

January 21, 2009

Mr. Arthur Holmes, Director
Montgomery County Department of Transportation
101 Monroe Street; 10th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850-2450

Re: Darnestown Road

Dear Mr. Holmes:

I am writing to follow-up on our discussion with your staff about options to improve traffic and pedestrian safety on Darnestown Road and to request the initiation of a County study.

On several occasions, the City of Rockville has expressed concerns about the amount of heavy truck traffic on Darnestown Road between MD 28 and Shady Grove Road, as well as traffic speeds on this section of the road. A recent request was sent to the County based on the fact that residential properties are currently developed on both sides of the road and potential pedestrian traffic would be generated by the new Falls Grove Park scheduled to open in early 2009.

To protect the Darnestown residents from the harmful impacts of heavy truck traffic, specifically noise and vibration, and to improve pedestrian safety, the City and individual residents requested that actions be taken to eliminate heavy truck traffic and to lower the speed limit on Darnestown Road. The County's position was to not restrict truck traffic as it is the County's policy to not restrict trucks from arterial roadways. Furthermore, your office determined that the existing speed limit for Darnestown Road was appropriate.

City staff met with County staff in late October 2008 to further discuss this issue and to explore other options. City staff was advised to send a formal letter clarifying this request for the County to initiate a study and to support a potential funding request for the study.

The City would like the County to consider reducing the width of Darnestown Road to slow down traffic and to improve pedestrian safety. One of the options is to reduce the lane widths allowing the creation of an island as a safe refuge for pedestrians crossing Darnestown Road. Another option is to eliminate one of the travel lanes to allow for such refuge island and to allow adequate right-of way to install sidewalks on the south side of the road. The option of realigning the road by shifting it to the north, which could provide the right-of-way needed to install the sidewalks, could be also considered. Finally, the new development of Kol Shalom at 9100 Darnestown Road (south side across Jersey Lane) could provide another opportunity, and the possibility of installing a

traffic signal at this intersection could have some merit. Those options, a combination of these options, or others should be considered as part of a study.

I look forward to working with you on this issue and appreciate your attention to this matter of mutual concern.

Sincerely,

Craig L. Simoneau, P.E.,
Director of Public Works

CS/EE/mbw

Cc: Edgar Gonzalez, Montgomery County DPWT
Emil Wolanin, Montgomery County DPWT
Emad Elshafei, Rockville Chief of Traffic & Transportation
Day File