

D.C. Pedestrian Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
June 27, 2022, 6:30 p.m.
Remote Public Meeting

Attendees: J.I. Swiderski, Dalton Howard, David Tumblin, Ameen Beale, Juan Ulloa, Charlotte Lee Jackson, James Elliott and Heather Foote. Agency reps: Karyn McAlister (DDOT); Dulce Naime (DPR); Rita Abou-Samra and Alex Krefetz (OP) and Sergeant Terry Thorne (MPD).

Start: Foote convened the remote meeting at 6:34 p.m.

Introductions and Agenda: Attendees introduced themselves and the draft agenda was approved.

Voices from the Wards: Elliott developed a calendar for future Voices from the Wards presentations. Tumblin would present in July, Beale in September, Ulloa in October, Foote in November and Elliott in December. Tumblin agreed to present in July.

OLD BUSINESS

Crosswalk enforcement (May 31st at Georgia & Morton Ave. NW). PAC witness participants included Howard, Foote, Tumblin and his son and former PAC co-chair Eileen McCarthy. Thorne recapped location criteria: cars can see full crosswalk; an uncontrolled crosswalk (no signal); 100-150 straightway in the road; a 45 ft marker to enable motorists to see the crosswalk; MPD officer “takes control” of crosswalk by stepping into it (past parked cars if present) to show intent to cross, and looks upstream at traffic. The motorist is given 40 ft. (at 20 mph) to stop. If outside this area, the driver is stopped and educated with a ticket. Tumblin expressed surprise at how many drive without seatbelts and said many cars drove right through crosswalk. Howard noted how community members approached and spoke of the need for such an enforcement operation.

Thorne said residents and people who work in the area almost always come up and express encouragement and the need for more such operations. The MPD traffic team understands the need for safe passage and are very active in enforcement efforts; I call to them directly a block down the road where the officers pull the road over. Officers also ticket for other violations such as not wearing a seatbelt. Darkened/tinted front windshields are also a violation; at night, this treatment blocks driver sight of pedestrians. Elliott asked about enforcement evaluation. Thorne said all cars are educated by enforcement and believes this changes driving behavior. Howard recommended Kenilworth & Eastern (where Thorne said was a past fatality) and 47th St and Nannie Helen Burroughs Ave. NE (which Thorne will look into). Thorne will notify PAC of future locations, noting there are multiple locations on Minnesota Ave. NE.

Holmes-Norton IIJA hearing follow-up. Earlier in the year, Elliott testified at the Representative’s Town Meeting on the IIJA (infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act). Since her June 8th hearing on this topic included almost no mention of pedestrian safety, staff agreed to a PAC co-chairs recommendation that a post-hearing question be sent to witnesses. Their answers on how the IIJA can best support pedestrian travel and safety will be included in the final Congressional Record of the hearing.

DMOI/OP webinar on IIJA. Foote expressed frustration at the 24-hour notice – through an Office of Planning email – for a webinar on IIJA funding hosted by the Deputy Mayor for Operations & Infrastructure (DMOI), which

oversees DDOT, DFHV and other agencies. DDOT's Acting Chief of Staff was MC and Dpty Mayor Lucinda Babers was actively involved. Foote will track down the slides and recording. She noted the heavy webinar focus on mega-transformative projects; those that are sustainable, transformative, equitable will guide the Task Force's work. Elliott noted that FHWA (Federal Highway Administration) guidance on IIJA indicates that multimodal travel and repair of existing infrastructure should be emphasized in states' use of funding. This language came out in a memo to all state DOTs.

The PAC has made repeat recommendations on how repair and maintenance is a high priority for pedestrian infrastructure. Elliott also mentioned a grant program (separate from the IIJA discretionary grants program) called "Safer Streets and Roads for All." Up to \$50 million nationally is available for Vision Zero implementation. DC would need to apply for the funding and the deadline is September 15th. McAlister said she had learned that state DOTs are not eligible. Elliott noted that regional planning bodies are potential applicants. Both he and McAlister will look further into whether DC could participate through MWCOC (Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, the regional such group for the District). McAlister added that this is handled at the Deputy level but that DDOT's State and Regional Planning Division is engaged on the federal guidelines and deadlines.

NEW BUSINESS

Streets for People (Office of Planning). Abu-Samra introduced Alex Krefetz, Grants Management Specialist, Streets for People program at the Office of Planning. (This follows on Abu-Samra's prior presentation on streateries and her work with DDOT's Kim Bacca.) They made a presentation on the Streets for People Grants Program, which focuses on downtown economic recovery and falls under the public health emergency and use of public space. A slide shows "Pathway to Downtown Recovery: Change the Space + Fill the Space + Bring the People Back. One goal is economic recovery and increasing tax revenue; another is envisioning "public space activation" in downtown. Feedback from downtown BIDs (Business Improvement Districts) enabled OP to secure funding for revitalization. The five FY22 grantees, chosen based on geography and areas that needed an extra attention, are: Adams Morgan Partnership BID; Downtown DC BID; Dupont Circle BID; Golden Triangle BID and Mt Vernon Triangle BID. Grantees have experience in large-scale events, collaboration with stakeholders and recurring events. The choices also enabled collaboration with National Park Service (NPS) for greater public space.

There are plans to continue this initiative in coming years. Krefetz reviewed past and future anticipated events. For street closures, OP is working with other agencies including DDOT on permitting, accessibility, nearby replacement bus stops and communication. There is a public input website at: <https://publicinput.com/dcstreetsforpeople>. Data analysis will inform the grant report and future planning. Some FY22 programming will continue until October. The grant report will be prepared in January-February 2023. Jackson Lee raised whether planning including changes to major arterials where the prior vehicle level is not coming back. Krefetz responded that this is not included, although DDOT has conducted updated traffic studies when street closures are involved and the final report will include these and any best practices and disruptions. Jackson Lee asked if the traffic studies are public. After indicating that there has only been one traffic study to date, Krefetz responded that the study is not public, since they are currently under regular DDOT regulatory and permitting process and need to be reviewed before they can be released. Foote asked if there is a pre-grant analysis on whether businesses are likely to return to pre-pandemic levels. AbouSamra said one metric to assess whether increased foot traffic from these events generates higher business revenue, in addition to greater use of public space.

Bladensburg Road Multimodal Safety and Access Study. Elliott introduced McAlister, who is managing the study, and noted that Hallums serves on one of this study's community consultation groups. McAlister made a slide presentation and said the safety and access study will lead to development of solutions based on two redesign concepts, each with a trade-offs matrix (procs/cons) that will enable the community to understand implications. She recalled that "multimodal" includes all types of travel, whether walking, bicycling, riding the bus, and driving, including deliveries and freight. The study includes all of Bladensburg Road NE, from Benning Rd. to Eastern Ave., about 2.5 miles. Two advisory committees were formed (inter-agency and community) and outreach and engagement have included advisory councils, stakeholder meetings, social media, a QR code, flyers at bus shelters and businesses and the mailing of 13,000 postcards to specific zip codes. More pop-up's are planned. Visitors to the website can use an online mapping tool and drop a dot or pin for example to indicate an unsafe crosswalk or needed bike lane. Slides showed demographics of survey participants, as well as survey questions and comments.

Pedestrian safety and reducing speeding tied for first place when participants were asked to rank their priorities for Bladensburg Road. Slides show more than a dozen diverse developments and projects along the study route, as well as transportation features and data. Six intersections account for more than half the injury crashes along Bladensburg Rd., considered a high crash corridor. Rear-end, angle and head-on crashes account for 68% of injury crashes. Injury crashes are more frequent in evenings; speed is involved in almost a quarter of injury crashes. The slide "Why Speed Matters" shows the impact of going 10mph above the speed limit (just under the 11mph threshold for an automated ticket). In a 25mph zone, this translates to 35mph. The slide showed that at 30mph the likelihood of a pedestrian fatality or serious injury is 50%; at 40mph the likelihood is 77%. The slide also shows the "cone of vision," how driver visibility decreases with speed. The top three pedestrian issues along Bladensburg Road are short crosswalk times; pedestrian-vehicle conflicts at uncontrolled crosswalks; and bicyclist-pedestrian conflicts on sidewalks. One study goal is to improve safety at the many uncontrolled crosswalks along Bladensburg Rd., a minor arterial. The study will conduct a study of substandard sidewalk width; the minimum standard DDOT width is six ft.

Data collected indicated no on-road bicycle facilities (bike lanes) along Bladensburg. Findings indicate that motorists failing to follow traffic laws is another top bicycle issue (e.g., law requires drivers to yield to bicyclists in addition to pedestrians in crosswalks.) There is high ridership on the B2 bus route which runs the length of Bladensburg, from Anacostia to Mt. Ranier, MD. The study anticipates a second public meeting in September, hopefully in-person, at which the two corridor alternatives would be available. Swiderski noted how the mode shares are different than other parts of Ward 5, with many more driving; he asked if there is information on where people are going for work. McAlister said such information is challenging to collect. Elliott noted that figures for pedestrian trips likely reflect a small portion of all actual pedestrian trips, since walking to work trips are generally less than 25% of all pedestrian trips made. MWCOG include break-outs of trips, although not at this level or resolution. Time constraints prevented a full presentation. The full DDOT study description along with interactive options and a survey can be accessed at <https://engage.dc.gov/BladensburgSafetyStudy>.

Open Streets Events. McAlister encouraged participation in the July-August Open Streets events. Foote added: Open Streets 9am-1pm (Ward 7: Saturday, July 30th on Benning Rd., from Minnesota to E. Capitol; Ward 5: Saturday, August 31st on 12th St NE Monroe to Franklin). <https://openstreets.dc.gov/>

ADMINISTRATIVE TOPICS

Recruitment of Administrative/Program Assistant: Elliott asked members to continue outreach efforts to assist in recruitment of an Administrative Assistant.

Approval of minutes: Howard moved and Beale seconded a motion to approve the March minutes, which passed with seven members in favor: Swiderski, Elliott, Howard, Beale, Tumblin and Foote. Howard moved and Tumblin seconded a motion to approve the April meeting minutes, which passed with seven members in favor: Swiderski, Elliott, Howard, Beale, Tumblin and Foote. Draft minutes for the May meeting will be circulated prior to the July meeting.

Treasurer's report: Adams communicated reported that the balance as of May 1st was \$6,525. There were no credits or debit, leaving a May 31st balance of \$6,525.

Recruitment of Administrative/Program Assistant: Elliott urged all members to continue to engage in outreach and recruitment for this position.

Next meeting: July 25th. Elliott suggested an invitation to DDOT's Anthony Cassillo Willingham for a presentation on electric vehicle charging cords and automated vehicles. The PAC previously submitted comments to DDOT for its guidance on the charging cord issue.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.