

**DRAFT SUMMARY OF April 1, 2015 MEETING of the  
PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE, and TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Executive Office Building, 9th Floor Conference Room**

**Members Present:** Darrel Droblich, Chair; Erwin Mack, Chair Emeritus; Kristy Daphnis; Captain Thomas Didone, MCPD; Angel Garcia-Ablanque, MCPS; Ramin Assa; Jeremy Martin, Rockville - MML; Anyesha Mookherjee, MSHA; Drew Morrison (for Roger Berliner), County Council; Reemberto Rodriguez, SSRSC; Colleen Mitchell, Vice Chair; Michael Subin, MC-CEX; Jack Strausman.

**Members Absent:** Steve Friedman; Alan Migdall; David Sharp; David Anspacher, MNCPPC.

**NEW Members:** George Branyan, Silver Spring Resident; Wendy Leibowitz, Bethesda Resident; Marybeth Cleveland, Dearborn Resident; Leah Walton, Wheaton Resident.

**County Staff:** Fred Lees, MCDOT; Shawn Brennan, MCHHS Aging and Disability Services; Jeff Dunckel, MCDOT; Nadji Kirby, MCDOT; Emil J. Wolanin, MCDOT; Shae Wilson, MCDOT.

**Guests:** Sarah Gotbaum, Elder Women's Aging Alliance; John Wetmore, Perils for Pedestrians.; Kristen Blackmon, Bethesda Transportation Management District (TMD); Peggy Schwartz, North Bethesda TMD; Patrick Benko, American Public Health Association; Peggy Dennis, Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board; Maureen Mahoney (guest).

**PBTSAC Committee Business:**

Chair Darrel Droblich called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm, calling for introductions. The four new members of the committee were introduced: George Branyan, Wendy Leibowitz, Marybeth Cleveland, and Leah Walton. The committee reviewed the summary of the January meeting, which was very long with a detailed review of the motions tracking grid.

**Motion: Moved to approve summary of the January 8 meeting. Committee voted unanimously to approve.**

Droblich provided the committee with an update of the January meeting with County Executive (CE) Leggett, attended by Droblich, Emil Wolanin, Al Roshdieh, and Jeff Dunckel. Droblich presented items discussed by the committee, including the vision and recommendations for a Pedestrian Master Plan, updating the Bikeways Master Plan, support for county-wide education programs on bicycle and pedestrian safety, more money to MCPD for enforcement, and to support funding of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Areas (BiPPAs).

The CE did express interest in bicycle safety education: he understands the need especially with Capital Bikeshare. The CE understands the need for the expansion of funds in the budget, but cited tough budgetary times. Droblich clarified the lack of enforcement funding in the current budget as the CE was not aware of that being an issue. Droblich emphasized to the CE the importance of coupling education and enforcement together to reduce pedestrian collisions. Droblich will testify to the County Council in an upcoming hearing. There is state legislation that requires bike shops to hand out information and the state supplies them with the information, using bicycle shops as a way to disseminate bicycle information into the community. The CE supports this idea. State legislation requires it, but the law is not being implemented or enforced. Information is not currently being provided by the State to bicycle shops.

**Review of the Committee Motion Tracking Grid:** Droblich requested that any additional items that are identified in discussions be added to the tracking grid. Most of the grid is now filled out. The committee reviewed the grid and identified the following items to be added:

The second item in the grid, January 2011 (evaluate recommendations for pilot study): should be closed out.

The third item, January 2011 (support Bill 37-11): In the first year of the program, cameras were placed on 25 school busses (of the 1200 bus fleet.) These were placed on the most problematic routes. In 2014, MCPD issued 1022 citations with these 25 cameras. There is debate between Council and the Executive Branch (OMB) on whether or not to expand the program (add 10 more cameras.) The program has been one of the most successful in the nation. Given the large number of citations, more education may be needed—or maybe not, given all the signage and warning lights school buses now use.

The fourth item, January 2011 (expanding SRTS to Bicycles and MVA Drivers Education): The Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) is adding pedestrian and bicycle safety questions to their test given for drivers' licenses. The questions are being developed now.

The fifth item, November 2012 (increase pedestrian and bicycle safety education programs): No updates except that the County will work with the State to get bicycle safety education materials into bike shops.

The sixth item, September 2013 (County-wide Bicycle Safety Education Campaign): No FY16 funding requested by the County Executive for this item.

The seventh item, September 2013 (MCPD Bike Patrols): This item is closed and can be removed from the active grid.

The eighth item, September 2013 (Improve Bicycle Infrastructure): Emil Wolanin to address this item under upcoming discussion of budget.

The ninth item, September 2013 (Bicycle Ride-along): Bicycle ride along has been completed and can be removed from the active grid.

**Action Items: Senior-walk-along: Commission on Aging has been discussing how to make communities more livable for seniors by making them more walkable—to do walkability studies. The AARP and the World Health Organization have check lists for doing walkability studies for seniors. Droblich suggested this may be a topic of interest to Marybeth Cleveland to take a lead on, modeled on what was done a couple of years ago for Bike-ride-alongs. Decision-makers join advocates and interest groups on assessing sidewalks and street crossings from a senior's perspective, including those with disabilities. Wheelchairs for use by decision-makers should be part of the activity. . . walk a mile in their shoes/on their wheels. Droblich will talk to Cleveland about this. Reemberto Rodriquez suggested connecting this effort to "senior villages," a county designated area for seniors that are identified by zip codes. John Wetmore discussed Wellness Walkways created in British Columbia for seniors that included frequent benches (every half a block) and saw-cut sidewalk joints instead of conventional tool joints. He just completed an episode of "Perils for Pedestrians" on the British Columbia Wellness Walkways and will send the committee the link when it gets posted. Leah Walton also mentioned the NHTSA Watching Out program. Droblich would like to get something on the Seniors Walk-along organized this summer.**

Skipping ahead to the item from September 2013 (Purple Line Project Comments): Drew Morrison reported that the Governor should provide his response to the proposed Purple line by mid-to-late-May. If the project proceeds, the contractor project teams should submit their proposals this August.

Skipping ahead to the item from May 2014 (Pepco Allowing Access to their Property for Hiker/Biker Trail): Jack Strausman reports that good faith negotiations are underway for a pilot project and future access to utility Rights of Way for a hiker/biker trail, as part of the Pepco/Exelon merger negotiations.

Skipping ahead to the item from May 2014 (update of County Bikeways Functional Master Plan): Jeff Dunckel cited an email from David Anspacher indicating that the update of the Bicycle Master Plan is now part of Park and Planning July work plan. MNCPPC has requested funding for technical support and to hire a consultant to help. There is no plan or funding request for a Pedestrian Master Plan.

Skipping ahead to the item from September 2014 (Snow Removal Plan): Drew Morrison reports that there is currently no funding requested for the snow removal plan.

Erwin Mack complimented Chairman Droblich and the entire committee for constructing the tracking grid that is bringing about action on the actions and motions of the committee, stating that this should have been done a long time ago; this is an excellent document. Droblich stated it was a team effort.

### **Program Updates:**

**Education outreach:** Nadji Kirby provided a summary of this year's YOLO campaign targeting pedestrian safety messages at high school students. Messages of being visible and avoiding distracted walking and driving were featured in the campaign. One program was established in Gaithersburg High School, led by a student there. A school "glow in the dark" assemble featured students with glow sticks doing skits and modern dance routines and speakers, including Captain Didone, Gwen Ward, and Councilmember Craig Rice addressing how students can be safe pedestrians. Social media was used; the principal encouraged students to tweet their impressions during the event. For fifteen minutes, the topic trended nationally on Twitter with the many tweets generated. Additional YOLO programs were done at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School and at Northwood High School.

The YOLO campaign has been submitted for a National Association of Counties Organization (NACO) award.

Dunckel presented a summary of the regional Spring Street Smart Campaign that began March 25. The current "Tired Faces" campaign is now in its third year, as the creative is not being redone every year. This allows additional money to be used for media and disseminating the message more broadly. This has resulted in the messaging getting more attention by the target audience. The YOLO campaign adopted the "Tired Faces" imaging, and broadened the message to high school students; some of that has been incorporated into this Spring Street Smart Campaign as well. Dunckel shared radio and TV spots that were created with the additional money available from not having to redo the creative work. These are airing on prime time programs, including the Jimmy Fallon Show, Saturday Night Live, and prime time evening news shows. These ads are also in Spanish for the Spanish media. There are also TV and radio interviews being conducted throughout the region, explaining how to be safer pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers. The campaign will run through the third week of April, with MCPD doing enhanced enforcement during that time. Dunckel reported that the Maryland Highway Safety Office has

decided to adopt the “Tired Faces” campaign for its statewide education effort. This campaign will not only be regional now, but statewide as well.

Reemberto Rodriguez asked if MCDOT has done anything with ethnic advisory groups: African-American, Asian, or Hispanic groups. Dunckel has had some interaction with Latino group, but not the others. Reemberto states going through those community groups will help build the relationships with them. Dunckel stated that he has done a lot of interaction with neighborhood groups and civic associations, but not these groups yet.

**Action Item: Follow up with Office of Community Partnership presentations and build relationships with their ethnic advisory groups—making presentations on the program and seeking their advice and council**

**Pedestrian Collision, Fatalities and Enforcement:** Cpt. Didone provided an update on pedestrian collisions. The state converted to a new accident report system (Automated Crash Report System – ACRS.) The County is now translating this new database to get the information needed on pedestrian crashes—a consultant has been hired to do this and is making good progress. Data for 2014 should be available soon. Initial analysis indicates we had 421 pedestrian collisions, 2 less than there were 2 years ago. Unfortunately, there have already been 5 pedestrian fatal collisions so far this year. This is higher than we have recently had at this time of the calendar year. Didone reviewed the fatal crashes with the committee. There have also been some very serious level 4 severity collisions that could just as easily have been fatal collisions. Speed is often the factor that affects whether these are fatal or survivable crashes.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) did an independent evaluation of the County’s speed camera program. MCPD expects to hear good news on the effectiveness of this program. Montgomery County is the only jurisdiction that has had an independent evaluation with a follow up study. Wendy Leibowitz asked if there had been any effort to educate people about speed cameras not being just to fill the County piggy bank. Much effort has gone into explaining that revenue has nothing to do with the purpose of the speed cameras. The program managed in MCPD is severed from the revenue stream that ends up in a separate department (OMB). Data has indicated that when MCPD puts up a camera, 25% to 40% of the vehicles are going 12 miles-per-hour or more over the limit; after a year, the data shows that under 1% are violating the speed limit where the cameras have been placed. That results in a reduction of revenue, and that is good because the County is looking to improve safety, not make money. Unfortunately, motorists who continue to speed and continue to get tickets are not going to accept that fact—and will continue to believe what they want to believe.

George Branyan stated the District of Columbia (DC) had IIHS do an 800 person telephone survey with the result that 87% of DC residents favor red light cameras and 76% favor speed cameras. DC has seen significant drops in speeds city-wide and the lowest number of total traffic fatalities and lowest pedestrian fatalities ever in the District.

**Update on Bill 3-15 – Sidewalk Closures During Construction:** Drew Morrison summarized the County Council’s action on Bill 3-15. The Executive Branch and the Council have worked together on this bill. Bill 3-15 requires that when there is a sidewalk closure, there needs to be a sign telling the public how long the sidewalk will be closed, and a contact to call (County 311) if it is closed beyond that date, or if there are problems with access for pedestrians during construction. The bill passed the full

Council unanimously. Morrison wanted to highlight all the work that DPS and DOT have done to focus resources on sidewalk closure projects. The next step is to get the State to pass legislation on this issue as well so this signage requirement will apply to State roads as well as County roads.

Dunckel provided a report on DOT's and DPS's handling of the sidewalk closure issue on Arlington Road—the developer failed to post the sidewalks' closure properly, as required by their Traffic Control Plan permit. It is this type of situation Bill 3-15 will address. Emil Wolanin explained how the requirements for developers applying for sidewalk closures had been revised and expanded. The requirements are much more restrictive on when and how sidewalks will be allowed to be closed. And now there will be much better coordination between the agencies and the County's Regional Services Centers. Ramin Assa asked about how the signage would accommodate those with visual disability. George Branyan stated the District of Columbia has employed a motion sensitive sign at a construction site on Connecticut Avenue—when the pedestrian approaches the sign, an audible message directs the pedestrian on what to do. Droblich suggested that the Senior/Disabled Walk-About should include visual impairment, perhaps blindfolding some of the participants.

**Discussion on FY16 Budget:** Emil Wolanin provided an overview of the DOT budget for the pedestrian safety program. All County departments were directed to reduce their budgets by 3%. No new items were funded under the County Executive's recommended budget. There were no reductions to any of the pedestrian safety budget items. In DOT's budget, anything related to safety remains in the budget; Wolanin handed out a list of the programs that would be cut. Due to issues with County Bonds, the future for the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) does not look good; cuts will have to be made. The Council indicates they will restore money for the BiPPas, pedestrian bikeways, sidewalks and pathways but reduce both road projects and the purchase of buses.

A question was asked about sidewalks and how they were funded: sidewalks are in both the Capital Budget (for sidewalk construction of projects) and the Operating Budget (for repairs and improvements of existing sidewalks).

**Ramin Assa requested that the committee have a more detailed discussion about the sidewalk program and the County's compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) at a future meeting.**

**Presentation on the Blue Ribbon Panel Report Recommendations and the Pedestrian Safety Initiative:** Darrel Droblich introduced the topic by explaining that an annual review of the recommendations in the Blue Ribbon Panel Report, issued in 2002, was specified in the legislation that authorizes the PBTSAC. To his knowledge this had never been done; he requested that Jeff Dunckel and Tom Didone prepare a presentation on the status of the program and the recommendations in that report and the subsequent Pedestrian Safety Initiative issued by County Executive Isiah Leggett in 2007.

Jeff Dunckel handed out the County's legislation that authorized the PBTSAC, with the language requiring the review of the Blue Ribbon Panel Report. He explained that the initial Blue Ribbon Panel Report with its 54 recommendations was then put into a strategic plan in 2007: the Pedestrian Safety Initiative. Dunckel also handed out the Committee's Mission Statement from 2009, that was drafted and reviewed with the PBTSAC and specified that the committee was to work on County-wide/global issues rather than site or project specific reviews.

Dunckel made a Powerpoint presentation to the committee, explaining the history of the program and the status of the strategies spelled out in the County Executive's Pedestrian Safety Initiative. (**See – Insert Link.**) Each strategy displayed in the Powerpoint was discussed. A check was placed by those strategies

that had been or are currently being employed and a teal color specified those strategies that had not been addressed.

Under the discussion of Strategy 3, Increase Emphasis on Pedestrians and Bicyclists in the Planning Process, Colleen Mitchell handed out her recommendation for a Montgomery County Pedestrian Master Plan, with specific examples of similar plans from other areas of the country (Seattle, Washington, D.C., etc.), with the goal of developing the process in which appropriate or routine pedestrian and bicycle facilities would be specified and provided for locations where pedestrian and bicycle mobility is a priority. Much discussion ensued on which agency should take the lead role in developing such a plan: MCDOT or MNCPPC. The objective would be to get the appropriate stakeholders together to discuss what was needed, and then decide how best to execute it.

Wolanin suggested putting together a work group to review what Colleen had prepared and to discuss the best process to develop some type of plan or guidance for the County. Droblich suggested that Colleen Mitchell, George Branyan and David Anspacher meet with Emil Wolanin to work through an outline of what this document or plan should be.

**ACTION ITEM: Droblich stated that this issue of the Pedestrian Master Plan will be added to the agenda of the next PBTSAC meeting to develop a process to define what it needs to be.**

Following the presentation, the question was asked about how MCDOT prioritizes where to build sidewalks and how much is spent on maintenance compared to new construction.

**ACTION ITEM: Jeff Dunckel will obtain the cost for sidewalk construction and maintenance and provide it to the committee (i.e. the cost and the linear footage of what is repaired and what is built new.**

#### **New Business:**

Drew Morrison, citing Cpt. Didone's previous discussions with the County Council on the need to fund more education to support the enforcement of pedestrian safety, introduced a motion for the PBTSAC to consider ensuring a comprehensive program. In discussing the issue with Councilmember Berliner today, Drew Morrison was asked to request the committee recommend \$125,000 for pedestrian safety education and enforcement.

**MOTION: Drew Morrison moved that the PBTSAC support adding \$125,000 to the FY16 budget to support a comprehensive pedestrian safety education and enforcement approach. The motion passed with one abstention.**

Jeff Dunckel thanked Jack Strausman for his 6 years of service to the Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee and presented him with the County Executive's Certificate of Appreciation. Jeff Dunckel also thanked Erwin Mack for his more than 9 years of service to the committee. Michael Subin presented Erwin Mack with his Certificate of Appreciation from the County Executive.

Meeting adjourned at 9:39 pm.