

April 30, 2019

County Council members
Historic Courthouse

Re: Bill 12-19, Basic Service Maps

I'm sure that you would agree that one of the major sources of complaints from citizens regards traffic problems, and the impact of developments. The County has a comprehensive set of Codes for Adequate Facilities, including the provision of transportation needs (roads).

Bill 12-19 is the annual revision to the maps, based on the efforts of Public Works to identify deficiencies. However, the overall result for Transportation leaves much to be desired. The steps toward correction should start with amendments to this Bill.

I spoke at the Planning Board's public hearing (the only speaker) on this matter, but they did not seem open to considering any of the issues I raised.

Following, I detail the issues that have been causing problems for years:

1. BCZR 4A02.4.D gives the standard for determination of Level-of-Service of signalized intersections. It specifies the use of the 1965 edition of the Highway Capacity Manual, the national standard. This was the original method which has been updated many times since, but the County continues to use this more than 50-year old method. The latest edition of the standard was released in 2016. Legislation should require use of the latest method, or at least require Public Works to provide a recommendation within 6 months concerning how to move beyond the 1965 method.

2. As you may be aware, the measurement methodology is based on observing if the last vehicle stopped at a red light gets through on the next green cycle. In cases where there is another traffic control device (signal or stop sign) just before the traffic signal being studied, the current process only considers vehicles that have already made it through that preceding traffic control, even if those vehicles behind it are clearly being held up by the traffic signal under study. No matter how many vehicles are lined up waiting behind that preceding controlled intersection, they have no effect on the rating of the studied intersection.

In the case of the Kingsville Triangle, a 4-way stop exists about 250 ft before the traffic signal, where only about 8 vehicles fit, so those 8 always get through the light on the next green cycle, thus always resulting in an "A" rating, even when the traffic is lined up a half mile on Bradshaw to the fire station, as well as on Jerusalem Rd in both directions, sometimes backed-up onto north-bound Belair Rd.

The diagram on the right is taken from an online traffic backup monitor taken on a recent afternoon which shows the line-ups on Bradshaw and Jerusalem Rds behind the 4-way stop (orange and red). This was a mild back-up situation.



This study technique likely results in false Level-of-Service ratings on many intersections around the county, leading to a belief that there is no problem to be fixed.



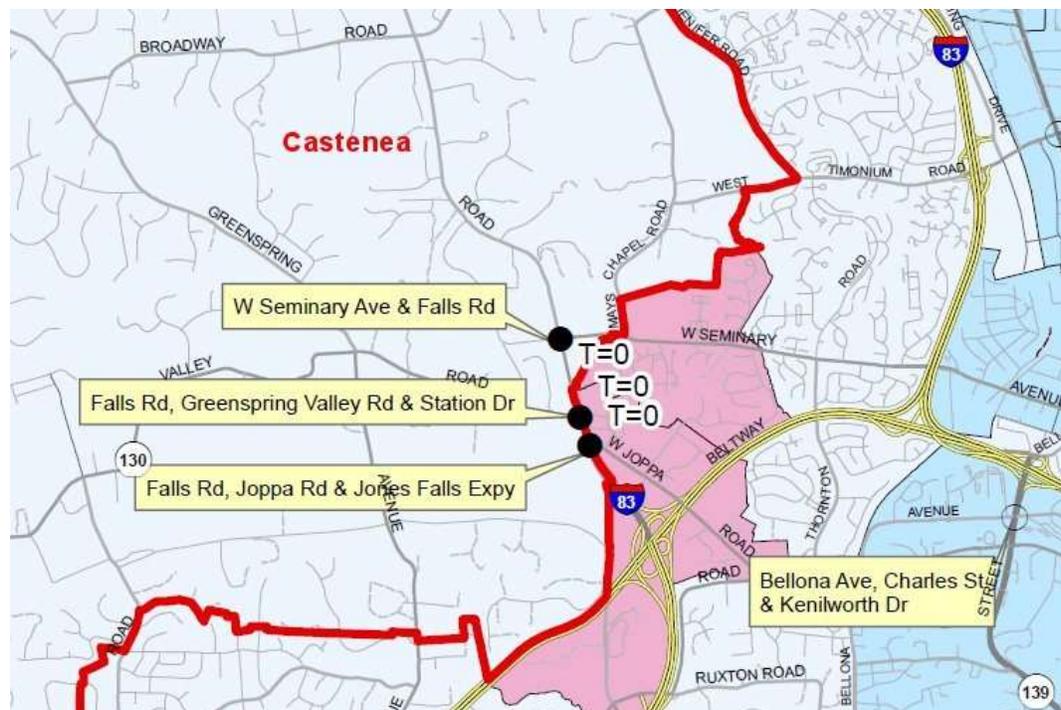
Backup on northwest-bound Bradshaw - my yard on right. (This is the route fire trucks must take.)



Backup on north-bound Belair Rd, many waiting for "jug handle" right turn to turn left at 4-way stop.

Legislation should require that such traffic be considered in order to get more realistic results.

3. The BCZR requires that "Commuter Sheds" be drawn for each intersection rated "D", "E", or "F". In fact, the Transportation Memo presented to the Council from Public Works states "there are 9 'F' level intersections" (including 3 on Falls Rd pictured below) and that "commuter sheds for the intersections noted above ... will be shown on the 2019 map". However, for some unknown reason, Public Works does not show any Commuter Sheds outside of the URDL. With such a designation, the failed intersections along Falls Rd should have stopped the Castenea development at Chestnut Ridge Golf Course, barely 1.5 miles to the north. As can be seen from the following portion of the 2018 map, while the affected traffic shed was drawn to the east (inside the URDL), none was drawn to the west and north of the failed intersection at Seminary, so it had no effect on the development of Castenea (2nd and 3rd Districts affected).



A similar situation exists with the failed intersections at Baltimore National Pike and N Rolling Rd (1st District) and at Ebenezer and Pulaski (6th District). Legislation should require that these traffic sheds be designated outside the URDL and that they be taken into account in the approval of new developments.

4. Although Public Works continually rates intersections, the full resulting list is rarely "published" online. I have only found lists online for 2009, 2013, and 2016. Steps should be taken to ensure that the full list is posted online every year after the corresponding Bill is passed. (A list for 2019 was posted online this morning in response to my question. It needs to be reformatted.)

Thank you for your consideration of these issues. I am, of course, available at any time to discuss this matter.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Pierce". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mike Pierce
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