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Making metro Atlanta safe and accessible for all pedestrians

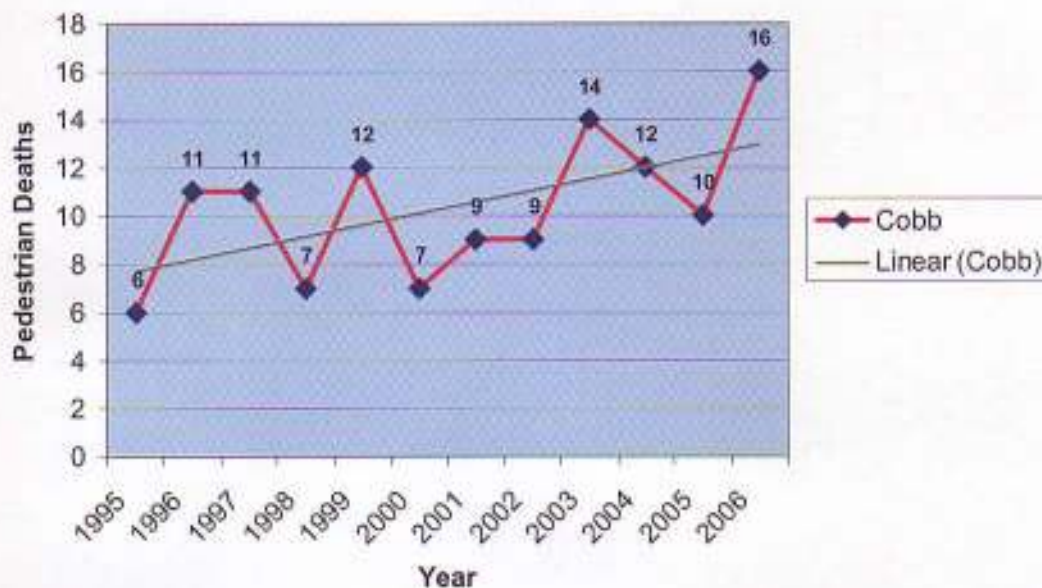
September 28, 2007

David Montanye, Director
Cobb County Department of Transportation
1890 County Services Pkwy
Marietta, GA 30008

Dear Mr. Montanye,

PEDS, which is partnering with the Governor's Office of Highway Safety to increase pedestrian safety in metro Atlanta, is alarmed by the rising number of pedestrian fatalities in Cobb County. In 2006, 16 pedestrians were killed, which is 60 percent higher than the average for the previous 11 years.

Cobb County Pedestrian Fatalities 1995 - 2006



The increases in density and transit use in Cobb County during the past decade have generated increased pedestrian traffic. To accommodate this, the county needs to provide safe pedestrian crossings on arterial streets, particularly on transit routes. I am writing to encourage you to consider installing median refuge islands, which can be a low-cost solution to a problem facing pedestrians in many locations in Cobb County.

The enclosed altered photographs show how a median island could be used on Powder Springs Road near Booth Road and on South Cobb Drive near Dink Lane to enable pedestrians to cross more safely. The Atlanta Regional Commission identified these areas as among the county's worst pedestrian crash zones, though many other locations would benefit from similar treatments.

Below are aerial views of both locations. With Cobb County Transit service and no marked crosswalks in sight, these multi-lane arterial represents a typical danger zone for pedestrians.



Powder Springs Road near Booth Road



South Cobb Drive near Dink Lane

Multi-lane streets are especially dangerous for pedestrians. The absence of pedestrian facilities forces people on foot to engage in risky behavior, such as attempting to use the two-way center turn lane as a refuge. Pedestrian attempts to judge vehicle speed and distance while crossing five lanes of high-speed traffic are imperfect and sometimes deadly.

Simple, inexpensive, concrete medians make crossing the roadway dramatically safer for pedestrians, even where no crosswalks are marked. Medians enable pedestrians to:

- focus on only one direction of traffic at a time,
- cross in two stages, which requires shorter gaps in traffic than waiting to get a gap in both directions
- have a safe refuge in the middle of the road, with no risk from turning cars, and
- be more visible to drivers while having a better view of oncoming traffic.

PEDS encourages the Cobb Department of Transportation to help reduce pedestrian injuries and fatalities by installing median refuge islands on multi-lane roads near bus stops and other locations important to pedestrians. Although many arterial roads were developed as rural highways, it's time they evolve to meet the needs of all users. Transit users and other pedestrians need and deserve to cross the street safely.

I will call you next week to answer any questions you might have.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Orta".

Michael Orta
Program Manager
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Cc: Bob Galante, Engineering, Cobb County Department of Transportation
Dan Conn, City Engineer, City of Marietta Public Works