



SILVER SPRING CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

April 13, 2021

Marc Elrich, County Executive
Montgomery County

[Delivered via e-mail]

Advice from the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board re:

SPEEDING ON GEORGIA AVENUE AND COLESVILLE ROAD (in Silver Spring)

Dear County Executive Elrich,

- **The Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board (SSCAB) writes to strongly support the recently announced decision of the Maryland State Police and the Montgomery County Police to address excessive speeding on the I-495 Capital Beltway, and respectfully requests that a similar initiative be launched for Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road inside the Beltway.**

The pandemic significantly reduced traffic volumes on most County roads, including Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road. While this has not been without benefits, one serious consequence is that vehicle speeds on both roads have increased considerably during the day, and to dangerous levels in the late night and early morning hours. In addition to individual vehicles speeding, there has also been an alarming increase in drag racing on both roads. Current conditions are bad, but we are worried that enforcement on the Capital Beltway will merely shift reckless speeding to the main County thoroughfares, like Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road.

At our monthly SSCAB meetings we have discussed this issue with Commander Francke – who acknowledges the problem – but candidly admitted that he and his officers are limited by resources, tools, and authority.

- **Consequently, the SSCAB advises that the County and State work collaboratively to develop a strategy to address the problem and commit the necessary resources to get the job done.**

Specifically, we advise that the following be considered and implemented:

1. Install additional speed cameras on Colesville Road between the Beltway and Sligo Creek Parkway. The steepness and sharp angle of the road make this a particularly dangerous area for vehicles and pedestrians alike, and many accidents have occurred along this stretch.
2. Install additional speed cameras on Georgia Ave in the section between 16th Street and the Beltway. Cars that don't get stopped at the red light at 16th Street pick up a great deal of speed through the Montgomery Hills area which has a high rate of accidents and many pedestrians and bus riders.
3. Add red light cameras at Sligo Creek Parkway and Colesville Road in all four directions (North and South on Colesville Road, and East and West on Sligo Creek Parkway). This is a major pedestrian crossing at the bottom of an incline in both directions along Colesville Road, and vehicles often cannot or do not attempt to maintain speed or stop when the signal changes, instead, picking up speed as they descend and accelerating further to accommodate the uphill climb. Traffic along Sligo Creek Parkway also often runs the

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light, especially to make left turns, which is particularly dangerous to cyclists and pedestrians, among them children walking to school.

4. Ensure systematic in-person officer enforcement on Colesville Road and Georgia Avenue.
5. Reduce the speed limit on Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road inside the Beltway to 30 mph between downtown Silver Spring and the Beltway.

Regarding the speed reduction request, we believe there is no reason to maintain a 35-mph speed limit on either Georgia Avenue or Colesville Road inside the Beltway. The Maryland SHA lowered the speed to 30 mph for Georgia Avenue north of the Beltway with no negative consequences, and if anything, there are more likely to be pedestrians and bikers on or along the roadways south of the Beltway on both Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road. A 35 mph speed limit allows vehicles to travel too fast in an urban setting, and with the current policy not to ticket until a vehicle is 11 mph above the speed limit, that effectively allows cars to regularly travel the Georgia and Colesville corridors at 45 mph.

The County and State have made deep commitments to Vision Zero, but many of the Vision Zero strategies require costly road and infrastructure improvements that will take years – even decades – to design and fund. The recommendations above are affordable and cost-effective. Speed and red-light cameras along with heightened police enforcement can bring in additional revenue that is much needed for a County budget strapped from pandemic expenses.

Perhaps even more importantly, the strategies advised above send a loud and clear message to any driver tempted to speed or otherwise drive recklessly – do not try it – because the County and State has made this a priority, and there is a price to pay to breaking the law. If we don't take a proactive approach, then the message we send is that Vision Zero and safety are really not important.

As always, we appreciate your consideration of the advice that we send.

Lysette House*
Chair

Sofia Bushen*
Vice-Chair

Parliamentarian
Melanie Funder Kaye*

Secretary
Katherine Lucas McKay*

(*Signatures on file)

CC:

Montgomery County Council Members
Reemberto Rodriguez, Silver Spring Regional Area Director
Members of the SSCAB