

**DRAFT MINUTES FOR September, 6 2012 MEETING of the  
PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE, and TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Executive Office Building, Lobby Auditorium  
7:00 pm to 9:30 pm**

**Members Present:** Erwin Mack, Chair; Ramin Assa; Lt. Robert McCullagh (representing Cpt. Didone); Darrell Droblich; Jeff Dunckel, Pedestrian Safety Coordinator; Benjamin Fulton (representing Valerie Ervin); Steve Friedman; Angel Garcia-Ablanque, MCPS; Alan Migdall; Colleen Mitchell; Alyce Ortuzar; Reemberto Rodriguez, SS RSC; David Sharp

**Members Absent:** David Anspacher; Arthur Holmes, Jr., Director, MCDOT; Richard Romer, Cpt. Tom Didone; Councilmember Valerie Ervin

**County Staff:** Linsey Bryant, MCDOT; Stacey Coletta, MCDOT; Robert Gonzales, MCDOT; Nancy Greene, DGS, William Haynes, MCDOT; Tom Pogue, MCDOT; Anil Saini, DGS

**Guests:** Cindy Buddington; Charles Crawford; Larry Evans; John Gover, SHA; Seth Morgan

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

**1. PBTSAC Committee Business:**

Chairman Mack welcomed guests and had committee members and guests introduce themselves.

The meeting minutes from the July were introduced.

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

**Pedestrian/Bicycle Fatalities in 2012:** Lt. McCullagh reviewed the Pedestrian/Bicycle Fatalities in 2012 in Cpt. Didone's absence. There have been three pedestrian fatalities and one bicycle fatality to date this year; one person is currently in the hospital in critical condition after a bicycle accident.

**2. Pedestrian Safety and the Disabilities Community:** Chairman Mack outlined what we will discuss during the meeting and how PBTSAC can help to improve mobility in Montgomery County for persons with disabilities.

**What Special Needs Must Be Provided For?:** David Sharp discussed the various disabilities persons with disabilities face while moving around Montgomery County: visual impairments, hearing impairments, physical limitations.

**What are Critical Issues for the Disabled?:** David Sharp also informed the committee of the difficulties persons with disabilities face while traveling throughout the County; damaged sidewalks/curbs, crosswalk signals, utility poles in the middle of sidewalks, ruts in pavement in the crosswalks on major roadways

Cindy Buddington added that the committee should consider persons that have manual wheelchairs; more difficult for them to navigate slopes. The slopes in sidewalks, as well as the signal timing to cross the street make it difficult to travel through the County. She also pointed out that it can be difficult to push the "on demand" pedestrian signal button, activating the pedestrian crossing; would like to have crosswalks synchronized (recall) with the traffic signals so they will change automatically – without having to push the buttons. Refuge lanes/islands along larger roadways make it more difficult to get around as well.

Lt. McCullagh and Will Haynes discussed how signals are timed to minimize the impact on the flow of traffic. Areas with higher pedestrian traffic are taken into account and the intersections cycle on a pre-timed basis for pedestrians. Most of the pedestrian signals require you to press the "on demand" button to activate them.

Members and guests inquired about how often the signals are tested/calibrated as maintenance of signals and malfunctioning signals can be a problem. Will Haynes explained that the County relies predominately on residents reporting malfunctions.

Charles Crawford expressed concern over the short time allowed for pedestrians to cross the road and a lack of maintenance of the crosswalk signals. He also expressed concern that the locator tone is often hard to hear for the visually impaired. There needs to be preventative maintenance of pedestrian signals: reporting once they're broken doesn't help at the time a person is there at the intersection.

Seth Morgan suggested more of an awareness aspect is needed for pedestrians: flashing strobe lights for the hearing impaired would be helpful. He also had concerns about hybrid vehicles; they are so quiet you can't hear them, making it dangerous for the visually impaired.

Alan Migdall expressed concern that pedestrians sometimes have to wait a full traffic cycle before they are able to cross and some may think the signal is malfunctioning when it is working.

The lack of visibility along major roadways is another concern, and the fact that drivers don't always recognize the "flashing" crosswalk lights. Utility poles in the middle of a sidewalk impeding access are another concern for the committee.

### **What Actions Should the PBTSAC Take on the Issue?**

Will Haynes informed guests and the committee that the cycling function of the pedestrian signals is primarily based on vehicle traffic, not pedestrian traffic. The State and County are working to have audible push buttons at all pedestrian crosswalk locations since they also provide an audible cue for the visually impaired.

John Gover also informed the committee that SHA and the County are looking into weight-activated pads to install on the landing areas of sidewalks, so persons with disabilities are not required to push the "on demand" buttons.

Jeff Dunckel informed everyone that MCDOT is considering a campaign to promote resident's reporting issues of malfunctioning pedestrian signals so needed repairs are addressed in a timely manner.

Tom Pogue relayed that SHA is testing the use of concrete ('white-top') to repair ruts in roadways that are prone to rutting.

Members and guests agree that a key component in keeping everyone safe on the streets is education.

### **3. State Programs Addressing ADA:** John Gover from SHA shared a presentation on SHA's Pedestrian and ADA Accessibility Programs.

SHA's has three Pedestrian Programs: Sidewalk Retrofit, ADA Retrofit and Pedestrian Access to Transit Program.

- The ADA Retrofit Program is the largest program; updating all existing sidewalks along State roads, bringing them to current State standards which exceed the Federal standards. Over 900 miles of sidewalk have been inventoried to identify all non-compliant elements. A GIS-driven database is used to identify and track ADA compliance. SHA prioritizes their projects based on input from the public/local governments, pedestrian generators (transit stops, public facilities, etc.) and pedestrian collisions.
- The Pedestrian Access to Transit Program focuses upgrading sidewalks and bus stops to ADA compliant. SHA works with MTA and local jurisdictions to identify areas of high ridership and sidewalks are non-compliant.

Another program run by SHA is the Audible Pedestrian Signal (APS) Program, which will upgrade all existing and new pedestrian signals to audible signals by 2016. Two-thirds of the signals have already been upgraded. These projects usually involve intersection reconstruction to current ADA standards.

Concern was expressed that local municipalities are not building sidewalks to the same standards – there is variability. SHA is working to make all crossings uniform State-wide.

Ramin Assa inquired about guidelines to follow during construction to accommodate pedestrians and people with disabilities. John Gover informed that there are procedures contractors are required to follow during construction. SHA is working with contractors to assure they maintain access during construction.

**4. County Programs Addressing ADA:** County staff explained how the County programs for Sidewalks, Bus Stops and facilities/ROW Access address ADA issues.

Sidewalks (Bob Gonzales, MCDOT): Montgomery County follows State standards for installing sidewalks. The County will install sidewalks along State roads, but must acquire a permit to do so. About five to eight miles of sidewalk are installed yearly on a budget of \$2.3 million. MCDOT receives 80-100 requests for sidewalks a year; currently there is a backlog of about 100 requests.

In addition to the County's Annual Sidewalks Program, the County's ADA Program has a yearly budget of \$1.5 million. Six miles of non-compliant sidewalks and curbs with 800 ramps are completed yearly.

The County coordinates their efforts with local utility companies, as well as other agencies to accommodate the future installation of sidewalks. All County CIP projects must go through a Pedestrian Impact Analysis prior to construction.

Colleen Mitchell expressed concern about the sometimes excessive crossing distances being designed into projects. Will Haynes explained that different roads have different requirements and it's not possible to accommodate short crossing distances in certain areas.

Bus Stops (Stacy Coletta, MCDOT): Stacy Coletta oversees the Bus Stop Improvement Program that makes all County bus stops ADA-accessible. She made a presentation on the current accessibility to bus stops, bus shelters and transit centers in Montgomery County. There are a total of 5,264 bus stops in the County, 3,458 are planned for improvements and 2,257 require construction. The type of information surveyed when determining the need for improvements are; location/description, pedestrian access/connection, signage information, safety/security characteristics and amenities. Bus stop improvements are prioritized by the following: whether passengers are in danger while waiting for a bus, if stops are near a safe street crossing, whether the street crossing can/should be improved, and if passengers can get to the stop along a safe and accessible path. When improving accessibility MCDOT looks beyond the bus stop, identifies pathways and looks to provide road crossing access.

Facilities/ROW Access (Nancy Greene, MCDGS): Nancy Greene is the ADA compliance manager for Montgomery County. She is in charge of investigating any grievances regarding ADA complaints. Nancy informed the committee that the Federal government is reviewing their regulations on ADA accessibility in the right-of-ways, as well as shared-use paths.

**5. Subcommittee Reports:** DEFERRED TO NOVEMBER 1, 2012.

Angel Garcia-Ablanque updated the committee on the stop-arm cameras on school buses. Frederick County has already started to install cameras on buses; Montgomery County is looking to "piggy-back" on their contract. Currently, if a police officer pulls you over a \$250 fine will be imposed and points will be assessed. Once cameras are installed, a \$125 will be imposed; however no points will be assessed.

**MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:40 p.m.**