

GOCA Transportation Committee
Meeting Minutes for January 20, 2015
Olney Library Meeting Room
6:30 pm

Committee members in attendance: Jon Arias, Sharon Dooley, Stanley Elswick, Barbara Falcigno, Howard Greif, Benson King, Barbara Ray, Daniel Rubenstein, Emmet Tydings, Bill Wanatosky, Anthony Watkins, John Webster. Not in attendance Jerry Simpson, Meg Pease-Fye. Quorum met (12/14)

Guests: Joe Fritsch (Olney), Michael Conklin (Sandy Spring), Michael Jackson (Director of Bicycle and Pedestrian Access, MDOT), David Anspacher (Planner Coordinator, MNCPPC), Patricia Shepherd (Bikeways Coordinator, MCDOT), Joy Nurmi (Special Assistant to the County Executive), Tom Street (Asst Chief Administrative Officer), Joanna Conklin (RTS Development Manager)

John Webster called the meeting to order at 6:40. December 2, 2014 minutes and January 20, 2015 agenda were unanimously approved.

Michael Jackson from MDOT discussed bike access.

Retrofitting trails into existing developments is hard to do. Cyclists can use roads.

Three levels of cyclers:

C = cul de sac rider, best on shared use paths

B = comfortable in some traffic

A = comfortable anywhere

In MD, there were 7 fatalities, 600 reported injuries. They have a 17 minute video called Competence and Confidence about how to ride on the MD roadways. Copies are in the library. New road code is to reduce the lane width in urban areas to 10 -11 feet in order to make people drive slower. It also allows room for a bike lane/buffer for a bike lane in areas that are already developed. SHA wants 13 ft so a car and bike can fit within the road width (MD law says drivers must give 3 feet to a bike)

David Anspacher from MNCPPC discussed planning & answered many questions.

Bike master plan was last updated 1978 and July 2015 will be undergoing revision. One concern is the speed of cars. On level roads, a bicyclist is going 12 mph. Shared use paths are slower since others on it and they are not as well maintained as the road surface.

In the last 10 years, bike commuters have increased 61% in the US. Capital Bikeshare and bikestations are more prevalent.

Least to most separated:

Take a lane (like we have on 97) where the cyclist uses the entire lane since not enough room for car + bike

Standard bike lane

Buffered bike lane

Two way cycle track

Shared use path

Need to plan for different levels of bicyclists.

Question: since BRT isn't going to be on 97, would it be possible to use the median for a Two way cycle track? One problem is to build it and then have to tear it out at some point in the future.

Patricia Shepherd (MCDOT) is in facility planning/implementation. In bike masterplan a two way cycle track on 97 from Olney ES to Glenmont is recommended.

The Needwood trail is in the CIP (in the outyears). ICC to Lake Needwood will be done by 2016 thanks to a 50/50 match from the state. Agreed that Bowie Mill Road needs bike lanes to access Magruder HS, recreational areas, and Shady Grove Metro.

Gold Mine Road bridge will be done with a wider shoulder and 8 ft wide shared use path on the south side to New

Hampshire Ave. You can look up the CIP projects on the county's website.

Bikeways program is designed to fill gaps in the network. It has \$500,000 a year budget. There is also a sidewalk program. Resurfacing projects can also provide some opportunity, e.g. North Bethesda between Edson and Nicholson Lane has a cycle track separated by flex posts and painted buffer.

Tom Street from County Executive's office discussed an Independent Transit Authority. It is a proposed bill because there is a need for:

An agency with single focus and can be more nimble administratively to build RTS (MCDOT is not resourced for transit development)

Economic growth of county (GSSC, White Flint, White Oak, Chevy Chase Lakes master plan)

Greater authority to determine the future of local issues

New authority proposed by County Executive

Includes all Ride-On functions

Develop, finance, maintenance of RTS (including CTC)

Coordination of WMATA, MTA, MARC

Parking Lot districts

Fleet management (currently under General Services)

Have authority to enter contracts (important in terms of relationships with Howard Co, Frederick Co, DC, etc)

Establish own procurement policies/procedures

All these things are subject to County Council approval: Envision five on the Board of Directors with 5 yr terms. They will create multiyear capital program, develop a budget, and hire staff.

County Executive will:

Appoint board members, council approves

Oversee authority & county executive

MCDOT keeps traffic signals, snow removal (ROAD responsibilities, the new authority would be focused on TRANSIT)

The accountability: Council approves CIP and the tax to fund it. There currently is a transit tax on everyone's property tax. Currently 4 cents. Same public process.

Question: How does this bring in business? Example given, if cybersecurity center locates in MoCo, many other businesses build up around it. Ditto the science research center. This increase in jobs (estimated by Dr Fuller that there will be a net 160,000 more jobs) is dependent on having transportation capacity and affordable housing.

Question: Why is this new authority needed? At state level, MDOT is in control of projects like 29 or 355 Rapid Transit Systems. With this new Transit Authority, it becomes local control.

Question: How will representatives have a seat on Transportation Planning Board/COG? They will have a seat once the state recognizes the new agency. Emmett Tyding doubts it will be easy.

Question: Is it revenue neutral? Other than operations, if no new work is done, it would be revenue neutral (since transferring some responsibilities from MCDOT). However, the idea is the economic growth will be greater than the increased costs (due to more buses, more operators, etc). Need new authority due to charter rate ceiling.

Legislation will be introduced by the end of the week. County Executive is requesting GOCA's support.

Answers from the questions for Joanna Conklin

BRT needed as part of staging requirements in GSSC, White Flint, etc

97 is a WMATA priority corridor and is still working on enhancing performance (but has no money)

Work with MCDOT on the original Olney Master Plan idea (scattered park and ride lots with express bus to metro)

County Executive has a senior transportation initiative.

Privatizing bus service was studied for Purple Line

Meeting adjourned at 8:25