

SCHOOL-RELATED CRASH REVIEW

Location: Wisteria Drive at Walter Johnson Road

Crash Date: March 6, 2024

Crash Time: Approximately 4:40 PM

Local Case No.: 240010945

Review Date: December 17, 2024

Description of Incident

On Wednesday, March 6, 2024, at approximately 4:40 PM, a motorist traveling southbound along Walter Johnson Road stopped at the stop sign at Wisteria Drive, then began turning right on to westbound Wisteria Drive. A cyclist was traveling eastbound on the shared use path on the north side of the street. According to the crash report, the cyclist stated that he saw the vehicle turning left but was not able to brake in time. The cyclist struck the right front corner of the turning vehicle. The crash report indicated the cyclist failed to yield right of way. It was raining at the time of the crash, the roadway surface was wet, and it was daylight. The cyclist suffered minor injuries.

Figure 2 illustrates the crash location and direction of pedestrian and vehicle travel.

Location and Site Description

The subject location is the intersection of Wisteria Drive at Walter Johnson Road. Seneca Valley High School (HS) is approximately 800 feet southeast of the Wisteria Drive/Walter Johnson Road intersection and located at 19401 Crystal Rock Drive, adjacent to Wisteria Drive. Seneca Valley HS has a current enrollment of 2,239 students in grades 9 through 12.

Seneca Valley School (HS)

The majority of student arrivals are between 7:15 AM and 7:45 AM and dismissals occur between 2:30 PM and 2:50 PM.

Wisteria Drive

Wisteria Drive is classified as a town center boulevard, is approximately 50 feet wide, and is generally oriented in an east-west direction. Wisteria Drive is approximately 3.4 miles long, with an alignment between Sea Breeze Court to the west and Waring Station Road to the east. Wisteria Drive sidewalks/shared use paths with grass buffers on both sides from Germantown Road to Crystal Rock Drive.

Wisteria Drive has a posted speed limit of 30 MPH. On-street parking is not permitted within the vicinity of the high school between Germantown Road and MD 119 (Great Seneca Highway). Refer to **Figure 1** in the attachments for additional details of the Wisteria Drive segment.

Wisteria Drive at Walter Johnson Road

Wisteria Drive at Walter Johnson Road is a four-legged intersection. Walter Johnson Road is classified as a town center street but is a “no outlet” roadway that provides access to businesses to the north and the MARC station to the south. ADA-compliant pedestrian ramps are provided on all corners of the intersection. However, there are only crosswalk markings across the north and east legs. Transverse crosswalk markings are installed for the north leg and continental crosswalk markings are installed for the

east leg of the intersection. The Wisteria Drive approaches are uncontrolled, and the Walter Johnson Road approaches are stop-controlled. The intersection is at the bottom of a sag curve.

The Wisteria Drive corridor was evaluated to identify potential infrastructure, maintenance activities, and road user behaviors that contribute to increased safety risk at and in the vicinity of the school-related crash location. The Wisteria Drive corridor was reviewed at the subject intersection where the crash took place. Please refer to **Figure 1** for additional information.

Crash History

Crash data obtained from dataMontgomery indicates six (6) crashes occurred at the intersection of Wisteria Drive at Walter Johnson Road between April 2019 and September 2024. Three (3) of the crashes were classified as “straight movement-angle collisions”, two (2) were “single vehicle collisions”, and one (1) was a “same direction rear-end collision”. Of the six crashes noted in the report, four (4) were identified as “property damage only” and two (2) as “injury” crashes, one of which involved a bicyclist. The incidents are illustrated on **Figure 3**.

Field Observations

Field observations were performed on Thursday, August 22, 2024, at approximately 12pm. Weather conditions were clear, and the roadway surface was dry. Bus stops are located on both sides of the intersection along Wisteria Drive, [south or east] of Walter Johnson Road. There is a 10-foot-wide shared use path (SUP) with a grassed buffer along westbound Wisteria Drive, while eastbound Wisteria Drive has a five-foot sidewalk, with grassed buffer. The north leg of Walter Johnson Road extends approximately 700 feet before it terminates in parking.

During the observation period, much of the vehicular traffic at the intersection originated from this leg, due to several businesses that exist on this portion of Walter Johnson Road. Foliage and signing obstruct sightlines at the Wisteria Road intersection for traffic turning from the north leg (southbound) of Walter Johnson Road. Reduced sightlines on this approach result in motorists advancing past the stop line and into the crosswalk. Along the east leg crossing, there is an advanced stop line installed which is an atypical application and may cause confusion for motorists traveling westbound along Wisteria Road.

It should also be noted that MCDOT has a plan for a new SUP along Walter Johnson Road. Any future improvements to increase pedestrian safety should be coordinated in conjunction with that effort.

Recommendations

Based on review of the Crash Report, field observations, and evaluation of existing infrastructure and traffic control devices, the motorist failed to yield right of way to the cyclist using the shared use path crossing of Walter Johnson Road. Sight lines, awareness of bicyclist activity, and field of vision also likely contributed to the collision. These factors may be improved by a variety of countermeasures outlined in the recommendations below.

1. Trim trees near subject intersection to improve sightlines for pedestrians and motorists.
2. Consider installing continental crosswalk markings along the north and south legs of the intersection to enhance pedestrian conspicuity.
3. Consider removal of the advanced stop line for uncontrolled crossing on east leg to avoid motorist confusion or shift it 20 feet upstream of the marked crosswalk and supplement with a STOP HERE FOR PEDS sign.
4. Discuss relocation of car wash sign to increase visibility for motorists looking to make a right turn from Walter Johnson Road onto Wisteria Drive westbound. The sign placed within the public right of way limits the sight line to approximately 125 feet.

5. Consider installing back-to-back pedestrian warning signs for the east leg crossing.

Site Photograph



Photo 1. North leg of intersection where crash occurred, looking south along Wisteria Drive.



Photo 2. North leg of intersection where crash occurred, looking north along Wisteria Drive. Motorist can be seen creeping up past stop line before turning due to poor visibility.



Figure 1 - Wisteria Drive Corridor Observations



Figure 2 - Crash Diagram

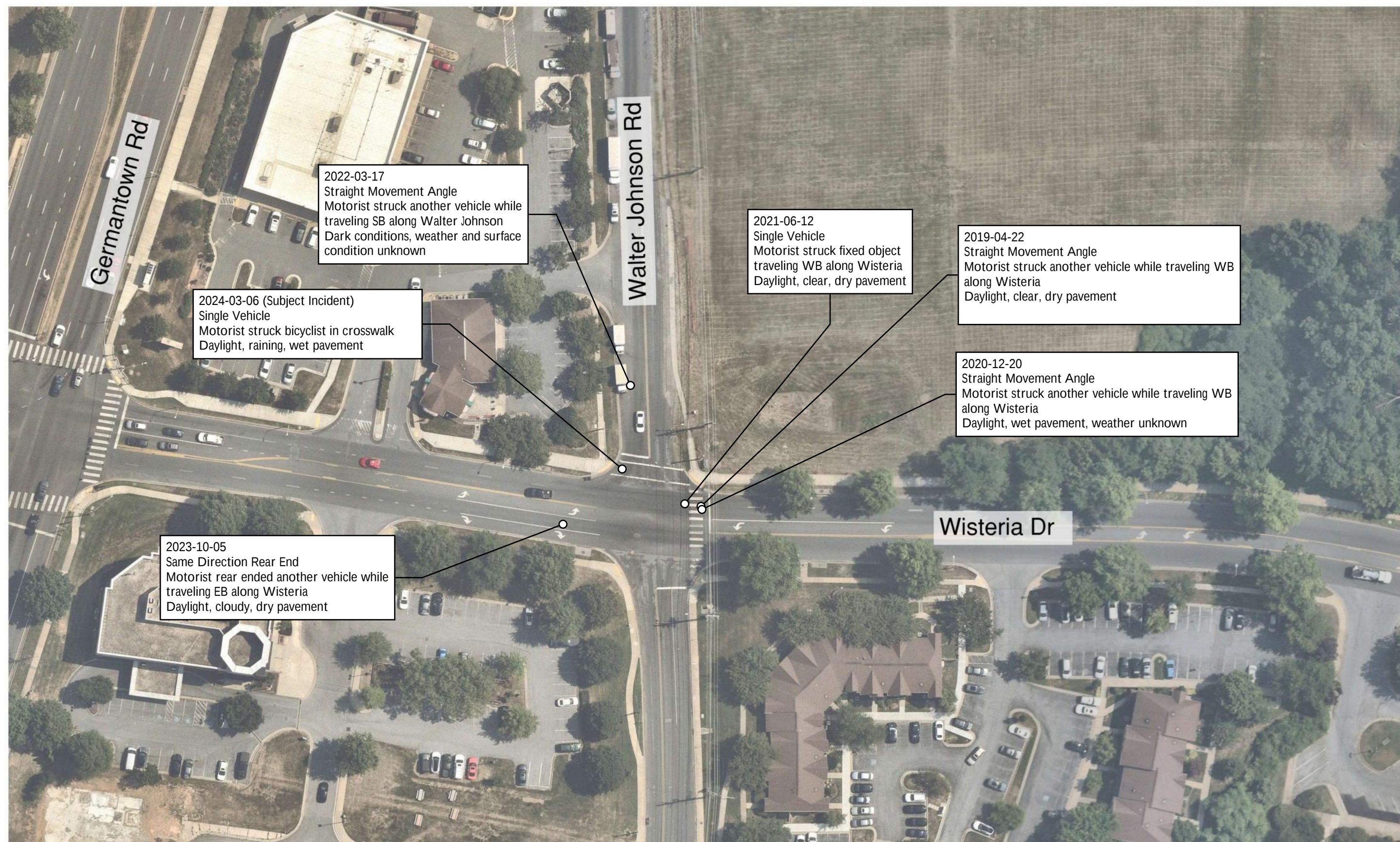


Figure 3 - Crash History (2019-2024)