



Oakland Mills Community Association
The Other Barn • 5851 Robert Oliver Place
Columbia, MD 21045
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December 3, 2020

Dr. Opel Jones, HC Council District 2
Ms. Christiana Rigby, HC Council District 3
3430 Courthouse Road
Ellicott City, MD 21043

Dear Dr. Jones and Ms. Rigby,

The Oakland Mills Board would like to bring a serious issue to your attention. It involves reckless driving and increased speeds on local county and state roads. While we know that state roads are not under your jurisdiction, much of the reckless driving is on county roads.

This summer, residents and board members began observing vehicles driving at extremely high rates of speeds. The sound of racing cars is audible from residents' backyards in our neighborhoods, and many have witnessed this first-hand while driving. The roadways that impact our community (Dist. 2 and Dist. 3), include but are not limited to, Route 175 between Tamar Drive and Thunder Hill Road, Snowden River Parkway, Broken Land Parkway, Route 29, and Route 108.

Residents have taken to social media and discussed the situation at length. The Oakland Mills Board discussed the issue at our two most recent board meetings. Oakland Mills resident Jim Alvey has been in contact with HCPD Lt. Francis and Cpl. Lopez. Both officers have been helpful and are aware of the increase in reckless driving. Alarming as it may sound, Mr. Alvey informed us that HCPD officers, in an attempt to pull drivers over, have been surrounded and taunted by these individuals. This is extremely concerning to say the least. The situation is getting worse; serious and fatal accidents will occur.

HCPD Officers have three important suggestions, which are the **use of speed cameras** to identify speeding vehicles; **increased traffic enforcement**; and **encouraging residents to write down and report license plate numbers** of speeding vehicles.

Our "ask" of you is to investigate the laws relating to speed camera enforcement in Howard County. Currently speed cameras are used at school zones. If laws that need to be enacted or amended, then we ask that you begin with legislation allowing for speed camera enforcement on county roads. The technology is in place in many areas for this to occur without delay once legislation is passed. We will continue to work with HCPD for increased enforcement and resources to bring this situation under control. County residents will need to know what is safely within their rights regarding the reporting of reckless driving.

Attached is an excerpt from an email Mr. Alvey received after reporting a license plate number of a car that was traveling at a high rate of speed. The email from Carla James, HCPD, outlines interesting facts which are important to share.

As stated, this is a county-wide problem with an immediate impact on our community. Please feel free to contact me to discuss this further. This problem is extremely concerning and poses an immediate safety issue for everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon L. Edelson", is placed over a light blue rectangular background.

Jonathan L. Edelson, Chair
Oakland Mills Board of Directors

cc: HCPD Traffic Enforcement Division

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Facts pertaining to reports of speeding/reckless driving from HCPD.

I was contacted by Carla James, HCPD, who collected further details prior to sending a letter to the vehicle owner. Ms. James told me some interesting facts including the following:

500 average monthly calls to the HoCo Police non-emergency hot line about speeding and reckless driving

50-60 average monthly letters written to vehicle owners regarding their reckless driving

440-460 reckless drivers that get away without any consequences because the reporting resident did not have the license plate information or other important information regarding the issue

Ms. James said that the average numbers have stayed consistent during Covid-19, despite the fact that there are less vehicles on the road due to more people working virtually.

She also read the letter to me (leaving out the vehicle drivers name). It basically says "you have been observed driving in a reckless manner on this date and time on this road. Should your vehicle be involved in further illegal activity there will be relevant consequences." It also says that the Howard County Police cannot verify this information, as it was not observed by a police officer..... So, in effect it is fairly weak but it does give drivers insight that they are being observed as reckless.

She told me that she gets a high percentage of calls saying that they were not guilty even though there was no penalty assessed. She has also gotten calls to apologize and one mother who requested that a letter be sent to her son