

November 14, 2019

Testimony in support of Aspen Hill Vision Zero Study

Good evening, my name is Shruti Bhatnagar, and I am Chair of Montgomery County Sierra Club. Vision Zero efforts are very important for our county, as there are far too many crashes in which people are injured or killed. This study is a comprehensive guide that lays out many of the “tools” available to improve the safety of our residents in this area and potentially throughout the county.

But, there is another reason that Sierra Club supports this study. It is vital that people be able to move throughout the community in which they live --- as well as being able to connect with areas where the work, shop and play. We want to promote more walking, more biking and more transit use. We’ve got to prioritize these methods of mobility over the single-occupancy-vehicle car, else we are closing our eyes to the impending fate that awaits us as our climate changes. The tools outlined in this study are needed to move us in the right direction. Thank you for evaluating all these ideas --- they are critical tools to move us forward.

- Aspen Hill’s infrastructure currently prioritizes vehicle throughput over community connectivity.
- The study IDs problem intersections and lays out a plan to achieve Vision Zero goals.
- This will be a BIG JOB – the state owns Connecticut Avenue and Georgia Avenue (these 2 roadways are listed in the county’s 20 highest injury road segments) and this will require much coordination between county and state.
- CIP funding is required for Vision Zero related projects. Building and improving pedestrian and bike infrastructure must be pursued. Among many good ideas listed in the study are installing speed cameras, high-visibility crosswalks, median refuges, and consider No Turn on Red.
- Please let Sierra Club know which areas of funding are a priority for this project; we’d like to include these ideas when we speak up on CIP budget priorities.
- Overall, we want to make Aspen Hill a more walkable, bikeable and equitable community --- one that has a lot of connectivity, and is safe for walking and biking, so that people can safely get to transit stops without taking their lives in their hands. This plan will also give people options besides getting into a car to go places.
- We look forward to the improvements and safety this plan will bring to an area that sorely needs more safety.

Thank you very much for your time and work on this.