

GOCA Transportation Committee
Meeting Minutes for December 2, 2014
Norbeck Country Club, Board Room
7:00 pm

Committee members in attendance: Sharon Dooley, Stanley Elswick (new member), Barbara Falcigno, Benson King, Meg Pease-Fye (new member), Barbara Ray, Daniel Rubenstein, Jerry Simpson, Emmet Tydings, Bill Wanatosky, Anthony Watkins, John Webster. Perry Buckberg has left the committee.

Guests: Dave Murnan (SHA), Anyesha Mookherjee (SHA), John Riehl (MCDOT), Chris Light (MCDOT)

John Webster called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. October 22, 2014 minutes and December 2, 2014 agenda were both approved by unanimous vote.

Barbara Falcigno explained what the committee wanted to learn about signals and led the discussion through the 97 corridor. John Riehl and Chris Light from MCDOT Division of Traffic and Engineering and Operations discussed:

Signal timing can only fix some problems. Once roadways are at capacity, there is little signal timing can fix. Real fix is more lanes or fewer cars.

There are several methods of detection of vehicles at an intersection:

- Magnetic loops in the pavement: no longer used. They get destroyed when pavement is resurfaced or when surface cracks
- Cameras to detect objects. Problem is many things can fool the camera – sunlight (particularly a problem on east west cameras during sunrise/sunset), headlights, fog, dirt, electronics exposed to the elements. Ideally the camera would be high up angled down at the traffic lane. The topography of some intersections cause the camera to have a low profile exacerbating the problem

Timings are set - can't have it skip a cycle. Any changes to one intersection will upset the entire corridor out of sync. MCDOT have worked the signal timings for the 97 corridor between 108 and 28 and no matter what timings are done for the signals, Emory and Emory Church Road cannot sync with the others along Georgia Avenue. When signal timings change from peak to nonpeak hours, it take several signals to readjust.

Specific intersections:

97/108

The committee noticed from the video made on 09/30/2014 that AM peak on SB 97 at 108 was negatively impacted because cars were stopped at Spartan/Morningwood intersection, backing up through the 108 intersection. The NB 97 left turn arrow onto Morningwood is purposefully long during school hours. Many years ago the school, police, & MCPS bus depot requested breaks in the SB 97 traffic so vehicles could safely get into and out of non-signalized Queen Mary Dr (Olney Elementary is at that corner). MCDOT will not change this unless the majority of stakeholders agree (GOCA, Olney ES, MCPS bus depot, and MCPD). They are open to adjusting the time that the light is being used to produce a gap in traffic.

Emory Church Rd/97

Discussion about configuration and phantom traffic. **ACTION ITEM:** MCDOT will recheck the cameras. **ACTION ITEM:** SHA will see if loops can be installed there due to the odd arrangement. In general loops are a step backwards in methodology. The county does not want different equipment at each of the 800 signals in MoCo (easier to maintain if all are the same). When a pedestrian pushes the walk button, the 97 traffic is stopped long enough for a person to cross.

When making suggestions, community needs to consider any unintended consequences to other intersections.

Anyesha Mookherjee discussed the items in the 2015 Olney Transportation Issues document.

97/28 grade separated interchange. No study is being done on the interchange but there is a study to create a second left turn lane from NB97 to WB 28. No construction money is budgeted yet.

ACTION ITEM: Restriping SB 97 in front of the Roots Shopping Center will be done in the spring when weather permits. A work order has been issued.

Protected Turns: **ACTION ITEM:** SHA will study each suggested protected turn. Prince Philip and 108 was studied and denied. Volume, sight lines, opposing traffic, and accident data were considered. **ACTION ITEM:** SHA will relook at all intersections. SHA asked GOCA TC to keep in mind that by adding a protected turn lane, it delays the through traffic on 108. Before signal was upgraded at Prince Philip and 108, the left turn arrow was a flashing red light. Now it is a solid red light. **ACTION ITEM:** SHA will check on this.

Second turn lane on NB97 to EB Emory was discussed. **ACTION ITEM:** SHA will take a look at this intersection with a second turn lane as an option. One unintended consequence is the effect of SB97 to Batchellors Forest Rd.

The lane markings from EB28 to NB97 direct traffic to the left two lanes. There is 2000 ft before the left lane turns into a turn lane onto the ICC. SHA standards state this is adequate space to merge over and there is no justification for restriping the guidelines. There have been no accidents. The committee disagreed strongly. The majority of the traffic making this movement continues north. Merging left is a safer movement than merging right so it makes more sense to restripe the intersection.

Dr Bird and Batchellors Forest Rd was studied and no back up was found at peak hours. No further studies will be done in order to see the effect of opening Old Vic Blvd will have on this intersection. Resurfacing damaged the road sensors so the light is cycling on a timer not on a sensor.

Speed mitigation along Old Baltimore Rd is being looked at by Fred Lees. This is not speed cameras but changes in the configuration of the road to slow vehicles)

Tolls on ICC are controlled by MTA.

SHA suggested that GOCA TC check in quarterly for updates.

Emmet Tydings reviewed the Regional Transportation Planning.

www.transportationplanninghub.org is a great resource.

Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) is a list of funded projects for the next 25 years, updated every 3 years.

Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) is a 6 yr plan updated annually.

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Washington area includes Frederick, MoCo, PG, DC, Charles City, Prince William, Loudon, (essentially Manassas to Bowie). Problem is to get these areas to agree. This is why beltway is widened in one part but not another (different taxing areas)

TPB also looks at housing, jobs, transit.

TPB generally approves the projects that come through. ICC was a close vote. BRT will likely be the next one.

MoCo spent \$2 million on a Road Code Rework (lane widths, sidewalks, speeds, lighting, storm water management). This is why some of the speed limits were lowered a few years ago. Park and Planning disagreed with the report.

Daniel Rubenstein contacted University of Pittsburg because senior engineering students do a Capstone Project. They may be interested in modeling Olney's 108/97 intersection as long as we provide the data (traffic counts). The report will likely

include a presentation including simulations of various intersection configurations and percent increases from current traffic levels.

Barbara Falcigno made a motion, seconded by Sharon Dooley for the Transportation Committee to provide the data to these students to study the effects increased traffic will have on 108/97 as well as potential changes to mitigate the congestion. Unanimously approved. Daniel Rubenstein will be the contact person.

Respectfully submitted by
Barbara Falcigno