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New Study Finds 62 Pedestrian & Cyclist Deaths and Serious Injuries on Richmond Highway, Fairfax County, Over 9 Years

NoVA Families for Safe Streets Releases Comprehensive KSI Analysis, Urging Immediate Action on Lighting, Crosswalks, and BRT Safety

FAIRFAX, VA — Northern Virginia Families for Safe Streets (NoVA FSS) today published a comprehensive analysis of Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) crashes along the Richmond Highway (aka Rt 1) corridor in Fairfax County, Virginia. The report — covering February 2017 through December 2025 — documents 62 KSI crashes involving pedestrians and cyclists along the ~14-mile corridor, resulting in 22 fatalities and 40 serious injuries. The findings paint an alarming picture of a corridor in crisis and call for urgent, coordinated action by local, state, and transit authorities.

“The Richmond Highway corridor is a concentrated and consistent pedestrian safety crisis. These crashes are not randomly distributed — they cluster in predictable locations shaped by inadequate lighting, incomplete crosswalk infrastructure, alcohol exposure, and high pedestrian activity among vulnerable populations.”

— NoVA FSS Report Conclusion, May 2026

Key Findings

Nighttime conditions are the dominant risk factor. Fully 77% of all KSI crashes and 95% of fatalities occurred in darkness. Over half of all nighttime crashes happened on road segments that were officially lighted, suggesting that existing street lighting is inadequate. The five top-priority crash sites are located between 203 and 845 feet from the nearest mapped streetlight.

Annual crashes are rising, not falling. KSI incidents grew from 3 in 2018 to 11 in 2024 (~ a fourfold increase) indicating that conditions along the corridor remain dangerous with the existing infrastructure. 2025 had 3 fatalities and 4 SIs, still unacceptable numbers.

Alcohol involvement is pervasive and worsening. Alcohol was a factor in 47% of all KSIs corridor wide. Post-COVID, the alcohol involvement rate rose sharply from 35% to over 51%. The Richmond Hwy & Huntington Ave intersection recorded an 80% alcohol KSI rate, with proximity to motels, a Virginia ABC store, and the Eleanor U. Kennedy Shelter identified as factors. An in-depth social scientific study is recommended to better determine the cause & effect of these factors.

Inadequate crosswalk infrastructure and mid-block crossings are driving fatalities. Approximately 65% of KSIs and 82% of fatalities occurred outside a marked crosswalk or intersection. 58% of crashes happened within 200 feet of a bus stop, where pedestrians frequently cross mid-block rather than walk to distant controlled crossings. Several key

intersections require two to three times for a person to walk in crosswalks to reach the opposite side because the intersection has only 3 crosswalks, not a 4th, more direct passage to cross the road.

Vulnerable communities bear a disproportionate burden. The 6.6-mile segment between Belvoir Road and South Kings Highway accounts for 58% of all KSIs, including 10 fatalities and 26 serious injuries. This stretch carries a Vulnerability Index score of 4.5 (Very High), with residents facing severe rent burden, limited English proficiency, low vehicle ownership, and heavy transit dependence.

Proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) may increase risk without more targeted safety measures. Two proposed BRT stops on Section 1 are adjacent to existing KSI crash clusters. Separated bike lanes and sidewalks will allow for safer multimodal options. Current BRT designs use landscaped medians without physical pedestrian barriers, and several planned stop locations lack complete crosswalk coverage. NoVA FSS urges a dedicated pedestrian safety assessment before construction begins.

Recommendations

NoVA FSS is calling on Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Fairfax County DOT, WMATA, Fairfax County Health Department and Fairfax County Public Works & Environmental Services Department to take immediate action: conduct field inspections and install upgraded lighting at the five highest-priority crash sites; redesign bus stop intersections at Backlick/Pohick Road, Huntington Avenue, Lockheed Boulevard, and Beacon Hill Road to provide direct, single-crossing pedestrian access; initiate a social scientific study about factors behind alcohol related KSIs and, if appropriate, deploy alcohol awareness outreach near key hotspots; install pedestrian refuge islands and HAWK signals at high-volume mid-block crossing locations, and install speed feedback signs as well as **speed safety cameras** (after Fairfax County authorizes). VDOT should also incorporate better data on driver's speeding and distracted driving behavior. Longer-term, the report calls for an equity-focused pedestrian safety investment plan for the most vulnerable corridor segment and an annual public KSI monitoring & reporting.

About Northern Virginia Families for Safe Streets

NoVA FSS is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization of concerned citizens and data-analytical students dedicated to improving pedestrian and cyclist safety in Northern Virginia. The KSI Richmond Hwy analysis was prepared by Ariana Thapa, Qinglong (Derick) Ma, Shuo Qin, Greeshma Priya Pendyala, John Deng, and Nazim Malwan, using crash data from the VDOT Traffic Record Electronic Data System (TREDS) via the VDOT Crash Analysis Tool, plus streetlights, bus stop locations, etc. from Fairfax County.

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Full report can be accessed here: [Richomnd-Hwy KSI-Analysis NoVA-FSS May-2026](#)

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