

Pedestrian, Bicycle & Traffic Safety in MoCo

Civic Fed Meeting, November 11, 2019
Kristy Daphnis - PBTSAC Chair (Volunteer)
kristy.daphnis@gmail.com

The Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (aka, the unpronounceable “PBTSAC”)

What is the PBTSAC? A group of citizens, elected officials, and government representatives focused on pedestrian and bicycle safety issues in Montgomery County.

- One of the 75+ Montgomery County Boards, Committees, and Commissions
- Tasked with advising the County Council and the County Exec on ped/bike safety issues.
- Focused on the whole of the County - not specific intersections & neighborhoods. (Though, we do sometimes weigh in on major issues...)
- Meet formally every other month, with intervening activities to promote and encourage ped/bike/traffic safety.

Who is on the PBTSAC? A collection of elected, County/state employees, and citizens - 17 Members

- **Stephen Aldrich**, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
- **Chris Conklin**, McDOT Director
- **Heidi Coleman**, Vice-Chair, Silver Spring Resident (up for reappointment); **George Branyan**, Silver Spring Resident; **Leah Walton**, Wheaton Resident; **Rachel Maleh**, Grosvenor/Strathmore Resident; **Tomas Bridle**, Bethesda Resident; **1 citizen vacancy**.
- **Marybeth Cleveland**, Derwood Resident & Disabilities Community Representative
- **Luisa Montero-Diaz**, Mid-County Regional Service Center
- **Captain Thomas Didone**, Montgomery County Police Department
- **Derek Gunn**, Acting Assistant District Engineer, Maryland State Highway Administration
- **Dave Helms**, Silver Spring Resident, Bicycle Advocate
- **H. Leon Langley**, Montgomery County Public Schools
- **Jeremy Martin**, City of Rockville & Maryland Municipal League
- **Hans Riemer**, Montgomery County Council

When do we meet?

- 4th Thursday, every other month. Rockville EOB, or community location
- Next meeting: Nov 21 (3rd Thurs, due to Thanksgiving), Bethesda Regional Services Center

What have we been up to recently?

- Continue to remind appointed and elected officials of Vision Zero commitment; track deliverables under VZ 2-year; advocate for longer term VZ commitment and action
- Weigh in on important issues, help raise awareness e.g.: Capital Crescent Trail, Vision Zero-based Planning Documents (Veirs Mill Master Plan, Aspen Hill Vision Zero Study, promote/support Ped Master Plan)
- Connect with community and advocacy organizations - such as the MCCPTA - for community awareness and action (Safe Routes to School Forum; facilitated start-up of joint quarterly mtgs btwn MCCPTA, PBTSAC, MCDOT, SHA)
- Participate in analysis and observation & carry forward recommendations (e.g., walk audits around the County, ACT Ped/Bike Memorials)
- Testify at County hearings - budget, pending legislation, oversight, etc.
- Coordinate advice to County & elected officials on State legislation
- **Community Engagement: Bring the meeting *outside* of EOB - gather community input in Wheaton, Germantown, Longbranch. Next up - Bethesda, Rockville.** Focus on highest incident areas & equity gaps.

Please....

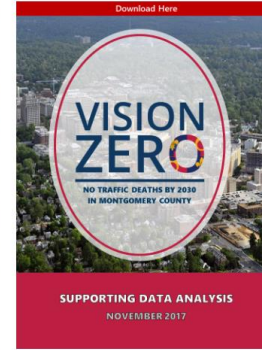
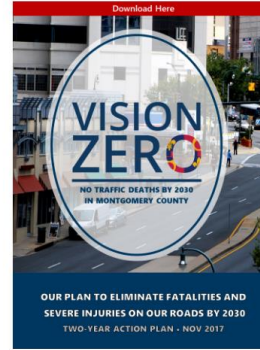
If your neighborhood is planning a pedestrian or bicycle safety event, SHA or MCDOT walk-audit, advocacy push, or other related activities - reach out!

The PBTSAC would like to get involved!

If a representative from the PBTSAC is not available to attend, we are always happy to:

- Help promote the event through social media and other channels
- Integrate talking points into our testimony and other materials
- Support your Associations' activities in our ongoing conversations with MCDOT, SHA, and others.

Vision Zero Action Plan



- Can be found here:
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/visionzero/action.html>
- Includes Action Items organized thematically, based on whether they are related to engineering, enforcement, education, traffic management, or law/policy.
- Links to active map - citizens submit problem areas and data, to supplement crash data.
- Includes information on County's progress for each action item

WHAT IS VISION ZERO?

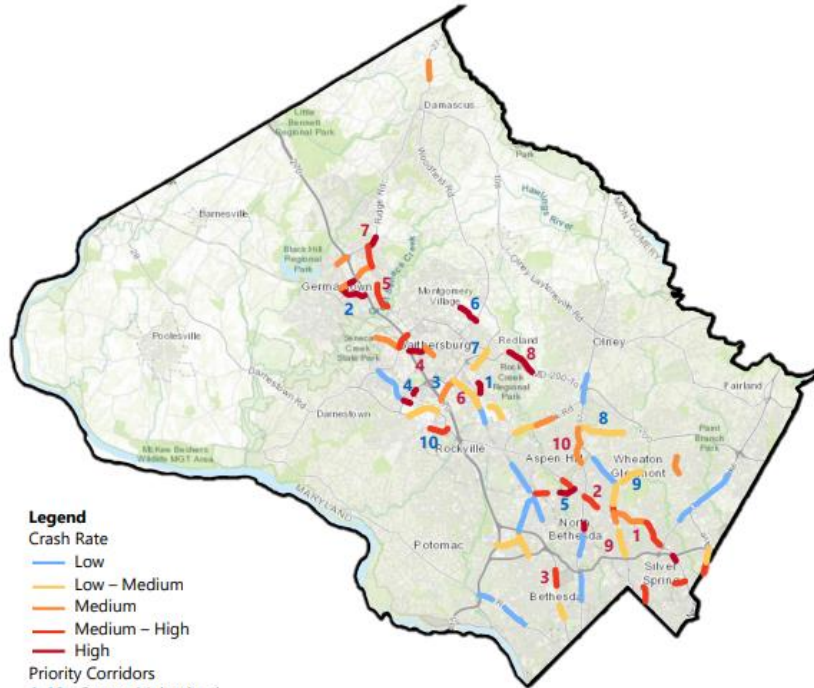
The Vision Zero concept for roadway safety was created in Sweden in 1997 and is widely credited for significant reductions in fatal and severe collisions on Sweden's roads, despite increased driving, biking, and transit use.¹ Vision Zero came to the US in 2000 with Washington State adopting its Target Zero plan.² In 2014, New York City became the first city to adopt Vision Zero, and the idea has since taken off.³ As of October 2017, Vision Zero has spread to 31 jurisdictions across the US.⁴ Vision Zero policies generally share six common principles:

1. Transportation-related deaths and severe injuries are preventable and unacceptable.
2. Human life takes priority over mobility and other objectives of the road system. The road system should be safe for all users, for all modes of transportation, in all communities, and for people of all ages and abilities.
3. Human error is inevitable; the transportation system should be designed to anticipate error so the consequences are not severe injury or death. Advancements in vehicle design and technology, roadway engineering, personal electronic devices, etc., are necessary components for avoiding the impacts of human errors.
4. People are inherently vulnerable, and speed is a fundamental predictor of crash survival. The transportation system should be designed for speeds that protect human life.
5. Safe human behaviors, education, and enforcement are essential contributors to a safe system.
6. Policies and practices at all levels of government need to align, making safety the highest priority for roadways.

Traditional Road Safety Approach	Versus	Safe System Approach
Try to prevent all crashes	What is the problem?	Prevent crashes from resulting in fatalities and severe injury
Reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries	What is the appropriate goal?	Zero fatalities and severe injuries
Reactive to incidents Incremental approach to reduce the problem	What are the major planning approaches?	Proactively target and treat risk Systematic approach to build a safe road system
Non-compliant road users	What causes the problem?	People make mistakes and people are physically fragile/vulnerable in crashes. Varying quality and design of infrastructure and operating speeds provides inconsistent guidance to users about what is safe use behavior.
Individual road users	Who is ultimately responsible?	Shared responsibility by individuals with system designers
The system is composed of isolated interventions	How does the system work?	Different elements of a safe system combine to produce a summary effect greater than the sum of the individual treatments – so that if one part of the system fails, other parts provide protection.

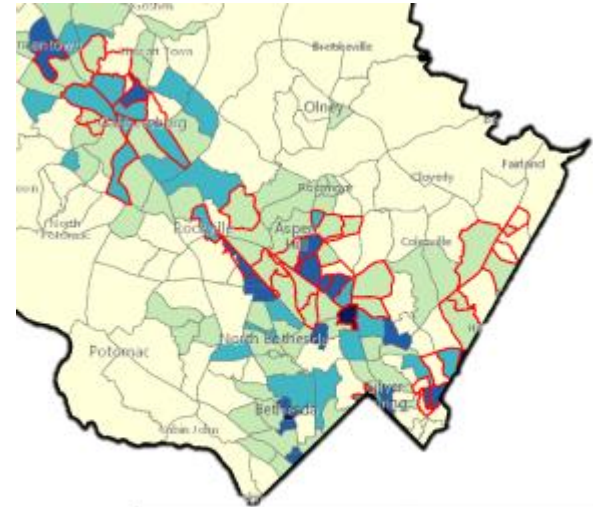
Source: "Zero Road Deaths and Serious Injuries: Leading a Paradigm Shift to a Safe System," *OECD/ITF*, 2016.

Data - 2-year plan, Visuals



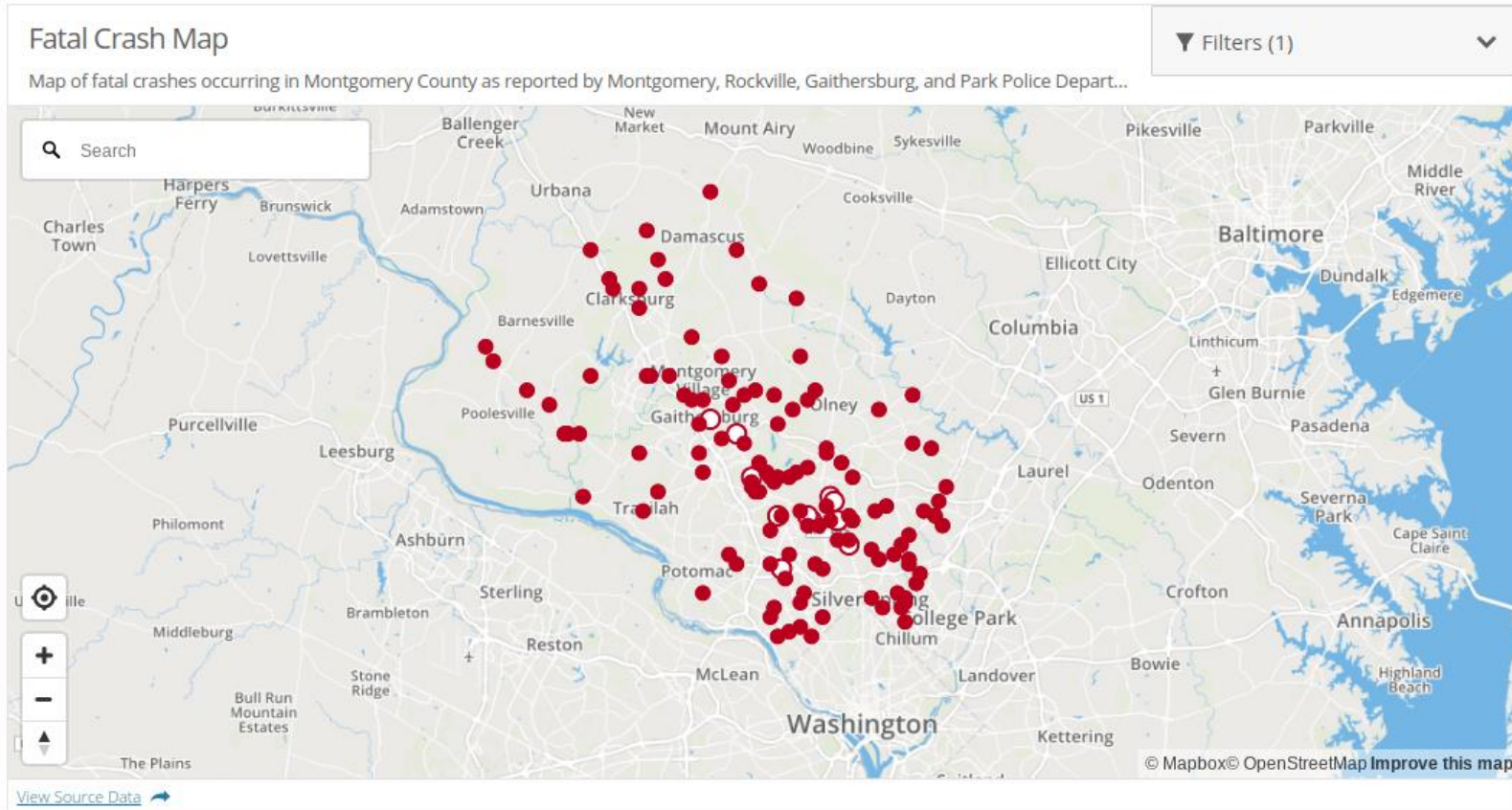
- Legend**
- Crash Rate
- Low
 - Low – Medium
 - Medium
 - Medium – High
 - High
- Priority Corridors
- 1-10 County Maintained
 - 1-10 State Maintained

Basemap Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



Basemap Esri, HERE, DeLorme, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS user community

Fatal Crashes (all road users) - since 2015



Fatal Crashes - Ped/Bike, since 2015

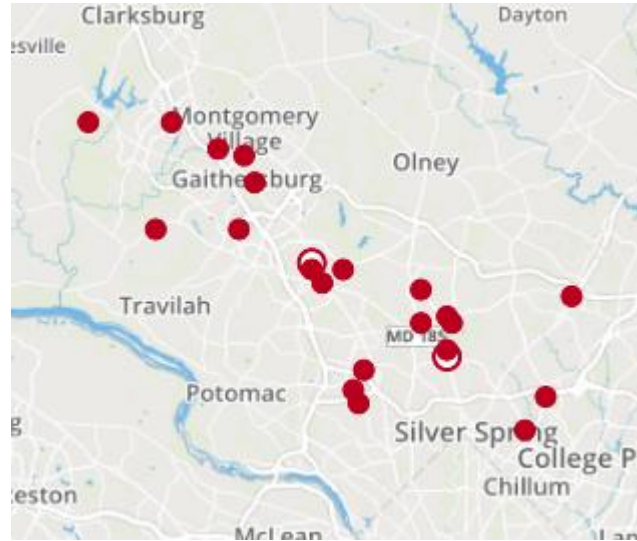
Pedestrians

Bicyclists



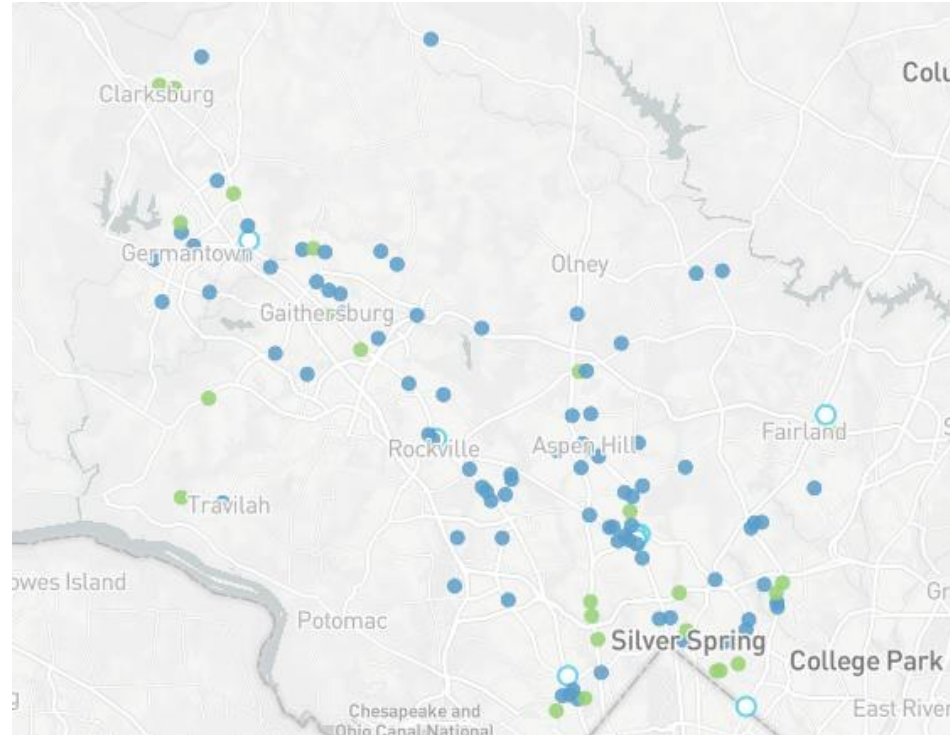
Fatal crashes - 1/1/2018 through 11/8/19

Ped/bike



Serious (non-fatal) - 1/1/18 - 11/6/19

Ped and Bike



Considerations

Planning and implementing solutions will depend on several factors, such as:

- Who owns and maintains the roadway?
- What does the specific right-of-way look like?
- What is the problem and funding source for fixing it?
- What is the traffic, pedestrian and bike volume and roadway geography?
- How do certain countermeasures fit into the broader transportation network?
- What types of interventions are allowable under the Federal & Maryland MUTCD?

When advocating for solutions, think about context - urban area, suburban, amenities (stores, schools, parks, etc.), travel patterns of residents, etc.; our “job” is to present the resident perspective, not to redesign/reengineer the roadway.

A good resource to learn about various engineering solutions:

<https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/>

What can you do?

- Learn about and advocate for pedestrian safety improvements in areas outside of your immediate neighborhood. Raising the bar across the County will improve safety culture and systematic safety approaches in all corners of the County.
- Collaborate with your neighbors - plan a community Walk-audit; tool-kit and resources available (lessons learned: Aspen Hill, Wheaton); coordinate priorities and requests; develop and come to consensus on a prioritized list of community “problem areas,” utilizing both community observations and data available on the Montgomery County Vision Zero page
- Call or tweet to 311 if you notice immediate safety concerns or issues - requests are all logged
- Engage your Civic Association in neighborhood-specific issues, as well as in conversations with MC Civic Fed, Advocacy Groups (e.g. ACT), geographically specific County Boards and Commissions, etc.
- Volunteer to lead “Safe Routes to School” initiatives at your school, and connect with the MCCPTA Safe Routes and Stops Committee
- Sign up for Vision Zero email listserve, Montgomery Planning
- “Like” the Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee Facebook page, attend PBTSAC Meetings (every 4th Thursday, 7PM)

Walk Audit - Toolkit, MC Planning

VISIONZERO



Montgomery Planning's Walk Audit Toolkit

PROVIDING TOOLS TO THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMUNITY TO WALK THE WALK

What is a Walk Audit?

Walk Audits are used to identify barriers to walking and bicycling. Neighbors walk the streets together and note what makes the streets feel comfortable for walking and what is missing. Walk Audits assess street infrastructure and conditions, documenting barriers, positive features, activities, and perceptions of the walking environment.

The results from a Walk Audit can be used to advocate for safer streets for all. Share the results with decision makers and the agency who is responsible for managing a particular roadway. The results can also help build community support to build a grassroots campaign to slow down traffic or attract media attention.

To organize a Walk Audit in your community, there are three phases: 1) Prep and Promote 2) Walk and Coverage and 3) Recap and Analyze.



montgomeryplanning.org/visionzero

PREP AND PROMOTE

Plan your event

- **Choose an area to audit.** Set a route, date and time. Plan for about 30 minutes for every half mile of walking plus time before and after the walk. Think about the purpose of the audit and who the particular roads serve. Is there a school nearby? A community center, park, or recreation center? Is the area primarily residential? Are there commercial establishments that draw from beyond the immediate neighborhood? Does the route include transit stops?
- **Walk the route(s).** Make sure the routes are safe enough to walk in groups. Note any issues for possible participants.
- **Create maps of the area.** You can print google maps and draw routes by hand or draw routes in powerpoint or another software program. You will need copies for participants on the Walk.
- **Consider your audience.** Do you need translation of materials? Is the route ADA accessible?
- **Organize volunteers.** A ratio of approximately one volunteer for every six participants is ideal, although not required.
- **Gather materials.** Print maps, walk audit checklists, and waivers. Get pens, markers, clipboards/notebooks, nametags and safety gear (or ask participants to bring their own).

Collaborate with the community

- **Invite participants to the Walk Audit.** Invite friends and neighbors, PTA members, civic associations, elected officials, representatives from state or local agencies (Department of Transportation, State Highway Administration, Montgomery County Public Schools, Police Department) business owners and other interested community members.
- **Get a headcount.** The easiest way to get a headcount is by creating a rsvp link (through a platform like evite.com or free-rsvp.com). You can also ask people to respond to you directly and keep an excel.
- **Promote the Walk Audit.** Hang up flyers, post to social media, and to your local listserv.

Attract Media coverage

- **Create and distribute a press release to local media outlets.**
- **Use the same graphics and messaging across print, web, social and video.**

WALK AND COVERAGE

Prepare

- **Distribute materials:** clipboards, name tags, maps, Walk Audit Checklist, safety gear. You can provide the clipboards and safety gear or ask participants to bring their own.
- **Ask people to sign waivers for legal liabilities.**
- **Review the route(s).** Go over the route(s), their lengths, and any points of concern.
- **Review the checklist.** Give a summary of the items on the checklist. Try to get people thinking about all types of road users, children, people in wheel chairs, people with visual or hearing impairments, and transit riders.
- **Assign someone in each group take photos or video of the audit.**

Walk the walk

- **Begin the walk.**
- **Make observations.** Write them down on the maps or checklists.
- **Take photographs of conditions.** Capture photos of participants as well as road conditions. Look for examples of barriers to safety and things you like.

RECAP AND ANALYSIS

Review

- **Reconvene as a group.** Discuss common observations and record findings on a map or one central location.
- **Interview participants.** Take video interviews of participants that you can share on social media and with participants.

Process

- **Analyze the data.** What common issues did you find? Are there improvements that you want to see?
- **Present the data in a user-friendly manner.** Create a short summary and include photos of the event. Think about including short personal stories or statistics about the roadway.
- **Create a video of the event.**
- **Report out to the community on what you learned.** Share your analysis and video with community members and media outlets.
- **Advocate for change.** Share your analysis and video with public agencies and elected officials. Consider a letter writing campaign.
- **Resources**
 - [Countystat - Vision Zero](#) provides information on high injury corridors.
 - [dataMontgomery](#) provides County crash data.

Coalition Building - Call to Action

It's imperative that we build a Countywide Coalition now, to:

- Increase accountability of County & State appointed & elected officials
- Get system-wide safety countermeasures *implemented*
- Raise the bar, in terms of funding
- Prioritize our resources to optimize safety
- Foster cross-organization communication to amplify advocacy
- Joint voice to call out progress/lack of progress:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/visionzero/Resources/Files/vz-progress.pdf>

Goal: *At least* two safety advocates (one bike/one ped) in each Council District & each State legislative District; committed to Coalition principles.