

### **Attendee**

Richard Klepner	OHS
Jackie McDermott	OHS
David Racca	CADSR/UD
Tom Nickel	DelDOT
James Wilson	Bike DE
Ken Grant	AAA
C.R. McLeod	DelDOT
Mark Luszcz	DelDOT
Tracy L.Y. Condon	DSP

### **DelDOT Support Staff**

Farzana Atique	McCormick Taylor
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#### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Chair, Mr. C.R. McLeod.

#### **2. MEETING MINUTES REVIEW (05/21/2019)**

Mr. McLeod asked members if there were any comments on the May 2019 meeting minutes. Mr. Ken Grant made a motion to accept the meeting minutes as is and Mr. Tom Nickel seconded the motion. All voted in favor of accepting the meeting minutes as is. The motion passed.

#### **3. THE TWO FACTORS DRIVING PEDESTRIAN FATALITIES IN THE US: AN ANALYSIS OF TEN YEARS OF NATIONAL CRASH DATA IN 435 CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS**

Mr. Jim Wilson gave a presentation on the two factors driving pedestrian fatalities in the US which is based on an analysis of ten years of national crash data in 435 Congressional Districts. Mr. Wilson remarked that pedestrian fatalities are not only a Delaware problem, but it is a national issue.

Mr. Wilson noted that US pedestrian deaths recently hit their highest total since 1990. Over 6,200 people were killed while walking in the US in 2018. According to Smart Growth in America, Delaware ranked the 2<sup>nd</sup> deadliest state for pedestrians. Mr. Wilson noted that most of the deadliest states for pedestrians are located on the Southern belt of the country. Mr. Wilson showed a figure of Congressional Districts having 700,000 population each. Ten deadliest congressional districts are identified, fortunately Delaware congressional districts are not within the list. Western Southern District in Phoenix, Arizona which has an annual pedestrian fatal crash rate of 4.5 per 100,000 people is the deadliest congressional district.

Mr. Wilson noted that the average crash rate in the US is 1.6, whereas the lowest rate is 0.4, which is in Plano, Texas. Mr. McLeod inquired what kind of congressional district is Plano. Mr. Wilson noted that it is a suburban district. Mr. Wilson remarked that when going from the highest to the lowest pedestrian fatalities rate there is an order of magnitude difference. Mr. Wilson remarked that the reasons for the magnitude difference should be identified.

Mr. Wilson remarked that it is not plausible that Phoenix has ten times more distracted drivers than Plano Texas drivers. Similarly, it is not plausible that Phoenix has ten times more distracted pedestrians than that of Plano, Texas. Mr. Wilson noted that there have been recent studies indicating that SUVs and trucks are generating more pedestrian fatalities in the recent years. But he stated that it is also not a plausible theory that Phoenix has 10 times as many SUVs and trucks than Plano.

Mr. Luszcz remarked that the distracted drivers and pedestrians may be the reasons why there is a higher number of pedestrian fatalities, but it does not support the discrepancy between the different states.

Putting implausible theories aside, Mr. Wilson asked what could cause one area of the country to have an order of magnitude when compared to another pedestrian fatal crashes per capita. Mr. Wilson showed the median household income for the deadliest congressional districts. The average U.S. household income is \$59K. All of the deadliest congressional districts for pedestrians are below the U.S. median household income. It was asked is poverty causes fatal pedestrian crashes. Mr. Wilson noted that the poorest congressional district in the US, Bronx in New York, is not in the top 10 deadliest districts. Whereas Bronx is a highly urban area, the 2<sup>nd</sup> poorest district is Eastern Kentucky (Kentucky 5<sup>th</sup> district) is a rural area. Mr. Wilson noted that some of the poorest congressional districts in the America are safer for pedestrians than the national average. Mr. Wilson stated that just being poor is not a death sentence. Poverty on its own is not enough to cause a high rate of pedestrian deaths. Mr. Wilson then offered some example of districts such as Ohio 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, Kentucky 1<sup>st</sup> and West Virginia 1<sup>st</sup> which all are low income districts but have lower fatality rates. Mr. Wilson asked why poor districts like Arizona 1<sup>st</sup>, Nevada 1<sup>st</sup>, and Florida 24<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> district have higher fatality rates than that of Ohio, Kentucky and West Virginia districts.

To look for an answer Mr. Wilson identified the Sunbelt Sprawl as one of the reasons for the disparity among the states for pedestrian fatalities. Mr. Wilson mentioned the term “Stroad”, which is a combination of the characteristics of street and road. Stroad is designed for high-speed vehicle movement but with adjacent commercial development. Mr. Wilson remarked that stroad is like what we have on Kirkwood Highway, Route 40 and Route 13 in Delaware. Mr. Wilson acknowledged that he could not quantify the stroad miles for Arizona 7<sup>th</sup>, Nevada 1<sup>st</sup> and Florida districts. However, he made the assertions that the function of poverty and stroad miles correlates to the pedestrian fatal crash.

Mr. Luszcz remarked that many roadways in Maryland are very much like those of Delaware. If someone is put on Maryland roads, they won’t know the difference between Delaware and Maryland. Maryland land use policy, driving education, or traffic policies do not differ significantly than those of Delaware, however there are significant difference in pedestrian fatalities between the two states.

Mr. Wilson remarked that some roads in Delaware with pedestrian fatalities show the characteristics of stroad such as Kirkwood Highway and Pulaski highway. The roadways are in low income areas where there are commercial areas on both sides of the road which causes many midblock crossings. He inquired whether policy can be implemented to restrict future creation of such stroads in Delaware. He also remarked that where there are current roadways with commercial area surrounding, the speed limit can be reduced with road diets or lower posted speed limits in those roadways to convert the stroads to streets.

Mr. Nickel shared his view that unfortunately there will be a presence of stroads in the state, since it depends on land use. Land use has economy cycle, as the economy goes down poverty will come to the area. Poverty and stroad remains linked.

Mr. Klepner emphasized the importance of having counties and state planning officials to be present in Pedestrian Council meetings so that they can take part in the discussions.

Mr. Wilson remarked that the new, New Castle County executives may be more willing to have discussions about land use.

4. **REVIEW OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 54 – REESTABLISHMENT OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WALKABILITY AND PEDESTRIAN AWARENESS**

Mr. Nickel mentioned that the Pedestrian Council will recommend that the Office of State Planning to be included in the Pedestrian Council. Mr. Luszcz noted representatives from both New Castle County and Kent County need to be included as members of the subcommittee and Pedestrian Council. Mr. Grant noted that AAA would like to be included as a more official member of the Pedestrian Council. Mr. McLeod agreed with the assertion.

Mr. Klepner mentioned that in addition to adding new members to the Pedestrian Council, he also raised the issue of how the recommendations are implemented and to investigate the charter of the Pedestrian Council. It was decided to have this as an agenda item for the next subcommittee meeting.

Mr. McLeod suggested that the subcommittee hold a meeting before the Ped Council meeting to be held on January 28<sup>th</sup>, so that discussions can be made to develop action items for the Council. Ms. Atique proposed to send out a doodle poll to schedule on the next meeting. Mr. Wilson asked whether Mr. Marc Cote can also be invited to the next meeting to share his ideas.

Mr. McLeod suggested that in the next subcommittee meeting, the members can vote on some action items and bring those items to the next January Pedestrian Council meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am.