

PBTSAC Meeting Minutes

11.18.21

Attendees:

Kristy Daphnis	Cindy Buddington	Kandese Holford
Heidi Coleman	Zachary Weinstein	Jeremy Martin
Steve Aldrich	Francie Gilman	Ronald Sherrow
Wade Holland	Sanjida Rangwala	
John Hoobler	Fabiola Yurcisin	(301) 208-1512 OR (301)
Marilyn (Guest)	John Kellenberg	963-3606
Marybeth Cleveland	Lee Keiser	(240) 498-4168
Ayhanna Booker	Michael Paylor	
Elijah Kinser	Sara Morningstar	

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

K Daphnis: Meeting called to attention at 7:05 pm

K Daphnis: Welcome to guests and new members

K Daphnis: Going to introduce new members and then talk about scope and priority of PBTSAC, then CIP budget and PBTSAC input into that process

NEW MEMBERS

K Daphnis: Several openings on the committee; welcome to our new members Fabiola Yurcisin, Zachary Weinstein, and John Kellenberg

K Daphnis: Many thanks to Leah Walton, George Branyan, and Heidi Coleman, who are cycling off the committee (pun intended)

Z Weinstein: Excited and honored to be a part of the committee; entered this space at UMD in their Bike Free program; volunteer with WABA, Coalition for Smarter Growth, and Montgomery For All

Z Weinstein: Bike safety is important, land use affects how people experience biking and transit and has a big impact

Z Weinstein: Excited to use the cyclist and land use aspect to these meetings

F Yurcisin: I am a cyclist, I have two kids that go to MCPS, my son did a LEGO robotics project because he could not get to his school via bicycle

F Yurcisin: Background in art; started working in public with place making projects – pedestrian friendly situations everywhere; how do you get from those places and safely move design

F Yurcisin: In school for a master's in urban planning; we will not be able to achieve sustainable goals if we do not become more pedestrian and bike friendly; we need better design for our roadways to reduce speed for king car

F Yurcisin: I am a design thinker and systems thinker; I have helped facilitate community meetings

J Kellenberg: Work at World Bank since 1993; environmental economist in DC / Latin America since 1985

J Kellenberg: Avid cyclist, work for a big pro-cycling organization that focuses on sustainable development

J Kellenberg: Interested in contributing and giving back; most of our focus is on developing countries but we try to give back to our local communities

K Daphnis: Want to give our other resident members an opportunity to share about themselves

S Rangwala: New parent of adopted 2 year old; interested in getting people to walk out and about in the community to encourage people who do not walk to start to walk

MB Cleveland: Live in Derwood – country / residential; I represent people with disabilities (blind, impaired) who have issues navigating; I advocate for people with disabilities to make sure they can travel safely

K Daphnis: H Coleman to introduce herself

H Coleman: I have been on the committee for 5 ½ years; sad to be rotating off; we accomplished a lot in that time; I joined in the slot of being a bike advocate; encouraging to see all three new members are bikers; before retirement I worked at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and at that time the committee did not understand Vision Zero and helped bring those concepts to the committee and that is now the primary activity we focus on

K Daphnis: I have been on the committee for 8 years; originally interested in committee because my daycare provider was killed in a road crash; I worked on federal regulations for safety and wanted to do something; it has been very fulfilling to help guide some of the Vision Zero implementation and development

K Daphnis: Are we at a turning point for the committee and thinking about the charter and bylaws and what recommendations we could make? This committee has existed since around 2000 when the County had done a Blue Ribbon Panel on pedestrian safety; we are a non-traditional committee in terms of the Boards, Committees, and Commissions that the County runs because we have lots of County employees on the committee as well along with Council Members; there are some good and bad things about that; the committee has changed and morphed from ped, to ped and bike, to ped, bike, and traffic. I am hoping that over the next several months as a group we can think about that and what type of recommendations and input would be helpful to the County Executive's office as the County Council would have some views on that as well. Our current County Council member is Hans Riemer who often sends his staff member Tommy Heyboer to attend. The pandemic has changed how we meet together. Over the last year we have done a lot of good work on the County's Vision Zero plan with the help of J Hoobler and W Holland

K Daphnis: There is a good path to having a robust and effective committee

J Hoobler: We have representatives on the committee from the County Executive's Office, County Council, Police Department (MCPD), Department of Transportation (MCDOT), Park & Planning (MNCPPC), and help from the Office of Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) as well that has all contributed to the work and success of the committee

K Daphnis: I am Chair and H Coleman has been Vice Chair, but H Coleman is now off the committee and I will be off next summer, so I again invite people to consider leading the committee in the future, and that goes to new members as well

C Buddington: I use an electronic wheelchair and do not drive, I use public transportation; we have a new direction with bicycles and bus stops and a fair number of our senior population are not bicyclists; I think one of the most important things to do is, at a young age, teach kids how to ride bicycles correctly – learn the rules and obey the rules; you can endanger people by hitting them with your bicycle and there are rules that should be taught to four year olds;

K Daphnis: Those types of conversations have been really important to the committee over the last two years making sure to take into account the needs of disabled persons; the bus stops are an issue that I know M Paylor and J Hoobler work on a lot; bike education and pedestrian safety education is part of the new Vision Zero plan to get to kids at a younger age;

C Buddington: How many years will it take? If we all agree, why is it not happening now?

K Daphnis: Funding, policy changes, building infrastructure takes a long time since we are changing a culture

C Buddington: Electronic bikes and scooters can go 15 mph, that is a disaster waiting to happen and puts an able-bodied person at risk of becoming a disabled person or a dead one because speed is bad when combined with rocks, branches, and twigs

J Kellenberg: C Buddington makes a good point, I had a bad accident on the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) and broke both my arms because of another cyclist without lights late at night; you can have bad things happen to you just by being a part of culture; there needs to be education at all levels

H Coleman: DC does bike education in 2nd grade; lighting is an infrastructure fix; having established spaces for everyone means we have to do less through education because the safer system will take care of itself

K Daphnis: If you are interested in serving as Chair of the committee please reach out to me or J Hoobler

F Yurcisin: If you are a cyclist, when you drive you are more aware of other cyclists, it has to be more of a shared experience

K Daphnis: Moving on to our CIP budget

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS BUDGET

S Aldrich: I lead Mandatory Referrals (the Planning Department's review of public sector projects) for transportation projects; we are funded by the County but we are not officially part of the County Government; we are more legislative and report to the County Council instead of the County Executive; we are all working for the County

S Aldrich: Every two years we get a list of the projects we recommend and send the top 100 to the County Executive

W Holland: The budget cycle comes up every two years for a full cycle, I have a presentation on how this works

W Holland: Operating Budget and Capital Budget; FY runs from July 1 to June 30;

W Holland: Operating Budget is for services; gets updated every year and is ~\$6B/year

W Holland: Capital Budget is for facilities; six year budget, updated every other year

W Holland: We are currently building a new six year budget; the off years typically have scheduling or budget changes

W Holland: Operating Budget is mainly Public Schools (MCPS)

W Holland: Capital Budget is top heavy for MCPS and MCDOT

W Holland: Capital Budget process starts about a year in advance; typically the budgets are what the County Executive sends over

W Holland: There are two opportunities, in the summer and fall, for input for the County Executive; then in the Spring there is time for input on the version that goes to County Council

W Holland: Two types of Vision Zero projects – Countywide projects and site specific projects

W Holland: Countywide projects are generally maintenance and spot enhancements that can be done based on data and community requests

W Holland: Site specific projects are a specific improvement at a specific place, typically multi-year projects that require dedicated funding to see them all the way through; examples include the CCT, White Flint West Workaround, and Fenton Street CycleTrack

W Holland: Breakdown of spending by agency and area; breakdown of top ten largest projects by expenditures

W Holland: Handing over to S Aldrich to talk about MNCPPC's review of these and their process for their top 100 recommendations

S Aldrich: We provided the staff report and top 100 transportation priorities as recommended by planning staff and approved by the Planning Board; we do this every two years

S Aldrich: Our focus is implementing Master Plans, and we want to make sure that the County Executive is aware of our priorities

S Aldrich: Vision Zero is one of the lens we use along with transportation benefits to Equity Emphasis Areas (EEAs); this year's top 100 list has 19 new projects which is a large addition - many of them support new Master Plans from the last few years, including the Veirs Mill Corridors Master Plan

S Aldrich: We are hoping the rankings reflect County priorities, not just from MNCPPC, but from the whole County; focusing on Vision Zero and EEAs are Countywide priorities

S Aldrich: Our Vision Zero criteria involve projects in the High Injury Networks

S Aldrich: We added equity in our review, with our own version of equity called Equity Focus Areas

S Aldrich: Our top 10 transportation projects did not change too much; we like protected intersections

S Aldrich: We added some new projects – Trial Bikeway Demonstration Projects is #17

S Aldrich: The need to have the most optimum capacity is not as important as having a safe road that all people can use

S Aldrich: Bikeways are 40% of the top 100 recommended projects

K Daphnis: The good thing about talking through this now is that you can see the past priorities from other years; the more familiar we are as a group, the easier it is to have the conversation about what we value and bring forward as a recommendation

K Daphnis: If the County funds these, does this mean the County will do the, for example, Veirs Mill BRT project and then also build sidewalks?

S Aldrich: If it is in their plans to build certain sidewalks, and CIP projects are mainly focused on their objective, then they will build them if it is in the plan but if not, no

S Aldrich: Not all the projects are costed out, many of them are, and that is something that MNCPPC needs to look at more closely in the future

MB Cleveland: We have had a lot of issues with the floating bus stops and those are sometimes a part of the BRT projects; I am concerned about that and the plans are probably in infancy, and that needs to get discussed when it is built

S Aldrich: Improvements along the corridors will have to include bicycle and pedestrian accommodations and the BRT stations have to be designed to work for all users

J Hoobler: I met earlier today to coordinate the efforts of my High Injury Network Road Safety Audit project with the MD 650 BRT project manager, so we are making sure that these projects have the best practices incorporated for safety and access

F Yurcisin: If I wanted more information about how those plans are moving addressing the BRT, do we go directly to the website? How do we get more information about what is being designed to be able to give input?

S Aldrich: I would need to annotate

W Holland: Each project has its own community group and public meetings which are listed on the project website: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dte/projects/BRT/>

H Coleman: What is feasible to actually get in the CIP on the list and what effect would federal funding have?

S Aldrich: There are a lot of great programs added; as a County we should position ourselves to get some of those funds and improve our facilities faster

K Daphnis: We should either support the priorities the Planning Board has voted on or provide an alternative view; what does the committee think after hearing this presentation?

Z Weinstein: The list is great, the pie chart does a good job of showing that our priorities are in the right place; I am slightly concerned that 4% of the pie chart was dedicated to road widening and we should think about each road widening project because wider roads are more dangerous

S Aldrich: The list was developed in part to support implementation of our Master Plans; there are plans for future roads and road improvements Upcounty; MD 355 road improvements in Clarksburg is an example of a road that needs widening because of congestion, same with Observation Drive; some of these things are not everything we want but it is heading in the direction we want to go

S Rangwala: Generally, this sounds good; I am glad we are expanding the trial bikeways and traffic calming / open streets work

J Martin: A couple of the road widening projects seem to refer to I-270 and I-495

K Daphnis: This list looks pretty good to me, maybe I would move some priorities around, but you went about this in a systematic manner

S Aldrich: There was not a public involvement process to put this together but used the collective experience of members of the Planning Department who had heard lots of public input; we used to have a very complicated scoring system involving metro areas, various things, etc. – we moved away from that because the questions drilled down on scoring changes instead of reflecting the desires of the Planning Board; the Planning Board was pretty happy with what we put together

J Hoobler: The Pedestrian Safety CIP has a lot of work related to this committee and the priorities S Aldrich shared

W Holland: We as a staff and our elected officials are trying to make sure we work out the areas around these BRT stations and it is helpful to hear that from the committee re: decisions that need to fit into the scope of work because these projects are gigantic and not everything can fit in

K Daphnis: The more you build out access to transit the more you do for safety and equity across the board

K Daphnis: Where do we go from here? I recommend I take this list and draft a high-level letter that would go to the County Executive, seeing as we get another pass at the County Council level, and send that; would that have impact?

W Holland: High level, larger concepts would be helpful and taking that into the review of more detailed winter recommendations when it comes time to provide input to the County Council

H Coleman: If there are projects that do not appear in the top 100, like the tunnel under MD 355

S Aldrich: That is #4

H Coleman: If there are concerns re: road widening, including for I-270 and I-495, we could mention that in the letter; we could also mention things that are low on the list but we could mention them as higher priorities

K Daphnis: I think our approach should be focused on the things we want to be done as opposed to the things we do not want to be done; there is a lot of very political stuff around this and we do not need to wade into those waters; there are some big, key, and basic pedestrian and bike safety and infrastructure that we need to do on our County roads and adjacent to State highways

S Aldrich: I suggest focusing on #17, it is not in any budget and has been in the Planning Board's recommendations; trial bikeways are a great idea; Montgomery Parks recommended a connection across Rock Creek along the shoulder, Parks has plans to build a longer-term facility but in the short term it is an innovating thing that SHA approved and it was built;

K Daphnis: I will write up a high-level letter that puts those principles down and send it out to the group so we can engage over email over the next few days – keep an eye out for that; anything else to wrap up on this topic from W Holland or S Aldrich? Seeing none, thanks so much for preparing that presentation

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

K Daphnis: Hopefully we can engage sooner in the future, over the last year we have been focused on the implementation and development of the Vision Zero plan but hope to do more of this in the future

K Daphnis: Announcements: State legislative session coming up soon

S Morningstar: If you go on the Montgomery County Delegation website you can see the list of what is filed

K Daphnis: We do not give any positions on State bills until we clear it with S Morningstar

K Daphnis: Different delegates are preparing legislation, one on crashes on State highways and information use

K Daphnis: Sunday at 4:30 Montgomery County Families for Safe Streets is holding a memorial for victims of traffic violence at Wheaton Metro

K Daphnis: Apologies for running late but we had good discussion and I will follow up with our new members over email to meet together individually

K Daphnis: Meeting adjourned at 9:06 pm