

PBTSAC Meeting Minutes

1.28.21

Attendees:

Dave Helms
Wade Holland
Michael Paylor
John Hoobler
Leah Walton
Leon Langley
Steve Aldrich
Sonia Moore-Williams

Sanjida Rangwala
Tomas Bridle
Chris Conklin
Luisa Montero
George Branyan
Dave Helms
Jeremy Martin
Heidi Coleman

Kristy Daphnis
Eric Tang
Joe Cholka
Kandese Holford
Wendy Leibowitz
Jeremiah Lowery

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

K Daphnis: Welcome to our guests, tonight we are having Wade Holland lead us through the rest of the 10 Year Plan progress

VISION ZERO (VZ) 10 YEAR PLAN

W Holland: We talked in past meetings about updating Vision Zero (VZ) principles, now we are moving into things the PBTSAC wants to recommend to include in the plan

W Holland: Lay out the ground rules for our work tonight, we have gone through ped infrastructure in a previous meeting and will start with bikes, then go to lighting, laws, and other safety issues

T Bridle: Infrastructure has a lot of needs at end points for bike parking, especially metro stations

H Coleman: Prioritizing crossing safety within the network should be part of the planning; as the network expands more streets will be crossed and they are currently unsafe

T Bridle: Need to prioritize bike access to schools – high priority for safety improvements

E Tang: Wayfinding needs to be included with the infrastructure improvements

S Rangwala: Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) needs to be safe enough that parents feel comfortable with kids walking / biking

D Helms: Tier 1 is not always best priority – 50 miles of bike lanes, a lot there

S Aldrich: There are some Tier 2 projects that would move up faster if they help complete a network

H Coleman: Should we rephrase to clarify that within the next ten years for this plan there would still be Tier 2 bikeways we implement? We are not *only* implementing Tier 1

S Aldrich: Makes sense

W Leibowitz: Hard to know who to go to between State / County for intersections where both are involved

W Holland: Moving on to school zones

S Aldrich: School zones should be 15 mph, 20 mph is too high

S Rangwala: Road diets in school zones

H Coleman: We should have slower speeds on more residential, not just schools – wherever there is high ped volume

K Daphnis: State seems unclear about whether context drive design means the land use is what is being considered or the road itself

M Paylor: Disagree with S Aldrich, 20 is plenty and we should follow the data along with the real ability to manage vehicle speeds

L Walton: We should have mobile speed signs entering school zones

C Conklin: School zones are highly context dependent – relationship between school and road is important

T Bridle: The more that is in law – like for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the better

C Conklin: Suggested follow up to Complete Streets Design Guidelines (CSDG): school zone toolkit with best practices for road treatments by facility type and relationship to school (access area / adjacent)

W Holland: Different schools need different treatments

D Helms: Road Code supersedes Master Plan for Highways and Transitways which supersedes CSDG – it all waterfalls down

K Daphnis: Need to leave engineers room to make decisions

C Conklin: CSDG (maybe) supposed to replace standard regulations in the code

W Leibowitz: Drop off zones are important

K Holford: School zone safety: Context Driven Guide is applicable whether the subject area is designated a school zone or not – areas just outside school zone may still warrant exploration of context driven countermeasures like a reduced speed limit *in conjunction* with other countermeasures

S Moore-Williams: We should increase the fines for school zones

T Bridle: Agree with K Daphnis

W Holland: Moving on to signals – ADA accessibility, things to mimic from other places, Lead Pedestrian Interval (LPI)

D Helms: LPIs with automatic recall in every Road Code designated Urban Area (26 total)

T Bridle: If there is documented research showing something saves lives, who does that literature review? What is the policy for looking at the research?

S Rangwala: Avoid left turn / ped crossing conflicts

J Lowery: DC recently banned Right Turn On Red (RTOR) within 400' of metro stations, schools, has a bike lane running through it, rec center, and libraries

D Helms: No RTOR in Road Code designated Urban Areas

T Bridle: A bike / ped advocate should review what is considered evidence-based

C Conklin: A policy should define how “No RTOR” is evaluated, there are instances when installing No ROTR increases safety problems, not decreases. Same with slip lanes, sometimes with really odd geometry it is better safety-wise

G Brayan: Crash Modification Factors Clearinghouse is the best place to see all good research on a countermeasure

S Aldrich: Montgomery Planning is working on a predictive safety analysis tool to support VZ, similar to Crash Modification Factors

C Conklin: Left Turn (LT) arrows are less of a problem than permissive LTs where drivers have to gauge gaps to make the turn – most relevant to larger streets

D Helms: If we allow conflicts between drivers and pedestrians and bicyclists, there are going to be deaths

S Aldrich: Permissive lefts on 6-lane highways are problematic

S Rangwala: I have been almost hit multiple times by LT car on 6-lane roads when I had walk signal

C Conklin: Dogmatic statements can lead to less safe situations

T Bridle: Is there a standard for Barnes Dance?

M Paylor: We are not getting deaths on RTORs; not typically (if at all) getting serious injuries with this movement – maybe other crashes, but not VZ

T Bridle: 2 Barnes Dances in Bethesda and looking at 1 in Silver Spring; want to put them into place wherever possible

W Leibowitz: Will the Barnes Dance on Arlington be marked? Needs to be marked.

M Paylor: The manipulation of data referenced is news to me – interested to hear more

T Bridle: Signals should have pedestrian crossings installed where they are missing

W Holland: Moving on to lighting

D Helms: We need to identify where lighting can contribute to safety – hard problem to solve

S Moore-Williams: We should put speed bumps in high crash areas

H Coleman: I assume data analysis surrounding lighting focuses on nighttime (or twilight) crashes and perhaps ped / alcohol involvement

W Holland: Yes – those variables aid in those analyses; CountyStat has helped the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) identify project needs

K Daphnis: Is there data / studies on recently completed lighting projects?

W Holland: Hard to tell – the data has so many factors that affect the crash

K Daphnis: Right, makes sense

E Tang: Overlay crash data with crime data to see where lighting would benefit

W Holland: Right – insurance companies recommend parking under lights for that same reason

D Helms: We should have lighting where people feel unsafe

J Lowery: We should have lighting on trails

W Leibowitz: Can public weigh in on where lighting should be?

W Holland: Want to make sure the Vision Zero plan is focused on the safety aspects of our transportation and transit system

W Holland: Getting to and from transit stops is something Vision Zero will touch on – also need to meet and exceed ADA compliance

K Daphnis: Paratransit is important to VZ – people really rely on it

E Tang: VZ is part of transportation equity

C Conklin: There are several services available – senior/Medicaid, call n ride, and metro access. Senior, disabled and low income focused.

J Lowery: We should have safe drop off spots for metro access users

T Bridle: Need to collect more data related to transit connections

C Conklin: Ride On Flex will return one day

D Helms: Every bus stop should have a safe crossing within 400'

L Montero: People loved the Ride On Flex in Wheaton / Glenmont

T Bridle: Drop-off / bike lane conflict issues are only going to get worse

K Daphnis: Agree with L Montero

D Helms: Bus stop safety should integrate RideOn and WMATA boardings and alighting in the level of service analysis

K Daphnis: Need infrastructure around the bus stops – safe infrastructure from a user-centric perspective

T Bridle: Agree with KD

J Lowery: Bus shelters are important

L Montero: Does VZ / PBTSAC weigh in on floating bus stops?

W Holland: Ongoing study by MCDOT

W Holland: Bus stop shelters are based on boardings / alightings

K Daphnis: What about the walkshed to the station?

W Holland: The Bike MP and upcoming Ped MP look into that – especially for larger transit stations like metro stations and Purple Line (PL)

D Helms: Typically transit agencies look at a ½ mile walkshed

C Conklin: There are lots of polygons in the Road Code and other documents that speak to this

T Bridle: West county Redline stops should be the first priority

E Tang: The walkshed might have to be context driven given the variance of the built environment of the County

S Aldrich: Planning Department presented a PL transit walkshed analysis to the Planning Board last fall – ½ mile plus bikesheds; <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/PL-Connectivity-Report.pdf>

J Hoobler: That report was focused on pedestrian level of comfort, not strictly tied to safety or accessibility

W Holland: Moving on to enforcement, laws, and regulations

T Bridle: Enforcement should be proportional to damage – does not make sense to devote resources to “stings” on bikes and peds that are not going to kill anyone

T Bridle: Education and cultural modification / training should be done for the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) which is largely biased towards vehicle drivers – particularly changing the data around crash analysis

T Bridle: Critical to change the culture within MCPD re: crash analysis if we are not going to move that into a civilian organization

S Rangwala: Police frequently break the rules of the road when driving

S Rangwala: I do not even know what is legal or illegal because cars park on sidewalks and in intersections and on the wrong side of the road

S Rangwala: You actually have to call the police non-emergency number for parking violations and explain to the person on the switchboard what the problem is

H Coleman: COVID has an increase in fatalities with less traffic and higher speeds – enforcement is important in that regard and needs to be focused on data analysis

D Helms: Automated speed enforcement should be used more

T Bridle: Need a better mechanism for reporting traffic and parking violations

J Lowery: Need something more than jail / fines – need education to couple with enforcement

E Tang: A percentage of violators are from outside Montgomery County so enforcement will not reach those violators

D Helms: Automated enforcement fines should be reinvested in education and engineering budget

M Paylor: Automated enforcement in the County pays for its own program and is only used where there are high speeds on the roads; vendor is getting a cut from the citations issue – program is not intended to be a profit generating program

J Martin: Targeted enforcement against certain communities can be an issue with over-policing – need buy in

K Holford: MDOT walkshed study overview presentation will include PL and MARC station analysis; https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/OPCP/MBPAC_WalkshedPresentation_10.23.2020.pdf

D Helms: Most people in this County of Color are inordinately killed in traffic crashes; they are dying much more than Caucasians – there is an equity issue in the County

M Paylor: Automated speed enforcement is not on arterials by current state law – residential 35 mph and lower and school zones

K Daphnis: County needs to do a better job when it comes to connecting with MCPS for SRTS

T Bridle: Public education traffic safety programs have virtually no impact on traffic safety

L Walton: Need to make sure our outreach is accessible for all communities we serve – needs different language use including Braille

G Branyan: Evidence is that educational campaigns absent enforcement have little impact

E Tang: People travel through the County that are not residents – how do we reach them as well? That is why regional campaigns are important

C Conklin: Perhaps PBTSAC could develop ideas for campaigns it believes would be effective since regional campaigns are good but messaging and delivery channels seem to be the issue

K Daphnis: Good thought

G Branyan: Street Smart has ¾ of messages targeting driver behavior and ¼ at peds, yet the generalization is repeated that it is “victim blaming”

S Rangwala: Is there a way to influence what is taught and tested to new drivers?

L Montero: Culturally competent messaging very important

C Conklin: Our work should point to what should be done as opposed to identifying “what doesn’t work”

M Paylor: We need to move away from the designation “victim blaming” and migrate to a comprehensive term that highlights “mode user responsibility” in the context of VZ

W Holland: Been great working with the PBTSAC over the last five months – hoping to have the draft plan out for March PBTSAC meeting

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

H Coleman: Plan for PBTSAC for February is to meet again and go over crash data that W Holland and Capt McBain is going to present to us and then in March W Holland will share the 10 Year plan and we will provide feedback

K Daphnis: Correct – and the data will be a year in review overview. Thanks to W Holland for his facilitation over the past few meetings – really great work. We will decide in March if we will go back to bi-monthly vs monthly meetings

C Conklin: The nature of the conversation we have been having is so incredibly productive – tremendous thanks to K Daphnis, H Coleman, W Holland, and J Hoobler – real pleasure to be a part of this

K Daphnis: Thanks, we want to partner with everyone and come to the table with solutions – pointing out problems but with an eye on giving valuable advice paired with that

K Daphnis: Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm