

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
WALTER REED BRAC INTEGRATION COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY – January 15, 2013**

- Ilaya Hopkins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- Updates from Phil Alperson, Montgomery County BRAC Coordinator:
 - Phil noted that every item discussed at the BIC meetings has loads of background material on the web site, listed under today’s meeting on the “Get Involved” Page:
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/brctmpl.asp?url=/Content/EXEC/brac/getinvolved.asp>
 - Phil said that at every BIC meeting he reminds everyone that the “Get Involved” Page’s chronological report of BIC meetings includes the following resource materials:
 - **Printable Timeline: Anticipated Construction-Related Traffic Disruptions in Bethesda (as of 1-15-13):**
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/disruptionstimeline-041111.pdf>
 - **Summary of BRAC Transportation Projects and Commuting Options:**
http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/brctmpl.asp?url=/content/exec/brac/projects_glance.asp
 - Phil reminded the Committee to get traffic and BRAC news and information first by following Montgomery County BRAC on Twitter [@BracMoCoMD](#) .
 - **Status of the application process for Federal funding for the MD 355 Multimodal Crossing Project at the Medical Center Metro Station and the “outer phases” of the four intersections improvement projects.** Phil reported that since last September’s BIC meeting OEA announced its approval of three SHA Intersection Improvement funding applications: \$18.3 million for Connecticut Avenue/Jones Bridge Road/Kensington Parkway, \$4.3 million for Rockville Pike/Jones Bridge Road, and \$8.2 million for Rockville Pike/Cedar Lane. This is in addition to previously announced approval of \$7.3 million for SHA intersection improvements at Old Georgetown Road/West Cedar Lane/Oakmont Avenue and \$40 million for MCDOT’s MD 355 Multimodal Crossing Project at the Medical Center Metro Station. Phil thanked the Congressional delegation for securing these funds, and emphasized that the funds

are now protected from potential “budget sequestration” because they are now obligated to the projects. Phil noted that funding approval remains outstanding for “Phase 4” of SHA’s Rockville Pike/Cedar Lane intersection project, which Barb Solberg would discuss later in her presentation.

- **Updating the status of the Crossing Project**, Phil said the a Memorandum of Agreement between the many stakeholder agencies should be signed in the near future, and that MCDOT and SHA are working on a memorandum of Understanding on the Rockville Pike/Jones Bridge Road project which will be performed by MCDOT as a subcontractor to SHA in conjunction with the Crossing Project.
- **NIH Update:** Phil Neuberg reported that impending budget cuts will require NIH to close its South Gate on Old Georgetown Road at Greentree Road because it could no longer place personnel at that post. Phil anticipates that forthcoming completion of SHA roadwork on Rockville Pike will enable NIH to open its North Gate later this spring.
- **Neighborhood Updates:** Debbie Michaels expressed her appreciation for the heads-up that was given in advance of unusual security procedures at WRNMMC on January 8. Ken Strickland expressed his appreciation to transportation officials who have communicated well with the Chevy Chase Valley neighborhood during major construction.
- **Navy Presentation:** Jeff Miller, Transportation Program Manager for Naval Support Activity-Bethesda, detailed construction of Medical Swing Space (MSS) facilities to accommodate major construction that will take place under NSAB’s Comprehensive Master Plan. The short-term MSS facilities are needed to maintain medical services while long-term construction is under way. The MSS facilities are expected to remain in place near the North Gate for approximately five years.
 - <http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/nsab-masterplan-swingspace-bic-011513.pdf> (4 pages)
 - Jeff also said that construction was completed by the end of the year at the three Jones Bridge Road gates. He noted that with all five gates operational, it appears that more Navy traffic is using the Jones Bridge Road as an alternative to Rockville Pike. Some BIC community members expressed concern about increased traffic along Jones Bridge Road.
 - Jeff noted that the timing of the Rockville Pike signal at North Gate has been adjusted to give more green time to traffic along Rockville Pike. This has helped improve traffic flow on Rockville Pike at the expense of vehicles queued to exit NSAB.

- Bill Sadlon of Naval Facilities Command reported that the Navy held an open house last October on the Environmental Impact Statement, and that public comments will be incorporate when the EIS is published later this spring. Some BIC community members expressed concern that construction relating to the EIS and Master Plan could have impacts on adjacent neighborhoods.
- **State Highway Administration Presentations:**
 - **Barb Solberg provided an update on the four Intersection Improvement projects, focusing on the anticipated construction schedules now that Defense Department had made funding available.** She said the point of these projects has always been to provide short-term relief from increased traffic generated by BRAC; the projects cannot provide major traffic reductions but are intended to restore traffic to pre-BRAC conditions, or slightly better, even with more post-BRAC traffic.
 - *Barb’s PowerPoint will be posted on the BRAC web site accompanying this meeting summary as soon as it becomes available.*
 - **Project Timeline:**
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/disruptionstimeline-041111.pdf>
 - **Project Descriptions:**
http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/brctmpl.asp?url=/content/exec/brac/projects_glance.asp
 - Barb discussed Phase 4 of the Rockville Pike/Cedar Lane intersection project. Phase 4 would extend the new northbound lane being constructed under Phase 1 on Rockville Pike that runs from the Navy’s North gate to Cedar Lane. Under Phase 4, a direct line for northbound vehicles exiting WRNNMC would be created by extending the Phase 1 lane north from Cedar Lane to just north of Locust Hill Road, where it would merge with the main traffic lanes of Rockville Pike. Residents of the impacted Locust Hill neighborhood have argued that Phase 4 would provide little benefit but could have negative traffic, environmental, and quality of life impacts. Barb said that SHA has studied alternatives proposed by Locust Hill, but has concluded that Phase 4 should proceed as planned because the project’s benefits outweigh perceived negatives, and SHA doesn’t agree with the premise that the merge lane would create dangerous weaving patterns or new traffic backups between Cedar Lane and Locust Hill Road. SHA is completing environmental assessments required under the NEPA law and hopes to present its final Phase 4 funding request to OEA within “a couple of months.”

- Other concerns and comments about the Intersections projects.
 - It was noted that the Village of North Chevy Chase has relayed specific concerns to SHA but VNCC had a conflicting community meeting this evening and could not be at the BIC meeting.
 - Others wondered whether SHA had accounted for planned expansion of the North Chevy Chase Elementary School.
 - The proposed extension of Platt Ridge Drive may be coordinated with the third phase of the Connecticut Avenue/Jones Bridge Road intersection project.
 - A concern was expressed that the widened north/east bound Cedar Lane would be narrowed too close to an intersection at the Parkview neighborhood that has very dangerous sightlines at a hillcrest. It was noted that the actual merge would be near Elmhurst Drive, well away from that hillcrest intersection.
 - It was emphasized that the only work impacting the Oakmont community will be utilities relocation in the area. No road construction is planned for Oakmont.
 - **Yuqiong Bai gave a presentation on planned post-construction landscape restoration at the Connecticut Avenue/Jones Bridge Road intersection.** She noted that some invasive species have been removed and will be replaced with native species. In some cases, particularly in the Connecticut Avenue medians which are being narrowed, large trees will be replaced with smaller shrubs. Along the Chevy Chase Park neighborhood, some trees will be replaced because they must be removed during construction of ADA-compliant sidewalks
 - *Yuqiong's PowerPoint will be posted on the BRAC web site accompanying this meeting summary as soon as it becomes available. The following PowerPoint was presented to the County Council last November:*
<http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/intersections-sha-185jbr-landscaping-120612.pdf>
- **Ilaya Hopkins solicited questions and comments from the public.**
 - Concerns were raised whether adequate air quality testing is being conducted relating to Phase 4. Barb Solberg said such testing is being conducted and is required under the NEPA law.
 - It was asked whether SHA had studied the Locust Hill community's specific premise that Phase 4 would create hazardous driving practices and promote more congestion along Rockville Pike, and whether there was a cost-benefit of the project. Barb Solberg said those specific concerns had been studied and that SHA

does not agree with the premise that the project is not cost-effective, and that the negatives suggested by Locust Hill are exaggerated especially compared to the anticipated benefit.

- **Ilaya suggested that topics for the next BIC meeting could be a detailed update on Phase 4, a discussion of the North Wood signal, and whether the premise that Phase 4 could create hazardous driving conditions is valid.**
- **The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 19, 2013, 7:00 p.m. (NOTE this is the new regular starting time), at the BCC Regional Services Center.**

Committee members in attendance, January 15, 2013:

Phil Alperson, County BRAC Coordinator
Christopher Bishop, State Highway Administration
Margaret Rifkin for Larry Cole, Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission
Lulu Gonella, Chevy Chase View
Neil Greene, Maplewood Citizens Association
Ilaya Hopkins, Western Montgomery Citizens Advisory Board, East Bethesda Citizens Association, and Chair, Walter Reed BRAC Integration Committee
Ginanne Italiano, Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce
Ed Krauze, Bethesda Parkview Citizens Association
Karen Kuker-Kihl, The Promenade
Richard Levine, Locust Hill Citizens Association
Marilyn Mazuzan, Town of Oakmont
Debbie Michaels, Glenbrook Village Homeowners Association
Phil Neuberg, National Institutes of Health
Patrick O'Neil, Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce
Ken Strickland, Chevy Chase Valley
Rich Vogel, Stone Ridge School
Leslie Weber, Suburban Hospital

Ex-officio:

Ken Reichard (Senator Ben Cardin)
Joan Kleinman (Rep. Chris Van Hollen)
Cindy Gibson (Council Member Roger Berliner)
Debbie Spielberg (Council Member Marc Elrich)
Capt. Fritz Kass, Naval Support Activity-Bethesda
Jeff Miller, Naval Support Activity-Bethesda
Joseph Macri, Naval Support Activity-Bethesda

Other Attendees

Brigitte Akalovsky, Village of North Chevy Chase
Yuqiong Bai, MD State Highway Administration

Michelle Basch, WTOP 103.5 FM
Dawn Chaikin, Locust Hill Citizens Association
Erin Donaghue, Bethesda Patch
Carl Gentilcore, Locust Hill Citizens Association
Greg Humes, Chevy Chase Valley
Aaron Kraut, Bethesda Now.com
Jeanette Musil, DOD Office of Economic Adjustment
Robert Obrist, Howard Hughes Medical Institute
William Sadlon, NAVFAC Washington
Barb Solberg, MD State Highway Administration
Julie Woepke, MD Dept. of Bus. & Econ. Development, Office of Military & Federal Affairs
Bernard Wunder, Chevy Chase Park