

**Silver Spring
Transportation Management District
Advisory Committee
September 11, 2014**

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Abbreviations:

DDOT= District Dept. of Transportation
IOS = Interim Operating Site
SSCAB = Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board
SHA= State Highway Administration
TDM = Transportation Demand Management

Item 1 & 2 -Introduction/Minutes: Chair Samantha Mazo called the meeting to order; members and guests introduced themselves.

VOTE: May, June and July minutes were approved with changes.

Item 3 – Chair Comments: Ms. Mazo announced that **Molly King** has left her position at The Blairs community, leaving a Large Employer vacancy that needs to be filled. **Reemberto Rodriguez** said that he would pass on the names of candidates who were interviewing for positions on the Urban District Advisory Board to assist in filling the vacancy. The candidates would be a better fit for the TMD Advisory Committee because they have expressed an interest in transportation matters.

Ms. Mazo also announced that the transit center is scheduled to open sometime in 2015, according to Dept. of General Services Director **David Dise**.

Item 4 – Updates: Jim Carlson announced:

- The Walk and Ride Challenge is underway in Silver Spring with 38 teams and 178 participants.
- Sharp & Company, Commuter Services outreach contractor, is meeting with property managers and employers to promote transit and transportation demand management (TDM) programs.
- Car Free Day is September 22nd, 6:30-9:00 am, at selected bus stops located in the Silver Spring Transit Center's Interim Operating Site (IOS).
- Ride On route changes will be in effect – Route 38 will change in October.
- The Maryland Open Meetings Act online tutorial is now required of all board and committee chairs and vice chairs; and also urged for all voting members. At least three people on a board or committee should participate in the training (chair, vice chair & staff).

Mr. Rodriguez and members discussed results of the August VanGo shuttle meeting:

- Extended hours will start mid-January; however, there is no funding for new signage, and buses will continue for the present with no identifiable VanGo paint scheme.

- Engineers will make final decisions on routes, taking into account the more compact the route, the better in terms of headways. There was discussion of the possibility of two different routes: one for daytime hours, and another at night.
- **Phil McLaughlin** or **Deanna Archey** will be invited to present an update for the Committee when the route and other information is finalized.
- It was clarified that the County does not operate a shuttle to the Montgomery College-Takoma Park campus; however, Montgomery College students take Ride On buses free with their student ID.

Item 5 - Discussion with Casey Anderson, Planning Board Chair: **Ms. Mazo** introduced **Casey Anderson**, the new Planning Board chair. **Mr. Anderson** said he had not been aware of the Committee until he attended a recent joint meeting with the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board (SSCAB). He also realized that the Advisory Committee was more transit-oriented when he saw an agenda from one of the meetings. **Mr. Anderson** added that he would like to hear the issues that the Committee is working on and its concerns with regard to transportation planning.

Ms. Mazo explained that the Silver Spring TMD Advisory Committee is an advisory body to the County Executive and Council and is made up of various business and residential interests. The TMD's role is to promote an efficient transportation system in downtown Silver Spring, with an emphasis on transit and other alternative modes, and to ensure better pedestrian safety and access.

Ms. Mazo explained some specific actions by the Committee:

- Review required employer Traffic Mitigation Plans (TMPs)
- Monitor employee transit use for mode share goals
- Review projects and presentations in the Silver Spring area, highlighting issues pertinent to the TMD and submit recommendation letters to County government
- Promotion of Capital Bikeshare implementation in Montgomery County – support funding initiatives
- Increase and capitalize on the County's investment in transit options and infrastructure
- Support pedestrian and bike safety objectives/initiatives
- Communicate with State Highway Administration (SHA), District Department of Transportation (DDOT) and other agencies on projects such as the 16th St. Circle audit, light timing and the District streetcar project; also involvement with SHA on Georgia Avenue pedestrian safety audit.

Mr. Anderson said many Montgomery County residents are not aware of transportation projects in DC, so working with DDOT is of great benefit.

The Committee discussed its involvement regarding the Purple Line project. **Mr. Anderson** said that, although still in the planning stages and not considered a formal advisory body, there will be a community advisory group for the Purple Line set up by Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) and TMD Committee members may be asked to participate.

Mr. Anderson suggested the Committee take a close look at bicycle trails, citing signage issues and cycling's expanded role as a functional component of transit. He believes that County DOT still views trails as a component somewhat separate from transit when it should be more integrated. For example, the current plan for the transit center is to use a sidewalk as a bicycle connection, creating

a potential pedestrian hazard. He is in agreement with having the Metropolitan Branch Trail moved to a location that will promote safer access for pedestrians and cyclists, and will promote better economic and community vitalization.

Mr. Anderson said his priorities are to streamline the development process and general transportation issues such as dealing with SHA application of one size fits all options for transit.

Other areas of discussion were:

- Ways the AC could help the Planning Board stay involved making sure public administrators complete transportation projects-Governor candidate Anthony Brown understands Smart Growth however political buy in depends on keeping transportation issues on the agenda
- The BRT presentation shown for upper Georgia Avenue corridor was unrealistic and should show real right of way impacts which are not as severe as presented
- SHA not consistent with MC interests but if they here the drum beat of what the community wants he believes we will see projects more compatible
 - Transit projects are looked at individually without taking into account its total impact on transit as a whole including other projects-need to bring all projects together
 - Funding for a comprehensive study for Silver Spring
- **Matt Folden** discussed the TPAR model-changing to a more person to person model and not vehicular for a more accurate assessment of traffic congestion
- Funding for UMD sophomore model which is added on top of existing COG traffic model however Mr. Anderson believes this may more of the same thing.

Mr. Anderson expressed that as Planning Board Chair he did not want to more of the same thing regarding traffic modeling having a start from scratch approach. He suggested the Committee get involved on the front end of traffic models making sure traffic flow is compatible to the surrounding community because current traffic tests for Rt. 29 upper Georgia Ave will show a need to speed up traffic to reduce congestion however it will cause hazardous conditions for pedestrians & cyclist. Also the AC could incorporate parking using it to ensure mobility and added amenity.

The discussion continued with the following:

- The impact of office leasing in areas with limited transit-2000 Master Plan (MP)wanted to reduce office leasing levels and increase residential development, now the reverse is wanted
- WMATA study on Rt. 29 corridor-public meeting proposing adding busses to improve access to area-presentation online
 - State and County agencies should be prodded to improve bus service during BRT construction
- The challenges of having master plans keep pace with development site plans-issues with MP and Site Plan compatibility and updating urban MP to incorporate instructions to developers
- Improving bike connections in downtown Silver Spring
 - Incorporating Bikeshare-although wanted by property owners, they are not happy about paying equipment, operation and upkeep fees-developers not able to get impact tax
 - Bikeshare less expensive compared to road work/repairs

- NIAID site on Fishers Lane- JBG project to build path connecting to Rock Creek Park instead of adding a turn lane however 600K project now costing over a million due to environmental impact issues
- The view that County Council can be arbitrary in supporting projects in MP's and the need to keep focused and repeated communication to complete development-Joint letters help in this regard
- Providing transit in areas has a better chance of attracting businesses than building more residential dwellings

Mr. Rodriguez discussed **Col. Reimer** efforts of highlighting drastic changes of TC opening with reduced pedestrian traffic effecting area businesses. **Mr. Carlson** has been unable to have someone update the AC regarding the TC. Mr. Rodriguez also announced:

- The forming of PL Community Advisory Groups-21 stations divided into 6 groups with the TC and Library as 1 group represented by the various Advisory Committees
- Consensus on where the Silver Spring CBD stands regarding socioeconomic issues of affordable housing, work force development and place making identity

The Committee discussed how it can help the Planning Board within guidelines since it can only advise County Government although presentations to the Board can be made by individuals.

Item 6- Adjourn: Next Meeting: October 9, 2014