

# SCHOOL-RELATED CRASH REVIEW

**Location:** Woodson Avenue south of Astoria Road

**Crash Date:** May 6, 2024

**Crash Time:** Approximately 3:49 PM

**Local Case No.:** 240021303

**Review Date:** December 17, 2024

## **Description of Incident**

On Monday, May 6, 2024, at approximately 3:49 PM, a motorist traveling southbound along Woodson Avenue collided with two pedestrians/students crossing Woodson Avenue in an easterly direction. The collision occurred approximately 50 feet south of the Woodson Avenue intersection with Astoria Road. The daylight crash occurred during cloudy conditions and the roadway surface was dry. The pedestrians suffered minor injuries.

**Figure 3** illustrates the crash location and direction of pedestrian and vehicle travel.

## **Location and Site Description**

The subject location is along Woodson Avenue, south of Astoria Road in the Newport Hills community. Rock View Elementary School is located at 3901 Denfeld Avenue and is situated west of Woodson Avenue, on the opposite side of MD 185 (Connecticut Avenue). The subject location also falls within the watershed for Newport Mill Middle School (MS) and Albert Einstein High School (HS), which are both located east of the site along Newport Mill Road. Rock View ES has a current enrollment of 600 students in grades Pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **Rock View Elementary School**

Most student arrivals occur between 8:30 AM and 9:00 AM and dismissals occur between 3:25 PM and 3:45 PM. Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is currently conducting a Safe Routes to School assessment for the Albert Einstein HS cluster that includes Rock View ES and is expected to be completed this year.

### **Woodson Avenue**

Woodson Avenue is a 25-foot-wide “Neighborhood Yield Street” and is generally oriented in the north-south direction. Woodson Avenue has grass-buffered, four-foot-wide sidewalks along both sides of the street. Woodson Avenue is approximately 3,300 feet long, with a speed limit of 25 MPH, between Wexford Drive to the south and Lund Place to the north. On-street parking is permitted along most of the Woodson Avenue segment, except for posted restrictions near the intersection with Denfeld Avenue. Refer to **Figure 1** in the attachments for additional details of the Woodson Avenue segment.

### **Woodson Avenue at Astoria Road**

Woodson Avenue at Astoria Road is a three-legged intersection, with Astoria Road extending easterly from Woodson Avenue. Astoria Road has a similar typical section width as Woodson Avenue and is classified as a “Neighborhood Yield Street.” ADA-compliant pedestrian ramps are provided on the east corners of the intersection facilitating an accessible crossing Astoria Road. The crossings of the north and south legs of Woodson Avenue are neither marked nor accessible. Transverse crosswalk markings are installed for the east leg (Astoria Road) of the intersection. The intersection is stop-controlled along the

westbound Astoria Road approach and the Woodson Avenue approaches are uncontrolled.

The Woodson Avenue 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 Woodson Avenue corridor was reviewed between Denfeld Avenue to the south and Soward Drive to the north. There is one horizontal curve along this segment directly adjacent to the intersection with Astoria Road. The segment also includes sag vertical curve with the low point at Astoria Road. The horizontal and vertical curvature constrain lines of sight and observations show the grade changes result in variable acceleration and deceleration rates by motors traveling the corridor. Please refer to **Figures 1 and 2** for additional information.

### **Crash History**

Crash data obtained from dataMontgomery provides information for seven (7) incidents along Woodson Avenue between October 2015 and September 2024. Two (2) crashes occurred in the vicinity of the Woodson Avenue intersection with Astoria Road, including the subject incident. The other crash occurred in November 2016 where a motorist traveling southbound along Woodson Avenue sideswiped a parked vehicle just north of the intersection with Astoria Road. The report indicated property damage only. The incidents are illustrated on **Figure 4**.

### **Field Observations and Findings**

Field observations were performed on Friday, May 31, 2024, during the Rock View ES morning arrival period. Weather conditions were clear, and the roadway surface was dry. Students/pedestrians were observed using sidewalks along Woodson Avenue, mostly traveling to/from Denfeld Avenue. One (1) pedestrian was observed exiting the wooded area west of the Woodson Avenue at Astoria Road intersection, crossing Woodson Avenue, and continuing easterly along Astoria Road towards the Albert Einstein HS.

Pedestrian activity was concentrated closer to Denfeld Avenue, where most pedestrians cross MD 185 (Connecticut Avenue) while traveling to/from Rock View ES. Two (2) crossing guards were present at the intersection of MD 185 (Connecticut Avenue) at Denfeld Avenue. Most students were accompanied by adults.

The west lot adjacent to the Woodson Avenue at Astoria Road intersection is owned and maintained by MDOT SHA as a storm water management facility. The facility displays “No Trespassing” signs and includes a chain link boundary fence. A chain link fence also runs behind the W-beam set along northbound MD 185 (Connecticut Avenue). A hole was cut in the chain link fence to provide unauthorized access between MD 185 (Connecticut Avenue) and Woodson Avenue via a worn pathway that follows the northern boundary of the storm water management facility.

During the field review, the student/pedestrian observed using the pathway indicated that many students use this pathway as a shortcut to Albert Einstein HS. All three (3) schools – Rock View ES, Newport Mill MS, and Albert Einstein HS – have walkshed boundaries that span the MD 185 (Connecticut Avenue) corridor. The Rock Creek Palisades Townhomes and bus transit stops create a desire line for crossing MD 185 (Connecticut Avenue) and to provide the most direct walking route to/from Albert Einstein HS. Students traveling to the nearest protected crossing of MD 185 (Connecticut Avenue) add 10 minutes to their trip, each way. The pedestrians/students involved in the subject crash did not use of this shortcut.

### **Recommendations**

Based on review of the crash report, the pedestrians improperly crossed the street. These factors may be improved by a variety of countermeasures outlined in the recommendations below.



1. Consider converting the Woodson Avenue/Astoria Road intersection to all-way stop control. Advance warning signs, crosswalk markings, and ADA ramps should be installed as necessary. This work was completed in winter 2024. See **Photo 6**.
2. Coordinate with MDOT SHA to request the existing chain link fence along the east side of MD 185 (Connecticut Avenue) bounding the storm water management facility be maintained and repaired as needed to discourage use of the cut thru path and midblock crossings of Connecticut Avenue north of Denfeld Avenue.

### Site Photograph



**Photo 1. Woodson Avenue looking north towards Astoria Road. Approximate crash location.**



**Photo 2. Worn path adjacent to SWM facility.**



**Photo 3. Pedestrians along Denfeld Avenue.**





Photo 4. Fence breach along Connecticut Avenue.



Photo 5. Obstructed sight line for Astoria Road approach looking north up Woodson Avenue.





**Photo 6. All-Way Stop Control implemented at the intersection of Woodson Avenue at Astoria Road.**





Figure 1 - Woodson Avenue Corridor Observations





Figure 2 - Woodson Avenue at Astoria Road and Adjacent SWM Facility

Walking path adjacent to SWM facility





Figure 3 - Crash Diagram



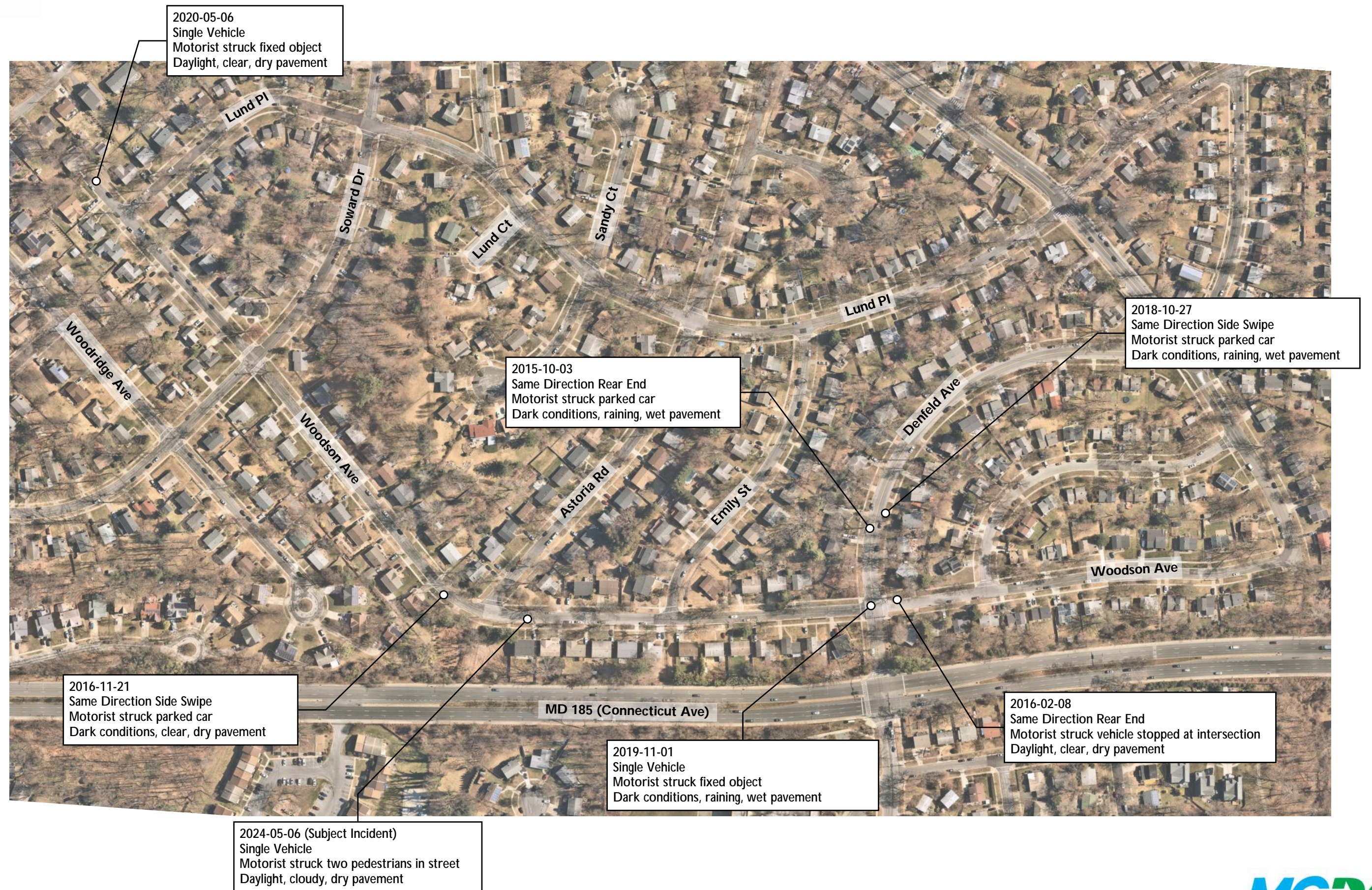


Figure 4 - Crash History (2015-2024)