

SAFE STREETS ACT 2023 - CRASH REVIEW

Location: Rock Spring Drive

Crash Date: September 9, 2024

Crash Time: Approximately 2:44 PM

Local Case No.: 240042790

Review Date: January 14, 2025

Description of Incident

On Monday, September 9, 2024, at approximately 2:44 PM, a motorist traveling eastbound along Rock Spring Drive collided with a student in the mid-block crosswalk. According to the crash report, the student ran, unexpectedly, into the roadway. Weather conditions were clear, the roadway surface was dry, and it was daylight. The responding officer indicated that the pedestrian suffered minor injuries as a result of the incident.

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

Location and Site Description

The crash occurred along Rock Spring Drive, at the mid-block crosswalk that provides access to bus stops on both sides of the street. Walter Johnson High School (HS) is located at 6400 Rock Spring Drive, just west of the incident location. Walter Johnson HS has a current enrollment of 2,942 students in grades 9th through 12th.

Walter Johnson High School

Most student arrivals occur between 7:25 AM and 7:40 AM and dismissals occur between 2:30 PM and 2:50 PM.

Rock Spring Drive

Rock Spring Drive is a four-lane divided downtown boulevard and generally runs in the east-west direction. Rock Spring Drive has an 8-foot wide unbuffered sidewalk along the south side of the street. There is no sidewalk along the north side of the street between Rockledge Drive and MD 187 (Old Georgetown Road). Rock Spring Drive has a posted speed limit of 30 MPH. No stopping is permitted at any time along both sides of the street. Refer to **Figure 1** in the attachments for additional details of the Rock Spring Drive segment.

Rock Spring Drive Mid-Block Crosswalk

The crosswalk is located approximately 250 feet east of the Walter Johnson HS frontage. ADA-compliant pedestrian ramps provide accessible crossings between bus stops on either side of the street. A staggered ladder-style crosswalk is installed for this crossing.

This mid-block crossing is a designated school crossing for Walter Johnson HS.

The Rock Spring 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 Rock Spring Drive corridor was reviewed between MD 187 (Old Georgetown Road) to the east and Rockledge Drive to the west. There are three horizontal curves along this segment – 350 feet east of Rockledge Drive, 230 feet west of the mid-block crosswalk, and 100 feet east of the crosswalk. The segment also includes vertical curves – a crest at Walter Johnson HS school bus entrance and a sag 230 feet west of the mid-block crosswalk. The horizontal and vertical curves do not limit sightlines, and observations indicate that the grade changes do not lead to noticeable variations in acceleration and deceleration rates by motorists traveling the corridor. Please refer to **Figures 1** for additional information.

Crash History

Crash data obtained from dataMontgomery indicates that eight (8) incidents occurred along Rock Spring Drive between January 2015 and September 2024. Three (3) of the eight crashes resulted in injuries, including one (1) pedestrian-involved collision and two (2) bicyclist-involved collisions. The incidents are illustrated on **Figure 3**.

Field Observations and Findings

Field observations were performed on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, during the Walter Johnson HS dismissal period. Weather conditions were clear, and the roadway surface was dry. Students were observed using the crossings and sidewalks. No crossing guard was present along Rock Spring Drive. Vehicles were observed queueing along the rightmost eastbound lane, stretching from the eastern edge of the Walter Johnson HS frontage to the Rockledge Drive intersection with Rock Spring Drive, to pick up students. The queue affected the bus operations, with one bus observed stopping in the middle lane to board passengers at the Rockledge Drive bus stop.

During these observations, a student was interviewed. Although not aware of the September 9, 2024, incident, the student mentioned a recent incident which involved a pedestrian and a vehicle. While this incident could not be confirmed in the available crash data, the reported crashes and the conditions around the school highlight the need for improved pedestrian safety at the study location.

Westbound left turns are restricted at median openings during school hours (7 AM to 8 AM and 2 PM to 3 PM), yet several vehicles were observed making illegal left turns into the commercial parking lot east of Walter Johnson HS. This lot likely serves as an alternative pickup location when the school pick-up area is overcrowded.

Recommendations

Reaction time and awareness of pedestrians may be improved by a variety of countermeasures outlined in the recommendations below:

1. Install School Crossing Assemblies (S1-1 and W16-7P signs) on the median side for both eastbound and westbound approaches to improve conspicuity.
2. Trim trees to improve the visibility of the existing eastbound School Advance Crossing Assembly (S1-1 and W16-9P), located 420 feet west of the crosswalk.
3. Consider installation of a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB) at this uncontrolled crossing. This improvement is included based on a recommendation identified by a traffic study conducted at this intersection in January 2025 (Logger ID: 90199).

Site Photograph



Photo 1. Subject Marked Crosswalk



Photo 2. Eastbound Approach to the Crossing



Photo 3. Westbound Approach to the Crossing



Photo 4. School Advance Crossing Assembly on Eastbound Approach



Photo 5. Eastbound Approach to the Crossing with Bus in View

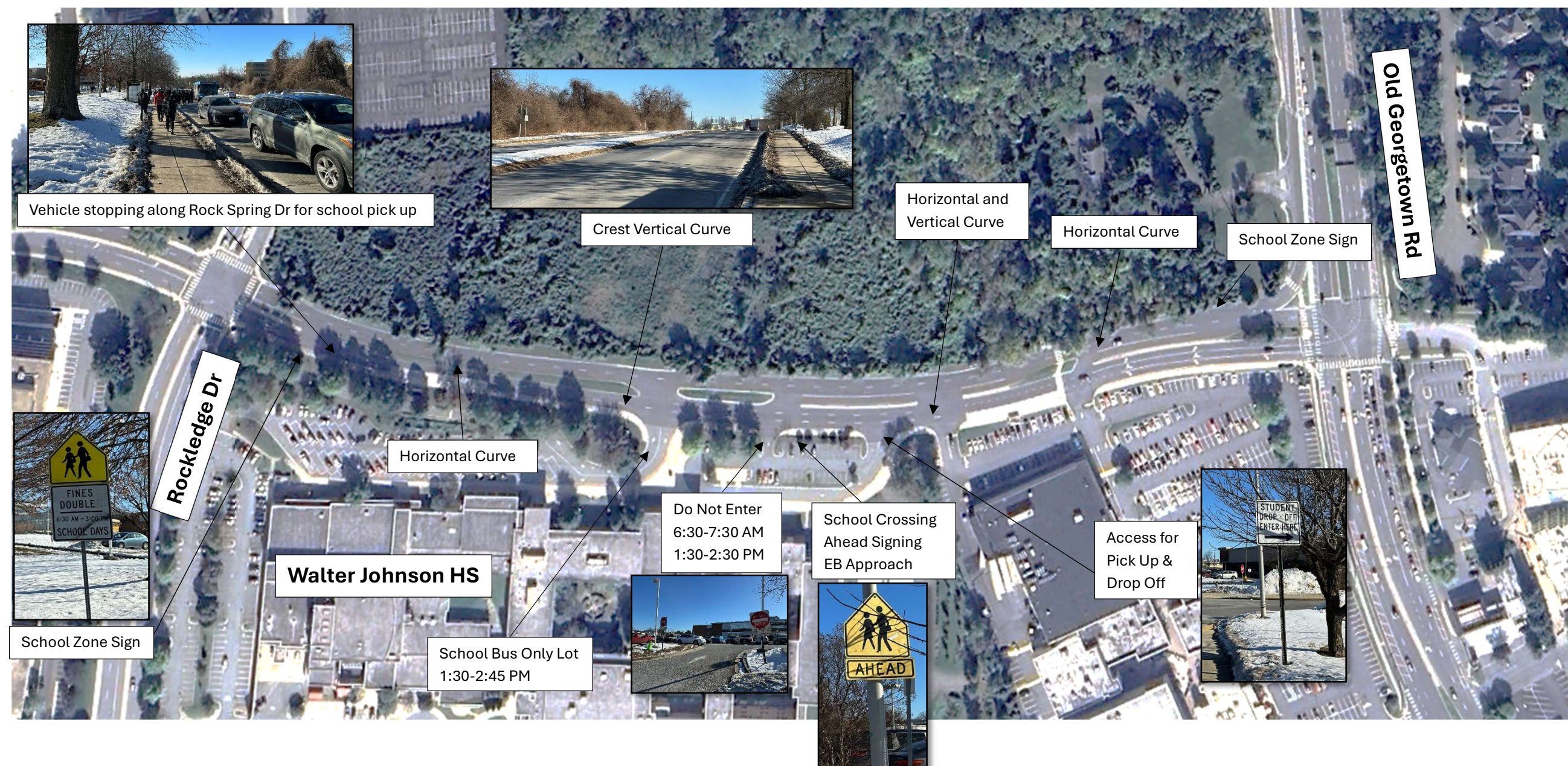


Figure 1 - Rock Spring Drive Corridor Evaluation

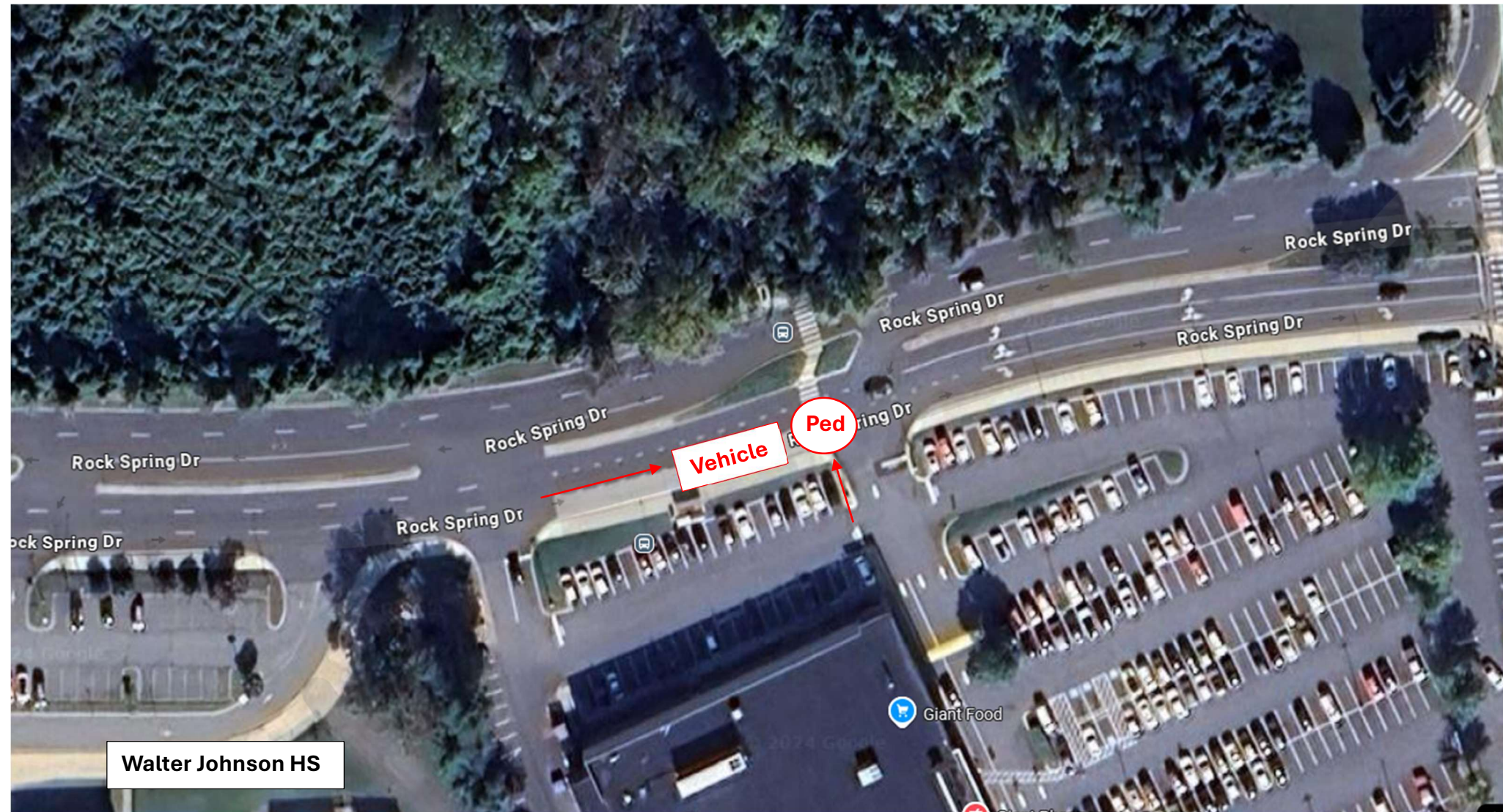


Figure 2 - Rock Spring Drive
2024 September 9 Pedestrian-Involved Crash

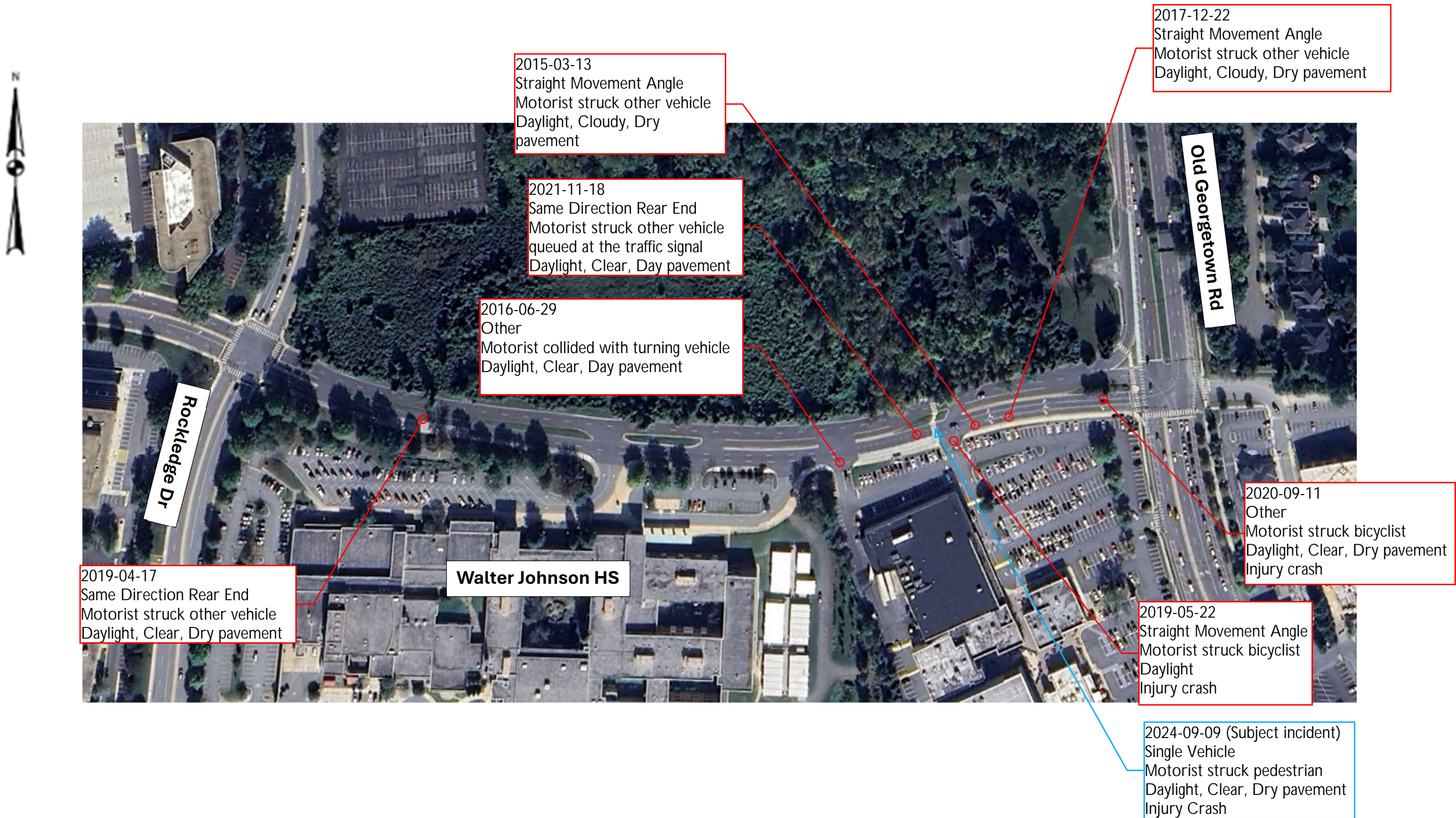


Figure 3 - Crash History (2015-2024)