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**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PEDESTRIAN AND TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Erwin Mack, Chairperson
Colleen Mitchell, Vice-chairperson
Annual Report 2012
OUTLINE 12/4/12**

I. Introduction to the Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee

Origin and Purpose

In response to record numbers of pedestrian fatalities in Montgomery County in the late 1990s, County Executive Douglas Duncan appointed the *Blue Ribbon Panel on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety* in the summer of 2000. The panel developed a plan to improve pedestrian and traffic safety in the county through education, enforcement, engineering, and legislation. One key recommendation called for establishing a formal committee appointed by the County Executive. The *Montgomery County Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee* was established by Council Resolution 14-1281 on May 23, 2002. (amended 10/11/05).

Pedestrian safety continues to be a top priority for the County. In December, 2007, County Executive Isiah Leggett issued a seven-point strategic plan for reducing pedestrian-related collisions and making our communities safer, more walkable, and more livable.

The purpose of the Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (PTSAC) is to:

- advise the County Executive and County Council on the status of the implementation of the Pedestrian Safety Initiative
- provide advice to elected officials on the priorities and needs for pedestrians and bicyclists
- identify issues regarding pedestrian and bicycle safety that need to be addressed

Membership

There are 17 members of the PTSAC appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council to serve three-year terms. Eight members of the PTSAC include representatives from the organizations/agencies listed below (the 2012 representatives are shown in parentheses):

- Police (Ct. Thomas Didone)
- Public Works and Transportation (Arthur Holmes, Jr.)
- Montgomery County Public Schools (Angel Garcia-Ablanque)
- Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (David Anspacher)
- Regional service centers (Reemberto Rodriguez)
- Montgomery Chapter of the MD Municipal League (John Hall)
- County Council (Valerie Ervin represented by Richard Romer)
- MD State Highway Administration (TBD)

The remaining nine seats are the Public-at-Large, representing various communities and viewpoints, including one bicycle advocate. The nine at-large members in 2012 included:

- Erwin Mack, Chair
- Colleen Mitchell, Co-Chair
- Ramin Assa
- Darrell Droblich
- Steven Friedman (bicycle advocate)
- Alan Migdall
- Alyce Ortuzar
- David Sharp
- Jack Strausman

A staff person from the Montgomery County Department of Transportation's Office of the Director is assigned to facilitate and coordinate the PTSAC. Jeff Dunckel, Pedestrian Safety Coordinator, has served in this role since June 2008.

Pedestrian Safety Initiative

The Pedestrian Safety Initiative issued by County Executive Isiah Leggett establishes goals to:

- Reduce pedestrian-related crashes, injuries, fatalities and their associated social and economic costs
- Ensure that all areas of the County provide safe and convenient travel options for pedestrians¹

The Pedestrian Initiative details seven strategies (outlined below) to meet these goals, and establishes timeframes and budgets to achieve each strategy.

Pedestrian Safety Initiative Strategies:

Strategy 1: Target pedestrian safety improvements in High Incidence Areas

Strategy 2: Assess and improve pedestrian network and connectivity needs

Strategy 3: Increase emphasis on pedestrians and bicyclists during the planning process

Strategy 4: Identify and implement corridor and intersection modifications and traffic calming treatments

Strategy 5: Upgrade pedestrian signals

Strategy 6: Assess and enhance street lighting

"My Pedestrian Safety Initiative outlines a strategic plan that protects the lives of our families, those who walk, those who bicycle, and -- yes -- those who drive...Every resident deserves a truly walkable community, and I am committed to improving the pedestrian environment for future generations."

- Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett, press conference 9/8/2008

¹ http://www.mcgov.org/Apps/Council/PressRelease/PR_details.asp?PrID=4119

Strategy 7: Modify pedestrian and driver behavior through enhanced enforcement and educational efforts

The Pedestrian Safety Program prioritizes funding for specific projects identified in the Initiative, and is supported by input from CountyStat and the PTSAC. Implementation of the full initiative is estimated at approximately \$4.8 million in recurring annual costs. Continuing budget constraints have slowed implementation and increased the importance of prioritizing projects that will best serve the County's residents.

Pedestrian safety has continued to be a priority in the county. The Montgomery County Department of Transportation launched a new website in the fall of 2012 to provide more complete and easily accessed information to residents on programs, resources, facilities and news related to pedestrian safety. The site can be accessed at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/walk.

II. Year in Review

Meetings and procedures in 2010

As a general rule, the Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee meets every other month on the first Thursday of the month at 7:00 PM for two and a half hours. Additional meetings are added if needed. The PTSAC met seven times in 2012 on the following dates:

- January 5
- March 1
- May 3
- July 5
- September 6
- November 1
- December 6

In addition to formal meetings, discussions on specific topics occurred via email and phone.

Subcommittees

Subcommittees are formed as needed to focus on specific topical areas. The subcommittees allow more technical topics that cannot be adequately addressed in the time allotted for meetings to be investigated by a smaller group which reports back to the full committee. In 2012 the following subcommittees conducted research and completed tasks as described below.

- **Traffic Calming. Chair, John Britton**
- **Sidewalks. Chair, Ramin Assa**

The Sidewalks Subcommittee is focused on studying the condition of sidewalks in Montgomery County, and identifying and recommending projects and technologies that will improve walkability and safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and people with mobility limitations.

- **Bicycle Access and Safety. Chair, Steve Friedman; Co-Chair, Peter Moe**

The Bicycle Access and Safety (BAS) Subcommittee was formed to address issues pertinent to the bicycling community to enable greater access and safer passage on county roads where bicycles are permitted.

In 2012 the BAS was involved in the following activities:

- BAS Chair testified in front of the Environmental Matters Committee of the Maryland General Assembly in March 2012 in support of the proposed sidewalk clarification bill.
- BAS Chair provided statement to the County Executive in support of hiring for the vacated Bicycle Coordinator position.
- BAS Chair worked with Montgomery County Police and CountyStat staff to improve data collection and analysis related to the involvement of bicyclists in a crash/incident.
- BAS Chair provided statement during the kick-off event for the Fall 2012 Street Smart campaign in November 2012.
- BAS Chair attended and provided support during meetings with MCDOT and MC Council leadership on bikeshare implementation.

- **Innovative Pedestrian Network Engineering. Chair, Alan Migdall**

This subcommittee was formed to explore ways to achieve better performance from our existing pedestrian and bicycle transportation infrastructure.

III. Program Reviews

- **Pedestrian Safety Review with County Executive**

Several PTSAC members met with the Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett on the evening of February 2nd, 2010. The PTSAC had 30 minutes to share the work of the committee over the past year. The following topics were reviewed:

- Electronic opportunities to gather information for the PTSAC
- The role of the Council representative
- Traffic Calming/Speed Humps
- Need for sidewalks
- Bicycle concerns
- The recent ADA challenge when using sidewalks

- **County Council Review**

In June of 2010, Council Vice President Valerie Ervin submitted a request for a status update on Montgomery County's pedestrian safety efforts. On October 21st, the PTSAC was represented at the Council's joint Public Safety and Transportation, Energy, Infrastructure and Environment (T&E) work session to provide an overview of the County's pedestrian safety programs. The Department of Transportation and Police Department put together a presentation, and Committee Chair, Erwin Mack, provided comments on the PTSAC's tasks and contributions to the County's pedestrian safety initiative. The Council was encouraged by the continued success of the programs and the PTSAC's work and dedication to pedestrian safety.

IV. Looking Forward

In the coming year, the PTSAC will continue to assist and advise the County in the implementation of the County's pedestrian safety efforts as defined in the County Executive's Pedestrian Safety Initiative. Accomplishing the County's pedestrian safety goals will require sustained emphasis on adequate resources. The PTSAC strongly believes that sustained emphasis on pedestrian safety is a key element of creating more livable communities and will continue to advise the County Executives and Council on accomplishing our shared priorities.