

ACTION COMMITTEE FOR TRANSIT
Montgomery County Council Bill 11-23: Safe Streets Act of 2023
March 21, 2023

The Action Committee for Transit supports the Safe Streets Act of 2023, with favorable amendments to include all school-related crashes within the scope of the Safe Routes to School provision.

- SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW. We support this provision. However, the scope is far too narrow. Many school-related crashes happen outside the current scope. For example, the current scope of this bill would only include 1 of the 9 crashes involving students/schools that happened in January that we are aware of:
 1. Loiederman Middle School (student): YES
 2. Sherwood High School (student): NO, on a state road
 3. Julius West Middle School (student): NO, outside the school zone, on a city road
 4. Magruder High School (student): NO, outside the school zone (at a school bus stop)
 5. Seneca Valley High School (student): NO, outside the school zone
 6. Waters Landing Elementary School (student): NO, not at arrival or dismissal according to the time on the police report
 7. Wheaton High School (student): NO, not at arrival or dismissal (evening classes)
 8. Wheaton High School (student): NO, on a state road
 9. Landon School (crossing guard): NO, on a state road, no school zone

When a school-related crash happens, we do not want to have to keep checking the language in the law to determine whether the crash was in scope or out of scope.

At minimum, the scope must include:

- *All roads* – state, county, municipal, M-NCPPC
- *All times* for crashes involving students going to or from school – before, during, and after arrival/dismissal
- *All times* for crashes in school zones or on school property - before, during, and after arrival/dismissal

We have heard 2 reasons for the limited scope and disagree with both.

- Reason: MCDOT only has authority over county roads.
Our response: There is nothing stopping MCDOT from conducting an infrastructure review on state or municipal roads. Indeed, MCDOT routinely weighs in on design considerations for non-county roads, for example during master planning. MCDOT also implements infrastructure changes on non-county roads, for example the University Boulevard West bus lane project.

ACTION COMMITTEE FOR TRANSIT
Montgomery County Council Bill 11-23: Safe Streets Act of 2023
March 21, 2023

- Reason: MCDOT does not have the resources to conduct infrastructure reviews for all school-related crashes.
Our response: Safe routes to school should be one of the county's highest priorities. If there are so many school-related crashes that MCDOT does not have the resources to conduct infrastructure reviews for all of them, then that is actually an argument *in favor of* amending the bill's scope to include *all* school-related crashes. In addition, it would be helpful to have an estimate from MCDOT about the resources necessary for conducting infrastructure reviews for all school-related crashes. For reference, the recommended FY 2024 operating budget for the Department of Transportation's General Fund is \$61,180,870, including 461 full-time positions, 4 part-time positions, and 283.78 FTEs.

- AUTOMATED TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT PLAN. We support this provision. Enforcement is an important component of Vision Zero. Automated traffic enforcement (speed cameras, red light cameras, stop sign cameras) can be deployed far more effectively and cost-effectively than the equivalent in human enforcement. In addition, we know from experience that the current unsystematic implementation of automated traffic enforcement is inadequate, complicated, and opaque. An automated traffic enforcement plan is the necessary first step toward systematic, county-wide implementation of automated traffic enforcement.

- LEADING PEDESTRIAN INTERVALS AND NO TURN ON RED. We support these two provisions, which go together. According to the US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, they are proven safety countermeasures: "The LPI works to position the pedestrian within the crosswalk thereby decreasing the likelihood of a conflict or crash with a left- or right-turning vehicle ahead of the turning traffic. Agencies will often consider restricting Right Turns on Red (RTOR) in association with LPIs to better control for conflicts with right-turning vehicles." In non-technical language, the LPI reduces the chance that a driver turning right on green will hit a pedestrian who has begun crossing on the walk signal, and no-right-on-red restriction is necessary to reduce the chance that a driver turning right on red will hit a pedestrian who has begun crossing on the LPI. However, even without an LPI, no-right-on-red independently reduces the chance that a driver will turning right on red will hit a pedestrian who has begun crossing on the walk signal. We have provided explanatory diagrams, below.

ACTION COMMITTEE FOR TRANSIT
Montgomery County Council Bill 11-23: Safe Streets Act of 2023
March 21, 2023

