

Email


Comment for the Pedestria...




Owner

 MCP...

Email

From  Alla Corey McCoy

To  <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject Comment for the Pedestrian Master Plan for Montgomery County

Date Sent

Date Received

2/15/2023 11:18 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for taking upon improving the walkability of our communities, providing a safer and healthier environment for us all. I would like to write about a walkability issue in our community that also negatively affects other adjacent communities and severely limits walkability for many. There are sidewalks installed on both sides of New Hampshire Avenue/Route 650 from where Route 198 meets Route 650 all the way to Randolph Road and beyond south. However, there is a small portion of Route 650, where on the west side of the road the sidewalk completely disappears, and private property fence is installed all the way to the roadway. There also is no shoulder on that stretch of the road because the shoulder becomes too narrow at first and then becomes a turn lane. This is extremely dangerous, as I see people walking right in the path of the fast moving vehicles, and sometimes even at night in the dark. It significantly limits walkability for the residents of the Stonegate community and adjacent communities, making it impossible to safely walk to the two shopping centers (including the one with Safeway). There also is no crosswalk that would allow people to safely cross to avoid that stretch of non-existent sidewalk. The stretch of the road is on New Hampshire Avenue between Stonegate Drive (entrance to the Stonegate community) and the St. Andrew Ukrainian Cathedral. I think it is important to build a sidewalk there, or at least to add a safe crosswalk at the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and Stonegate Drive, with a zebra on the roadway, and with a button operated light to stop traffic.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Alla McCoy
200 Farmgate Lane
Silver Spring, MD 20905

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	

Attachment C: Public Correspondence to Date



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Page 1

CABIN JOHN CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 31, Cabin John MD 20818

Organized 1919 Charter Member Montgomery County Civic Federation
Scott and Heidi Lewis – Co-Presidents; Bob Walsh – Treasurer; Kelly Banuls – Secretary

February 21, 2023

By email to: mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org

Mr. Jeff Zyontz
Acting Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
M-NCPPC
2425 Reddie Drive
14th Floor
Wheaton, MD 20902

Re: Pedestrian Master Plan Public Hearing – March 23, 2023
Written Testimony of Cabin John Citizen's Association

Dear Chairman Zyontz and Members of The Planning Board:

Cabin John Citizens Association is pleased to share our written testimony to the Pedestrian Master Plan in advance of the public hearing on March 23, 2023.

We support the objectives of the Pedestrian Master Plan to create safer, more comfortable experiences for county pedestrians. Outdoor activity and alternative forms of transportation remain important to the Cabin John community, so we support thoughtful planning and infrastructure investment that encourages walking and biking.

We recognize that resources are limited and that Pedestrian Master Plan recommendations must be prioritized. We believe, however, that the county has devoted too few resources to responding to our community's requests for less costly pedestrian safety improvements such as marked crosswalks.

We, along with individual Cabin John citizens, have repeatedly requested crosswalks in several key locations in Cabin John for almost a decade – nearly all of which have been denied. Our crosswalk requests have included school bus stop locations, entrances to public parks, and on commuter traffic roads with poor sightlines. We should not have to wait until something terrible happens to proactively address pedestrian safety concerns. We ask that the county commit additional resources to install pedestrian crosswalks as requested by our community.

We also support the testimony of Kelly Banuls and the residents along Persimmon Tree Road in Cabin John and Bethesda, which includes a petition request for a crosswalk at Persimmon Tree Road and Caraway Street, a school bus stop location.

We appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Scott and Heidi Lewis,
Co-Presidents

Charlotte Troup Leighton,
Vice President of Advocacy

cc: Eli Glazier, Montgomery County Planning - eli.glazier@montgomeryplanning.org
Councilmember Andrew Friedson, Montgomery County Council - councilmember.friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov

Email

Sidewalk Master Plan - Spe...

Owner

MCP...

Email

From

 Cris

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

Sidewalk Master Plan - Specific Recommendations?

Date Sent

Date Received

2/13/2023 1:39 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Hello-

In my cursory review of the Pedestrian Master Plan, I did not see a specific reference to streets in mature neighborhoods that may have, in the past, been appropriate settings to exclude sidewalks, but which today, given a multitude of changed circumstances, make the inclusion of sidewalks necessary. I believe such (primarily Downcounty) neighborhood streets necessitate a close, case-by-case evaluation of sidewalk appropriateness given the greater likelihood of higher density in Downcounty areas, as well as the aforementioned street design, which in many cases occurred decades in the past.

One such street is **Kent St., between Stoneybrook Dr. and Kensington Parkway**. Kent Street bisects the Rock Creek Hills subdivision, a neighborhood developed in the 1950s and 1960s with the intent of creating a neighborhood with a "park-like setting." To be sure, attempts by neighbors over recent years to increase sidewalks in Rock Creek Hills have been met with resistance from those who enjoy the setting of the neighborhood "as-is." However, I believe there is a middle ground for this debate, which I also believe to be applicable to other, similarly mature neighborhoods with these dynamics.

This middle ground is to create a pedestrian "loop," around which pedestrians can travel, that connects existing sidewalk and trail networks together by bridging any missing "pieces." In this way, pedestrians can avail themselves of all the desired benefits of a sidewalk network, while those who do not want sidewalks within their neighborhoods are less impacted than by extending the sidewalk network further within neighborhood streets.

In the case of Rock Creek Hills, Kent St is a Ride-On bus route, MCPS bus route (with stops), and heavily-used commuter connector to avoid congested intersections and major roads within and around Kensington. To that point, the Town of Kensington successfully installed 'no left turn' signs at several locations in TOK, to prevent commuter motorists from using Rock Creek Hills and TOK as a 'cut through' for commuter travel. While this strategy may or may not have helped in this regard, it is evidence that TOK recognized the volume of travel coming through town limits, as well as Rock Creek Hills.

Kent St., and Kent St. alone, should have sidewalks. Not only do many school-aged children use this road for walking to school or the bus, but they also use it to access 'downtown' Kensington, parks, and other neighborhood amenities. Many pedestrians use Kent to access the Beach Dr./Rock Creek Park trail network. Those living along and beyond Stoneybrook Ave frequently take walks through Kensington/Rock Creek Hills, and by necessity, use Kent St for access. But because it is a bus route and a major cut through for vehicular traffic, with on-street parking permitting, it is often the scene of many hazardous pedestrian-vehicular interactions. To that end, over the years the County

Attachment C: Public Correspondence to Date


has installed speed bumps, and even a roundabout, for traffic calming purposes. It is not enough. To be a pedestrian along Kent St is not enough, as even stop signs at Kent St. and Wake Dr. seem to be deemed optional by motorists.

I am therefore requesting the inclusion of Kent St. into future sidewalk analyses with the hope that one day the road is served by sidewalks.

Thank you

Cris Maina
3304 Wake Dr
Kensington, MD 20895

Attachments

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Email

Walking in MoCo

Owner

 MCP...



Email

From

 Esther and Terence Curry

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

Walking in MoCo

Date Sent

Date Received

3/4/2023 2:36 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

In my opinion, in Montgomery County walking is seen as a leisure activity that takes place on trails rather than as a means of actually getting anywhere useful. As a result you can amble along a trail that has no amenities like cafés or lavatories and then go home again. If, however you wanted to go on foot to get a pint of milk you'd almost certainly have to brave a narrow sidewalk (too narrow for two people to walk comfortably side by side) with no buffer between you and six lanes of traffic. You'd then have to pick which is the least inconvenient crossing, have to wait for ages to cross and then have to sprint across when it's finally your turn.

Because of zoning we have no corner stores accessible to neighborhoods which, as someone who grew up in the UK and who has lived in both Vienna and Berlin, is nonsensical. The layout of residential streets with odd cutoffs to stop cars using them as cut throughs means that pedestrians, if they are mad enough to try, also have to go the long way round. This is even more intolerable in summer by the lack of trees on many streets.

Where I live there is one grocery store that one can get to on foot or by bike pleasantly. However, Shalom Kosher is (naturally) closed on Saturday. The car lot (far too big with no trees and unbearably hot in the summer) is accessible from the Sligo Creek trail. From Dennis Avenue round to the Safeway on University an obvious pedestrian route would be along Gilmore because it parallels University Blvd but it is chopped up and there is no side access to the Safeway car lot. Who in their right mind would want to walk along University Boulevard to get there? Don't even talk to me about walking to Snyders over on Georgia Ave. it's theoretically feasible, but the most tolerable route takes you partially along the trail and then through a neighborhood but that's a way longer route than the most direct but wildly unpleasant one along the main road.


In Europe people walk regularly to get basic necessities because it is a pleasant experience so they combine exercise with errands. Everyone has a shopping basket on wheels and takes it with them. Here, even in Kensington, walking from one store to another and having to cross Connecticut Ave one feels vulnerable and out of place as one waits for an eternity to cross the road.

Truly, the car has taken over but it is time that neighborhoods and built up areas were reclaimed for pedestrians, wheelchair users and cyclists. A kid should be able to hop on their bike and go and buy some candy without it being a full-scale expedition where they could well be mown down by an irate driver who doesn't see why they should stop just because there's a stop sign, or an optimistically painted crosswalk on their six-lane highway.

Esther Curry
1507 Woodman Avenue

Sent from my iPhone

Attachments

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Email

FW: Montgomery County ...

Owner

 MCP...



Email

From

 Glazier, Eli

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

FW: Montgomery County Pedestrian Master Plan

Date Sent

Date Received

2/28/2023 11:05 AM

-----Original Message-----

From: Gael Cheek <gaelcheek@yahoo.com>

Sent: Tuesday, February 28, 2023 11:04 AM

To: Glazier, Eli <eli.glazier@montgomeryplanning.org>

Cc: Qi, Lily Delegate <Lily.Qi@house.state.md.us>

Subject: Montgomery County Pedestrian Master Plan

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Eli

I recently received a helpful email from my State Delegate Lily Qi concerning the Montgomery County Pedestrian Master Plan. I understand from that document that you are the staff contact for the Montgomery County Pedestrian Master Plan. I would like to know how to find a map of all the sidewalks in Montgomery County, both currently built and planned. I would also like a list of all the agencies and contacts for requesting sidewalks in Montgomery County.

I have recently worked with Lori Main from the Annual Sidewalk Program. She has been an excellent help concerning my neighborhoods request for a sidewalk as a result of a recent pedestrian accident involving two pedestrians. I believe that her proposal for our sidewalk is forthcoming and that it will be successful.

In the course of getting information to request the sidewalk two problems came to my attention. I was not able to find any map that shows where sidewalks currently exist or one showing where they will be built. Because the request for a sidewalk is more likely to be viewed favorably if the sidewalk requested connects to other sidewalks, not having such a map is a problem for individuals requesting sidewalks.

The other problem was that many different agencies seem to be involved in building sidewalks based on certain criteria which are too numerous to list.


This is a problem because in my case it is possible that our sidewalk would be connected to one proposed on a major road near our street but there is no way for me to know if the sidewalk on that street would be built.

Since many citizens do not know how to request sidewalks this lack of a map and list of agencies is a barrier for improvements based on the shared experience of pedestrians. I believe a map showing where current sidewalks are is crucial for citizens faced with dangerous road conditions.

Thanks for you help on this important plan.

Gael Cheek
12201 Ambleside Dr
Potomac MD
20854
301-466-7666

Attachments

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March 1, 2023

Honorable Ben Cardin

United States Senate
509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Chris Van Hollen

United States Senate
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Jamie Raskin

United States House of Representatives
2242 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Glenn Ivey

United States House of Representatives
1529 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable David Trone

United States House of Representatives
2404 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Montgomery County Congressional Delegation:

I am writing to express my organization's strong support of the Montgomery County Department of Transportation's (MCDOT's) proposed Goshen Road Safety and Pedestrian Improvement project.

Goshen Road serves Historically and Transportation Disadvantaged Communities in Gaithersburg, MD. A hillcrest at its intersection with Emory Grove Road obscures driver's sightlines. Sixty-six crashes have occurred on this road between the intersection of Emory Grove Road and MD-124 since 2015. More than half of these resulted in an injury.

This project will improve safety by addressing the sight distance at this intersection. In addition, missing segments of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure will be constructed. The intersection of Goshen Road and MD-124 will be modified to improve operations and safety.

The Montgomery County Planning Department, part of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission along with the Planning Board, strives to improve quality of life in Montgomery County by planning the natural and built environments for current and future generations. The Planning Board works closely with the Planning Department to help ensure master plans, development projects, and infrastructure investments implement this mission. This project is fully consistent with the County's 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan* and ongoing *Pedestrian Master Plan*, which envision comfortable, safe and convenient walking and bicycling networks throughout the county.

I appreciate the Montgomery County Congressional Delegation's commitment to funding high-quality projects with visible and sustainable community benefits, and we urge you to support this worthy project.

Sincerely,



Jeff Zyontz
Chair

Email

Pedestrian Master Plan Pu...

Owner

 MCP...



Email

From

 Laura

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

Pedestrian Master Plan Public Hearing

Date Sent

Date Received

3/14/2023 7:43 AM


[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Bikes, scooters, and skateboards on the sidewalk are a danger to pedestrians -- especially the elderly and disabled -- and should not be allowed.

In my downtown Silver Spring neighborhood, I experience frequent near misses while walking when people on fast-moving bikes and scooters come from behind with no warning. I rarely hear them approaching because of the traffic noise. I do not always walk in a straight line (because I am not a robot) so it is not always easy for the person to avoid hitting me. Walking on the sidewalk should not be a safety risk.

Please address this urgent problem.

Attachments

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Attachment C: Public Correspondence to Date

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Email

Pedestrian Safety in Damas...

Owner

 MCP...



Email

From

 Marie Dean

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

Pedestrian Safety in Damascus

Date Sent

Date Received

3/14/2023 3:38 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

As a longtime resident of Damascus, I am pleased to see that the need for sidewalks in Damascus Town Center is addressed in the Pedestrian Safety Survey. Sidewalks in the town center are vital to allow for the revitalization of the town center which is currently struggling. Residents understand that Damascus has sidewalk issues because all of the major roads (routes 27, 124, and 108) are state highways. Retrofitting sidewalks to meet modern needs is expensive, but it is important for planners to remember that the idealized vision of a rural town in Damascus does not match today's reality. There has been increasing residential construction in the town center due to the lower cost of real estate in Damascus. One senior housing complex has been completed in the town center (Victory Haven) and another is under construction at St Anne Church. There is a new townhouse development under construction adjacent to Damascus Elementary School. There needs to be a master plan for sidewalks to link all of this new development to the existing town center including Damascus High School.

The planning board needs to address sidewalk issues when development is planned. Let me give you a few examples. I reported concerns about the sidewalk situation at Victory Haven (route 108) in June 2020 when I witnessed a disabled senior walking in route 108 with a walker because there is no sidewalk connecting Victory Haven to the crosswalk leading to the senior center/library complex on the other side of route 108. There is a

sidewalk in front of Victory Haven but it does not connect to the existing sidewalk that leads to the crosswalk at route 124. The needed gap in the sidewalk is one residential lot in width but there is no sidewalk. This situation should have been addressed during the planning process but now it is 3 years of promises but no sidewalk. We have been told that it will be another year before the sidewalk that everyone acknowledges is necessary will be built because 108 is a state road. It should not take 4 years to get fix this problem.


There is a senior housing center under construction at St Anne Church on a dangerous section of route 27. There are no sidewalks on that section of route 27. Many have questioned the approval of this project at that location because the seniors will be unable to walk safely anywhere off the property.

There is a new townhouse development being built next to Damascus Elementary School. It is actually an ideal location for such a development with access to the town center and transportation and walkable to both an elementary school and Damascus High School. But there is no sidewalk on that side of route 27. The residents will not be able to walk safely to town. There needs to be a sidewalk on both sides of route 27 from Bethesda Church Road to the town center. Damascus Center is a still a small town. Let's make it walkable.

Thank you for addressing our problems,

Marie Dean
10720 Middleboro Drive
Damascus MD 20872
Marie_dean@verizon.net

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	
		
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From: digitalteam@montgomeryplanning.org
To: [Glazier, Eli](#)
Subject: New submission from Pedestrian Master Plan feedback (final)
Date: Friday, March 10, 2023 11:58:40 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Comments

This plan includes a lot of proposals that are about as dumb as a ton of bricks.
There are 91% of the residents in MD own and drive cars.
The number that walks regularly is about 62%, but that is typically less than 10 minutes per day and in a park or local neighborhood.
The county developed a "Go Green Montgomery Plan" (which includes a lot of dumb ideas also, like outloawing natural gas appliances...) -
Making every intersection in the county a "mandatory walk signal" on every cycle is a HUGE waste in carbon emissions !!!!!
Making pedestrians push a button to cross the street is not unfair. Most light cycles there is NO ONE waiting.
It will also cost a fortune to change the hardware - yet another wasteful spending line in the county budget.
Raising taxes for this plan is ridiculous and anti-business. Let the policies phase in ONLY as regular equipment, lighting, and roadway maintenance allows it. Its fine.
The number one priority for the county is LOWERING the cost of solar power and supporting job growth, as the ability to "build its way out" of the budget is going the way of the dinosaurs (and former local farms). Most of this plan is NOT a priority, and frankly several ideas are pretty anti-driver.
BTW - the "safe crosswalks" the county has been creating are also a disaster waiting to happen - I have seen cars race past them without stopping while another car blocks the view of an aging pedestrian or baby stroller in the cross walk. PLEASE STOP creating these dangerous non-solutions (and take them out or install a real red-light that stops traffic when pedestrians request it).
You need to create safer DRIVING roads in this county, in particular around the schools, and stop wasting money on marginal improvements for pedestrians that are normally NOT THERE.

Name (optional)

David Lechner

Email (optional)

dave@lechnersonline.com

Email

FW: New submission from ...

Owner

 MCP...



Email

From

 Glazier, Eli

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

FW: New submission from Pedestrian Master Plan feedback (final)

Date Sent

Date Received

3/6/2023 8:45 AM

Additional testimony.

There is not any contact information, but is that okay?

From: digitalteam@montgomeryplanning.org <digitalteam@montgomeryplanning.org>

Sent: Sunday, March 5, 2023 9:56 PM

To: Glazier, Eli <eli.glazier@montgomeryplanning.org>

Subject: New submission from Pedestrian Master Plan feedback (final)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.


Comments

I have some issues with section B-4g. I am NOT in favor of making the closure permanent. I live near the north end of Sligo creek parkway. I use this road for commuting during the week. I also actively bike and walk along it. It is currently closed on FRIDAYS as well as during the weekend. I cannot use it to commute on Fridays, and indeed even sometimes see school buses hurrying to get off the road on Friday mornings before the gates are closed. Sligo Creek Parkway was my commute and access to the beltway near Forest Glen, access to Holy Cross hospital and access to downtown Silver Spring and Takoma park. I now have to loop around and go onto even more crowded street (Georgia Ave. or Colesville Road) to get to these locations. The extra time is especially concerning for Hospital access on weekends. I also know several families from nearby apartments who used to use the rec center and picnic areas off the parkway on weekends, but no longer can as there is extremely limited or no nearby parking or easy access from which to walk to these facilities. On weekends the parkway recreation areas are basically off limits to anyone who is unable to walk or bike there. I have been walking, biking and driving this road since before the pandemic and did not have any issues using the path along the parkway or

Attachment C: Public Correspondence to Date

sharing the road with bicyclists before the pandemic. Even now I don't see much more pedestrian traffic than before the pandemic closures, although most people seem to choose to use the open road and not the path, which is often unused weekends. I ask you to consider reopening the road and make it usable by all in the nearby communities. At the very least please reopen it on Fridays for those of us who have to commute.

Attachments

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From: [Fonner Family](#)
To: [Glazier, Eli](#)
Cc: [Jesse Fonner](#); [John Dillon](#)
Subject: Norbeck Road: lack of pedestrian sidewalks
Date: Thursday, February 16, 2023 5:01:30 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Mr Glazier,

I understand that there is a Pedestrian Master Plan available online for Montgomery County. I am unable to download it to read so I'm wondering if you can answer my single question:

Does the plan address the **lack of sidewalks on Norbeck Road** between Wintergate (at the the bridge) and Twin Valley Court on one side and Laughlin Lane on the other? If I try to walk to the Norbeck Animal Clinic for a vet appt, just two blocks from my home, or if the kids living in my neighborhood want to walk to the East Local Norbeck Park across from Bailey's Lane, we put our lives in peril. Not everyone has a car or can drive so walking is often not a choice but a necessity and often involves walking in the road!

There is a hodgepodge of pedestrian paths from Bailey's Lane North towards Georgia Ave but nothing from Baileys Lane East on Norbeck. There is a short bit of sidewalk on the bridge (at Norbeck and Wintergate) but nothing after it going East towards Layhill Road.

Thank you for any clarification you can provide.
Davida Fonner

Email

Pedestrian master plan sub...

Owner

 MCP...



Email

From

 pablo collins

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

Pedestrian master plan submission

Date Sent

Date Received


3/13/2023 11:22 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

I submit the attached document for inclusion in the hearing on the Pedestrian Master plan.

Thank you
Pablo Collins
4820 Leland St
Chevy Chase MD 20815
301 946-4919

Attachments

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SIDEWALK TRAVESTIES

by Pablo Collins

Submission to Planning Board Hearing on the Pedestrian Master Plan

- The following pictures make it very clear that no one is looking out for pedestrians and the sidewalks on which they travel.
- Policy makers may talk about “pedestrian friendly” but the sidewalks are far from that.
- Government, business, and drivers feel free to intrude on the sidewalks, without concern for pedestrian access or safety.
- Are there any standards and are they ever enforced?
- Is anyone in charge? Is there any oversight?
- Does anyone care?

Montgomery Ave.
Driveway curbs impede free
flow and force pedestrians
and wheelchairs close to
the street



Montgomery Ave.
Signal pole in middle of
sidewalk



Bradley Blvd.
Phone pole in middle of
sidewalk



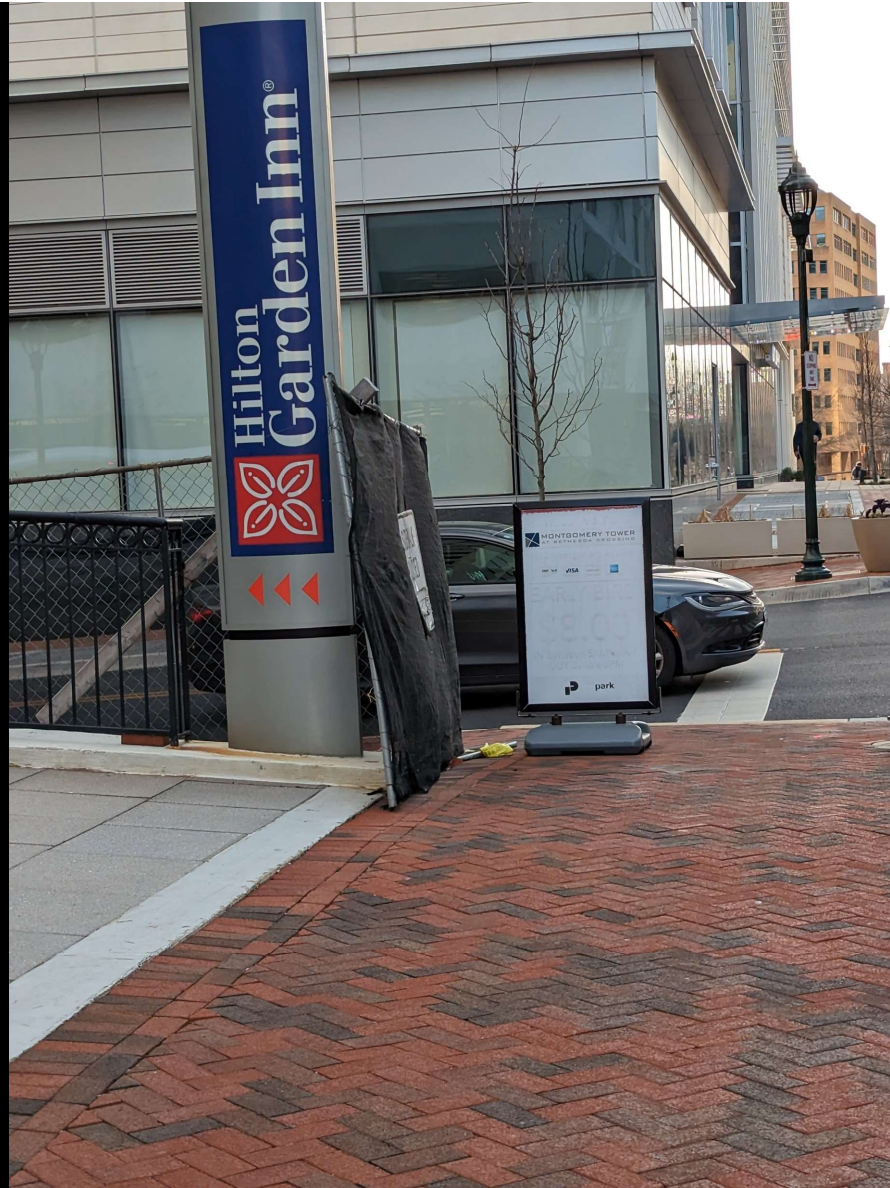
Bradley Blvd.
Phone pole and traffic
control box make for a
slalom course



Wisconsin Ave.
Driveway curbs present
tripping hazard and wheelchair
obstacle



Montgomery Ave.
Abandoned commercial sign
obstructing sidewalk



Montgomery Ave. at
Waverly
Why are these flower
boxes blocking more
than half the sidewalk?
See next picture.



Montgomery Ave. at Waverly
The engineers or construction crews obviously overlooked the different grades at the corner and rather than repair their error they decided it was easier to block the sidewalk.



Bethesda Ave.
Commercial signage
restricts pedestrian flow
forcing people off the
main walkway



Bethesda Ave.
Another view of
commercial signage
blocking pedestrian flow



Bethesda Ave.
More commercial
signage in walkway



Bethesda Ave.
Whose great idea
was this, leaving the
fire hydrant in the
middle of the
sidewalk. One
wouldn't leave a
hydrant in the
middle of the street
but its ok to leave it
in the sidewalk.



Bethesda Ave.
Multiple commercial
signs left randomly
on the sidewalk



Arlington Blvd.
Is this sidewalk for parking
or walking?



Bethesda Ave.
No place for
pedestrians except the
street.



Arlington Blvd.
Utility pole falling over? No
problem, place an anchor
in the middle of the
sidewalk.



Arlington Blvd.
How many poles can we
plant on the corner?



Hampden Lane
Lovely view while walking
down the sidewalk.



Hampden Lane, Is this
a sidewalk or a waste
loading dock?



Hampden Lane
Car parked on sidewalk,
obstructing pedestrian
flow



Hampden Lane
A simple way to keep
cars and trucks from
using driveways and
sidewalks for parking.
No Parking barriers



Woodmont Ave.
More signs blocking
the sidewalk



Montgomery Ave.
Large signal box in the
middle of the walkway



Montgomery Ave.
A common sight – vehicles
blocking the sidewalk



Wisconsin Ave.
Pipe in the way – not too
worry, just block more of
the sidewalk.



Leland St.
Pedestrians Forced to
veer out of the walkway
while the sidewalk on
other side of street
closed for different
construction project.



March 15, 2023

Planning Chair Jeff Zyontz
Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reddie Drive, 4th Floor
Wheaton, MD 20902
mcp-chair@mncppc.org

Re: Public Hearing Draft of the Pedestrian Master Plan

Dear Mr. Chairman,

The Pedestrian Master Plan was initiated as part of Montgomery County's 2017 Vision Zero Action Plan to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2030. Given that we have not yet achieved even the 50% reduction called for in the County's January 2002 Blue Ribbon Panel report in the subsequent two decades, **how will we achieve Vision Zero's 100% reduction in the next seven years?** Good intentions are not enough.

The Pedestrian Master Plan must be very clear in its presentation of what the problems are: where current design practice runs contrary to the law, policies, standards and accepted professional best practices; what legal and regulatory changes need to be made; and who is responsible for fixing the problems. **This Plan must be a game-changer or Vision Zero is just a meaningless slogan.** The Public Hearing Draft's recommendations would create a better environment for pedestrians, but significant changes are needed for the Plan to be truly effective.

Pedestrian safety must be the Plan's clear #1 goal: Increasing walking rates and pedestrian satisfaction are good goals, but they *follow from* making Montgomery County a safer place to walk, rather than *lead to* safety. The methodology for prioritizing projects should be moved from the appendix to the body of the Plan so that it can be put into better context, but it also needs to be revised to better promote pedestrian safety. Pedestrian crash history - safety - is only 15% of the total score, and four of the ten prioritization factors specifically address bikes whereas only two address pedestrians - it's not clear why bike factors predominate or even why they're included in a prioritization of pedestrian projects. **The methodology should prioritize pedestrian safety for project implementation and the plan should also clearly state what types of projects would do the most to promote pedestrian safety** since specific locations are unspecified.

Many more metrics are needed to ensure that we are improving pedestrian safety: In the Vision and Goals section, "Enhance Pedestrian Safety" has just two metrics, the satisfaction of residents and the number of pedestrian fatalities and severe injuries; the latter is the most important metric but is actually a measurement of failure to provide a safe system. Many other operational aspects of the system should be measured first to avoid that failure, such as tracking the percentage of roads with an appropriate posted speed limit; the frequency and severity of speeding on the county's roads; the frequency of red light running; the frequency of driver failure to yield to pedestrians; the percentage of roadway lighting that is up to standard and operational; the percentage of crosswalk markings that are in good condition; and the percentage of stop bars and roadway lane markings that reflect the safest roadway operation for pedestrians.

The Recommendations section should be significantly reorganized to ensure that the entities responsible for making changes can clearly understand what they need to do: The themes in the Design, Policy and Programming section are too focused on translating the recommendations into active verbs like “build” and “protect” and not enough on which parties need to take the desired actions, confusing both responsibility and priority; for example, Action B-6 “Reduce pedestrian pathway temperatures” is listed well in advance of Action B-10 “Assume control of state highways.” Recommendations should instead be organized first as to their level of statutory importance. This plan is almost 300 pages, its appendices more than 150, and the Complete Streets Design Guide, with which this plan should be read, is over 300. Most lawmakers and upper management in transportation agencies are not going to wade through 750 pages to find the changes they’re being asked to make, e.g., the legislative changes that would be led by our State Delegation are now shown in eight places spread over 54 pages. **All recommendations that would require a change in State law should be grouped together.**

The Introduction states that unlike the Bicycle Master Plan and Master Plan of Highways and Transitways, the Pedestrian Plan focuses on policies, programs and priorities. As such, **having an organizational format with a clear legal and technical framework that is directed to those responsible for making the necessary changes is essential.** Up to five agencies are noted as having lead responsibility for some recommendations, reducing the likelihood that any single agency will be held accountable. All recommendations that would require changes to an agency’s standards, policies and practices should be grouped together to make it easier for the agency to see clearly what they need to address. Such a reorganization would also help the public understand where an agency’s policies adversely affect pedestrian safety and where to apply pressure to make the right thing happen. Where a satisfactory agreement cannot be achieved in discussions with state and/or local agencies, **M-NCPPC should maintain a record of these open issues on the Pedestrian Master Plan website.** During my 20-year career as the highway coordinator and de facto pedestrian coordinator for the Planning Department from 1996 until 2016, many of the Plan’s issues were previously discussed but not satisfactorily resolved. Having a permanently available public record may prompt a better response by the applicable agency.

The Introduction’s statement is misleading however because specific location-based recommendations for facilities are made in this Plan as 62 pages of “Pedestrian Infrastructure Recommendations,” but the recommended 310 pedestrian shortcuts are a distraction from the necessary focus on safety. The Plan section states that the need for new and reconstructed sidewalks far exceeds the county’s capacity to build them. No basis is given for that statement but if we are serious about achieving Vision Zero by 2030, an all-hands-on-deck approach is needed, and **the County should consider starting no new highway capacity projects until we have a safe pedestrian system.**

Councilmember Will Jawando was recently quoted as saying that **over the past decade, out of over 700,000 traffic citations in Montgomery County, only 3,300 drivers have been cited for failing to yield to a pedestrian. That’s less than one-half of one percent of all citations -** roughly one ticket per police officer every four years for the 1,281 currently authorized positions **- while pedestrians are involved in 4% of all crashes and comprise 27% of the severe injuries and fatalities,** per the Existing Conditions data in the plan. Subtracting the citations given as part of dedicated sting operations would get us pretty close to zero, i.e., virtually no

day-to-day enforcement. *(I regularly walk the length of Georgia Avenue through the Silver Spring Central Business District and typically see 2-3 violations during my 30 to 40-minute roundtrip, i.e., I see more pedestrian-related violations by drivers on an average day than MCPD is ticketing in the entire county.)* Using the above statistics, **police enforcement to protect pedestrians should be at least eight times what it is currently and MCPD should consider having a dedicated group of motivated officers in charge of enforcement so that proper training and accountability are assured.** A list of all potential traffic and pedestrian-related violations should be included on the County's Vision Zero website, along with a tally of all tickets given for each offense every year.

Transportation engineers must be accountable for the projects they design, and the police department should concur on the design: Additional metrics are needed for the capital projects that we undertake and we must ensure that those in charge take responsibility for safety. Each project should be scored by the agency's project manager for pedestrian safety and comfort and for adherence to the stated target speed. The design should then be scored by an independent engineer under contract to the MCPD who should make recommendations for any necessary additional improvements. Rather than argue about whether a problem is best addressed via enforcement or redesign, **both agencies with shared responsibility for the day-to-day safe operation of our roadways should have input into a project's design and success,** enabling the county to avoid future speeding and safety problems. These scores should be reflected in the transportation project manager's and design section chief's personnel reviews and in the review of the design consultant for use in the consideration of awards for future work. The project should also be scored one year after construction to ensure that actual operation has met the project goals and remedial work undertaken as needed. **MCPD should also have a process to formally request roadway projects to address perennial enforcement problem locations.**

The driving culture in Montgomery County needs to improve, but County employees themselves need to take public safety seriously, have adequate supervision to ensure that they do so and be punished when they do not. While red light-running is rampant **at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road, the frequent occurrence of Ride-On bus drivers running the red light and cutting off pedestrians in the crosswalk is the most egregious.** *(I have personally witnessed this happen even in groups of two or three buses and recently even by an articulated FLASH bus, the County's premier transit service. The current driver expectation of punishment in such a high-visibility location apparently must be quite low.)* In addition to punishing drivers who break the law, **MCDOT should also consider adopting an operation policy to require bus drivers to stop on a yellow light as long as it is safe to do so.**

In addition to looking at what other agencies can do better, **the Planning Department should closely examine which of its own policies may adversely affect pedestrians.** Several years ago when I was leading the Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan, buried in the numbers in how peak-hour Level of Service (LOS) for Policy Area Mobility Review was determined, I found that there was no upper limit to the free flow auto speed used for the off-peak period; this essentially let speeding drivers set our benchmark for success. But those drivers, often on state roads with long stretches of open roadway at night, could be driving at speeds that, in a crash, would be lethal to a pedestrian crossing the road. Setting the off-peak speed bar too high not only makes our roadway system operations look worse than they really

are, but in some cases unnecessarily show the need for wider roads and/or intersections. The latter may not only make conditions worse for pedestrians directly, but also create expensive candidate capital projects that will compete with pedestrian and bike projects for funding.

The data used for determining LOS should reflect only legal behavior and the maximum speed used for the off-peak speed should be the lower of the posted speed, the statutory speed, and the target speed in the Road Code. (Since MSHA has been lowering speed limits on some state highway segments in Montgomery County, those changes should be kept up to date in the Planning Departments database.) **Where the 85th percentile speed exceeds the posted speed, measures should be proposed to bring it down, such as allowing off-peak parking, narrowing lanes to construct bike lanes and/or create buffers for sidewalks, and adjusting traffic signal timing to discourage speeding.**

Enclosed with this letter are a list of additional detailed comments on the many recommendations made in this master plan, but I would like to emphasize one issue that MSHA must address: **MSHA's longstanding practice of violating Maryland's own version of the national policy on lane striping obscures the presence of unsignalized intersections and is the biggest insidious safety hazard to pedestrians on state highways that serve as our major transit corridors.**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Public Hearing Draft.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Cole
1228 Dale Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20190

Enclosure

March 15, 2023

Enclosure for letter to Chair Zyontz
Re: Public Hearing Draft of the Pedestrian Master Plan

Please consider the following additional detailed comments in the context of my letter to you on this date. Recommendation numbers from the Public Hearing Draft are provided where they would be useful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Master Plan should include a list of all references that were used in the creation of this master plan and that *should* be used in the master plan's implementation. The Complete Streets Design Guide (CDSG) is a very useful reference to promote a more pedestrian-friendly environment. I note that there are 29 references to the CDSG in the master plan text but there is not a single reference to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' (AASHTO's) A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, despite the fact that the interpretation of AASHTO's guidance by county and state engineers over the years has been the source of tremendous disagreement with planning staff and with pedestrian advocates. The disagreements have been due in part to organizational inertia – “we’ve always done it this way” – but also because of individual engineers’ lack of understanding of the flexibility in that document but sometimes even the existence of other AASHTO documents such as the Roadway Lighting Guide and the Roadside Design Guide, or guidance from the Federal Highway Administration and USDOT.

To make progress, we need to be able to speak the same language and, where we have disagreements, to resolve them on a general basis rather than an eternal project-by-project basis, which wastes time and resources and often has an unsuccessful result. The Complete Streets Design Guide is a useful document for engineers and designers to take advantage of the flexibility in law, tech guides, etc. and is a good reference, but **particularly where State policy or practice conflicts with federal or nationally accepted policies and practices, those primary references should always be cited as the source material.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Goals 1 and 3 should be swapped to place “Enhance Pedestrian Safety” in the #1 slot.

INTRODUCTION

The references to schools in this document appear to be focused solely on Montgomery County Public Schools and not include private schools or any colleges, including the multiple campuses of Montgomery College and other colleges in Montgomery County. The travel mode choices and pedestrian facility needs of those users likely differ greatly from MCPS students. For example, Montgomery College’s Silver Spring/Takoma Park campus is in a very urban environment on a state highway; despite the school’s being on one side of the road and restaurants and retail on the other side of the road, neither of the two intersections most convenient for that pedestrian traffic is signalized on this six-lane undivided roadway and neither of the signalized intersections in either direction has a protected pedestrian phase.

RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

To ensure that we achieve a pedestrian system that accommodates everyone to the best of our ability, **all projects should include meeting ADA Best Practices as a goal rather than just the minimum required by ADA.** Aiming for the minimum, as we most often do now, ensures that when we fall short because of site-specific problems we end up with a sub-par system that operates poorly for those with physical handicaps.

The number of barriers is also important in determining whether a trip is considered feasible or not. For example, even where the right-of-way exists to offset a sidewalk from the roadway to ensure a level sidewalk, a sidewalk at the curb line is often built, forcing the sidewalk to go up and down at each driveway; the prospect of negotiating a wheelchair down a long block of 15 driveways with two ramps at each is daunting even if technically feasible. We must do better to have a truly equitable system.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The existing conditions section should include data on speeding citations, illegal right turns, red light running, and violations of a pedestrian's right-of-way, and a survey of lighting conditions.

DESIGN, POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

This section title and recommendations should be reordered to reflect each subject's proper importance and what issues particular agencies or organizations need to lead/address; policy and the law are most important.

POLICY

Statutory

Maryland Vehicle Law (MVL)

MVL classifies each area by its type and level of development and sets a statutory speed for divided and undivided roads in each; this speed limit may be modified within certain limits based on an engineering study. In addition, the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways includes a list of target speeds for roads in Urban Road Code Areas. As development has occurred over time, the posted speeds for roads for some areas may no longer reflect their current development.

Using MSHA's Highway Location Reference as a base, the Pedestrian Master Plan should include in its section on existing conditions a table that shows where current posted speeds exceed those statutory speeds and/or target speeds and request from MSHA or MCDOT, as applicable, a written justification for the higher speed. If the reasons are not sufficient, the current speed limits should be lowered. After an assessment of the roads in the list, Planning staff should recommend changes to the law as necessary to ensure that the roads in Montgomery operate safely.

Funding Pedestrian Enforcement

Consideration should be given to discussing with the State Delegation the possibility of allocating the fines collected for pedestrian violations to pedestrian enforcement and pedestrian improvements rather than going into the state's general coffers as with other traffic violations.

Montgomery County Zoning Code

B5b: Rather than “encourage” ped-scale lighting, the Zoning Code should require it where it would be beneficial.

A speed limit of 5 mph should be set for scooter users on public sidewalks to ensure pedestrian safety.

Other policies and standards

Unsafe Intersection Striping on State Highways

Maryland’s approved version of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices calls for lane lines to be discontinued at every intersection unless there is a particular hazard but in practice, MSHA typically ignores “minor” by carrying the normal lane line striping on state highways through such intersections without a break, obscuring even the presence of an intersection. **This is an insidious violation of federal and Maryland policy that places pedestrians in particular danger by decreasing driver awareness.** As an example, in the 1 1/4-mile segment of Colesville Road (US 29) Capital Beltway and Spring Street, there are thirteen intersections where the normal lane striping is shown without a break that would alert drivers on US 29 to the presence of pedestrians, who actually have the right of way at these locations, or even of other vehicles turning from those side streets. At South Noyes Drive, a crosswalk was installed opposite the former Silver Spring Library mostly on top of one set of lane lines, diminishing its warning effect to drivers. While the law says that pedestrians have the right of way to cross US 29 at any of these intersections, the lane striping signals to drivers that they have an unimpeded path.

To the west at Noyes Drive and Georgia Avenue (MD 97), MSHA installed a crosswalk at the Woodside Synagogue in the response to a couple of serious pedestrian crashes several years ago. A warning sign and lane markings were installed 400 feet in advance of the crosswalk but the lane lines that obscure the presence of this intersection and five other intersections between Spring Street and 16th Street were left intact, diminishing the safety of the crosswalk installation.

In addition to an inherent lessening of safety by not providing information to drivers, the lack of warning of potential conflicts likely leads to increased operating speeds on these state highways. **Carrying normal lane striping through intersections should be discontinued immediately as a practice and existing such markings should be removed as soon as possible. Only where necessary in unique circumstances should dotted lane extension markings be installed per the diagram in Recommendation P-7a on page 109.** Speed and crash studies should be performed before and after this pavement marking removal to document its effect.

Lighting Policy

A driver’s quick reaction to the presence of a pedestrian in the roadway is based on two things: expectation and actual perception, but perception at night is often hindered because of poor lighting. Montgomery County provides continuous lighting of its roadways as a rule but MSHA’s policy is to light intersections only and then not even every intersection; unsignalized intersections are frequently not lighted. **This policy has no engineering basis but serves only as a cost-containment policy.**

When the Montrose Parkway interchange was built on MD355 more than a decade ago, so street lighting was proposed by MSHA for several hundred feet because there were no intersections, which for the purpose of the project they defined as the ramp termini on Montrose Parkway below MD355. The only light for pedestrians on the sidewalks would have been from passing cars and the moon. Montgomery County contributed \$1 million to ensure that adequate lighting would be provided, as the County has also done on other state projects. If MSHA's position is that local jurisdictions should provide the funding for street lighting, that's a matter for discussion and negotiation, but **MSHA's policy must be changed to provide adequate lighting as part of all capital projects to ensure the safety of all users of the road.**

B-5: The title of this section should be revised to Lighting for Roadways, Intersections, and Pedestrian and Bike Facilities.

B5a: Lighting standards for roadways, intersections and trails already exist, as prepared by AASHTO and IESNA; these are the policies that should be used. We should first determine whether our roadway lighting levels are up to current technical standards before asking pedestrians about their satisfaction with street lighting.

MCDOT's lighting policy requires continuous lighting along roadways but the lighting levels of roadways and intersections should be correlated with the AASHTO Roadway Lighting Guide. Beyond meeting the necessary lighting levels, the exact location of light standards is important because a light between the driver and the pedestrian will enable the driver to discern the colors of the pedestrian's clothing; a light behind the pedestrian will result in the driver seeing only a silhouette until his vehicle's headlights light the pedestrian in the roadway. **In addition to correlating with AASHTO, MCDOT's lighting policy should include locating luminaires to improve driver perception of pedestrians in the roadway as well as enable pedestrians to be seen by drivers before they enter the roadway.**

DESIGN

Community Involvement

B-1b: Community involvement needs to be at the beginning of the design process but in terms of decision-making, the design team needs to ensure that the legal and technical requirements are met before putting a proposal back in front of the public. Asking abutting property owners how new sidewalks should be constructed is often met with the answer that the project should have as little effect on their perceived property as possible. But property owners often think that their property extends to the edge of the roadway even when their actual property line is ten to fifteen feet closer to their house. Public engagement needs to start with ground rules that reflect the County's road standards that are the result of years of Planning and Executive Branch staff work and Planning Board input to ensure public safety for all users of the right-of-way; exceptions can be made but should be well documented. The ideas and requests of private property owners are important but the greater public good of any project must be the ultimate goal.

Guardrail Design

Guardrail installation in Montgomery County is often flawed to the detriment of safety. The location of guardrail in areas where there is a sidewalk should be between the road and the sidewalk per AASHTO recommendations (as referred to in Recommendation P-7c.) The purpose

of this guidance is to protect both drivers and pedestrians. The guardrail is intended to redirect errant drivers back onto the roadway, which a guardrail will do effectively if it is at the edge of the roadway. If the guardrail is placed behind the sidewalk, it will guide vehicles along the sidewalk until the driver regains control, potentially hitting any pedestrians on the sidewalk in the meantime. Guardrail is also often installed too close in front of a fixed object such as a utility or light pole; hindering the guardrail's ability to flex after a crash and potentially leading the vehicle into the object.

There are abundant examples of these basic elements of guardrail design not being followed along State highways, County roads and even park roads in Montgomery County. One example of the latter is along the short distance of Sligo Creek Parkway between just west of Brunett Avenue and US 29 where there are three segments of guardrail built behind Sligo Creek Trail rather than between the road and trail; there is a segment of newly built trail that was built too close to the roadway where guardrail should have been installed; and there is **a segment of guardrail on Sligo Creek Parkway at the culvert opposite Brunett Avenue has several posts were left out, rendering the guardrail completely useless in terms of driver safety.**

In the fairly recent repaving of the intersection of US 29 and Sligo Creek Parkway, a guardrail was installed behind the sidewalk at the southwest corner of the intersection to protect the traffic signal controller; there is evidence that the guardrail was hit soon after installation. While the traffic signal controller remained undamaged, what would have happened had there been trail users waiting at the corner to cross US29? This intersection also has both speeding problems and frequent red light-runners; the guardrail should have been installed where it would have protected pedestrians also.

MSHA, MCDOT and Parks should explain their guardrail design policies, consider providing employee training in guardrail design, and reorganize their review processes to avoid such problems in the future.

Sidewalk Width

The wording on Safe Routes to Schools' website echoes AASHTO's recommendation for wider sidewalks along arterials: "Sidewalks with a width of eight to ten feet or more should be built where there is no sidewalk buffer along an arterial street and along roads adjacent to school grounds where large numbers of walkers are expected." This advice should be coordinated with the County's road standards but is on the right track. We should ensure that sidewalks along roadways classified as arterials and higher have adequate space for pedestrians.

The reasons for deviations from the County's road standards and ADA Best Practices should be made part of the project record and made publicly available. All too often with retrofit projects, there is a tendency to start not even with the appropriate road standard on whose creation and adoption a lot of staff time and legislators' time has been spent, but to minimize the footprint of the project to reduce impacts on residents' perceived property line. While a smaller footprint may be more acceptable to the abutting property owner, the pedestrian space is often the loser by means of a much narrower landscape panel separating them from traffic or by that panel's complete elimination. There may be sufficient reasons for making such a decision, but written documentation is needed to deter such decisions being made just because it's politically easier in

the moment and the decision-makers (Planning Board and County Council) should be aware of the trade-offs being made.

Also, a minimum unencumbered width should be set for sidewalks in commercial areas. While the sidewalks in the Silver Spring CBD were constructed to be the entire width from the curb to the building face, entrance sheds, crowd railings, tables and seating have been placed on a permanent basis and sometimes obstructs even the minimum width required by ADA.

Crosswalks and stop bars

B-3b: Some discussion should be added to this section about crosswalk width and the crosswalk's relation to stop bars. Wider crosswalks than standard should be provided where needed to accommodate users in commercial areas, near schools and where the crosswalk is part of a named trail.

Also, Section 3B.18 of the Maryland Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices requires that the front edge of stop bars be located a minimum of four feet from the outer edge of crosswalks. Poor drivers frequently overshoot the stop bar and partially block the crosswalk, causing pedestrians to divert around vehicles and eliminating the safety zone for pedestrians, particularly small children who may not be visible immediately in front of a vehicle. Four-foot separation is required as a minimum, but a greater distance should be provided where there are large numbers of pedestrians, near elementary schools where young children are shorter and therefore less visible to drivers, and in areas where drivers frequently overshooting the stop bar demonstrate that there is a need. I note that a separation of approximately twelve feet was provided in the recent installation of the new traffic signal and crosswalk on Colesville Road (US 29) at Granville Drive/Hastings Drive, an appropriate design response to reflect the presence of higher speed traffic near the Capital Beltway exit ramp.

Median pedestrian refuges

AASHTO recommends providing a median pedestrian refuge island on multi-lane roads where the crossing distance is greater than 60 feet. Refuge islands are highly desirable for midblock pedestrian crossings on roads with four or more travel lanes, especially where speed limits are 35 mph or greater and/or where annual average daily traffic (AADT) is 9,000 or higher. They are also a treatment option for uncontrolled pedestrian crossings on 3-lane or 2-lane roads that have high vehicle speeds or volumes. When installed at a midblock crossing, the island should be supplemented with a marked high-visibility crosswalk.

Pedestrian Level of Comfort (PLOC)

The discussion of PLOC is somewhat confusing because in the Plan four potential scores are used but the PLOC methodology in the appendix uses six. Recommendation B-1d states that new and reconstructed sidewalks should achieve at least a "somewhat comfortable" rating, which is a pretty mediocre goal. Recommendation B-1d should be reworded to require that new and reconstructed sidewalks achieve at least a "comfortable" rating as part of capital improvement and private development projects (using the six-level methodology.)

Roadway Resurfacing

All pavement resurfacing projects should ensure that ADA requirements are met within their project limits and opportunities for increasing pedestrian safety should be pursued. In

1993, the US District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania found in *Kinney v. Yerusalim* that agencies are required bring roads up to ADA standards when they are being repaved. I had a discussion with SHA sometime in the late 90s concerning this case but never got a straight answer on this as to whether they agreed that they were required to follow this decision. At the time, the intersection of 16th and E-W Hwy was being upgraded but the non-ADA-compliant SE corner, which requires users to go up or down steps to get to the roadway, was not fixed because of the expense to fix the problem. Current guidance from USDOJ and FHWA is essentially the same as what the court required in 1993.

Even though the intersection of 16th and E-W Hwy has been recently repaved and restriped, the stairs remain. The new intersection striping was redone about three times; the final striping reduced the roadway width of 16th St, but pedestrian refuges were not constructed on the north and west legs even though they could easily have been accomplished with minimal expense, particularly on the north leg which has much higher pedestrian traffic. These refuges should be pursued to benefit the hundreds of pedestrians that use this intersection daily going between the Silver Spring Metro Station and the apartment complexes on all four corners of this intersection.

Provide additional traffic control devices where needed to ensure the effectiveness of No Right Turn on Red restrictions and reduce the need for enforcement. The signalization of right-turning northbound traffic from Georgia Avenue to Colesville Road has been in place for years but is frequently violated, sometimes by multiple vehicles at a time and sometimes even by drivers turning from the second lane of Georgia Avenue to get around cars that are appropriately stopped by a red turn arrow. The installation of a near-side turn arrow would likely be beneficial in getting more drivers to stop but the construction of a traffic island to separate right-turn traffic should also be considered. There are too many pedestrians crossing at this intersection that are exposed to drivers operating illegally and unsafely.

Other design issues

One item that is associated with the state's control of highways is that their standard curb height is 8" whereas Montgomery County's is 6". The higher curb height requires longer handicap ramps and therefore has a greater likelihood of impinging on the grades of adjacent sidewalks.

Where state roads pass through CBDs and other areas with large groups of pedestrians, a 6" curb height should be used. This conversation with MSHA needed to make this change does not have to wait for a transfer of control.

Pedestrian safety should be evaluated at all unsignalized intersections and bus stops on arterial highways and greater and additional signalized intersections provided as needed. Crossings should be identified for every bus stop and ensure that all appropriate safety measures are in place (crosswalk striping, lighting, handicap ramps, sufficient sight distance & appropriate operating speeds.)

Sidewalks should be built on the intersecting streets of all arterials and roads of a higher classification. Drivers leaving these major roadways often continue to drive at a higher than appropriate speed that is incompatible with pedestrians walking in the roadway.

B-3a: The graphic shown is useful but should be modified to show one of the ramps occurring on a curved sidewalk section to forestall any misunderstanding that these ramps can only be constructed on a straight section of curb. Traffic engineers at MCDOT used to operate under this misunderstanding with the result being that only single ramps were built at the apex of intersection corners for many years. Using a more adaptable illustration would help to avoid future misunderstandings. This illustration should also show one side having both a sidewalk and a landscape panel since the wide sidewalk from curb to property line generally only occurs in business districts.

OPERATIONS

Traffic Signal Operation

Which is our true priority, safety or reducing congestion?

A longtime feature of the annual Road Show to discuss the proposed State budget has been to begin the discussion on transportation by saying that safety is our highest priority, and then everyone mostly talks about new roadway capacity projects. **If pedestrian safety is the highest County priority, traffic signalization phasing and timing decisions should be made on that basis.**

DC's operation of 16th Street handles large rush hour traffic flows into and out of the District but still manages to have good pedestrian crossing times, and in the off-peak the traffic signal system is timed to keep speeds low. While Montgomery County for the most part does not have a grid street network like the District does, MCDOT should investigate the potential for controlling speeding problems by adjusting traffic signal cycles.

B-2a: Major trail crossings should also be added to the list of locations needing automatic traffic signal recall as they most often have a high number of users.

P-2e: I had a discussion years ago with MCDOT staff about the need to get longer crossing times in the Silver Spring CBD during the noontime lunch rush. Their answer was that longer times couldn't be provided because the cycle length was shorter than it was during the AM and PM peak periods. The longer peak cycles were designed to maximize vehicle throughput during the peak but drivers would not want to wait longer at a red light during the off-peak, a very car-centric decision; this should be reevaluated and longer ped times provided when pedestrian traffic is high and vehicular traffic less. **The Plan's recommendations for more pedestrian crossing time but not increasing traffic signal cycle lengths need to be reconciled.**

Evaluate traffic signals in CBDs to optimize their operation and provide additional pedestrian crossing time where possible. Three examples of suboptimal operation in the Silver Spring CBD that would benefit from better timing or phasing:

- At the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Cameron Street, southbound traffic receives a red signal so that northbound traffic may continue but there are frequent periods when there is no northbound traffic in sight down to Colesville Road, prompting some pedestrians to cross against the signal.

- The intersection of Colesville Road/Georgia Avenue is an important intersection that poses pedestrian safety challenges but two potential opportunities: when the DON'T WALK comes on for the south leg of Georgia to accommodate the left turn from southbound Colesville, the DON'T WALK comes on for the north leg of Georgia too, unnecessarily cutting the walk short when there's no conflict. Also, when the green and arrow comes on for northbound Georgia, traffic is held at the ped crossing at Ellsworth leaving a longish gap when no traffic is turning right onto Colesville. The arrow turns red just as the held traffic reaches the intersection, frustrating most drivers but encouraging some to just run the light and endanger pedestrians.
- The intersection of Fenton Street and Ellsworth Drive has a protected phase to allow pedestrians to cross Fenton Street, but the DON'T WALK on Ellsworth stays on even though there's no conflict. The operation should be changed to a protected all-walk. Also at this intersection, despite the permanent closure of Ellsworth between Fenton and Georgia, the DON'T WALK signal still operates when the other segment of Ellsworth has a green signal; the ped heads on the non-operational segment should be removed or covered. The DON'T WALK phase is sensibly ignored by adults but the message given to children that it's okay to ignore the signal sometimes is not one that encourages safe behavior.

Consider creating a database of the pedestrian timings at each intersection including what walking speed the crossing time was based on.

Where accommodating pedestrian volumes adversely affects traffic operations or provides a less-than-desirable pedestrian accommodation, an assessment should be made of adjacent unsignalized intersections to see whether providing an additional signalized crossing for pedestrians would alleviate the problem. Example: The crossing of Georgia Avenue (US29) at East-West Hwy (MD410) in front of Montgomery College is a five-legged intersections that often doesn't work well for pedestrians or drivers. Two intersections just south of this location, King Street and Jesup Blair Drive, would provide much safer pedestrian crossing opportunities if they were signalized and would improve access to the college and Jesup Blair Park, in addition to removing many potential conflicts at E-W Hwy.

Permits and Franchises

We should ensure that permitted uses don't degrade the sidewalk, such as outdoor seating, entrance structures, ropes/railings, and scooter and bike parking. For example, while most of the Covid-era outdoor seating has been removed in Silver Spring, the sidewalk is still constricted by permanent or semi-permanent shelters at restaurant and club entrances, sometimes with ropes/railings beyond that shelter, reducing the usable width of the sidewalk. Scooters being left scattered on the sidewalk pose a frequent tripping hazard as well as an obstacle for those with handicaps. Consideration should be given to empowering County Parking Enforcement personnel to give appropriate tickets to property owners and scooter companies to reduce these nuisances.

Where new homes are built on already platted lots, including those where an older home is demolished, and where existing homes are undergoing a significant renovation, the building

permit should require that a sidewalk be built to current standards along the street frontage in all areas where the zoning supports this construction.

Maintenance

Sidewalks should be checked every two years to ensure that adjacent landscaping has not encroached on sidewalks and paths. Where encroachments occur, adjacent property owners should be notified that vegetation should be removed within two feet of the sidewalk or path.

Park trails have become increasingly subject sediment and debris washed up on the pavement from more frequent and severe storms. This sediment and debris is often swept to the lower side of the trail, resulting in ponding on the trail that becomes an obstacle for users, often for days after the storm. Park maintenance policies should be changed to ensure that sediment and debris is moved to a location that maintains positive drainage for the trail.

EA-6c: Bring park trails up to ADA standards and ensure adequate temporary accommodation during repairs. While there is likely a problem with bringing some of the existing local connections to park trails up to ADA standards, the main paved trails should be accessible to all at a minimum. As one example of an existing problem, Sligo Creek Trail between Colesville Road and the Beltway has substandard cross-slopes that do not meet ADA standards and makes its use difficult for people with mobility problems even though it is otherwise a heavily used downcounty facility.

MA-4: Revise snowplowing policies to ensure that pedestrian crossings and transit stops are kept clear of snow. While roads are plowed in the order of their importance, the area in front of the curb radius at intersections is often left unplowed, making crossings difficult and potentially unsafe for pedestrians, particularly those without the physical agility to climb over mounds of snow, some of which last for days during which they may turn into a block of ice.

MA-2d: I agree that the County should take on the responsibility for clearing snow on the major transit corridors. This is most needed where sidewalks are directly adjacent to curbs since the snow plowed from the roadway now ends up on the sidewalk where it become the responsibility of the adjacent property owner to remove it, so rather than remove the snow from a five-foot width of sidewalk they now have to do that plus remove the snow from up to three lanes of traffic.

Maintenance of Traffic During Construction

Ensure that approved maintenance of traffic plans in regard to pedestrian accommodation during construction are followed but also improved. The MCDOT division chief in charge of design should be required to sign off on all diversions of pedestrians during construction, as well as diversions from ADA Best Practices and diversions from county roadway standards. Detailed reasons should be included with the package submitted for sign-off.

As an example of the need for temporary ADA-accessible accommodation for park facilities, the Sligo Creek Trail bridge at Garland Avenue was closed to trail traffic for several months last year. While there were signs on the bridge saying it was closed, there was no advance notice of

the closure, which created a big potential problem for mobility-impaired people approaching from the south, and there was no alternative accommodation.

Violations of approved plans are rampant with unexpected sidewalk closures, lack of handicapped access, and other unsafe conditions; these conditions are easily seen as part of the construction at the Planning Department's former headquarters at 8787 Georgia Avenue and the storage area allowed in the Spring Street median drastically reduces the sight distance of pedestrians approaching the marked crosswalk at Woodland Drive. All worksites should be required to post a contact name and number at the Department of Permitting Services along with a link to the approved traffic plan.

In addition to ensuring that the contractor doesn't violate the approved plan, more care needs to be taken in the approval of the plan itself. For example, the restarted Purple Line work has been active on Bonifant Street for many months with the segment west of Georgia Avenue completely closed to traffic and the segment east of Georgia Avenue restricted to eastbound traffic only. Yet the pedestrian signals to cross Bonifant at Georgia have not been modified at all, forcing pedestrians to wait unnecessarily or encourage them to violate the DON'T WALK because there is no longer conflicting Bonifant Street traffic.

Enforcement

More automated enforcement is needed, particularly with red-light-running where there are higher numbers of pedestrians and bicyclists. **Red light cameras should be installed at all major trail crossings at signalized intersections.**

But automated enforcement should augment rather than replace in-person enforcement. Since cameras to enforce speeding violations come with a 12 mph "grace" allowance before a ticket is given, reliance on cameras has likely adversely affected driver culture since speeding within this allowance is seen as being able to be done with impunity, making a big difference in pedestrian safety. A pedestrian who is hit by a vehicle going at the speed limit of 30 mph has approximately a 40% chance of being killed whereas a vehicle going 42 mph (12 mph over the limit) has an 80% chance of being killed. Supplementary in-person police enforcement is needed to reinforce the posted speed limit. Other methods of improving the usefulness of cameras should be considered such as keeping a log of ALL speeding violations and having MCPD contact the worst repeat offenders.

The recent bill to prohibit stops of drivers by police for "minor" infractions is generally a good idea, but the question of when such infractions should be addressed needs to be answered. For example, the bill would prohibit stops for window tinting but often tinting can be so dark as to prevent anyone outside from seeing who is in the car and whether the driver is paying attention to the road in front of them. This lack of visibility presents a problem for pedestrians trying to meet the eyes of the driver, as they should do when crossing in front of a car. To resolve this problem, as well as to avoid the danger to a policeman approaching a stopped car, **Montgomery County should consider enlisting parking enforcement personnel to ticket obvious window tinting violations when a vehicle is parked, avoiding confrontation.**

Periodically, police will have a special enforcement action (Street Smart) intended to move the needle on pedestrian safety. This is inadequate. The police department needs to have a force

dedicated to pedestrian and traffic safety so that its sole responsibility is to keep the county on target for VisionZero. In addition to drivers' obvious disregard for keeping crosswalks clear and safe is their disregard for the law prohibiting the use of handheld cellphones, with the result that their inattentiveness puts others in danger, unprotected pedestrians most of all. The assessment of the adequacy of police enforcement of pedestrian safety needs to be focused on the reduction of pedestrian collisions and fatalities not on tickets given or hours spent on enforcement; the latter shows only the level of effort not the level of success.

If VisionZero is going to be successful, it's not enough to make the policy and design changes recommended in the draft Pedestrian Master Plan, the County needs to take a position of Zero Tolerance of the many daily incursions on pedestrian space and safety. Police need to begin to ticket drivers for their not stopping at the stop bar and partially or completely blocking the crosswalk. The latter forces pedestrians to uneasily use the sliver of crosswalk that may remain while walking mere inches from the bumper of a car whose driver may inattentively release his foot off the brake or forces them to walk in the roadway beyond the crosswalk to close for comfort to running traffic on the intersecting street.

PROGRAMMING

The cost to pedestrians of not creating a much safer environment will be obvious in the number of pedestrian-related crashes, injuries and fatalities, but it also needs to be obvious to the agencies and department heads who are most directly responsible for success, the MC Police Department and the MC Department of Transportation. The proportion of these agencies' budgets allocated to pedestrian safety needs to increase every year that Vision Zero goals are not met. Continued failure must result in a change of leadership of these departments. The cost of failure should not continue to be borne solely by pedestrians.

Email

Fw: Notice of Public Heari...

Owner

 MCP...

Email

From

 [Ria Malinak](#)

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

Fw: Notice of Public Hearing: Pedestrian Master Plan

Date Sent

Date Received

2/14/2023 9:26 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

I watch with interest as the county works to make our county more pedestrian-friendly. A walking/biking path along Falls Road has been in the proposed phase since 2004 when I purchased my home. Here we are in 2023, and it is still just a plan without any funding. None of the people who live along Falls Road north of the Potomac Village (our shopping area) are able to walk to/from our shopping area: Falls Road lacks a shoulder, the yards slope down onto the road, traffic volume makes it difficult to cross to the other side where walking would be safer.

Meanwhile those who live East, West or South of Potomac Village (with much less residential density) were gifted a wide walking/biking path years ago. Now as we compete for funds with the entire county, we can be assured to never have our walking path built.

Please move the Falls Road walking path project up in the priority list. We have been waiting for 19 years.

[Ria Malinak](#)

240-605-9642 cell

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Glazier, Eli <eli.glazier@montgomeryplanning.org>

To: Glazier, Eli <eli.glazier@montgomeryplanning.org>

Sent: Monday, February 13, 2023 at 12:04:31 PM EST

Subject: Notice of Public Hearing: Pedestrian Master Plan

Good morning,

Montgomery County Planning Board

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Name of Plan: Pedestrian Master Plan Public Hearing Draft

Date: March 23, 2023, 6:00pm

On March 23, 2023, the Montgomery County Planning Board will conduct a public hearing on the Public Hearing Draft of the Pedestrian Master Plan. The public hearing will be conducted in the 2nd Floor auditorium of the M-NCPPC Wheaton Headquarters Building, 2425 Reedie Drive, Wheaton, Maryland at 6 p.m. Public hearing participants will be able to attend in-person or virtually. Please visit <https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/> for updates on the public hearing.

The Pedestrian Master Plan, developed by the Montgomery County Planning Department, is the first countywide plan in Montgomery County to make recommendations to improve the pedestrian experience in a holistic way. An important element in the county's 2017 Vision Zero Action Plan, 2021 Climate Action Plan, and Thrive Montgomery 2050, the recently adopted General Plan, the Pedestrian Master Plan documents the pedestrian experience in Montgomery County today and makes recommendations in line with national and international best practices to make walking safer, more enjoyable, and more accessible in the years ahead. The Public Hearing Draft Plan is available at www.montgomeryplanning.org/walkinghere.

Community members can provide written, video and audio testimony. Those wishing to testify at the public hearing, either in-person or virtually, are requested to sign up beginning a month prior to the hearing. To check the approximate hearing time, or to sign up to testify, go to <https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/agendas/>. For questions regarding the hearing or to sign up to testify, please send an e-mail to mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org or call 301-495-4605.

Written comments must be submitted no later than 12 noon on Wednesday March 22, 2023 to be forwarded to the Planning Board in advance of the public hearing. Written testimony may be submitted to: Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board, 2425 Reedie Drive, 14th Floor, Wheaton, Maryland 20902; forwarded via email to mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org or faxed to 301-495-1320.

The public hearing record will stay open until April 6, 2023 at 5 p.m., subject to Planning Board approval. Written comments received between now and the close of the record will be considered by the Planning Board as part of its review of the Public Hearing Draft Plan during its work sessions starting on or after April 13, 2023.

For more information about the Plan, please visit www.montgomeryplanning.org/walkinghere or contact Eli Glazier at 301-495-4548 or eli.glazier@montgomeryplanning.org. Thank you for your interest in Montgomery County's pedestrian-friendly future.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission encourages the participation of individuals with disabilities in its programs and facilities. For support in using facilities, staff support or adaptive equipment, please contact the M-NCPPC Montgomery County Commissioners' Office, at least a week in advance of a meeting or event, at (301) 495-4605 or at mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org. Maryland residents can also use the free *Maryland Relay Service* for assistance with calls to or from hearing or speech-impaired persons; for information, go to www.mdrelay.org/ or call (866) 269-9006.

You are receiving this email because your address was submitted to a list of Home Owners Association and Civic Association email addresses for notification purposes.



Eli Glazier

Planner III
Countywide Planning and Policy Division

Montgomery County Planning Department
2425 Reedie Drive, 13th Floor | Wheaton, MD 20902
Eli.Glazier@montgomeryplanning.org
o: 301.495.4548

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	
image001.png	10,663	
image002.png	845	
image003.png	942	
image004.png	967	
image005.png	827	
1 - 5 of 5 (0 selected)		Page 1



Email

Pedestrian issues

Owner

 MCP...



Email

From

 Steve Warner

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

Pedestrian issues

Date Sent

Date Received

2/25/2023 9:32 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.


I am a homeowner off Georgia Avenue near Dale Drive as the traffic lights at both Seminary Road and Place are not sequence or times as the Seminary Road changes before Seminary Place as cars pour across on Red lights at Seminary Place as the state needs to correct it.

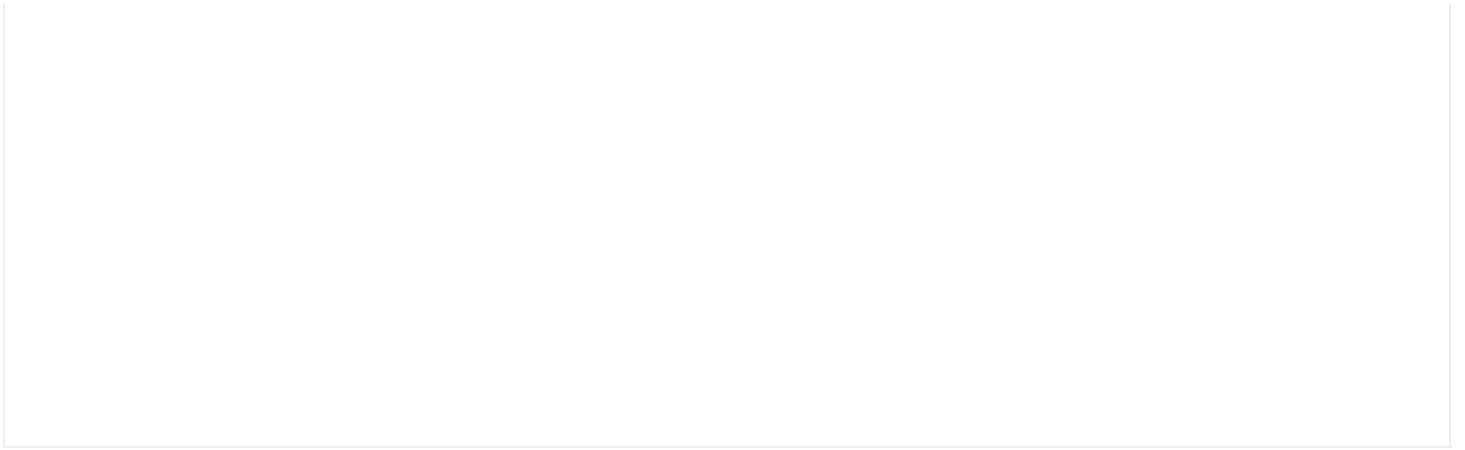
Not pedestrian friendly

Steve Warner

Silver Spring

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	
		
There are no Attachments to show in this view. To get started, create one or more Attachments.		
0 - 0 of 0 (0 selected)		Page 1



From: [Kelly Banuls](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony for Planning Board
Date: Monday, February 20, 2023 12:01:02 PM
Attachments: [Persimmon Tree Petitions.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Board Members,

I am writing as a follow up to my upcoming testimony on March 23rd. On behalf of our neighborhood, I am reaching out to formally request the installation of a cross walk on the corner of Caraway and Persimmon Tree Rd, in Cabin John, MD.

There is a school bus stop at this location with children and young adults crossing each morning and afternoon. Cars constantly speed up and down Persimmon Tree Rd, making this an unsafe situation for all.

We have spoken as a community, and this topic has been raised by neighbors over the past many years with absolutely no response. We have signed petitions within the community, please see the attached documentation. These petitions were collected and reflect the severity and need for a crosswalk at this location.

We understand that an investment is required for such improvements, but would like to make the Board aware that handicap accessible ramps already exist on both sides of the street, which we understand is one of the largest parts of the investment. We also understand that the Board is reviewing and considering some other critical pedestrian needs and believe that this is a small ask that could have a huge impact on the safety and well-being of the children throughout our community.

A speed study was conducted several years ago during Covid, when traffic was minimal and did not accurately reflect current speeds and patterns. We appreciate your time and support.

Thank you for your consideration,
Kelly Banuls
6613 Persimmon Tree Rd
Cabin John, MD 20818

From: [Robin Gaster](#)
To: [Glazier, Eli](#)
Subject: Trees
Date: Thursday, March 9, 2023 3:11:51 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

I walk a lot around DTSS, and the destruction of trees related to the purple line will make the walk along wayne ave - a major throughfare - pretty unpleasant in the summer. Trees make a difference to walking around here - and should be in the master plan.

thanks

Robin

Robin Gaster Ph.D (he/him)
Nonresident Senior Fellow, [ITIF](#)
Visiting Scholar, George Washington University
Institute of Public Policy
240-462-4462
[LinkedIn](#)
[Calendly](#)