

SCHOOL-RELATED CRASH INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW **MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MCDOT)**

- **Location:** Independence Street at Turkey Branch Parkway
- **Crash Date:** May 8, 2025
- **Crash Time:** Approximately 3:05 PM
- **School Name:** Parkland Middle School & Wheaton High School
- **School Walkshed Boundary:** Inside
- **Local Case No:** 250020302
- **Review Date:** February 3, 2026

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT AND CRASH DETAIL

On Thursday, May 8, 2025, a vulnerable road user (VRU) was traveling north on a scooter along the stop-controlled approach of Turkey Branch Parkway when a motorist along westbound Independence Street collided with the scooter. The crash report notes that the scooter did not slow. The Independence Street approaches are free flow. The scooter operator suffered a suspected minor injury and was transported to the hospital. The weather was clear, the roadway surface was dry, and the crash occurred in the daylight. Figure 2 illustrates the crash location and the direction of scooter operator and vehicle travel.

SCHOOL-SPECIFIC CONTEXT

- **School Type:** Middle High
- **School Hours (Arrival / Dismissal):** 8:15 AM – 3:00 PM (Middle School) & 7:45 AM – 2:30 PM (High School)
- **School Enrollment FY 23-24:** 1,092 (MS) & 2,747 (HS)
- **Crossing Guards Present:** Yes No

INFRASTRUCTURE & CONDITIONS

- **Sidewalk Coverage**
There is continuous sidewalk coverage along all approaches and legs of the intersection. All sidewalks appear narrow and potentially substandard. The sidewalks on the north leg, south leg, and west leg are buffered, whereas the sidewalks on the east leg are not buffered.
- **Crosswalk Visibility**
There are no marked crosswalks at the subject crash location.
- **Lighting at Location**
There is a 100-watt HPS luminaire leased light in the southwest corner.
- **Speed Limit / School Zone Limit**
The posted speed limit along Independence Street is 25 mph, and the posted speed limit along Turkey Branch Parkway is 25 mph.
- **Intersection Geometry**
Independence Street is a two-lane, two-way undivided roadway with one lane in each direction and no shoulders. The lanes are approximately 17-feet wide with parking permitted on both sides of the street on the west leg and parking prohibited on the east leg. Turkey Branch Parkway is a two-lane, two-way undivided unmarked roadway that is approximately 25 feet wide with parking permitted on both sides of the street.

- **Nearby Transit Stop**
Bus stops for Montgomery County Ride On exist to at the intersection of Independence Street at MD 185 (Connecticut Avenue) to the east of the subject intersection.
- **Nearby School Facilities**
The Parkland Middle School lies 1.5 miles to the northwest, with school access along W Frankfort Drive and Renn Street. The Wheaton High School lies 1.5 miles to the southeast, with school access along Dalewood Drive.

SITE OBSERVATIONS

- **Observation Date/Time:** 2:15 – 3:30 PM, Thursday, January 8, 2025.
- **Pedestrian Activity**
Moderate vulnerable road user (VRU) activity was observed crossing the intersection, with 19 total VRUs. Of the 19 VRUs, 13 crossed the north leg, two (2) crossed the south leg, one (1) crossed the east leg, and six (6) crossed the west leg (some crossed more than one leg of the intersection). Around 3:00 PM, students were observed at the intersection. At 3:30 PM, a group of five (5) students crossed the north leg.
- **Vehicle Activity:** Light.
- **Drop-off / Pick-up Operations**
No drop-off or pick-up patterns observed at the crash location.
- **Visibility / Obstructions**
Vehicular and pedestrian sight lines from Turkey Branch Parkway may be negatively impacted by on-street parking. Motorists were observed to pull past the stop sign to increase their sight lines. There are not “No Parking” signs installed along Independence Street near Turkey Branch Parkway.
- **Driver Behavior**
Road users were observed generally following traffic control devices and properly yielding right of way. Motorists were generally observed to comply with required stops for pedestrians within the crosswalks. The longest observed queue along Turkey Branch Parkway was four (4) vehicles.
- **Additional Details**
Independence Street is a neighborhood connector providing access to detached residential houses to the west. To the east of the signalized intersection with MD 185 (approximately 375 feet to the east), the roadway becomes a parking lot into the Aspen Hill Shopping Center and Holy Cross Health Center. Turkey Branch Parkway provides access to detached residential houses.

CRASH HISTORY (AT THE LOCATION)

- **Total Crashes (Last 5+ Years):** A total of seven (7) crashes occurred at or near the subject crash location between January 1, 2020 and November 30, 2025.
 - **Pedestrian/Bicycle Involved:** There were two (2) VRU crashes; one cyclist and one scooter (subject crash). The cyclist crash occurred in April 2025 at 5:40 PM in the daylight along a dry surface.
 - **Student-Involved Crashes:** The only known student-involved crash included the subject crash.

- **Crashes During School Hours:** Of the seven (7) crashes, four (4) crashes occurred within school hours or within one hour of the school bell (6:45 AM to 4:00 PM) and within the school calendar year.
- **Recurrent Patterns (Time/Type):** There is not a recurrent crash pattern. There were three (3) angle crashes, two (2) VRU crashes, one (1) sideswipe crash, and one (1) rear end crash. All crashes happened in the daylight. One (1) crash occurred along a wet surface, and one (1) crash occurred along an unknown surface.

FINDINGS

There were no obvious infrastructure deficiencies that contributed to this crash. The crash occurred due to failure to exercise due care approaching an uncontrolled crossing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While not related to the crash, the following were identified as recommendations to enhance the safety of the location:

- ☑ **Maintenance:** Paint stop lines for both approaches of Turkey Branch Parkway. Paint a crosswalk for all legs of the intersection. Provide corner clearance “No Parking” signs along the west leg of Independence Street to improve sight lines from Turkey Branch Parkway.
- ☑ **Engineering:** Considering narrowing the intersection of Independence Street at Turkey Branch Parkway using curb extensions. Vehicles travel downhill from the signalized intersection with MD 185 along a wide roadway and results in speeding vehicles. Flex post curb extensions will increase visibility and promote slower traffic operations to mitigate safety risk.

SITE PHOTOS / MAPS

- ☑ Photos Attached
- ☑ Crash Diagram Included
- ☑ School Walk Zone Map Included
- ☐ Heatmap of Past Crashes (if applicable)



On-street parking along Turkey Branch Pkwy



Signalized intersection with MD 185 to the east up a hill



On-street parking along Independence St and along hill



Vehicles from Turkey Branch Pkwy typically pull past stop sign to improve sight lines

Figure 1 – Independence St at Turkey Branch Pkwy

 Crash Location



Figure 2 – Crash Diagram



Figure 3 – Crash History (2020-2025)

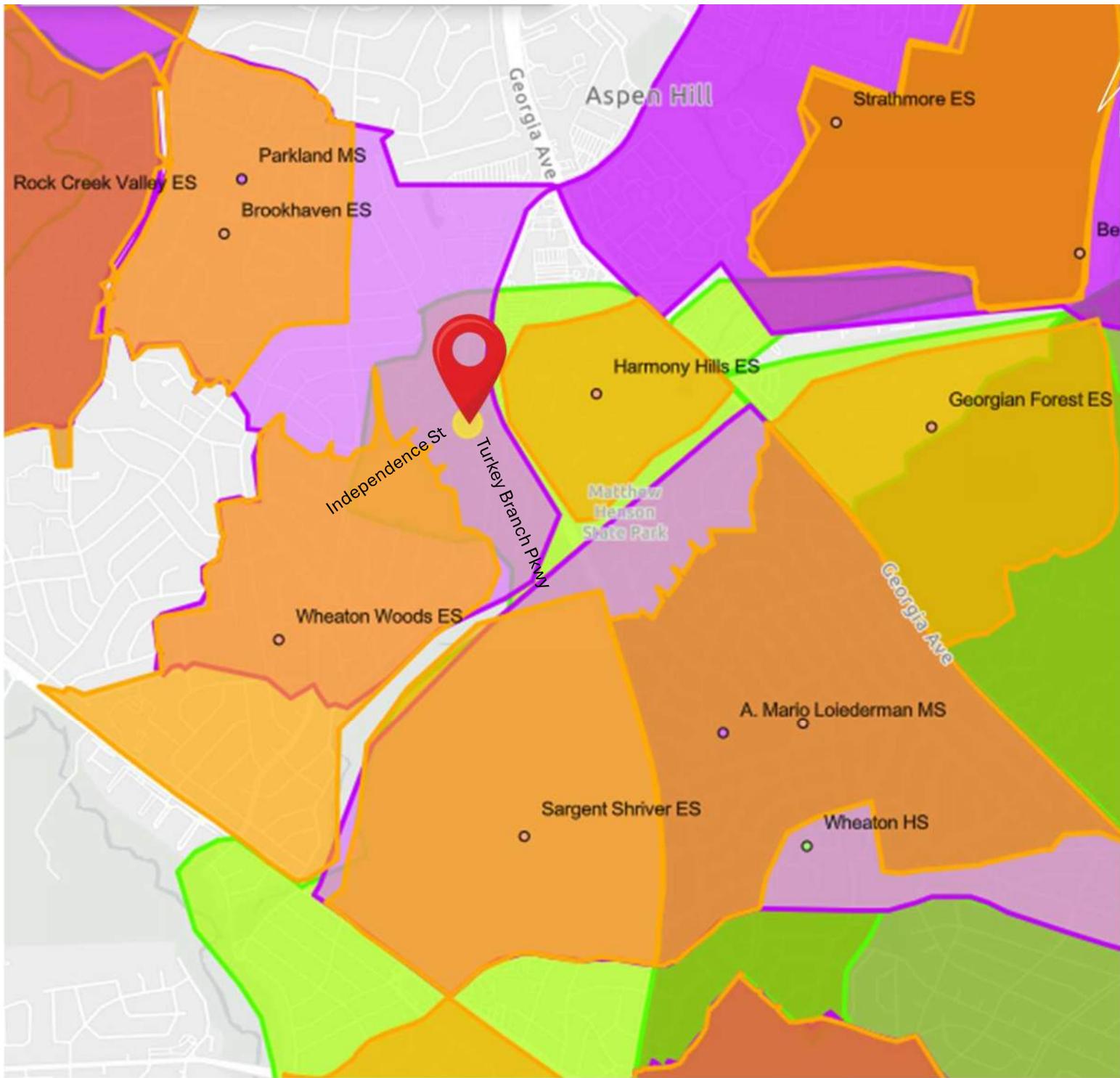


Figure 4 – School Walk Zone Map