

8504 Rayburn Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

October 24, 2018

Via E-mail

Lori Jean Main
Montgomery County Department of Transportation
Planning & Design
100 Edison Park Drive
4th Floor
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
lori.main@montgomerycountymd.gov

Re: Support for Sidewalk Installation on the
8600 block of Hempstead Ave., Bethesda MD

Dear Ms. Main,

The Bradmoor Neighborhood Association (BNA) strongly supports the September 6, 2017 application for the installation of a sidewalk on the eastern side of the 8600 block of Hempstead Avenue (8600 block) in Bethesda, MD, filed by Ms. Stephanie Mantelmacher. The installation of this sidewalk will substantially enhance pedestrian safety. The 8600 block is situated a short distance from Bradley Hills Elementary School (BHES). Both the 8600 block and BHES are within the Bradmoor neighborhood. The BNA is the local neighborhood association and is recognized by Montgomery County (the BNA is designated as CA 1442 by the Montgomery County Planning Department).

The BNA has long been concerned about pedestrian safety in the Bradmoor neighborhood given the substantial increase in traffic both in Bradmoor and in the greater Bethesda area over the last several years. In particular, the safety of children walking to BHES is of paramount concern. Based upon data collected by the BNA, BHES enrollment has grown 67% since 2007 and there are an estimated 200 to 240 children who walked to school daily last year. In this regard, the children who live in Bradmoor and in the immediately adjoining neighborhoods are considered "walkers" and are not serviced by Montgomery County Public Schools buses.

Many of these "walkers" walk along the 8600 block to and from BHES. Many Bradmoor parents have expressed concerns about the safety of their children walking to school and some have complained of "near misses," including at least two incidents on the 8600 block.

Compounding the problem is an increase in recent years of on-street parking use along the 8600 block (which may be tied to the expansion of nearby Suburban Hospital)—the increased number of parked cars creates blind spots for both drivers and pedestrians. In addition, parents or other caregivers driving children to and from BHES must drop off and pick up their children in a designated driveway located on the northern side of BHES along Folkstone Road. A Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) sign then requires that traffic

exiting the drop off/pick up driveway (which is within BHES grounds) to turn right (east) on Folkstone Road. Folkstone Road terminates at its intersection with Hempstead Avenue (a "T" intersection). Although the BNA acknowledges the safety benefit of the MCDOT direction for traffic exiting the driveway to turn east on Folkstone Road, a net effect is to substantially increase traffic on Hempstead Avenue at the beginning and at the end of the school day, with many cars turning right (south) onto Hempstead Avenue and traveling through the 8600 block.

Proposed Sidewalk Extension

There is an existing sidewalk that runs south along the eastern side of Hempstead Avenue from Hempstead's intersection with Greentree Road to a point at or near the property line between 8613 and 8615 Hempstead Avenue, where the sidewalk terminates (please see photograph attached to the transmittal email). The BNA supports an extension of the existing sidewalk from the 8613/8615 Hempstead Avenue property line southwards along the remainder of the eastern side of the 8600 block to the intersection of Hempstead Avenue and McKinley Street.

The BNA is interested in applying for sidewalk installations along several other street segments in the Bradmoor neighborhood. In 2017, the BNA formed a sidewalk committee to identify candidate street segments and to survey Bradmoor residents who live along those street segments. The BNA intends to submit one "master plan" application covering several street segments. The BNA sidewalk committee has identified the 8600 block as one of the Bradmoor street segments of most concern. Given the many children and other pedestrians who daily walk along the 8600 block and the relatively heavy weekday vehicular traffic on the 8600 block, the BNA support Ms. Mantelmacher's application and respectfully requests that the sidewalk installation for the 8600 block be expedited. I believe that support for the installation of a sidewalk along the eastern side of the 8600 block is supported by virtually all, perhaps 100%, of the affected homeowners.

If you have any questions, or if the BNA can provide any support or assistance to MCDOT for this proposed sidewalk installation, please let me know.

Sincerely,



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