

August 7, 2023 from Bethesda, MD

Re: Testimony to MoCo Council on the Pedestrian Master Plan

Dear MoCo Council Members,

I urge the Council to adopt, fund and implement the Pedestrian Master Plan with measurable completion goals. Progress is urgently needed to increase safety for vulnerable users of the Counties' road infrastructure and to progress the lagging progress of the Counties' Vision Zero goals. As noted in the MoCo's Vision Zero FY2022 Annual Report, injuries increased by 19% from 2020 to 2021 (from 202 to 241 injuries respectively).

My family has been car-free for almost 25 years. After returning from overseas assignments, we moved to Bethesda for its access to public transportation and its promise of walkable and bike-able infrastructure.

Unfortunately for pedestrians, we've seen regression and not progress. For example, "beg-buttons" were installed at all signalized intersections, pedestrian scramble (like roaches) at intersections which are signalized to prioritize vehicles, many closed sidewalks, and only minor changes in speed limits and installation of speed cameras.

For too long, convenience and level of service for vehicles has been prioritized over risk of pedestrian injuries and death. Even the Vision Zero Annual report excuses and normalizes the rise in pedestrian deaths:

*Much of the year-over-year increase, particularly for serious injury crashes, was due to a 9% increase in vehicle miles traveled.*

Why should there be a linear or greater increase in serious injures with more vehicle miles driven? With this logic, we can never reach Vision Zero without banning vehicles.

We need to do better. The Pedestrian Master Plan is a step forward.

We remember our neighbors Jake Cassells 17, Dr. Ned Gaylin 81, Jennifer DiMauro 31, Eric Frank Grosse Jr. 71, Enzo Marcel Alvarenga 18, and recently Sarah Langenkamp 41.

With best regards,

Warren Chan

