

November 25, 2014

Mr. Brian W. Young
District 3 Engineer
Maryland State Highway Administration
9300 Kenilworth Avenue
Greenbelt, MD 20770
Via Email: byoung@sha.state.md.us

Mr. Emil Wolanin
Chief, Division of Traffic Engineering & Operations
Montgomery County Dept. of Transportation
100 Edison Park Drive, 4th Floor
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
Via Email: emil.wolanin@montgomerycountymd.gov

Dear Mr. Young and Mr. Wolanin:

As members of the BRAC Integration Committee (BIC) which represents residential communities, institutions, and businesses in the vicinity of Naval Support Activity Bethesda (home of the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center), we are writing to express our concern over pedestrian safety while construction is under way and when work is completed on transportation modifications being implemented by your agencies. The goal of the ongoing modifications is to improve access for vehicles and pedestrians to the major job centers and transit hub serving Metrorail/bus, RideOn Bus, and MTA Express Bus. We believe incorporating relatively simple measures and coordinating efforts will result in a safer and more user-friendly environment.

Making the area more accessible to multi-modal transportation has been a top priority of our committee since its inception. It is notable that, based on observation and anecdotal evidence, pedestrian and bicycle traffic is on the rise. This is good news since we want to encourage employees, residents and visitors to move around in modes other than single occupancy vehicles, and Montgomery County has gone to great lengths to construct new and improved shared use paths in the area for this purpose. But it is discouraging to know that it is still not safe, particularly at intersections and where road construction is under way.

Intersection improvement construction continues, most actively at the intersection of Route 355/Rockville Pike and Cedar Lane. The forthcoming east side entrance and pedestrian underpass at the Medical Center Metro station will be a major project causing significant disruption. Throughout the active work zones and in the final product, we need improved safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Key issues we would like to see addressed include:

- Accommodations for pedestrians and cyclists through construction zones while work is underway, including signage, improved lighting and crosswalk striping.
- Clear pathways connecting residential areas to Medical Center Metro and connecting the Medical Center Metro area to the business district.

- State of the art lighting along Route 355 and at intersections to illuminate multi-use paths and cross walks.
- Improved cross walks with signalization, striping on the road way and other signage that allows for adequate time for rush hour crowds to cross Route 355 safely.

We ask that your agencies continue to work together to determine which is responsible for each aspect of the project and that pedestrian and bicycle safety be addressed throughout the project area.

Thank you very much for your attention to this vital factor of success. We look forward to receiving updates on the issues outlined above from the appropriate transportation agencies at the first BIC committee meeting in 2015 scheduled for March 17, 2015.

Sincerely,

Nancy Abeles
Bethesda Crest Homeowners Association

Lulu Gonella
Town of Chevy Chase View

Ilaya Hopkins
East Bethesda Citizens Association

Ginanne Italiano
Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce

Edward Krauze
Bethesda Parkview Citizens Association

Karen Kuker-Kihl
The Promenade Towers

Richard Levine
Locust Hill Citizens Association

Janet Maalouf
Maplewood Citizens Association

Marilyn Mazuzan
Town of Oakmont

Debbie Michaels
Glenbrook Village Homeowners Association

Freda Mitchem
Chevy Chase Valley Citizens Association

Phillip Neuberg
National Institutes of Health

Patrick O'Neil
Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase
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Richard Vogel
Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart

Leslie Ford Weber
Suburban Hospital (Johns Hopkins Medicine)