

Montgomery Planning

PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN DRAFT DESIGN, POLICY AND PROGRAMMING RECOMMENDATIONS REVIEW



Description

Review the Pedestrian Master Plan draft Design, Policy, and Programming Recommendations and provide feedback to Montgomery Planning Staff.



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MASTER PLAN INFORMATION

Draft

Report to Planning Board

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SUMMARY

This document contains the following information:

- An introduction providing the draft design, policy, and programming recommendation context
- A high-level description of how the draft design, policy, and programming recommendations are organized
- A summary of ongoing community engagement efforts
- A project schedule
- Project next steps
- Attachments including:
 - Complete Draft Design, Policy, and Programming Recommendations
 - Main Community Comments
 - Montgomery County Department of Transportation Recommendation Comments

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INTRODUCTION

This staff report summarizes the Pedestrian Master Plan Draft Design, Policy, and Programming Recommendations (“the Recommendations”). The complete Recommendations are in Attachment A. The Recommendations are informed by the March 2022 [Pedestrian Master Plan Existing Conditions Report](#), which provided a deep understanding of existing pedestrian conditions and attitudes in the county and was based on four main data sources:

- A statistically valid **pedestrian survey** that documents pedestrian activity and perceptions for the county as a whole and for different land-use types, sent to 60,000 households;
- A **student travel tally** that describes how public school students arrive to and depart from school, completed by over 70,000 students;
- A **comfortable pedestrian connectivity analysis** cataloging pedestrian conditions along the entirety of the pedestrian transportation network in Montgomery County; and
- A **2015-2020 pedestrian crash analysis** identifying trends in pedestrian crashes.

While pedestrian comfort and safety need to be improved throughout the county, particular areas of focus emerged from the *Pedestrian Master Plan Existing Conditions Report* and are organized around the plan’s four goals:

- **Goal 1: Increase Walking Rates and Walking Satisfaction in Montgomery County:** Address issues pedestrians with disabilities encounter, improve pedestrian satisfaction along streets, and improve pedestrian satisfaction at crossings.
- **Goal 2: Create a Comfortable, Connected, Convenient Pedestrian Network in Montgomery County:** Fill sidewalk gaps, prioritize street buffers on high-speed streets, provide pedestrian

refuges, focus on crossing improvements, improve comfortable access to elementary schools, and prioritize safer crossings to parks.

- **Goal 3: Enhance Pedestrian Safety:** Reduce high-speed pedestrian crashes, address safety disparities, improve lighting, and communicate permitted pedestrian activity.
- **Goal 4: Build an Equitable and Just Pedestrian Network:** Address the above findings in a way that meets the needs of the entire community.

The Recommendations also respond to the anecdotes and observations collected from community members over the past three years.

When implemented, these recommendations will not necessarily change the county's pedestrian environment in the near-term, but as sidewalks are reconstructed, intersections are reimaged, lighting is replaced and new development is built, the approaches, designs, and practices contained in the recommendations will lead to a more pedestrian-friendly Montgomery County.

RECOMMENDATION CONTEXT

The Recommendations are one component of a broader set of Pedestrian Master Plan recommendations still in development, which include the following topics:

- **Design, Policy, and Programming Recommendations**

These include the high-level, systemic recommendations that are the subject of this briefing.

- **Pedestrian Infrastructure Prioritization**

The Pedestrian Master Plan will recommend a data-driven approach to prioritizing pedestrian capital improvement projects based on equity, comfortable access, safety and other metrics.

- **Pedestrian Shortcut Locations**

The Plan will recommend pedestrian connections that will shorten pedestrian trips to be constructed through capital projects or private development.

- **Country Sidepath Locations**

The Pedestrian Master Plan will include recommendations for sidepaths—shared pedestrian and bicycle pathways—along roadways in the more rural parts of the county, in line with guidance in the Complete Streets Design Guide.

- **Complete Streets Design Guide Area Technical Translation**

The Plan will make recommendations to advance the transition from the old Road Code area type classifications (Urban, Suburban, Rural) to the Complete Streets Design Guide area type classifications (Downtown, Town Center, Suburban, Industrial, Country), as discussed by the Planning Board on September 15, 2022.

DRAFT DESIGN, POLICY AND PROGRAMMING RECOMMENDATIONS

The draft Recommendations are organized around six themes:

- **Build**
Identify opportunities to build pedestrian amenities better, faster, safer, and more equitably.
- **Maintain**
Clarify existing regulations and propose changes to how the county and private property owners care for sidewalks, pathways, and other pedestrian spaces so that these public investments can provide a high quality of service for everyone for years to come.
- **Protect**
Make walking safe in Montgomery County and eliminate walking-related fatalities and severe injuries to further the county's implementation of Vision Zero.
- **Expand Access**
Make the pedestrian system more accessible to people with disabilities, as the pedestrian environment can be difficult or impossible for some members of the community to use.
- **Monitor**
Track the county's progress in achieving the plan's vision and identify opportunities to improve the quality of pedestrian data collection.
- **Fund**
Develop additional potential revenue sources to fund the Pedestrian Master Plan vision.

There are 34 recommendations across these six themes, and within those recommendations are 94 key actions—more specific changes that achieve the recommendation intent. The Recommendations and key actions are in Attachment A of this staff report. A summary of the community feedback received to date (and how Planning Staff intend to address it) is Attachment B. A memorandum with Montgomery County Department of Transportation comments is Attachment C.

ONGOING ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS

The Pedestrian Master Plan team continues to meet with groups across the county to share the Recommendations and listen to feedback. To date, Planning Staff have hosted or scheduled virtual or in-person meetings with:

- Greater Olney Civic Association, 7/12/2022
- Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board, 7/18/2022
- Wheaton Ad-hoc Pedestrian Safety Interest Group, 7/20/2022

- Pedestrian Master Plan Community Advisory Group, 7/26/2022
- Pedestrian, Bicycle, Traffic Safety Advisory Committee, 7/28/2022
- Action Committee for Transit, 8/9/2022
- Getting Around the County, 8/9/2022
- Sligo Branview Community Association, 8/18/2022
- Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board, 9/12/2022
- Commission on People with Disabilities, 9/14/2022
- Midcounty Citizens Advisory Board, 9/15/2022
- Commission on Veterans Affairs, 9/20/2022
- Town of Kensington, 10/13/2022
- American Council of the Blind, 10/20/2022
- Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board, forthcoming
- East County Citizens Advisory Board, forthcoming

In addition to continued presentations to community groups, interest groups, regional services center citizens advisory boards, and others, Planning Staff have developed several unique engagement approaches to gather input for this stage and future stages of the Pedestrian Master Plan.

BUS WRAPS AND BUS SHELTER ADVERTISEMENTS

The Pedestrian Master Plan team worked to develop promotional content for bus shelters and routes serving Equity Focus Areas.¹ The example shown below highlights a draft recommendation and invites the viewer to learn more and provide feedback on the project website.

¹ Equity Focus Areas are parts of Montgomery County that are characterized by high concentrations of lower-income people of color, who may also speak English less than very well. Approximately 26.5 percent of the county's population lives within Equity Focus Areas.

Recommendations are currently being advertised at ten bus shelters and on 30 RideOn buses.



A Pedestrian Master Plan recommendation advertised on a RideOn bus

PROMOTION IN MONTGOMERY PARKS

Similarly, the Pedestrian Master Plan team has worked closely with Montgomery Parks to promote the draft recommendations at 53 parks located in Equity Focus Areas across the county. Signage was installed at locations with high foot traffic within these parks and provides information about several different draft recommendations in either English, Spanish or Mandarin.

Each sign invites the public to text a phone number if the recommendation on the sign is important to them. Text feedback is cataloged, and everyone who interacts with these signs is provided the project website link to further explore the draft recommendations.

In addition to Montgomery Planning’s Communications Division, this effort would not have been possible without the thoughtful, diligent efforts of the Montgomery Parks operations staff. The Pedestrian Master Plan team looks forward to future collaboration on other engagement efforts.



A sign in Mandarin highlighting the draft recommendation about shade

ONLINE PRIORITIZATION ACTIVITY

As indicated above, the Pedestrian Master Plan will prioritize locations where pedestrian capital improvements should be targeted, based on a number of factors. This prioritization is intended to guide the county’s Capital Improvement Program investments to those areas with the greatest need.

The Pedestrian Master Plan team developed an interactive prioritization tool to solicit feedback from the public about the factors that are the most important when it comes to prioritizing where to invest in pedestrian infrastructure. The prioritization tool was developed with the Communications and ITI divisions and can be found at montgomeryplanning.org/planning/transportation/pedestrian-planning/pedestrian-master-plan/prioritizing-pedestrian-improvements/

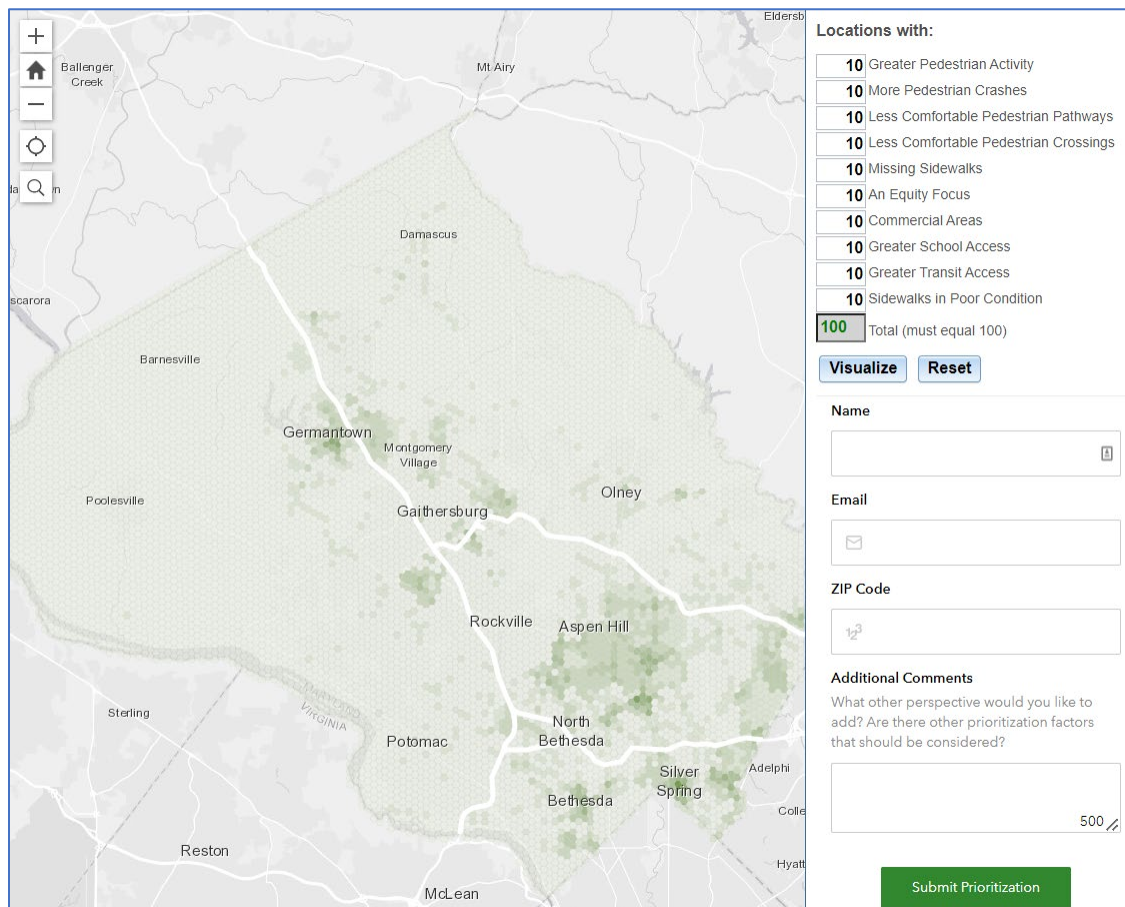
To share feedback, users are asked to allocate 100 points among the following prioritization factors, assigning more points to those factors they think should be given more consideration when setting priorities:

- **Greater pedestrian activity:** Places where more people are walking today, based on a model developed by Montgomery Planning’s Predictive Safety Analysis

- **More pedestrian crashes:** Places where the most crashes that harm pedestrians take place based on police crash reports
- **Less comfortable pedestrian pathways:** Places with more pathways (sidewalks, trails, or streets without sidewalks) that score as Undesirable in the Pedestrian Level of Comfort analysis (e.g. narrow/missing sidewalks, sidewalks adjacent to high speed roads with narrow or missing street buffers, etc.)
- **Less comfortable pedestrian crossings:** Places with more street-crossing locations that score as Undesirable in the Pedestrian Level of Comfort analysis (e.g., four to six lanes of high-speed traffic to cross, no traffic signal or stop sign to enable crossing, etc.)
- **Missing sidewalks:** Places with more gaps in sidewalk coverage along non-residential streets
- **An Equity Focus:** Places identified by Montgomery Planning as having high concentrations of lower-income people of color, who may also speak English less than very well
- **Commercial areas:** Places that meet the definition of Downtowns or Town Centers in the county's Complete Streets Design Guide
- **Greater school access:** Places where more people can walk to a Montgomery County Public School
- **Greater transit access:** Places where more people can walk to a WMATA Metrorail station, MARC station, planned Purple Line station, or Bus Rapid Transit station
- **Sidewalks in poor condition:** Places where a county survey found that inaccessible, broken sidewalks are more common

After assigning all 100 points, the user can visualize on a map where their prioritizes would target pedestrian improvements in the county. Darker green areas of the map are those that are higher priority.

Additional adjustments can be made to the prioritization if desired. Once the user is satisfied with the results, they submit their preferred factor scoring to the Pedestrian Master Plan team.



Locations with:

10	Greater Pedestrian Activity
10	More Pedestrian Crashes
10	Less Comfortable Pedestrian Pathways
10	Less Comfortable Pedestrian Crossings
10	Missing Sidewalks
10	An Equity Focus
10	Commercial Areas
10	Greater School Access
10	Greater Transit Access
10	Sidewalks in Poor Condition
100	Total (must equal 100)

Visualize **Reset**

Name

Email

ZIP Code

Additional Comments
 What other perspective would you like to add? Are there other prioritization factors that should be considered?

Submit Prioritization

Prioritization activity with Map Visualization

Ultimately, Planning Staff will review the community's priorities when developing the plan prioritization recommendations.

The tool highlights how data plays a role in making prioritization decisions. This tool was developed specifically for this plan, but it can be adapted for future planning efforts to provide a more hands-on interactive approach to capturing stakeholder values in prioritization exercises.

The prioritization tool website was launched in the beginning of September and will be available for public use through the middle of October.

SCHEDULE

Planning Staff continue to make progress on completing the Pedestrian Master Plan. With recommendation development ongoing, the master plan team is on schedule to complete the Working Draft by the end of the year.

COMPLETED

- Task 1: Planning Board Scope of Work, completed 9/2019
- Task 2: Identify Best Practices for Pedestrian Master Plans, completed 9/2019
- Task 3: Existing Conditions Report, completed 3/2022

IN PROGRESS

- Task 4: Pedestrian Infrastructure Prioritization, completion 10/2022
- Task 5: Progressive Pedestrian Design Toolkit, completion 11/2022
- Task 6: Pedestrian-Supportive Policies, completion 11/2022
- Task 7: Pedestrian-Supportive Programming, completion 11/2022

FUTURE

- Task 8: Planning Board Review and Transmittal
 - January 2023 - May 2023
- Task 9: Council Review and Approval
 - May 2023 - November 2023

NEXT STEPS

Planning Staff will:

- Finalize draft recommendations
- Continue internal, interagency and community engagement
- Prepare the Pedestrian Master Plan Working Draft

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: Draft Design, Policy, and Programming Recommendations
- Attachment B: Main Community Comments
- Attachment C: Montgomery County Department of Transportation Recommendation Comments