

January 18, 2020

Mr. Mark Schwartz
Arlington County Manager
Via e-mail: mschwartz@arlingtonva.us

RE: FY2021 County Budget

Dear Mr. Schwartz,

Committee Members

Eric Goldstein, Chair
Chris Yarie, Vice Chair
Pamela Van Hine, Recording Secretary
John Armstrong
Ian Blackwell
Jim Feaster
Gail Ginsburg
Eric Goodman
Tom Korns
Andrea Walker

I write to you today on behalf of the Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC) to express the committee's views on priorities for you to consider as you finalize your proposal for the FY 2021 Arlington County Budget. Consistent with last year's County Board action adopting Vision Zero, all of this year's recommendations are those that we believe are important for making it safer to walk in Arlington County, including those that will improve our sidewalks, and those that will improve our road crossings.

The PAC strongly supports budgeting funds to improve and maintain the quality of our sidewalks, including routine maintenance. In order to be effective, sidewalks must be well-connected and well-maintained, to meet the needs of pedestrians of all ages and abilities. Additionally, as I wrote to you last year, just as the county maintains a street condition index, we should also keep an inventory of sidewalk condition, and ensure a minimum level of maintenance/state of good repair. Lastly, as we have discussed in the past, ensuring sidewalks are well lit is a critical element of the pedestrian network. The county needs to invest the resources to finalize, publish, and implement the much awaited (and much delayed) streetlight management plan.

It is also of the utmost importance that pedestrians be able to safely and effectively cross the street, without fear of being killed, injured, or hit by cars. To that end, we urge you to ensure that the FY 2021 budget has sufficient funds for school crossing guards, to enable our community's youngest pedestrians to safely walk to school. Additionally, as we continue through the Vision Zero process, it is inevitable that issues will arise that require additional funds to make our streets safer. We recommend that the budget has sufficient flexibility to meet these critical, but as of yet unspecified, needs.

Lastly, as I will address more fully in separate correspondence, the PAC believes there can be significant improvement in the design, management, and enforcement of clear sidewalk requirements around construction sites. We believe the county should increase resources going towards this critical task.

By ensuring the pedestrian elements of our street networks are safe, well connected, and convenient for all who wish to walk along our streets, we help build a better community for everyone. As always, we look forward to being a constructive partner with you, Arlington County staff, public committees and commissions, and all of Arlington's citizens to ensure this upcoming budget reflects Arlington's values as a walkable community.

Sincerely,



Eric Goldstein
Chair, Pedestrian Advisory Committee