

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE AND TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Erwin Mack, Chair  
Colleen Mitchell, Vice-Chair**

## 2013 Annual Report

### I. Introduction to the Pedestrian, Bicycle 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 the establishment of 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, Bicycle and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee 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 relevant to pedestrian and bicycle safety that need to be addressed.

#### Membership

There are 17 members of the PBTSAC 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 2013 representatives are shown in parentheses):

- Montgomery County Police Department (Cpt. Thomas Didone)
- Montgomery County Department of Transportation (Arthur Holmes, Jr.)
- Montgomery County Public Schools (Angel Garcia-Ablanque)
- Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (David Anspacher)
- Montgomery County Regional Service Centers (Reemberto Rodriguez)
- Montgomery Chapter of the Maryland Municipal League (John Hall)
- County Council Member Valerie Ervin (represented by Benjamin Foulton)
- Maryland State Highway Administration (Aneysha Mookerjee)

The remaining nine seats are the Public-at-Large, representing various communities and viewpoints, including one bicycle advocate and an advocate for persons with special needs. The nine at-large members in 2013 included:

- Erwin Mack, Chair (Takoma Park)
- Colleen Mitchell, Vice-Chair (Silver Spring)
- Ramin Assa (Bethesda)
- Darrel Droblich (Chevy Chase)
- Steven Friedman (bicycle advocate; Chevy Chase)
- Alan Migdall (Gaithersburg)
- Alyce Ortuzar (Olney)
- David Sharp (advocate for persons with special needs, Montgomery Village)
- Jack Strausman (Cloverly)

A staff person from the Montgomery County Department of Transportation's Office of the Director is assigned to facilitate and coordinate the PBTSAC. 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 pedestrians ([www.mcgov.org/Apps/Council/PressRelease/PR\\_details.asp?PrID=4119](http://www.mcgov.org/Apps/Council/PressRelease/PR_details.asp?PrID=4119)).

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.

**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 PBTSAC. 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. For Fiscal Year 2013, the funding for pedestrian safety initiative activities is \$3.7 million.

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. This site includes all information pertaining to the business of the PBTSAC. The site can be found at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/walk](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/walk).

## II. Year in Review

On December 17, 2012, Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett celebrated the five-year anniversary of his December 2007 Pedestrian Safety Initiative, which for the first time provided a blueprint for action to improve pedestrian safety based on measurable strategies. Since 2009, pedestrian collisions have decreased 12 percent and the most severe collisions, those where pedestrians are incapacitated or killed, has declined 21 percent.



## Meetings and Procedures in 2013

As a general rule, the Pedestrian, Bicycle and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee meets on the first Thursday of every other month at 7:00 PM for two and a half hours. Additional meetings are added if needed and members of the community are encouraged to attend. The PTSAC met six times in FY 2013 on the following dates:

- January 3
- March 7
- May 2
- July 11
- September 12
- November 7

## Special Topics and Motions

- January 3. Special Topic: Bicycle Access and Safety. The purpose of the meeting was to facilitate a discussion with major stakeholders in the bicycling community to see what the County can do to make the roads safer for all types of bike riders. Community groups represented in the meeting included: MOBIKE, NIH Bicycle Club, Potomac Peddlers, The Bethesda Urban Partnership, The Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board, Washington Area Bicyclist Association, The *North Bethesda* Transportation Management District, and the *Rockville Bike Advisory Committee*.
- July 11. Special Topic: The Committee heard a presentation from Maryland Transit Administration's Purple Line Manager Michael Madden. The Purple Line is a light rail system that will extend from new Carrollton to Bethesda, running through College Park and the Takoma Langley community and will connect with other transportation hubs. There will be 21 stations. Funding is shared equally between Federal and State. Construction is expected to begin in 2015, with the system operational by 2020. All the stations will be clearly marked as Purple Line Stations.
- August 22. Special Event. Under the leadership of Steve Friedman, Chairman of the Bicycle Access and Safety Subcommittee and MCDOT staff, the PBTSAC organized a Ride-along Tour of bicycle facilities in Washington, DC. A number of key MCDOT representatives and County employees participated in the tour, which covered areas with D.C's Bikeshare. The DC facilities were innovative but different; showed evidence of "outside-of-the-box thinking"; inconsistent in the color of paint used to create bike lanes throughout the city, an issue that may be confusing to new cyclists.
- At the September 12, a number of motions were acted upon related to the January meeting focusing on bicycle access and safety. These were:
  - Motion 1 Passed: Countywide Bike Safety Education Campaign. Voted that the PBTSAC recommend to the County Executive that a county-wide bicycle safety education campaign be developed that meets national best practices (i.e., League of American Bicyclists) for bicyclists of all levels with consideration for less experienced bicyclists to address the anticipated increase in bicyclists due to the implementation of Bikeshare. In addition, the PBTSAC recommends that an education campaign be developed which focuses on motorists regarding safe interactions around and with bicyclists. This may include details such as:
    - Understanding the rights and responsibilities of bicyclists in using the roads, trails, and/or sidewalks
    - Conflict mitigation with other road users
    - Use of protective and reflective devices to reduce risk while riding
    - Use of proper signals to inform other road users of bicyclists actions
  - Motion 2 Passed: MCPD Bike Patrol Activities. The PBTSAC recommends to the County Executive that MCPD bike patrols be encouraged to ride in the streets in addition to riding on sidewalks during routine patrols, as well as participate in motorist and bicyclist sting operations to identify road users operating vehicles in an

unsafe manner. MCPD bike patrols would serve as examples to all road users of riding on the road safely and would educate road users on relevant laws pertaining to safe/legal operations regarding interactions with other road users. Doing so as an ancillary function to these patrols would not diminish the ability of bike patrols to be able to go where cars can't go and would further educate and protect all road users as well as pedestrians who have to cross county streets while considering the actions of vehicular road users.

- Motion 3 Passed: Improve Bicycle Infrastructure. Voted that the PBTSAC recommend to the County Executive that emphasis be given to improving existing bike infrastructure or implementing new bike infrastructure in the areas where Bikeshare will be implemented, working with all appropriate stakeholders, including but not limited to affected schools. This will provide the Bikeshare program with the opportunity to succeed by helping participants feel safe and confident when using bicycles. Research indicates that proper signage, bike lanes, sharrows, etc. help facilitate safe bicycling by notifying bicyclists and motorists alike of where bicycles are allowed to ride as well as create an expectation that bicyclists will be using these facilities.
- Motion 5 Passed: Bicycle Ride-along. Voted that the PBTSAC recommend to the County Executive that the 2011 ride-along is repeated within and not later than one year following the implementation of Bikeshare. This will allow MCDOT, bicycling advocates and other stakeholders to assess the progress being made in the first four points above and point out areas requiring more attention.
- At the September 12 meeting, a number of motions were acted upon related to an earlier meeting that focused on traffic and pedestrian safety issues experience by the disabilities community. These were:
  - Motion1 Passed: Crosswalk Striping and Crossing Treatment Policy. Voted that the PBTSAC recommend to the County Executive that a crosswalk striping policy and crossing treatment policy be developed that meets national best practices for pedestrian safety for all roadways users of all mobility levels, and that is consistent for local, county and state roadways.
    - This may include details such as:
    - High visibility (ladder) crosswalks shall be utilized at signalized intersections in CBDs and adjacent to transit stops/stations and other high pedestrian volume locations. On other roadways, parallel line striping at signalized intersections is warranted (the goal is to reserve funds for most needed locations and convey consistent message to motorists). Consider use of advance stop bars and diagonal striping to improve visibility. Investigate use of a vertical and detectible ridge along crosswalks in high volume locations to improve safety of persons with visual impairments.
    - Develop maintenance goals to ensure crossing surface is smooth and without obstruction and markings remain in good repair.
    - Crossing distances shall be mitigated/shortened at every opportunity through the use of raised pedestrian refuge islands (adequate to accommodate a wheelchair, protected with a nose), curb extensions or tightened turning radii. Signals should be set to meet the most recent MUTCD pedestrian walking speed of 3.5 ft./second.

- At uncontrolled crossings of multiple lane roads with high traffic volumes and speeds over 40mph, marked crosswalks alone are inadequate for pedestrian safety. Beacons or half signals and advance warning signs should be implemented.
  - Motion 2 Passed: Pedestrian Criteria in Speed Camera Placement. Voted, that the PBTSAC recommend to the County Executive the specific placement of speed cameras to take pedestrian activity and crossings into greater consideration, particularly at the location of bus stops and other pedestrian generators and natural crossing paths. Speed cameras are a vital tool to slow motorists on roadways and allow pedestrians to cross roadways, particularly on arterials where signalized intersections are at great distances and pedestrian generators such as bus stops encourage mid-block crossings.
  - Motion 3 Passed: Montgomery County Pedestrian Master Plan. Voted, that the PBTSAC recommend to the County Executive and the County Council that Montgomery County develop a Pedestrian Master Plan to establish overarching goals for the County regarding pedestrian mode share, crash rates, and facilities. Agreed-upon goals help guide individual projects and construction and raise awareness of the need to accommodate pedestrians equally with motorists. A master plan provides evidence of national best practices for facilities and sets the design and engineering standards for pedestrian facilities in road construction and development projects. A pedestrian master plan will not only address concerns raised by the disabled community regarding street crossings, but also about maintaining a clear path of travel on sidewalks (often blocked by utility poles and street furniture and construction projects), and improving safety in parking lots and access to bus stops.
- At the September 12 meeting, a number of motions related to the Purple Line Project were passed. These were:
  - Motion 1 Passed: No Additional Lane Capacity. Voted, that the PBTSAC recommend to the County Executive and County Council that in central business districts, locations with other high capacity transit services (metro stations, bus hubs), locations with high pedestrian volumes and planned pedestrian generators, that no additional lane capacity be provided for motor vehicles, including no additional turn lanes. Instead, right of way should be dedicated to bicycle facilities, promenades with wide planting strips and street trees.
  - Motion 2 Passed: Specifications for Crossings. Voted, that the PBTSAC recommend to the County Executive and County Council that anywhere the Purple Line travels through central business districts, locations with other transit services (metro stations, bus hubs), locations with high pedestrian volumes and planned pedestrian generators, crossings should include raised pedestrian refuge islands (that cross over the striped crosswalk), tight turning radii, and planting strips with street trees.

### **Selected Public Awareness Activities**

Over the course of the past year, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) undertook several initiatives in cooperation with the Montgomery County Police

Department (MCPD), local schools and community partners. The Committee provided a forum to provide community and inter-agency input and deliberation regarding the development and implementation of some of these programs. The Committee continues to be pleased with the progress of these new initiatives and believes that they merit additional financial and staff support to increase their effectiveness and reach throughout the County. Some of these efforts include:

### “Tired Faces” Campaign

To drive home the idea that sharing city streets with bikers can be dangerous the County conducted a public awareness campaign called “Tired Faces” as part of its annual Street Smart efforts. Centered around the message, “to pay attention and obey traffic laws,” the campaign consisted of eight provocative images rotated on transit shelters throughout the County. The ads showed tire tracks running down the side of a man’s face, accompanied by various cut lines, such as: “You can’t fix a pedestrian at a body shop.” “Pedestrians don’t come with airbags.” The campaign won a “Wildcard” Digital Out-of-Home award by MediaPost Communications.

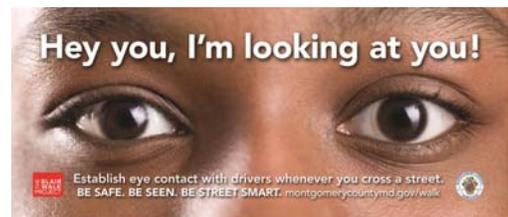


### Seneca Valley High School

Following a fatal collision involving a student, the Department of Transportation and the Montgomery County Police Department kicked off a pedestrian safety education and enforcement campaign at Seneca Valley High School in Germantown. The campaign kicked off with a student assembly featuring County officials and Mrs. Gwendolyn Ward, mother of Christina Morris-Ward, a 15-year old Seneca Valley student who was tragically killed crossing Germantown Road. The assembly featured a 10-minute [Public Safety Announcement](#) produced by students at the high school, which highlighted the importance of being a safe pedestrian and driver. Following the event, a team of pedestrian safety Champions, comprised of parents and members of the community, as well as representatives from Montgomery County Fire and Rescue, were out on the streets talking to the high school students about crossing safely and handing out reflective materials. The Champions reminded pedestrians to practice the following safe behaviors and encourage students to BE SAFE, BE SEEN, and BE STREET SMART. Following the education campaign, police were out on the streets around the high school issuing citations to pedestrians and drivers who did not obey the law.

### “Hey You, I’m Looking at You.”

A new MCDOT pedestrian safety campaign featured bus posters showing the eyes of two county students and the slogan, “Hey You, I’m Looking at You.” The campaign focused on the most important factors in reducing crashes: visibility of pedestrians, and vigilance by drivers. The “Eyes” campaign was developed by a group of Blair High School students. A contest was conducted among students to have their eyes featured in the campaign materials. The winning eyes remind pedestrians to establish eye contact with drivers, be visible, and look both ways before crossing the street. They also prompt drivers to look out for pedestrians.



### Capital Bikeshare

In September, Montgomery County announced the grand opening of Bikeshare. Through two years of work and grants from the Maryland Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration, the County provided some funding and found additional contributions from the City

of Rockville and the Chevy Chase Land Company to bring Bikeshare to Montgomery County. More than 24 Capital Bikeshare stations are located in the following areas: Takoma Park, Silver Spring, Friendship Heights, Bethesda, Rockville, Shady Grove and the Life Sciences Center.

### **Subcommittees**

Subcommittees are formed as needed to focus on specific topical areas. The subcommittees allow more technical topics to be researched that cannot be adequately addressed in the time allotted for meetings. Members of subcommittees report back to the full committee. In 2012, the following subcommittees conducted research and completed tasks as described below.

- **Sidewalks. Chair, Ramin Assa**

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

Ramin, is there anything to be added here or should this section be deleted??

- **Bicycle Access and Safety. Chair, Steve Friedman**

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.

Steve, is there anything new to be added to this section besides the motions and actions listed above?

### **Looking Forward**

In the coming year, the PBTSAC 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. The PBTSAC plans to continue to address many of the concerns raised by the disabilities and bicycle communities to insure county facilities meet the needs of all users as well as seek to increase efforts for pedestrian and bicycle related public education and awareness campaigns. [This might be a leap or editorializing on my part, but seems reasonable - dd]