

**City of Takoma Park Safe Roadways Committee  
Monthly Meeting, April 21, 2015**

**MINUTES**

1. The meeting convened at 7:31pm with the following in attendance: Sheryl Gross-Glaser, Ryan Morden, Nick Finio, Kacy Kostiuk, and Joe Edgell. Wren Rogers arrived at 7:40pm.
2. The committee discussed the meeting minutes. Sheryl moved to approve the minutes; Nick seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.
3. The committee discussed the proposed meeting agenda. Kacy moved to approve; Sheryl seconded. The agenda was unanimously approved.
4. Takoma Park's most dangerous intersections:
  - a. As lead of the intersection improvements subcommittee, Nick created a list of the "most dangerous" intersections in Takoma Park. He shared the list with the committee members. This document is attached at the end of the meeting minutes.
  - b. Fenton/Albany Ave and Takoma Ave:
    - i. This is a four-way stop sign by Belle Ziegler Park and Montgomery College.
    - ii. It is a very busy intersection even in the middle of the day on weekdays. Cars seem to be regularly rolling through the stop signs. There is no painted crosswalk.
    - iii. Ryan noted that this is an entirely city-controlled intersection with no need to work with SHA for improvements.
    - iv. Joe said that a raised crosswalk at the intersection may be a possibility.
    - v. Sheryl asked about accident data at this site. Joe said that he has asked for this from the police and has not heard back, so he will contact the city manager to see if he can obtain the data that way.
    - vi. Joe noted that it seems like few people come to a complete stop at many stop signs. Kacy said that the police patrols of stop signs on Maple seem to help with this.
  - c. Lincoln and Carroll:
    - i. Nick noted that a volunteer fire fighter he knows said this is undoubtedly the worst intersection for accidents in the city.
    - ii. This intersection has been discussed a lot previously – poor visibility, no pedestrian crosswalk, etc.
    - iii. Joe said that the new state law – HB 450/SB 371 – that Councilmember Seth Grimes recently emailed the committee about might be able to help with intersections like this. More information about the law can be found here: <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2015RS/bills/hb/hb0450T.pdf>
      - Ryan said that he did some research on this law and that it appears to not be a substantive change to the situation that already exists. He said that the law allows a community to declare "high priority areas" for pedestrians and cyclists, and then SHA has to either deny or approve it this designation. Montgomery County has already designated more than two dozen areas as "high priority," but only one of these has been confirmed by SHA. However, this new law could be a way to keep SHA moving and prevent them from ignoring these requests for designation.
      - Ryan said that an idea might be to have one of the delegates propose a bill that says that SHA has to put in sharrows, stop signs, etc. Jamie Raskin and Kumar Barve are running for Congress, so they may be amendable to what the community wants. Ryan suggested making a

wishlist of what the committee wants SHA roads to include: sharrows, signs, etc. Alternatively, a bill could try to force SHA to recognize all of Takoma Park has a pedestrian area.

- iv. Sheryl said that there may be strategic reasons to designate all of the city or to choose only specific areas.
- v. Joe suggested putting the law and discussion on the agenda for next month.
- d. Flower and Maplewood:
  - i. This will become a three-way stop during the bridge construction.
  - ii. There is poor visibility and no crosswalk. Sheryl said that parked cars on Flower Ave obstruct the view for cars turning from Maplewood.
  - iii. Wren noted that the new soccer field has brought more pedestrian traffic there.
  - iv. Joe said that the Friends of Sligo Creek opposed creating an additional parking lot in the grassy area behind the field.
  - v. Joe said that it seems like the city has been moving crosswalks back away from the curb – not to mid-block but about 3-4 feet from the intersection. This seems unsafe for turning cars who can't see pedestrians.
  - vi. Ryan noted that there's a bus stop by the field and that it's dangerous to cross Flower there at rush hour.
  - vii. Kacy said that there is a light-operated crosswalk in front of the university. This must have been added when SHA still controlled Flower Ave.
  - viii. Joe said that it's important to share any feedback regarding Flower Ave immediately because the plans are being finalized now. Joe previously sent an email to the committee about this; he suggested that anyone with additional suggestions should convey the information to the city council very soon.
  - ix. Nick and Joe noted that there will be curb bump-outs in the new Flower Ave plans. People are opposed to the idea of removing parking. Joe suggested focusing on transit-oriented planning for future projects.
  - x. Sheryl suggested improving car-share services. Joe suggested that new developments do not provide parking to encourage people without cars from the beginning.
- e. Flower and Division
  - i. This is next to Maplewood, a cut-through by WAU parking and Greenwood Ave.
  - ii. Nick said that the volunteer fire fighter he knows noted that there are a lot of accidents at this location. There's no stop sign or crosswalk there.
- f. Manor Circle and 410:
  - i. There is a bus stop on one side but no sidewalk at that location and no crosswalk.
  - ii. This is a curve with limited visibility.
- g. 6700-6800 New Hampshire Ave
  - i. This is by the Shoppers complex. Many pedestrians cross here and do not use the crosswalks.
  - ii. There is a crosswalk at Poplar and New Hampshire.
  - iii. Joe said that part of the reason people may cross mid-block without a crosswalk is not just lack of availability of one but also a cultural component, since many of the people living in this area are recent immigrants from places where it may not be as common to use crosswalks regularly.
  - iv. Nick noted that the only option he can think of to improve this location would be to add a signal. Joe suggested a pedestrian bridge. Sheryl said this would be really expensive. Nick suggested a speed camera at this location, perhaps near the Prince George's Ave intersection.
  - v. Nick said he thinks there was a pedestrian death at this location a few years ago.
- h. 410 at Red Top Road

- i. This is on the other side of New Hampshire, near the 410/New Hampshire intersection. People use the bus stops and cross 410 frequently. This is within the city limits but right at the edge.
  - i. Joe suggested that the intersections subcommittee (Nick, Sheryl, Wren) come up with the ten-top problematic intersections in Takoma Park and order them by rank. List what the intersection is, why it's a problem, and what needs to be done to solve the problems. This could be shared with the city council.
  - j. Other intersections that committee members felt are dangerous:
    - i. Joe suggested Elm and 410. Joe noted that a high-tech strobe crosswalk with sensors would work there. Sheryl said that the pedestrian calming methods in Silver Spring on Dale Ave are great and inexpensive.
    - ii. Joe suggested adding an intersection near the University and New Hampshire intersection. It would be good to have 1-2 from each ward in the city.
    - iii. Wren suggested asking councilmembers to send out messages to their residents to ask for feedback. Each councilmember may have feedback themselves. Joe said he will send an email to the councilmembers.
    - iv. Kacy noted that the 410/Piney Branch intersect is on the list of worst intersections in Maryland.
- 5. Carroll Ave bridge and Lincoln/Carroll intersection:
  - a. Kacy and Wren said that there is concern about the idea of a four-way stop at this intersection by a resident living at the corner. Cathy Wilson has expressed lack of support for the proposal with Councilmember Kate Stewart and has discussed this briefly with Kacy and with Wren. Wren said that her concerns seem to be pollution (her front porch already gets a lot of dirt on it from the diesel fuel in the buses due to the bus stop there) and increased noise. She doesn't think there's enough pedestrian and bike traffic there to warrant a four-way stop. Wren said that Cathy suggested a flashing light like the one at Carroll/Long Branch.
  - b. Kacy said that there was a man with a clipboard at the location last week, doing additional counts of traffic and pedestrians at the intersection during morning and evening rush hours. Wren will follow up with SHA to request more information.
  - c. Ryan reported on the Carroll bridge project progress. The earliest the road might be closed for beginning bridge work would be February 2016.
  - d. Ryan noticed that there was a chunk of the bridge that had fallen near the bike path recently and sent an email about it to Daryl Braithwaite. He suggested that SHA put up a net. She passed the email on to SHA. It doesn't sound like netting is something SHA planned on doing. Ryan said this seems like a dangerous situation for people and cars under the bridge.
  - e. Joe said that someone recently emailed the Takoma listserv about a new hole in the bridge.
  - f. Joe suggested emailing something to the city council regarding the bridge safety. Ryan said he would work on this.
- 6. Takoma Junction traffic study:
  - a. Joe said that the idea of a traffic study is great but that what that "means" is not defined. The company doing the development has agreed to pay for it.
  - b. Joe suggested that the committee make recommendations on what the traffic study should include.
  - c. Nick suggested that the study probably would and show include:
    - i. Pedestrian and bike counts – and which way people are going
    - Public transportation counts – and which directions
    - ii. Car counts – and which directions
  - d. Joe suggested also recommending:

- i. Computer simulations based on different intersection redesigns
    - ii. Transit-oriented development
  - e. Joe said that he had suggested including no parking in the development except for Coop shoppers. He said the council did not seem interested in this possibility.
  - f. Wren suggested adding required bike parking, which might help reduce car parking. Joe noted this could be a park-and-ride for bikers using bike share.
  - g. Joe suggested a public restroom at this location. There are no public restrooms in the city. He noted that this is an issue for people biking and walking. Sheryl pointed out that this is an issue particularly for older people.
  - h. Nick agreed to take the lead on collecting recommendations for the city council.
  - i. Everyone should email Nick with suggestions on what should be studied within the next two weeks.
- 7. Residential Streetscape Task Force
  - a. Joe read a letter that Sheryl had written to the city council. She wrote that she had read the task force's recommendations related to ADA recommendations for curb ramps and was concerned about this. She opposed "subtle colors" for ramps and linked to a study showing that the bright "federal yellow" is best for people who are visually impaired.
  - b. Joe noted that the task force did take into consideration some of the SRC's comments but that there are still some issues with their recommendations.
  - c. The task force presented to the city council recently. Committee members could watch the council meeting video to learn more about the discussion.
  - d. The plan now is to create "design standards." This might be something committee members should be involved with.
- 8. Report on the Public Works budget session with council
  - a. Joe attended this session. The council received the recommendations very positively. There was discussion of continuing work on sidewalks, even though the funds are not coming from speed camera revenue anymore.
  - b. Joe thinks that modifications to the sidewalk policy could improve the situation.
  - c. There was no focus on snow clearing. There was a lot of focus on "sustainability." The committee may want to think of suggestions to augment the budget in the future (i.e. a snow-clearing machine).
  - d. There is another budget session covering recreation, police, speed camera funds, and communications on April 23 at 7:30pm.
  - e. Joe said that the fiscal year starts July 1. Fiscal year 2015 will close at the end of June.
  - f. Kacy asked what is on the list of sidewalks to be worked on next. Kacy will send an email to Daryl for this information.
  - g. Joe suggested inviting Daryl to speak to the committee. Joe will send her an invitation for an upcoming meeting.
- 9. Next month's meeting and agenda suggestions
  - a. Joe said he wanted to talk about the priorities and how to achieve them. Joe suggested having reports from each of the subcommittee at upcoming meetings.
  - b. There was a discussion at the last meeting of making one recommendation each quarter to the city council.
    - i. First quarter: Carroll Ave bridge recommendations (finished)
    - ii. Second quarter: Takoma Junction/intersection improvements
  - c. There was a discussion about planning for the second-quarter recommendations related to the Takoma Junction and intersection improvements.
    - i. Nick said that it seems like it would be best to focus on the Takoma Junction recommendations first and that this could be separate from other intersection recommendations.

- ii. This recommendation from the committee could focus on what goes into the study. It might be good to include a recommendation on the structure of the intersection as well.
  - iii. Joe asked if it would be possible to have a recommendation ready by the next meeting. He suggested easing into the suggestions about total intersection redesign by making recommendations that these designs are considered in simulations in the traffic study. Possible designs could include:
    - Eric Saul's
    - Barbara Muhlbacher's roundabout design – a smaller roundabout to allow for flow; Joe suggested this with a pedestrian-activated stoplight (starts off as red, then a flashing red, then off)
    - Others?
      - a. Joe suggested an intersection like one in England where there is almost no control at all, but it works in the end. He will send a link to a video of this to committee members.
  - iv. In two weeks, all other committee members should send recommendations to Nick for inclusion in the report.
    - d. Committee members should email Joe with other items for upcoming meetings.
10. The meeting adjourned at 8:57pm.

## **Takoma Park Unsafe Intersections**

### **Fenton Street/Albany Avenue and Takoma Avenue**

- Serves as high-traffic alternate route between Silver Spring and Takoma Metro, alternate to 410/Piney Branch or Blair Road; access route to Montgomery College
- Adjacent to Belle Ziegler Park and Playground
- No painted crosswalks
- No stop sign or other traffic control nearby except for one raised crosswalk along length of Takoma Ave from Fenton to Eastern/Piney Branch intersection

### **Lincoln and Carroll**

- We're working on this one
- Anecdotal evidence from volunteer firefighter that this intersection sees accidents

### **Flower and Maplewood**

- Will change during bridge reconstruction
- Currently no painted crosswalk across Maplewood, cars must pull forward to turn left or right, into the pedestrian path

### **Flower and Division**

- Cut through to Greenwood Ave, access to Washington Adventist U. Parking and Buildings
- Anecdotal report from volunteer firefighter of accidents
- Unsignalized, no crosswalks, no stop sign

### **Manor Circle and 410**

- No sidewalks on the north side of 410, so peds must cross to south side
- No crosswalks

### **6700-6800 NH Avenue (between Poplar Ave and Shoppers complex)**

- High speed traffic into stream valley from both directions of NH Ave
- Pedestrians cross mid-block to access southbound K6 bus stop on NH Ave
- High density development at Belford Towers
- Crosswalk at Poplar recently torn up by utility work on NB NH Ave

### **410 at Red Top Road, near 410/NH Intersection**

- High-trafficked F bus routes on both sides of street, only crosswalk is at NH Ave
- Poor visibility coming east on 410
- Dangerous crossing traffic to access Red Top Road