



**Commission on People with Disabilities
Meeting Summary Minutes
December 9th, 2020**

****MEETING WAS HELD VIA ZOOM ****

Welcome and Approval of November 2020 Meeting Summary Minutes

Seth Morgan, Chair, convened the meeting. A motion was made to approve the November 2020 Meeting Summary Minutes. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the November 2020 Meeting Summary Minutes were unanimously approved as written. Approved minutes are available online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd.

Update on Vision Zero – Wade Holland, Vision Zero Coordinator

Handout: <https://montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CPWD/20201209VZUpdateCoPWD.pdf>

Website: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/visionzero/>

Wade Holland, Vision Zero Coordinator, works for the Office of the County Executive, and works with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA), Office of Public Information (OPI), Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD), Fire & Rescue Services (FRS), and other partners with the goal to eliminate traffic fatalities in Montgomery County by 2030.

The current Vision Zero Action Plan requires the County to develop a long-term strategic plan that will guide the County towards eliminating serious and fatal injuries from our roadways. A new 10-year strategy is currently being drafted. Public feedback was collected this summer and fall to determine issues and programs that were important to residents. This fall and winter, workgroups of city, county, and state staff are constructing the first draft of the plan. In winter and spring 2021, an additional round of public feedback will be held to get resident opinions on the draft. Wade will present before the Commission again to get feedback. The plan will be finalized in June 2021 so that it can be implemented at the start of Fiscal Year 2022. More information can be found on the Vision Zero 2030 Plan website: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/visionzero/2030plan.html>

A core piece of the Vision Zero Action Plan was to update the street, sidewalk, and bike path designs for all roadways in the County to prioritize safety for all users, environmental and economic sustainability, and create streets that are great, dynamic places. The Complete Streets Design Guide (CSDG) provides policy and design guidance on the planning, design, and operation of county roadways and will be used in the following situations: when designing future streets or reconstructed streets in an area experiencing redevelopment; when implementing a capital improvement project, such as the construction or reconstruction of a street, intersection, or bridge, and; when resurfacing a street or conducting major work in the street, which may create an opportunity to reconsider some aspects of the street's design. CSDG was created to ensure that safety for all users is prioritized when designing or redesigning a street. As roadways are changed either through private development or County Government projects, the guide lays out expanded sidewalk clear zones free of permanent and temporary obstructions and separated bicycle facilities to keep bikes and e-scooters out of car traffic and off the sidewalk. This Commission has already provided constructive feedback on CSDG. The draft of CSDG was approved by the Montgomery County Planning Board and will be reviewed by the County Council after the winter holidays.

The Vision Zero Action Plan called for the creation of a Pedestrian Master Plan (PMP) which is currently under development by the Planning Department. The plan will make walking and rolling safer, more comfortable, more convenient, and more accessible for pedestrians of all ages and abilities in all parts of the county. In addition to prioritizing needed infrastructure, the plan will recommend new and amended policies and operational practices, design standards and programming to support walking and rolling. The PMP's scope goes beyond the safety impacts of walking and rolling in our county and looks at the comfort, convenience, and access that make up the pedestrian experience in the County. The plan will identify and recommend policies, practices, design standards, and programming that will make it easier and preferable to be a pedestrian in Montgomery County. The Montgomery County Planning Department is collecting data on all roadways to calculate the Pedestrian Level of Comfort Countywide. These data will aid the Planning Department in making its prioritization recommendations. The PMP will go before the Montgomery County Planning Board next fall with a goal of final approval by County Council by the end of 2022.

Every four years, the County Council must update the Subdivision Staging Policy. As part of the update this year, it has been renamed the County Growth and Infrastructure Policy to clarify what this policy does. The intent of the Growth and Infrastructure Policy is to ensure public facilities, particularly schools and transportation infrastructure, are adequate to accommodate new development. This year's update provided an enhanced focus on schools in relation to growth and development in Montgomery County. The transportation side of the policy evaluated transportation policy areas and updated multimodal infrastructure adequacy tests with a new focus on Vision Zero safety priorities. The updated policy incorporates Vision Zero principles by requiring a Vision Zero Statement for all projects that will generate 50 or more peak-hour person trips and updates the developer requirements for developer-funded bikeways, sidewalk, and bus shelters to be more robust. This will ensure new developments will add to a better pedestrian environment for all users and elevates safety more than previous policies had before. The new policy has been adopted by the County Council and will be in place through 2024.

The 2020 Vision Zero Action Plan called for implementing the Pedestrian Road Safety Audit recommendations for Middlebrook Road to increase pedestrian safety around the newly expanded Seneca Valley High School. This project was completed during a scheduled resurfacing of Middlebrook Road in order to lower costs. MCDOT developed an interim road diet that removed the east-bound general travel lane adjacent to the high school and replaced it with a two-way cycle track to create a dedicated space for people who use bicycles and scooters. All lanes on the west-bound travel lanes were narrowed to reduce travel speeds and create buffer space between the roadway and the sidewalk. The project should be completed by the end of the year, weather permitting. Photos of the project are included in the handout. Wade reported MCDOT also reviews roads considered high injury network areas based on past data showing serious and fatal crashes. Short term fixes are applied until permanent changes can be made.

The Vision Zero Action Plan calls for additional protected crossings with either a full traffic signal or a pedestrian beacon to create more safe places for pedestrians and cyclists to cross. All new signals have pedestrian countdown timers, audible pedestrian signals, and are timed for crossing at 3.5 feet per second. The County will add additional crossing time if the context is appropriate. So far in 2020, the MCDOT and SHA have installed 3 traffic signals and 10 pedestrian beacons and scheduled 6 signals and 14 beacons for installation. There are different types of pedestrian beacons installed depending on the context of the road and land use. The HAWK beacon, also known as a pedestrian hybrid beacon, stays dark until activated by a pedestrian. When activated, the HAWK beacon brings up a yellow light to alert drivers, then a solid red light to stop traffic and allow the pedestrian to safely cross. The protected crossing installed at Colesville Road near Blair High School was installed as part of the BRT project. SHA installed full traffic signals at Veirs Mill Road and Matthew Henson Trail and Georgia Avenue and May Street.

Wade reported the Montgomery County Police Alcohol Holiday Task Force is currently underway. It is an eight-week task force that focuses on detecting alcohol-related offenses during the holiday season. To date, the task force has arrested 100 people for driving under the influence. These arrests include only those arrests made by task force officers and do not include the additional arrests made by patrol officers in the performance of their duties. The task force is set to run through January 9th, 2021.

Vision Zero offered education programs this past fall including a bicycle rodeo where kids learned bicycle safety skills on a temporary bicycle course that was set up and had their helmets and bicycles checked. MCDOT has partnered with Montgomery County Public Schools to provide fun activities at meal distribution sites to include learning how to walk safe, safety tips, coloring books, drawstring back packs, and lights.

Commissioners can visit the Vision Zero website for full updates for all action items in the plan.

The floor was opened to questions.

Eric Cole, Commissioner, asked if the CSDG addresses installing sidewalks on residential streets to provide safe paths of travel to schools and transit. The Safe Routes to Schools program is supposed to make walking and bicycling safer for children in residential neighborhoods. Wade said streets with pedestrian activity would most likely be recommended to have a sidewalk installed on at least one or both sides of the road. He noted that there is a large backlog of sidewalk installation requests prior to the CSDG approval. Sidewalk installation is prioritized based on data. When sidewalk installation requests are received from a resident, the area is reviewed for proximity to school or transit as well as the crash history in that area. That information is used to rank how those installation requests are implemented. The Vision Zero draft that will come out in the spring will include recommendations for policy changes or recommend sidewalks to be installed where larger gaps exist such as on Viers Mill Road or other heavy pedestrian activity locations. The PMP will also review those areas and policies and how sidewalk installations are ranked and prioritized. There may be a draft of the PMP next summer or fall to allow time for feedback. Sidewalks can be very expensive especially if they need to be installed on private property. On some residential streets with lower traffic areas there are opportunities to create a walking lane using temporary materials to create a protected and designated place for pedestrians. These lanes can be installed faster and at a much lower cost until a permanent fix can be installed.

Trish Gallalee, Vice-Chair, asked if Vision Zero includes snow removal. Wade said there is a section in the draft Vision Zero Action Plan that includes snow removal but it is still being developed. Vision Zero prioritizes the pedestrian experience. MCDOT wants to make sure snow removal policies are updated. They are reviewing what it would cost for the County to provide more sidewalk removal. One low cost option would be to copy DC's Volunteer Snow Program. This free service matches seniors and those with disability and access and functional needs with volunteers in their community to shovel their walkways after a snow event.

Seth asked how MCDOT is planning to address the issue of snow removal contractors piling snow in accessible parking spaces. Wade said he will look into this issue. If contractors are not performing the scope of the work their contract can be terminated. (Please see Pedestrian Winter Safety Act of 2001, Montgomery County Council <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/resources/files/archive/pr/2001/0423snowlaw.pdf>. The Commission provided testimony on this bill)

Richard Shermanski, Commissioner, asked if there are plans to enforce dedicated on-street parking for bicycles and scooters. Wade reported MCDOT recently installed two bicycle and scooter corrals on Fenton Street in front of Whole Foods and Safeway. This created more space for users to park their devices off of the sidewalk. MCDOT notified scooter vendors of these two new spaces. MCDOT is planning on installing more bicycle racks. Developers have also been asked to install bicycle racks. There is no law stating that scooters cannot be parked on the sidewalk, but they do need to be parked so they are not blocking the sidewalk. Scooter vendors do have responsibilities they must follow in order to be allowed to operate in the County. If a complaint is received, the scooter vendor has to make sure that scooter is moved within a certain time frame. The County also has the ability to tow or move it themselves.

Seth asked if MCDOT will providing community education on HAWK signals. Also, he came across an intersection today that had one solid green light and a flashing red light and he was not sure how to proceed. Wade said there should only be on color at an intersection and the signal that Seth came across most likely was malfunctioning. Signal issues can be filed by calling 311 or the police non-emergency number after hours. Regarding education of HAWK signals, MCDOT will post door hangers or send postcards to the areas where the

signals are being installed. Wade will share an example of the flyer with the Commission which shows a driver what the phases of the signal are and shows pedestrians step-by-step instructions.

Bong Delrosario, Director of Transportation Policy and Programs, Maryland Department of Disabilities, asked if HAWK beacons were being installed near the newly installed floating bus stops in downtown Silver Spring. Wade said one was recently installed near Georgia Avenue and Fenton Street, but that is several blocks away from a floating bus stop. No HAWK beacons are currently scheduled to be installed near floating bus stops.

Seth asked if MCDOT has a plan to deal with the issue of drivers who need access to the sidewalk to unload their wheelchairs or motorized devices but are unable to due to the bicycle lane that has been installed next to the sidewalk. Wade said this issue is being looked at and Matt Johnson, MCDOT, should be able to address this issue and mobility assessments that will be conducted in urban areas during his presentation. These urban environments are becoming more complex with the addition of new transit lines, bicycle lanes, the Silver Spring Transit Center, and the Purple Line. As these areas change MCDOT wants to make sure they can accommodate everyone and that everyone feels safe.

Seth invited Wade to speak periodically before the Commission to provide updates and to give the Commission an opportunity provide input before plans are implemented. This Commission would like to help MCDOT develop plans that as inclusive as possible for all persons with disabilities. Commissioners can contact Wade at wade.holland@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Visually Impaired Urban Transportation Study – Matt Johnson, AICP, BiPPA Project Manager, Division of Transportation Engineering, Montgomery County Department of Transportation

MCDOT received a grant from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) to do a study and pilot design for users who are blind or have low vision navigating the urban environment especially with relationship with connecting to transit. The study will be conducted from January 2021 to June 2021 and a document will be created on best practices to improve the way sidewalks and other pedestrian spaces work in our urban areas for connecting to people to transit. The project will also create a pilot design for a segment of roadway which has yet to be determined. MCDOT will be reviewing treatments across the country and throughout the world that may be effective and could be incorporated. While the grant is specific to Silver Spring, there is potential to incorporate these best practices throughout Montgomery County. Matt said the scope of the study includes creating tactile 3D documents that individuals can use to see how the plans will be laid out. He added that one of the lead consultants on the consulting team has visual impairments and has been a great resource.

This study is just beginning and MCDOT wanted to get this Commission involved as early as possible. MCDOT will be hosting a meeting on January 11th, 2021 at 6:30pm to kick-off the project. The meeting will be open to the public and Commissioners are invited to attend. Interested members can e-mail Matt to sign up at Matt.Johnson@montgomerycountymd.gov. MCDOT will also manage an e-mail distribution list for those who want to regularly receive e-mail updates on the project. Commissioners can also e-mail Matt to sign up for the distribution list or if they have any questions or comments. Matt will present updates at the Commission's January 13th, 2021 meeting as well.

Matt thanked Betsy Luecking, Staff, Shawn Brennan, Mobility Manager, and former Commission Chair Charlie Crawford for their letters of support to MWCOG that helped MCDOT secure the grant. He also thanked the Commission for their time and input. While the study focuses on visual impairments, MCDOT is looking at universal design perspective and how these treatments might impact persons who use wheelchairs or have cognitive impairments as well as how someone can navigate these environments without the use of a smartphone.

Seth asked if Patrick Sheehan, President, National Capital Area Chapter of the American Council of the Blind of Maryland, has been involved in this project. Matt said they will be reaching out to him to be involved. He added that this is open to everyone and anyone who is interested can join. If individuals are unable to attend the upcoming meeting or future meetings, they are willing to talk to the individual one-on-one.

Hannah Henn, Strategic Innovation Senior Engineer, MCDOT, is supporting Matt on this project. She added that in addition to the meeting on January 11th, five in-person interviews will be conducted with the consultant team walking the streets of downtown Silver Spring with individuals who have a vision disability and getting their feedback on the experiences. Those individuals are to be determined and Hannah asked the Commission to share their suggestions for who should be interviewed. The in-person walks will be held sometime in January 2021.

Seth asked Matt to provide periodic updates to the Commission. Matt said he would be happy to and added that this project has to be completed by June 2021. Commissioners can also send him an e-mail to receive updates.

Americans with Disabilities Act Issues – Matthew Barkley, ADA Compliance Manager, ADA Compliance Team, Department of General Services

Website: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DGS-ADA/WhatWeDo.html

Before joining Montgomery County Government, Matthew Barkley worked on independent living at the local, state and federal level. He also served as the Director of Disability Services, Planning and Development in Fairfax County where he provided staff support to the Fairfax Area Disability Services Board. He said he always admired the work of this Commission including the hiring preference for persons with disabilities, Design for Life Montgomery, Respect the Space campaign, and accessible pedestrian crossings.

The ADA Compliance Team was brought together in 2010 when the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) conducted Project Civic Access within Montgomery County Government. Project Civic Access is a proactive audit of ADA compliance in buildings, policies and procedures in state and local governments. Governments are then notified of those violations and a timetable is set for when those violations must be remedied. Those governments must also survey buildings that the DOJ did not audit. In 2006, DOJ conducted sample audits of over 110 buildings and facilities within Montgomery County including parks. In 2011, Montgomery County and Montgomery Parks entered a settlement agreement with DOJ.

The Team provides training and technical assistance on a wide range of ADA and accessibility issues. They also handle grievances related to Title II ADA which requires that state and local government entities do not discriminate against people with disabilities in their programs, services and activities. The Team consists of six staff members including Matt and an architect, a capital projects manager, a program specialist who handles outreach and training, technical assistance and contract administration, and a construction representative. They want to know of any violations that people encounter when trying to access County buildings, facilities, and programs. The ADA Compliance Team does take complaints regarding sidewalks and pedestrian safety works with MCDOT to resolve those issues. ADA comments, concerns and complaints can be sent via e-mail at adacompliance@montgomerycountymd.gov or by phone at 240-777-6197 (V).

The Team is working on small building refresh projects that range from adjusting grab bars to completely overhauling buildings for ADA compliance. The Team operates with a \$3,500,000 annual budget for ADA projects, but they also work closely with DGS's Division of Building Design and Construction and other County agencies to ensure the work they are doing is ADA compliant. The Team currently has 22 construction projects underway in various stages from the early stages of design through to completion. Matthew noted that projects are based on resident input. The Team values input from this Commission, county residents, and persons with disabilities. Working together to create a paradigm shift to change Montgomery County culture to make it accessible for persons with disabilities and making it a better place for everyone as a result. Projects include the Department of Health & Human Services Building at 401 Hungerford Drive, the Crisis Center at 1301 Piccard Drive, the Long Branch Outdoor Pool, and the Longwood Community Recreation Center which had a new ramp installed. The Team is in the design stages for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Swim Center which will include accessible seating and locker rooms. The storefront will also be moved to be accessible. The Upcounty Regional Center was recently completed to include accessible parking spaces and an accessible route to the building. The Team is also working with the Department of Correction & Rehabilitation (DOCR) as a result of the DOJ audit. This includes making the parking accessible at the Montgomery County Correctional Facility, having an

accessible route, and ensuring the lobby, visitor, and some staff areas as accessible. The Montgomery County Pre-Release Center is undergoing renovations in their medical unit as that is where COVID patients will be housed.

The Team is in the process of implementing county-wide trainings including a mandatory comprehensive ADA Title II training for all county employees. They are also working on specialized trainings targeted towards emergency first responders, staff that operate homeless shelters, bus operators as well as trainings on disability etiquette.

Betsy Luecking, Staff, asked Matt to brief the Commission on project updates and other issues at all future meetings. She also noted that the Commission does work with the County's ADA Compliance Team to provide input and it is a combination of advocacy and ADA compliance that makes the County go beyond the ADA to be inclusive and user-friendly. For example, the ADA does not require automated doors, but this Commission advocated for them to be installed at new County facilities. Automated door installation within the private sector is largely complaint driven if the building is inaccessible.

COVID-19 Pandemic Critical Program Issues

John Whittle, Commissioner, reported DDA Deputy Secretary Bernie Simons continues to conduct bi-weekly webinars on Friday afternoons from 1pm to 2pm. Previous webinars can be found on their website: https://dda.health.maryland.gov/Pages/Deputy_Secretary%27s_Webinars_on_COVID-19.aspx.

DDA recently shared its fifth round of personal protective equipment (PPE) with providers and those receiving self-directed services statewide including Montgomery County. More support for additional PPE continues to be an ongoing need. Some providers have been able to purchase additional PPE through fundraising or private funds. DDA also reported as of December 3, 2020, that statewide 1,015 individuals funded by DDA have tested positive for COVID-19, with 361 in the southern region of Maryland which includes Montgomery County. Statewide 49 people have passed away due to COVID-19. There are no separate reports from DDA that are Montgomery County specific.

Maryland Department of Health (MDH) has [drafted a COVID Vaccination Plan](#) for vaccine distribution priorities. Stakeholders and advocates are working for further prioritization and clarification for people with disabilities and provider staff as guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) or MDH is not clear. For now, this group may only be in the Phase 2 of the more general distribution priority.

The Maryland General Assembly 2021 legislative session to begin January 13, 2021 will be completely virtual. Hearings will be held online and speakers must pre-register. John will e-mail Betsy a list of legislation that could affect the lives of persons with disabilities or how services are delivered.

Beth Shuman, Senior Legislative Aide, Councilmember Gabe Albornoz, reported the partnership with the Primary Care Coalition (PCC) was initiated using funding from the federal CARES Act. Dr. Michael Greenberg, Commissioner, has volunteered as a medical advisor to work with group homes serving people with developmental disabilities throughout the County. The initiative has been successful in providing training and disseminating information from the CDC and DDA to providers. Fit testing for PPE has all been provided. CARES Act funding is set to end on December 30th, 2020. With Councilmember Albornoz's and Dr. Greenberg's leadership, the County Council has approved additional funding to provide the PCC program through June 2021. The County will expand the scope of PCC to include vaccines as well as working with non-residential direct service providers such as personal supports, in-home supports, supported employment, and day habilitation programs which all need support, PPE supplies, and training.

Seth thanked Councilmember Albornoz and Beth for their stalwart support of this issue.

Update on Policing Advisory Commission – Jenn Lynn

Website: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COUNCIL/PoliceAC/index.html>

The Policing Advisory Commission (PAC) was created in 2019 by the Montgomery County Council in response to the ongoing public dialogue around policing practices and as an effort to increase community involvement in matters of public safety. PAC's mission is to advise the Council on policing matters and recommend policies, programs, legislation, or regulations with regards to policing. PAC is currently evaluating responses from the [Reimagining Public Safety community input survey](#) that was conducted by the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force.

All PAC members must attend the citizen's police academy which has been condensed into five 2 ½ hour classes on Zoom. Jenn Lynn took the class in-person and completed the academy last night after use-of-force training. She noted that she is not police force material.

Jenn Lynn is Chair of the Emergency Response and Mental Health Resources Committee which has been tasked with evaluating response options as well as improving response to individuals with Autism and mental health challenges, increasing training and adding more crisis teams if possible. Jenn Lynn is currently discussing with the Call Center the possibility of having a specified response to a call if it seems like it involves a person with Autism or mental health challenges. The Hiring and Discipline Committee has been asked by the Council to review and provide comments on [Bill 34-20 - Police - Disciplinary Procedures - Police Labor Relations - Duty to Bargain – Amendments](#). The School Resource Officer (SRO) Committee is reviewing statistics and fact sheets provided by the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) regarding demographics, types of arrests, and types of interactions. The Discretionary Policing Committee is reviewing all other issues including traffic enforcement and marijuana arrests.

PAC will be meeting again next Monday, December 14th and will be reviewing Bill 34-20 and [Bill 46-20 - Police - School Resource Officers - Prohibited](#). Meetings are open to the public. Agendas and meeting minutes can be found on their website.

Susan Smith, Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC), reported she is a member of the Mental Health Advisory Committee which has a subcommittee working on recommendations for mobile treatment. Jenn Lynn and Susan will discuss the work their Committees are doing offline.

MaryBeth Dugan, Montgomery Parks, asked if Maryland-National Capital Park Police are represented on PAC. Jenn Lynn said there are no members from any police department on the Commission except for Officer Cate Brewer, Fraternal Order of the Police, or her designee and Police Chief Marcus Jones or his designee who are both Ex-Officio Members. Anyone is welcome to attend the meetings and Park Police could ask to be on the agenda if they had an issue to discuss. PAC will also be holding public forums and other departments and agencies are welcome to attend.

Chair and Vice-Chair Report

Tabled due to time constraints.

Ex-Officio Member Reports

Tabled due to time constraints.

Announcements

Tabled due to time constraints.

Meeting adjourned – 7:30pm

**Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities
January 2021 Meeting and Events Calendar**

Developmental Disability Advisory Committee – Monday, January 11th

****PLEASE NOTE NEW START TIME****

3:30pm to 5pm to be held via Zoom – link to be announced

Full Commission Meeting – Wednesday, January 13th

6pm to 7:30pm to be held via Zoom – link to be announced

Submitted by: Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist I
Betsy Tolbert Luecking, Community Outreach Manager

