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VIA E-MAIL

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To Whom It May Concern:

By way of this letter, the McKenney Hills – Carroll Knolls Civic Association (“MHCK”) submits a comprehensive proposal for sidewalk construction and traffic calming to Montgomery County (the “County”). With the new Downcounty Consortium (McKenney Hills) Elementary School #29 (“DCES#29”) scheduled to open in the fall of 2012, MHCK is taking a proactive approach with this proposal to ensure pedestrians, especially children, will have safe routes to DCES#29, as well as bus stops for other schools (i.e. Albert Einstein High School, Montgomery Blair High School, Newport Mill Middle School), Oakland Terrace Elementary School and the McKenney Hills Park. Based on page 5 of Mandatory Referral No. 10720-MCPS-01, there will be an estimated 400 pedestrian arrivals each day at DCES#29. This is a significant increase to the existing pedestrian traffic in our neighborhood.

In addition to focusing on safe routes for our children, our proposal also promotes safety for commuters who walk to public transportation, specifically the Forest Glen Metro Station, Ride-On Buses and MetroBus on Georgia Avenue (i.e., current public need), and addresses existing traffic-related issues (i.e., current speeding problems). We have tremendous access to various modes of public transportation and want to ensure sufficient, safe access is provided. This encouragement of the use of public transportation will also benefit the environment.

## **Background**

The McKenney Hills – Carroll Knolls neighborhood is located north of Forest Glen Road, west of Georgia Avenue, south of Plyers Mill Road and east of Homewood Park. Click on <http://www.mhckcivic.org/neighborhood-info.html> for a map of our neighborhood. The neighborhood is used as a cut-through by drivers avoiding Georgia Avenue. Despite some existing speed humps, there is a significant amount of speeding through our neighborhood most frequently on Brunswick Avenue, Dennis Avenue, Douglas Avenue, Evans Drive, Hildarose Drive and Gardiner Avenue. In 2010, one neighborhood child was hit on Evans Drive by a driver apparently trying to cut through the neighborhood. The Forest Glen Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation Center is located at the south end of Leslie Street which results in speeding on Leslie Street, Loma Street, Brunswick Avenue and Dennis Avenue during shift change (i.e., ~7am, ~3pm and ~11pm); speeding traffic around the 3pm shift change increases the danger to children walking home from school.

This proposal was conceived after an August 21, 2010, neighborhood walkabout by MNCPPC's Rollin Stanley and Sandra Tallant and approximately 20 residents. During this walkabout, community members expressed their concern over various items. Among them were the matters that are subject to this proposal. At the end of this walkabout, the neighborhood formed a Traffic Committee of approximately a dozen residents. From there, the Traffic Committee talked with residents and worked vigorously to walk/drive/bike the neighborhood to gain an understanding of all the issues at hand.

We also met with Khursheed Bilgrami, Montgomery County Traffic Operations, to further educate ourselves on the traffic calming options available to us. He spent time driving through the neighborhood with us to understand the issues and provide traffic calming ideas. We also met with Richard Earp and Robert Gonzales, Jr. of the Montgomery County Annual Sidewalk Program and Jean Gries of the Montgomery County Safe Routes to School Program. They drove through the neighborhood with us to provide their thoughts on sidewalk needs and feasibility in certain areas. The ideas and recommendations received during both meetings are incorporated in our proposal below.

The Traffic Committee presented its proposal at MHCK monthly meetings on October 26, 2010 and November 23, 2010. Traffic Committee updates were also provided via the MHCK newsletter. The proposal was also posted to the MHCK website and notification provided on the MHCK listserv for a two week comment period from December 9, 2010 to December 23, 2010. Once all comments were received, they were evaluated by the Traffic Committee and MHCK Board and the proposal was modified, as appropriate, to result in that provided below.

## **The Proposal**

### *Proposed Sidewalks*

Listed below are sidewalks that we request to be constructed. The sidewalks requested below are in no order of priority. We do understand the County will make the decision as to which sidewalks get priority. If all sidewalks on our list are built, there will be a solid network of sidewalks throughout our neighborhood to permit safe passage for pedestrians.

Our proposal is that major thoroughfares in our neighborhood would be provided with sidewalks on both sides of the street, while feeder streets would have a minimum of one sidewalk on either side of the street. As Exhibit 1, we have included a map that highlights areas in which we have requested sidewalks as well as where sidewalks already exist. Proposed sidewalks are highlighted in red with existing sidewalks highlighted in blue. As you will see, we build on the existing infrastructure to ensure its maximization. Currently, many sections of sidewalk do not connect from block to block. For example, on Gardiner Avenue, sidewalks are not consistently on one side and do not exist in many blocks on either side of the street. As a consequence, a pedestrian would have to crisscross the road to have continuous access to sidewalks that do exist and walk in the street in blocks where no sidewalk exists on either side. Further, we suggest the County consider the location of school bus stops in the final sidewalk construction plan to ensure students are waiting for buses on safe sidewalks instead of in grassy and/or muddy areas or in the streets.

Based on our review of MCAtlas viewer (<http://www.mcatlas.org/viewer/>), it appears all of the sidewalks we propose would be within County rights-of-way. As such, the County would not be required to expend funds for land purchase. To ease the impact on private property, and to make sidewalks more acceptable to homeowners, it would be preferable if sidewalks would be constructed as close to the curb as possible.

We request sidewalks at the following locations (Also see Exhibit 1):

- South side of Arthur Avenue between Gardiner Avenue and Greeley Avenue
- South side of Churchill Road between Kohler Road and Gardiner Avenue
- South side of Clark Place between Gardiner Avenue and Darcy Forest Drive
- South side of Darrow Street between Gardiner Avenue and McKenney Avenue
- North side of Dexter Avenue between McKenney Avenue and Georgia Avenue
- East side of Douglas Avenue between Evans Drive and Dexter Avenue

- South side of Evans Drive between Haywood Avenue and Georgia Avenue
- West side of Gardiner Avenue sections between Evans Drive and Clark Place
- East side of Gardiner Avenue sections between Evans Drive and Clark Place
- North side of Hayden Drive between Gardiner Avenue and DCES#29
- West side of Haywood Drive between Hutting Place and Evans Drive
- North side of Hildarose Drive between Gardiner Avenue and McKenney Avenue
- South side of Hildarose Drive between Gardiner Avenue and McKenney Avenue
- East side of Hutting Place between Haywood Drive and Harmon Road
- West side of McKenney Avenue between Darrow Street and Eccleston Street
- East side of Greeley Avenue between Hildarose Drive and Arthur Avenue
- North side of Emmet Road from Brunswick Avenue to Oakland Terrace Elementary School
- South side of Homestead Drive between Haywood Drive and Gardiner Avenue

### Stop Signs

- Add a stop sign to the stem of the existing “T” on Kohler Road at the intersection of Kohler Road and Hayden Avenue
- Add a stop sign to the stem of the existing “T” on Kohler Road at the intersection of Kohler Road and Churchill Road
- Add a stop sign to the stem of the existing “T” on Leder Road at the intersection of Leder Road and Hayden Avenue
- Add a stop sign to the stem of the existing “T” on Leder Road at the intersection of Leder Road and Churchill Road
- Add a stop sign to the stem of the existing “T” on eastbound Homestead Drive at Douglas Avenue
- Convert the existing 2-way stop at the intersection of Dennis Avenue and Gardiner Avenue to a 4-way stop. There will be two important benefits of a 4-way stop sign: (i) traffic will be forced to move more slowly on Dennis Avenue (i.e., traffic calming); while there are existing speed humps, a 4-way stop would be more effective, (ii) there is a significant amount of pedestrian traffic that crosses Dennis Avenue on Gardiner Avenue with a destination of the Forest Glen Metro Station or other public transportation options. This proposed 4-way stop, along with clearly marked crosswalks, would ensure pedestrian safety. If the homes on the north side of Dennis Avenue are included within the area to be served by DCES#29, then the children walking to school will also be provided a safe route. If for some reason, this option is not feasible, then we propose the

County consider other physical traffic calming measures (e.g., curb extensions, pedestrian islands, etc.).

- Add two stop signs to make a 3-way stop at the intersection of Hayden Avenue and Gardiner Avenue. Currently, there is only one stop sign at this intersection on southbound Gardiner Avenue. With the school being built at the end of Hayden Avenue (i.e., top of the hill), this intersection will be a central crossing point for pedestrians making their way to school. A 3-way stop along with clearly marked crosswalks would ensure safe passage across these soon-to-be more heavily traveled streets. If for some reason, this option is not feasible, then we propose the County consider other physical traffic calming measures (e.g., curb extensions, pedestrian islands, etc.).
- Convert the existing 2-way stop at the intersection of Plyers Mill Road and Brunswick Avenue to a 4-way stop. This intersection is a major crossing area for children currently going to and from Oakland Terrace Elementary School. There is a hill on Plyers Mill Road which makes it difficult for westbound drivers to see pedestrians trying to cross Plyers Mill Road at this intersection. Once again, safety of children getting to school will be fortified with this addition. If for some reason, this option is not feasible, then we propose the County consider other physical traffic calming measures (e.g., curb extensions, pedestrian islands, etc.).
- Add a stop sign on southbound Brunswick Avenue at Loma Street to complement the crosswalk proposed below. This pathway is frequently used to access McKenney Hills Park and is used as a path to the Forest Glen Metro Station. Further, depending on the area to be served by DCES#29, children will use this path as their route to school. If for some reason this option is not feasible, then we propose the County consider other physical traffic calming measures (e.g., curb extensions, pedestrian islands, etc.).
- Review the intersection of McKenney Avenue and Dexter Avenue for conversion to a 4-way stop from a 2-way stop. Since there is an upward hill on eastbound Dexter Avenue, drivers have limited visibility with respect to vehicles on McKenney Avenue trying to cross or turn onto Dexter Avenue.
- Review the intersection of Leslie Street and Conover Drive for conversion into a 3-way stop from a 1-way stop. Since there is an upward hill on eastbound Leslie Street, pedestrians and drivers have limited visibility with respect to vehicles on Conover Drive trying to cross or turn onto Leslie Street.

### Speed Limit Signs

Currently, the neighborhood has very few speed limit signs and we propose that more be installed. While the default speed limit in a residential neighborhood is 25 mph, clear signs indicating so, combined with our other traffic calming proposals set out below, would deter speeding and ensure pedestrians are safe. Further, based on the Local Area Transportation Review completed on March 3, 2010 for DCES#29, it appears some roads have a speed limit of 20 mph (i.e., Gardiner Avenue). Specifically, we propose more speed limit signs on Brunswick

Avenue, Dennis Avenue, Evans Drive, Hildarose Drive, Douglas Avenue, McKenney Avenue and Gardiner Avenue to ensure drivers, especially those using the neighborhood as a cut-through, are constantly reminded of the speed limit within the neighborhood.

### Marked Crosswalks

We currently have a significant amount of pedestrian traffic mainly due to the proximity of several public transportation options. As mentioned above, with the addition of DCES#29 pedestrian traffic in the neighborhood is expected to rise by approximately 400 walkers to and from the new school. We recommend crosswalks and related crosswalk signs at the following intersections. The intersections listed below are not in a particular order of priority, but are based on our own observed pedestrian traffic patterns. We request crosswalks at the following locations:

- Across the north side of Gardiner Avenue at Hayden Avenue
- Across the west side of Hayden Avenue at Gardiner Avenue
- Across the east side of Gardiner Avenue at Arthur Avenue
- Across Gardiner Avenue on the north side of Eccleston Street
- On each side of the existing 4-way stop at Dexter Avenue and Gardiner Avenue
- On each side of the proposed 4-way stop at Dennis Avenue and Gardiner Avenue
- On each side of the existing 4-way stop at Brunswick Avenue and Dennis Avenue
- Across Loma Street at the west side of Brunswick Avenue, a frequent pathway to McKenney Hills Park and future pathway used for DCES#29.
- Across Gardiner Avenue on the north side of Hildarose Drive
- Across Loma Street on the east side of Leslie Street
- Across Brunswick Avenue on the north side of Loma Street
- On Kohler Road across Kohler Court

### Trees

We understand that in some places, trees must be removed to implement this proposal (e.g., sidewalks, traffic calming). Many of these trees are near the end of their lives. We request that the County take into consideration any overhead power lines when planting trees to avoid tree-power line issues in the future. This was appropriately done when the County installed sidewalks on Dennis Avenue from Gardiner Avenue to Georgia Avenue in 2009 and planted native redbuds under power lines. We have several residents that are willing to volunteer to help the County in the effort of replanting trees.

### Speed Humps and Other Traffic Calming

We believe the existing speed humps that were previously installed throughout the neighborhood are generally ineffective on long stretches of roadway, unless accompanied by other traffic calming. Even with existing speed humps in place, speeding continues on Brunswick Avenue,

Dennis Avenue and Gardiner Avenue. As a result, we propose that (i) these speed humps be re-evaluated to ensure they were properly constructed (i.e., too low, too smooth, etc.) and serve their intended purpose, (ii) additional speed humps be considered or (iii) other traffic calming measures be implemented to complement the existing speed humps (e.g., edgelines, curb extensions, etc.). We propose the following measures: (i) curb extensions at Churchill Road and Gardiner Avenue to slow that stretch of roadway on Gardiner Avenue between Dexter Avenue and Hayden Avenue (ii) curb extensions on Brunswick Avenue, specifically the downhill area going southbound on Brunswick Avenue between Finch Street and Dennis Avenue, (iii) speed humps or some other traffic calming measure to Leslie Street to slow traffic on the downhill stretch from Conover Street to Loma Street and (iv) curb extensions, double yellow lines, edgelines, and possible speed humps to Hildarose Avenue, Dexter Avenue, Douglas Avenue and Evans Drive as there are no traffic calming devices on these long stretches of roadway.

### Hayden Avenue

Hayden Avenue is the main thoroughfare to access DCES#29. It is a very narrow street even with the current prohibition of parking on the north side. The other access point to DCES#29 would be via westbound Churchill Road, left on Kohler Road and then right on Hayden Avenue.

We recommend that Churchill Road be made a one-way street westbound weekdays during certain timeframes (e.g., 8 am – 9 am and 3pm – 4 pm). For the same timeframe, we recommend Kohler Road to be one-way southbound and Hayden Avenue be one-way eastbound from Kohler Road to Gardiner Avenue. These restrictions would require traffic to flow in a loop and avoid oncoming traffic on these narrow streets during peak times of the school. Further, we recommend the existing faded no parking signs on the north side of Hayden Avenue be replaced.

### **Conclusion**

We are aware that you will have to conduct several studies regarding our proposal. As you are well aware, the new elementary school is expected to significantly increase the pedestrian traffic (i.e., children and their parents walking to school) and vehicle traffic (i.e., school buses and parents driving children to school) in our neighborhood. We respectfully request that any decisions consider this expected increase in volume of traffic, specifically the traffic study and mandatory referral mentioned above. We also respectfully request that our proposal be considered in light of current safety issues for school children on their way to buses, commuters walking to Metro and other public transportation, and other pedestrian traffic throughout the neighborhood.

In preparing this proposal, we were advised by several employees of the County, so we would like to specifically thank those mentioned above, as well as Cherian Eapen and Justin Clarke from MNCPPC for their assistance.

It is imperative that the County acts on this proposal quickly to ensure such infrastructure is in place prior to children starting their first day of school at DCES#29 in the fall of 2012.

Please contact the Chair of our Traffic Committee, Brian Bhandari, with any correspondence related to this proposal at [MHCKTrafficCommittee@yahoo.com](mailto:MHCKTrafficCommittee@yahoo.com)

We look forward to working with you to devise a proposal that satisfies the needs of our community and puts the safety of pedestrians first.

Sincerely,

/s/ Richard S. Tingley

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cc: County Executive Isiah Leggett  
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