

From: Emily Violi Benjamin

To: Montgomery County Council

**Re: FY27 Capital Budget and FY27-32 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Testimony:
Support Tuckerman Lane CIP**

Thank you for having me this evening! My name is Emily Benjamin. I have come to testify in support of funding the [Tuckerman Lane Sidewalk project](#).

This project, broken into four segments, was first put forward a decade ago. In that time, the project has not been prioritized or funded, with only Segment 1 seeing partial design progress. During this same time, our area has continued to see tremendous growth, leading to an increase in cars on Tuckerman. This is a critical economic corridor. However, for many of us, it is also our home. The majority of Tuckerman Lane from Old Georgetown Road to Falls Road is lined with houses or entrances to communities. My family and I live directly along Segment 4 of the project.

I can't express how dangerous Tuckerman Lane is for pedestrians. There are currently no pedestrian facilities or traffic calming measures for the majority of the road in question, only a large shoulder that pedestrians are forced to share with cars.

As you may know, Maryland law allows drivers to use the shoulder to pass a vehicle turning left. On Tuckerman, that means cars, buses, and trucks often move onto the shoulder at full speed, right where pedestrians are walking. I have watched children walking from school leap into a drain ditch to avoid cars driving on the shoulder.

The average speed on our segment of Tuckerman is 41 MPH. [County road planning guidance](#) states that being struck by a car going that speed has a 73% fatality rate. This project would get pedestrians off the shoulders and make the flow of traffic safer and more efficient. There are far too many cars now on Tuckerman Lane to continue to accept this informal sharing of the shoulder for cars and pedestrians.

With the opening of Woodward High School, this issue will only become more apparent. The majority of Segment 4 of the proposed Tuckerman Lane CIP is in the walk zone for both Woodward and Tilden Middle School. If one of the goals of these school changes is geographic proximity to schools (Appendix 1), how can the county disregard that students living less than half a mile away cannot walk to or from the school because of well-known road safety issues?

Segment 4 of the project is less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile. It is the least expensive segment of the proposal. But its impact on safety will be felt across hundreds of homes and thousands of residents.

In this budget cycle, I respectfully implore you to prioritize the Tuckerman Lane project and **fully fund the complete construction of a.) Segment 4 before Woodward High School opens and b.) Segment 1, the additional residential segment already underway.**

To close, I have brought a visual (Appendix 2). This is the school bus that crashed through our front yard on Tuckerman and caused a multi-car accident as cars were also driving on the shoulders. Mercifully, no children were on the bus and no pedestrians were on the shoulder, but a bus attendant was injured. We can't wait another decade for safety on Tuckerman Lane. It is a matter of when, not if, a tragic accident will occur. We have an opportunity to change this outcome to be one of community and safety for children and neighbors instead. Thank you!

Appendix 1: From the [Superintendent's report](#) on Woodward

"The geographic proximity of some communities to Charles W. Woodward High School may increase the number of students eligible to follow recommended walking routes, which would reduce reliance on student transportation resources and support operational efficiency." *This is not possible because half of the walk zone lives near or along Tuckerman Lane.*

Appendix 2: School Bus Crash on Tuckerman Lane



