Park Hills Civic Association (PHCA) and Seven Oaks-Evanswood Citizens Association Safety on Wayne Forum Notes
5/23/2019 at Silver Spring International Middle School

Link to slideshow (discussed in beginning and end of meeting) and summary of concerns relating to slides:
- Concern #1: Speed limit down the steep and serpentine hill from Fenton St. -> Sligo Creek. How do we get people to adhere to the current 25 mph speed limit? How do we balance the residential character of the community, while improving pedestrian safety?
  - Less than a year ago, a car wrapped around a tree going down this hill
  - Drivers trying to go around when car in front stops for pedestrians at the crosswalks
  - Three blind curves (shown in slides)
  - Especially critical to make amiable and liveable soon with new design plans for DTSS
- Concern #2: MCPS new parking lot - looks optimized for parent convenience, not kid safety. Who is in charge of the design?
  - The Cluster Coordinator for Northwood was present and explained the loop - one way in and one way out - the purpose being for busses and street traffic to not mix. In the original design, there's a circle and the traffic loops around and comes back to Wayne. Parent drop off would be in one area, and bus drop off is separate. Silver Spring International is also only expected to get three parking spaces out of this. Sligo Creek will be losing parking when the expand the cafeteria. They currently don't have enough parking even for staff.
- Concern #3: It seems too many designs are catering to people who are not walkers - those coming from outside the community; but it can be unfair to people who chose to live in this neighborhood. Others concerns seem more important than community concerns, as community space is being taken down. There's also the difference in North and South side.
- **Derek Gunn, MDOT SHA:**
  - Trying to do a blanket approach; look from a planning standpoint/thinking globally
  - *Some initiatives they're currently doing:*
    - 1. Lowering speed limits to a standard speed in these types of areas
    - 2. Pavement markings
      - Using data on the safest type of crosswalks, making bar strips more visible, repurposing existing crosswalks on Georgia Ave, etc.
      - Standardizing treatments (MCDOT has own standards)
    - 3. Movement prohibits
      - Ex: On Sligo Creek, no turn on red (trying to make this a standard)

- - - 4. Leap pedestrian intervals (gives 3-5 seconds of advanced walking space for pedestrians before traffic approaches)
    - Press release in downtown busy Metropol. Areas - urban mobility program
    - Purple Line construction - Challenge is getting a consistent timeline
      - Three phases they have to consider:
        - 1) Pedestrian challenges and when exactly construction has begun
        - 2) Maintaining safety during construction
        - 3) Ensuring safety after the design is complete
      - Have to consider what can happen in tandem with construction. Goal is to implement the features as soon as possible
    - They are looking for out of the box ideas, and welcome any community feedback on new ideas and how to integrate them with the communities
- **Dustin, MDOT SHA**
  - Goal is to make changes to the corridor without having to go through a long, drawn out engineering study; wants to pull data from everywhere to get these changes implemented ASAP
    - Using bus ridership data from the county, and Strava data to get a sense of where people are walking and biking, how well the infrastructure is working, etc.
  - New SHA guidelines for pedestrian safety that came out last year
  - County and state need to work together to standardize the treatments. Some ideas include:
    - HAWK signals (that flash rapidly when pedestrians cross, although there's not currently many in MoCo)
      - These have two types of beacons: Warning beacons; and variation beacons that operate like traffic signals
      - Concern: People getting immune to flashing beacons/even signs. By rolling out safety initiatives again, and highlighting these approaches, they hope to make motorists really take notice
    - Ensuring drivers see the 25 mph speed signs - yellow signs, orange flags next to signs, larger signs/font, flags to alert of "new corridor," etc.
      - Collect data on these and see if they're needed longer than two months
    - Markers on the ground with speed limit (need approval)
    - Data application - dedicated short range communication (something they want to learn more about. Very helpful to have community support to move forward with these types of ideas).
      - Put device on vehicles to detect if a pedestrian is near based on their cell phone signal & sends alert message to approaching vehicle

- Also applications similar to Waze that have a censor add on at strategic spots on the roadway. Shares with community info like "crossing pedestrian 300 ft. ahead."
  - This was deployed in Howard County and they're awaiting feedback on how it's working
  - Trying to work with vendor to deploy this in MoCo.
- Want to take an approach of reintroducing Wayne Ave. like their mobility projects, really highlight the speed limit
- Other goals - Higher functionality roadways; higher arterial
- **Questions/Comments and Answers:**
  - Q: *Are the speed cameras on Wayne turned on yet?*
    - A (SHA): Unsure.
  - *Q: Does data show that increasing speed signs is more effective?*
    - A (SHA): Supposedly increases visibility by ~60%. For local data, it's going to take monitoring
      - License tag readers
  - *Q: Skepticism over if measures described will work long term. Some residents want to narrow the road to two lanes, permanently, so drivers feel it's narrow enough to slow down.*
    - A (SHA): Valid, but even a narrower road doesn't react to the geometric change; but they're going to study it when the road goes down from four to two lanes for Purple Line construction, in addition to research they've already looked at when reducing lanes in other areas
  - *Q: You mentioned people get immune to these new things. How quickly does this immunity catch on?*
    - A (SHA): It varies. People started becoming immune to the flashing beacons after initial reaction. Sometimes the natural character of the road makes the change work because drivers see that they have to be more cautious.
  - *Q: What about increased enforcement?*
    - A (SHA): Engineering, education, and enforcement are the best approach. The SHA would support increased enforcement. But police have budget/staffing limitations.
  - *Q: If you were designing a road so drivers would not go faster than 25 mph, how would you design that road?*
    - A (SHA): Every road way is different. Wayne has more curves than most roadways. One way is to resolve curvature issues. For example, you can exaggerate a curve so people have to slow down; or narrow the lanes where drivers are going downhill and picking up speed so they realize they have to slow down.

- *Comment: You should build a shoulder!*
- *Comment: We need to be more aggressive in these measures. For example, Bonifant is slowed down by speed bumps, potholes, a chicane, etc. Can we create a solution with a buffer feature between the sidewalk and the road, and by narrowing the road permanently?*
- *Comment: Strong concern about school kids getting hit, even with two crossing guards.*
- *Comment: Want to look for alternatives to narrowing Wayne Ave. - such as more crossing guards - rather than reducing, due to concern that one lane will create congestion to DTSS.*
- *Comment: Need to make sure we are correcting deficiencies and making Wayne Ave. safer as we build, and making sure to advocate for safer roads as part of the Purple Line design.*
- A (SHA): Our intention tonight isn't to reply on what the Purple Line is doing, bu to compliment what they are doing. Lane narrowing is part of the Purple Line design. The SHA is working with them.
    - To be clear on the process, Purple Line has to go through SHA for submittals (need to make sure they maintain safety, etc. For example, the Purple Line made accomodations for a buffer on the north side of Wayne Ave. as a result of residents voicing concern)
    - Regarding design, however, sometimes this can't do much from an engineering standpoint - but things like buffers can help.
    - Purple Line has been trying for a safer design, although it might not be to everyone's liking because people have different ideas about what that looks like.
    - (Derek Gunn) was hesitant to come to the meeting tonight because he likes to show meaningful implementation. So he definitely wants to come back after the things mentioned are in place to gage how effective they are.
- *Q: When are they turning the speed cameras back on?*
    - A (SHA): We have very little role in speed cameras (their role is just making sure it's not a "speed trap," and that it's not blocking view)
- *Q: What about signs that reflect back drivers speed?*
    - A (SHA): Currently these are only in work zones.
- *Q: Wayne Ave., between Georgia and Colesville, there seems to be more permanent road narrowing. Who is doing work at this certain place? Is there plans for a cycle lane, etc. ?*
    - A (SHA): The cycle lane on Wayne Ave. from Georgia is part of the Green Trail.

- *Comment: Unmarked police cars at strategic hours on crosswalks like St. Michaels church may be helpful. Sometimes people cross there with their iPhones to film, incase someone tries to run them over.*
- *Comment: There's three unsignalized crosswalks in this residential area.*
- *Comment: Have you looked if the width on Wayne Ave is set for 25 mph? There can be things done to tighten the lanes up, like on Connecticut Ave. they have narrow lanes, speed cameras, etc.*
- *Q: What about electronic signs that tell people how fast they're going? Why are these only done in work zones, not school zones?*
    - A (SHA): This is regulated by police departments. SHA only does this monitoring in construction zones. They are looking into it to see if this counts, since it's technically a construction zone.
- *Q: What happens to the sidewalks if the lanes are narrowed?*
    - A (SHA): We are widening the sidewalk. The most narrow sidewalk currently is 6 ft. in South side, on North side, it's wider. In the future, we can expect a 10 ft. hiker/biker trail for the majority of the way; 5 ft. buffer. Even if we were to move forward with the sidewalk project today, the Purple Line will beat us to it, so working with them is the best way to go.
- *Q: What about bike lanes on the South side where there isn't a buffer? If you are able to take some width from each lane, there can be a bike lane going downhill (uphill there's already a safe and wide hiker/biker lane).*
    - A (SHA): There's a median in the future design - 11 ft. outside lan for buses and 12 ft. inside lane for the Light Rail.
- *Del. Jheanelle Wilkins update on speed camera:* She was told because of political influence, elected officials cannot make the request to turn the speed camera on - so she worked with residents to make the request in 2017. She also requested a SHA speed study, which determined that the current speeds were not excessively high. We now need to re-engage and put pressure on the county and the police department to turn the cameras on.
    - **To do this, residents can email 3DCommander@montgomerycountymd.gov**
- *Comment: For speed cameras to go off, you need to be going double over the speed limit (if it's 25 mph, it's only triggered when you go 12 mph over). Is that a county or state law?*
    - **State law (SB 277 from 2009) altered the speed enforcement program threshold from 10 to 12 miles per hour over the posted speed limit for which a citation may be issued and restricted the hours during which school zone monitoring systems may be operated. [You can read the fiscal and policy notes for this law here.](#)**

- MDOT SHA, the Maryland Transportation Authority, and the Maryland State Police administer the Maryland SafeZones program, which operates automated speed enforcement in highway work zones with a posted speed limit of 45 mph of higher. [Additional information about the Maryland SafeZones program can be found on the SafeZones program website.](#)
- Counties and municipalities operate their own school zone speed enforcement programs. MDOT SHA involvement in the local school zone programs is limited to the establishment of designated "school zones" along state highways and review of utility permit applications for placing ASE equipment on them to ensure the safety of pedestrians and drivers.
- [For more information on Automated Speed Enforcement, please click here.](#)

Meeting notes courtesy of Kathleen Bender - staff members with Maryland Del. Jheanelle Wilkins