

PBTSAC Meeting Minutes

07.22.21

Attendees:

Kristy Daphnis	Sanjida Rangwala	Sara Morningstar
Heidi Coleman	Steve Aldrich	Lee Keiser
Chris Conklin	Jeremy Martin	Francie Gilman
Michael Paylor	Marybeth Cleveland	Jennifer Chen
George Branyan	Wade Holland	Kathleen (last name not captured)
Dave Helms	Jim Brown	Peggy Schwartz
Leah Walton	Eli Kinser	
	Joe Moges	

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair K Daphnis called the meeting to order at 7:36PM.

UPDATE ON [SHARED STREETS IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY](#)

MCDOT Shared Streets Initiatives

Michael Paylor, Division Chief of Montgomery County’s Department of Transportation (MCDOT) Division of Traffic Engineering and Operations, recapped the major pieces of the Shared Streets program – temporary shared streets block permits that are a reworked version of the neighborhood block permit program, temporary neighborhood greenways to create more space for people walking and biking by closing local roads to local car traffic only, and “streeteries” which provide restaurants space in the roadway for outdoor dining. (The other major part of the program, Open Parkways, is managed by Montgomery Parks). All programs will remain in place through the fall and are being assessed by MCDOT for a long-term version of the programs.

The Montgomery County Council passed a [non-binding resolution \(statement of support\)](#) for Shared Streets in the past month. The resolution states the County Council’s support for the continuation of Open Streets – “including but not limited to Open Parkways, Shared Streets, Streeteries, Temporary Neighborhood Greenways, and the Beach Drive closure in Washington, D.C. – and will support efforts by County and non-County agencies or organizations to enhance these programs as appropriate.”

The [County Executive has also stated his support for Shared Streets](#) and wants to see the streeteries concept extended beyond the COVID-19 emergency.

As part of the review of Shared Streets, M Paylor mentioned the need to review current requirements around public hearings for closures. These public hearing requirements are most relevant to closures like Newell Street in Downtown Silver Spring where the road is completely closed off to vehicular traffic compared to neighborhood greenways that still allow local vehicle traffic.

MCDOT Director C Conklin mentioned this would be an appropriate time to get input from the PBTSAC members on the future of the Shared Streets program. C Conklin mentioned that there is a desire to maintain street grids in the business districts, but what that exactly look like in the medium and long-term is still being developed. C Conklin asked the committee to send their comments to M Paylor as he

is leading Shared Streets for the department. Chair K Daphnis noted the committee could send a letter to the County Executive and County Council or share their thoughts with M Paylor as part of a future committee meeting.

Beach Drive Closures in Washington DC

H Coleman mentioned that the supporters of the open parkway in Rock Creek Park in DC had reached out in a prior meeting asking for the PBTSAC's input and support. H Coleman noted that the County Council and District of Columbia's City Council have publicly supported the northern portion of Beach Drive in Rock Creek Park, controlled by the National Park Service, to remain closed to vehicular traffic seven days a week. Should the PBTSAC not take a position, individual members could share their thoughts during the current comment period being hosted by the National Park Service. There is also a petition hosted by the Washington Area Bicyclist Association.

Regarding a letter of support for the Beach Drive closure, Chair K Daphnis noted that the PBTSAC's letter would first have to be reviewed by MCDOT and then the County's Office of Intergovernmental Relations since the letter would go to an agency outside the County Council or County Executive. S Morningstar with OIR confirmed the process.

Regarding a letter of support for the Beach Drive closure, Director C Conklin asked the committee to consider potential issues with the long-term closure given there are concerns that vehicular traffic would be redirected to other roads. C Conklin mentioned the County Executive took no position other than "wait-and-see" for the project until at least Labor Day. W Holland mentioned that the County Executive did not want to be taking positions on projects outside the state unless the project would have direct negative impacts on county residents. C Conklin will share the County Executive's response on this project with the PBTSAC.

H Coleman mentioned that the District Department of Transportation has collected data on traffic impacts as well as counts of pedestrians and bicyclists using the closed portion of Beach Drive.

UPDATE ON VISION ZERO PROJECTS AND CRASH DATA

Vision Zero and Crash Data Update

Chair K Daphnis turned the floor to W Holland, Vision Zero Coordinator with the County Executive's Office, and Captain Jim Brown with Montgomery County Police. Capt. J Brown is taking over for Dave McBain as the department's lead for the Central Traffic Unit. Capt. D McBain is now the commander of the 5th District (Silver Spring).

W Holland [provided a PowerPoint presentation updating the committee](#) on recent grants the County Government secured for safety projects, on-going and planned safety projects across the county, the increased funding for Safe Routes to Schools for a systemwide sidewalk and walkability study, the status of the Vision Zero 2030 Action Plan and FY22-23 Workplan, summary of changes in crashes by roadway user between 2019 and 2020, and a look at mid-year crash reports to see how the crashes reported per week were increasing as the county opened and more people started traveling.

Chair K Daphnis asked which school walksheds will be reviewed and under construction during the current fiscal year (FY22). W Holland said he will reach out to John Hoobler in MCDOT for the details on the scope of work and how those three schools were chosen.

D Helms asked if an update to the High Injury Network was being done for the new Vision Zero plan. W Holland confirmed this is being done using the 2015 to 2019 crash data and will be in the new plan as well as reflected in the FY23 workplans for action items that are directly tied to the high injury network. W Holland mentioned there should not be major changes in the high injury routes that were identified in the 2018-19 Action Plan since work has not yet started on some of the previously identified routes. In addition to the update to the High Injury Network, the Planning Department is undertaking a [Predictive Safety Analysis](#) that will incorporate the crash data, land use, and roadway infrastructure data to identify additional areas of concern.

D Helms asked about the status of the Complete Streets Design Guide (CSDG). S Aldrich with Montgomery Planning, who is co-leading the project along with Andrew Bossi of MCDOT, said they are waiting for a transmittal letter to go from the Department of Transportation to the County Council. Once that letter is sent, the County Council will then begin their review of the guide. S Aldrich mentioned areas of county code will need to be updated to conform with the recommendations in the guide. Once the CSDG is approved, that will trigger an update process for county code and the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways. S Aldrich expects the update to the master plan to be faster than the previous update that took upwards of six months. This update will reclassify county roadways to match the CSDG. D Helms asked if there was a way to cross reference the CSDG classifications with Federal Highway Administration functional classifications. S Aldrich responded it will not be one-to-one and that county roadways will still have federal functional classifications. Once the master plan is updated to the new CSDG classifications each road can be compared across the two classification systems.

Safety Issues along University Boulevard West Temporary Bike lanes

K Daphnis and D Helms mentioned a safety issue with the temporary bike lanes along University Boulevard West. There were reports of at least two riders, one scooter rider and one bicyclist, struck by drivers of motor vehicles turning right from University Blvd W. The Open Streets coalition reached out to the State Highway Administration. Joe Moges with SHA mentioned that since this is a study there is flexibility to make quick changes. J Moges said the State is looking to make changes within two to three weeks to include installation of traffic yielding to pedestrian signing.

Centralized Traffic Unit Update

Captain J Brown discussed the updated traffic enforcement staffing model for Montgomery County Police that went live on Monday, July 5. The new Central Motors Unit (Central Traffic Unit) brings officers from the six district stations to the Central Traffic Unit. There will be 11 officers in the dayshift and 11 officers in the afternoon/night shift. The current plan is to rotate across the six districts every three weeks, with Patrol officers continuing to provide coverage for weeks when the Central Unit is in other districts. The central team is currently working the fourth police district (Wheaton/Aspen Hill) and so far this week have written 172 traffic violations. This week officers also supported Christmas in July in partnership with the Children's Inn at the National Institutes of Health. Captain J Brown said the goal of the centralized unit was to have consistent, countywide high visibility enforcement that is data-driven and focused on the most dangerous roadway behaviors that lead to serious and fatal crashes. The central unit will also be taking crash reports and continue its on-going collaboration with MCDOT and SHA to share data, discuss emerging safety issues, and coordinate safety campaigns.

Captain J Brown announced that a speed study is underway to determine if automated speed enforcement will be appropriate for Georgia Avenue in the area of Hewitt Avenue and May Street. Regarding the overall automated traffic enforcement program, the new contract will double the number of cameras in the fleet from 48 up to 100 cameras. D Helms asked if the speed data collected as part of the study could be shared publicly. Captain J Brown will look into how this could be shared.

Chair K Daphnis mentioned it would be good to get an update from Police this fall on the automated traffic enforcement authorization and placement process as well as information about how the Collision Reconstruction Unit performs its investigations.

C Conklin mentioned there has been much improved coordination between MCDOT and MCPD for fatal crash reporting in recent years and wants to see that continue with the new leadership in place at Police. W Holland confirmed that alerts are still going to MCDOT and SHA when the Collision Reconstruction Unit is sent for a fatal crash and will ensure C Conklin is still on the notification list.

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Support for Capital Trails Coalition's Top 40 Projects List

D Helms mentioned the Capital Trails Coalition is looking for community and organizational support for building the area trail network. D Helms asked if this was something the PBTSAC could support. W Holland mentioned the [County Council adopted a resolution of support on this topic](#).

Guest Announcements

K Daphnis asked if any guests had input on items discussed during the meeting or announcements. No guests had announcements.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

K Daphnis announced that interviews for new PBTSAC members have been completed and the committee will have new members soon to replace members that are leaving.

There will not be an August meeting for PBTSAC. The committee will reconvene in September.

During the September meeting, the committee can discuss when to potentially return to in-person meetings while keeping the virtual option available.

K Daphnis thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:52PM.