

**STATEMENT OF RICHARD LEVINE
LOCUST HILL CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION**

**BEFORE THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
REGARDING BILL 11-23, THE SAFE STREETS ACT OF 2023**

March 21, 2023

President Glass, Vice President Friedson, and Members of the Council: My name is Richard Levine and I am testifying on behalf of the Locust Hill Citizens' Association. Locust Hill is a single-family community bounded by Cedar Lane on the south, Rockville Pike on the west and the arc of the Beltway from Rockville Pike around to Cedar Lane.

Most relevantly for the purpose of this hearing, the central portion of our community has many MCPS students, no sidewalks, and is a direct cut-through route, via Elmhirst Parkway, between Rockville Pike and Cedar Lane. We seek development of automated traffic enforcement of an existing no-left-turn restriction intended to ameliorate this safety hazard and believe such a solution would help protect other communities with turning and prohibited straight-across restrictions.

Because we read bill 11-23's proposed County Code section 31-9D, Automated Traffic Enforcement Action Plan, to have a county-wide focus that goes beyond priority downtown and town center areas, we believe there is an opportunity to further the goals of Vision Zero. Our ask of the Council is simple. Please amend section 31-9D to:

- Add to the list of situations to be included in the required enforcement planning process a new subsection (a)(1)(D), "at intersections with vehicle directional movement restrictions," and
- Move the "and" from after subsection (B) to after subsection (C).

Locust Hill's efforts to protect our residents from cut-through traffic have spanned many years. After public hearing, we obtained a no left-turn restriction from Elmhirst Parkway to Cedar Lane from 3-7 pm (except for school buses), and a no-right-turn restriction from Cedar Lane from 7-9 am. MC DOT also installed speed bumps along the cut-through route.

An additional promising remedy—or so we thought—was to work with MC DOT and the Stone Ridge School regarding installation of traffic control signals at the Cedar Lane intersection with Elmhirst Parkway and the Stone Ridge School entrance. These include illuminated no-left-turn and no-right-turn signs mounted on the signal arms.

But as we learned, County Police have not enforced these restrictions. For example, we were told, there is no easy "stake-out" area for police to lurk regarding left turns, and now it seems traffic enforcement is a lower staffing priority. But restrictions that are not enforced do not exist, except for those imbued with voluntary civic virtue. (A photo of illegal left-turning traffic is attached)

Residents asked, why don't we ask for installation of an enforcement camera. We had to respond that there was no such thing as a no-left-turn camera. But there could be and should be.

While the legislative findings in new subsection 31-9C(a) focus on pedestrian crashes *at* intersections, we believe that Vision Zero's effort to reduce pedestrian risks should also include automated enforcements efforts to reduce hazards created by vehicles *on their way to* intersections when those hazards are created by drivers' intentions to violate turn or cut-across restrictions once at the intersection.

We understand that no-left-turn software for county intersection cameras may not currently exist. But given recent advances in image detection and analysis, part of the Enforcement Action Plan should be to explore—and request—software and processing capabilities for that purpose. Potential deployment timelines might be included in the Plan.

We appreciate the Council's consideration of Locust Hill's perspective and hope you will direct the Executive to think expansively about the opportunities for Automated Traffic Enforcement to promote Vision Zero. We would be happy to interact with MC DOT in carrying out such an effort.

Exhibit Attached

Exhibit

Left-Turning Traffic at Elmhirst Parkway and Cedar Lane

