

District of Columbia  
Bladensburg\*  
Bowie  
College Park  
Frederick  
Frederick County  
Gaithersburg  
Greenbelt  
Montgomery County  
Prince George's County  
Rockville  
Takoma Park  
Alexandria  
Arlington County  
Fairfax  
Fairfax County  
Falls Church  
Loudoun County  
Manassas  
Manassas Park  
Prince William County  
\*Adjunct Member

**MEMORANDUM**

**August 22, 2011**

**TO:** Human Services & Public Safety Policy Committee Members  
**FROM:** Melissa Rivord, Chief of Public Safety Programs  
**SUBJECT:** Traffic Fatalities

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Recently, Falls Church Vice Mayor and Human Services & Public Safety Policy Member Mr. David Snyder inquired about the number of motor vehicle crashes and fatalities in the metropolitan region. I conducted an inquiry into this matter with our local and state law enforcement partners, and with the US Park Police, who are responsible for the parkways. Last week, there was an article that reported on eight deaths that occurred as a result of four significant crashes over the weekend. Although this is one of the busiest times of the year according to AAA, our law enforcement agencies have reported that there has NOT been an increase in motor vehicle accidents in 2011. In many cases, agencies were able to report that the number of motor vehicle accidents has declined over the last 3-5 years, which many attributed to click it or ticket campaigns, sobriety checkpoints, truck safety campaigns, and zero tolerance for aggressive driving campaigns.

A summary of responses is provided below. I hope this helps address any concerns you may have.

- Virginia State Police report that they have not seen an overall increase in crashes, nor has there been an increase in crashes involving trucks/buses. Recently, they did have to close a significant portion of the interstate for a fatal truck crash that caught fire. Often, these incidents make the news and impact traffic significantly, which may give rise to the belief that there is an increase, but that is not the case.
- Prince William County indicated that the number of fatalities is level with this time last year (8 total), and only one involved a commercial vehicle (school bus). Prince William County also indicated that there seems to be an increase in the lack of use of seatbelts in the serious and fatal crashes.

- In the City of Fairfax, the number of motor vehicle accidents is down compared to 2010 (743 vs. 769), and the number involving trucks and buses is also down (21 vs. 34).
- Alexandria reports a decline in numbers since 2007 (when there were 7 fatalities); this year there have been 2 cases, which is in line with the last two years.
- Manassas reports that the number of motor vehicle accidents is down. Pedestrian accidents, however, are on the rise.
- Manassas Park reports that they recently had their first fatal in many years from a single vehicle motorcycle crash a few weeks ago. Overall, their record of vehicle crashes, regardless of the type of vehicle, is very low due to the way our road system engages our community.
- During the period January 1, 2011 to August 15, 2011, the Takoma Park Police Department had 46 written accident reports for damage, 16 written reports for personal injury during a collision, and zero (0) written reports of fatalities. This does not include basic exchanges of information, hit and runs, or anything that would not require a report. The data compiled does not include vehicle type or descriptions; however, any written accident report involving a bus would be included in the figures provided. In Takoma Park, it appears that overall numbers of collisions in each of the first six months of this year are down about 20-25% in comparison to randomly selected comparison of earlier years. It is difficult to attribute this to any one thing without some detailed analysis, but the captain reporting this information speculated that the road that produced the largest number of reported collisions in the past was New Hampshire Avenue; approximately a year or two ago, a RADAR speed enforcement camera was installed and appears to be slowing people down, at least during heavy traffic periods, and likely is decreasing collisions on that stretch of roadway.
- Frederick County and the state of Maryland report that the crash levels have stayed the same over the last few years. Additional statistics are available from the state here: <http://www.mva.maryland.gov/Driver-Safety/Stats/stats.htm>
- And US Park has shown a tremendous reduction in the number of crashes this year (currently 1200 less than last year), with a total of 5 fatalities compared to 11 in 2010, and a 5-year average of 13 deaths/year. Of the 1655 crashes this year, 40 involved a travel/commuter bus; 10 involved a school bus; 15 involved a truck and trailer; and 3 involved tractor trailers (all of these numbers are well below the 5-year average). A chart showing greater detail is provided below.

YEAR	CRASH TYPE				SPECIFIED CRASH INVOLVEMENT										
	PROPERTY DAMAGE ONLY	PERSONAL INJURY	FATAL EVENT	TOTAL	UNKNOWN	OTHER	OTHER	NON-DRIVER	DRIVER INVOLVED	OTHER DRIVER INVOLVED	ALL OTHER	OTHER INV.	OTHER DRIVER INVOLVED	OTHER INVOLVED	OTHER INVOLVED
2006	1442	492	14	2954	13	26	62	492	35	2198	216	20	56	8	11
2007	2236	451	10	2677	14	19	51	444	20	2032	199	10	45	7	6
2008	2121	454	11	2586	13	22	61	431	24	1929	187	11	40	11	10
2009	2327	400	17	2824	12	23	70	441	18	2116	197	15	46	12	2
2010	2287	528	11	2826	21	41	64	388	30	2131	235	14	58	13	6
2010 (REVISED)	2284	477	13	2773	17	26	62	439	27	2083	203	14	53	20	7
2011	1345	305	5	1655	10	17	26	203	21	1314	126	10	40	15	3

Please let me know if there is anything else I can do to be of assistance. Thank you.

*Melissa A. Rivord*

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