

Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee (WUDAC)
Tuesday | January 9, 2024 | 7:00 pm-8:30 pm
Hybrid Meeting

WUDAC in attendance: Jim Epstein, Rob Fox, Ali Oliver-Krueger, Nina Koltnow, Philip Daley, Tanya Baskin, Kit Wood, Riana Cole, David Jarrett, Rep. for Mid-County Director (Merlie), Crystal Ruiz

Guests: Joe Moges (SHA), Michael Paylor (MC-DOT, Qianyu Hu (SHA), Erich Florence (SHA Engineer)

Public: Alison Gillespie, Sarah Abdelrahim, Will Cotter, Liz Torres (OMG manager), Leah Haygood (OMG board), Eric Enrico Hunt, Kathis Chévez, Margaret Rifkin (Art and Walkability Project), Dave Obrzut, Chip Py, Marta Martinez, Krista Brick, Carol ??

- I. Call to order 7:00 pm
- II. Review/Approve minutes 7:02 pm
October and November Minutes Approved
Motion to move May meeting from 14th to 21st (3rd Tuesday) approved.
- III. Community Concerns 7:05 pm

Alison Gillespie (OMG) in favor of bike lanes, but not in favor of bikes sharing lanes with buses (re: new University Blvd bus/bike lanes). Implementation sloppy (little communication, inconsistent about signage). Not faster for buses, unsafe for bikes.
- IV. Reports/Updates 7:15 pm
 - a. Elected representatives in attendance

For Council Member F-G (Katia Chévez): Proposal for overnight stays in Ag Reserve - meeting next Tuesday at 7.

 - Council is currently in recess; they will be back in session starting Tuesday, Jan. 16.
 - ECON Agenda:
 - Bill 42-23 (Menstrual Products in Public Restrooms)
 - January 16, 2024
Public Hearing on the agritourism zoning text amendment for overnight stays (ZTA 23-09) | [Sign up testify](#)

- January 18, 2024
Joint ECON/HHS Committee worksession on Bill 34-23 (Wage Commission) and Bill 35-23 (Tipped Workers Minimum Wage)
 - January 29, Monday: 11:30 @ Wheaton Rec Center; The newly formed Wheaton/Glenmont Arts and Entertainment Advisory Board is hosting a second town hall to get feedback from youth on things they would like to see in their community. Please share the attached flyer with youth.
 - February 1, 2024
Joint ECON/EC Committee work session on the local sports/sport tourism industry and workforce opportunities
- Special shoutout to Crystal Ruiz for being responsive and working with WMATA to address the rodent issue in Wheaton

b. Wheaton & Kensington Chamber of Commerce, *Ali Oliver-Krueger*
 Holiday on Duty and Angels for Children Toy Drive kick-off were both successful.
 Upcoming: late March Business Expo.

c. Committee Reports - None

d. MCCAB, *Rob Fox*

At the last meeting (November), Wendy Howard from OMG provided an overview of One Montgomery Green and their work with that business community
 MCPD public safety updates.
 They meet the 3rd Thursday of every month.

e. Mid-County RSC, *Luisa Cardona (Crystal Ruiz)*

Urban district: holiday banners and decorations went up w/ help from SHA. If you see a banner in disrepair, call 311. (Decorations are coming down soon.)
 In February, Safe Streets Team (red shirts) new hours will be 10AM - 8:30 PM.
 New flyers are being designed for homeless outreach. Please call the new number on the flyer to help unsheltered people.
 Please sign up with the County to testify in support of WUD in the County budget.
 WUDAC sent a letter in support, with urgent needs prioritized.

V. Presentation | Wheaton Transportation Updates 7:40 pm
Joseph Moges, Senior Safety Office – State Highway Administration
Michael Paylor, Division Chief, Traffic and Operations, MCDOT

Current fiscal concerns (How will new budget restrictions from MD affect the Wheaton area?)

Michael - Each department/division has its own budget. His office has the budget to fulfill current commitments. There may be some changes in design and implementation due to budget.

Joe - District: Federal constraints don't apply to safety or maintenance, which is our bread and butter.

Georgia Ave grant application has been submitted. Most adjustments are made by finding other federal money. No safety initiatives will suffer. (What qualifies as a safety initiative?)

Georgia Ave and Price: Revised plans changed signal poles to E side of intersection to avoid utilities and business impacts. That change has been submitted; waiting for final review by SHA. It's an iterative process. Hope to start construction in spring. [See plans, attached.](#)

Current plans for Grandview/Blueridge/Georgia area and E-bound University to N-bound GA?

Michael: Bicycle project is a higher priority than new traffic lanes and signal. Existing lane configuration will be preserved; sidewalks will be modified for safety. Signal will be under construction this spring or summer. [See plans, attached.](#)

A WUDAC member observed that drivers gun the left from E-bound Univ onto Grandview. Please investigate this as a safety issue.

Georgia and Arcola: Joe requested Leading Pedestrian Intervals at those signals to increase safety for pedestrians crossing.

Public: pedestrian barrier on Georgia in mid-Wheaton has been down too long. Having to refabricate a custom design takes too long. Why not use rope barrier as at Safeway on Reedy. This is a Montgomery Planning issue.

Michael: no one anticipated it getting run into so much by vehicles. Do we have any data on type of collision that is causing these impacts? We should know that in case there is a pattern. The design was arrived at after much discussion of cultural preferences in the community.

Crystal: agreed; customization makes replacement difficult. Currently there are new sections in production.

Feedback from the Governor's visit? Michael looking for improvements to ask the Governor for. Don't know what made it onto final ask list.

What are near- and mid-term safety improvements that can be made on Georgia Ave while waiting for it to become a boulevard.

Joe: Walked with the Governor and worked with Transp Secy Weidefeld; applied for grant to expand "Montgomery Hills" project to end of Red Line. Sidewalks to reflect best practices; transportation hub, bus priority.

University: Status of University Corridor Plan (in the hands of Montgomery Planning) and how does the new plan coordinate with Amherst Bikeway?

Joe: working on Master Plan for some time; not finalized; still being workshopped. Still open to community members' input. DOT coordinated with SHA re: rollout of (University Ave) pilot bike lane. Wrapped data from that into bus/bike lane plans. Re: Amherst Bike Way - all in favor of ADA improvements.

Michael: Comments are still open (through 1/4/24) on Amherst Bike Way. Construction should start in the summer. As part of that, signal at Amherst and University should be reconstructed (sometime in 2025). Re: the new red bus lanes on University: working on completing markings. Neighbors were thoroughly kept in loop, info was on website. Red paint got put down without enough dry weather following for other painted markings. Re: DOT saying people can use bus lanes now, but not once completed: Michael does not feel this is problematic. He is hopeful they will use portable signs to communicate when traffic pattern has to change. Re: safety of combining bus and bike lanes - bikes sharing lanes with buses make much more sense than bikes sharing lanes with cars. Less exposure. We need to incorporate this type of efficiency, as road space is limited.

Joe: personally pushed hard to incorporate bikes with buses. Analyzing the bike lane pilot, those lanes were underutilized. This solves three problems at once. There are already standards for how buses pass bikes, and drivers are trained. This gives a pedestrian buffer, too.

New MUTCD (Federal Transportation) standards; what are their impacts? Particularly invested in bicycle, pedestrian changes involving "new toolbox." There is still a state review process. Joe will see how he can work with local community on positive changes, including the potential for pedestrian pavement painting.

Streeter: State/County have no more plans at this time.

OMG: working on reaching out to stakeholders re: innovation, beautification/design, enhancing equity, showcasing sustainability. Pursuing funding and partnerships.

Public: question about putting in a 4-way stop at Bucknell and Prichard. Michael will look into it.

VI. Adjourn

8:30 pm

NEXT WUDAC MEETING: February 13, 2024