

## FATAL CRASH REVIEW

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**Location:** University Boulevard East at Langley Drive  
**Accident Date/Time:** Saturday, September 5, 2020 at approximately 10:37 PM  
**Local Case No.:** 200034859  
**Police District:** District 4  
**Review Date:** Thursday, September 10, 2020

### **Description of Crash:**

The police preliminary investigation indicated that around 10:37 PM a 2013 Ford Focus, travelling westbound on University Boulevard East struck an adult male pedestrian north of the crosswalk across University Boulevard East. Lanes - the driver remained at the scene. The pedestrian was transported to the hospital, where they were later pronounced deceased. The driver of vehicle was uninjured. Police state that alcohol was not a factor. The investigation is ongoing.

### **Location and Site Description:**

University Boulevard East (MD 193) is classified as an urban principle arterial oriented east-west with a 35 MPH posted speed limit at the collision site. The intersection of University Boulevard East and Langley Drive is two-way stop controlled, with the approaches from Langley Drive being stop controlled. University Boulevard, through the intersection is a six-lane divided roadways with opposing left-turn bays. The approaches from Langley Drive are two-lane undivided local streets. Crosswalks are located across both approaches from Langley Drive and across the western leg of University Boulevard. Pedestrian sidewalks are present of both sides of University Boulevard.

### **Site observations:**

An on-site evaluation of the intersection was conducted on September 10, 2020 around 10:00 AM. The following was noted during the evaluation:

- **Road Geometry:** The westbound approach of University Boulevard has a slight curve with decorative trees along the inside of the curve. Sight distance to the subject intersection is generally clear from all lanes from the approximately 650 feet from the signalized intersection of University Boulevard and Piney Branch Road to the east. The eastbound approach comes from a significant curve, with residences to the intersection. Sight distance is limited.
- **Pavement markings:** Pavement markings were found to be in fair condition and visible. The eastbound lanes of University Boulevard contained a “Don’t Block the Box” marking through the intersection, due to traffic congestion at the Piney Branch Road intersection.
- **Signage:** Existing signing was found to be good condition, visible, and placed properly. Of significant note is the absence of pedestrian warning signing both at and in advance of the crosswalk spanning University Boulevard East. Also of note, is the presence of an overhead sign approximately 500 feet west of the intersection on the eastbound lanes. The sign legend shows as “Pedestrian Area Next 3 Miles” next to an image of a pedestrian warning sign (W11-2) with

flashing beacons. (Picture 5) An investigation did not find a similar sign in the westbound direction.

- **Pedestrian Facilities:** As noted previously crosswalks are present on the north, east, and west legs of the subject intersection. The crosswalks markings across Langley Drive are standard parallel bars and the markings across University Boulevard provides crosshatched zebra type markings. The median in University Boulevard partial extends into the crosswalk markings and is not suitable to serve as a pedestrian refuge, being 4 feet wide. Pedestrian ramps with detectable surfaces are present on all quadrants. The location of the pedestrian ramps at the SE and SW quadrant may potentially be construed as an unmarked crosswalk. Significant jaywalking was observed around the intersection. Two (2) separate individuals were observed crossing University Boulevard north of crosswalk, from the eastbound to the westbound, to the bus stop west of the intersection. Two (2) individuals were observed crossing University Boulevard just west of the intersection, approximately at the unmarked crosswalk (Picture 4); a commercial pickup truck stopped in the travel lane to allow them to cross the eastbound lanes. Several groups of pedestrians were observed crossing University Boulevard between the subject intersection and Piney Branch Road.
- **Transit:** There are bus stops all along University Boulevard. Metro bus stops are located at the intersection, on eastbound University Boulevard and approximately 300' west of the intersection on westbound University Boulevard and just west of the intersection with Piney Branch Road. A Ride On stop is located approximately midway between Piney Branch Road and Langley Drive on the eastbound lanes of University Boulevard.
- **Signals:** The subject intersection is not signal controlled, however there are signalized intersections in both the east and west of the subject intersection at Piney Branch Road and E Wayne Avenue/Buckingham Drive. It was observed that cars turning right from Piney Branch Road on to westbound University Boulevard, were making a lot of lane changes and may serve as a driver distraction on approach to the crossing at Langley Drive.
- **Lighting:** LED lights were present on virtually all utility poles along University Boulevard. Proper adequacy and operation could not be determined at the time of the field investigation. However the MCDOT streetlight map indicated that all lights near the subject intersection are functional
- **Drainage:** University Boulevard continues on a general downgrade to the east through the intersection. No evidence of pooling or drainage issues was observed.
- **Other Hazards:** Drivers were observed making U-turns at the subject intersection, in both the eastbound and westbound directions. Over the course of the field investigation significant conflicts were observed between through traffic on University Boulevard and vehicles turning out of Langley Drive, on both approaches.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations:**

Although the direct cause of the collision is unknown there are several improvements can be made and investigated to enhance safety at the intersection, particularly pedestrian safety. As University Boulevard is maintained by the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA), MCDOT recommends that MDOT SHA consider the following:

1. Foliage trimming. Though, as of the time of this investigation, visibility was sufficient, there are decorative trees along University Boulevard that may obscure signing or driver/pedestrian sightlines in the future.
2. Install pedestrian warning signs. The crosswalk across University Boulevard operates, effectively, as a mid-block crossing. Advance warning signs are typically installed ahead of the mid-block crossings to alert drivers to the unexpected condition. Though right-of-way is narrow and existing signs complicate sign spacing, it appears that warning can be installed in both directions around the intersection. As this portion of University Boulevard is relatively low speed using median/in-street pedestrian crossing signs may improve visibility at the crossing, in conjunction with standard advance warning signing.
3. Expand the existing median to provide proper pedestrian refuge, allowing pedestrians to more safely make the crossing in two stages.
4. Investigate whether the intersection should be signalized. Per Maryland state guidance documents mid-block crossings are to be discouraged. While observed traffic volumes strongly favor traffic along University Boulevard, observed pedestrian volumes and behavior would likely benefit from adding control to the intersection.

## Appendix A: Pictures

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Picture 1: The crosswalk on University Blvd, looking westbound



Picture 2: Looking towards intersection from the westbound departure



Picture 3: Looking along the westbound lanes from near the intersection with Piney Branch Road



Picture 4: Pedestrians crossing western leg of intersection



Picture 5: "Pedestrian Area Next 3 Miles" overhead sign with flashing beacons west of intersection over eastbound lanes. Looking in the direction of the intersection.