

To: Mayor Tarter and members of City Council
From: The Citizens Advisory Committee on Transportation
Subject: Support for using surplus funds for pending traffic-calming projects

November 21, 2019

Dear Mayor Tarter and members of City Council:

As we've heard in recent Council meetings, many Falls Church residents and visitors have frightening stories to share of repeated close calls with cars, commercial vehicles, and bikes. Nationwide, fatal crashes involving bicyclists rose 10 percent from 2017 to 2018 while ones involving pedestrians rose 4 percent, according to the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#).

Our neighboring jurisdictions have reported alarming numbers of pedestrian and cyclist deaths and injuries in recent years:

Washington, D.C. | In 2019 and 2018, more than half of the people killed in traffic fatalities were walking, biking or using a scooter. As of Oct. 24, the District recorded 22 traffic fatalities in 2019, including 10 pedestrians, two bicyclists and one scooter rider (Source: [Washington Post](#)). In 2018, 15 pedestrians, three cyclists and one scooter rider were killed (Source: [WAMU](#)).

Fairfax County | At least 35 people have been killed in pedestrian crashes since 2017, including 14 deaths and 126 injuries this year, as of Oct. 29 (Source: [FairfaxCounty.gov](#)).

As City and regional populations continue to grow, and as the City continues to evolve from a car-centric community, more pedestrians and cyclists encounter cars and trucks more often. On top of that, traffic patterns constantly change due to major construction projects, cut-through traffic from people avoiding I-66 tolls and drivers using apps like Waze.

Amid Falls Church residents' daily safety concerns while walking and biking on our streets, **the CACT strongly encourages City Council to:**

- **Use a significant portion of the recent budget surplus to expedite completion of traffic-calming projects currently in the NTC queue**
- **Use local funds to finish top-priority projects and "slower" grant money to complete lower-ranked projects that are still of great importance, as suggested by some on Council**
- **Direct the Police Department to monitor high-risk residential areas, as suggested by the mayor, especially during school bus pick-up and drop-off times**

We applaud the measures taken by City Council and staff in recent years — especially sidewalk construction — to make the City a safer, more pleasant place to walk and bike, and we encourage more efforts to ensure safety on the streets.

In recent years, Washington, D.C., Arlington and Alexandria have all adopted Vision Zero commitments to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious accidents in the coming years by making significant investments in safety measures. Falls Church should do the same.

Our committee would like to work with City staff and Council to create a comprehensive plan for the City to encourage safe driving and improve the safety of everyone on City streets.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrea Caumont
Chair

Committee Members

Dave Gustafson (vice chair)
Paul Baldino
Bill Ackerman

Shaun Dakin
Doug Devereaux
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