



July 24, 2023

Mr. Evan Glass, President
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20902

Dear Councilmember Glass:

The Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA) is writing to express our continued support of the Montgomery County Pedestrian Master Plan Draft published February 13, 2023. GOCA wrote to the Maryland National Parks and Planning Commission in March 2023 stating our support of the draft Pedestrian Plan as had been published. And we continue to support the Master Plan's "vision to create safer, more comfortable experiences walking or rolling around the county, and to make getting around more convenient and accessible for every pedestrian." Further, we support Montgomery County's Vision Zero goals to "eliminate traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries."

I served on the Pedestrian Master Plan Advisory Committee as a representative of the Olney Town Center Advisory Committee as Chair of their Transportation and Pedestrian Safety Subcommittee. Following Eli Glazier's presentation of the plan to GOCA's members, our Transportation Committee carefully analyzed the draft plan and presented a summary with their recommendations to our members which we discussed at our meeting on March 14. Most recently, we also reviewed the changes made to the draft submitted to the County Council. The revisions to the draft submitted to the Planning Board do not significantly change the Plan, but do improve the draft language.

The following is the motion that GOCA membership approved at our April 11th meeting, after consideration of the various presentations we had on the draft plan and our members' analysis of the draft. And the points raised in the motion still apply with respect to the version being considered by the County Council.

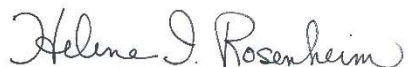
We are very impressed with both the comprehensiveness and specificity of the Draft Pedestrian Plan, and appreciate how carefully staff have developed it. Overall, we support the plan, and would like to note in particular the following:

- *We applaud the County for looking at its overall policies and priorities for investment, and for its adoption of the Complete Streets Design Guidelines, which emphasize providing safe transportation options for all people.*

- *We appreciate that the County is aware of the many no-or low-cost options it has for improving conditions for pedestrians, such as adjusting signal timings and painting roadways to alert drivers to smaller streets intersecting with the larger one.*
- *We fully support using a more data-driven approach to prioritizing improvements (Key Action B-1a), as often, the people who may need them most are also the people with the fewest resources available to them to be the “squeaky wheel.”*
- *We also note that most suggested revenue increases would have to be approved by the County Council, and would go through their own public review and comment period.*
- *We reserve judgement on Key Action B-10a, transferring State roads to County control. While we think that a conversation may be in order, we hope that this conversation would encompass a range of options. For instance, it might be more effective to convince MDOT SHA that their guidelines for roadways in urban and Town Center areas should be changed. Such an action would address the issues without having to transfer roadways and accompanying costs. *
- *While we agree with MA-2d, whereby the County would take responsibility for shoveling snow on more sidewalks, we encourage them to broaden this beyond formal sidewalks. For instance, the pathway connecting the Hallowell neighborhood to Buehler Road, which is used by people walking into the Town Center as well as children walking to school, cuts through Southeast Olney Park. This portion of the pathway is never cleared, and generally becomes icy and dangerous.*
- *Regarding Action P-5b, walking school buses, the same concept has been successfully implemented with bikes in other parts of the country.*
- *In establishing a two-tiered vehicle fee, the determination should not just be based on the size of the vehicle, but somehow also needs to account for safety features a car may have such as software to prevent lane drifting or automatic braking.*
- *In the Olney area, we suggest one more “goat path” to be formalized: halfway along the St. Peter’s driveway, there is a path worn by kids cutting through the condos on their way to town after school, as well as residents of the condominiums accessing the school, playground and church.*

Evan, GOCA appreciates your advocacy for safe walking and bicycling throughout Montgomery County and specifically your leadership in the adoption of the Montgomery County Pedestrian Master Plan.

Thank you,



Helene Rosenheim
President