

Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (PBTSAC) Meeting Minutes

12.17.20

Attendees:

Kristy Daphnis
Heidi Coleman
George Branyan
Dave Helms
Wade Holland
Leah Walton
Leon Langley

Marybeth Cleveland
Sanjida Rangwala
Sonia Moore-Williams
Steve Aldrich
Jeremy Martin
Sara Morningstar
Marsha Metnick
Peggy Schwartz

Andrew Wexler
Kelly Peralta
Warren Chan
Kandese Holford
Jeremiah Lowery
Daniel Marcin

WELCOME

Chair K Daphnis called the meeting to order at 7:04PM.

The PBTSAC will be meeting every month through January 2021 to gather more information on the County workgroup’s development of the new Vision Zero Action Plan and have an opportunity for PBTSAC members to provide input. This meeting is the second of the “off-month” meetings where attendance for PBTSAC members is optional.

State Transportation Bills

K Daphnis said the PBTSAC should work with the County’s Office of Intergovernmental Relations (OIR) to potentially give feedback on bills during the 2021 Maryland Legislative Session. K Daphnis noted that PBTSAC does not have a chartered role to make recommendations directly to the State Government but can work with OIR to make recommendations and support legislation. K Daphnis has testified at two recent public hearings as a resident and not as PBTSAC chair.

The following local bills were discussed:

- MC 2-21 would allow Montgomery County to lower speed limits to 15 MPH after conducting a traffic engineering study. Currently, state law sets the lowest speed limit that can be posted at 25 MPH. This bill has been brought up in previous legislative sessions at 20 MPH. The bill has passed out of the Montgomery County Delegation’s Land Use Committee. The full County Council and County Executive are supportive of the bill with some amendments. The County Executive and Department of Transportation (MCDOT) asked that speed studies are included in the bill for all areas. An amendment for giving municipalities in the county the same authority as the County Government was tabled as it was not ready for primetime.
- MC 4-21 would enable Montgomery County Government to transfer the automated speed enforcement program from Montgomery County Police to Montgomery County Department of Transportation. An amendment was added to include all automated traffic enforcement be transferred to MCDOT. This bill is supported by the County Council and County Executive. This bill is still pending approval by the Montgomery County Delegation’s Land Use Committee.

Discussion turned to the status of Maryland's transportation trust fund. The pandemic has greatly affected revenue to the trust fund, so expect the Consolidated Transportation Plan to be revised. The State has to pay out \$250 million for the Purple Line settlement.

The legislative session starts January 13, but there are still uncertainties with how everything will run due to the on-going pandemic.

With the new Biden Administration, people should be on the lookout for potential earmarks that will support transit and road projects. There is a \$900 billion COVID-19 relief bill being discussed in Congress before the holidays, but unclear what the transit benefits or state/local government support will look like.

The Federal Highway Administration has the next draft of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) out and is open for comments for 90 days.

In the 2020 legislative session, Delegate Solomon proposed a school zone sidewalk construction bill requiring sidewalks to be built when the needs are identified. It was unclear if this bill would be revived for the 2021 session.

VISION ZERO 10-YEAR PLAN

K Daphnis turned the floor over to W Holland, Vision Zero Coordinator, to run through tonight's activity to gather feedback from PBTSAC members on the Vision Zero 10-Year Strategy and 2-Year Action Plan.

W Holland introduced two topic areas: finalizing PBTSAC's recommendations for updating the Vision Zero program's principles and brainstorm the strategies and actions the PBTSAC would want to see in the 10-year plan.

W Holland provided the PBTSAC the lists of principles they had agreed upon in the prior workshops:

- Transportation-related deaths and severe injuries are preventable and unacceptable.
- Human life takes priority over mobility and other objectives of the road system. The road system should be safe for all users, for all modes of transportation, in all communities, and for people of all ages and abilities.
- Equitably prioritize funding, resources and outreach to communities that experience a disproportionate burden of traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries.
- People will make mistakes. The transportation system should be designed so those mistakes don't lead to serious injury or death.
- People are inherently vulnerable, and speed is a fundamental predictor of crash survival. The transportation system should be designed for speeds that protect human life.
- Policies and resources at all levels of government need to align, making safety the highest priority for roadways.

The last remaining principle was about the roles and responsibilities for roadway users to reach our Vision Zero goals. After discussion, the group approved "All road users have a responsibility to respect one another, and to behave in a safe manner. Drivers have the potential to do the most harm and have a responsibility to be mindful and respectful of others on the public right of way."

After finalizing the principles, the next task was to brainstorm strategies and actions the PBTSAC would want to see in the 10-year plan. Based on feedback from prior meetings and the survey members filled out, the following topic areas were developed by W Holland to aid in the discussion:

- Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure
- Lighting
- Safety to and from transit
- Enforcement of traffic laws
- Education and capacity building
- Other / Miscellaneous

The following topics were discussed:

- For snow removal, PBTSAC recommends the government take more responsibility for clearing sidewalks, ramps, bike lanes, and bus stops. Priorities should be for downtown areas and near high volume transit stops. The government should also examine how it clears snow to avoid pushing snow on to sidewalks and keeping intersections clear.
- For new sidewalk construction, the priorities should be around schools (#1), parks and recreation centers, senior living facilities, and within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from Metro stations. There needs to be buffer space between existing sidewalks along major highways in the County. The County should push private development projects to build sidewalks even if there is not a connecting network when the project is built.
- For removing sidewalk obstructions, the County should identify and address smaller trip hazards as part of routine maintenance such as bad slopes and sidewalk pushed up by tree roots. For budgeting sidewalks, the county should separate out maintenance work and new sidewalk projects to make the budget easier to understand.
- For building temporary walking lanes instead of sidewalks, this should only be considered in the proper context such as the Grove Street project in Silver Spring. Any walking lane needs to have protection and maintenance plan.
- For marked crosswalks, there needs to be a policy update like DC's recent update for the threshold for painting crosswalks on low-volume streets. Appropriate treatments, such as new lighting and signage, needs to go along with new crosswalk markings where appropriate.

In order to get through all the agenda items, the remaining discussion of the action items was tabled and will continue in the January meeting.

Announcements

Councilmember Evan Glass is planning a Vision Zero forum for January. The exact date is to be determined but look out for the announcement after the holidays.

Shared/Open Streets

- K Daphnis is working with "Open Streets Montgomery" to advocate for more shared streets.
- The State Highway Administration is planning to close one lane in each direction on University Boulevard West for four to six months and will launch in the spring. The project is pending as SHA is seeking a federal grant to implement the project.

The January PBTSAC meeting will be a regular session. K Daphnis will reach out to MCPD's Captain D McBain to provide updated crash statistics, MCPD's work in 2020, and plans for 2021.

CLOSEOUT

K Daphnis thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 PM.