



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL**  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

**NANCY NAVARRO**  
**COUNCIL PRESIDENT, DISTRICT 4**

January 8, 2019

Louis Mozzano, Chair  
Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board  
2004 Queensguard Road  
Silver Spring, MD 20906

Dear Mr. Mozzano,

Thank you for your letter dated December 26, 2018 in which you expressed the Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board's concerns about pedestrian safety in Montgomery County. I fully share your concerns and appreciate your thoughtful suggestions. Indeed, this is an on-going issue that the County Council has been advocating for assistance from the State as the enclosed letters show.

On November 13, 2018, the Council received a briefing from Mr. Gregory Slater, Administrator of the State Highway Administration (SHA) that highlighted pedestrian safety issues throughout the county. It was a productive session that gave the Council an opportunity to discuss specific high incident areas with the State Highway Administration. This briefing occurred shortly after the incident involving high school students on Georgia Avenue.

After this briefing, the Council sent a letter to Mr. Slater in November outlining a number of strategies we believe the SHA should pursue moving forward, including identifying locations where full pedestrian and HAWK signals can be implemented, reducing the speed limit on State roads in Urban areas to 25 miles per hour, and auditing the location and access to transit bus and school bus stops on State highways to identify where stops and crosswalks should be relocated or installed, and where improved lighting is needed. The Maryland Department of Transportation has responded to one of our requests, agreeing to reduce the lane width in the Wheaton Urban District along MD-97 to 10-foot travel lanes.

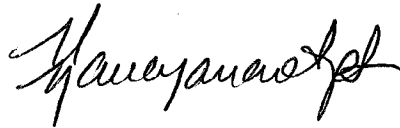
In addition to making these requests to the State Highway Authority, we have expressed a desire for a streamlined and expedited process from the SHA to

implementing these improvements as we implement our Vision Zero goals for the County.

In order to bring about the necessary changes that are required to make our roads safer, it will necessitate multi-agency collaboration. To accomplish this, I have requested that the County Executive create a Pedestrian and Bicycle Task Force that will be led by Montgomery County's Vision Zero Coordinator and include representatives from Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD), the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), and the State Highway Administration. This task force will come up with recommendations for changes that can be acted upon in the for the Fiscal Year 2021 budgets at the State and County levels.

As your District 4 Councilmember, please know that I share your desire to end this trend of pedestrian incidents, and will continue to advocate for solutions to this issue. Again, thank you for your letter and I look forward to working with you on this very important initiative.

Sincerely,



Nancy Navarro  
President, Montgomery County Council

Enclosures

Cc:

The Honorable Larry Hogan, Governor, State of Maryland

The Honorable Marc Elrich, Montgomery County Executive  
Councilmembers

The Honorable Marc Korman, Chair, Montgomery County House Delegation

The Honorable Craig Zucker, Chair, Montgomery County Senate Delegation

Andre Futrell, District 3, Engineer, State Highway Administration

Al Roshdieh, Director, Montgomery County Department of Transportation

Kristy Daphnis, Chair, Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL**  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

October 16, 2018

The Honorable Larry Hogan, Governor  
State of Maryland  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Peter K. Rahn, Secretary  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
7201 Corporate Drive, P.O. Box 548  
Hanover, MD 21076

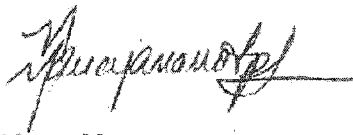
Dear Governor Hogan and Secretary Rahn,

On October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018 a motor vehicle struck four young students approaching a school bus stop on northbound Georgia Avenue (MD 97) in Montgomery County's Aspen Hill neighborhood. As of this writing, one of the students has life-threatening injuries. A police investigation is underway.

We have seen a steady climb in vehicle collisions with pedestrians during the past year. To date in 2018 we have had 11 pedestrians perish along roadways in Montgomery County, compared to 11 all last year and 8 in 2016. Of the 11 who died this year, 9 were along State highways. While we do not have the police report on this incident yet, this section of MD 97 has always been considered hostile to pedestrians and bicyclists. As with similar incidents during the past couple of years on River Road (MD 190) and Veirs Mill Road (MD 586), we want immediate action to make this section of upper Georgia Avenue safe for all.

While we are grateful for the safety improvements at the River Road and Veirs Mill Road accident sites, we think it took much too long to identify the solutions and implement them. We want much more immediate safety relief along upper Georgia Avenue, including, but not limited to, reducing the speed limit: 45 mph is much too high for this suburban area. Furthermore, we expect the State Highway Administration (SHA) to be much more proactive on other State highways to reduce the chance of further severe accidents.

Very soon we will hold a Council session when we expect SHA to present the steps it will take in the short term to address this issue on its highways. We need a much streamlined (i.e., faster) process at SHA to implement pedestrian safety improvements. We all espouse the objectives of Vision Zero; now is the time to see those objectives translate into action.



Nancy Navarro  
Council Vice President  
District 4



Hans Reimer  
Council President  
At-Large



Roger Berliner  
District 1



Craig Rice  
District 2



Sidney Katz  
District 3



Tom Hucker  
District 5



George Leventhal  
At-Large



Marc Elrich  
At-Large



Nancy Floreen  
At-Large

cc: The Honorable Isiah T. Leggett, Montgomery County Executive  
The Honorable Nancy King, Montgomery County Senate Delegation Chair  
The Honorable Shane Robinson, Montgomery County House Delegation Chair  
Gregory Slater, Administrator, State Highway Administration  
Andre Futrell, District 3 Engineer, State Highway Administration

### Recommendations at Specific Locations

- *Georgia Avenue (MD 97) between Bel Pre Road and Arcola Avenue.* In this segment there should be a lower speed limit, a better alignment for left hand turns on and off of MD 97, the optimization of the pedestrian signals, and more and safer pedestrian crossings.
- *Wheaton Commercial Business District: Georgia Avenue (MD 97), Veirs Mill Road (MD 586), and University Boulevard (MD 193).* In this area there should be a lower speed limit, safer pedestrian crossings and pedestrian signal optimization, and increased attention to proper street lighting.
- *Veirs Mill Road (MD 586).* In these segments there should be sidewalks and better street lighting: southbound from Twinbrook Parkway to Aspen Hill Road; northbound and southbound between Aspen Hill Road and Connecticut Avenue (MD 185); and pedestrian signal optimization for safer crossings along the entire corridor.
- *Georgia Avenue (MD 97) and Fenwick Lane.* It is close to meeting warrants today and the future senior building and redevelopment of the 8787 Georgia Avenue will more than justify it.
- *New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650) and Northampton Drive.* This intersection has seen a lot of collisions involving both motorists and pedestrians. It also lacks curb ramps at the crosswalks.
- *Columbia Pike (US 29) & Stewart Lane (west side).* The west side of this intersection where Milestone Drive meets Stewart Lane and US 29 lacks space for motorists to make a right turn on southbound US 29 due to left-turning motorists waiting at the signal using up the minimal space between the southbound lanes of U.S. 29 and the frontage road (Milestone). One solution is to shave off the corner to facilitate right turns more easily.
- *Colesville Road (US 29) & Indian Spring Drive.* A flashing pedestrian signal is needed at this intersection.
- *Colesville Road (MD 384) & Wayne Avenue/Second Avenue.* This intersection has bad signal timing due to the split-phased configuration for Wayne/Second, which creates lots of wasted green time for the cross street and encourages jaywalking due to long wait times for pedestrians. The signal setup should be changed if possible to remove the split phasing and decrease wait times. This intersection will soon be altered in some way with the coming bikeway along Wayne and Second which recently began construction, but we are not sure if the signals will be modified as part of that.
- *University Boulevard West (MD 193) & Brunett Avenue.* The current pedestrian activated signal at The Oaks retirement home crosswalk 200 yards northwest of Brunett Avenue should be moved to the present unsignalized (but marked) crossing at University Boulevard & Brunett Avenue. The new North Four Corners Park has brought much more use to the Brunett Avenue crossing and it is a better spot for a signal than The Oaks location, which requires seniors to walk along the narrow MD 193 sidewalk to reach the nearest bus stops at either Royalton Road or Brunett Avenue.
- *Norbeck Road (MD 28) & Emory Lane.* A left-turn signal phase is needed at this intersection. There are reports of several accidents there due to motorists

- *Norbeck Road (MD 28) between Bauer Drive and Georgia Avenue (MD 97).* Residents turning onto MD 28 from local roads or pedestrians trying to cross MD 28 face a line-of-sight issue due to hills and curves which reduce visibility. Cars on MD 28 traveling at higher speed than is posted also contribute to serious accidents. It is very difficult to safely turn out of Flower Valley onto MD 28 using the Westbury Road exit due to the curve, foliage, and speeding by motorists. There are also sight-line issues at the Hannans Way, Columbine Way and Carrolton Road exits onto Norbeck Road, as well, but Westbury Road remains the most dangerous exit.
- *I-270 & Falls Road (MD 189).* A higher level of lighting is needed at this interchange to improve the visibility of pedestrians crossing the ramps.
- *Darnestown Road (MD 28) between Great Seneca Highway (MD 119) and Muddy Branch Road.* A crosswalk or HAWK signal is needed here.
- *Darnestown Road (MD 28) between Shady Grove Road and Traville Gateway Drive.* There is a pending sidewalk request with SHA in this location.
- *Germantown Road (MD 118) & Clopper Road (MD 117).* This is a very wide intersection with significant traffic on all legs. It is also adjacent to Kingsview Middle School to which many young teens reach by foot.
- *Massachusetts Avenue (MD 396) & entrance to Westland Middle School.* A HAWK signal or similar engineering solution is needed for the unprotected marked crosswalk here and at other similar crosswalks in this section of MD 396.
- *River Road (MD 190) & Braeburn Parkway.* The unsignalized turn into and out of the back entrance of Whitman High School where three members of a family were killed by an oncoming speeding driver. SHA has proposed a promising permanent solution, but it is not scheduled for implementation. This stretch of River Road should be designated as a School Zone, which would allow for the speed limit to be reduced.
- *Wilson Lane (MD 188) & Cordell Avenue.* SHA has already evaluated and found significant crossing activity at Wilson Lane due to Bethesda Elementary School. We request that SHA at least paint a crosswalk here and look at whether a signal would be warranted.
- *Old Georgetown Road (MD 187) & Cordell Avenue.* This unsignalized marked crosswalk of Old Georgetown should be a prime candidate for a HAWK/pedestrian-activated signal – SHA says they have concerns about drivers having to stop there and again at the Arlington/St. Elmo/Wilson intersection.
- *Rockville Pike (MD 355) in White Flint/Pike District.* There are several routine maintenance activities needed in this section of MD 355, including: paint in crosswalks on all four legs of intersections where that condition does not exist today; repaint more visible crosswalks at all intersections along Rockville Pike; and better lighting at two key pedestrian intersections: MD 355/MD 187 and MD 355/Marinelli Road.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

OFFICE OF THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT

November 30, 2018

Gregory I. Slater, Administrator  
Maryland State Highway Administration  
707 North Calvert Street, Room C-400  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Dear Administrator Slater:

On November 13 the County Council had a wide-ranging conversation with you regarding both general and specific strategies for improving traffic and pedestrian safety along State highways in Montgomery County. I want to summarize for you the general strategies we wish the State Highway Administration to pursue going forward:

- Reduce the lane widths to 10 feet in all our Urban Areas (11 feet if adjacent to a parking lane or a curb), consistent with the direction in the County's Road Construction Code. This is the standard that has been applied to County roads since the Council updated the Road Code in 2014. It was developed after significant engineering review by our Planning Board and Department of Transportation staffs; the 10-foot-width standard was deemed sufficient to accommodate trucks and buses. The State roads in Urban Areas should adhere to the same standard. The County has formally adopted about 25 Urban Areas where this standard applies (see the attached map).
- Set the speed limit on all State roads in Urban Areas to 25 mph, unless a different target speed is specified in a local master plan. This, too, was a provision in the 2014 Road Code update. Target speeds in our Suburban Areas are not specified in law, but many of our most recent master plans do set them, and they are often lower than the current posted speed limits. As we noted in our earlier letter, the speed limit on Georgia Avenue (MD 97) in Aspen Hill should be reduced from the current 45 mph posting.
- Audit the location and access to both transit bus and school bus stops on State highways to identify where stops and crosswalks should be relocated or installed, and where improved lighting is needed.
- Identify where the next set of full pedestrian signals and HAWK signals will be implemented, and to develop the warrants for these types of signals.

STELLA B. WERNER COUNCIL OFFICE BUILDING • 100 MARYLAND AVENUE • ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850  
240/777-7900 • TTY 240/777-7914 • FAX 240/777-7989

[WWW.MONTGOMERYCOUNTYMD.GOV](http://WWW.MONTGOMERYCOUNTYMD.GOV)

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

- Incorporate officially designated Safe Routes to Schools in the prioritization for pedestrian safety improvements.
- Reconfigure State roadways where we have identified bikeways—especially protected bike lanes—in the Bicycle Master Plan we adopted on November 27.
- Reduce the time to analyze proposed pedestrian safety improvements as well as the time to install them once a decision is made to implement them.

The above initiatives should apply to all state highways; we would like to also proceed as we have discussed to work through a set of changes for Georgia Avenue specifically.

As promised at the November 13 worksession, I am attaching a set of individual locations along State highways of immediate concern to Councilmembers. I request that your staff evaluate each of them and report back with an action plan.

We look forward to a continuing partnership with SHA in achieving the Vision Zero goal in the foreseeable future. These steps will hasten us on that path.

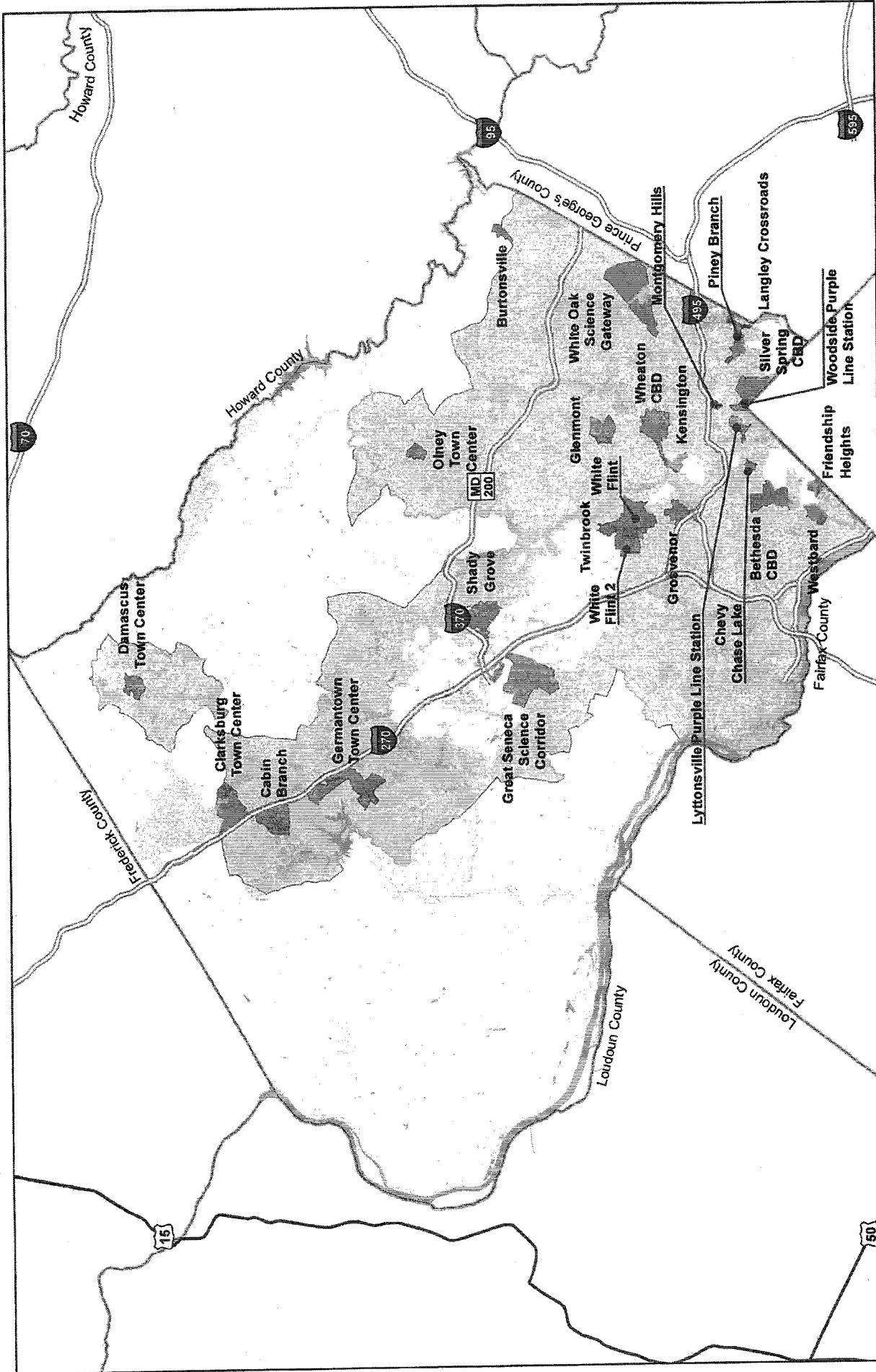
Sincerely,



Hans Reimer  
Council President

cc: The Honorable Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive  
Councilmembers  
The Honorable Marc Korman, Chair, Montgomery County House Delegation  
The Honorable Craig Zucker, Chair, Montgomery County Senate Delegation  
Andre Futrell, District 3 Engineer, State Highway Administration  
Al Roshdieh, Director, Montgomery County Department of Transportation  
Kristy Daphnis, Chair, Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee





ROAD CODE AREAS      PARKS      MUNICIPALITIES