



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

OFFICE OF THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT

November 30, 2018

Gregory I. Slater, Administrator
Maryland State Highway Administration
707 North Calvert Street, Room C-400
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Dear Administrator Slater:

On November 13 the County Council had a wide-ranging conversation with you regarding both general and specific strategies for improving traffic and pedestrian safety along State highways in Montgomery County. I want to summarize for you the general strategies we wish the State Highway Administration to pursue going forward:

- Reduce the lane widths to 10 feet in all our Urban Areas (11 feet if adjacent to a parking lane or a curb), consistent with the direction in the County's Road Construction Code. This is the standard that has been applied to County roads since the Council updated the Road Code in 2014. It was developed after significant engineering review by our Planning Board and Department of Transportation staffs; the 10-foot-width standard was deemed sufficient to accommodate trucks and buses. The State roads in Urban Areas should adhere to the same standard. The County has formally adopted about 25 Urban Areas where this standard applies (see the attached map).
- Set the speed limit on all State roads in Urban Areas to 25 mph, unless a different target speed is specified in a local master plan. This, too, was a provision in the 2014 Road Code update. Target speeds in our Suburban Areas are not specified in law, but many of our most recent master plans do set them, and they are often lower than the current posted speed limits. As we noted in our earlier letter, the speed limit on Georgia Avenue (MD 97) in Aspen Hill should be reduced from the current 45 mph posting.
- Audit the location and access to both transit bus and school bus stops on State highways to identify where stops and crosswalks should be relocated or installed, and where improved lighting is needed.
- Identify where the next set of full pedestrian signals and HAWK signals will be implemented, and to develop the warrants for these types of signals.

- Incorporate officially designated Safe Routes to Schools in the prioritization for pedestrian safety improvements.
- Reconfigure State roadways where we have identified bikeways—especially protected bike lanes—in the Bicycle Master Plan we adopted on November 27.
- Reduce the time to analyze proposed pedestrian safety improvements as well as the time to install them once a decision is made to implement them.

The above initiatives should apply to all state highways; we would like to also proceed as we have discussed to work through a set of changes for Georgia Avenue specifically.

As promised at the November 13 worksession, I am attaching a set of individual locations along State highways of immediate concern to Councilmembers. I request that your staff evaluate each of them and report back with an action plan.

We look forward to a continuing partnership with SHA in achieving the Vision Zero goal in the foreseeable future. These steps will hasten us on that path.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hans". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a long horizontal stroke for the 's'.

Hans Reimer
Council President

cc: The Honorable Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive
Councilmembers

The Honorable Marc Korman, Chair, Montgomery County House Delegation

The Honorable Craig Zucker, Chair, Montgomery County Senate Delegation

Andre Futrell, District 3 Engineer, State Highway Administration

Al Roshdieh, Director, Montgomery County Department of Transportation

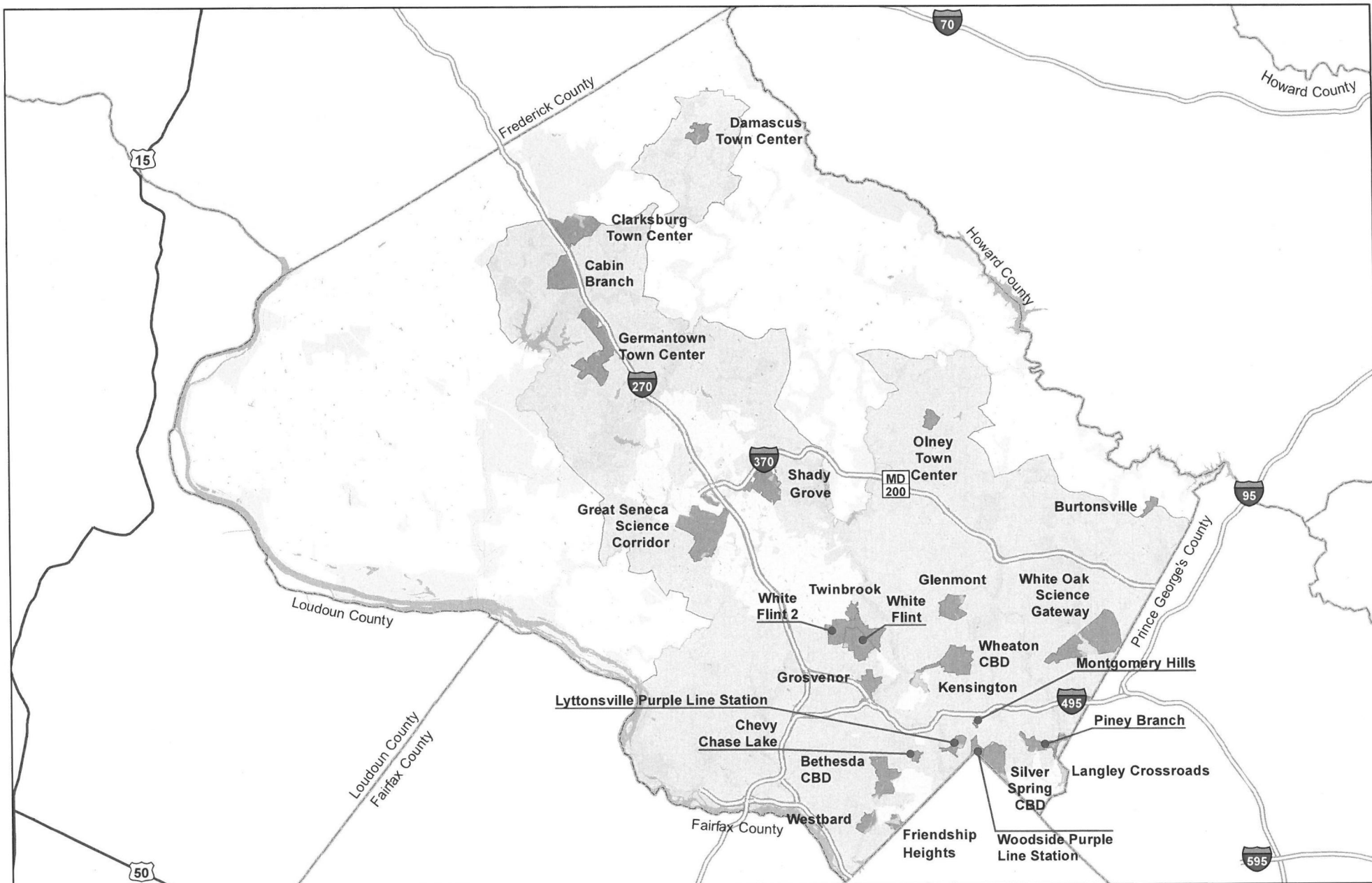
Kristy Daphnis, Chair, Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee

Recommendations at Specific Locations

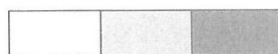
- *Georgia Avenue (MD 97) between Bel Pre Road and Arcola Avenue.* In this segment there should be a lower speed limit, a better alignment for left hand turns on and off of MD 97, the optimization of the pedestrian signals, and more and safer pedestrian crossings.
- *Wheaton Commercial Business District: Georgia Avenue (MD 97), Veirs Mill Road (MD 586), and University Boulevard (MD 193).* In this area there should be a lower speed limit, safer pedestrian crossings and pedestrian signal optimization, and increased attention to proper street lighting.
- *Veirs Mill Road (MD 586).* In these segments there should be sidewalks and better street lighting: southbound from Twinbrook Parkway to Aspen Hill Road; northbound and southbound between Aspen Hill Road and Connecticut Avenue (MD 185); and pedestrian signal optimization for safer crossings along the entire corridor.
- *Georgia Avenue (MD 97) and Fenwick Lane.* It is close to meeting warrants today and the future senior building and redevelopment of the 8787 Georgia Avenue will more than justify it.
- *New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650) and Northampton Drive.* This intersection has seen a lot of collisions involving both motorists and pedestrians. It also lacks curb ramps at the crosswalks.
- *Columbia Pike (US 29) & Stewart Lane (west side).* The west side of this intersection where Milestone Drive meets Stewart Lane and US 29 lacks space for motorists to make a right turn on southbound US 29 due to left-turning motorists waiting at the signal using up the minimal space between the southbound lanes of U.S. 29 and the frontage road (Milestone). One solution is to shave off the corner to facilitate right turns more easily.
- *Colesville Road (US 29) & Indian Spring Drive.* A flashing pedestrian signal is needed at this intersection.
- *Colesville Road (MD 384) & Wayne Avenue/Second Avenue.* This intersection has bad signal timing due to the split-phased configuration for Wayne/Second, which creates lots of wasted green time for the cross street and encourages jaywalking due to long wait times for pedestrians. The signal setup should be changed if possible to remove the split phasing and decrease wait times. This intersection will soon be altered in some way with the coming bikeway along Wayne and Second which recently began construction, but we are not sure if the signals will be modified as part of that.
- *University Boulevard West (MD 193) & Brunett Avenue.* The current pedestrian activated signal at The Oaks retirement home crosswalk 200 yards northwest of Brunett Avenue should be moved to the present unsignalized (but marked) crossing at University Boulevard & Brunett Avenue. The new North Four Corners Park has brought much more use to the Brunett Avenue crossing and it is a better spot for a signal than The Oaks location, which requires seniors to walk along the narrow MD 193 sidewalk to reach the nearest bus stops at either Royalton Road or Brunett Avenue.
- *Norbeck Road (MD 28) & Emory Lane.* A left-turn signal phase is needed at this intersection. There are reports of several accidents there due to motorists

mistiming oncoming traffic, especially by senior citizen drivers who reside in Flower Valley.

- *Norbeck Road (MD 28) between Bauer Drive and Georgia Avenue (MD 97).* Residents turning onto MD 28 from local roads or pedestrians trying to cross MD 28 face a line-of-sight issue due to hills and curves which reduce visibility. Cars on MD 28 traveling at higher speed than is posted also contribute to serious accidents. It is very difficult to safely turn out of Flower Valley onto MD 28 using the Westbury Road exit due to the curve, foliage, and speeding by motorists. There are also sight-line issues at the Hannans Way, Columbine Way and Carrolton Road exits onto Norbeck Road, as well, but Westbury Road remains the most dangerous exit.
- *I-270 & Falls Road (MD 189).* A higher level of lighting is needed at this interchange to improve the visibility of pedestrians crossing the ramps.
- *Darnestown Road (MD 28) between Great Seneca Highway (MD 119) and Muddy Branch Road.* A crosswalk or HAWK signal is needed here.
- *Darnestown Road (MD 28) between Shady Grove Road and Traville Gateway Drive.* There is a pending sidewalk request with SHA in this location.
- *Germantown Road (MD 118) & Clopper Road (MD 117).* This is a very wide intersection with significant traffic on all legs. It is also adjacent to Kingsview Middle School to which many young teens reach by foot.
- *Massachusetts Avenue (MD 396) & entrance to Westland Middle School.* A HAWK signal or similar engineering solution is needed for the unprotected marked crosswalk here and at other similar crosswalks in this section of MD 396.
- *River Road (MD 190) & Braeburn Parkway.* The unsignalized turn into and out of the back entrance of Whitman High School where three members of a family were killed by an oncoming speeding driver. SHA has proposed a promising permanent solution, but it is not scheduled for implementation. This stretch of River Road should be designated as a School Zone, which would allow for the speed limit to be reduced.
- *Wilson Lane (MD 188) & Cordell Avenue.* SHA has already evaluated and found significant crossing activity at Wilson Lane due to Bethesda Elementary School. We request that SHA at least paint a crosswalk here and look at whether a signal would be warranted.
- *Old Georgetown Road (MD 187) & Cordell Avenue.* This unsignalized marked crosswalk of Old Georgetown should be a prime candidate for a HAWK/pedestrian-activated signal – SHA says they have concerns about drivers having to stop there and again at the Arlington/St. Elmo/Wilson intersection.
- *Rockville Pike (MD 355) in White Flint/Pike District.* There are several routine maintenance activities needed in this section of MD 355, including: paint in crosswalks on all four legs of intersections where that condition does not exist today; repaint more visible crosswalks at all intersections along Rockville Pike; and better lighting at two key pedestrian intersections: MD 355/MD 187 and MD 355/Marinelli Road.



ROAD CODE AREAS



RURAL
SUBURBAN
URBAN

PARKS



MUNICIPALITIES

