

Manuel T. Ochoa

August 18, 2023

Montgomery County Council  
Council Office Building  
100 Maryland Avenue, 6th Floor  
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: Pedestrian Master Plan – Willard Avenue

Dear Council President Glass and County Councilmembers,

I would like to provide a brief comment and suggest an addition to the draft Montgomery County Pedestrian Master Plan. I have been a resident on Willard Avenue near River Road since 2014. My neighbors and I have noted that as cars travel along our section of Willard Avenue, which mostly includes single-family homes, cars speed well over the posted speed limit of 25 hours especially between River Road and Willard Towers (4701 Willard Avenue). The Pedestrian Level of Comfort Map rates our section of Willard Avenue as Uncomfortable. Currently the sidewalk is fairly narrow with little to no shade on both sides of Willard Avenue.

The draft Pedestrian Master Plan recommends three pedestrian short cuts from Sherrill Avenue, Baltimore Avenue, and Saratoga Avenue to the Willard Avenue Path. The Willard Avenue Path is also recommended as a future bikepath from Western Avenue to Willard Avenue. Currently, there is no safe connection to Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park across north of Willard Avenue except for the traffic light at River and Willard.

After discussing the issue with several neighbors, we would like to recommend that Willard Avenue should be narrowed to slow down traffic so that cars are more likely to meet the speed the posted speed limit. By giving Willard Avenue a “road diet”, the street could accommodate wider sidewalks with shade trees, and a pedestrian island that would connect the Willard Avenue Path along the GEICO property line to Willard Avenue Park.

A narrower Willard Avenue would slow down cars and provide greater pedestrian safety especially for future residents should the GEICO property be redeveloped as once planned. This would also provide a safe connection for residents of Brookdale, especially children and seniors, and other nearby safely cross Willard Avenue. A pedestrian island would also slow down traffic to allow bicyclists to more safely enter Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park near Willard Towers.

If you have any questions regarding my testimony, I may be reached by email at [REDACTED] or by calling [REDACTED]. Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Manuel T Ochoa". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "M".

Manuel T Ochoa