



## **Government of the District of Columbia Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B**

*By Electronic Mail*

September 23, 2024

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Ed Tippett, District Manager  
Safeway, District 85  
Division 35, Store 1276  
[etippett@safeway.com](mailto:etippett@safeway.com)

RE: Detailing Pedestrian Access and Pedestrian Safety Challenges and Requests for Improvements at Safeway (6500 Piney Branch Road, NW)

Dear Mr. Backus, Mr. Lofland, and Mr. Tippett:

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B, at a duly noticed public meeting, with a quorum being the “majority of the total number of commissioner positions currently filled in Commission 4B,” at its September 23, 2024, meeting voted with \_ Yeas, \_ Nays, and \_ Abstentions to send this letter detailing pedestrian access and pedestrian safety challenges and requests for improvement at the Safeway located at 6500 Piney Branch Road, NW (Division 35, Store 1276). The property is located within Single Member District 4B02 (and was previously located within Single Member District 4B03 prior to redistricting). Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B’s

Vision Zero Committee considered and provided feedback on this letter at the Committee's September 18, 2024, meeting.

**The property raises a number of pedestrian access and pedestrian safety issue on the store grounds** (see attached pictures). The store includes a large parking lot with driver entrances on Van Buren Street, NW, Piney Branch Road, NW, and Underwood Street, NW. The only designated and complete pedestrian access is from Georgia Avenue, NW. Although both Van Buren Street, NW, and Piney Branch, NW, are residential roads, there is only partial and almost always obstructed pedestrian access from Van Buren Street, NW, and no designated pedestrian access from Piney Branch Road, NW.

In addition, wide curb cuts that exceed one lane of ingress and egress to and from the store at Van Buren Street, NW, and Piney Branch, NW, encourage dangerous driving, vehicle conflicts as drivers enter and leave the store, and use of the parking lot as a cut through to avoid the intersection at Van Buren Street, NW, and Piney Branch Road, NW. Bushes surrounding the property worsen the problem by restricting sight lines at locations that are already dangerous for pedestrians.

These approaches raise additional accessibility concerns, as there is no sidewalk ramp at the entryway to the store from these entrances and bulk items and store equipment are often lining and blocking the entryway from this approach, requiring pedestrians to walk even further through travel lanes to reach an accessible entrance to the store. The Fire Lane / No Parking striping in front of the store is often disregarded, including vehicles that stand and park blocking the sidewalk entryway ramps that provide what accessibility is available. See attached photos.

The Commissioner for Single Member District 4B02 and residents have regularly communicated with management and staff at the store about these pedestrian access and pedestrian safety concerns. For example:

- The Commissioner for Single Member District 4B02 met with the District Manager and the Store Director on April 12, 2023, to discuss a number of issues raised by neighbors with regard to the store, including pedestrian access and pedestrian safety. The District Manager mentioned the possibility of painting crosswalks on the store property for better pedestrian access.
- On April 7, 2024, the Commissioner for Single Member District 4B02 emailed the District Manager and copied the Co-Chairs of the Commission's Vision Zero Committee, noting: "I've highlighted before that there is no pedestrian access to the store from Piney Branch, Van Buren, or Underwood - only from Georgia Avenue, which is not residential. I know many neighbors enter walking from Piney Branch, and it's treacherous. I almost get hit by a car every time, and I come to the store almost daily .... Is there anything that can be installed for pedestrian access, particularly along Piney Branch Road, NW? Some sort of sidewalk and/or crosswalk would be amazing. Hardening the median of that entrance/exit with concrete would also be valuable because drivers entering and exiting use the entire wide space and it's very dangerous. A speed hump is another

option. (And while there is eventually a sidewalk on that side right in front of the store, it's often blocked with merchandise, tables, vendors, etc. and the curb ramp is usually blocked by cars, creating accessibility concerns.)”

- On July 9, 2024, the Commissioner for Single Member District 4B02 emailed the District Manager: “I wanted to mention again the **pedestrian access and safety issue for pedestrians entering from Piney Branch and Van Buren** (attached email). Can you let me know if anything can be done to make entry safer for pedestrians (concrete medians at entrances / exists, crosswalks, sidewalks or even painted paths from the sidewalk to the entrance)? The store's design is very clearly geared toward drivers, but I know so many who walk over to shop and would appreciate a safer experience.”
- And on August 14, 2024, the Commissioner for Single Member District 4B02 emailed the District Manager: “With regard to the traffic safety issues, I am specifically speaking about Safeway property. (You had mentioned when we met in person painting a crosswalk/pedestrian path within the parking lot.) There are painted markings like medians at both the Piney Branch and Van Buren entrances that could be made actual medians so that cars go in and out in the correct lanes, which would also reduce cars using those entrances and exits as cut-throughs. In addition, there could be some sort of pathway from both entrances to the store - as currently there is no safe pedestrian access from either Piney Branch or Van Buren.”

The Commission requests Safeway's consideration and implementation of the following suggestions to improve pedestrian access and pedestrian safety at the store located at 6500 Piney Branch Road, NW.

- **Concrete medians on Safeway's property at the driver entrances on Piney Branch Road, NW, and Van Buren Street, NW.** There are currently faded painted median markings. Concrete medians would ensure drivers approach the entrances more slowly and better direct traffic to prevent vehicle and pedestrian conflicts.
- **Concrete or painted pedestrian pathways on Safeway's property from Piney Branch Road, NW, and Van Buren Street, NW, to the store's entrance.** As noted, there is no dedicated and complete pedestrian access from either of these streets. Pedestrian safety would improve greatly with more clearly demarcated pedestrian passage. In addition, the partial sidewalk entry from Van Buren Street, NW, is almost always blocked with Safeway trash and other materials and should be kept clear.
- **Installation of a curb ramp on the east side of Safeway's entryway.** Pedestrians have no accessible entrance from the east side of the store and must use sidewalk ramps in front of the store that are often blocked by vehicles. In addition, keeping the entryway clear of bulk items for accessibility from this approach is essential.
- **Installation of speed humps on Safeway's property between the driver entrances on Piney Branch Road, NW, and Van Buren Street, NW.** Drivers regularly cut through

these entrances to avoid the intersection at Van Buren Street, NW, and Piney Branch Road, NW. A well placed speed hump or humps would prevent cut through traffic.

- **Action to prevent illegal commercial vehicle parking on store property and parking in the No Parking / Fire Lane area in front of the store.** Non-Safeway affiliated commercial vehicles (e.g., large trucks with construction and lawn equipment and materials) regularly park on the lot – specifically in the corner at Van Buren Street, NW, and Piney Branch Road, NW, for extended periods of time. These vehicles impede driver and pedestrian sight lines. In addition, they appear to engage in (or at a minimum encourage) extensive construction and hazardous material dumping, which is regularly collected from the edges of Safeway’s property via monthly community cleanups. In addition, parking in the No Parking / Fire Lane in front of the store impedes the already limited accessible pedestrian entrances.
- **Trimming or removal of bushes on Safeway’s property surrounding the parking lot, particularly near the vehicle entrances on Piney Branch Road, NW, and Van Buren Street, NW.** Bushes surrounding the store impede driver and pedestrian sight lines and worsen pedestrian safety challenges. In addition, these bushes seem to invite dumping, including dumping of construction materials, electronics, and hazardous waste. While Safeway has been responsive on the issue of litter and periodically trimming the bushes, the problem persists and is severe.

Safeway is a neighborhood amenity. Neighbors regularly shop at the store, including many neighbors who walk from the surrounding area. The Commission appreciates consideration and implementation of all possible action to improve pedestrian access and pedestrian safety on the store grounds.

The Commission has voted with \_ Yeas, \_ Nays, and \_ Abstentions to appoint the Commissioner for Single Member District 4B02, Erin Palmer; the Commissioner for Single Member District 4B04, Evan Yeats; the Commissioner for Single Member District 4B08, Alison Brooks; and the Commissioner for Single Member District 4B03, Zurick T. Smith, to be authorized to communicate this letter and represent Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B in communication with you or any DC government entity regarding this matter. The aforementioned Commissioners request a response to this letter providing actions Safeway intends to take to improve pedestrian access and pedestrian safety by October 23, 2024, and would be happy to speak with store representatives about this letter at their convenience.

Sincerely,

Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02 Commissioner  
Evan Yeats, ANC 4B04 Commissioner  
Alison Brooks, ANC 4B08 Commissioner  
Zurick T. Smith, ANC 4B03 Commissioner

cc: Councilmember Janeese Lewis George, Ward 4  
Emily Cassometus, Senior Counsel, Office of Councilmember Janeese Lewis George

Councilmember Anita Bonds, At-Large  
Julia Hudson, Chief of Staff, Office of Councilmember Anita Bonds

Councilmember Christina Henderson, At-Large  
Mike Shaffer, Chief of Staff, Office of Councilmember Christina Henderson

Councilmember Kenyan R. McDuffie, At-Large  
Derron Parks, Chief of Staff, Office of Councilmember Kenyan R. McDuffie

Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr., At-Large  
Angela Fowlkes, Chief of Staff, Office of Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr.

Enclosures

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