

**Draft Summary of September 1, 2016 MEETING of the PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE and TRAFFIC SAFETY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Executive Office Building, 9th Floor Conference Room**

Members Present: Darrel Droblich, Chair; Kristy Daphnis, Vice Chair; George Branyan; Jeremy Martin, Rockville/Municipal League; Anyesha Mookherjee, MSHA; Leah Walton; Valeria Carranza; Al Roshdieh, Director of MCDOT; Aaron Zimmerman, MNCPPC; Aaron Kraut (representing Councilman Roger Berliner).

Members Absent: Ramin Assa; Roger Berliner, Councilmember; Marybeth Cleveland; Heidi Coleman, Bicycle Advocate; Capt. Thomas Didone, MCPD; Steve Friedman, Bicycle Advocate; Wendy Leibowitz; Colleen Mitchel, Reemberto Rodriguez, SSRSC;

County Staff: Venu Nemani, Chief of Traffic Engineering and Operations Division, MCDOT; Chris Conklin, Deputy Director, MCDOT; Michael Subin, CEXO; Jeff Dunckel, MCDOT; Nadji Kirby, MCDOT; Mark Terry, MCDOT; Shawn Brennan, DHHS – Aging and Disabilities Services.

Guests: Crystal Ruiz (representing Hans Riemer), Marieannette Otero, Safe Routes to School National Partnership; Jon Morrison, MBPAC; John Wetmore, Perils for Pedestrians; Peggy Dennis.

PBTSAC Committee Business:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Darrel Droblich at 7:10 pm.

Review of Summary from June Meeting

The June meeting summary was approved.

Search Committee for New Nominations (Darrel Droblich)

Volunteers are needed to be on the search committee to find replacements for Darrel Droblich and Ramin Assa. If you'd like to be on the search committee please send Darrel Droblich your contact information.

Notice for new members: <http://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/BCCpublic/ViewJob.aspx?id=142>

Volunteer to Draft Annual Report (Darrel Droblich)

A report needs to be developed for the County Council and County Executive of PBTSAC activities and recommendations. If you'd like to volunteer please contact Darrel Droblich.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Crashes and Fatalities to Date (Jeff Dunckel)

The County's fifth pedestrian fatality happened on August 31 at approximately 8:56pm. The pedestrian was walking west in the area of the eastbound side of Bells Mill Road when a car traveling east of Bells Mill Road struck the pedestrian in the area of Windsor View Drive. It was thought he had non-life threatening injuries but he later succumbed to his injuries at the hospital. The fourth pedestrian fatality happened on August 4 around 9:24pm. Police determined the pedestrian had been struck on Layhill Road as he walked from west to east across the inbound lanes of Layhill Road and had been carried by the striking vehicle approximately one mile to the Bel Pre Road and Homecrest Road intersection. The driver did not stay at the scene. MCDOT and MCPD will be doing extra outreach throughout the fall to deter further collisions.

Recognition of the passing of Sarah Gotbaum (Darrel Droblich)

Darrel would like to write a motion after the meeting to recognize the passing of Sarah Gotbaum.

Discussion: Trails and Crosswalks Across High Speed Roads (Darrel Droblich)

Connecticut Road/Aspen Hill Area – Darrel suggested this area should be reviewed for improvements. The sidewalk is very narrow and there is a lot of overgrowth. There is no natural path between the two business centers and people are walking in the street. Jeff suggested that we should encourage people to call 311 when they come across sidewalks that need repair. It was also suggested that Darrel should request a roadway study by SHA.

SHA is grappling with how sidewalk projects are prioritized. They have more projects than they can fund right now. Sidewalks used by school children are given higher priority. Retrofit sidewalk projects are lower priority.

Action Item: Darrel is going to provide the sidewalk coordinates to Anyesha for her to review.

Veirs Mill/Turkey Branch Road

There have been one pedestrian and one bike fatality at Veirs Mill and Turkey Branch in recent months. SHA has been doing educational outreach at this crosswalk. SHA found bicyclists don't want to stop and push the button because the push button was created for pedestrian and not for bicyclists. To improve this crosswalk, SHA is looking at posting more signage, relocating the crosswalk, improving the roadway surface, and reviewing the breaking distance for cars. MCDOT is going to put curb markers on the ground directing people to push the button and have street teams doing education. SHA is not looking at installing a HAWK (pedestrian hybrid beacon) signal at this location.

Al Roshdieh wrote a letter to the secretary of state requesting improvements be made at the Veirs Mill/Turkey Branch crosswalk. MCDOT's chief traffic engineer is considering the option of installing a HAWK signal and seeing if it's something the County wants to install. MCDOT is actively engaged in finding a solution. The state does not allow HAWK signals because it conflicts with the Maryland law that says all vehicles must stop at a dark signal (i.e. when a signal is broken or has lost electrical power). There is a modified HAWK signal on East Gude Drive that always flashes yellow when not active so the signal is within the law. The state has the statutory authority to adopt the MCDOT experimental HAWK signal. In the past, MCDOT has requested a HAWK signal at Shady Grove Metro and East Gude Drive. The Shady Grove Metro signal was not approved. A HAWK signal can reduce pedestrian crashes by 69% and provide a 29% reduction in total crashes. MCDOT continues to work with the state to find solutions to this problem.

Kristy asked the question: How are agencies part of the pedestrian safety and making sure there are good crosswalks? For example Georgia Avenue has a lot of bus stops along the street and not many crosswalks for pedestrians to cross.

SHA primarily responds to citizen concerns and works with other agencies (RideOn, Montgomery County Public Schools) to make improvements.

MCDOT works with WMATA on where bus stops are placed but the jurisdiction of bus stops in Montgomery County is under MCDOT. The safety problem is that bus stops are placed in uncontrolled crosswalk locations. Bus stops need to be aligned with existing signalized locations.

Program Updates

Approved FY17 Operating and Capital Budget for Ped. Safety Initiative Programs – Detail Funding by Programs

Jeff Dunckel - The pedestrian education and enforcement budget remain the same. The sidewalks program budget remains healthy and robust. Bus stop improvements have been cut back a little bit because many of the improvements have been made. Al Roshdieh - the funding for trails, bike paths, and trail improvements have been increased substantially (300%).

The planning for the capital budget for FY18 has started and the County is gearing up for the operation budget. Even after the budget is submitted there continues to be a lot of back and forth. By the end of December the budgets are in place. Al Roshdieh would like to maintain the same level of funding for education. Al Roshdieh would like to replace crosswalks every three years and could use PBTSAC support in getting crosswalk replacement funds. Al Roshdieh would also like additional funds for maintenance and building of sidewalks and trails.

Countywide Pedestrian Safety Education (Jeff Dunckel)

Bicycle Safety Materials from SHA for Bicycle Shops

MCDOT is in the process of printing the brochure and delivering them to the bicycle shops on the list. The brochures should be available before the holidays.

Update on Strategic Highway Safety Plan

The Strategic Highway Safety Plan meeting was well attended by most of the jurisdictions in Maryland. The plan was very comprehensive and Montgomery County was definitely way ahead of the curve. The next meeting is September 22 and Kristy will try and make it to that meeting. Kristy found the planning meeting to be very technical and not easy for the public to participate.

Safe Routes to School – Education Efforts (Nadji Kirby)

Walk to School Day is Wednesday, October 5. The SRTS social media pages are promoting a Walk to School Day Contest. Contest page: http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-PedSafety/SRTS/School_Contest.html

Nadji is doing another bike certification seminar on September 12 so parents and schools can do bike rodeos and use the trailer. Fire & Rescue, MCPD, and SRTS are also doing a safety day on Bethesda Elementary on September 27.

Bicycle Master Plan (Aaron Kraut)

The next meeting is September 8. David will be discussing new bike classification and new types of infrastructure with the bike planning board. A technical advisory committee meeting will be coming up in September.

Tommy would like to speak to the PBTSAC about the outcome of the Annual Bicycle Summit at the October meeting.

Status of State Road Projects (Anyesha Mookherjee)

River Road/Braeburn Pkwy construction has started for the intersection warning device along with the S shaped island in the medium. SHA is also starting work on a concept study to close the intersection at Braeburn and relocating the entire intersection to where the crosswalk is.

Vision Zero (Mike Subin)

The hearing committee started meeting in early July. The steering committee consists of Captain Didone, Lieutenant McBain, Vinu Nemani, Fred Lees, and consultant groups Toole Design and RKK. There will be six focus areas: aggressive driving, impaired and distracted driving, pedestrian and bicycles, vehicle technology, roadway infrastructure, and traffic. The format is the three E's plus legislation. The kickoff will be September 12 at 2:00 in the lobby auditorium. The PBTSAC will review the report and send it to the County Council. Jeremy, Kristy, and Darrel volunteered to review the report when the draft is available in late Nov/early Dec.

Review of Committee Motion Tracking Report (Drobnich)

Darrel is going to review the report and send an email to AI for items he needs update on.

Peggy brought up Motion 14. It's been over two years since the PBTSAC went to the County Council and asked to lean on PEPCO to have shared use path under their electrical transmission corridor. PEPCO said they would build the paths but PEPCO is dragging its feet because they are waiting for MCDOT to create safe bicycle and pedestrians crossings. Peggy would like to find out if MCDOT is taking action and suggests having MCDOT and PEPCO come to the PBTSAC meeting and discuss why this hasn't moved forward.

School Bus Cameras (Drobnich)

Cameras are being installed on all the school buses. With only 25 cameras, there were over 4,000 violations issued in past years. The camera ticket is \$125 and the police ticket is \$570.

Other

John expressed his concern over the fact that the East West Highway may be used as an alternative pedestrian route due to Purple Line construction. There is a gap in the sidewalk that needs to be addressed before Purple Line Construction begins. Al Roshdieh says East-West Highway may not be used and an alternative safe location will be chosen.

Meeting adjourned: 9:15pm