

**DRAFT MINUTES FOR November, 1 2012 MEETING of the  
PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE, and TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Executive Office Building, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room  
7:00 pm to 9:30 pm**

**Members Present:** Erwin Mack, Chair; David Anspacher; Ramin Assa; Lt. Robert McCullagh (representing Capt. Didone); Darrell Drobnich; Benjamin Fulton (representing Valerie Ervin); Steve Friedman; Angel Garcia-Ablanque, MCPS; John Hall, City of Rockville; Colleen Mitchell; Alyce Ortuzar; Yvette Freeman (representing Reemberto Rodriguez); Al Roshdieh (representing Arthur Holmes, Jr.)

**Members Absent:** Arthur Holmes, Jr., Director, MCDOT; Cpt. Tom Didone; Councilmember Valerie Ervin; Alan Migdall; Reemberto Rodriguez; David Sharp; Jack Strausman

**County Staff:** Jeff Dunckel, Pedestrian Safety Coordinator; Joana Conklin, MCDOT; Bill Selby, MCDOT; Tom Pogue, MCDOT; Nadji Kirby, MCDOT; Emil Wolanin, MCDOT; Councilmember Nancy Floreen

Chairman Erwin Mack called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**1. PBTSAC Committee Business:**

Chairman Erwin Mack welcomed guests and committee members and guests introduced themselves.

The meeting minutes from the September were introduced.

**MOTION:** A motion was made to approve the September 6, 2012, minutes; approved unanimously.

**Pedestrian Crash Data 2012:** Lt. Robert McCullagh distributed and reviewed the pedestrian crash data that was available thru September. Pedestrian fatalities are down, and severity of crashes declined from 33 percent in 2006 to 23 percent this year. He informed the committee that they are completing the investigation on the pedestrian fatality that occurred on MD 118, Germantown Road. The committee was also informed that the stabbing on the Capital Crescent Trail was not a random act and that the two individuals involved knew one another. Lt. McCullagh addressed the sexual assault that also occurred on the Capital Crescent Trail and stressed the need to take safety precautions when alone.

Darrell Drobnich inquired about recent assaults that took place in the Bethesda Tunnel; Lt. Robert McCullagh informed the committee that investigators are working with the surrounding law enforcement agencies to address recent issues.

Angel Garcia-Ablanque had a question: "If a driver has a green light and the pedestrian crossed in the crosswalk, does driver have to stop?" Who has the right of way? Answer is the driver has the right-of-way and the pedestrian is at fault.

Pedestrian crashes are defined as involving a vehicle and a pedestrian; bicycle and pedestrian crashes are not recorded. Will bicyclists ever be required to have a license? Steve Friedman responded that the County does have a process to register their bikes. It is unlikely bicyclists will ever be licensed.

Steve Friedman provided feedback to MCPD about possible categories that could be added to the data collection process. He also inquired about how corridor traffic calming is defined. Emil Wolanin explained that traffic calming is usually applied to residential roadways; usually not longer, more heavily trafficked roadways.

Alyce Ortuzar expressed concern about the need for regional connectivity to accommodate the growing bicycle community.

Ramin Assa inquired about FY13 funding for education. Tom Pogue explained that the current funding goes thru MCDOTs Traffic Engineering Division and that this CIP funding is for the HIAs and school locations. Ramin also inquired about whether Police take distracted drivers into consideration when preparing their reports. Lt. McCullagh explained that it is taken into consideration; however the challenge is in proving that they were distracted at the exact time of the accident. Cellphones are not impounded.

**Status of Reappointments:** Jeff Dunckel informed the committee that the County Executives Offices submitted the requests for reappointment package to the County Executive and are awaiting approval. We are still waiting on an SHA appointment. Arthur Holmes, Jr., John Hall, Colleen Mitchell, Steve Friedman and Capt. Thomas Didone were all included in the request for reappointment.

**Annual Report:** Colleen Mitchell is in the process of preparing the Annual Report. Jeff will provide summary remarks to the Council for her use in preparing the minutes. Jeff stated that we need a draft by the meeting on January 3, 2013.

**County Council Review:** Erwin Mack discussed the County Council's review of the committee. The County Council was pleased with the progress of the PBTSAC.

Chairman Erwin Mack raised a question about the need for monthly meetings. These may be necessary when/if the committee is unable to complete the scheduled agenda at any scheduled meeting.

## **2. Bikeways and Bicycle Safety:**

**Requests to State Highway Administration:** Councilmember Nancy Floreen distributed her WABA memo to SHA and their response; as well as expressing the importance of bicycle and pedestrian safety in our communities. She would like the committee's help to advocate the points referenced in her memo.

Erwin Mack informed the committee that the January 3, 2013, meeting's primary focus will be on bicycles. The information for the January meeting will be sent out early. Steve Friedman will invite various members of the bicycle community, as well as members from WABA, etc. Erwin requested that Councilmember Floreen provide an electronic version of her memo, as well as the response from SHA so that they can be posted with the meeting packet.

Angel Ablanque-Garcia discussed how schools operationally ask that bike lanes and traffic calming not interfere with the entrances to schools.

Alyce Ortuzar expressed frustration with SHA and MCDOT on lack of notification on projects/plans, so that the public can provide input. She also has concerns over the plows covering sidewalks and bus stops and will send Councilmember Floreen an article on the subject.

**3. Fall Education and Enforcement Campaign:** Joana Conklin made a presentation to the committee on the education MCDOT has done and plans for this fall. The focus will be on pedestrian visibility; the darkest time of the year also means the most dangerous for pedestrians/bicyclists. MCDOT is informing pedestrians that they need to wear brighter/reflective clothing in order to be visible and that pedestrians/drivers need to be on the look-out for each other. The Street Smart program will also be rolling out their campaign focused on visibility on November 14, 2012. MCDOT will have the "Bright Eyes" posters reformatted to fit on Ride On buses. We will also be handing out reflecting materials so pedestrians are visible.

Joana also introduced and navigated through the new Pedestrian Safety website. It is more of a blog-type system, making it easier to archive and navigate through information.

Angel Ablanque-Garcia suggested setting up meetings at the schools so that MCDOT can post posters in the schools to educate the students.

Darrell Drobnich proposed a motion to increase funding to the Pedestrian Safety educational program in FY 14.

Alyce Ortuzar expressed concern about whether there is adequate outcome and comparison data and if it will have the impact we are seeking with the additional funding, or could the money be more useful elsewhere.

Jeff Dunckel explained that through the analysis conducted prior to and after the changes made at the Piney Branch and Four Corners HIA locations, more pedestrians are obeying the rules. Therefore, MCDOT believes that an increased funding would be beneficial to the pedestrian safety program.

Al Roshdieh suggested a change to the language of the motion to include bicycles without impacting other pedestrian safety programs.

**MOTION:** PBTSAC recommends to the County Executive that funding be increased for pedestrian education and bicycle safety programs without negatively impacting other pedestrian safety programs; eight in favor, one opposed, one abstention.

#### **4. Follow-up: Pedestrian Safety and Needs of Disabled:**

**Issues Identified at September Meeting:** Jeff Dunckel reviewed concerns from the disabled community that were discussed at the September meeting.

- The locator tone is hard to hear for visually impaired persons.
- Infrastructure impedes the mobility impaired.
- The timing of crosswalk signals isn't long enough.
- Utility poles impede sidewalks.
- Ruts in the roadway/crosswalks.
- Requests for signals to be on pedestrian recall, so they don't have to push the pedestrian signal button.
- Need for more pedestrian refuge lanes.

Chairman Erwin Mack advised the committee that there was inadequate time to consider the above list and that in order to give due diligence to these concerns an unscheduled meeting of the PBTSAC would be called to meet on Dec 6, 2012, with invitations given to those who indicated their concerns as listed and that the meeting agenda would limited to provide such time. Steve Friedman proposed a motion to defer further discussion on disability issues to the December 6, 2012, meeting, ensuring that someone from the disabilities community is present. With the December 6, 2012 meeting scheduled, no motion was necessary.

#### **5. Subcommittee Reports:**

**Bicycle Access and Safety:** Steve Friedman updated the committee on the Bicycle Coordinator position in MCDOT. The position description was posted and expands the position to include an engineering role.

- **Idaho Stop-Introduction of Topic:** Steve Friedman explained a new law for bicyclists in Idaho that allows bicyclists to proceed through a Stop sign in the absence of any other traffic. However, if other traffic is present, bicyclists are to abide by the local traffic laws. Steve will send out a video on the subject to the committee members. There will further discussion on the topic at the January 3, 2013 meeting.

**Sidewalks-Pedestrian Networks:** Ramin Assa requests that the committee have a meeting focused on sidewalks/crosswalks. What can we do to educate drivers on the laws regarding stopping for pedestrians? Lt. McCullagh suggested calling the District Commander for the area and they will send an officer to enforce the areas where they receive reports.

Yvette Freeman updated the committee on the progress of SHA's reinstallation of the sidewalk ramps at Wayne and Georgia Avenues. SHA is going to reinstall the ramps; however there are some impediments they will have to work around.

**6. New Business/Committee Comments:** Benjamin Fulton informed the committee that Councilmember Valerie Ervin will be hosting a community event on November 28, 2012, at seven o'clock, at Shepherd Elementary School in Washington, D.C. Councilmember Muriel Bowser from Washington, DC will be present in addition to MDSHA staff and MCDOT staff. They will be discussing community issues as well as issues related to pedestrian safety.

Next meeting will be held on December 6, 2012.

**MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:30 p.m.**