

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY REVIEW BOARD

DECEMBER 20, 2016

9:00 A.M.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Michael Ryan, Chairman
Chris Tsavatewa, Vice Chairman
Elaine Lucas, Commissioner
Violet Poe, Citizen Member
Brad Belo, MBC P&Z Planner
Nigel Floyd, MBC Traffic Engineer
Leon Jones, Coroner
Bessie Brown, Pilot International

OTHERS PRESENT:

Kevin Poss, Facilities Management Dept.
Stephanie Hyman, DPH
Sa'sha Moody, DPH
Gregory Brown, Planning & Zoning
Denise Kelley, Asst. Clerk of the Commission
Gabrielle Dawkins, 13 WMAZ
Matt Thielke, Fox 24

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

David Gowan, BOH Chairman
Captain Brad Wolfe, Bibb County Sheriff's Dept.
Major Eric Walker, Bibb County Sheriff's Dept.
Rob Ryals, Facilities Management Dept.
Myrtle Habersham, AARP
Sam Henderson, Mayor's Representative

MACON TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Henry Poole, Driver
JoAnn Lamb, Operations Manager (Fixed Route)
Dave Golder, Safety and Training Director
Andy Stroud, Director of Business Development

On December 20, 2016, the Board and guests embarked on a field trip to assess the areas where pedestrian injury or fatality has recently occurred. The Macon Transit Authority provided transportation. The group travelled a fixed-route from Poplar Street to MLK Jr. Blvd. and continued to Broadway and Eisenhower Pkwy ending at Middle GA State University before returning to the Government Center. There was a stop at Blossom Avenue and Montpelier where the Coroner, Mr. Leon Jones, met the group and discussed pedestrian concerns in that immediate area. A synopsis of the trip is below.

FIELD TRIP

MLK, Jr. Blvd/Ash Street

Incident occurred on November 16, 2016 in the evening. Witness stated subject was standing in middle of roadway when he was struck.

Assessment/Recommendations

The area is in need of added streetlights. On the south side of the street there are no sidewalks so pedestrians are forced to either walk on the street or on the dirt. The sidewalks on the north side of the street are in disrepair and require maintenance. Further west, the sidewalks are embedded into the hillside making it difficult disabled pedestrians. It was also recommended that traffic signs be added to warn drivers of the upcoming intersection. Other areas of concern

were strategic locations of bus stops between long blocks and pavement striping. The group added that public education could possibly lessen the hazards of pedestrian injuries or fatalities in the area by encouraging pedestrians to cross at designated locations. Numerous pedestrians were seen in the area at the time of the field trip.

Eisenhower Pkwy/Second Street

Incident occurred in the late afternoon on May 2, 2016. Due to surrounding traffic, driver was unable to avoid a child who stood in the street. The child was hit and suffered injuries.

Assessment/Recommendations

There are no sidewalks on either side of Eisenhower in the immediate area. A convenience center is located on the north/west corner of Eisenhower and 2nd streets. There is no pedestrian infrastructure which makes for a hazardous situation for pedestrians to cross from the south side of the street to the north to patronize the convenient stores. It's approximately ½ mile to the nearest crosswalk. The speed limit is 45 mph but most drivers tend to exceed the speed limit by 10 to 15 mph.

Further west, the State divided a neighborhood so Eisenhower Parkway can continue to run eastbound. This resulted in the division of residents (including children) having to cross the busy highway to visit family and friends. This is a high risk situation.

The group made the following recommendations. Add flashing lights to warn drivers of potential pedestrians crossing the highway between the neighborhoods. More street lights along the route should be added. Bus stops should be placed closer to the intersections and connect to added sidewalks.

Eisenhower Pkwy/Bloomfield Road

Incident occurred on June 28, 2016 in the evening. Subject hit by vehicle while crossing the street and talking on the cell phone.

Assessment/Recommendations

There are no street lights in the area. There is heavy traffic and no pedestrian infrastructure is provided on Bloomfield. The traffic island has no curbs and the striping encircling the island requires new paint. There are skid marks on the island indicating vehicles have come to sudden stops.

The group made the following recommendations: Increase lighting in the immediate area, repaint the road markings and add a pedestrian refuge.

Montpelier/Blossom Avenue

Coroner, Mr. Leon Jones, met the group at the Bentley Funeral Home. Mr. Jones voiced his concern regarding the heavy traffic that passes between the parking lot and the funeral chapels across the street. The speed limit is 35 mph but most drivers increase their speed by 15 to 20 mph.

A flashing beacon at the crosswalk can enhance pedestrian safety by calling the drivers' attention to their speed in hopes that it will increase driver awareness of potential pedestrian conflict. Adding a pedestrian island and shrinking lanes would force vehicles to travel at a slower speed.

Meeting

Chairman Michael Ryan called the meeting to order at 11:15 a.m.

Approval of November 15, 2016 Minutes

On motion by Vice Chairman Chris Tsavatewa, seconded by Ms. Violet Poe and passed unanimously, the minutes of November 15, 2016 were approved.

Subcommittee Reports

Policy and Legislation

Vice Chairman Tsavatewa had nothing to report.

Public Communication

Ms. Poe reported that reflector strips were placed on wheelchairs, walkers and canes of thirteen St. Paul Apartment (1355 Forsyth Street) residents on Friday, December 16th. The residents were encouraged to follow all traffic safety rules, use crosswalks at all times, and be attentive and extremely careful as they move from one location to another with their wheelchair, walker, cane or tri-bike. Scarlett Harper, Resident Service Coordinator, coordinated the activity. The residents were appreciative for a way to bring visibility to them as they move from one location to another in high-traffic areas.

Residents Danny Porter, Tommy Sinkfield and Marvin Losey shared their concerns regarding pedestrian safety, road design, and public transit shelters in Macon-Bibb County. The public transit shelter concerns by Mr. Losey were referred to Andy Stroud of the Macon Transit Authority and communications with Mr. Losey have been addressed and the issue was resolved.

Ms. Julie Moore of the Budget and Strategic Funding Department verified that the Macon-Bibb County Pedestrian and Safety Review Board was not eligible to apply for the Macon-Bibb County Community Development Block Grant Program. The eligibility requires interested

parties/organizations to hold 501 (c) 3 status. Ms. Moore encouraged the Board to apply for the safety grants from the Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety in the Spring of 2017.

Mr. Desmond Schneider, Purchasing Department, has been working with the vendors for the "CROSS THE WALK" Pedestrian Safety Education Campaign to secure the contracts for the billboards, bus window wraps, PSAs and convenient store signs. The billboard design has been changed to reflect the new name of the Board for the "media blitz" in January, 2017.

Approval for the campaign bus window wrap design has been given by the Design Review Committee of the Macon-Bibb County Transit Authority.

The "media blitz" will officially kick-off the "CROSS THE WALK" Pedestrian Safety Education Campaign. It will be held on Friday, January 6, 2016 at 11:30AM at the Macon-Bibb County Government Center. The Board was urged to attend. Several members of the Board will be asked to make remarks during the event. The campaign song and a campaign jingle are in the process of being completed in time for the "media blitz".

Ms. Poe met with Mr. English of iHeartMEDIA on December 14, 2016. Mr. English will contact Commissioner Elaine Lucas and Vice Chairman Tsavatewa to appear on Middle Georgia Speaks during the first week of January to discuss the Board's activities.

Interagency Coordination

Vice Chairman Tsavatewa discussed the annual distribution of grants for highway and traffic safety. Based on the 2016 Georgia Highway Plan, pedestrian and bicycle safety are high priorities. He added the Board should review the subject and submit an application for grant money. To qualify for the grant, the State is required to meet a 15% quota of the total bicycle and pedestrian fatalities combined.

Letter from Pedestrian Safety Review Board to Georgia Legislatures

Chairman Ryan will prepare a letter to the Georgia Legislative delegation requesting a meeting with them to discuss the request for GDOT to allow implementation of the safety enhancements discussed during the Board's field trips. Mr. Nigel Floyd agreed and added comments to the issue. Commissioner Elaine Lucas suggested the letter's contents include the introduction of the Board, the Board's background and the objectives of the Board. Also, a request should be made to the Legislative Board for assistance from the GDOT in achieving the Board's goals. Discussion ensued on how to proceed.

Other Matters

Discussion took place regarding the number of Board members. Commissioner Lucas will provide an updated member list.

Commissioner Lucas informed the group of the upcoming Commission Retreat where the SPLOST project list will be discussed. She asked the group to prepare and submit to her a list of projects they would like added to the SPLOST project list.

Commissioner Lucas stated that Ms. Nancy White is no longer at the Department of Board and Health. The Board will consider replacing Ms.White at the next meeting.

Chairman Ryan discussed the topic of reducing the speed of traffic of Forsyth Street in front of the St. Paul Apartments. The residents of the apartment complex are requesting a crosswalk for their use. The area has a lot of pedestrians and traffic calming is needed. The College Street/Forsyth Street intersection needs pedestrian safety improvement as well.

Commissioner Lucas asked Ms. Stephanie Hyman to order more coloring books entitled "Walk & Bike With Me in Macon Bibb County."

The next meeting will be held on January 17, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. Chairman Ryan asked if there was any further business to discuss. Hearing none, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted:

Denise Kelley
Recording Secretary