

Dunwoody City Council
City of Dunwoody
41 Perimeter Center East
Dunwoody, GA 30346

March 6, 2013

Dear Council Members,

Thank you to Mr. Nall, Mr. Heneghan, and Mr. Thompson for meeting with me regarding improvements in student/pedestrian safety in the Chesnut ES/Peachtree MS school zone. As we discussed, the 4 main complicating factors in the Chesnut/Peachtree school corridor include:

- 1) Two schools (Chesnut and PCMS) make up one contiguous school zone stretching a full 1/2 mile on North Peachtree Road. The school zone is too long, not well enough marked, and many vehicles join the school from incoming streets that are in the middle of the school zone. Also, vehicles pass one school and think they are 'done', not knowing/recalling that there is a second school.
- 2) Lack of on-school parking for Chesnut during arrival and dismissal times. The nearest parking for students walking into school is across Peachford road in the overflow lot of Peachtree Charter Middle School. No crossing guard is present at the Peachford crosswalk.
- 3) Proximity to on/off ramps for I-285 less than ½ mile south of Chesnut on North Peachtree Road.
- 4) Proximity to GA Perimeter College – class start times coincide with school start/dismissal times for both Chesnut and Peachtree, and GPC enrollment has dramatically increased in recent years.

Together, Chesnut and Peachtree are requesting urgent attention at the following locations:

At the crosswalk in front of Chesnut:

A HAWK system to provide flashing red lights, then solid red to require traffic to stop when activated. This system should also provide in-ground lighting to illuminate the crosswalk area as another visual marker of the crossing. When not active, the HAWK will allow traffic to flow as normal.

At the crosswalk in front of Peachtree Middle:

A school zone crossing sign, suspended from the traffic arm already in place. This sign should be large (there are 4 lanes at this location) and include flashing yellow lights to coincide with Peachtree's arrival and dismissal times. Due to street width here, two signs (one in each direction) may be required.

At upper and lower ends of combined school zone on North Peachtree:

Radar speed signs announcing a school zone at 25 mph. Signage must include flashing yellow lights when the 25 mph school zone speed is in effect. If vehicles exceed the 25 mph during school zone hours, actual mph flashes in the radar window. It is imperative that these signs be 'timed' to coincide with school zone hours and revert to 35 mph when it is not arrival/dismissal times to avoid driver 'sign fatigue'.

At crosswalk on Peachford Road:

A HAWK system to provide flashing red lights, then solid red to require traffic to stop when activated. This system should also provide in-ground lighting to illuminate the crosswalk area as another visual marker of the crossing. When not active, the HAWK will allow traffic to flow as normal. This is especially important due to the blind curve on the approach of Peachford toward North Peachtree.

(Vehicles are very aggressive due to limited sight distance and traffic congestion at school hours. Many vehicles stop inside the marked crosswalk and many vehicles from North Peachtree road turn through traffic onto Peachford without good visibility when vehicles are queued in the carpool lane for Chesnut.)

At school zone entrance on Peachford Road:

Radar speed signs announcing a school zone at 25 mph, with same recommendations for lighting and speed settings as for North Peachtree.

Throughout 1/2 mile length of school zone on North Peachtree:

Rationalization of ALL traffic signage in this area, to combine on single poles/signs or eliminate, where possible, redundant, unnecessary signage. It is very visually crowded and 'dilutes' the impact of any signage that is designed to call attention to the school zone and pedestrians at crosswalks. Remove/combine signage wherever possible and make new school zone signage more prominent.

Along Kings Point Dr (in front of Peachtree) and Brookhurst Dr (lower end of Chesnut):

Mark appropriate areas in approach to intersection with North Peachtree for both of these roads as 'No Parking' on one side. Due to traffic congestion for drop-off/pick-up for both schools, as well as during special events when whole-school attendance is expected, vehicles park along both sides of these residential streets. This is a nuisance to school neighbors and a serious safety concern if emergency vehicles cannot pass on these streets with parking on both sides.

Two years ago, a 1st grader was 'grazed' by a vehicle while IN THE CROSSWALK, HOLDING HANDS with her mother at Brookhurst/North Peachtree. This year, Mr. Heneghan's son was nearly missed IN THE CROSSWALK, WITH A CROSSING GUARD, also a case of a child in a marked crosswalk accompanied by an adult. We cannot rightly call these 'accidents' anymore, since we, in fact, know these situations to be dangerous and frequent.

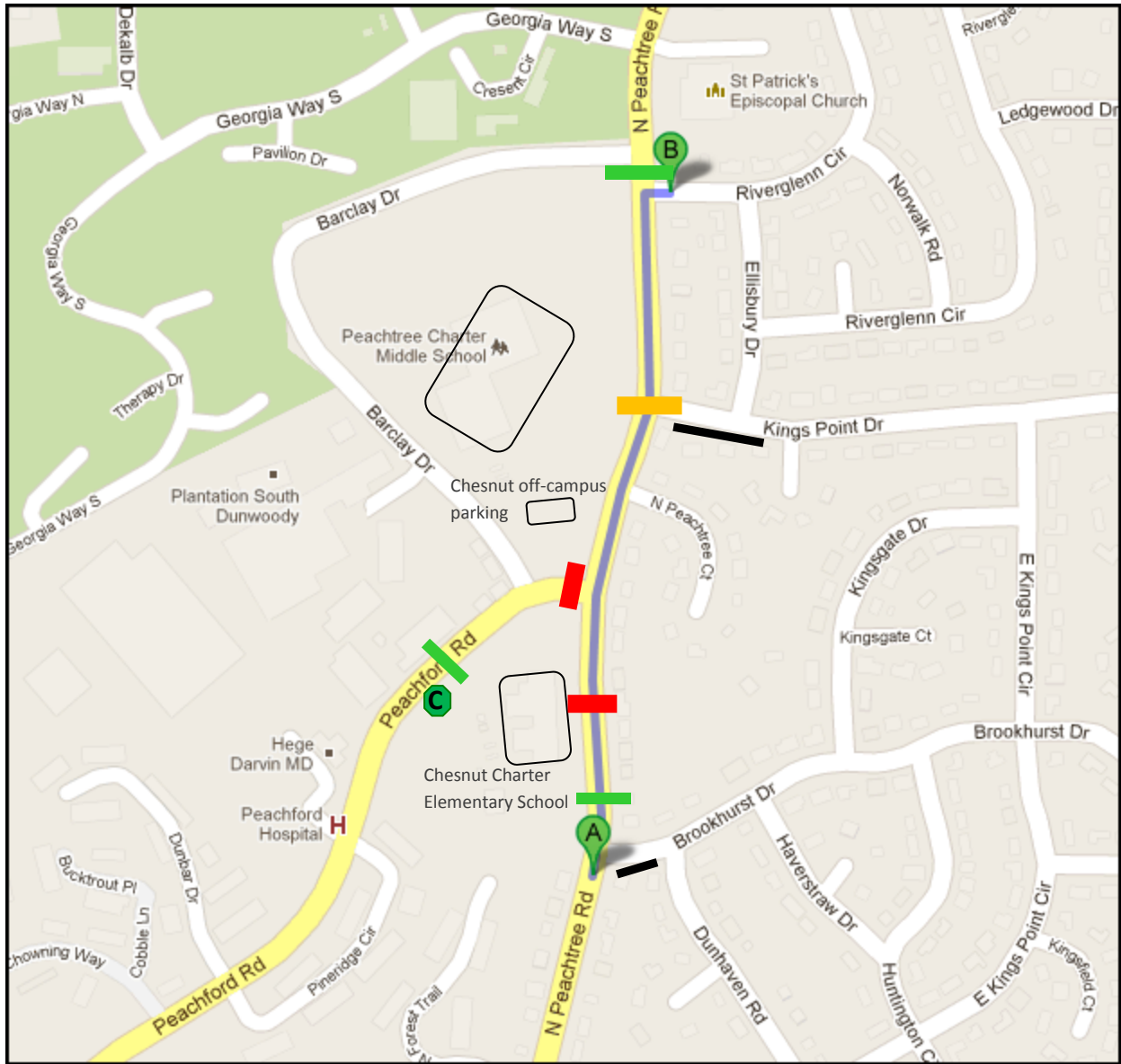
We respectfully urge you to take swift action on these items, which are critical to help keep children safe on the way to and from our schools.






Melissa Marion-Landais
Chair, Chesnut Charter Council, 2012-13

Ann Laffoon
Chair, Chesnut PTA, 2012-13

Allegra Johnson
Chair, Peachtree Charter MS Parent Teacher Council, 2012-13

cc: Veronica Williams, Principal, Chesnut Charter ES
Scott Heptinstall, Principal, Peachtree Charter MS



Symbol	Description
	Existing school zone signs
	HAWK crossing system
	25 mph radar signs, with flashing lights
	School crossing sign from traffic arm, with flashing lights
	one-sided 'No Parking' on residential streets