

# SAFE STREETS ACT 2023 – CRASH REVIEW

**Location:** Dennis Avenue at Julep Avenue

**Crash Date:** February 29, 2024

**Crash Time:** Approximately 8:03 AM

**Local Case No.:** 240009833

**Review Date:** December 17, 2024

## **Description of Incident**

On Thursday, February 29, 2024, at approximately 8:03 AM, a motorist traveling eastbound along Dennis Avenue collided with a student in the crosswalk at the east leg of the intersection. According to the crash report, glare from the sun, limiting visibility, was considered as a factor in the collision. Weather conditions were clear, the roadway surface was dry, and it was daylight. The student suffered serious injuries.

**Figure 2** illustrates the crash location and direction of pedestrian and vehicle travel.

## **Location and Site Description**

The crash occurred at the intersection of Dennis Avenue at Julep Avenue. Sligo Middle School (MS) is located at 1401 Dennis Avenue, with the school's property frontage beginning about 80 feet east of Julep Avenue. Sligo-Dennis Avenue Local Park is located just east of the school, and the Sligo Creek Trail runs from north to south through it. Sligo MS has a current enrollment of 661 students in grades 6th through 8th.

### **Sligo Middle School**

Most student arrivals occur between 7:45 AM and 8:15 AM and dismissal occurs between 3:00 PM and 3:30 PM. Sligo MS also provides a separate toddlers and infants program, which operates between 7:30 AM and 4:00 PM. MCDOT is currently conducting a Safe Routes to School assessment for Sligo MS, which is expected to be completed this year.

### **Dennis Avenue**

Dennis Avenue is a two-lane area connector (previously classified as a minor arterial), is 35 feet wide, and is generally oriented in the east-west direction. East of Julep Avenue, Dennis Avenue has grass-buffered sidewalks with a nominal width of four feet along both sides of the street. West of Julep Avenue, Dennis Avenue has four-foot sidewalks, with no buffer. Dennis Avenue has a posted speed limit of 30 MPH and includes hazard identification beacons indicating a school zone speed limit of 25 MPH when flashing **(Photo 2)**. On-street parking is permitted along most of the segment, with the exception of the Sligo MS frontage. Refer to **Figure 1** in the attachments for additional details of the Dennis Avenue segment.

### **Dennis Avenue at Julep Avenue**

Dennis Avenue at Julep Avenue is a four-leg intersection located west of Sligo MS. Julep Avenue is classified as a neighborhood yield street with its north leg having no outlet and serving less than 30 homes. ADA-compliant pedestrian ramps provide accessible crossings of the north, south, and east legs of the intersection. The crossing of the west leg is neither marked nor accessible. Ladder-style crosswalks are installed for the east and north legs of the intersection, while a transverse-style crosswalk is installed on the south leg of the intersection.

Dennis Avenue at Julep Avenue is a designated school crossing for Sligo MS. An MCPD-designated crossing guard is present during school arrival and dismissal to facilitate student/pedestrian movements to and from points south of the school.

The Dennis Avenue corridor was evaluated to identify potential infrastructure, maintenance activities, and road user behaviors that contribute to increased safety risk at and in the vicinity of the school crossing. The Dennis Avenue corridor was reviewed between Huntley Avenue to the west and Sligo Creek to the east. There are two horizontal curves along this segment – one near Huntley Avenue and one east of Sligo MS. The segment also includes vertical curvature with a crest near Huntley Avenue, sag at Inwood Ave and another crest in front of Sligo MS. The horizontal and vertical curvature constrain lines of sight and observations show the grade changes result in variable acceleration and deceleration rates by motorists using the corridor. Please refer to **Figure 1** for additional information.

### **Crash History**

Crash data obtained from dataMontgomery provides information for eight (8) crashes that occurred within the influence of the Dennis Avenue at Julep Avenue intersection between July 2015 and March 2024. One (1) collision involved a pedestrian and one (1) involved a bicyclist. Two (2) collisions resulted in injuries. The incidents are illustrated on **Figure 3**.

### **Field Observations and Findings**

Field observations were performed on Tuesday, March 5, 2024, near the end of the Sligo MS morning arrival period. Weather conditions included light rain and the roadway surface was wet. Students were observed using the crossings and sidewalks. Vehicles were observed stopping along both Dennis Avenue and Julep Avenue to drop off students.

During these observations, a crossing guard was interviewed at the end of the arrival period. While this crossing guard was not present at the time of the February 29, 2024, incident, they confirmed that glare from the sun affects visibility when traveling or looking east Dennis Avenue during the morning/arrival timeframe.

The hazard identification beacon (HIB) along Dennis Avenue, east of the school, had one damaged LED indication.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the crash report, the motorist failed to identify the pedestrian in the crossing as a result of limited visibility resulting from glare from the sun. Reaction time and awareness may be improved by a variety of countermeasures outlined in the recommendations below.

1. Consider upgrade existing school crossing assemblies to use 36"x36" S1-1 signs. Install S1-1 assemblies on both the left and right sides of the crossing for both eastbound and westbound approaches to improve conspicuity.
2. Consider installing R1-6c IN-STREET SCHOOL CROSSING signs in the vicinity of the crossing along the centerline.
3. Repair damaged LED signal head for school HIB east of school to improve motorist awareness entering the school zone.
4. Consider installation of curb extensions for all corners of the Dennis Avenue at Julep Avenue intersection to reduce crossing distances for pedestrians or a pedestrian refuge on the westbound

approach to the Dennis Avenue/Julep Avenue intersection island to reduce pedestrian exposure.

### Site Photograph



**Photo 2. School Zone HIB**



**Photo 3. Bridge Truck Restriction**



**Photo 1. Crosswalk Markings at Julep Ave**





**Photo 4. Westbound Approach to School Crossing**



**Photo 5. Eastbound Approach to School Crossing**



FIGURE 1 - DENNIS AVENUE CORRIDOR EVALUATION





FIGURE 2 - DENNIS AVENUE AT JULEP AVENUE  
2024 FEBRUARY 29 PEDESTRIAN-INVOLVED CRASH





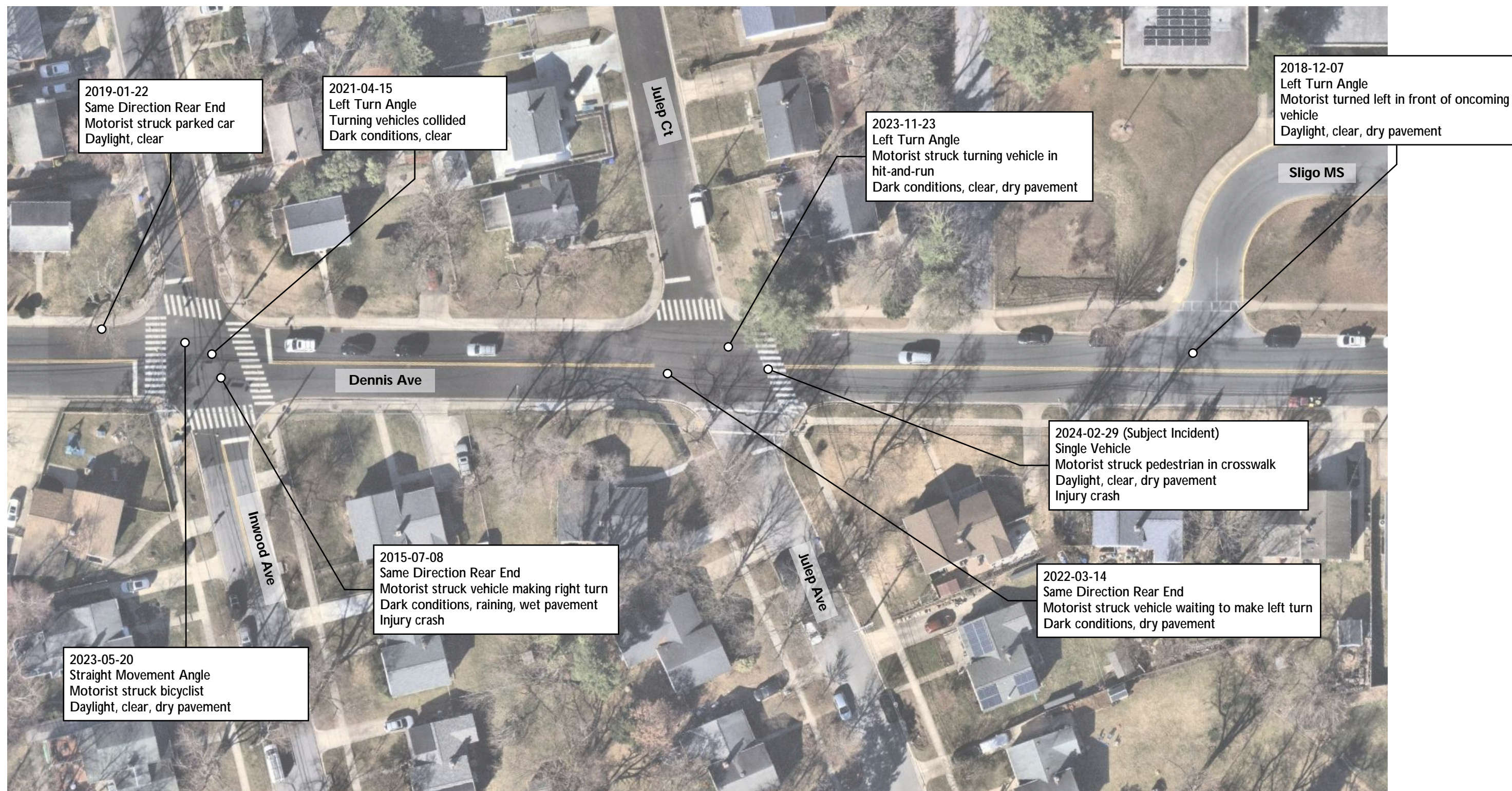


Figure 3 - Crash History (2015-2024)