

PROPOSED MOTION:

Submitted by Jim Klein, Mt. Vernon District Representative  
Trails, Sidewalks and Bikeways Committee

*"I move that the TSB committee chairman sign and send a letter to the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors on the topic of urgent pedestrian safety actions, using the attached text and supporting rationale, subject to such editorial changes as approved by the committee."*

-----Proposed body of text-----

In follow up to our March letter to the Board of Supervisors and the January 28 board matter presented by Supervisors Lusk and Alcorn, the Fairfax County Trails, Sidewalks and Bikeway (TSB) Committee requests that the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors take the necessary steps, including technical, policy and funding support, as needed for the immediate implementation of the following top two priorities in order to reduce the risk of death and injury to pedestrians and bicyclists along the Route 1 corridor in advance of the proposed BRT and widening projects that are not anticipated to be implemented until later this decade.

1. Work directly with VDOT to immediately reduce the posted speed limit from 45 to 35 through Lorton and from Fort Belvoir to Alexandria.
2. Building upon past studies and the status of ongoing design work in the corridor, conduct an updated comprehensive and coordinated traffic engineering and design evaluation as necessary to determine the probable cost of upgrading existing pedestrian facilities at each signalized intersection, and implementing the resulting recommendations, to include but not be limited to:
  - **High visibility crosswalks**, one on each intersection segment, with accessible curb ramps and timed pedestrian signals (ped heads) as the design standard.
  - **Signal timing** -modified so that a pedestrian does not have to push the button to get a walk signal and as the default signal, it comes on with the changing vehicular signal at all times (referred to as "ped recall" and/or "rest-in-walk"). Fairfax BOS should work with state delegates to require VDOT to program traffic signals for "ped recall" or "rest-in-walk" along Route 1 and other principal arterials within existing or planned urban and urbanizing corridors. Deviating from this standard should require a waiver to the policy.
  - **Yield to pedestrian signs** at every signalized intersection with crosswalks and pedestrian signals with fines noted as needed for both through traffic and turning traffic
  - **Eliminate right turn on red** at all intersections within each of the existing and planned activity centers along Route 1, and the signals should be timed for "leading pedestrian interval" giving pedestrians a head start into the intersection prior to the parallel traffic getting the green signal.

These actions are consistent with the recommendations of the Virginia Department of Transportation **Pedestrian Safety Action Plan**, May 2018, which identifies the Route 1 corridor as a priority for statewide investments in pedestrian safety.

([http://www.virginiadot.org/business/resources/VDOT\\_PSAP\\_Report\\_052118\\_with\\_Appendix\\_A\\_B\\_C.pdf](http://www.virginiadot.org/business/resources/VDOT_PSAP_Report_052118_with_Appendix_A_B_C.pdf)),

While the Route 1 corridor is clearly identified as a statewide hot spot for pedestrian injuries and fatalities, it is less clear whether VDOT and the County are following up on the recommendations in the report and on the spirit of the January 28<sup>th</sup> Board Matter. More critical is the issue of equity and investment in the Route 1 corridor, which continues to suffer from a lack of pedestrian infrastructure as evidenced by the rash of fatalities during the first three months of this year. The Board can and should

take specific actions to provide funding and policy direction so that VDOT and FCDOT can work more quickly (and in a coordinated manner) to address this unsettling issue of pedestrian safety on Route 1.

While most County residents are making concerted efforts to reduce the risk of COVID-19 by wearing masks, keeping social distances, and avoiding crowded places, including buses, more and more people in the corridor are walking along and/or trying to cross Route 1 to get from their homes to nearby destinations. We cannot wait eight or more years for the road widening and BRT to be implemented as local and state government budgets are shattered by loss of revenues in these trying times.

Implementing these two priorities as soon as possible (speed limit reduction and completion of high visibility crosswalks with pedestrian friendly signal timing at all intersections) would have the most immediate and significant impact on pedestrian safety in the corridor. Making these changes as soon as possible will also work hand in hand with the design and engineering of the road widening, so that we do not make the problem worse by over engineering the roadway design for 45 mph travel when we want it to be 35 mph (or less!)

These two items form the backbone of pedestrian safety on Route 1 and we urge you to act immediately to save lives, reduce injuries, and increase safety in a fair and equitable manner.

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### **RATIONALE for reducing the speed limit**

Three of the first four and four of the first eleven pedestrian involved fatal crashes occurred on the Route 1 corridor. Survival rates of pedestrians hit by a car going 45 mph drop significantly at 35 as shown by the highly respected AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety's diagram below and even more at 25mph.

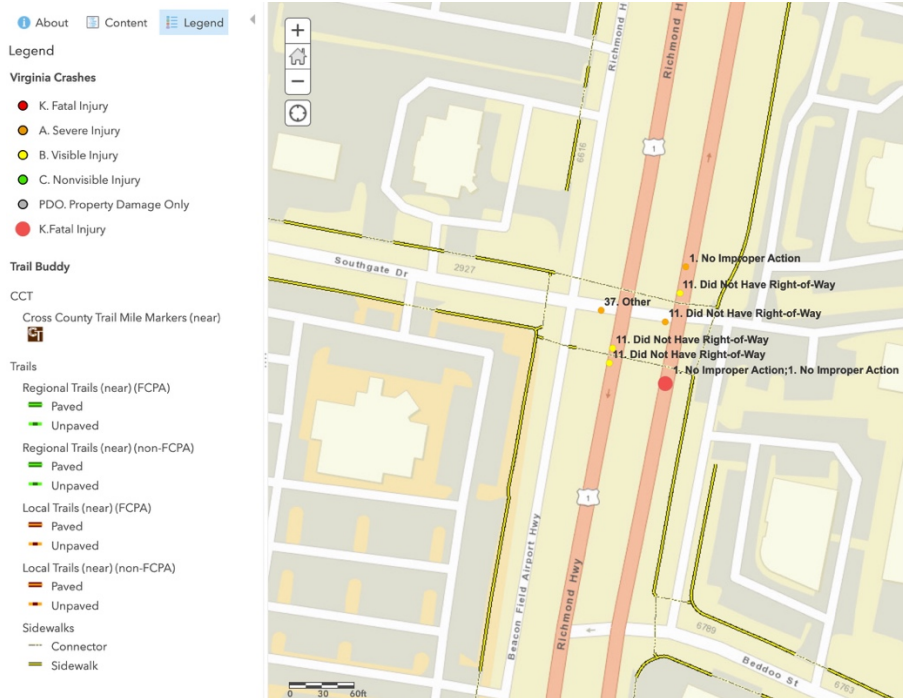


Source: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

Reducing the posted speed limit to 35 would also allow for the use of barrier curbs instead of mountable curbs giving pedestrians more protection on parallel sidewalks, allow for more trees planted along the roadway, and otherwise create a more livable street. Our goal should be to look more like the Alexandria section north of Potomac Yards with the BRT rather than the Fort Belvoir south section which is a glorified interstate with crossovers.

## RATIONALE for increased pedestrian safety facilities at signalized intersections along Route 1

Many of the pedestrian involved crashes between 2013 and 2020 have occurred in the developed sections of Route 1 in proximity to desirable destinations and desire lines between residential areas and commercial areas, often at or near intersections. The map below illustrates the Southgate intersection near Target and Beacon Hill shopping centers:



The driver not having right-of-way was noted as the cause of four of the seven pedestrian involved crashes (with distracted driving accounting for the fifth, alcohol as the sixth and adverse conditions for the seventh).

In addition to reducing the speed limit for vehicles, increasing the visibility of intersections, adding “yield to pedestrian signage” and modifying the timing of pedestrian signals will provide clearer information to both drivers and pedestrians about who has the right-of-way.