

BRAC IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY – September 19, 2011

- **John Carman called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.**
- **Phil Alperson, the County’s BRAC Coordinator, provided the following updates:**
 - **COUNTY EXECUTIVE LEGGETT WILL HOLD A TOWN HALL MEETING 7:30 PM** Wednesday, Sept. 21, at Westland Middle School in Bethesda.
 - **THE BRAC MOBILITY PROJECTS MATRIX IS POSTED ON THE BRAC WEB SITE.** It has been updated through June 14, 2011 and reflects the multi-modal approach the County, State and other stakeholders are taking to address the transportation impacts of BRAC in Bethesda – transit improvements, pedestrian and bicycle enhancements, intersection upgrades, transportation demand management, etc.
 - http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/transpo_project_matrix-061411.pdf
 - **THE “TIERS AND PHASES” OF BRAC PROJECTS** based on funding is also posted on the web site. The Tiers and Phases were developed by MDOT and MCDOT with input from the BIC in October 2009, and the summary text has been revised through September 19, 2011.
 - **Matrix developed by MDOT-MCDOT, October 2009:**
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/bracprojects-tiers-100609.pdf>
 - **Summary of Tiers & Phases, updated September 19, 2011:**
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/tiersphases-summary-revised-091911.pdf>
 - **PRINTABLE TIMELINE: ANTICIPATED CONSTRUCTION-RELATED TRAFFIC DISRUPTIONS IN BETHESDA (AS OF 9-15-11):**
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/disruptionstimeline-041111.pdf>
 - **Summary of BRAC Transportation Projects and Commuting Options**
http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/brctmpl.asp?url=/content/exec/brac/projects_glance.asp
 - **9-15-11 MCDOT construction update on BRAC-related projects**
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/mcdot-projectsupdate-091511.pdf>

○ **SEPTEMBER 15TH MARKED THE OFFICIAL COMPLETION OF BRAC AT THE CAMPUS OF BETHESDA NAVAL HOSPITAL.**

- The patient merger was actual completed weeks earlier and the hospital is now officially the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda. Phil cautioned that while the congressionally-mandated BRAC action is complete, the ripple effects of BRAC are yet to be fully realized and the mitigations will take a while and BRAC is still ongoing for the community “outside the fence.”
 - There was much discussion about changes on traffic since the merger at the end of August. In some instances, NSAB personnel have been parking illegally in the neighborhoods. Capt. Malanoski said this is being addressed internally. He and Jeff Miller also noted that carpooling and transit use has greatly increased, and that the NSAB morning and evening rush hours have “shifted left.” It appears that the biggest change so far is in the afternoon peak, where traffic backups in Bethesda seem to have become worse. Ilaya Hopkins provided a series of anecdotal evidence, which is posted on the BRAC web site with this meeting summary.
 - <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/bic-ilaya-post-brac-traffic-092011.pdf>
 - There topic of possibly of undergrounding PEPCO and other utility lines, which had been discussed at previous BIC meetings, was raised again. Some BIC members strongly urged County and State transportation officials to work with PEPCO and the other utilities, but officials repeated that logistical and cost constraints, the many demands for undergrounding from wooded communities throughout the County, and the delays such an endeavor would place on the BRAC intersection projects, make this effort virtually impossible at this time. Andy Scott noted that undergrounding requires long corridors, whereas the intersections projects are limited in nature. Edgar Gonzalez noted that undergrounding would require coordination among many different utilities with different requirements, and contrasted the nature of wooded neighborhoods with the Bethesda Urban District, for which undergrounding is in the Master Plan. Phil said he would raise the issue with PEPCO officials.
- **M-NCPPC UPDATES:** Larry Cole reported that the Park and Planning Commission will soon be holding hearings to follow-up on the County’s Bus Rapid Transit study.
 - **SHA UPDATES:** Andy Scott introduced Ben Myrick, a traffic signal specialist from the State Highway Administration, who discussed signal issues with BIC members. There were questions why some signals that serve only NIH or WRNMMC gates on Rockville Pike or Jones Bridge Road are fully operational at times when those gates are closed. Concerns were raised about the apparent lack of coordination, or the short-timing, of the many signals along Rockville Pike between downtown Bethesda and Cedar Lane. There

continue to be concerns about the signals at Wilson Drive and North Wood Road. There were suggestions that police officers manually control traffic during periods of high volume. Ben noted that high volumes of traffic cannot be relived by manually overriding the controlled signal system, which usually causes even more neighborhood backups. Dave Dabney noted that the Bethesda Urban Partnership is working with the business community to encourage greater use of alternative transportation modes. Ben stated that SHA is conducting a study of signal operations in the Medical Center area and may be able to follow-up with the BIC in November.

- **UPDATE ON \$300 MILLION OFFICE OF ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT FUND FOR TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS NEAR MILITARY MEDICAL FACILITIES:**

- **REVISED CRITERIA:** On September 9, OEA issued revised criteria governing the \$300 million Federal Funding Opportunity in response to comments received after the initial criteria were published in August. One revision was to clarify a criterion that will measure the impact of BRAC on the greater community in which the military medical center is located. The other revision was to clarify a criterion that evaluates a proposed transportation project's ability to address a transportation issue in terms of improving access, reducing parking demand, ability to address public safety and potential accidents, etc.

- **OEA Federal Register posting, September 9, 2011:**

- <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2011-09-09/pdf/2011-23041.pdf>

- **CLARIFICATION ON REQUESTING FUNDS FOR NON-CONSTRUCTION STUDIES:** At the August BIC meeting, there was a discussion about the possibility of submitting funding requests for studies, such as a Rapid Transit Corridor Study for the MD 355 area serving the Medical Center, that are not connected to specific planned construction projects. At the time, Phil, Edgar and Andy expressed their strong feelings that OEA rules are clear that only construction projects would be funded and that non-construction studies wouldn't be considered. They were concerned that including such studies as part of separate construction projects (such as the Cedar Lane/Rockville Pike Intersection project) would lower OEA's score for that project and jeopardize funding in this competitive granting process. Phil had promised to look further into the matter and reported that follow-up conversations with OEA officials confirmed the concerns that were expressed in August. Consequently, neither MCDOT nor MDOT-SHA will submit any funding requests for non-construction studies.

- **DISCUSSION: PROJECT PROPOSALS FOR TO MITIGATE BETHESDA BRAC TRANSPORTATION ISSUES:**

- Phil, Andy and Edgar led a discussion about project proposals MDOT-SHA and MCDOT are planning to submit to OEA. Phil noted that OEA is requiring

government entities to prioritize multiple proposals and, in cases where more than one entity is submitting projects to mitigate the same BRAC transportation issues, there must be a single consolidated priority list. The submission deadline is October 7. OEA will announce decisions on or about November 7 which entities will be able to apply for actual federal funds from the \$300 million appropriation.

- Phil said there will be a total of six proposals submitted by MCDOT and MDOT. Phil said the projects track what has been included in the consolidated “Tiers and Phases” that were first developed in October 2009.
 - **Summary of Tiers & Phases, updated September 19, 2011:**
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/tiersphases-summary-revised-091911.pdf>
- The projects, in priority order, will be:
 - The County will submit one proposal for the MD 355/Metro Crossing Project – the Local Preferred Alternative including deep elevators on the Navy side and a shallow pedestrian underpass, along with at-grade improvements – that was derived from the NEPA process. This is the number one overall priority project.
 - MDOT-SHA will submit four proposals for the SHA Intersections Improvements projects; and MDOT-SHA will submit an additional proposal for transit and bicycle improvements along MD 187/Old Georgetown Road that will include extending the Bethesda Trolley Trail south to Lincoln Street and adding a bus passenger drop-off near the NIH gates. The priority order of these projects will be:
 - Unfunded phases of the Rockville Pike / Cedar lane intersection project (Phase 5 won’t be pursued);
 - Unfunded phases of the Connecticut Avenue / Jones Bridge Road intersection project;
 - The Old Georgetown Road / West Cedar Lane intersection project;
 - Bicycle and transit improvements along Old Georgetown Road. (NOTE this is a new project that was not included in the initial Tiers and Phases.)
 - Unfunded phases of the Rockville Pike / Jones Bridge Road intersection. (NOTE that the dynamic signaling will already have been completed. NOTE also that “Phase 1-B” listed in the Tiers and Phases won’t be pursued.)

BCC Regional Services Center or the Western Montgomery Citizens Advisory Board. Ken Hartman noted that the Services Centers have suffered staffing reductions so supporting the BIC would be difficult, especially if there is no BRAC Coordinator if the OEA grant that funds Phil's position isn't extended beyond next March. Phil and Ken said they would discuss the future of the BIC with the Chief Administrative Officer in the County Executive's Office.

- **February 2007 Executive Order establishing the BIC (scroll down):**
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgtmpl.asp?url=/content/EXEC/Register/June07ExecOrders.asp>

- **Key language in Executive Order identified by Office of County Attorney:**

- "OEA recommends that the affected local governments establish a single community task force to identify community impacts from the expansion, as well as coordinate initial assessments of important BRAC-related community issues. For this reason, the BRAC Implementation Committee was established on February 23, 2007."
- "The Implementation Committee is expected to complete its work no later than September 15, 2011, which is the date by which the BRAC implementation is mandated to be complete."

- **John Carman solicited additional comments from the public.**

- Paul Seder said that members of the Bethesda business community should consider realigning office hours, such as more Saturday hours, as a way to relieve the usual morning and afternoon peak traffic periods. He wondered if Suburban Hospital or Howard Hughes Medical Institute have altered their hours.

- **The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 18, 2011, 7:30 p.m., at the BCC Regional Services Center.**

Committee members in attendance, September 20, 2011:

Phil Alperson, County BRAC Coordinator

John Carman, Chairman, BRAC Implementation Committee

Dawn Chaikin, Locust Hill Citizens Association

Larry Cole, Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission

Dave Dabney, Bethesda Urban Partnership

Edgar Gonzalez, Montgomery County Department of Transportation

Leslie Weber for Brian Gragnolati, Suburban Hospital

Ken Hartman, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center

Ilaya Hopkins, East Bethesda Citizens Association
Ginanne Italiano, Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce
Ed Krauze, Bethesda Parkview Citizens Association
Janet Maalouf, Maplewood Citizens Association
Debbie Michaels, Glenbrook Village Homeowners Association
Sara Morningstar, Montgomery County Office of Intergovernmental Relations
Patrick O'Neill, Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce
Andy Scott, Maryland Dept. of Transportation
Richard Vogel, Stone Ridge School
Phil Neuberger for Dan Wheeland, National Institutes of Health

Ex-officio:

Joan Kleinman (Representative Chris Van Hollen)
Susan Buffone (Council Member Roger Berliner)
Debbie Spielberg (Council Member Marc Elrich)
Capt. Michael Malanoski, Naval Support Activity-Bethesda
Commander John Lambertson, Naval Support Activity-Bethesda
Jeff Miller, Naval Support Activity-Bethesda

Other Attendees

Nancy Abeles, Bethesda Crest
Kristen Blackmon, Bethesda Urban Partnership
Sandy Dean, Walter Reed NMMC
Erin Donahue, Bethesda Patch
Richard Hoyer, Action Committee for Transit
Richard Levine, Locust Hill Citizens Association
Marilyn Mazuzan, Town of Oakmont
Avice Meehan, Howard Hughes Medical Institute
Jeanette Musil, DOD Office of Economic Adjustment
Ben Myrick, State Highway Administration
John Olderman, Chief of Staff, State Senator Richard Madaleno
Alex Ruoff, Gazette Newspapers
William Sadlon, NAVFAC Washington
Paul Seder