

Mayor and Council Work Session and Executive Session March 8, 2016 Agenda

*"A diverse, business-friendly, and sustainable community with clean, safe and strong neighborhoods."
"Providing the most efficient and highest-quality services as the municipal location of choice for all
customers."*

"Change your thoughts and you change your world." - Norman Vincent Peale

EXECUTIVE SESSION

3:30 PM 1. Executive Session

4:00 PM WORK SESSION

4:00 PM 1. Proclamation: 311 Day

4:05 PM 2. Fairgrounds Softball Association Items - *Rodney Tissue, City Engineer*

4:15 PM 3. Burhans Boulevard Pedestrian Study - *Rodney Tissue, City Engineer*

4:35 PM 4. Budget/Funding Needs of the Hagerstown Fire Department - *Fire Chief Steven Lohr*

5:10 PM 5. Sister City Relationship with Xinjin County, Chengdu, Sichuan, China - *Mayor and
Council Discussion*

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

ADJOURN

**REQUIRED MOTION
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
HAGERSTOWN, MARYLAND**

Topic:

Executive Session

Mayor and City Council Action Required:

Discussion:

Financial Impact:

Recommendation:

Motion:

Action Dates:

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**REQUIRED MOTION
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
HAGERSTOWN, MARYLAND**

Topic:

Fairgrounds Softball Association Items - *Rodney Tissue, City Engineer*

Mayor and City Council Action Required:

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ATTACHMENTS:

File Name

hfsa.2016.pdf

Description

Fairgrounds Softball
Association Items



CITY OF HAGERSTOWN, MARYLAND

Department of Parks and Engineering

March 8, 2016

TO: Valerie Means, City Administrator
FROM: Rodney Tissue, City Engineer *RT*
RE: Fairgrounds Softball Association Items

1. Background

The Hagerstown Fairgrounds Softball Association (HFSA) has a User Agreement and a Field Light Installation Agreement with the City. The User Agreement was established in 2011. Representatives from the Softball Association would to review two requests with the Mayor & Council at the upcoming workshop.

2. M&C Action Requested

HFSA officials are requesting that the Mayor & Council 1) consider an amendment to allow baseball to continue to 11:00 pm on Friday nights, and 2) renew the User Agreement for an additional period of time.

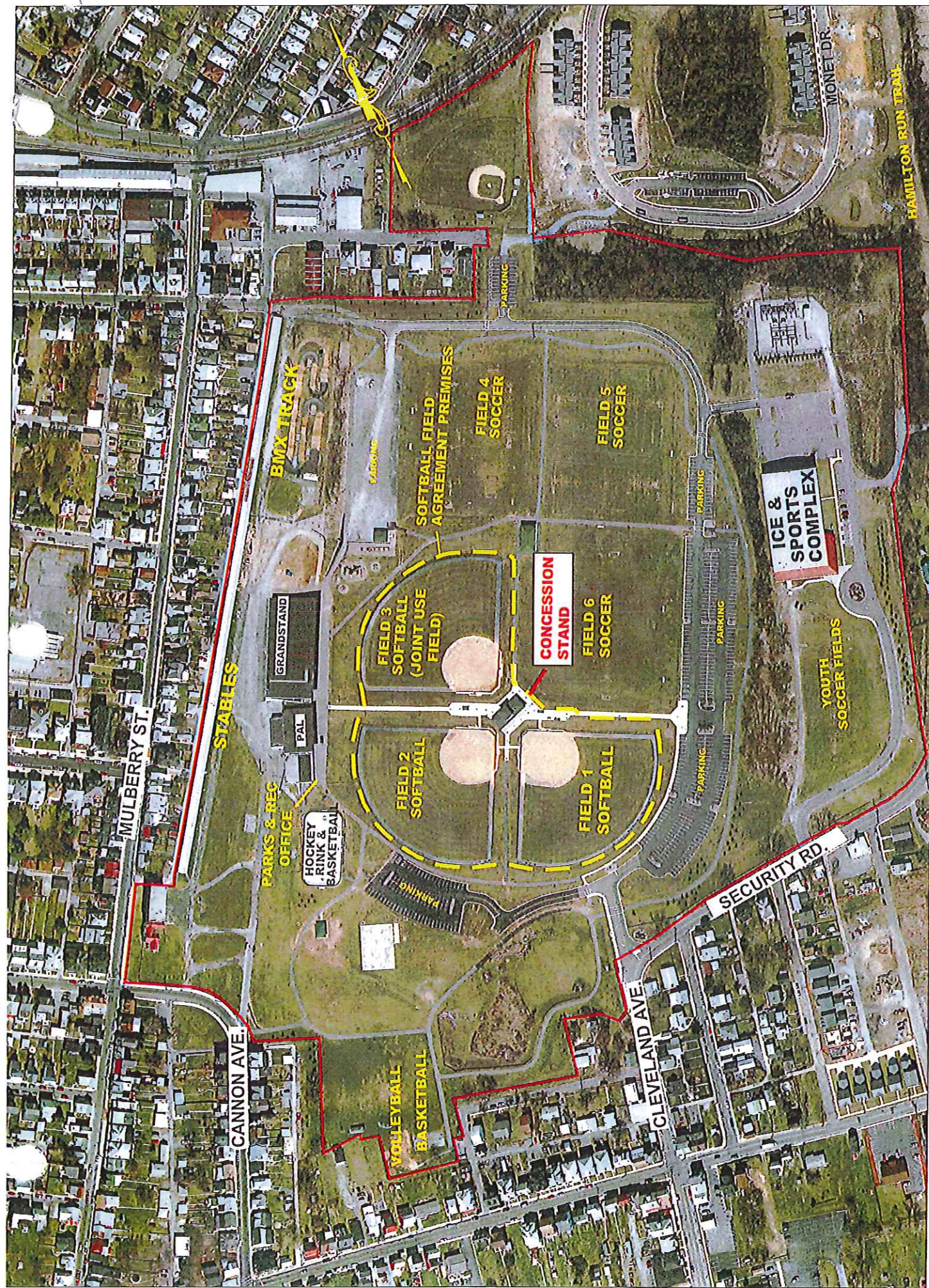
3. Discussion

- A. Field Lights – In May 2012, the City entered into a Field Light Installation Agreement with the HFSA. This agreement prohibits the operation of field lights after 10:00 pm without prior approval by the City. In July 2014, the City Council approved an amendment to this agreement that allows the HFSA to conduct two all night baseball tournaments on the premises. These events have been held for two summers without incident. The HFSA is growing and they are adding several teams. They are now requesting that on Friday nights, they would like to use the lights to 11:00 pm. Staff supports this request provided that the HFSA officials be responsible for ensuring that everyone is removed from the park and they lock the gates by no later than 11:00 pm.
- B. User Agreement - The officials of the HFSA are requesting a new long-term User Agreement for the use of the three softball fields at Fairgrounds Park. These agreements provide them exclusive use of two of the fields (which have lights). The third field provides them with “priority scheduling”, but the City may conduct other events on the field with their approval. The User Agreement expires at the end of this season, but the staff is suggesting that we develop a new agreement for Mayor & Council approval.

Staff will be present with HFSA officials to discuss these two matters at the next workshop.

Attachments: User Agreement – Exhibit A

c: Junior Mason
HFSA



FAIRGROUNDS PARK - SOFTBALL FIELD USER AGREEMENT - EXHIBIT A

**REQUIRED MOTION
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
HAGERSTOWN, MARYLAND**

Topic:

Burhans Boulevard Pedestrian Study - *Rodney Tissue, City Engineer*

Mayor and City Council Action Required:

Discussion:

Financial Impact:

Recommendation:

Motion:

Action Dates:

ATTACHMENTS:

File Name

burhans_pedestrian_study.2016.pdf

Description

Burhans Boulevard
Pedestrian Study



CITY OF HAGERSTOWN, MARYLAND

Department of Parks and Engineering

March 8, 2016

TO: Valerie Means, City Administrator
FROM: Rodney Tissue, City Engineer *RT*
RE: Burhans Boulevard Pedestrian Study

1. Background

Late in 2015, the Mayor & Council requested that Engineering staff review the situation where pedestrians are crossing Burhans Boulevard in the vicinity of George Street (between Franklin Street and Salem Avenue). Council received complaints about pedestrians illegally crossing the street where there is a high volume of vehicular traffic. Due to the nature of the complaint, we engaged our traffic engineering consultant, Sabra Wang & Associates, to evaluate the subject. Attached you find their memorandum summarizing their findings and providing conclusions and recommendations.

2. M&C Action Requested

Staff is requesting that the Mayor & Council review our findings and our recommendations and authorize staff to complete mitigating items as you see fit.

3. Discussion

Review of the Sabra Wang study yields the following highlights:

- 705 Pedestrians crossed in this one block section during a 12-hour period in early January of this year.
- Of these 705, 154 (or 22%) crossed mid-block at George Street; 191 (or 27%) crossed at the actual traffic signal either at Franklin Street or at Salem Avenue; the remaining 51% (or 360) cross somewhere mid-block but not exactly at George Street.
- The study does not recommend any type of mid-block pedestrian crossing since the problem is spread out through the entire block, and there is no guarantee that the installation of signalized mid-block crosswalk would resolve the problem.
- SHA will not make changes at Franklin Street as they do not believe it will help pedestrians at an intersection with few accidents and would increase vehicle delay.
- Therefore, the short-term recommendations by the consultant and staff, and approved by the City's Board of Traffic & Parking include the following:
 - Improve signalized intersection crosswalk timings at Salem Avenue:
 - Provide minimum of 15 seconds to cross Burhans
 - Provide leading pedestrian phase at signalized crosswalks. Pedestrians would get a walk light 4-5 seconds before the cars on perpendicular street gets a green light
 - Increase width of crosswalks
 - Install sign "turning vehicles must stop for pedestrians"

- Provide education to pedestrians (similar to the successful program in Ocean City):
 - Add "No Pedestrians X-ing" painted on tops of curbs (see attached picture)
 - Deliver flyers to businesses and residents (see attached sample)
 - Media campaign
- HPD provide educational stops of people jaywalking.

Staff will be present at the work shop to review the situation with the Mayor & Council and to answer any questions you may have.

Attachments: * Sabra Wang Memorandum – 2/10/16
 * Picture of proposed curb marking
 * Draft of educational flyer

c: Eric Deike
 Tim Young
 Erik Kline
 Paul Kifer – Acting Chief of Police



SABRA, WANG & ASSOCIATES, INC.

MEMORANDUM

From: Paul Silberman, PE, PTOE
Erin Govea, PE
Sabra, Wang & Associates, Inc.

To: Mr. Rodney Tissue, PE
City Engineer
City of Hagerstown, Maryland

Subject: George Street Pedestrian Study

Date: February 10, 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A traffic study was performed on North Burhans Boulevard (US Route 11) at George Street, between Salem Avenue (MD 58)/West Church Street and West Franklin Street (US Route 40) in Hagerstown, Maryland, evaluating the need for pedestrian safety measures in the area. The study evaluated the traffic control criteria as specified by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD 2009). Based on the crash experience, pedestrian volumes at George Street, and pedestrian volumes crossing midblock between George Street and existing signalized crosswalks at West Franklin Street and Salem Avenue/West Church Street, it is not recommended to legitimize the midblock crossings but rather to improve the existing signalized crosswalks. Additionally, education and enforcement are recommended along with the installation of a barrier system behind the sidewalk within the commercial properties on North Burhans Boulevard. The following paragraphs summarize the preliminary findings and specific recommendations.

Primary Concern

A request was made to evaluate the need for improved pedestrian safety at the intersection of North Burhans Boulevard and George Street, which is unsignalized, and at Salem Avenue/West Church Street and West Franklin Street, which are signalized intersections, due to increasing midblock pedestrian activity at this uncontrolled crossing.

Site Description

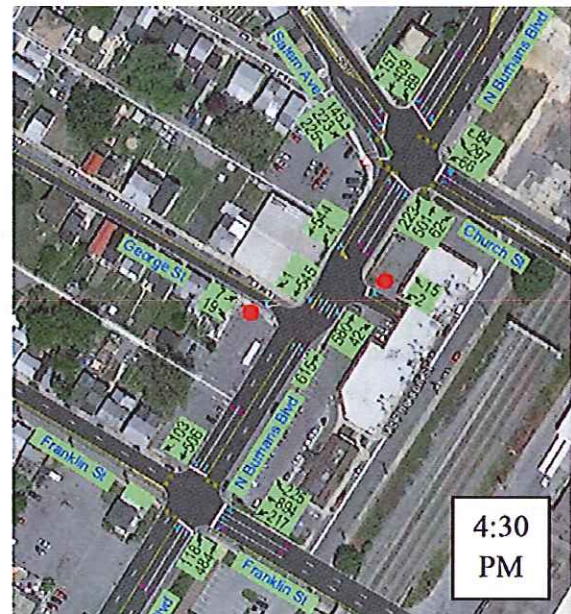
North Burhans Boulevard (US Route 11) is a four-lane, undivided roadway. George Street is a one-way local roadway with a single stop control approach eastbound at North Burhans Boulevard. Adjacent land use includes a small shopping center that has restaurants to the east of the intersection, Goodwill on the northwest corner, and residential housing to the west. On-street parking is permitted on both sides of George Street. No bicycle facilities are present. No crosswalks are marked across North Burhans Boulevard at George Street. The nearest signalized intersections are located approximately 250 feet north at Salem Avenue/Church Street and 250 feet south at West Franklin Street. Crosswalks are marked at both signalized intersections.

February 10, 2016

Summary and Findings

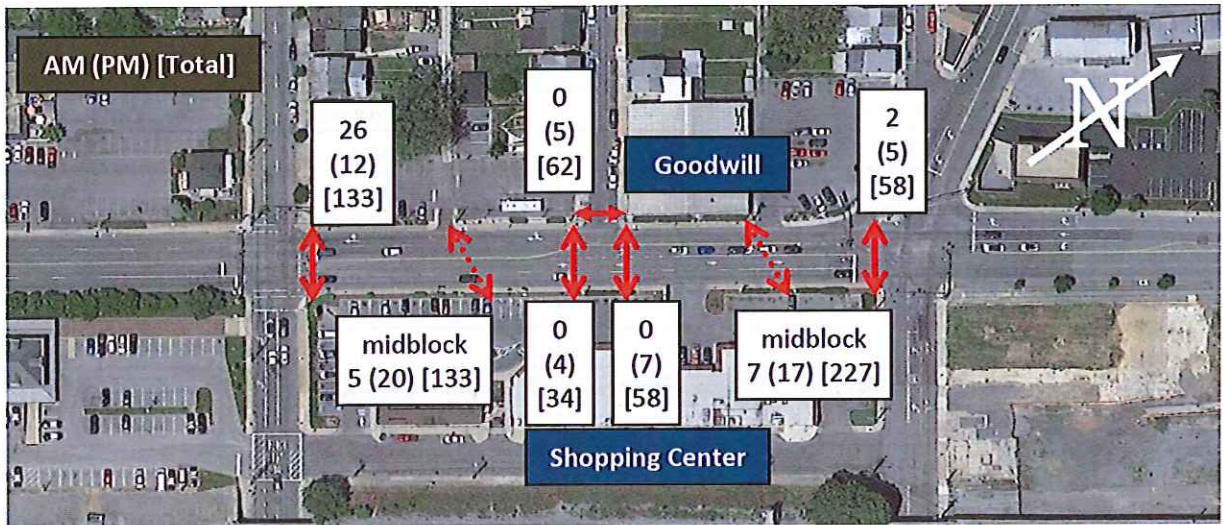
Traffic counts were performed on Tuesday, January 5 and 12, 2016, during the morning and afternoon peak hours at the unsignalized study intersection and at the neighboring signalized study intersections of North Burhans Boulevard at Salem Avenue/Church Street and at West Franklin Street.

- 1) PEAK HOURS: The AM and PM vehicular peak hours for the study intersection occurred between 7:45 AM and 8:45 AM and from 4:30 PM to 5:30 PM, respectively.
- 2) VEHICULAR TRAFFIC: Approximately 1,130 vehicles during the morning and 1,270 vehicles during the afternoon peak hours traveled on North Burhans Boulevard. Peak hour volumes are shown in the following images for the study intersection.



- 3) PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE TRAFFIC: During the hours counted, 160 pedestrians and 8 bicycles were recorded at the study intersection. The majority of pedestrians counted were on the north and west sides of the intersection with 36% and 39% each, respectively, while 21% of pedestrians crossed the south leg of North Burhans Boulevard. In addition to pedestrians crossing at the unmarked crosswalks at George Street, 360 people were observed crossing midblock north and south of the intersection. These crossing volumes are shown in the following image.

February 10, 2016



- 4) BUS ROUTES: Bus routes 117 and 333 run along North Burhans Boulevard between Salem Avenue/Church Street and West Franklin Street.
- 5) SPEED LIMIT: The posted speed limit is posted for 25 miles per hour on North Burhans Boulevard.
- 6) DESIGNATED SCHOOL CROSSING: The intersection is not located within a school zone.
- 7) SIGHT DISTANCE: Minimum stopping sight distance is adequate for both approaches of North Burhans Boulevard.
- 8) GAPS, DELAYS, AND QUEUES: Gaps to cross North Burhans Boulevard at George Street were occasionally observed during the peak hours. Delays were observed to be minimal for both pedestrians and side street vehicles. Queues from the neighboring signalized intersections can reach George Street.
- 9) EXISTING TRAFFIC CONTROL: The existing signs and pavement markings are placed correctly per the MUTCD. The crosswalks at the signalized study locations have pedestrian signal head indications without pushbuttons. The only pedestrian signage present is a pedestrian warning sign for the crosswalk across the right turn lane from Salem Avenue.
- 10) CRASH HISTORY: From January 1, 2011, to December 31, 2015, there were nine midblock pedestrian or bicycle crashes within the study area with no fatalities. **One bicyclist and eight pedestrians were involved in crashes.** Of the pedestrian crashes, two pedestrians were in a marked, signalized crosswalk, five were outside of a crosswalk, and one was in a neighboring parking lot. **Table 1** further summarizes the crash data, and crash diagrams are provided in the **Appendix**.

February 10, 2016

Table 1: Crash Data from State of Maryland

Time of Day	# of Accidents	Accident Type	# of Accidents
7:30 AM to 9:30 AM	1	Ped. Involved	8
9:30 AM to 11:30 PM	1	Bicycle	1
11:30 AM to 1:30 PM	0	Total	9
1:30 PM to 4:00 PM	1	Surface Condition	# of Accidents
4:00 PM to 6:30 PM	4	Wet	2
6:30 PM to 7:30 AM	2	Dry	7
Total	9	Total	9
Weather Condition	# of Accidents	Lighting Condition	# of Accidents
Clear	7	Daylight	5
Rain	2	Dawn or Dusk	1
Snow	0	Dark: Street Lights On	3
Total	9	Total	9
Reported Year	# of Accidents	Severity	# of Accidents
2011	1	Fatality	0
2012	2	Not Injured / Not Known	2
2013	0	Possible Injury	4
2014	4	Injured - Not incapacitated	2
2015	2	Disabled	1
Total	9	Total	9

11) **FIELD OBSERVATIONS:** A traffic engineer observed the intersection during peak hours, specifically focusing on driver behavior, traffic patterns, geometry, and overall operations. The following summarizes the observations:

- While queues sometimes reached George Street, drivers on North Burhans Boulevard were not observed blocking the intersection, and vehicles were able to enter the mainline.
- Delays were higher for drivers turning left to go northbound as they must cross more travel lanes.
- Some drivers make the southbound left turn into the shopping center, which is prohibited.
- Some drivers turn onto George Street from northbound and southbound North Burhans Boulevard, which is prohibited since George Street is one-way in the eastbound direction. The Goodwill drop-off area may be attracting these turns.
- Pedestrians were observed waiting in the street to cross to cross North Burhans Boulevard near George Street instead of waiting behind the curb as well as making two-stage crossings, thus waiting in the roadway for traffic to clear in one direction.
- Pedestrians cross midblock between Franklin Street and Church Street, often between queued vehicles.
- Pedestrians were observed to cross North Burhans Boulevard diagonally, causing their backs to be to traffic in at least one direction.
- Distracted pedestrians were observed crossing the street (i.e. using cell phones.)
- Slow-moving pedestrians were observed (elderly and disabled) as well as some minors.
- Bicyclists were observed riding with traffic.

February 10, 2016

- 12) **PEDESTRIAN BEACON (HAWK) ANALYSIS SUMMARY:** The results of the warrant analysis for a HAWK beacon, detailed in the **Appendix**, show that the minimum volume requirements were not met for the intersection of North Burhans Boulevard and George Street. However, a minimum of two hours were met for midblock crossing locations.

Table 2: Pedestrian Volumes Crossing North Burhans Boulevard

Hour Start Time	Vehicles per Hour on North Burhans Boulevard	Number of Pedestrians Crossing North Burhans Boulevard			HAWK Warrant Met? (at an individual location)
		At George Street	Midblock to the North	Midblock to the South	
2:30 PM	1,156	8	29	8	BORDERLINE
2:45 PM	1,178	5	33	8	YES
3:00 PM	1,193	3	34	10	YES
3:15 PM	1,164	6	28	8	YES
3:30 PM	1,130	10	25	7	BORDERLINE
3:45 PM	1,141	10	22	12	BORDERLINE
4:30 PM	1,207	11	17	20	YES

Note: These points fall on or above the applicable curve in Figure A1 in the Appendix.

The difficulty with installing a HAWK signal would be the close distance to the neighboring signals and the fact that pedestrians are spread out between the two existing signals north and south of George Street. Installing a HAWK may draw some pedestrians to the new signalized and marked mid-block crosswalk, but this is not guaranteed. According to the MUTCD, the satisfaction of a traffic signal warrant shall not in itself require the installation of a traffic control signal.

Only striping a crosswalk across Burhans Blvd at George Street without other improvements is not recommended. Recent studies do not support any increase in safety for pedestrians and may lead to a false sense of security. The results of the *Evaluation of Pedestrian Facilities* study by the FHWA indicate that neither driver nor pedestrian behavior is altered with the installation of a marked crosswalk at an unsignalized location.⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ *Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access Part II of II: Best Practice Design Guide, Bicycle and Pedestrian Program, Federal Highway Administration,*

http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/publications/sidewalk2/sidewalks208.cfm

Conclusion and Recommendations

There is a documented safety issue with one bicyclist and seven pedestrians involved in a collision on North Burhans Boulevard between Franklin Street and Salem/ Church Street in the last five years. A combination of strategies is recommended to improve the pedestrian crossing experience within the study area.

Mr. Rodney Tissue, P.E.

February 10, 2016

The following short-term recommendations should be considered:

1. Work with the property owners to replant bushes and/or install fencing in the planting strip along the east and west sides of North Burhans Boulevard to deter midblock pedestrian crossings
2. Improve existing signalized intersection crosswalks/timings
 - a. Provide a minimum of 15 seconds to cross North Burhans Boulevard at Salem Avenue/Church Street and at Franklin Street
 - b. Provide leading pedestrian intervals (LPIs) for signalized crosswalks
 - c. Increase the width of existing crosswalks and provide ladder striping for additional visibility across George Street
 - d. Prohibit right turns on red when pedestrians are present
3. Provide education to pedestrians
 - a. Use crosswalk markings on curb
 - b. Flyers and/or door-to-door chats with businesses
 - c. Media alerts (local radio stations, newspapers, Goodwill in-store announcements)
4. Provide enforcement
 - a. Deploy police officers to issue warnings to pedestrians outside of crosswalks

The following long-term recommendation should be considered:

1. Evaluate the geometric and operational feasibility to remove the southeast corner channelized island to reduce pedestrian exposure and create a small focal public space

APPENDIX

Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon Analysis

A pedestrian hybrid beacon was evaluated using guidance from Section 4F of the 2009 MUTCD. The pedestrian hybrid beacon (PHB), also known as a HAWK (High-Intensity Activated CrossWalk), is used to warn and control traffic at an unsignalized location. The beacon would remain dark until actuated by a pedestrian pressing a walk button. An example of a HAWK located in Washington, DC, is shown in the following photograph.

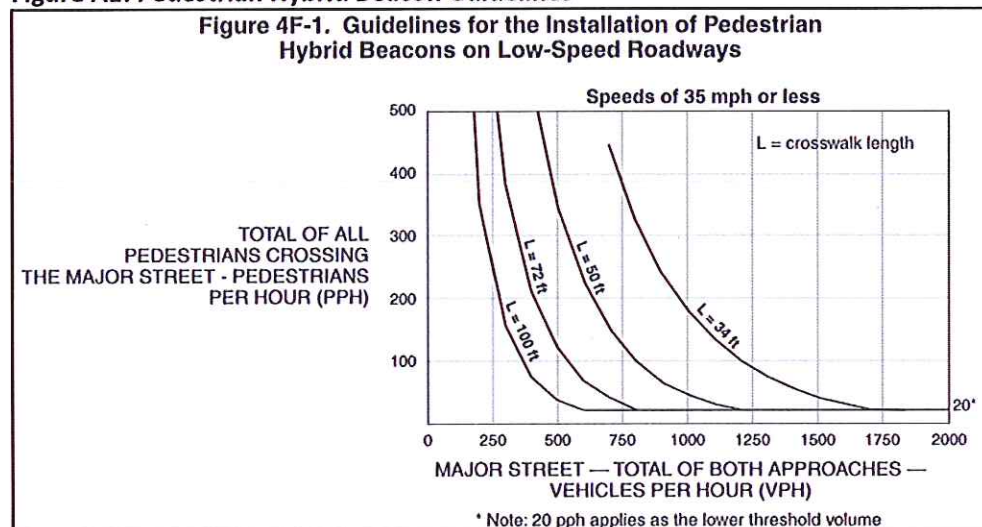


HAWK beacon at Georgia Avenue & Hemlock Street NE

According to the MUTCD, a pedestrian hybrid beacon may be considered if the plotted point representing the vehicles per hour on the major street (total of both approaches) and the corresponding total of all pedestrians crossing the major street for 1 hour (any four consecutive 15-minute periods) of an average day falls above the applicable curve in Figure 4F-1 for the length of the crosswalk. See **Figure A1**.

The width of North Burhans Boulevard is approximately 48 feet. The highest pedestrian volume was 18 people crossing against approximately 1,175 vehicles per hour on North Burhans Boulevard at George Street. Consequently, this point does not fall above the applicable curve. Therefore, the guidelines established by the MUTCD in Figure 4F-1 are **not satisfied at George Street**. Examining the points for the highest hourly volume of midblock pedestrians crossing North Burhans Boulevard against the vehicle volumes has some points falling at or above the applicable curve, so the minimum requirements are **met for the midblock locations between George Street and Franklin Street and between George Street and Church Street**.

Figure A1: Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon Guidelines



Mr. Rodney Tissue, P.E.

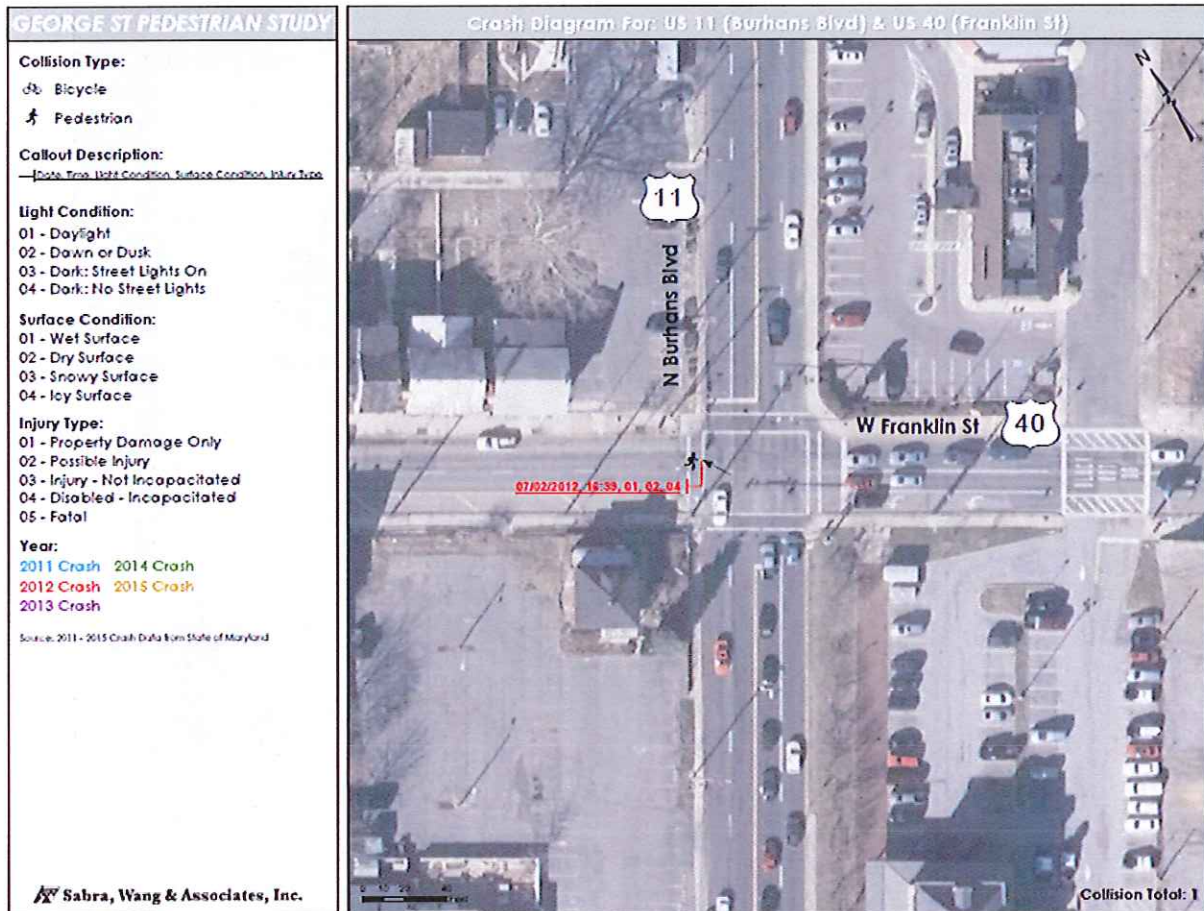
February 10, 2016

Crash Diagrams

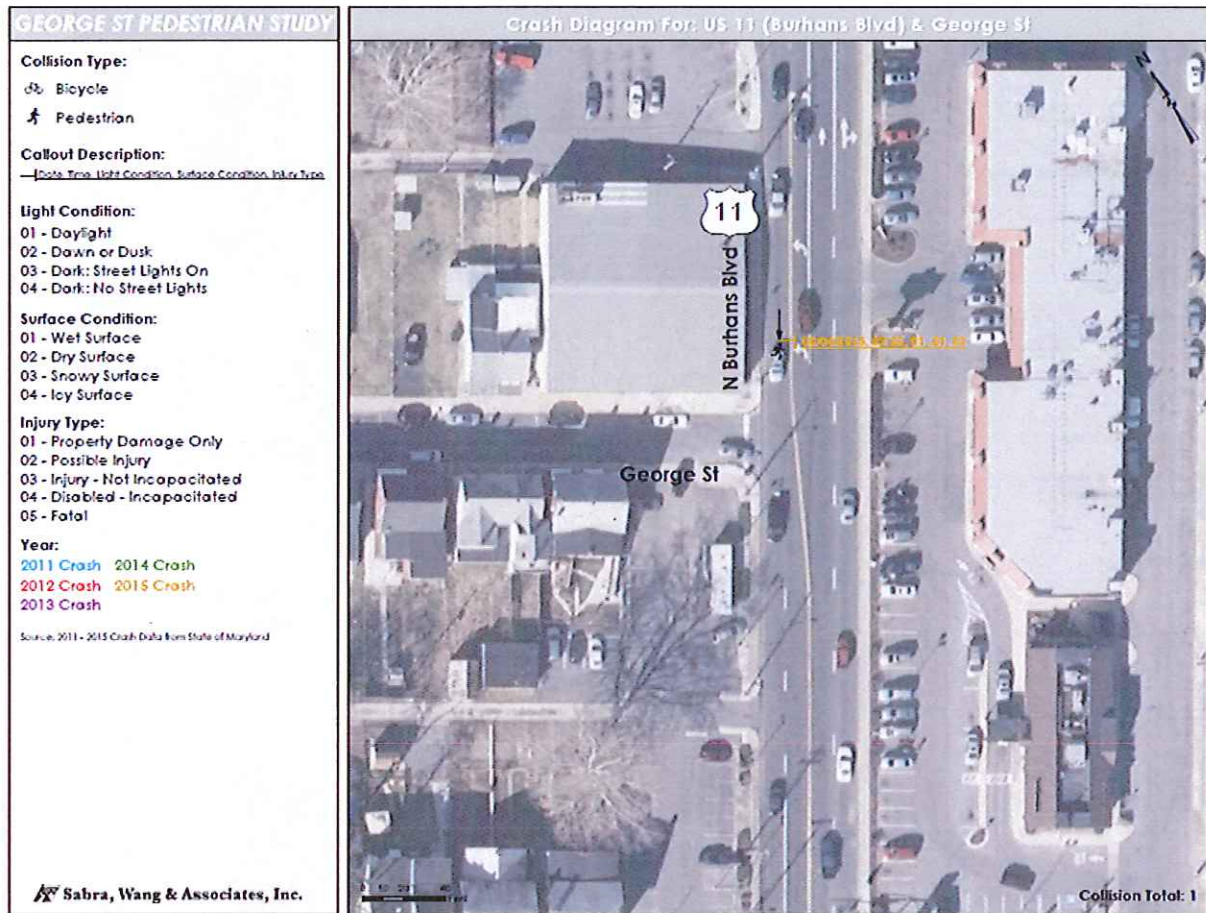
The following crash diagrams were developed for the three intersections within the study area. At the signalized intersection of North Burhans Boulevard and West Franklin Street, there was one pedestrian collision in 2012. At the intersection of North Burhans Boulevard and George Street, there was one pedestrian collision in 2015. At the intersection of North Burhans Boulevard and Salem Avenue/Church Street, there was one pedestrian collision in 2011, one in 2012, three in 2014 (excluding one in a parking lot), and one in 2015.

Mr. Rodney Tissue, P.E.

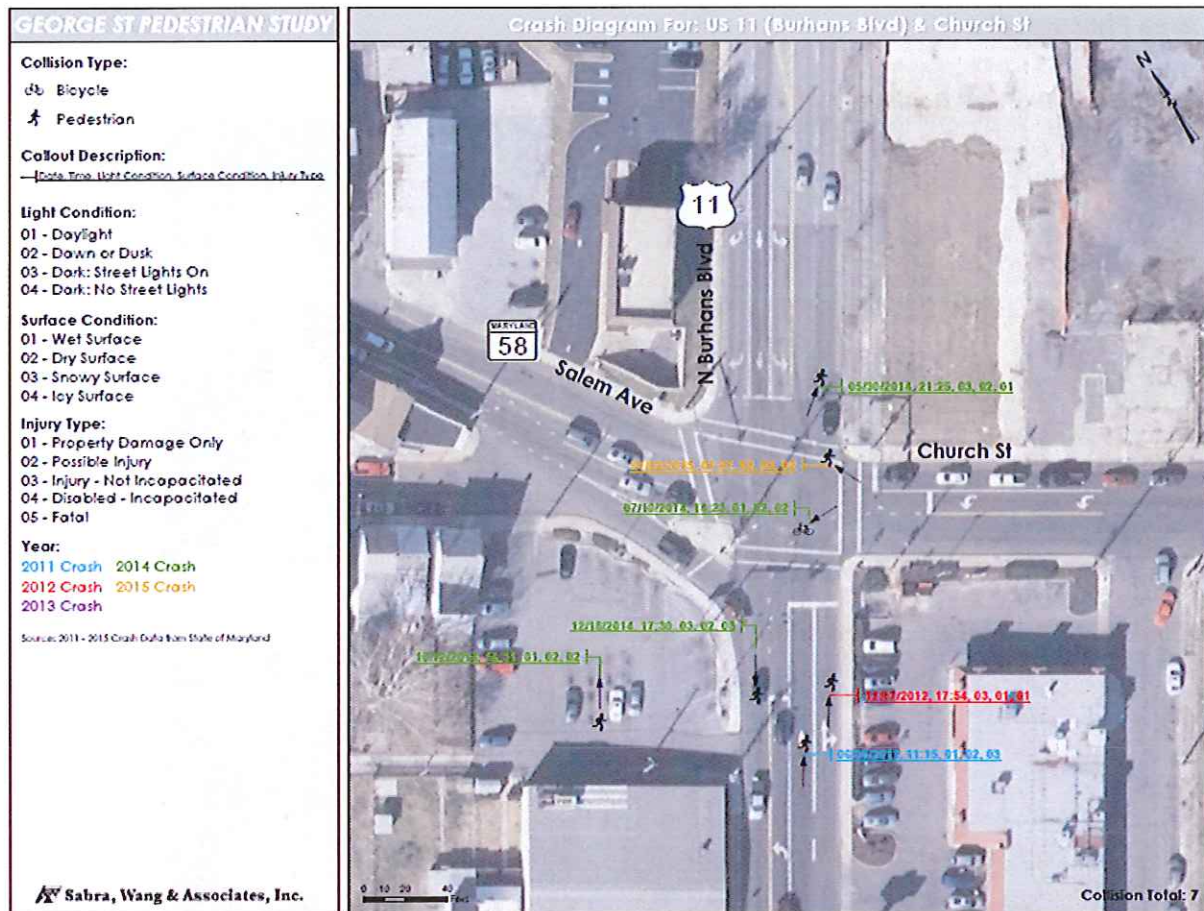
February 10, 2016



Mr. Rodney Tissue, P.E.
February 10, 2016



Mr. Rodney Tissue, P.E.
February 10, 2016



Mr. Rodney Tissue, P.E.
February 10, 2016

Study Area Photographs

Northbound North Burhans Boulevard at George Street



Southbound North Burhans Boulevard at George Street



Mr. Rodney Tissue, P.E.

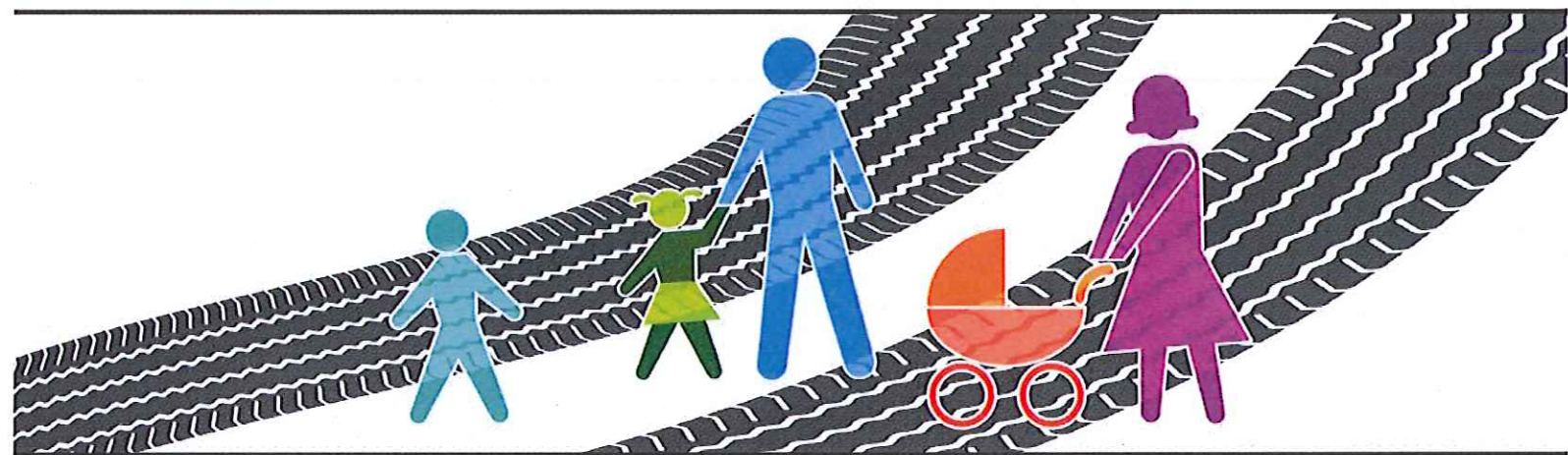
February 10, 2016

Eastbound George Street at North Burhans Boulevard

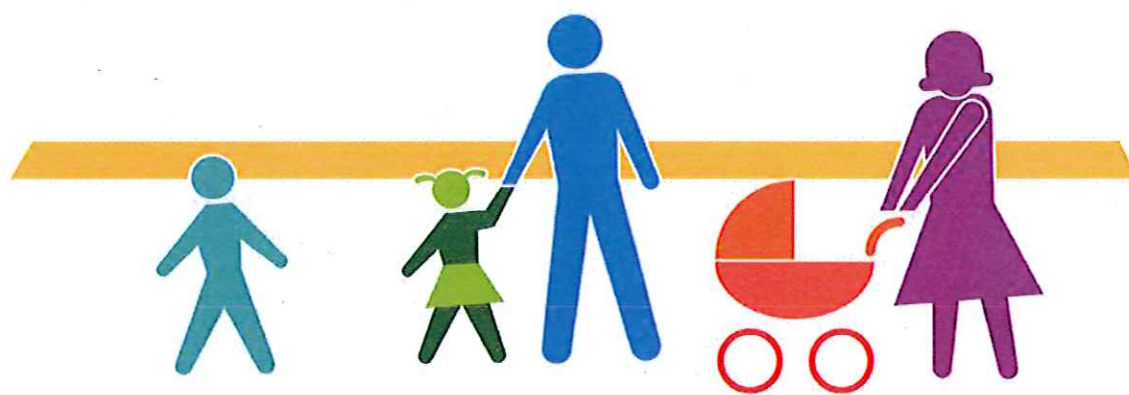


Intersection of North Burhans Boulevard and George Street (looking west)





Don't Walk the Line



Cross Between the Lines
in designated crosswalks

On average, a pedestrian is killed
in a traffic crash every 2 hours.

Maryland State Highway Administration

SAMPLE



NO PEDESTRIAN X-WALK

SAMPLE
CURB PAVING

CURB FILING
SAMPLE



Exhibit 40: Examples of Pedestrian Safety Education Efforts in Maryland and Washington D.C.

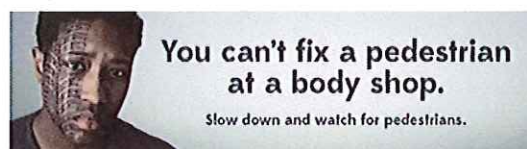
OC Walk Smart!, Town of Ocean City, MD, 2013 – Present

An illustrated crab, “Crab the Lifeguard,” has been placed on Ocean City transit, plane banners, boat billboard messages, roadside billboards, and in local businesses, and has appeared on television and radio public announcements to remind pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers of safety tips. Also, the Town of Ocean City, the State Highway Administration, and the Maryland Office of Highway Safety increased signage, created more marked crosswalks and more countdown clocks at certain troublesome intersections with longer cross times, and made other safety improvements. In the first year of the campaign, pedestrian related crashes decreased 50 percent from the previous year, including zero fatalities. The campaign expanded to the Delaware beaches in 2014.



Street Smart, D.C. Metropolitan Region, 2002 – Present

Street Smart, a semi-annual public awareness and education campaign conducted in the Washington, D.C. region, aims to increase pedestrian and bicyclist safety through public awareness and increased law enforcement. Street Smart uses outdoor advertising and sponsorships of traffic reports on local radio stations to reach its target audience. Also, safety events were held around the region to reach people in areas with high pedestrian crash rates. Street Smart has conducted pre- and post-campaign surveys since its inception. For the spring 2013 campaign, 39 percent of those surveyed said they saw an ad. Also, there was a 35 percent increase in respondents identifying Street Smart as a roadway safety program and a 45 percent increase in awareness of police enforcement of pedestrian safety laws.



You Only Live Once (YOLO), Montgomery County Public Schools, MD, 2014 – Present

Using a popular saying and acronym among students, the YOLO campaign was designed to raise awareness of the risks of distracted walking and other risky pedestrian behaviors. It was organized and developed by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation. A toolkit was sent to every high school in the county and included a guidebook on developing a school pedestrian safety education program, ideas for events, campaign posters (similar to those used in the MWCOC campaign *Street Smart*), sample morning announcements, a parent tip sheet in English and Spanish, and a social media plan with graphics and pre-written tweets and posts using the hashtag #YOLOWalksafe. The National Association of Counties awarded the Montgomery County Department of Transportation a 2015 Achievement Award for the campaign in the category of Civic Education and Public Information.



Walk Smart College Park!, College Park, MD, 2014

SHA installed a new pedestrian-activated signal and a median fence, reduced the speed limit, and in partnership with the University of Maryland, the City of College Park and the University of Maryland and Prince George's County Police, introduced the Walk Smart College Park! Campaign. The campaign includes student outreach at on-campus events, print and digital media advertising in the University's newspaper, exit signage at Byrd Stadium, and transit advertising on UMD shuttle buses. Furthermore, posters, banners, floor decals, and coasters are being used by many of the businesses in the corridor.



**REQUIRED MOTION
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
HAGERSTOWN, MARYLAND**

Topic:

Budget/Funding Needs of the Hagerstown Fire Department - *Fire Chief Steven Lohr*

Mayor and City Council Action Required:

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Motion:

Action Dates:

ATTACHMENTS:

File Name

Fire_Memo.pdf

Description

Memo



Steven Lohr
Fire Chief

HAGERSTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT
CITY OF HAGERSTOWN
25 West Church Street
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740



(301) 790-2476
FAX (301) 797-7448
slohr@hagerstownmd.org

TO: Valerie Means, City Administrator
FROM: Steve Lohr, Fire Chief
SUBJECT: Budget/Funding Needs of the Fire Department
DATE: March 3, 2016

Presenting an overview of the budget needs of the Hagerstown Fire Department in the areas of Personnel, Apparatus and Equipment to Mayor and Council Tuesday, March 8, 2016.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you.

**REQUIRED MOTION
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
HAGERSTOWN, MARYLAND**

Topic:

Sister City Relationship with Xinjin County, Chengdu, Sichuan, China - *Mayor and Council Discussion*

Mayor and City Council Action Required:

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File Name

Memo_-_Sister_City_with_XinJin_China.pdf

Description

Memo



CITY OF HAGERSTOWN, MARYLAND

Donna K. Spickler
City Clerk

TO: Mayor and City Council
Valerie Means, City Administrator

FROM: Donna Spickler, City Clerk

SUBJECT: Sister City relationship with Xinjin County, Chengdu, Sichuan, China

DATE: March 8, 2016

A Sister City opportunity has been presented to the City of Hagerstown with the people of Xinjin County, Chengdu, Sichuan, China. A Sister City relationship with Xinjin County, Chengdu would provide benefits to Hagerstown and Washington County, as well as to Xinjin County, Chengdu. Collaborations could be established in education, tourism, the health industry, and organic agriculture, among other possibilities. Mayor Gysberts hosted a delegation from Xinjin County, Chengdu in September, 2015 for a day-long tour of Hagerstown.

This opportunity is brought to Hagerstown by the UNESCO Center for Peace. UNESCO encourages international peace and universal respect for human rights by promoting collaboration among nations.

The UNESCO Center for Peace's mission is to promote understanding of UNESCO's mission and ideals and to translate them into programs that will help raise a new generation of peacemakers, placing human dignity at the center of their activities and striving to make the culture of peace a commodity of everyday life through education, science, culture and communication.

Xinjin is located in the western portion of the Sichuan Basin and the southern part of Chengdu. Xinjin got its name in North Zhou Dynasty over 1,450 years ago. Covering an area of 330 square km, this county has a population of 308,800.

Time is included on the March 8, 2016 Work Session agenda to discuss the possibility of a Sister City agreement with Xinjin County, Chengdu, China.

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Thank you.