

**Friendship Heights
Transportation Management District
Advisory Committee
May 19, 2020**

Voting Members

Barbara Condos (Chair)	Town of Somerset
Elizabeth Demetra Harris	Friendship Heights Village
Christopher Itteilag	Somerset House Management Association
Manuel Ochoa	Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights
Afua Ofori	Polinger Co./Large Employer
Ahkeeia Payne	GEICO

Non-Voting Members

Sandra L. Brecher	MCDOT/Transportation Policy-Commuter Services
Iftin Thompson	M-NCPPC
Derrick Harrigan	B-CC Services Center

TMD Staff

Jim Carlson	MCDOT/Transportation Policy-Commuter Services
Nakengi Byrd	MCDOT/Transportation Policy-Commuter Services

Absent

Chief John Fitzgerald	Chevy Chase Village Police
John Mertens (Vice Chair)	Friendship Heights Village

Guests

Gary Erenrich	MCDOT
Wade Holland	MCDOT
Bob Joiner	The Agenda News
Julian Mansfield	Friendship Heights Village
Mayor Jeffrey Slavin	Town of Somerset
Stephanie Webber	Sharp & Company

Item 1 – Introductions/Minutes: Chair Barbra Condos called the meeting to order. Members and guests introduced themselves. January minutes approved

Item 2 – Vision Zero: Wade Holland discussed the County’s *Vision Zero* plan. The Vision Zero concept began in Sweden in the late nineties, based on the idea that serious and fatal crashes are unacceptable and can be prevented with better engineering design. Human life takes priority of other considerations in planning for mobility, and different road treatments are customized to fit unique mobility circumstances/needs. Human error is inevitable in every circumstance, and speed is a major factor in crashes - crashes which can be controlled by speed reduction in engineering construction design. Other points discussed:

- Speed vs. Survival – pedestrians have a 90% chance of survival in a 20-mile per hour collision with a vehicle; however only a 10% chance at 40-mph; the driver’s field of vision is greatly reduced as travel speed increases.

- Six governmental agencies are in alignment with making roadways safe as their highest priority by lowering speeds, installing traffic signals – roadways are more dangerous to pedestrians and cyclists as they are more likely to have fatal crashes – education & enforcement can also have a significant impact on the community in adopting VZ principals.
- Vision Zero road treatments typically consist of separating peds and traffic/cyclist, hiker/biker trails, expanded medians, bump-outs that slow vehicles, crosswalks closer to bus stops and more visible – these move traffic while keeping pedestrians safe.
- High injury networks are priority routes that have been flagged for improvements due to a high rate of accidents in the area, such as Bel Pre Rd., Middlebrook Rd., Georgia Avenue, Veirs Mill Rd. The Henson trail is receiving a major upgrade.

Mr. Holland reported that most recommendations from the County have been funded and \$54 million has gone into the Capital Improvement Program 6-yr. budget for a ped-bike tunnel to run at Wisconsin Ave. along the Purple Line route. Projects in the Friendship Heights area include pedestrian activated HAWK signals on Willard Ave. and updating signal at Connecticut Ave. & Lenox.

- VZ projects can be tracked via the project map on the VZ website: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/visionzero/>
- Methods of high visibility enforcement on newly reconstructed roadways include citing for distracted or impaired driving, seat belt use, aggressive driving, and speeding.
- Target enforcement by State and local police have shown a 23% reduction in crashes, as half of all crashes are caused by distracted driving
- Enforcement benefits have shown so far that the safe speed camera and targeted driver enforcement reduced 21,000 fatal and incapacitating injuries if conducted properly
- Call 311 to issue service request or cite issues

Mr. Holland discussed a 10-year strategy leading the County to 2030 to reach VZ goals. He also announced workgroups starting in the Fall that will develop action items for the 10-year strategy.

Q & A, comments and discussion from the Committee included:

- The installation of HAWK hybrid beacon signals on Willard Avenue is making midblock crossing safer, along with crosswalk striping and lowering speed limits
- Right turn on red issues – Police enforcement have no authority for automated enforcement
- Police enforcement difficult on Wisconsin Avenue due to differing jurisdictions-enforcement on Maryland side but not on DC
- River Rd. & Willard issues- crossing signal not long enough due to adding a turn lane

Item 3 – Metro Recovery Plan: **Gary Erenrich** discussed Metro’s recovery plan with each jurisdiction measuring its own operations for returning to normal. He said recovery is in the stabilization phase where essential work & travel is being planned among Covid fears. Metro presented to the Board last week.

Other points:

- The Ride-On system is the first to be fare-free and have rear door entry to reduce driver passenger contact
- Ride-On identified bus routes essential for travel-only 1/3 of buses running on 36 routes
- Metrorail service limited to 9 pm with no service changes in the FY21 budget - waiting for recovery efforts first
- Ridership is down 400,000 to 85,000 for Metro and 70,000 to 15,000 for Ride-on

- Metro’s recovery is complicated by three differing jurisdictions that have their own timetables for recovery

Mr. Erenrich explained that since some stations or their entrances are closed due to the pandemic, Metro is taking the opportunity to do construction on the Silver and Orange lines. Managing re-entry includes running every 20 minutes with the first and last rail car not in operation to reduce contact between the driver and passengers. Also discussed:

- Metro buses operating until 11 pm & Ride On until midnight
- Looking to place fare collection targets at the rear of buses to minimize driver/public contact- currently no fare collection
- Applied for a grant to look at using smartphone & other technologies for off-boarding fare payment
- Managed re-entry funded in large part by the CARES Act, giving \$25 billion to transit with the Washington area receiving \$1 billion and \$30 million to Ride-On
- The HEROES Act also has transportation funding – strict restrictions regarding cleaning requirements
- Recovery planning will consist of anticipating customer behavior, such as the hesitancy at taking public transit – source: COG employer survey

Item 4 – Marketing Outreach Update: **Stephanie Webber** reported that the marketing team is gathering private garage inventory data. They are also finding ways to connect with businesses that do not involve face-to-face interactions, promoting telework and other information. There were two Commuter Services telework webinars and free consultation to employers with funding provided by the COG grant.

Item 5 - Updates:

- Federal bill passed, allowing up to \$2,500 for employers to provide laptops to employees during the Covid crisis
- Climate Action & Resiliency Plan (CARP) is underway with Germantown consultant AACOM reviewing & implementing the 850 recommendations from the six Climate Change workgroups, submitting a draft at the end of the year - opportunities for community involvement
- Dockless vehicle program available for essential workers/trips only as an alternative to reduced transit service. Service is free with sanitation encouraged
- Dockless vendor Spin is joining vendors in Montgomery County providing dockless/electric bikes and scooters – none at present in Friendship Heights area
- Commuter Services launched a Bike Match program to pair donated bikes to commuters in need
- Thrive 2050 is underway with virtual Town Hall events – critical decisions about the County will be made through this process
- FY21 reductions looming

Item 6 – Around the Room: Discussion continued with some on the Committee expressing their approval that scooters are not in Friendship Heights, due to concerns about parking in the public right of way. However, parking corrals are installed in areas of the County that provide dockless vehicles, and the Count provides education and works with vendors to address violators with fines. Personal scooter use is permitted on street only.

Adjourn - Next meeting date: July 14, 2020