

PBTSAC Meeting Minutes

5.28.20

Attendees:

Kristy Daphnis
Heidi Coleman
Darren Flusche
Dave Helms
Wade Holland
Chris Conklin
Luisa Montero

Tommy Heyboer
Jeremy Martin
Alison Gillespie
John Pechilis
Joe Wever
George Branyan
Derek Gunn

Michael Paylor
Lee Keiser
Shawn Brennan
Craig Wilson
John Hoobler
Sara Morningstar

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

K Daphnis: Looking to move to a monthly meeting, ~1 hour and 15 minutes

COVID-19 RESPONSES FROM MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

K Daphnis: Want to talk about some of the operational impacts from COVID and how orgs are moving forward

C Conklin: Lots of changes, has touched most of MCDOT; first impacts were to Ride On, made changes to limit contact between bus operators and the public – first in the region to stop collecting fare since the farebox is so close to the driver and involved a lot of interaction between passengers and operators; made a variety of changes to service changes, working to scale back up in the next couple of weeks; have shifted to emergency response mode to reduce workplace interaction; lots of parking changes – changed parking protocols, designated pick up zones, and changed urban district parking set ups, working to help residents; highway maintenance highly impacted, reinstated mowing program but otherwise in emergency response mode; teleworking is rule of the day for office workers; productivity in engineering has continued; beginning to work on coming out of COVID, Transit heavily impacted; WMATA expects a year or more to recover, we think we will recover faster earlier, but still expect close to a year; working with MCGEO to help things run well; drivers are bypassing stops to keep passenger counts low as a necessity; we dramatically increased standby buses for the routes – have not had too many issues; service impacts to bus routes based on equity emphasis areas and car ownership areas to ensure we serve residents well, has been effective; lots more electronic processing of documents; construction has continued as it was exempt from stay at home requirements – construction has been hard because of COVID;

K Daphnis: Can MCDOT provide an update on construction projects on hold?

C Conklin: J Hoobler will provide

M Paylor: Making sure we are not overcrowding the office; COVID has affected our pavement marking construction work – developing a backlog; signing construction work affected – screening requests based on critical nature of the work because in emergency response mode; studies need to be put on hold based on critical nature – challenges in collecting traffic data; COVID has slowed down several efforts but we are moving forward with mission critical activities;

J Hoobler: The Safe Routes to Schools program relies on arrival and dismissal observations for the Walkability Audits and with schools not in session that is not feasible. Other work in the program can continue. The Pedestrian Road Safety Audit program uses some volume data for signal warrants and other needs, including observations, but it able to continue on during COVID.

D Gunn: D3 Traffic has tried to maintain mission critical operations – maintenance, construction work program, etc.; similar to MCDOT we are experiencing issues furthering studies without proper observation abilities; operationally there are issues because of COVID emergency response; we have tried advancing construction as much as we can – traffic levels have varied – have tried accelerating construction while staying responsive to day to day maintenance needs; similar labor practices as MCDOT – working remote and following guidelines in the field; prioritizing safety in all work – safety is our priority, and the priority of our partners like MCDOT;

COVID-19 BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

T Heyboer: This budget was horrible, next year's budget will be bad as well; County Council is doing a "continuity of services" budget – approved same thing as last year's budget with some additional COVID appropriations; Council is looking to re-do the budget and cut things; budget was passed a week ago but is tentative; pedestrian and bike projects turned out pretty good; CCT tunnel programmed for summer 2024; BRT projects were kept – FLASH tentatively starting in the fall, MD 355 and MD 586 BRT do not have construction money but have other money; County Executive had recommendations for safety improvements near White Flint; Boyds Transit Center moving forward including parking lot and bus loop; Dale Drive project added, Bowie Mill project added, Bradley Boulevard included, Ped Safety CIP extra money approved; Bethesda Bike Loop on track; Council and Executive will probably have to do downward revisions later this year; the cuts we think are coming for the savings plan will potentially have an impact on the capital budget;

VISION ZERO ONE YEAR AND TEN YEAR PLANS OVERVIEW; VISION ZERO STATISTICS OVERVIEW

W Holland: Still have the 3 Es of safety; education took a hit because of public outreach issues, but Duwan Morris at MCDOT did a great job of pivoting and making an excellent product; some engineering projects are delayed, but most are still on schedule; escaped budget cuts through the first pass – impressed with the hard decisions the County Council has had to make in protecting the budget for Vision Zero safety projects; lots more people staying in; fewer police reports; fewer ped and vehicle crashes for stay-at-home April vs normal year April; driver behavior has some changes for speeding, but suspected impaired driving has really jumped from 8.8% to 16.3%;

W Holland: We were preparing pre-COVID for a nine-month process to develop the 10 year strategy, COVID changed that; now extending the current 2020 plan past the December timeline, now going into 2021, because of COVID; three phases to developing 10 year strategy – phase one starts in June and is public outreach and community survey, gathering data, studying other plans; phase two starts fall 2020 and involves workgroups to draft strategy, meets for five months through Jan 2021, developing working draft of strategy; phase three starts winter/spring 2021 and involves community input on the plan; the 10 year strategy will have a two year plan that kicks it off underneath the umbrella of the 10 year plan;

K Daphnis: How long is Vision Zero Coordinator position funded?

W Holland: My position (VZ Coordinator) is in the office of the County Executive and technically expires in 2022, 2023; gives County Executive at that time opportunity to decide how to move forward;

K Daphnis: Last election cycle made it hard to get some things done;

W Holland: Reaching out to advisory workgroups with questions and thoughts for the 10 year strategy; Regional Service Center advisory committees, Montgomery County Bicyclist Activist Group, and Transportation Demand Management;

Luisa Montero: Telework has helped and should be considered

C Conklin: Teleworking is a major strategy in Transportation Demand Management

COUNTY / MONTGOMERY PARKS OPENING UP STREETS TO PEDS / BIKES

D Flusche: I am the trails manager for Montgomery Parks; Open Parkway is a big initiative we have taken since COVID; there are three Open Parkways, with four different locations; LFP, Beach, and Sligo Creek; initiative is a team effort, Park & Planning Board is on board, operations, park police, facilities management, exhibit shop, and MCDOT; definitely worth closing the parkways, thousands and thousands of people using the parkways; Open Parkways have provided space for tens of thousands of users; May saw 65k users just along Beach Drive in May alone; using paint to mark trails with social-distance- encouraging messages; continuing to refine and improve access through park gates, including looking at ADA improvements;

H Coleman: Thank you for doing this! Appreciate the new designs for improved access through park gates; have you considered opening to peds / bikes only for more days of the week?

D Flusche: Considering all options

K Daphnis: Meeting tomorrow with MCDOT, SHA, and others to talk about shared streets, access restrictions, etc.

A Gillespie: Pavement markings difficult to read for vision-impaired folks

QUESTIONS AND OPEN DISCUSSION

K Daphnis: What are the thoughts on meeting monthly?

C Conklin: Will be an added burden for staffing, might not be necessary

G Branyan: Maybe every other meeting is short form and just updates

K Daphnis: Sounds good, will follow up with MCDOT offline

S Aldrich: A draft of the Complete Streets Design Guidelines was posted today; this is a joint effort between MNCPPC and MCDOT

L Walton: Lifesavers Conference offering sessions via webinar, there is one on ped / bike infrastructure; I will send K Daphnis the info on how to register;

K Daphnis: Marybeth Cleveland wanted to share her appreciation of how MCDOT and Maricela Cordova did a wonderful job reaching out to the vision-impaired community, did a walk-through of the site with them, listened to feedback on the project and set up a successful program that turned out great

C Conklin: Maricela Cordova and Hannah Henn put together a grant to look at vision-impaired infrastructure improvements for Silver Spring as well

COMMITTEE BUSINESS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, WRAP UP

K Daphnis: Meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.