maureen.Kelley@delaware.gov
Michael Smith	Governor Appointed Resident from New Castle County	MichaelSmithecon@gmail.com
Lloyd Schmitz	Governor Appointed Resident Representative with a Visual Disability	LloydSchmitz@gmail.com
William Jiron Jr.	Governor Appointed Resident Representative with a Physical Disability	bigwillie1@msn.net
John McNeal	Chair of the State Council for Persons with Disabilities	John.McNeal@delaware.gov
Kris Connelly	Alternate for Sarah Keifer, Kent County Director of Planning Services	Kris.Connelly@kentcountyde.gov
Omar Noor	Governor Appointed Resident Representative with a Developmental Disability	Omar.Noor@delaware.gov
Dr. Kevin Spence	Executive Director of League of Local Governments	deleaguelocalgovs@gmail.com
Elliott Larkin	Director of Land Use and Planning for the City of Wilmington	ETLarkin@wilmingtonde.gov
Kara Colpo	DOS ADA Title II Coordinator	Kara.Colpo@delaware.gov
Antoni Sekowski	Alternate for David Culver, NCC Land Use General Manager	Antoni.Sekowski@newcastlede.gov

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DeIDOT Support Staff

Name	Organization	Email
Kelly Valencik	DeIDOT	Kelly.Valencik@delaware.gov
Stephanie Johnson	DeIDOT	Stephanie.Johnson@delaware.gov
Angie Hernandez	JMT	AHernandez@jmt.com
Sophie Thompson	JMT	SThompson2@jmt.com

Guests

Name	Organization
Matt Harris	University of Delaware
Collin Willard	University of Delaware
Paul Moser	DeIDOT
Jared Kauffman	Chair of the Pedestrian Council's Safety, Outreach, and Education Subcommittee

Meeting Purpose

The purpose of this meeting was to conduct the sixth Delaware Pedestrian Council meeting, including voting to approve the Council's budget for the 2025 fiscal year. The following items were discussed:

1. Introduction

John Sisson called the meeting to order with an opening welcome at 1:02 p.m. Kelly Valencik introduced Stephanie Johnson, the new Director of the Division of Planning at DeIDOT. Stephanie has been with DeIDOT for over 25 years, and has held key roles in accounting, auditing, finance, and planning. Before this, she was the Director of DeIDOT's Resiliency & Sustainability Division. Kelly then provided an overview of the meeting agenda. Sophie Thompson then led the roll call from 1:09 pm to 1:11 pm. With five Council members present, the Council did not have a quorum at this meeting.

2. Approval of Previous Minutes

The Council did not have a quorum at this meeting and was therefore unable to approve the minutes from the previous meeting.

3. Public Comment

Kelly Valencik provided an opportunity for members of the public to share questions or comments. No questions or comments were stated by the public.

4. Review of Fatal Pedestrian Crashes in Previous Quarter

Emily Hufnal from DeIDOT Traffic Safety provided an overview of fatal pedestrian crashes by quarter. During Quarter 1 of 2025, there were a total of five fatal pedestrian crashes, with three fatalities in New Castle County, two fatalities in Kent County, and no fatalities in Sussex County.

Sharon Bryson gave an overview of OSHS data for the pedestrian crashes for Quarter 1 of 2025. Fatal crashes included two low visibility situations with pedestrians wearing dark clothing in areas of

the roadway with poor lighting, a 93-year-old man heading to a bus stop who was struck in a hit-and-run, and two cases of pedestrians being struck after exiting disabled vehicles. Sharon also shared details regarding a recent crash where a pedestrian was struck by a speeding driver who ran a red light and was driving the wrong way down a one-way street. The overall ages of pedestrians who were fatally struck in this quarter ranged from age 15 to 93.

5. Pop-Up Projects Discussion

Kelly Valencik introduced Paul Moser (DelDOT), Matt Harris (University of Delaware), and Collin Willard (University of Delaware) from the University of Delaware Living Lab Research Group, who discussed the potential to use Pedestrian Council funds to sponsor the cost of materials which they use to create safe pedestrian pop-up demonstration projects. The UD Living Lab group shared examples of previous pop-up projects that they have created and shared a breakdown of costs and possible uses for the items. Since the Council did not have a quorum at this meeting, they were unable to vote to put funds towards the pop-up project materials.

6. Subcommittee Updates

Sophie Thompson provided a brief update regarding the Land Use Subcommittee, which last met on November 22nd. Upcoming discussion for future meetings includes focusing on the following items to align to Senate Bill No. 50:

- Accessibility and connectivity improvements to make transit a more viable option for all Delaware residents.
- Improving pedestrian safety through modifications and improvements to land use planning, regulations, and processes in Delaware.
- How state agencies and municipalities can better identify gaps in the system of pedestrian paths and sidewalks to create a system of sidewalks and pathways that is continuous and interconnected.

Jared Kauffman also provided a brief update regarding the Outreach and Education Subcommittee, which last met on February 7th. The next subcommittee meeting is planned to be held in late April. Upcoming discussion for future meetings includes focusing on the following items to align to Senate Bill No. 50:

- Messages for effective outreach
- Quantifying outreach and giveaways
- Education and outreach to decision-makers
- Social media posts relating drivers to pedestrians

7. Council Budget

Kelly Valencik shared information about the upcoming Everyone Gets Home Summit in Dover, DE as an idea for the Council to sponsor and attend. The event could be a good opportunity for the Council to find new subcommittee members and to learn more about pedestrians in Delaware, as well as providing an opportunity network with other pedestrian safety-related agencies. Sponsorship costs \$750, and includes an ad printed in the Summit program and an exhibition/display/table. If choosing to attend, the Council could use a volunteer to create an ad for the event program, and volunteers to staff the Pedestrian Council table at the event.

Kelly then presented the proposed 2025 Council budget to the group, at \$20,100 for supplies and \$1,000 for travel. Kelly proposed a potential budget breakdown of \$16,350 towards safety pop-up project materials, \$4,000 towards safety outreach materials (reflective items, hats, etc.), and \$750 towards training sessions, workshops, or events. **These funds must be spent by June 15, 2025.** The Council was unable to vote on the proposed budget due to the lack of a quorum.

Kelly also provided an overview of the suggested budget breakdown for 2026, based on the 2025 budget. This includes \$15,000 towards safety pop-up project materials, \$2,600 towards safety outreach materials, \$1,000 towards expert speakers, \$1,000 towards training sessions or workshops, \$500 towards travel reimbursements for Council members, and \$1,000 for other ideas from Council members. This suggested budget breakdown is flexible and is open to suggestions from Council members.

8. Complete Streets Design Guide Comments

Angie Hernandez addressed the comments received by the Council on the Complete Streets Design Guide. Based on feedback from the Pedestrian Council, the following language regarding crosswalk spacing based on pedestrian trip lengths was added to the guide: *“Pedestrian origin and destination patterns, as well as potential trip lengths, should help inform appropriate crosswalk spacing and frequency to ensure safe and direct pedestrian access.”* Regarding accessible on-street parking, the guide refers to other documents like the Pedestrian Accessibility Standards and notes that on-street parking is typically regulated by municipalities.

9. Agency Updates

Council Members who represent agencies as part of the Pedestrian Council were asked to provide round-robin updates to the general Council with any recent pedestrian-related updates from their respective agencies. No updates were shared.

10. Focus Areas for 2025

Sophie Thompson provided an overview of items which will be major focus areas for the Pedestrian Council in 2025 based on the Council’s 2024 Annual Report and the requirements of Senate Bill No. 50, which established the Pedestrian Council. In addition to the previously mentioned focus items for subcommittees, the following items will be of focus for the general Council in 2025:

- Pedestrian priority area program for improving pedestrian safety in high crash areas.
- Sidewalk and Multi-Use Path Maintenance Policy review.
- Traffic rules review to identify any legal changes needed to better support a safer pedestrian environment.
- Council to continue working with Americans with Disabilities Act Title II coordinators to identify areas of improvement.

11. Next Meeting Dates

Kelly Valencik shared that the next Council meeting will be held on Thursday, July 17th from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM, and the fourth meeting of 2025 will be held on Thursday, October 23rd from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM. Outlook calendar holds have already been sent for these dates. Please reach out if you have not received these holds. Kelly Valencik shared that the Council will need to meet again prior to the July 17th meeting in order to vote to approve the annual budget for the 2025 fiscal year.

12. Closing Remarks

John Sisson asked the Council members to share any potential budget ideas with Kelly Valencik or before the next Council meeting. Jamie Whitehouse asked whether the group could use the funds for pedestrian safety kits, reflective patches for school bags for kids, etc. Kelly shared that the funds are able to be used on these items, and that the Safety, Outreach, and Education Subcommittee has been working on finding reflective items such as hats, bags, etc. for unhoused people and pedestrians who frequently walk at night (for example those who walk to and from work, bus stops, grocery stores, and more). Kelly mentioned that it would be helpful if Jamie could potentially work with the County to help distribute these items, and Jamie shared that they could certainly help with that.

Bill Payne shared that he believes that he doesn't see data pointing towards the homeless community being involved in accidents. He believes that accidents tend to happen more with those who are in the low-income community without cars who are being struck more frequently. Bill Payne shared that he would like to see more data pointing towards the homeless community being struck. John Sisson shared that while Bill's point is valid, homeless status is not typically tracked in the crash database and can be difficult to identify. He shared that the goal of these materials is to get reflective items to people who might not spend money on these on their own to help make sure that they are still visible. William Payne suggested using funds to purchase pens to help share information about the Council. Kelly suggested discussing this topic further at the next Safety, Outreach, and Education Subcommittee meeting. Bill agreed.

John Sisson adjourned the meeting at 2:28 p.m. All agreed.