Silver Spring
Transportation Management District
Advisory Committee
October 10, 2013

Abbreviations
HIA = High Incident Area
JARC = Job Access Reverse Commute
MSHA = Maryland State Highway Administration

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Items 1, 2 & 3 – Introductions/Minute Review/Chair's Comments

Item 4 – Presentation, Pedestrian Safety Update: Jeff Dunckel, Montgomery County's Pedestrian safety Coordinator, announced that the pedestrian safety statistics that focus on distracted walking and driving has now been updated. Last year there were 400 pedestrians struck, causing six fatalities. This year so far there have been 12 fatalities from January to the end of August. September is the beginning of the most dangerous months for pedestrian crashes.

Mr. Dunckel said the history of pedestrian safety started during the **Duncan** administration in 2002 with 54 Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations. The recommendations were implemented by County Executive Isiah Leggett in 2007 under the Pedestrian Safety Initiative.

The strategic plan follows a targeted approach identifying problem areas and supplying the resources necessary to improve access. The pedestrian safety team was most concerned with Level 4 and Level 5 collisions, with a Level 4 meaning incapacitated injury and Level 5 resulting in a fatality. **Mr. Dunckel** reported a 21 percent drop in Level 4 and 5 incidents due not only to the pedestrian safety program but also to traffic calming measures such as speed cameras. On the increase, however, are pedestrian strikes on surface parking lots, which are up to 39 percent. These crashes, which can have the same severity as street traffic accidents, are being addressed by property owners and managers.

Mr. Dunckel said that from October through December there are increases in pedestrian collisions that occur during the evening rush hour. When the program started, pedestrians and drivers tended to be fault equally. Implementation of the education program and police enforcement has since reduced negligent pedestrian behavior. Currently 60 percent of crashes are the fault of drivers. Police crosswalk stings are targeting drivers to reduce crashes where the driver is usually at fault.

Montgomery Count Police **Capt. Tom Didone** has instituted a training program to help officers make more accurate determinations involving crashes.

Mr. Dunckel explained that certain High Incident Areas (HIAs) have the highest concentration of pedestrian crashes: 11 percent of crashes occur on less than 1 percent of the roads. While there has been a recent increase in fatalities this year, overall the pedestrian safety program has been successful:

- Overall collisions down by 7 percent
- Severe collisions down 21 percent
- Fatalities down 38 percent
- HIAs collisions down 43-50 percent in traffic calming areas
- Safe Routes to School program responsible for a 79 percent decrease in collisions
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The pedestrian safety program takes a coordinated approach using engineering to build traffic calming infrastructure and educating the public to obey signals in an effort to change both pedestrian and driver behavior.
HIAs are categorized into two groups based on common crash characteristics. The HIA strategy focuses on one group using the coordinated Engineering, Education and Enforcement (3E) approach, then moved to the next group. Group 1 crashes are the fault of the pedestrian, Spanish speaking and occur in residential/commercial land use areas. Group 2 crashes are the fault of the driver, occurring in urban district areas such as Georgia Avenue, Fenton Street and Colesville Road.

Mr. Dunckel discussed the Pedestrian safety audits that were conducted in some of the HIAs:

- Georgia Avenue between Spring and Sligo – the first HIA.
- Colesville Road between Fenton and Noyes streets – crosswalk removal at the library.
- Colesville Road between Georgia and 16th Street Circle – will be done after the Silver Spring Transit Center opens.
- Fenton Street between Wayne and Cameron – the most recent pedestrian safety audit.

Traffic enhancements include engineering improvements such as:

- Widening sidewalks
- Signal reconstruction
- Refuge islands and beacons
- Improving street lighting
- Median fencing and landscaping

Making areas more pedestrian friendly included:

- Narrowing roads by putting in bump outs to shorten crossing distance.
- Inserting high visibility crosswalks which have a 90 percent driver compliance rate in stopping for pedestrians.

Other issues discussed regarding pedestrian safety were:

- Using landscaping and fencing to direct pedestrians to cross at certain areas and discourage midblock crossings
- The location of bus stops and other transit when placing crosswalks – moving crosswalks away from intersections encourages midblock crossing however there are greater walking distances between intersections in areas such as Georgia Avenue in Olney.
- The importance of signalization to get drivers to stop at crosswalks utilizing pedestrian activated beacons. Maryland State Highway Administration (MSHA) controls signals; however the City of Rockville obtained approval allowing them to install signals.
- Reconstructing sidewalks for ADA compliance..
- Using signaling to control pedestrian lack of adherence and light colored clothing to resolve visibility issues.

Mr. Dunckel discussed the education component of the safety program which uses about 30 volunteers to educate the public on not texting while driving and teaching pedestrians to make eye contact with drivers. Volunteers conduct outreach efforts throughout the County and help with campaigns such as:

- The Best Eyes Contest and Swag Bracelet s- conducted with student advisory group at Blair High School.
- Posting "Do Not Cross" signs.
- Safety promotion teams – English/Spanish speaking volunteers.
- Outreach at community events.

Mr. Dunckel said that enforcement efforts such as issuing citations to drivers and pedestrians are highly effective at stopping reckless behavior. There were 374 citations issued during driver focused sting operations conducted over a two month period.

Other areas of discussion:

- The Safe Routes to School received $100,000 in funding from County Council.
- The importance of reducing speeds to posted speed limits – pedestrian strikes at 40 mph have an 85 percent fatality rate; at 20 mph that drops to a 15 percent fatality rate.
- Projects to expand sidewalks, making them safer.
- More information is available at – www.montgomerycountymd.gov/walk website.

Questions and comments from the Committee included:

- The lack of crosswalks on East West highway in relation to the Blair Apartment's redevelopment. The redevelopment will add population density, causing greater midblock crossing issues. Although not an identified HIA, there is discussion with the Urban District and MSHA to remedy.
    - Blair Master Plan up for Planning Board approval on October 24th, which will be done in two phases. The portion that addresses East West Highway will not have movement until 10-15 years.
- State Highway contact is Assistant Engineer, **Anyesha Mookherjee** of District 3. **Brian Young** is Chief Engineer and **Dustan Kuzan** is the Pedestrian Safety person.
- The status of the Colesville Road audit - MSHA is holding community meetings and using recommendations from the audit to look at changes such as:
    - Removing reversible lanes.
    - Four way crossing at Spring Street intersection.
    - Placing a median on Colesville between Spring and Dale Drive.
- Buses and pedestrians continue to block the entrance at Discovery on Wayne Avenue – delay of the transit center aggravating the situation.

The list of SHA contacts will distributed to the Committee.

VOTE: The Committee approved September's minutes

Council Memorandum: Mr. Carlson called attention to a memo from Councilmember **George Leventhal** (included in the meeting packet) explaining a change in the law regarding how County property is disposed. The law now requires public comment before a decision is made. He is not sure if the Committee has to take a position at this time.

Updates:

- Capital Bikeshare launch scheduled for Friday, September 27th. Fourteen stations active, with 39 more to be installed.
- Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) grant - bikeshare now offered Countywide to low income individuals. Brochures translated into French, Amharic and Chinese. The program provides free bikeshare membership, bike helmet, bike safety classes (bikes can be provided via bikeshare system)
- Corporate and bulk memberships available.
- Volunteers needed for the MOCO Epic Festival this Saturday and Sunday.

Adjourn

Next meeting: December 12, 2013

Silver Spring Transportation Management District Advisory Committee Attendance Sheet
October 10, 2013

Voting Members (12)			
Name	**Affiliation**	**Present**	**Absent**
Chamber Members (3)			
Arnetta Haines	Social and Scientific Systems	X	
Michael Meszaros	Digital Industry, Inc.	X	
Samantha Mazo / Co-chair	Linowes and Blocher LLP	X	
Citizens Advisory Board Members (3)			
Jim Bunch	Kemp Mill, Four Corners, East SS		X
Phil Olivetti	North & West Sector Plan Area	X	
Andrew Wexler / Co-chair	CBD Resident	X	
Employers less than 50 employees (3)			
Vacant			
Everton Latty	iDeal Decisions, Inc.	X	
Valerie Spencer	MayaTech	X	
Employers with 50 or more employees (3)			
G. Michael Price	Discovery Communications	X	
Molly King	The Blairs	X	
Vacant			
Non-Voting Members (3)			
Sandra Brecher, DOT Transit Services	DOT Director or Designee	X	
Matthew Folden	M-NCPPC	X	
Reemberto Rodriguez	Silver Spring Regional Center	X	
Vacant	Montgomery County Police		
Staff			
Nakengi Byrd	DOT, Commuter Services	X	
Jim Carlson	DOT, Commuter Services	X	
Beth Dennard	DOT, Commuter Services		X
Guests			
Jeff Dunckel	MCDOT	X	
Harriet Quinn	4-Corners Resident	X	