

November 9, 2017

Mr. Al R. Roshdieh  
Director, Montgomery County Department of Transportation  
*via email*

**Re: Transportation Safety & Improvements in Rock Creek Hills**

Dear Director Roshdieh,

A new middle school opened this year in the Rock Creek Hills community, which is located just outside the Beltway to the east of Connecticut Avenue. While cut-through traffic and speeding have been concerns here for some time, these are of greater importance now that Silver Creek Middle School has opened, and we are seeing increased walking students and an increase in traffic at intersections on the principal local streets used to reach the school. On October 24, 2017, the members of the Rock Creek Hill Citizens' Association voted to request your Department to evaluate several sidewalk, intersection, and traffic calming measures, in order to improve the safety of our community and especially the safety of children accessing the new school. As both traffic study and engineering matters are involved, this letter is copied to Mr. Bruce Johnson, Chief, Division of Transportation Engineering, and Mr. Chris Conklin, Acting Chief, Division of Traffic Engineering and Operations. Our requests are as follows.

1. Area Transportation Study

The part of Rock Creek Hills that is most impacted by through traffic lies south of Saul Road and east of Connecticut Avenue to the park area adjacent to the Mormon Temple. This traffic is a function of local, cut-through, and middle school traffic (including buses) with particularly heavy volumes on Saul Road, Elrod Road, Old Spring Road, and Kensington Parkway. As discussed further below, the intersections with the most traffic violations are Old Spring & Elrod Roads, Elrod & Saul Roads, and Elrod Road & Calvend Lane. Excessive speed is an issue on Kensington Parkway, Elrod Road, and Old Spring Road below Saul Road.

We believe that most of these issues can be addressed through engineering changes and turn restrictions that are consistent with your Department's policies. In that vein, we are not requesting stop sign changes as a principal means for controlling excessive speeding. Rather, as has already been done at one intersection (Saul Road & Haverhill Drive) within the new school zone, such steps as intersection change, traffic calming measures, and selected use of sidewalks should meet our immediate concerns. However, the specific requests below should be supported by a general area traffic study that would form a baseline for the specifics and allow the determination of traffic increases resulting from the addition of another grade to Silver Creek Middle School in the next school year.

2. Sidewalk Construction

Sidewalks can be a thorny issue in any community that does not have them. However, RCHCA has concluded that sidewalks are warranted for safety purposes on the following streets: (a) Saul Road between Haverhill Drive and Old Spring Road; (b) Kensington Parkway between Beach Drive and Litledale Road; (c) Kent Street between Kensington Parkway and Stoneybrook Drive; and (d) Elrod from Saul to Old Spring Road and then down Old Spring to Beach Drive. Sidewalk configurations along this last, (d), which is a direct route between Beach Drive and the middle school, must reflect that triangular intersections at Elrod & Saul Roads, and at Elrod & Old Spring Roads, should be converted to T intersections (per point 3, following).

### 3. Intersection Modifications

There are triangular intersections at Elrod & Saul Roads, and Elrod & Old Spring Roads, which are inconsistent with current County policy, and which encourage stop sign running. They are particularly dangerous because both intersections involve downhill grades, with those on Elrod and southbound Old Spring being relatively steep. The intersection at Elrod & Saul Roads is just opposite the new middle school and just east of its lower entrance, which provides an additional hazard. Changing the Elrod Road side of both intersections to a T intersection (as was done recently at Saul & Haverhill, as mentioned) would require a full stop, and significantly reduce speeds and intersection hazards. As noted, any sidewalk plans for the Old Spring-Elrod-Saul corridor should be consistent with these urgently needed intersection modifications.

### 4. Turning Restrictions

There is very heavy AM traffic turning left on Franklin Street from Connecticut Avenue south bound and then right onto Kensington Parkway, in order to bypass the traffic lights at Saul Road & Connecticut, and at Beach Drive & Connecticut. A reverse flow occurs during the PM rush. Accordingly, RCHCA requests that an AM no left turn restriction be placed on Connecticut at Franklin, and a PM no left turn restriction be placed on Kensington Parkway at Franklin.

### 5. Traffic Calming Measures

Excessive speeding on Kensington Parkway between Littledale Drive and Beach Drive persists, despite the installation several years ago of speed bumps between Franklin Street and Saul Road. RCHCA therefore requests that your Department study, and hopefully recommend, the installation of traffic calming devices along Kensington Parkway between Franklin Street and Beach Drive.

I realize that these are extensive concerns, but RCHCA believes that they are a comprehensive package which addresses much of the cut-through and speeding traffic that has afflicted our community for years, which have worsened now that the new Silver Creek Middle School has opened, and which now raise concerns regarding the safety of children accessing the new school. In closing, I would like to express our appreciation for Mr. Bilgrami and Mr. Calderon's very helpful participation in RCHCA's October 24 membership meeting.

Thank you very much for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to let me know if you have any questions about any of the above.

Sincerely yours,



James J. Pekar, Ph.D.

President, Rock Creek Hills Citizens' Association

Cc: Mr. Bruce Johnson, Chief, Division of Transportation Engineering, MCDOT  
Mr. Chris Conklin, Acting Chief, Division of Traffic Engineering and Operations, MCDOT  
Ms. Dewa Salihi, Chief, Traffic Engineering Studies Section, MCDOT  
Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board  
Dr. Traci Townsend, Principal, Silver Creek Middle School  
Mr. Roger Berliner, Montgomery County Councilmember