

M A R Y L A N D



BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

2020 Annual Report

Contents

Introduction	2
What is MBPAC	2
Year in Review.....	2
Covid-19 Pandemic	2
A Year of Reorganization.....	3
Advisory Role	3
Procedures	4
Subcommittees	4
Individual Meeting Highlights	5
January 24, 2020	5
April 24, 2020	5
July 24, 2020	5
October 24, 2020	5
2020 Recommendations	6
2021: Focus Areas	6
Appendix A - MBPAC member list as of December 2020	7
Appendix B – Links to Relevant Documents	8

Introduction

What is MBPAC

The Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (MBPAC) advises Maryland state government agencies on issues related to bicycling and pedestrian activity including funding, public awareness, safety and education as required by statute.

The twenty-two member committee is appointed by the Governor, combining the experience of citizens with the expertise of representatives from nine State agencies and one state-chartered bi-county commission. Committee members represent geographical regions throughout the State and specific interests, including those of visually and mobility challenged individuals.

MBPAC has three primary focus areas for promoting bicycle and pedestrian activities:

1. Mode of Transportation – Promote non-motorized modes as healthy, efficient, and environmentally-friendly ways to travel for work and for fun
2. Education and Awareness – Promote activities, programs, and policies that foster bicycle and pedestrian safety education across all age groups; also promotes greater awareness of the mission and work of the MBPAC
3. Tourism & Recreation – Promoting and protecting Maryland's off-road trail system and on-road facilities, providing guidance to Maryland State agencies, and providing guidance on program strategies that promote Maryland's trails, infrastructure, and tourism resources

MBPAC Website

<https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/tso/pages/Index.aspx?PageId=140>

MBPAC Email Contact

MBPAC@mdot.maryland.gov

Year in Review

Covid-19 Pandemic

2020 was challenging for the Committee, State Departments and Agencies and everyone generally. The global pandemic presented unexpected challenges and required staff to be creative and innovative to ensure the Committee continued to meet its statutory obligations.

After MBPAC's in-person, January 2020 meeting, the remaining quarterly meetings were held virtually, using on-line collaboration tools. This alone was difficult, but membership turnover provided additional complications in ensuring all members were able to be fully engaged. While meetings in the past were supported with collaboration tools for members and guests who were not physically present, it was generally preferred that members would attempt to attend the regular meetings in person. Despite a

few transitional challenges, the quarterly meetings have generally improved with additional familiarity with the GoTo Meeting platform. MBPAC meetings are projected to take place online until July 2021.

Staff also began to utilize Microsoft Teams to support some administrative functions and organizing committee meetings.

A Year of Reorganization

2020 also saw a significant transition in the appointed members of the Committee. This included a new chair, changes in citizen membership and new state agency representatives. In addition to changes in the representatives for all but one state agency, seven (7) new citizen members were appointed. The roster of appointees as of the end of 2020 is contained in Appendix. The current roster is always posted on the MPBAC website.

As of December 2020 only six (6) of the twenty-two positions were occupied by members that were on the committee in 2019. Thus, over 70 percent of the committee members were new in 2020. While this presented challenges in the continuity of Committee mission, MDOT Committee staff continued their diligent efforts and remained highly supportive of the Committee. At the end of 2020, only one position remained unfilled and candidates for that vacancy were being sought to ensure that all positions are filled in 2021.

MBPAC wishes to recognize and thank those individuals who have served the Committee over their many years of contribution. As noted, 2020 (and 2019) represented a significant change in the composition of the Committee with many long serving members departing.

First, we wish to recognize the service of our most recent **Chair, Eric Brenner**. Eric led the Committee for four years, stepping down in mid-2019. He brought many groups to the table that had not otherwise been previously engaged. We will continue to build on the foundation he provided.

Other recent departures from the Committee included many others who were able to provide unique perspective and value to MBPAC. These individuals included Citizen members as well as representatives of State Agencies. We wish to thank the following additional individuals for their valued service:

Tres Denk
Scott Hansen
Kevin Racine
Patrick Sheehan

Deborah Ginage-Pulley
John Hartline
Marci Ross
Eileen Sparling

Dr. Charles Glass
Greg Hinchliffe
Fred Shaffer
John Wilson

Advisory Role

The Committee is charged with providing guidance to the state agencies involved in Bicycle and Pedestrian matters. In recent years, this responsibility was fulfilled by asking agencies and others to formally present their plans, programs, and initiatives during meeting sessions, for consideration, feedback and questions from Committee members, as well as the interested public. During 2020 the Committee resumed an earlier practice of providing advisory guidance utilizing a Committee-approved response to the request for input related to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the I-495 P3 Managed Lanes project. As outlined below, a formal response was developed with the assistance of an ad-hoc subcommittee, and a comment letter was approved by majority vote that included abstentions on the part of some state agency representatives.

It is anticipated the Committee will continue to pursue such formal means of developing and documenting input on major projects, policies and related matters where and when appropriate. The Committee will prioritize increasing its engagement as part of the development of bicycle and pedestrian-related topics during the inception of these programs and will seek active early engagement in significant matters that fall within its scope.

Procedures

Due in part to the substantial membership transition, but also to support onboarding of members and further to allow guests and external parties to understand how MBPAC operates, the Committee developed and published a procedures manual in 2020 to guide current and future activities of the group. The MBPAC Procedures Manual allows new committee members to understand the workings of the Committee more readily and will help ensure full and consistent compliance with the Committee's statutory charge. The procedures manual defines member roles, conditions required to meet a quorum, and how the Committee will adhere to Maryland's Open Meetings Act.

Subcommittees – ad-hoc or formal

Subcommittees, or working groups, are permitted to help advance work of the full MBPAC but are subject to full Open Meetings Act requirements if given official standing. Based on a thorough review of the needs and opportunities related to smaller group investigation into committee wide concerns, the Committee decided that the formation of ad-hoc committees on a volunteer basis would best serve the Committee's needs and interests. These ad-hoc committees can include stakeholders outside of the formal MBPAC membership. In 2020 MBPAC took action to embrace this approach to address specific issues with focused stakeholder attention prior to considering official Committee action.

An ad-hoc subcommittee was formed to review and propose written comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the I-495/I-270 Managed Lanes Project, as previously noted. This project is proposed to construct express toll lanes on I-495 and I-270 to mitigate current and future motor vehicle traffic volumes. The ad-hoc team circulated inputs and compiled recommendations that were compiled into a draft letter and circulated for MBPAC consideration prior to the October meeting. A quorum of members at the October meeting discussed and amended the recommendations and a vote was formally made to approve the amended language. MBPAC's comment letter was developed and submitted as part of the project's public comment period.

MBPAC discussed the probability of additional ad-hoc subcommittees being formed in future as a mechanism to help promote active engagement and inclusion, while ensuring adequate focused attention on matters within the Committee's purview. Potential additional ad-hoc subcommittees may include groups focused on legislation, infrastructure, and access for people with disabilities.

No other ad-hoc subcommittees brought forth issues for consideration or adoption by MBPAC. It bears noting that MBPAC membership does not limit members from participating in or expressing bicycle and pedestrian related concerns as part of outside bodies formal or otherwise.

Individual Meeting Highlights

Detailed meeting minutes are kept on the Committee website. Links to those meeting minutes can be found in [Appendix B](#).

January 24, 2020 (in person)

The January 2020 Committee meeting was held in person. In retrospect, what seemed so normal, became unique and significant. This was also the first formal meeting held outside of Maryland and completed the ongoing MBPAC 'theme' of exploring the roles and responsibilities of regional planning organizations in addressing bicycle and pedestrian issues. The Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) which is the Maryland Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) that includes Cecil County, hosted and presented to MBPAC in Newark, DE.

The Committee was presented with a summary of activities supported by the MPO including pedestrian planning and bicycle infrastructure. WILMAPCO regularly convenes a Non-Motorized Subcommittee to inform their work and use of federal funding in this regard. Also, in the meeting the Maryland Transportation Authority's (MdTA) presented their decision on the Nice-Middleton Bridge replacement. The Committee did not take a formal position; however, members expressed significant concerns about the decision reached and seeks to continue to explore alternatives to the option selected by MdTA.

The East Coast Greenway leadership in Maryland and Delaware also presented their recent work and highlighted ongoing barriers for bicycles and pedestrians crossing the Susquehanna River as a point of major concern.

April 24, 2020 (virtual)

April's meeting began the virtual format which has continued for all subsequent MBPAC meetings. Key agenda items included review of State Highway Administration's (SHA) Context Drive Design Guidelines and MDOT's draft Level of Traffic Stress (LTS).

July 24, 2020 (virtual)

After three meetings with the Chair and many other seats unfilled, July's meeting filled many of those vacancies. The newly appointed Chair offered his vision for the Committee and introduced draft procedures and subcommittee guidelines. The procedures and guidelines were refined following the July meeting. The State of Maryland's Walktober was previewed, a new MDOT-led initiative to promote walking as exercise and transportation. The month-long Walktober features four "Walkinars" - webinars with a pedestrian focus. Members agreed that an ad-hoc subcommittee would form to review the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the I-495/I-270 Managed Lanes Project, focused on bicycle and pedestrian aspects.

October 24, 2020 (virtual)

Key topics covered during the October quarterly meeting included a Walkshed analysis of rail transit stations in Maryland, and a report of Walktober's progress to date. The MBPAC procedures were voted on and approved by the committee pending additional review by the Offices of Attorney General and the Maryland Department of Health. The committee reviewed, voted on, and approved an advisory letter related to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the I-495/I-270 Managed Lanes Project.

2020 Recommendations

1. Managed Lanes Project comments (see [Appendix B](#) for link to the actual letter)
 - i. The Managed Lanes Project could either thwart or accelerate ongoing and planned improvements to bike-ped transportation across I-270 and I-495, therefore, the DEIS and the Section 4(f) evaluation each need to explicitly address how and where this project may affect bicycle and pedestrian transportation.
 - ii. The committee is concerned that the DEIS fails to answer several key questions concerning the potential impacts on bicycle pedestrian safety, planned and potential bicycle and pedestrian crossings, as well as ways to mitigate such impacts.
 - iii. Provide bicycle pedestrian crossings of the Managed Lanes Project at Little Paint Branch, Henson Creek, Southwest Branch, New Carrollton Station, Central Avenue, future WB&A Trail in addition to enhanced sidewalks and side-paths at all other crossings.
2. MBPAC supports the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration's Context Driven Access & Mobility For All Users design guidelines. Implementation of Context Driven efforts will improve pedestrian and bicycle safety.
3. MBPAC also supports MDOT's transition to using level of traffic stress (LTS) methodology in bicycle access measurements. LTS provides a simpler and more implementable understanding of bicycle safety and mode shift.
4. MBPAC stands by the previous leadership's request for the preservation of the existing Nice Bridge over the Potomac River for future pedestrian and bicycle access. The existing span should be preserved as an economic development engine for Southern Maryland's growing trail network.
5. MBPAC supports continuation and expansion of the Walktober program.

2021: Focus Areas

In 2021, MBPAC will focus on understanding other non-profit and local initiatives with presentations by local and regional bike and pedestrian organizations. The presentations are intended to provide groups with the opportunity to discuss barriers to progress for projects they are pursuing. These presentations will also allow MBPAC members to advise State agencies, where appropriate, on potential approaches to help assist and guide the Agencies in these efforts.

- January 2021 focused on the middle and lower Eastern Shore counties.
- April 2021 will focus on the three most Western counties in Maryland.
- Areas for July and October have not yet been selected.

The Committee continues to encourage the Administration and Agencies to further engage the Committee as part of the development of new policies, procedures and practices and updates to existing documents.

Other initiatives include pursuing the vision laid out in the July 2020 meeting and leveraging the new energy the reconstituted membership brings to the Committee.

Appendix A - MBPAC member list as of December 2020

Chair:

Jon Morrison

State Representatives:

Maryland Department of Commerce: Heather Ersts

Maryland Department of Disabilities: Chelsea Hayman

Maryland Department of Health: Kristi Pier

Maryland Department of Natural Resources: Andrew Mengel

Maryland Department of Planning: Sarah Lipkin Sularz

Maryland Department of Transportation-TSO: Jeff Hirsch

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission: Eli Glazier

Maryland State Department of Education: Gabriel Rose

Maryland State Police: Lt. Laura Beck

Residents:

Baltimore Metropolitan Area: Karen Schonfeld, Pierre Stewart

Eastern Shore: Patti Stevens

Southern Maryland: Marshall Edwards

Washington DC Metropolitan Area: Jim Titus, John Wetmore

Western Maryland: Steve Green

Visually Impaired Representative: Jim Smith

Mobility Impaired Representative: Vacant

At Large:

Marquette Rogers, Steve Friedman, Antoine RJ Wright

Appendix B – Links to Relevant Documents

January 2020 Meeting:

[January 2020 Meeting Minutes](#)

[Agenda](#)

[Maryland Transportation Authority's Nice Bridge Bicycle Access Decision](#)

[WILMAPCO's Bike Ped Planning](#)

[East Coast Greenway in Maryland/Delaware](#)

April 2020 Meeting:

[April 2020 Meeting Minutes](#)

[Agenda](#)

[Meeting Presentations](#)

July 2020 Meeting:

[July 2020 Meeting Minutes](#)

[Agenda](#)

[Meeting Presentation](#)

October 2020 Meeting:

[October 2020 Meeting Minutes](#)

[Agenda](#)

[Meeting Presentation](#)

[Managed Lanes Project DEIS Comments](#)

Past Years' Meeting Minutes

[2019 Meeting Minutes](#)

[2018 Meeting Minutes](#)

[2017 Meeting Minutes](#)