

**AGING IN COMMUNITY COMMITTEE
OF THE
COMMISSION ON AGING**

Date: September 14, 2021

9:30am-11:30 am

Meeting Topic “Making our streets and sidewalks safer for pedestrians and older drivers”

In Attendance: Monica Schaeffer (co-chair, AIC), Wayne Berman (co-chair, AIC), Barbara Selter, Nanine Meiklejohn, Marsha Weber, Eddie Rivas, Joyce Dubow, Mary Sweeney, Art Williams, Jean Dinwiddie, Laurie Pross, Kendell Matthews, Nkiru Ezeani, Betsy Carrier

Staff: Pazit Aviv, Marcia Pruzan, Shawn Brennan

Guests: Sara Fought, Jewish Council for the Aging; Wade Holland (Montgomery County), Eli Glazier (Montgomery County)

Opening Remarks from the Co-Chairs: Monica and Wayne welcomed everyone, especially the newest Commissioners. Everyone had a chance to introduce themselves. Wayne reviewed the agenda and focus for the meeting. The focus of the meeting was on “Making our streets and sidewalks safer for pedestrians and older drivers”. The guest speakers for the meeting were Wade Holland, Vision Zero Plan Coordinator, Montgomery County Office of the County Executive and Eli Glazier, Lead Planner on the Pedestrian Safety Master Plan, Montgomery County Department of Planning. The powerpoints of the presenters are available by contacting Wayne.

Approval of the Minutes: The minutes of the June 8th meeting were approved and seconded.

PRESENTATIONS AND QUESTIONS: “Making our streets and sidewalks safer for pedestrians and older drivers”

- The first presentation was given by Wade Holland. Mr. Holland presented an overview of the County’s “Vision Zero” program. “Vision Zero” is the County’s program’s goal by 2030 to eliminate traffic and pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries on our roads and sidewalks. This particular concept was adopted from similar efforts started in Sweden. Focus is on prevention, controlling speed & zeroing in on certain intersections where the highest numbers and of crashes and pedestrian injuries occur. The five principles of the Vision Zero program are:
 - Traffic Deaths are preventable;
 - Human Behavior must be integrated into design;
 - The goal is to prevent fatal and severe crashes;
 - The responsibility lies with the system (design and behavior); and
 - The realization that saving lives is not expensive.

As part of his presentation, Mr. Holland reviewed some statistics indicating that older adults, age 60 and over, are very vulnerable to injury or death from crashes and pedestrian accidents. Then Mr. Holland showed some of the projects being implemented by the County to reduce these crashes and pedestrian accidents. The program has identified the most frequent causes, locations, and corrective measures that involve new street design, improved traffic signals, better signage, improved lighting, more visible pavement markings, and new beacons.

- The second presentation was given by Eli Glazier. He reviewed the County's "Pedestrian Master Plan." This is the County's first Pedestrian Master Plan, and intended to 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. The plan is designed to enable all trips within a short distance to be realistic pedestrian trips. It was prepared in response to the expected increase in an older population and the concomitant desire for more walkable spaces that are more accessible to more people. We have seen this approach in certain neighborhoods where streets have been blocked off from car traffic and dedicated to pedestrian walking, dining and such. In order to increase usability, streets would be "Shared Streets" where everything would be placed going in the same direction, including the floating bus stops and the bicycle lanes.

The Department of Planning has developed Pedestrian Audit Toolkits to encourage citizens to help with the process of identifying the areas that need attention. There is a map which codes a Pedestrian Level of Comfort with walking, red indicating low level of comfort, blue indicating a high level of comfort. This coding is derived from survey data for bicycling for the entire country. No data was collected about lighting and the presenter admitted that less is known about pedestrians than is known about drivers. The Pedestrian Master Plan is all about inclusivity, walking and rolling. The goal is to make all roadways (except limited access) walkable. There are several initiatives planned, including some that involve analysis, some involve the regulatory process, and some are very concrete such as recommendations (such as traffic signal timing, better crosswalks, traffic calming, and use of more visible materials selections). Mr. Galzier urged the Commissioners to get involved by signing up for the "e-Newsletter at www.Montgomeryplanning.org/walkinghere

A good discussion followed Mr. Glazier's presentation with lots of questions. There was some discussion about roadway lighting not being adequate in many locations throughout the county for safe pedestrian walking. Not much work has been done on this just yet, although Portland Oregon was mentioned as having a model program with respect to lighting.

UPCOMING MEETING: The next AIC meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 12th from 9:30 am-11:30 am. The main meeting topic will be "Advocacy Opportunities in the Affordable Rental Senior Housing Sector." It will be facilitated by Monica Schaeffer/Mary Sweeney.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 11:40 am