

Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee (WUDAC)
Tuesday | January 14, 2025 | 7:00 pm-8:30 pm
Hybrid Meeting

In Attendance:

Call to Order:	Tanya Baskin, Chair				Respectfully Submitted by: Nina Koltnow	
Date/ Time:	Tuesday, January 14, 2025 7 PM					
Attendees:		Ali Oliver-Krueger (Vice Chair)	X	Nina Koltnow (Secretary)	X	Tanya Baskin
	X	Dave Jarrett	X	Pedro Matamoros		
	X	Andrea Hernandez	X	Phillip Daley		
	X	William Cotter	X	Riana Cole		
		Kit Wood		Rob Fox		
Staff:	Luisa Cardona, Crystal Ruiz, Talia Beaulieu-Hains					
Guests:	Cmdr. David Smith					

County Officials: Mid-County Regional Services Director Luisa Cardona: WUD Operations Manager Crystal Ruiz; Community Projects Manager for Mid-County Regional Services, Talia Beaulieu-Hains

Guests: MCPD Commander David Smith

Public: Sarata, Jim Epstein, Dan Orzbut, Kirk Holmes, Margaret Rifkin, Kanisa Baker

- I. 7:00 pm Call to Order - Tanya Baskin, Chair
- II. 7:02 pm Review and Approve December Minutes - Approved
- III. 7:05 pm Community Concerns -
What efforts are being made do decrease theft from porches? Is it more common, or are we just more aware of it?

IV. 7:11 Elected representatives in attendance -
None in attendance

V. Presentations - 7:20 PM -

Big push in Landmark community. Reduced crime there by 85%.

Fight against fentanyl was focus in 2025, especially in the CBD and Hewitt Avenue Corridors. In each of those locations, positive impact was made on crime, especially downtown, where there is an increased deployment of officers.

This year we are going to focus more on theft from autos and theft of autos, particularly airbags and catalytic converters, especially Hondas. We have put more officers on beat later at night and focused on affected neighborhoods.

In terms of prevention, park cars in lighted areas, use security cameras. At mococonnect.org - you can register your cameras and share your footage with the Police Department. Theft from porches - no particular data. Please report these cases to the police. Partner with neighbors to pick up packages when you are out of town, light your porch.

Successful criminal enforcement: Tobacco Hut had been burglarized several times; a suspect has been apprehended. Midnight officers interrupted burglary at Lindsay Ford, apprehended suspect. Arrested weapons suspect just out of Glenmont MacDonalds. ID'ing more illegal drugs and firearms, making arrests. Over 100 felony arrests were made in 2024.

Community engagement: coat drive in Olney, pop-ups at Wheaton Mall, retail blitzes to combat shoplifting at particular stores.

Do police monitor Nextdoor and other social media sites, or do people have to reach out? We do, but we don't comprehensively catch all of those. Please report all crimes. 301-279-8000 is non-emergency number for crimes not in progress. That helps find patterns and allocate resources where the problems are. We also have a website, where you can email Commander Smith and Deputy Commanders.

There is a general sense that "It's not as safe here as it used to be!" Is this accurate, or just our perception? We are seeing reductions in crimes in multiple categories, actually. Sometimes one or two incidents affect the feeling of the whole community. Contact us if you would like more data about your neighborhood. Datamontgomery contains some deeper analysis tools. [Link Here](#).

Commercial vehicles parked in the neighborhood. What can we do about them? There is a law that commercial vehicles are not to be parked in residential neighborhoods. We have an officer assigned to traffic issues. Please send an email to

Ijeoma.Enendu@montgomerycountymd.gov (Community Operations Supervisor who leads our traffic division) with your specific street and complaint.

One suggestion from Executive Session was to park a lighted police car in a high crime area as a deterrent. Is that effective, and could it be deployed? It's not a bad idea. We don't have the surplus vehicles to do that. Not sure how effective it is, especially when repeated. We do have mobile fixed cameras that we can move to various areas. They are visible (red and blue flashing lights) and provide footage to police. We also try not to be too predictable.

How often can those cameras be moved, and how many do you have? We have 8 - 12, can move them pretty easily. We have had them at the mall, Hewitt Ave, Landmark Apartments. We are always looking for better camera technology. Drone as first responder is also helpful, as are license plate reading cameras in police cars.

The mobile fixed cameras can be stigmatizing in a particular area, which is why maybe police cars parked in certain areas could be helpful. Thank you, that is a good idea.

Crystal Ruiz - streetscape updates. See power point.

Our budget did receive funding for updates such as removing sidewalk hazards, trees that have become too big and heaving up sidewalks. Currently removing pavers in entranceways to parking lots. They are a significant burden on the team. This is 50-60% of WUD budget. Just improved corner at Grandview and University. Paver maintenance costs are tremendous. Yes, they look great, but their expense for upkeep is not tenable.

Our snow removal is 90% electric now. Much better for health and the environment. Brick replacement also done by team. There is a lot of brick maintenance needed around town. Improved walking surfaces in Marion Fryer Plaza: more concrete, less grass and mud.

In terms of the previous pedestrian barrier on Georgia near Reddie, will any of that be replaced? We will no longer spend 10% of our budget on this fence. We are working with DOT to keep people from crossing in that area. Looking for options. Will get mock-ups, run them by WUDAC, coordinating with SHA. It will be another type of fence, probably like what's on Viers Mill but smaller.

Luisa Cardona - Hispanic Heritage Month - see Power Point

See two videos on instagram: one of drone footage of event, and one on the ground. Huge number of attendees, volunteers, vendors, great media. Cost \$50,000 (split with Latino Health Initiative).

Hallowheaton was also very successful, including the bar hop. It is one of the most successful events that we have.

Our social media engagement: flyers are big on Facebook, videos on Instagram. Joint posts get tremendous engagement. We get good returns on social media ads. We are

creating new content for the months when there is less going on in Wheaton. See our post of the drone photo of snow removal. We welcome advice and guidance For near future, WUDAC is focused on reopening the Streeter and Small Business Week. We will do a Placemaking activity with the county in the parking lot next to the county building during Taste this year.

VI. Reports and Updates

1. Wheaton & Kensington Chamber of Commerce - Ali

WUDAC is partnering with Chamber of Commerce for Small Business Week. Moving Business Expo to Wheaton is under consideration.

2. Committee Reports -

- *Economic Development: Ali, Kit, Pedro*
- *Public Safety (Youth Crisis): Nina, Rob, Philip, Dave*
- *Outreach And Communications (Social Media Presence): Tanya, Riana, Andrea, Will*

3. Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board (MCCAB) - Rob Fox

Representative for Council Member Glass announced online portal for reporting hate incidents. Some types of crime have gone down.

Renters' Alliance report regarding support for renters.

Presentation from WMATA regarding recent accomplishments, growing ridership in general, Red Line summer slump, but back up now. Georgia Avenue bus lanes continuing from Wayne Ave to Glenmont. Silver/Purple line connection information, redesigned buses, automatic train operation being re-implemented.

CIP budget forum coming in February.

This Thursday's MCCAB meeting will feature Steve Neff from the public schools, regarding truancy.

VII. Adjourn 8:30 pm

NEXT WUDAC MEETING: Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at 7 PM.