

ATTACHMENT B: MAIN COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Since sharing the draft design, policy, and programming recommendations with the community in July, Montgomery Planning Staff have received many helpful comments and suggestions for ways to improve the recommendations. The following section highlights the main issues raised and how Planning Staff intends to address them.

COMMENT #1: LIMIT NOISE

Loud noises can detract from the pedestrian experience in parts of the county, including noise from motor vehicles and gas-powered leaf blowers.

STAFF RESPONSE

- Study noise levels along roadways across Montgomery County, identify appropriate noise levels for different areas, and recommend approaches to reduce excessive noise.

COMMENT #2: REDUCE CONFLICTS BETWEEN PEDESTRIANS AND TURNING VEHICLES

Vehicles turning through a crosswalk is a major conflict point for pedestrians traveling in the county. To the extent possible, this conflict should be minimized.

STAFF RESPONSE

The proposed Recommendations currently attempt to mitigate this conflict through several Key Actions:

- Construct raised crossings to slow turning vehicles (B-3c).
- Make No Turn on Red the default in Downtowns and Town Centers (P-2c).
- Prioritize pedestrian crossings using Leading Pedestrian Intervals (P-2d).

Additionally, Planning Staff have identified the following measures that could be taken to address the community comment:

- Prioritize the removal of free-flowing right-turn slip lanes.
- Develop criteria for all-direction pedestrian signals (Barnes Dance).
- Develop criteria to reduce the number of permissive left turns allowed at intersections in Montgomery County.
- Minimize the use of double left- and right-turn lanes.

COMMENT #3: USE AUTOMATED ENFORCEMENT MORE EFFECTIVELY

The goal of automated enforcement in the county should be to eliminate dangerous driving behaviors, not to provide ongoing revenue to fund pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

STAFF RESPONSE

- Remove the Automated Enforcement key action in Recommendation F-1.
- Increase the number of automated traffic enforcement cameras to improve driver compliance.

COMMENT #4: PROVIDE ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

The plan's education recommendations should be broader in scope, target more audiences, and provide resources for community members to practice traffic safety.

STAFF RESPONSE

The proposed Recommendations currently address education through several Key Actions:

- Develop legislation to improve the driver's license renewal process by implementing a knowledge test requirement (P-1e).
- Conduct pedestrian and bicycle safety educational programs in partnership with agencies such as Montgomery County Public Libraries, Montgomery County Public Schools, and Montgomery County Recreation (P-5a).
- Shift the programming and education elements of the county's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program to Montgomery County Public Schools and create SRTS initiatives, including pedestrian/bicycle education, in individual schools (P-5b).

Additionally, Planning Staff have identified the following measures that could be taken to address the community comment:

- Develop plan to construct "Traffic Gardens" – small-scale street grids with roadway features like signals and stop signs designed to educate young people about traffic safety – countywide at libraries, parks, and schools.
- Emphasize importance of non-English language pedestrian safety education.

COMMENT #5: INCREASE SIGNAL ACCESSIBILITY

Additional measures should be taken to ensure that pedestrians with low or no vision can take advantage of Leading Pedestrian Intervals and other approaches to providing pedestrians dedicated time to cross the street.

STAFF RESPONSE

The proposed Recommendations currently address improved signal accessibility through several Key Actions:

- Identify and modify Accessible Pedestrian Signals/Pedestrian Push Buttons in the county that are incorrectly installed or are inaccessible to wheelchair users (EA-4a).

Additionally, Planning Staff have identified the following measures that could be taken to address the community comment:

- Ensure that Accessible Pedestrian Signals provide an audible signal at the beginning of a Leading Pedestrian Interval so pedestrians with low or no vision can benefit from pedestrian priority.
- Clarify that even with pedestrian recall active, Accessible Pedestrian Signal features (locator tone, audible/vibrotactile walk indication, etc.) will continue to function.

COMMENT #6: IMPROVE ROADWAY SIGNAGE AND STRIPING

There are opportunities to use roadway signage and striping to provide drivers and pedestrians more information about conflict points, leading to improved visibility and safer outcomes.

STAFF RESPONSE

- Use dashed centerline striping at locations where a major roadway crosses an uncontrolled intersection.
- Ensure stop bars are installed an appropriate distance behind both marked and unmarked crosswalks at all stop-controlled and signalized intersections.

COMMENT #7: PROTECT PEDESTRIANS FROM MOTOR VEHICLE CRASHES

Roadway design should be forgiving when people make mistakes, but pedestrians should not be endangered by design that is forgiving for drivers.

STAFF RESPONSE

- Ensure all guardrails along roadways with sidewalks are between the sidewalk and the roadway. Consider installing additional curbside guardrails at locations where vehicles are more likely to enter the sidewalk.
- Eliminate breakaway traffic signal and street light posts along sidewalks.

COMMENT #8: OFFER MORE STREETScape AMENITIES

Beyond benches and public restrooms, additional features should be provided to improve the pedestrian experience.

STAFF RESPONSE

The proposed Recommendations address streetscape amenities through two Key Actions:

- Provide public seating in Downtowns, Town Centers, and along Boulevards (B-4h).
- Develop and implement a plan to provide public restrooms throughout the county in areas with high pedestrian activity (B-11a).

Additionally, Planning Staff have identified the following measure that could be taken to address the community comment:

- Update the public seating recommendation (B-4h) to include public water fountains and additional trash receptacles.

COMMENT #9: ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

The transition to electric vehicles is essential for the County to make progress on achieving its Climate Action Plan goals, but the need to charge these vehicles curbside can create accessibility challenges for people using adjacent sidewalks.

STAFF RESPONSE

- Develop design standards for curbside electric vehicle charging that prioritize accessible pedestrian travel along the adjacent sidewalk.