



PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE AND TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES FOR January 3, 2013 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; David Anspacher; Darrel Droblich; Yvette Freeman (representing Remberto Rodriguez); Steve Friedman; Benjamin Fulton (representing Councilmember Valerie Ervin); Lt. Robert McCullagh (representing Capt. Didone); Alan Migdall; Alyce Ortuzar; Rebecca Torma (representing John Hall); Jack Strausman

Members Absent: Ramin Assa; Cpt. Tom Didone; Councilmember Valerie Ervin; Angel Garcia-Ablanque; John Hall; Arthur Holmes, Jr.; Colleen Mitchell; David Sharp

County Staff: Jeff Dunkel, Pedestrian Safety Coordinator; Chad Bolt (representing Councilmember Berliner); Sande Brecher, MCDOT; David Gottesman, CountyStat; Will Haynes, MCDOT; Bruce Johnston, MCDOT; Chuck Kines, M-NCPPC; Nadji Kirby, MCDOT; Ruby Marcelo, CountyStat; Tom Pogue, MCDOT; Jocelyn Rawat (representing Councilmember Floreen); Anne Root, MCDOT; Bill Selby, MCDOT

Guests: Anyesha Mookherjee, MSHA; Robert Bernstein, Potomac Pedalers; Jack Cochrane, MoBike; Dave Dabney, The Bethesda Urban Partnership; Peggy Dennis, WMCCAB & MCCE; Michael Farrell, MWCDF; Shane Farthing, WABA; Monte Fisher; Joe Fritsch; Peter Gray, WABA; Richard Hoyer; Calman Prussin, NIH Bike Commuter Club; Peggy Schwartz, North Bethesda TMD; Rogers Stanley, DHCA; John Telesco, RBAC; Brian Walker; John Z. Wetmore, www.pedestrians.org.

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. He also introduced Anyesha Mookherjee as the anticipated soon-to-be appointed SHA representative.

The meeting minutes from December were introduced (first item in packet).

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

Update on Reappointments: Jeff Dunkel informed the committee that the County Executive has appointed and the County Council has approved the requests for reappointment for Capt. Thomas Didone, Steve Friedman, and Colleen Mitchell. We are still waiting on approval of Arthur Holmes, Jr., John Hall, and Anyesha Mookherjee. Erwin Mack explained that the County Executive must appoint and the Council approve all 17 members.

Annual Report: Colleen Mitchell was unable to attend the meeting due to an illness. However, she notified Erwin Mack that she was unable to complete her report because several members have not provided all the information she needs. She plans to have the report ready for the March meeting, and Erwin Mack requested the members provide her with the information she needs.

County Executive Press Event (item 2) – December 17, 2012 was the County Executive Press Event to commemorate the 5th anniversary of the Pedestrian Safety Initiative (#2 in package). Since the implementation of the initiative, pedestrian collisions have decreased by 12% over the last three years. The Safe Route to School Program (SRTS) helped drop the rate of collisions 72% at schools where it was instigated. Jeff Dunkel, in

Department of Transportation

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summarizing the event, commented that “we’ve been very active since July 2009, but the job is not done.”

Letter To Leggett Recommending Pedestrian Safety Education Funding (item 3) – This came about as a result of the conversation at the November 2012 meeting. Darrel Droblich spoke about the letter, which outlines the need for increased funding for pedestrian education and bicycle programs without negatively impacting other pedestrian safety programs. A lot of the work has been done with little money and by a lot of volunteers, he said.

2. CountyStat Review of Bicycle Safety: (item 4) Ruby Marcelo made a PowerPoint presentation on behalf of CountyStat. Bicycle crash data is collected only on incidences when the police were called and when the incidence involved a bicycle and a vehicle. The report doesn’t include bicycle and pedestrian or bicycle only incidences. It also doesn’t include accidents in parks, only on roadways. Ruby Marcelo’s presentation contained several graphs and slides showing how Montgomery County stands within the state and nationally.

The Police analysis of High Incident Areas shows that typically around 6:00 pm on a Tuesday has the highest occurrence of incidents. As a note, there is one area in Potomac, MD that does not show up on this report as a high incident area, but if you expand out the search, this area starts showing up. The report also showed the 2011 Bicycle Crash High Incident Areas, which are Germantown, Wheaton-Glenmont, Forest Glen, Silver Spring, and Bethesda. There was also a breakdown of the types of incidences at each location based off the police reports. The most common keywords in these areas were crosswalks, sidewalks, intersection, yield, driveway, and parking lot. The data used for these studies was from January 1, 2009 through June 4, 2012, with a total of 400 recorded incidents.

Bicycle Access and Safety Subcommittee Discussion

Steve Friedman led the discussion on Bicycle Safety. He said the County is recognizing what a vital part of our lifestyle bicycles are, and we need to make the roads safer for all types of bike riders. The section titles below are from the agenda.

3. A Rose is Not Always a Rose: David Anspacher started with explaining the different types of bike riders: first, folks in the advanced range who don’t want to be treated any differently than other vehicles on the road; second, an advanced rider, but who would prefer to have separate lanes; third, the slower, causal rider who doesn’t want to be on the road at all.

Jack Cochrane asked the County not to oversimplify the different types. The focus should be on the rider who uses a bicycle for transportation or commuting. They ride 2 to 5 miles to work, maybe living in the city and riding everywhere. These are the types that are perfect for BikeShare. MOBIKE represents the transportation cyclist who rides everywhere. They have been in existence for about 10 years.

Calman Prussin discussed the NIH Bicycle Club. NIH has about 20,000 employees, and 3% identify themselves as bike commuters. There are 4 different trails (including the Trolley Trail and the Capital Trail) leading into NIH. All bike riders get funneled into these 4 corridors, it makes riders feel safer, and it’s easier for motorist to see the multiple riders. NIH has had the highest bike to work day participation for the last 6 or 7 years in the Washington DC area.

Robert Bernstein discussed Potomac Peddlers which has about 2,500 to 3,000 members. Montgomery County has the highest number of members. He rides from Howard County to Washington DC for work, which takes him through Montgomery County or Prince George County (45 mile ride). He has more trouble riding home from work than riding to work. He said the County needs to work on clearing tree branches and other obstacles from the side of roads so bike riders can safely navigate the county roads.

Steve Friedman reminded members to keep in mind the children who ride bikes. Many areas in the county don’t have sidewalks or bike paths for them to ride to school, and these are the next generation of bike riders.

4. Riding Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Steve Friedman led this discussion. Regardless of the type of cyclist you are, you need to be able to safely ride and to follow the law. He shared a letter he received about a rider who got a ticket because an accident closed down a road that he was riding on, and the road he detoured onto didn’t allow bicycles on the roadway. He got a ticket, because he didn’t know the laws. This confusion happens when riders and motorists don’t know the rules about bicycles, and even sometimes the police don’t know all the rules.

Erwin Mack reminded the committee that they are to look at the whole county, not just at some intersections or specific sites.

Shane Farthing rode to tonight's meeting using various trails from Washington DC, including going on MD 355 on a folding bike, which causes him to be a slower rider. The County needs to take into account the health benefits of encouraging more bicycle riding as commuters. People are only going to do what they feel safe doing, and if they don't feel safe riding a bike on a road, they will not ride a bike. We need to provide the infrastructure to make people feel safe. Anytime you have a bicycle on a sidewalk, there is a failure somewhere, because bike riders are not safe on sidewalks. If mass cycling is the goal, then we need to tell riders where the safest areas are to ride. If we want the benefits of having a large cycling population, the County needs to sacrifice lanes on highways, parking spaces, and sidewalk space. Until you start to build things for the average person, you can only get 3% to use it. To get an increase of 8 to 11% you need to work on the infrastructure. You need to give the 60% that say they would like to bike the opportunity to do so safely.

Alyce Ortuzar asked what Shane Farthing would do to make Rockville Pike more rider-friendly. He said the safest way would be to dedicate a bike lane, but the amount of right turns make it difficult.

Jack Cochrane talked about improvements that need to be made to make riders feel safer. He said there needs to be more public education, more signage, and more markings on the road to designate bicycle lanes/areas. In a letter sent to the County in October, a list was provided stating what was needed to encourage more bikers, including making a 4 lane road into a 3 lane road with one bike lane. This would slow down traffic, but it would encourage more bicyclists to use the roads and make them safer.

5. What's Mine is Yours – Capital Bike Share - Sande Brecher started this topic with a brief introduction to BikeSharing. MCDOT has been working on it for 5 years. The County recently received a grant from Maryland DOT (MDOT) for a Down-county program, which would be the area between the DC line and the Beltway. The Mid-county area (Rockville and Shady Grove) would have 20 stations under an FTA Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) grant, and the Down-county program would have 30 stations under the MDOT grant using Federal CMAQ funds. BikeShare is set up for short term usage--the first half hour is free, the second half hour is \$1.50, and the next half hour is \$4.50, and so on. Alta Bike Share is the company that is providing the bikes. Alta is a for-profit company, and gets their revenue from the County, and the County gets their revenue from memberships to the BikeShare program as well as County and grant funds. The total program would cost about \$5 Million, with the grants covering about \$2 Million of the costs. MCDOT is looking into corporate sponsorship, and the participating jurisdictions in the region are exploring title sponsorship for the entire system, like New York City has done with Citibank, calling their program CitiBike.

Anne Root continued the discussion by talking about possible locations for the BikeShare stations, including Shady Grove and the Life Sciences Center for the JARC program. MCDOT is planning to conduct more site visits in January/February. The Down-county BikeShare program is at the Council for funding appropriation approval. Council action is scheduled for January 22, 2013, after which MCDOT can start work on the down-county station planning. In order to get the grant, MCDOT had to show preliminary areas for the stations, which were set up with help from the consultants MetroBike LLC. The plan is to have stations operational by the Spring/Summer of 2013.

MCDOT's plan to market/educate the public under the JARC program is coordinating with Montgomery College; some of those classes will be free for the public.

6. Rome Wasn't Built in a Day – Bruce Johnston led this topic. MCDOT has been concerned with the location of the stations and the infrastructure involved and the safety of riders. MCDOT is changing the bike coordinator position, making it a Capital Project Manager position. Resumes have been received and are currently in the review process. Traffic Engineering is working on signage and the restriping of roadways to enhance the County's bicycle infrastructure.

There is also information about some projects that have been completed and one that has been proposed for 2013. A number of roadway and bicycle projects have been put on hold due to budget issues. Bruce Johnston explained that his Division of Transportation Engineering works to complete Master Plan projects. One example of a completed project is Battery Lane, which added a bike lane. Restriping the roadway is not a simple task. Crews need to grind off the old paint lines, then repave and repaint. The best time to do restriping is when a street is scheduled for repaving. Woodglenn Road, for example, is planned to be slurry sealed, and then repainted in the

summer of 2013. The bikeway program has a budget of about \$500,000 per year. This year the River Road project is taking up about \$400,000 of these funds.

He concluded by saying it's going to take some time and additional money for bikeway improvements, and he expects MCDOT to start sending those kinds of budget requests to the County Executive and to argue for the money in the future.

Chuck Kines said the Parks Department is working on a plan to open its trails for 24 hour access. The time has come to have that discussion, he said. The Parks Department probably won't add lights to the trails, but they will have to start doing some different things, he felt, by accommodating travelers on trails for greater durations during the day.

7. I Fought the Law and the Law Won – Lt. Bob McCullagh gave a rundown of the different types of fines for both bicyclists and for motorists having interactions with bicyclists. For cyclists, the fines range from \$50 to \$90 and include riding with headphones on, even if you are not playing music. For Motorists the fines range from \$100 to \$290. If you choose to go to court to dispute the fines, the judge can raise some fines to as much as \$500. The only ones that have points attached are the \$290 fines. The police must be able to identify the person involved in an incident, not just identify the vehicle with its license plate number. The police need to be able to make their case in court.

8. Open Discussion

Next meeting will be held March 7, 2013.

9. Adjourn – Meeting adjourned at 9:31 pm.