

BRAC IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY – November 16, 2010

- **John Carman called the BRAC Implementation Committee to order at 7:35 p.m.**
 - **John noted that MDOT would provide an update on the SHA Intersections Improvement project at the December 21 BIC meeting.**

- **Phil Alperson, the County's BRAC Coordinator, provided the following updates:**
 - **THE BRAC MOBILITY PROJECTS MATRIX is posted on the BRAC web site.** It has been updated through October 20 and reflects the multi-modal approach the County, State and other stakeholders are taking to address the transportation impacts of BRAC in Bethesda – transit improvements, pedestrian and bicycle enhancements, intersection upgrades, transportation demand management, etc.
http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/transpo_project_matrix-102010.pdf

 - **THE “TIERS AND PHASES” OF BRAC PROJECTS based on available funding streams is also posted on the web site.** The Tiers and Phases were developed by MDOT and MCDOT in November 2009 with input from the BIC.
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/intersections-tiersphases-summary-111709.pdf>

 - **CONGRESSIONAL FUNDING UPDATE:** Phil reported that Congress might take up FY2011 appropriations bills in the lame duck session just under way. The House version of the FY2011 Defense Appropriations bill currently includes language championed by Representatives Chris Van Hollen and Jim Moran that would help fund BRAC-related transportation projects around the military hospitals in Bethesda and Fort Belvoir, where Walter Reed Army Medical Center will be relocating. The Senate version of the bill doesn't currently include this funding. Neither bill has made it to the full House or Senate, but this action could take place in November or December, and then be resolved in Conference. It should be noted that bills in both the House and Senate include \$20 million in Defense Access Road funding which would go towards the MD 355 Crossing Project in Bethesda. Phil cautioned that the new and unsettled dynamic in Congress following the November elections could mean that consideration of this funding could be pushed to next February or March. There was discussion about how the BIC or members of the community could help encourage the Senators to advance the \$300 million funding. Community leaders said they would schedule meetings in the Senators' offices as soon as possible.

- **STATE FUNDING PRIORITIES:** There was discussion about the State's budget for BRAC projects. Edgar noted that the BRAC Intersections Improvement project is in the State's Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) and is still funded at approximately \$30 million, plus \$9.4 federal appropriations from Fiscal Years 2008 through 2010.

- **SHA INTERSECTIONS PROJECT:** Phil reported that the State Highway Administration has responded to Planning Board non-binding comments on the SHA Intersections Improvement project arising from the July 2010 Mandatory Referral Hearings. In July the Planning Board essentially approved SHA plans (with comments) for three intersections projects: Rockville Pike/Cedar Lane; Rockville Pike/Jones Bridge Road; and Old Georgetown Road/West Cedar Lane. The Board did not approve plans for the Connecticut Avenue/Jones Bridge Road intersection. SHA responded with correspondence dated October 22, 2010:
 - 10-22-10 SHA response regarding plans for Rockville Pike/Cedar Lane; Rockville Pike/Jones Bridge Road, and Old Georgetown Road/West Cedar Lane.
http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/intersections-sha_responsetomncppe-102210.pdf (12 pp)

 - 10-22-10 SHA response regarding plans for Connecticut Avenue/Jones Bridge Road
http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/intersections-md185jbr-sha_responsetomncppe-102210.pdf (5 pp)

- **CHEVY CHASE VALLEY TRAFFIC MITIGATIONS:** Phil reported that the Chevy Chase Valley Citizens Association had corresponded with MCDOT and SHA confirming its consensus support for proposed traffic and safety mitigations that had been discussed at the October BIC meeting.
 - 11-15-10 Correspondence from the Chevy Chase Valley Citizens Association:
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/intersections-chevy-chase-valley-community-consensus-111510.pdf>

- **ROCKVILLE PIKE / MD 355 CROSSING PROJECT:** On Monday, December 6th at 6:00 pm, the Park & Planning Board is scheduled to discuss Staff Recommendations on MCDOT's Rockville Pike/MD 355 Crossing Study, pertaining to a proposed pedestrian access project between the Bethesda Naval Hospital campus and the Medical Center Metro station. This event was originally scheduled for November 4th and then the 18th. MCDOT will give a presentation on the study and public testimony will be heard at this meeting. Edgar Gonzalez of MCDOT noted that the agency stakeholders on this project (including

MCDOT, MDOT, SHA, DOD, NIH, FHwA, WMATA, MNCPPC, and NCPC) will have a meeting on November 23rd that he hopes will result in the selection of a Preferred Alternative for the project, which will be the subject of the MCDOT presentation at Park & Planning on December 6. Phil was asked to advise the BIC as soon as possible on the outcome of the November 23rd meeting.

- **MD 355 Crossing Project:**
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/brctmpl.asp?url=/content/exec/brac/nepa-pedaccess.asp>
 - **Planning Board's BRAC Transportation Projects web site:**
<http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/transportation/brac/index.shtml>
 - **Planning Board background on MD 355 Crossing Study:**
<http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/transportation/brac/brac7.shtml>
- **NIH ON-CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION:** Construction will commence this month on the NIH campus of several projects resulting from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) – the economic stimulus and jobs creation bill. These projects won't conflict with BRAC-related road, transit or bike/pedestrian projects, but you will notice more construction traffic at the NIH Commercial Vehicle Inspection station on Rockville Pike. Debbie Michaels mentioned the ongoing Stoney Creek storm water management project near Woodmont Avenue. Susan Hinton of NIH provided additional information on the ARRA projects.
- **NIH Office of Community Liaison:** <http://ocl.od.nih.gov/default.asp>
 - **NIH Update on "Porter 2" Construction:**
http://nihrecord.od.nih.gov/newsletters/2010/08_20_2010/story1.htm
- **FUTURE OF BRAC IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE:** Phil reported that the County Executive had received a letter from the Coalition of Military Medical Center Neighbors (CMMCN) on November 5, 2010 expressing its concern about the long-term future of the BIC, and that the Executive responded on November 10th that he did not intend to disband the BIC after September 2011.
- **11-5-10 Letter from Coalition of Military Medical Center Neighbors to County Executive Leggett:**
http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/bic-cmmen_lettoglegett-bic_future-110510.pdf

- **11-10-10 County Executive Leggett's response:**
http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/bic-leggettresponse-cmmcn-bic_future-111010.pdf
- **NEW BRAC BLOGS:** Phil reported that Lieutenant Governor Brown, who heads the statewide BRAC effort, has initiated a new "BRAC@U" blog and MDOT has a new "BRACtivity" electronic newsletter.
 - **BRAC@U blog:** <http://www.governor.maryland.gov/bracblog/>
 - **MDOT "BRACtivity" newsletter sign-up:**
<http://www.mdot.maryland.gov/Planning/brac/index.html>
- **NAVY UPDATES:** Captain Malanoski of Naval Support Activity-Bethesda reported that construction is now complete of Buildings A&B, the main medical facilities authorized by the 2005 BRAC law. A&B will now be prepared for the relocation of personnel and facilities that have been dispersed around the Bethesda campus. Personnel will begin to move into the buildings May through July, including personnel relocating from Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Construction will begin soon on gate improvements; he expects minimal impact on traffic along MD 355 or Jones Bridge Road. NSAB recently met with Bethesda Parkview residents to discuss specific construction directly impacting that neighborhood. On the matter of long-term community relations, Captain Malanoski observed that the BIC has worked well for the Navy and hoped the BIC would remain in place but the Navy would consider other communication measures in the future if the BIC is no longer an option.
- **MCDOT UPDATES ON BIKE PATHS & SIDEWALKS PROJECT AND CHEVY CHASE VALLEY MITIGATIONS:** Edgar Gonzalez reported MCDOT's anticipated completion schedule for the bike/ped project:
 - The sidewalk on the east side of Rockville Pike has been completed. Portions that were not ADA-compliant have been fixed.
 - The shared use path along Jones Bridge Road should be completed by October 30, 2011. It will run along the north side of the road between Rockville Pike and Platt Ridge Drive, where it will cross and run on the south side to Connecticut Avenue. CMDOT is working with Howard Hughes Medical Institute on easement issues.
 - The shared use path along West Cedar Lane should be completed by September 2, 2011. NIH has concerns about the placement of PEPCO poles along the alignment on the side south of West Cedar Lane.

- Wayfinding signage and lighting in the neighborhoods south of NIH should be completed by March or April 2011.
- To mitigate traffic and safety concerns in the Chevy Chase Valley neighborhood, a traffic signal on Jones Bridge Road at Spring Valley Road should be installed in the spring of 2011.
- Edgar noted that the Spring Valley Road signal may be a temporary solution, pending the assessment of this signal's impact on mobility in the region. If the signal is shown to have an adverse impact on gridlock and mobility, then MCDOT will work with the Park & Planning Board to construct a short access road connecting Montrose Driveway to the signalized intersection at Platt Ridge Drive. Edgar said that the County Executive has agreed to include this project in the FY2012 budget and will ask the County Council to include this project in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The Council is expected to vote on this project in the spring of 2011. Construction would take a few years to complete, if it moves forward at all, pending the traffic study on the impacts of the signal at Spring Valley Road.
- **COMMITTEE "DELIVERABLES":** John Carman led a discussion on possible deliverables the BIC could produce by September 2011. This subject was suggested at the October BIC meeting by Ilaya Hopkins, who subsequently provided talking points for this discussion.
 - **"Develop list of criteria to recommend priority list of mobility matrix projects or, even better, develop a priority list of projects. If limited funds are available, how will they be spent?"** The Committee discussed the delayed construction of the BRAC intersections and the Metro pedestrian access projects, and whether funds should be directed to one specific project rather than both, or if funds should be focused on one intersection rather than dispersed among several. Edgar observed that reconsidering the use of budgeted dollars would delay implementation of any project by years, and not addressing the immediate concerns of BRAC-related gridlock. Other BIC members expressed their belief that the intersections project should proceed as planned to address the impending traffic concerns. Some BIC members believe the Metro access project would provide "the most bang for the buck" and should be pursued. Edgar noted that the \$20 million DAR funding is the only Metro access funding we can anticipate; he hopes MCDOT can provide more clarity on the project after the stakeholders' meeting on November 23. John Carman sensed the BIC consensus to be that MCDOT and MDOT should proceed with Tier I plans determined a year ago.
 - **"Recommendations for a County communications plan (target audience is the broader community) to prepare for Sept 2011 and beyond. i.e. Town Meetings, Q and A sessions, develop handouts, press releases, talking points."** BIC discussed whether it could help determine methods and timelines for

community outreach. Phil reported that the County Executive and various county officials are already discussing a community outreach program about BRAC.

- **“Determine what, if anything, the BIC or members of the BIC can do to help secure federal funding. Members are not being as fully utilized as they can be. It should be a coordinated strategy.”** This was discussed extensively earlier in the evening. Members of the community plan to meet with the Senators.
- **“Document the list of successes/accomplishments of the BIC.”** John Carman referred to the November 5th letter from the CMMCN to County Executive Leggett which listed a number of Committee successes. He asked Phil to use the list to create a living document or matrix upon which the BIC could build:
 - We helped to initiate and support the interagency coordination between the county and state entities that are involved in the transportation projects.
 - We helped to secure the first ever DAR funding for transportation beyond building roadways.
 - We have ensured that communities are aware of the developments and issues related to the base and the surrounding area.
 - This broader engagement has allowed individual communities to work to mitigate specific impacts on their neighborhoods.
 - And members of the BRAC Implementation Committee, specifically members of the Coalition of Military Medical Center Neighbors, have pushed to have a broader vision for the area because if we cannot answer the big questions of how this will work in a coordinated and meaningful fashion, we will not be able to address the small details of the individual projects in a productive and timely manner.
 - The BRAC Implementation Committee in its entirety provides an open forum for insight, coordination and accountability among the various affected entities
- **“Document the list of outstanding or unresolved issues.”** There was a suggestion that project schedules could be documented during the next year. Phil was asked to create a matrix
- **“Use the BIC as an opportunity to highlight all the development in the pipeline in the area so that planners will continue to see them working together, not piecemeal.”** There was discussion of documenting the major projects along the MD 355 corridor between downtown Bethesda and the White

Flint Sector. Larry Cole of Park & Planning said that MNCPPC has that kind of integrated documentation.

- **“Make the website more user-friendly. It is an incredible source of information but it is not easy to navigate.”** One suggestion was to provide easy links to see the status of transportation projects, rather than wading through mountains of documentation. Phil said he would incorporate BIC suggestions to make the web site easier to navigate.
 - **“Nail down a transition plan to keep the community and Navy engaged in the process. If the BIC stays intact beyond September 2011, a clear purpose and plan should be created to direct that body in its ongoing work.”** This topic was covered earlier in the evening. The County Executive has no intention of dissolving the BIC in September 2011 and is considering ways to keep it up and running beyond then. The BIC can revisit this topic in the future.
- **John Carman solicited comments from the audience. There were none.**
 - The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 21, 2010, 7:30 p.m., at the BCC Regional Services Center.

Committee members in attendance, November 16, 2010:

Phil Alperson, County BRAC Coordinator

John Carman, BRAC Implementation Committee Chairman

Larry Cole, Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission

Edgar Gonzalez, Montgomery County Department of Transportation

Ken Hartman, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center

Ginanne Italiano, Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce

Seth Maiman, Western Montgomery Citizens Advisory Board

Debbie Michaels, Glenbrook Village Home Owners Association

George Milne, Stone Ridge School

Patrick O’Neill, Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce

Sara Morningstar for Melanie Wenger, Montgomery County Office of Intergovt. Relations

Susan Hinton for Dan Wheeland, NIH

Ex-officio:

Ken Reichard (Senator Ben Cardin)

Joan Kleinman (Rep. Chris Van Hollen)

Susan Buffone (Council Member Roger Berliner)

Jeff Miller, Naval Support Activity-Bethesda

Captain Mike Malanoski, Naval Support Activity-Bethesda

Other Attendees

Nancy Abeles, Bethesda Crest

Sarah Gantz, Gazette Newspapers

Greg Humes, Chevy Chase Valley Citizens Association

Karen Kuker-Kihl, The Promenade Apartments

Marilyn Mazuzan, Town of Oakmont

Natalie Neumann, Patch.com

Ken Strickland, Chevy Chase Valley Citizens Association