

Joint Meeting
Transportation Management District
Advisory Committees
Friendship Heights/Bethesda/North Bethesda/Silver Spring/Greater Shady Grove
September 30, 2021

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Item 1 – Welcome/Introductions: Jim Carlson opened the meeting and introductions were tabled to allow presentation time.

Item 2 – Vision Zero: Wade Holland, MCDOT Vision Zero Coordinator, explained that the Vision Zero national program was started with the belief that zero fatalities or serious injuries should occur from traffic accidents, as all are preventable by engineering and design. Originated in Sweden in the 90s, it gained support in the US in the early 2000s. Research has found that speed is a major cause of serious and fatal crashes as the survival rate decreases the higher the speed. Also reported:

- Seat belt use and car safety features have also improved the survival rate of high-speed crashes
- Roadway data is looked at to focus resources to improve – data show increases in pedestrian fatalities, which may be due to purchase of larger vehicles opposed to the past trend of smaller vehicles
- In 2020 50% of crashes were due to impaired driving
- Racial equity is a major factor in pedestrian strikes as racial minorities tend to have a higher number of emergency room visits due to traffic strikes
- The older the pedestrian, the longer the recovery from crashes
- Car crashes cost the County \$3 billion annually
- High Visibility Enforcement which is a mixture of education and enforcement focuses on the behaviors that have the most impact on crashes, such as distracted driving
- Seat belt use has increased – High Visibility data shows that 90% of drivers wear them
- A central office in Gaithersburg manages the High Visibility enforcement teams
- Vision Zero projects include pedestrian crosswalk beacons, lowering speed limits, and installing bike/shared use paths to increase connectivity
- Projects are being constructed at areas of high crash rates; 26 miles of road have lower speed limits, such as the ‘20 Is Plenty’ pilot being conducted on business streets
- The Emery Road project is an extension of the existing bike lane

Mr. Holland discussed the collaboration with State Highway Administration (SHA) for Vision Z engineering treatments:

- Installing new traffic signals, raised crosswalk upgrades, increasing off-peak parking, and lowering road speeds
- The Shared Streets project closes streets to provide outdoor dining and open space for biking and walking, using barriers such as flexi posts
- University Blvd pilot until November
- The Shared Streets on Colesville Road causing safety issues with cars blocking lanes for curbside dining – lack of enforcement sited
- Interactive map available on Vision Zero website:
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/visionzero/>

- Policy updates include tactile treatments for visually impaired navigation and floating bus stops - trial installations
- Treatments to slow bikes to increase pedestrian safety include floating bus stops, green paint to show conflict areas, rumble strips, and speed bumps
- Parking corrals for safe scooter and micro-mobility parking – identify locations to increase parking, and vendors offering incentives to use corrals
- Discussion regarding employing Vision Zero across the County and not just in hot spots, as speeding has increased during Covid due to lack of enforcement – limited resources only placed where there is the most need

Some on the Committee commented that SHA is only concerned with moving traffic and not pedestrian safety, with the presence of dangerous crossing conditions on some State roads and lack of response. Also discussed was SHA’s lack of notice about nighttime construction. It was noted that SHA has been a bit more reliable about sending notices of upcoming construction.

Discussed the issue of parking in a travel lane vs. No Parking lane – a person can park in a No Parking zone IF they remain in the vehicle - **Captain McBain** 3rd District contact.

- Meeting with the Regional Services Director **Jacob Newman** to discuss safety in the area as MCDOT receives information from the Community via Silver Spring Regional Service Center
- Department of Permitting Services is responsible for clearing sidewalks for outdoor dining; however, to report infractions call or contact online 311 and upload up to three photos

Item 3 – Metro Update: Gary Erenrich, MCDOT Special Assistant to the Director, reported that the anticipated increased ridership Metro was hoping to see after Labor Day has not occurred. However, Ride On and Metro are moving back to full service as it is aggressively trying to build ridership with bus service out pacing rail service. The slow increase in rail service may be due to the continued telework of the federal government. Also reported:

- Researching fare changes with a focus of making them seamless, convenient and equitable
- Some concepts of fare changes have been implemented on a trial basis, such as free transfers, one-way weekend fares, and fare pass reduction
- Fare equity study sent to Council included \$1 bus fare, Metro Access flat fares, and expanding rail hours
- Finding ways to promote reverse commute back into the county
- Modernization of the local payment system, replacing fare gates and bus fare boxes
- Chart showing Metro fare changes since 1970 as fares started increasing beyond the CPI in 2011
- Montgomery County is the leader in discount fares for children and seniors
- The importance of federal funding for transit, from the infrastructure bill to Build Back Better
- Shuttle service during the Red line shut down between Rockville & Shady Grove stations carry 5,000 riders a day

Item 4 - County Update: Sande Brecher reported:

- Today is the last day to comment on the Executive Regulation for the NextGen TMD legislation which was passed by Council
- Electric vehicle effort underway to provide a purchasing Co-op for EVs for businesses and residents – Fall/Winter roll out
- Walktober starting October 6 (Walk Maryland Day) and every Wednesday in October @ noon

- Car Free Day on September 22nd was a success
- The bike “Learn to Ride” and E-scooter classes are underway
- Bike donation event at COB garage on October 8th
- The MoCo Bike match program is seeking bike donations
- FY23 Budget Forums upcoming

Jennifer Bolick announced:

- Her team is continuing to conduct outreach to the TMD’s regarding the Metro shut down
- Transportation Management Plan meetings with employers
- Car Free Day was a success
- The upcoming Walk & Ride challenge is Monday, October 4th; registration ends today

Adjourn