

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
WALTER REED BRAC INTEGRATION COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY – February 18, 2014**

- **Phil Alperson called the meeting to order in the absence of BIC Chair Ilaya Hopkins at 7:05 p.m.**

- **Updates from Phil Alperson, Montgomery County BRAC Coordinator:**
 - **Phil noted that tonight’s meeting lacked formal presentations. With all four intersections projects and the Crossing Projects designed and heading towards construction, there is little news from SHA or MCDOT regarding project design.** Phil suggested that tonight’s and future meetings will likely focus on construction updates and community impacts. Future meetings will probably be shorter than in the past unless there are formal presentations.

 - **Phil noted that matters discussed at the BIC meetings have loads of background material on the web site, listed under today’s meeting on the “Get Involved” Page:**
http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/brctmpl.asp?url=/Content/EXEC/brac/get_involved.asp
 - **The “Get Involved” Page’s chronological report of BIC meetings includes the following resource materials:**
 - **Printable Timeline: Anticipated Construction-Related Traffic Disruptions in Bethesda:**
http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/brac/resources/files/brac_projects_timeline.pdf

 - **Summary of BRAC Transportation Projects and Commuting Options:**
http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/brctmpl.asp?url=/content/exec/brac/projects_glance.asp

 - **Phil reminded the Committee to get traffic and BRAC news and information first by following Montgomery County BRAC on Twitter [@BracMoCoMD](#).**

- **MD 355 Multimodal Crossing Project at Medical Center Metro Station:**
 - **Phil followed up on the MCDOT presentation on the Crossing Project at the BIC meeting last June and the subsequent meeting in September.** After receiving nine responses to its Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI), MCDOT selected two Design-Build teams that will be sent Request for Proposals

(RFP): Clark Construction Group, LLC and Corman-Bradshaw Joint Venture. Today, Phil reported that MCDOT is nearing completion of the RFP and hopes to transmit it to the contractor finalists by late March and select a contractor around November.

- **Phil also reported that the County Planning Board held a Mandatory Referral Hearing on the Multimodal Crossing Project and approved it in January.** Karen Kuker-Kihl said she had testified to advocate for enhanced handicapped accessibility, including an additional down-escalator, benches, and improved sloping in the Metro Station plaza on the west side of MD 355.
 - More information on recent activities relating to the Crossing Project can be found on the “Get Involved” page and the Project Map. In addition, MCDOT has established a web site for the project at:
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dote/projects/355Underpass/index.html>
- **Christopher Bishop of SHA provided updates on the Intersection Improvements projects.**
 - **MD 355 (Rockville Pike) / Jones Bridge Road Intersection Project:**
 - Short term improvements (Dynamic Signaling/Crosswalks/etc): Delayed by winter weather, the signal should be activated by late March, and will be preceded by public outreach.
 - **MD 185 (Connecticut Ave) / Jones Bridge Road Intersection Project:**
 - Phases 1-2 , Connecticut Ave:
 - Landscaping completed. Sign and signaling to be completed when warmer weather returns later this spring. Interim signage must remain until all work is done.
 - Phase 3, Jones Bridge Road: Turn lanes / SWM / Utilities Relocation:
 - Productive discussions continue with HHMI re: design, relocation and reconstruction of retaining wall. SHA hopes to keep utilities on south side of JBR. Advance utilities relocation may occur in about a year, followed by construction.
 - **MD 355 (Rockville Pike) / Cedar Lane Intersection Project:**
 - Phases 1-3 Construction:
 - Advance utilities relocation has been completed. Stream diversion near Elmhirst is nearly complete and construction of a retaining wall at NIH along southbound MD 355 has begun. For this project there may be occasional off-peak single lane closures.
 - However, bad weather conditions have delayed construction of Phases 1-3. Public outreach will be conducted before construction begins when warm weather returns. SHA is looking into the

feasibility of enhanced lighting in the intersection during construction.

- Cedar Lane closure still on course for mid-June through late-August, when schools are not in session. SHA is working with MCDOT to develop Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) plans to detour traffic around the closure. SHA will include information about the detour as part of its outreach for the project. The detour information will be publicized at a later date this spring. Shared with the community and will be posted to the SHA webpage for the project.
 - A planned signal on Cedar lane at Elmhirst Parkway/Stone Ridge School has been coordinated by SHA and MCDOT, with MCDOT establishing warrants for signal. However, construction and operations of the signal have yet to be determined. (NOTE further discussion below.)
- NOTE: Phase 4 Design & Engineering -- Traffic, Air, and Noise Studies will be conducted at conclusion of Phases 1-3. Phase 4 is currently delayed pending the outcome of these studies after the completion of Phase 3.
- **MD 187 (Old Georgetown Rd) / West Cedar Lane intersection Project:**
 - Design, engineering and Construction update: ROW issues almost clear and utility relocation should commence later this spring, weather permitting.
 - Bethesda Trolley Trail extension update: This SHA project is separate from the intersection project and is on a later timeframe than the intersection.
- **Richard Levine discussed Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) detours during the summer closure of Cedar Lane and the MOT's relationship to a separate and unrelated MCDOT project to reconstruct the Elmhirst Parkway Bridge near Cedar Lane. Richard has been in contact with officials from SHA and MCDOT to discuss coordinating MOT plans for the two projects in a manner that will limit impacts on Locust Hill.** SHA and MCDOT have been trying to coordinate the two projects for over a year and had hoped that the closures could occur simultaneously. However, while the SHA closure of Cedar Lane is planned to occur during the two-month summer break when schools are closed from June to August, the MCDOT closure of the Elmhirst Parkway Bridge will take as long as six months and it has become unlikely that the closures can occur simultaneously.
- **MCDOT link to the Elmhirst Parkway Bridge project:**
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OMB/Resources/Files/omb/pdfs/fy15/ciprec/501420.pdf>

- **Ed Krauze raised strong concerns about the planned signal on Cedar Lane at Elmhirst Parkway/Stone Ridge School.**
 - Mainly, he was concerned that the signal was never discussed at a BIC meeting or in any other public forum. He was also concerned that SHA’s responses to him over the past week, and at this evening’s meeting, were inadequate and led him to question SHA’s credibility and wonder if SHA is planning other projects the public doesn’t know about.
 - Richard Levine noted that the Locust Hill community, which would be directly impacted by the traffic signal, has been aware of the signal for several years as part of its ongoing discussions with SHA and MCDOT about the Intersection project.
 - Fred Lees, representing the Montgomery County Dept. of Transportation’s Division of Traffic Engineering and Operations, provided detailed information about how traffic signals on County roads are approved. The County would manage the signal although it is being planned in conjunction with SHA’s Intersection Project. The County will conduct a “signal warrant analysis” in the area where a signal has been requested. If that area has the proper warrants then MCDOT will consider installing the signal. Fred noted that there has never been a formal public hearing process for signals although the affected communities are consulted.
 - Patrick O’Neil, as a land use attorney representing the Stone Ridge School, offered some historical perspective on the signal. First, he noted that Stone Ridge has had to provide significant Right of Way (ROW) along both Cedar Lane and MD 355 for the SHA Intersection Project, requiring the School to modify traffic patterns in and out of its campus. Second, Patrick noted that the Master Plan for the school campus, which is located at the southeast corner of the MD 355/Cedar Lane intersection, calls for the construction of multi-use turf fields on a tract of campus property along Cedar Lane across from where Elmhirst Parkway meets Cedar. Stone Ridge plans to replace its existing driveway to Cedar Lane by constructing a new driveway further east that will provide access to the school and the new fields. This new school entrance on Cedar would create a four-way intersection with Elmhirst that could be controlled by the planned signal. Patrick said this signal would provide safer operations for traffic and pedestrians. Patrick said that discussions among Stone Ridge School, SHA and MCDOT are ongoing and that at this time it is not clear who would pay for installation of the signal. Patrick was asked if Stone Ridge School could provide details on its Master Plan at the next BIC meeting.

- **Updates from Naval Support Activity-Bethesda (NSAB):**
 - **Capt. David Bitonti discussed the ongoing security drills on the NSAB campus that run from February 17 through February 28.** He noted that there may be unusual activities on campus but they should not impact the surrounding neighborhoods. He did note that on February 27 there will be an “active shooter” drill that will feature a “Giant Voice” that may be heard in the general vicinity of USUHS.
 - **2-6-14 Walter Reed NMMC Journal: Keep Calm and Carry on During Preparedness Drill Base, Tenants Prep for Solid Curtain-Citadel Shield:**
<http://www.dcmilitary.com/article/20140206/NEWS11/140209997/keep-calm-and-carry-on-during-preparedness-drill-base-tenants-prep>
 - **There was also general discussion about traffic around NSAB.** From his perspective he believes the signal at North Wood generally is working well and he looks forward to the planned extension of the “load lane” for traffic on southbound MD 355 to make left turns into the North Wood gate.
 - **He also mentioned that NSAB is in the process of bringing on a new Public Information Officer, but in the meantime people should contact john.epperson@med.navy.mil with any questions or concerns.**
- **Phil solicited Neighborhood Updates and Public Comments.** David Goldstein of the Chevy Chase Valley community stated his strong objections to the proposed Platt Ridge Drive extension project. It was noted that the BIC had long ago discussed this project and that he should air his concerns to the Planning Board, where there will be an opportunity to testify in the future at a Mandatory Referral Hearing. He also had a petition signed by community residents which he could transmit to the County Executive and County Council.
- **Phil adjourned the meeting at 8:35 pm. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 22, 2014, 7:00 p.m. at the BCC Regional Services Center. NOTE THIS IS THE FOURTH TUESDAY, NOT THE USUAL THIRD TUESDAY.**

BRAC Committee members in attendance, February 18, 2014:

Nancy Abeles, Bethesda Crest Home Owners Association

Phil Alperson, County BRAC Coordinator

Christopher Bishop, State Highway Administration

Ed Krauze, Bethesda Parkview Citizens Association

Richard Levine, Locust Hill Citizens Association

Janet Maalouf, Maplewood Citizens Association

Marilyn Mazuzan, Town of Oakmont

Debbie Michaels, Glenbrook Village Homeowners Association
Phil Neuberg, NIH
Sara Morningstar, Montgomery County Office of Intergovernmental Relations
Phil Neuberg, National Institutes of Health
Patrick O'Neil, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce
Leslie Weber, Suburban Hospital/Johns Hopkins

Ex-officio:

Capt. David Bitonti, Naval Support Activity-Bethesda
Ron Ewart, NAVFAC, Naval Support Activity-Bethesda

Other Attendees

Hon. Al Carr, House of Delegates District 18
Carl Gentilcore, Locust Hill
David Goldstein, Chevy Chase Valley
Sheila Igbinedion, Montgomery County Dept. of Transportation
Aaron Kraut, Bethesda Now.com
Fred Lees, Montgomery County Dept. of Transportation
Jeanette Musil, DOD Office of Economic Adjustment
Elizabeth Weibel, Gazette
Julie Woepke, MD DBED Office of Military & Federal Affairs