



Montgomery County Vision Zero
Equity Task Force
Meeting #2 Summary

May 2, 2019

Purpose of the Meeting

This was the second Equity Task Force Meeting for the Montgomery County Vision Zero Plan. Montgomery County developed an Equity Task Force as part of the implementation of the two-year Vision Zero Action Plan. The Task Force is comprised of County staff and members of the Pedestrian, Bicycle, Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (PBTSAC), other organizations, and residents. The goals of the Task Force are to define what equity means within the context of Vision Zero and then based on that definition, determine what action items should be developed in the areas of engineering, education, and enforcement. The second meeting consisted of a brief presentation around engineering efforts as well as an interactive activity to engage the attendees in determining funding priority for transportation engineering efforts when it comes to equity for Montgomery County.

Meeting Information

The meeting was held on Thursday, May 2, 2019 from 7pm – 9pm at the Silver Spring Civic Building in the Spring Room, located at 1 Veterans Pl, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

Attendance

Approximately 12 members of the Equity Task Force attended the second meeting. These attendees included residents, members of PBTSAC, staff of MCDOT, M-NCPPC, SVHS PTSA, WUDAC, WMCCAB, MCR, ACLU, GCCA, Community Vision for Takoma, and Germantown Pedestrian Safety. (See attached sign-in sheet)

Format

1. Introduction

During the introduction, Wade Holland from Montgomery County, along with the members of the project team, Veronica O. Davis, Mei Fang, Jazmin Kimble, and Cipriana Eckford, introduced themselves. The microphone was then passed around the room for the members of the Equity Task Force to give brief introductions. They stated their name, city of residence, affiliation, and reason for attendance. Wade introduced the meeting agenda and the

purpose of the Task Force explaining the four parts: Defining Equity, Engineering, Enforcement, and Education.

In order to concisely explain the structure of an equity framework, Veronica gave an explanation of an Emergency Room Analogy. A patient arrives to the hospital and goes through an intake process. A priority is determined based on their symptoms. That patient is then processed in order of priority. In comparison to Vision Zero, the equity framework is an evaluation process that gives Montgomery County DOT help in prioritizing projects.

Veronica gave a recap of the first Equity Task Force meeting. She shared a few of the equity statements from the attendees. The statements sound great when there is no money attached to it, but how do we begin to prioritize them when money becomes involved? There were contradictions between the statements of the attendees.

2. County's Presentation

Wade began the presentation explaining the high injury network. John Hoobler from MCDOT led the next portion of the presentation on the Engineering Toolbox and budget. John explained the engineering standards, road design standards, and leading practice guides. He gave examples of transportation engineering efforts that MCDOT has implemented. Attendees asked questions during the presentation.

Q. Once MCDOT identifies an intersection that needs a solution how long does it take MCDOT to make a decision?

A. *Timeframe varies by project. If it's a signal change it has to go to State Highway Administration (SHA) for a plan review and a design review and can take about 6 months. If it requires coordinating with other agencies it can take longer.*

Q. Do engineering and enforcement solutions get prioritized simultaneously?

A. *They do get prioritized at the same time. Automated traffic enforcement (ATE) has a cost associated with it. Sometimes enforcement is easier to manage.*

Q. Are there base solutions that can be implemented across the County? Why can't we just do quicker, inexpensive solutions first?

A. *Yes and No. There are problems surrounding that. You're not addressing issues of a particular space if you're implementing a broad solution. However, you can lower compliance when broad stroking solutions. Wade mentioned interim solutions such as flex post and removing a lane. If it works they can obtain funding for a longer solution.*

Q. How will we educate people in areas when installing infrastructure such as signals?

A. *Creating fliers and handouts that are bilingual and explain how the signal works. Canvassing local apartments/housing using a bilingual team. (Will be talked about in the education Equity Task Force meeting)*

Q. What are the criteria for siting audible pedestrian signals (APS)?

A. *We are installing APS at new intersections and retrofitting as we go.*

John talked about bike infrastructure. They have plans to install the first protected bicycle intersection and bike signal in the State of Maryland. He mentioned other infrastructure options such as a floating bus stop. The solution or choice of infrastructure is based on the context. What works for Silver Spring may not work for Colesville. How do you make a decision for which bicycle facility to install?

Wade finished the presentation with the selections of engineering projects, the Vision Zero operating and capital budget, and Countywide projects. Engineering projects are based on community requests, council priorities, county executive priorities, crash/injury data, equity, and development projects (the listed order does not represent priority). The operating budget is a yearly budget and the capital budget is a six-year budget. Generally, it is the capital budget that they are referring to for Vision Zero engineering projects. A large part of the capital improvement goes to mass transit. Wade mentioned a question from the first Equity Task Force meeting: *Where do we spend our dollars around the County?* A large portion of the funding is countywide. The 2nd most is the Capital Crescent Trail (Bethesda to Silver Spring) and the 3rd most is Silver Spring. The lower ranks are projects reflected in capital improvement program (CIP). The City of Rockville wasn't reflected at all. The city maintains their own roads. Rockville is starting their own Vision Zero.

There are 34 Bicycle-Pedestrian Priority Areas (BPPA) in the county with five currently under evaluation and construction. Dollars are targeted towards high injury areas for pedestrians to encourage pedestrian safety.

There was a good discussion on the money received from speed cameras. Does the money go back in to that area? If it goes back into public safety, it may increase the support. If we have state and county roads, can the money generated from the speed camera go to the communities instead of Montgomery County? This would be a good question to discuss in the Equity Task Force enforcement meeting.

3. Building Equity Activity & Discussion

Each attendee was given an activity sheet with blocks that represent different transportation engineering efforts (See attached activity sheet.) Attendees were tasked with determining funding priority in Montgomery County when it comes to equity. There were descriptions for some of the transportation engineering efforts for every two attendees. Nspiregreen explained the exercise, giving the attendees about 10 minutes to complete the activity. The intended plan for the activity was discontinued after attendees expressed their confusion about the purpose of this exercise. They would have liked more spatial context, not focusing on the engineering efforts as much but where the efforts are needed. Instead of the activity, the group engaged in open conversation about funding priority. Attendees raised questions about how do we create a framework that will determine where and what are the priorities.

Based on the discussion the big themes that emerged as well as differences of priority are:

1. Part of an outcome for the framework process is how do we put something in place to get rid of unnecessary actions. Things can get to a point where they fall off the priority list.
2. Identifying the different needs for particular audiences because they won't be the same.
 - a. Resident
 - b. Commuter
3. Determining whether or not we should approach crash-related deaths before injuries.

- a. Zero deaths and zero injuries
 - b. Systemic issue
4. Creating a level of evaluation for equity.
 - a. Equity policy for different zones
 - b. Where and how much?
5. The Equity Task Force will create the framework that identifies the equity lens.
 - a. **Data**
(How many deaths?)
 - b. **Economic opportunity**
(Are people looking for work?)
 - c. **History of funding**
(Did they have an engineering project already? When? What?)
 - d. **Physical infrastructure in existence**
(are there sidewalks, bike trails, etc.?)
 - e. **Existence of vulnerable populations**
(schools, blind schools, orthodox Jewish communities, etc.)
 - f. **Existence of pedestrian/destinations**
(e.g. mall, library, bus stops)
 - g. **Solutions that have been proven/implementation**

Upcoming Meeting

Veronica and Wade ended the discussion and mentioned the next steps for the upcoming meeting. The project team will develop statements from the first and second meeting and highlight what is a priority. We will discuss the summarized points in the next meeting. The next meeting will be held at the Aspen Hill Library in June.