

## Notes from the Takoma Junction Task Force Subcommittee meeting with Cedric Ward, SHA

June 17, 2011, starting 9:30 am at the Historic Takoma building

Attending: Lorraine Pearsall, Susan Robb, Jim DiLuigi, Seth Grimes, Katrina Oprisko, Kay Daniels-Cohen, Cedric Ward

(Items below are summary paraphrases of things Cedric Ward said, except those attributed to others.)

For issues pertaining to traffic, Cedric is the right contact. He can direct us to other SHA staff.

Ben Myrick and company are a resource for signals: timing, design of new signals. (They also develop policy, e.g., roadway lighting, the focus on lighting intersections rather than non-intersections.) We should work through Cedric to get to Ben and company.

Cedric's office does a review if they find that adjustments need to be made in response to a timing issue.

Timing is based on the worst traffic hour – they highest volumes for each nearby intersection, coordinating them so that they'd flow. SHA bases its traffic assumptions on a 2% growth rate and that the current assumptions have been projected out to 2030.

The SHA had recently visited Takoma Junction, the week before this meeting. Vehicle detectors (cameras) were not functioning and will be replaced – he's not sure about when – and then the timing will be reexamined. The "ped" [pedestrian] phase will be switched to a different point in the cycle.

SHA has a goal to upgrade every pedestrian signal in the state upgraded to both count-down timer and audible by 2016. The audible messages would meet ADA guidelines to accommodate persons with disabilities. The sound level adjusts automatically based on the ambient noise.

Lorraine: We would like to prevent traffic delay, due to automatic pedestrian Walk signal illumination, based on the presumption that someone is waiting to cross, if no one is waiting to cross.

Cedric: We can test this (pedestrian Walk only when the button is pushed), but the presumption now is that most people won't press the button. Changing this through-out the day (i.e., automatic at some times but not others) creates unfavorable expectations for pedestrians.

The delay in the vehicle signal is to allow the pedestrians to finish crossing the street. One factor here, in TJ, is that it is a 2-stage crossing. They will be shortening the time, but it will still be automatic. There may be multiple cycles, with different timings, but the automatic/non would need to be consistent.

The SHA is working closely with the county to improve pedestrian safety. This is an initiative of County Executive Ike Leggett's. This includes all-ped phases, with (timing-wise) leading pedestrian intervals "where you establish the pedestrian in the crosswalk" before the green for cars come on.

The SHA is the ultimate authority in decisions about signal timings.

Regarding signal timing updates: Once changes are made, Cedric will let us know.

Kay: Want return of the pedestrian crossing from near Grant to near the co-op; worth the money in the long run. Seth: The TF took this off the near-term request list, not the long-term list.

Susan: Question about reinstating right turn from left lane on Carroll facing the co-op. Seth: Also, left turn from Carroll onto Philadelphia in front of the fire station. Susan: Also extend the lane divider for travel on Carroll toward the co-op.

Cedric: Usually changes were made for safety reasons. These lane-marking changes could be examples.

Katrina: Asked about simulations. Cedric: SHA wouldn't make simulations public. The SHA would have to run a simulation, for instance, of the change to a double-right.

Katrina: What's SHA's opinion on use of flashing vehicle control lights rather than the current (green-yellow-red) cycle.

Cedric: Typically, timed signals handle traffic volume, of a level that flows through the TJ area, better. "I'm 95%" on retention of timed signals in TJ.

Right now, the volumes are too high for flashing lights in front of the fire house... to handle the peak-hour traffic.

Lorraine: The Sycamore light has created big problems. Could it be converted to flashing?

Cedric: The problem might go away after the vehicle detection is corrected. The SHA will recheck at that time.

Typically, signals should not be placed so close together, but that Sycamore signal was put in for a reason. "Right now, the best control is the existing signal." Because the lights are so close, changing the Sycamore light to flashing wouldn't work, they'd distract and cause rear-end accidents.

Jim: Opinion on traffic circle?

Cedric: Maryland likes roundabouts, but "we like them at the right places. You have to look at traffic volumes." Here, and given the historic area, a roundabout "would create property impacts." A request from the city council would go beyond Cedric's department. "With a roundabout you'd have to get the highway and roadway designers involved."

Cedric: Development in the city lot would entail the developers submitting a traffic impact study to the county. It includes a determination, from Park & Planning, which intersections are impacted. The SHA reviews. (Per request from Katrina:) Will find out the current level-of-service rating, also the feasibility of a left-turn lane from Carroll into the city lot.

Seth: To-dos for Cedric are –

- 1) Report when the vehicle detectors are in and the timing re-work has been done, to Lorraine.
- 2) Look into right turn from the left traffic lane on Carroll facing the co-op and left turn from Carroll onto Philadelphia by the fire station.