



## EAST COUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD (ECCAB)

### Wednesday, May 1, 2024 Meeting Summary

**Board Members Present:** Fisseha Adugna, Bill Bentley, LaTonya Brooks, Radwan Chowdhury, Rachel Evans, Ken Flemmer, Roberta Goldberg, Metassebia Keefelegn, Peter Myo Khin, Calandra Tate Moore, Len Newman, Mark Pharaoh, Susan Price, and Dan Wilhelm.

**Board members absent:** George Brown, Sheala Durant, Gertrude Jones, and Kimberly Price-Evans.

**Guests Present:** Daniele Moxley, Hamrawit Tesfa, Ana Martinez, Eileen Finnegan, Sharon Brown, Ed Weiler, Margie Goergen-Rood, and Ken Jones.

**County Regional Office Staff Present:** Jewru Bandeh, Cicero Salles, and Ayanna King.

**Welcome and Introductions:** The meeting was called to order just after 7:00 p.m. by Chair Peter Myo Khin. Board members, government officials, and public members introduced themselves.

**Approval of Meeting Summary:** The meeting summary for the April 3, 2024 meeting was approved with no objections.

**Presentation/Discussion.** Anthony Featherstone, Worksource Montgomery Executive Director, provided an update for the group since his last presentation of later last year. His update focused on six areas in youth services:

1. System Building
2. Community Engagement - includes a mobile job center
3. Success Engagement – promoting awareness
4. Talent Development – in targeted industries, and providing up to \$5K for education
5. Career Education – focusing on middle and high school.
6. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) – a federal program which is a major source of funds

Data showing the need for workforce services:

	Montgomery County	East County
Households	388K	58K
Poverty	8%	11%
Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed	24%	34%

(ALICE)		
Above ALICE	68%	55%

ALICE is the percentage of families who are working, but due to child care costs, transportation challenges, high cost of living and so much more are living paycheck to paycheck.

Workforce Montgomery added the following services in 2024:

- Justice Empowerment Center (at Georgia Ave site)
- Financial Empowerment Job Center (at Wheaton site)
- Young Adult American Job Center (East County). This includes the Launch Your Future Employment (LYFE) program which is being added into the MCPS effort to support the state Blue Ribbon program requirements. It provides for a 16-week paid work experience.

Anthony explained that they are striving to educate students to ask themselves four basic questions at key points in their career to guide them in adjusting their path:

- Who are you?
- How have you grown?
- Where are you headed?
- What are your options?

**Police Report.** Jewru Bandeh reported that Lt. Gregory Chmiel was unable to attend this month and emailed his report, which is provided here:

- The MCPD 3 on 3 basketball tournament is kicking off this Friday at the Briggs Chaney rec center and will run for 4 weeks, every Friday starting at 5pm.
- Overall crime rates remain low in comparison to averages; however, this past week IDA sector did see a spike in auto thefts and theft from autos as compared to the very low numbers we had been seeing over the past several weeks. This past week, we had 26 auto thefts districtwide, with 17 of them occurring in IDA and the weekly average is 21. We had 21 thefts from autos, with 14 of them occurring in IDA and the weekly average is 24. We had 0 commercial robberies, 2 robberies of individuals, 6 assaults, 1 commercial burglary, 3 residential burglaries, which are below average.
- Incidents involving firearms are continuing a downward trend. In April 2024, we had 22 incidents involving firearms, which is the lowest monthly total in a year.
- We are continuing to deploy SAT (plainclothes) and DCAT (proactive) as well as patrol units into high crime areas and hot spots to reduce and deter crime.
- The department recently held their quarterly awards ceremony. Numerous officers from the 3<sup>rd</sup> District were recognized for Lifesaving Awards and Commendations for heroic actions taken during the course of their duty. 3D presented a total of 8 awards, which was far above all other police districts and highlights the excellent work being done by 3D officers.
- The 6 rookie officers assigned to 3D after the Police Academy have all successfully completed their Field Training and are being assigned to their permanent shifts in 3D to begin working as solo officers.

## Committee Reports:

- **Quality of Life/Services Committee Report:** Roberta Goldberg, Chair, reported that the third district police gave a detailed report and they had time to discuss issues. She recommended that such a program be scheduled for the full board. The group continues to work toward holding a forum this fall concerning youth and juvenile violence. They have decided that it will be a listening session.
- **Planning and Economic Development Committee Report:** Rachel Evans, Chair, reported that the committee was briefed by the Planning Staff concerning their ongoing technical update to the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways (MPOHT). One of the primary drivers of this technical update are new county laws that converted all county street classifications to be consistent with the Complete Streets Design Guide. In addition, the *2023 Pedestrian Master Plan* added new area types.

Rachel also indicated the committee has discussed Dan Wilhelm's proposal for the Board to send a letter urging the county to fund a BRT study for Randolph Rd and add integration with transit needs east of Old Columbia Pike from Briggs Chaney Rd to New Hampshire Ave. To explain the need, Rachel asked Dan to provide background and details to the Board. Dan Wilhelm communicated the following to the Board (Peter Myo Khin also amplified some of these points):

- There was a 2000-2002 study that strived to develop a road solution to address ever increasing road congestion. The study looked at every idea, independent of cost, environmental impacts, or community impacts. All possible approaches resulted in some 14-hours of congestion per workday by 2030. The group concluded transit needed to be substantially improved to reduce the number of auto trips. That proposal consisted of express routes and local routes which would be integrated to facilitate rapid transfers. The express routes are now called BRT and the local routes are Ride On and Metrobus. The BRT would functionally be equivalent to Metrorail.
- The County Executive formed a transit taskforce that meeting in 2012/2013 which proposed a BRT network, among other topics.
- The Planning Department created a Transit Master Plan that was approved by the Council in late 2013 that included 10 corridors. Dan handed out a map developed at that time that illustrated those corridors. The map also included the light-rail purple line (inside the beltway) and corridor cities transitway (CCT) from Shady Grave to Clarksburg. The map did not include Metrorail. The only corridor on the map that has been built to date is US29 BRT, so almost all corridors represent the planned future. The purple line is under construction; Veirs Mill Rd and parts of MD355 are in the CIP to complete final design and then construction; alternatives are being studied for New Hampshire Ave and N Bethesda Corridors; and detailed design is underway for dedicated lanes on US29.
- ECCAB has supported funding alternative studies for Randolph Rd. Randolph Rd is the only east-west BRT that provides direct transfers between six of the corridors at five stations: US29, New Hampshire, Georgia North, Viers Mill, and MD355 South/N. Bethesda.

- The 2014 White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan extended the BRT east of US29 to cover Viva White Oak. It would also support Montgomery College and the White Oak Medical Center. The most appropriate corridor to use for this extension is Randolph Rd.
- The recently approved Fairland/Briggs Chaney Master Plan includes BRT along US29. The most practical way to achieve that is to route the orange line down Old Columbia Pike and into the area identified in the previous bullet.
- The Randolph Rd corridor needs to be integrated with the blue and orange US29 corridors and New Hampshire Ave corridor to provide rapid transfers. Today, DOT studies one corridor at a time without addressing transfers to other BRT corridors or Ride On/Metrobus.
- There was a question about coverage. BRT and local bus service will only serve parts of the county and therefore auto trips will still be required. Also, some trips will not be practical using transit.
- There was also a question about ridership and buses being too empty. While currently true for some buses, it should change in the future. The intent is that as BRT is implemented some local bus routes will be eliminated or modified. DOT has yet to do that. Also, the design as it builds out will provide a network effect where more locations can be reached by transit and thus increase ridership. The proposed three corridors in East County will provide great connectivity within the high-density activity centers between Briggs Chaney Rd and New Hampshire Ave east of Old Columbia Pike. The design also provides connectivity along the three major roads leading to these activity centers. One goal of the Thrive Montgomery 2050 plan is that development will be focused in our area along the BRT corridors.

A recommendation was made to urge the county to fund an alternative study for Randolph Rd and include integration with the two US29 corridors and the New Hampshire Ave corridor. The integration also needs to address transfers to Ride On/Metrobus. After much discussion, the motion was accepted without any objection. A letter will be written and approved by the Executive Board for transmission to the Executive and Council. It will be brought up at the June meeting for formal ECCAB ratification.

**Old Business:** None

### **New Business, and announcements**

- **Jewru Bandeh**, East County Regional Office Director, reported the following:
  - County Executive Ehrich will provide the state of the county on May 2, 2024
  - He thanked those who attended the ribbon cutting event for the Montgomery College East County Education Center on April 20, 2024
  - The application deadline has closed for the ECCAB. He hopes to have new members selected in time for the September meeting.
- Ana Martinez reported for Councilmember Kristen Mink that they continue to work on the budget. They were also supporting the residents at the Enclave because of two fires that occurred last week. One fire didn't cause any significant damage but the

other resulted in a number of units being vacated.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.