

**DRAFT MINUTES FOR March 1, 2012 MEETING of the  
PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE AND TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Member Present:** Erwin Mack, Chair; David Anspacher; Ramin Assa; Darrel Droblich;; Steve Friedman; Arthur Holmes, Jr., Director, MCDOT; Alan Migdall; Colleen Mitchell, Peter Moe; Alyce Ortuzar; Reemberto Rodriguez, Director, SS RSC; Richard Romer (representing Councilmember Valerie Ervin)

**Members Absent:** Cpt. Thomas Didone; Valerie Ervin, Councilmember; Angel Garcia-Ablanque, MCPS; David Sharp; Jack Strausman

**County Staff:** Jeff Dunckel, Pedestrian Safety Coordinator; Joana Conklin, MCDOT; Fred Lees, MCDOT; Michael Subin, CEX; Nadji Kirby, MCDOT; Tom Pogue, MCDOT; Bill Selby, MCDOT; Sande Brecher, MCDOT; Linsey Hawksford, MCDOT

**Guests:** Peggy Schwartz, NBTMD/TAP; Kristen Blackmon, BTS; Peggy Dennis, WMC-CAB

Chairman, Erwin Mack called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

**1. Committee Business:**

The minutes from the January meeting were introduced.

**Motion:** **A motion was made by Alan Migdall to amend the January minutes: Ramin Assa is concerned about the small percent of violations compared to the number of bus routes and stop. He suggests, along with Alyce Ortuzar, that we spend the cost of the camera on education and engineering, including lighting on the buses. Alan Migdall agrees that some money should be spent on education and engineering.**

**Action:** **The committee moved to approve the amended January, 2012, minutes; approved unanimously.**

**Committee Appointments (Dunckel):** Interviews were held in January. A memo from Director Holmes with PBTSAC's recommendation was sent to the County Executive and is currently in the process of being submitted to Council for approval.

**Pedestrian/Bicycle Collisions and Fatalities:** Since Cpt. Didone was unable to attend; Jeff Dunckel reviewed the 2011 and 2012 crash data information. Although, the data showed a reduction in pedestrian crashes in 2011 from 2010's level, there was an end of the year surge in fatalities—6 total from January to November; 5 total in December—and an uptick in collisions from the previous nine months. Bicycle crash data also shows a slight reduction in bicycle related crashes since 2010. Fred Lees explained the levels of collisions as it's used in the data collection process. The analysis process will begin shortly to determine factors involved in the crashes and ways to lessen their occurrence. Steve Friedman sent Cpt. Didone a list of questions as to why the crashes occur. Members discussed the relation between the number of cyclists on the road to the number of crashes that may occur.

**Report on Bill 37-11: School Bus Safety Cameras:** Richard Romer updated the committee on the status of Bill 37-11. The bill received unanimous support by the Council's Public Safety Committee and will go to full council for a vote on March 6, 2012. Councilmember Ervin thanks the committee for their support.

**Update on Silver Spring Library – Pedestrian Safety Improvements:** After distribution of the Pedestrian Impact Statement last meeting, Jeff Dunckel asked members for their feedback. Colleen Mitchell expressed concern that the study is based on existing roadways instead of future conditions; i.e. Purple Line, trails, etc. Reemberto Rodriguez explained that we have to work with what we have now. DGS staff will review options related to the Purple Line.

## **Report on County Executive's February 23 "Boards, Committees, and Commissions Town Hall"**

**Meeting:** Steve Friedman expressed the urgency to refill the Bike Coordinator's position (Gail Tait-Nouri recently left MCDOT); maintain funding for the annual bikeways project; and complete the Metropolitan Branch Trail. Erwin Mack thanked the County Executive and the Council for appointing current committee members and for their continued support of the committee.

**Update on Bicycle Coordinator Position:** Arthur Holmes, Jr., informed committee that the request to fill Bike Coordinator's position has been given high priority and is going through the hiring process. Staff in MCDOT's Division of Engineering is handling the workload in the interim.

## **2. Continuation from January 5, 2012 Meeting:**

**Bicycle Laws and Regulations – Education and Enforcement:** Peter Moe provided the committee with two hand-outs: a crash data report and traffic laws for motorists and bicycles. He explained how the data is processed, analyzed, and the factors involved in the data collection throughout the State of Maryland.

- **State Crash Data on Bicycles:** The committee reviewed the bicycle crash data and Peter Moe expressed how difficult it is to find meaning behind the incidents. He recommends a data review on an annual basis by the committee. The universal problem in accurate bicycle data collection is that it is difficult to know how many people are bicycling. Suggestions were made to keep track of bicycles; satellites, licensing, cameras, etc. Steve Friedman suggested implementing a High Impact Area reviews for bicycles, as well as pedestrians. Sande Brecher informed that Commuter Services, MCDOT, collects data on bicycle commuters annually in the TMD's. Erwin Mack suggested that she share the information with Cpt. Didone. Bill Selby also expressed that we may get data from the Bikeshare Program. Reemberto Rodriguez believes that all the suggestion made, may still undercount actual number of occurrences. Concern was expressed that police also need to properly code accidents for accurate data analysis.
- **Share the Road:** Under Maryland Law, bicycles are vehicles having many of the same rights and responsibilities as motorists. Peter Moe explained the difficulties in getting drivers to "share the road" with bicyclists. MVA will begin putting messages about share the road on registration renewals this spring, as well as electronic messages. There is currently a bill proposed to clarify passing laws for vehicles when passing bicyclists. The main challenge in managing traffic laws is that even though we may have good laws, there is still going to be bad behavior on both parts, i.e. motorists and bicyclists.
- **Municipalities vs. County vs. State Laws:** State law currently prohibits bikes on sidewalks. State laws take precedence over County and municipality laws, but the current law does allow counties and municipalities to exempt their jurisdictions from the sidewalk restriction. Members are concerned about the lack of education, and warnings in municipalities where bikes are not permitted on sidewalks.

## **3. Piney Branch Curb Marker Campaign: Applying the Three Es:**

Joana Conklin made a presentation on the Curb Marking Campaign along Piney Branch Road. There were three main issues identified during the audit in 2008. The education aspect began in 2009 with surveys and CASA Safety Promotion Teams. Engineering improvements were made as a result of the audit in 2011: curb markers, lighting enhancements, count-down signals, mid-block crosswalks. Other engineering improvements are in the design phase, as well. Flyers explaining the campaign were distributed to residents, area businesses, as well as apartment complexes and posted in bus shelters prior to the curb markers being installed. Enforcement of violators began with a two week zero tolerance campaign in December 2011. A follow-up campaign was conducted in January and February, 2012. Preliminary results show that more people are doing the right thing than prior to these education and enforcement activities.

Feedback from CASA shows that most people appreciated the County's efforts and weren't aware they were doing the wrong things. They suggested driver education and that the campaign be extended to other parts of the county. Suggestions were made that we may need to try a different campaign to reach teenagers/young adults. There is a focus group that Joana Conklin and Jeff Dunckel are working with at Blair High School to see how we can reach the younger generation.

Jeff Dunckel and Cpt. Didone are working on strategies to implement this campaign in other HIAs.

#### **4. Subcommittee Reports, Updates, Recommendations:**

**Sidewalks-Pedestrian Network Assessment:** Jeff Dunckel and Ramin Assa met with the East Silver Spring Citizens' Association Board to discuss the proposed Pedestrian Network Assessment Pilot Study. The Board unanimously supported a survey of the neighborhood. A summary of the meeting was included in the meeting packet.

**Bicycle Access and Safety – House Bill 946-Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles – Riding on Sidewalks:** Steve Friedman explained how the introduced bill will change the current laws; State law **will allow** bicycles on the sidewalks, unless the local jurisdictions prohibit it. A hearing is scheduled for March 9, 2012, before the House Environmental Committee.

**Motion:** a motion was made by **Steve Freidman that the PBTSAC support of House Bill 946 be sent via a letter to Intergovernmental Relations.**

**Action:** the motion was approved unanimously: Peter Moe abstained. **Steve Freidman will draft the letter.**

#### **5. New Business/Committee Comments:**

**SHA Intersection Reconstruction for ADA Compliance:** Fred Lees discussed the ADA intersection improvements that are going on in Rockville and Downtown Silver Spring. SHA is attempting to make the ADA improvements, but is in turn causing problem for able-bodied persons. County staff met with State staff in the field and SHA will be addressing the issues.

**Bill 32-11: Committee Evaluation and Review Board:** Richard Romer explained the purpose and meaning of Bill 32-11. Council assembles a committee to assess all the County Advisory boards every 10 years. This bill is amending what the committee evaluates/reviews. Overall, the workload report will not be any more than what is required for our annual report. Once the committee is appointed, PBTSAC will have 60 days to provide information about the committee. Council will have an interim report in six months (August/September 2012) and a final report in 12 months (winter).

**Action:** **Jeff Dunckel plans to form a work group to clarify the requested changes.**

**Miscellaneous:** Ramin Assa requested MCDOT include the Pedestrian Network Assessment in its proposed Operating budget.

**Next Meeting May – EOB 9<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room:** Meeting will be May 3, 2012.

#### **6. Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 9:29 p.m.