Officials Cite Median, Education in Enforcing Pedestrian Safety on Route 1

According to the Spring 2018 [edition](http://www.bestreetsmart.net/docs/2018/2018-campaign-fact-sheet-spring.pdf) of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments’ Street Smart traffic safety campaign, Prince George’s County leads the Washington D.C. region in transit fatalities.

The data records 99 transit fatalities throughout the county in 2017. Of those 99 total incidents, 24 were pedestrian fatalities. Maryland’s Charles County and Fairfax County in Virginia were tied for second place, each with 35 fatalities recorded.

Despite the high number of pedestrian fatalities reported countywide, officials are optimistic about a net decrease in pedestrian incidents on Route One, thanks to the installation of a traffic median in the middle of the street and ongoing education and enforcement efforts.

In an email, Paulette Jones, Public Information Officer at the county’s Public Works and Transportation division, cited a comprehensive approach emphasizing four “e”s of safety: “engineering, education, enforcement and emergency services” as a way to improve public safety along roadways.

The stretch of Route One running south of this university’s campus is considered a “high crash [corridor],” Jones wrote via email. She specified that high crash corridors are designated by the Maryland Department of Transportation’s State Highway Administration as one-mile segments of road with “five or more crashes in a five-year period.”

The State Highway Administration’s data for 2017 records average daily traffic of 37,301 vehicles near the intersection of Route One and Campus Dr, making it among the busiest in the county.

Nevertheless, officials from MDOT SHA report a drop in traffic incidents along Route One in recent years.

Charles Glischar, Media Relations Manager for MDOT SHA, wrote, “crashes have been decreasing on US 1,” in an email.  “After experiencing fatal pedestrian and bicycle crashes in 2013 and 2014, no pedestrian or bicycle crashes occurred in 2015 and 2016.”

Glischar wrote that since 2015, only one pedestrian fatality had been confirmed in a 1.5-mile segment of road along Route One between Knox Rd University Blvd. Pedestrian and cyclist injuries have also decreased in the area since 2014, when seven incidents were reported. There were three reported injuries in 2015 and 2017, and two in 2016.

Much of the fatality decrease in the area, according to Prince George’s County Police Department officers, stems from the installation of a black metal median dividing Route One in half near the intersection with Knox Rd.

Major Chris Price, Commander of PGPD’s Special Operations Division, said that since August 2015, his unit had investigated 58 pedestrian fatalities. “Only one of these has been in College Park, in October of last year,” he said.

“As of late, College Park has not seen as many crashes and fatalities,” Price said. “One of the biggest things we’re attributing it to is the installation of the barriers and medians along Route One. It makes it harder for pedestrians to cross illegally.”

Although Price could not remember when exactly the medians were installed, “it’s been at least two years,” he said.

Along with the medians, Price stressed the value of education in promoting pedestrian safety in the area.

“We have officers out on the corner handing out pamphlets and flyers, especially to students walking around College Park,” he said.

As of this point in 2018, no new pedestrian fatalities have been reported along Route One. With continued education and enforcement, the roadway is on track to become safer for the entire campus community.