

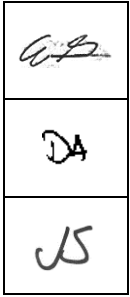
PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN

WORK SESSION #2



Description

The Planning Board will discuss public testimony on the *Pedestrian Master Plan*, both oral and written, received before the closing of the public record on April 6, 2023.



Eli Glazier, Project Lead, Countywide Planning and Policy Division

Eli.Glazier@montgomeryplanning.org, 301-495-4548

David Anspacher, Planning Supervisor, Countywide Planning and Policy Division

David.Anspacher@montgomeryplanning.org, 301-495-2191

Jason Sartori, Division Chief, Countywide Planning and Policy Division

Jason.Sartori@montgomeryplanning.org, 301-495-2172

MASTER PLAN INFORMATION

Lead Planner/Staff Contact

Eli Glazier

Eli.Glazier@montgomeryplanning.org

301-495-4548

Planning Division

Countywide Planning and Policy

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Planning Board Information

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SUMMARY

This document contains the following information:

- A description of comments and staff responses for the relevant plan sections
- An updated matrix of all received comments summarized with staff responses and recommendations

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INTRODUCTION

The Pedestrian Master Plan is Montgomery Planning's first comprehensive vision to create safer, more comfortable experiences walking or rolling around the county, and to make getting around more convenient and accessible for every pedestrian.

Pedestrian comfort walking or rolling (with a mobility device) in Montgomery County can vary greatly depending on where you are. Some roads and intersections are safer and more accessible than others. To ensure a less stressful traveling experience, the county recommended the Planning Department put together a master plan to address the issues all pedestrians face in Montgomery County.

Since work began on the Pedestrian Master Plan in fall 2019, Montgomery Planning has held numerous in-person and virtual community engagement events and activities, designed and distributed a survey to 60,000 households, and collected and analyzed commute and crash data to have a deeper understanding of the issues important to pedestrians of all backgrounds, ages, and types of mobility.

The Pedestrian Master Plan provides detailed, actionable recommendations in line with national and international best practices to improve the pedestrian experience, from more and better places to cross the street to a data-driven, equity-focused approach to identifying the county's future pedestrian/bicycle capital investments. The plan vision is supported by four goals:

- Increase walking rates and pedestrian satisfaction
- Create a comfortable, connected, convenient pedestrian network
- Enhance pedestrian safety
- Build an equitable and just pedestrian network

WORK SESSION SCHEDULE

The April 13 work session covered the following topics:

1. General Comments
2. Racial Equity and Social Justice Statement
3. Vision and Goals
4. Existing Conditions

This staff report identifies the remaining sections of the plan that will be covered in the work sessions. The April 27 work session is anticipated to begin with Topic 5 and proceed as far as time allows. If the topics are not completed on April 27, the remainder will be discussed at the May 11 work session:

5. Recommendations Chapter
 - A. Recommendations Overview
 - B. Design, Policy, and Programming Recommendations
 - C. Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Area Prioritization
 - D. Complete Streets Design Guide Area Type Designations
 - E. Pedestrian Shortcuts
 - F. Country Sidepaths
6. Implementation
7. Monitoring
8. Appendices
9. Table of Contents
10. Executive Summary
11. Introduction

Planning Board Commissioners are asked to:

- Identify any additional topics related to the Pedestrian Master Plan that they would like to discuss during the work sessions.

Throughout the work sessions, Planning staff's recommended modifications to the plan are displayed as follows:

- Underlines represent additions to the text
- Brackets represent [deletions] from the text

WORK SESSION #2 SECTIONS

5: RECOMMENDATIONS CHAPTER

A: RECOMMENDATION OVERVIEW

Design, Policy, and Programming Organization (Pages 62-127)

Reorganize the recommendations section from the Design, Policy, and Programming section of the plan to ensure the entities responsible for making changes can clearly understand what they need to do. All recommendations that would require changes to an agency's standards, policies and practices should be grouped together to make it easier for the agency to see clearly what they need to address. Such a reorganization would also help the public understand where an agency's policies adversely affect pedestrian safety and where to apply pressure to make the right thing happen.

Commenter: Larry Cole

Planning Staff Response: Disagree. Planning staff believes it is helpful to introduce the Design, Policy, and Programming recommendations and key actions thematically, but agrees that to assist in implementation, the recommendations could also be presented in a format that makes it easy for agencies to understand their responsibilities.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends adding a summary table at the beginning of the Design, Policy, and Programming recommendation section that identifies each recommendation the applicable lead and support agencies, and the plan goals the recommendation addresses. This table will be included in the Planning Board Draft plan presented to the Planning Board at the last work session.

Key Action Lead Agencies (Pages 61-62, Throughout)

Include municipalities as stakeholders in the key actions and as implementation partners.

Commenter: Town of Kensington

Planning Staff Response: Agree.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends adding "Municipalities" to the list of entities on pages 61 and 62 that will be responsible for implementing the key actions.

"Municipalities" will be identified as "Lead" partners on individual key actions as applicable. These changes will be included in the Planning Board Draft plan presented to the Planning Board at the last work session.

References to Related Efforts (Throughout)

Many of the action items identified in this plan are already in various stages of implementation within MCDOT and other Executive Agencies, as well as the Vision Zero Action Plan, such as Key Action B-1a. Where there is overlap, a connection between plans should be shown.

Planning Staff Response: Agree. There are several key actions that overlap with elements in the Vision Zero Action Plan.

Recommended Action: Because the Vision Zero Action Plan is updated every two years, Planning staff recommends updating the descriptions of the following recommendations and key actions to mention efforts in the Vision Zero Action Plan with the text: “[Related Effort: Vision Zero Action Plan](#)”:

- B-1a (Page 64)
- B-1e (Page 66)
- B-5 (Page 79)
- B-7g (Page 85)
- B-11 (Page 90)
- MA-1a (Page 91)
- MA-2d (Page 93)
- MA-3a (Page 94)
- P-1b (Page 95)
- P-2 (Page 99)
- P-2a (page 99)
- P-2b (Page 99)
- P-2g (page 102)
- P-4c (Page 104)
- P-5e (Page 108)
- P-6a (Page 108)
- P-8 (Page 112)
- EA-2 (Page 115)
- EA-2c (Page 116)
- EA-8a (Page 123)

B: DESIGN, POLICY, AND PROGRAMMING RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Action B-1a (Page 64)

In recommendation B-1a, the proposed shift from a “reactive” sidewalk project to a “proactive” sidewalk project should not remove existing sidewalk requests from the queue and should continue to permit residents to request sidewalks.

Commenter: Gael Cheek

Planning Staff Response: Partially Agree. The plan envisions the Annual Sidewalk Program proactively building sidewalks based on considerations that would include pedestrian safety (crashes). By moving away from a request-based system, county residents can be more confident that the sidewalks that are built will target locations that are most in need of improved pedestrian safety and connectivity. However, sidewalks projects that are already in the construction queue should not be removed.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends adding language to the description of Key Action B-1a:

B-1a: Pivot the Annual Sidewalk Program from a reactive, request-driven process to an equitable, data-driven process.

An approach to sidewalk construction that relies on community requests does not necessarily address those locations with the greatest need. Using a data-driven approach to allocating the limited resources of the Annual Sidewalk Program will ensure that the highest-priority connections are made and that resources are expended equitably. Sidewalk requests already in the Annual Sidewalk Program queue should continue to be considered for future construction.

Goals: Comfortable/Connected Pedestrian Network, Pedestrian Safety, Equitable and Just Pedestrian Network

Lead: MCDOT

Key Action B-1b (Page 65)

Support for streamlining the sidewalk construction public engagement process and changing the conversation from whether a sidewalk will be built to how the sidewalk will be built in a contextually appropriate way.

Commenters: Jordan Day, Sanjida Rangwala, Commission on People with Disabilities, Larry Cole

Opposition to streamlining the sidewalk construction public engagement process in favor of earlier engagement and additional neighborhood by neighborhood engagement about whether sidewalks are wanted.

Commenters: Elizabeth Wehr, Bernard Barrett, Jr., Diana Huffman and Kenneth Levine, Joe and Connie Lesch, John and Beni Devine, Lauren Saunders, Maddie Glist and Tim Pohle, Paula Wyman, Rich Kuzmyak, Sinaly Roy

Planning Staff Response: No change. Key Action B-1b is intended to be implemented in concert with B-1a. The intention is that the county should proactively build sidewalks in residential areas where they provide the largest connectivity and safety benefits. This proactive approach will not be successful if constructing the highest priority connections requires neighborhood approval. Community members are encouraged to share their perspectives, but the feedback MCDOT should be looking for as they construct sidewalks is how to make the necessary sidewalks context-sensitive, not whether the sidewalk should be built at all.

Key Action B-1d (Page 65)

Key Action B-1d should exclude sidewalk work that is only fixing the existing sidewalk to ensure there are no trip hazards. As written, the recommendation could be interpreted to mean that anytime MCDOT conducts routine sidewalk maintenance, the agency will need to bring existing sidewalks up to current standards, which will reduce the amount of routine sidewalk concrete maintenance that can be completed.

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Agree.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends the following change to Key Action B-1d:

B-1d: Require that new and reconstructed sidewalks achieve at least a “somewhat comfortable” rating using the Pedestrian Level of Comfort (PLOC) tool.

Currently, 41% of pedestrian pathway mileage in the county is rated as “uncomfortable” or “undesirable,” based on Montgomery Planning’s PLOC metric. To improve the comfort of walking, this recommendation establishes a minimum comfort standard of “somewhat comfortable” for new and reconstructed sidewalks as part of capital improvement and private development projects. This ensures that future sidewalks and pedestrian pathways are designed and constructed to be navigable and comfortable. Note that sidewalk reconstruction does not include maintenance projects to eliminate tripping hazards.

Goal: Comfortable/Connected Pedestrian Network

Leads: MCDOT, Montgomery Planning

B-1 New Key Action (Page 67)

The SHA 8" curb height should be lowered to MCDOT's 6" standard in areas with pedestrian activity to allow more accessible sidewalks and crossings to be created.

Commenter: Larry Cole

Planning Staff Response: Agree.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends adding the following key action:

B-1X: Update state curb height standards to 6" in areas with pedestrian activity

Curb ramps allow people using wheelchair and other wheeled vehicles to transition between the road surface and the sidewalk. By law, the running slope of the curb ramp (from the street to the sidewalk) cannot exceed 8.33 percent for new sidewalks or 10 percent for those built before the ADA went into effect. To achieve these running slopes, a taller curb ramp requires more space because ramps need to be longer. This additional space requirement often requires adjustments to the slope of adjacent sidewalks, which can have a negative effect on accessibility. Lowering the state's 8" standard curb height to the county's 6" standard will allow shorter ramps and more accessible sidewalks.

Goals: Equitable and Just Pedestrian Network

Leads: MDOT SHA

B-1 New Key Action (Page 68)

Ensure that sidewalks along roadways classified as arterials and higher have adequate space for pedestrians. The reasons for deviations from the County's road standards and ADA Best Practices should be made part of the project record and made publicly available. All too often with retrofit projects, there is a tendency to not consider the appropriate road standard dimension, but to minimize the footprint of the project to reduce impacts on residents' perceived property line. While a smaller footprint may be more acceptable to the abutting property owner, the pedestrian space is often the loser by means of a much narrower landscape panel separating them from traffic or by that panel's complete elimination. There may be sufficient reasons for making such a decision, but written documentation is needed to deter such decisions being made just because it's politically easier in the moment and the decision-makers (Planning Board and County Council) should be aware of the trade-offs being made.

Commenter: Larry Cole

Planning Staff Response: Agree.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends adding Key Action B-1i to read:

B-1X: Document deviations from Complete Streets Design Guide streetscape default widths where applicable.

The Complete Streets Design Guide identifies preferred, default, and minimum widths of different roadway elements from travel lanes to sidewalks and landscape buffers. These widths were agreed upon through a collaborative process between MCDOT, MCDPS, and Montgomery Planning. Where public or private projects are not providing the default widths, Planning Department and MCDOT staff must document the reasons that prevent achieving the CSDG dimensions as part of regulatory staff reports.

Goal: Comfortable, Connected Pedestrian Network

Lead: Montgomery Planning, MCDPS, MCDOT

Recommendation B-2 (Page 67)

Recommendation B-2 should not use the pejorative term “beg button”.

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Agree.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends amending the Recommendation B-2 text:

B-2: Eliminate the need to press a button to cross the street.

Pedestrians should not need to press a button to safely cross the street, and yet in much of Montgomery County, this is the case. A pedestrian-friendly place avoids the [“**beg button**”] **pedestrian push button** wherever possible. The key actions below help the county achieve this recommendation. In urban areas, the default would be to automatically provide pedestrians time to cross the street during every signal cycle; in suburban and country areas where there are often fewer people walking today, the county would use creative technologies to prioritize pedestrians and reduce delay.

Key Action B-2a (Page 68)

Supports making pedestrian recall the default in Downtowns and Town Centers and adjacent to rail and bus rapid transit stations, schools, parks and community centers, but recommends also including trail crossings.

Commenters: Jordan Day, Larry Cole

Planning Staff Response: Agree. Major trail crossings are locations with high pedestrian activity and should be considered for pedestrian recall.

Recommended Action: Planning Staff recommends updating Key Action B-2a to read:

B-2a: Make pedestrian recall the default configuration for signalized intersections in Downtowns and Town Centers and adjacent to rail and bus rapid transit stations, schools, parks, major trail crossings, and community centers.

Currently, pedestrian phases at signalized intersections can be configured as push-button actuated or recall. Push-button actuation requires the pedestrian to push a button to receive a walk signal and is not automatically triggered. Recall automatically provides a pedestrian crossing phase every signal cycle and removes the onus from the pedestrian to push a button to request the walk signal. Recall should be the default configuration in urban areas where pedestrian activity is greater. The accessibility features of the Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS) will remain effective even if the pedestrian phase is in recall.

Goals: Comfortable/Connected Pedestrian Network, Equitable and Just Pedestrian Network

Leads: MCDOT, MDOT SHA

Key Action B-2b (Page 69)

Passive Pedestrian Detection devices come with a significant cost (about \$6,000 per crossing) and are not yet particularly reliable nor effective. While we continue to evaluate these, their benefits have not been found to justify their costs. We suggest removing this recommendation at this time.

This text “consider having the pedestrian push button immediately provide a pedestrian phase” appears to be describing Pedestrian Preemption, which while not explicitly prohibited by the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) implies that preemption is limited to vehicles, and requirements for how preemption is operated (MUTCD 4E) could conflict with pedestrian preemption. Either remove the preemption recommendation or consider what other more viable operations would achieve the intent here.

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Agree with Modifications.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends changing Key Action B-2b as follows:

B-2b: Continue to evaluate passive detection to eliminate the need for pedestrians to press a button to safely cross the street in areas where pedestrian recall is not desirable. [Target implementation of passive detection (such as sensors) to eliminate the need for pedestrians to press a button to safely cross the street in areas where pedestrian recall is not desirable. If this is not feasible at every appropriate location, consider having the pedestrian push button immediately provide a pedestrian phase.]

In Suburban and Country areas of the county where providing a pedestrian crossing phase via pedestrian recall in every signal cycle may have detrimental effects on traffic flow, passive detection provides an option that eliminates the need to push a button while minimizing impacts to traffic. Using sensors, the signal detects an approaching pedestrian and adds a phase to the signal cycle so that pedestrians can safely cross the street.

Precedent: The PUFFIN passive detection approach is used in the United Kingdom.

Goals: Comfortable/Connected Pedestrian Network, Equitable and Just Pedestrian Network

Leads: MCDOT, MDOT SHA

[Key Action B-3a \(Page 70\)](#)

The graphic shown is useful but should be modified to show one of the ramps occurring on a curved sidewalk section to forestall any misunderstanding that these ramps can only be constructed on a straight section of curb.

Commenter: Larry Cole

Planning Staff Response: Agree with Modifications.

Recommended Action: As Planning staff did not develop this graphic, instead of modifying the graphic, we recommend adding the following text to the recommendation:

B-3a: Update state and county design standards to reflect a preference for perpendicular curb ramps aligned with the crosswalk.

When curb ramps are significantly out of alignment with the crosswalk, people with vision disabilities have more difficulty orienting to cross the street safely, and people using wheelchairs are directed into the intersection, where they are more vulnerable to conflict with motor vehicles. Misaligned curb ramps also inconvenience people pushing strollers or using other wheeled devices. Perpendicular curb ramps aligned with the crosswalk can be provided on both straight and curved sections of curb.

Goals: Equitable and Just Pedestrian Network, Pedestrian Safety

Leads: MCDOT, MDOT SHA

B-3 New Key Action (Page 72)

Wider crosswalks should be provided to accommodate heavier volumes of pedestrians in commercial areas, near schools and where the crosswalk is part of a named trail.

Commenters: Larry Cole, Game Changers

Planning Staff Response: Agree.

Recommended Action: Planning Staff recommends adding the following key action:

B-3X: Crosswalk markings and associated curb ramps should be at least as wide as the sidewalks and trails they connect on either side.

Pedestrian facilities like sidewalks and crosswalks should be designed to comfortably accommodate the anticipated number of users. In commercial areas, near schools, and where major trail crossings are present, wider crosswalk markings are necessary to maintain the pedestrian experience across the intersection and inform drivers that the crossing has significant pedestrian activity.

Goals: Walking Rates, Pedestrian Safety, Equitable and Just Pedestrian Network

Leads: MCDOT, MDOT SHA

Key Action B-3e (Page 74)

In support of Key Action B-3e, there should be additional advance signage for drivers approaching crosswalks.

Commenter: Rich Kuzmyak

Recommend removal of Key Action B-3e. Prior discussions around this piece of code left the code alone as it is impossible for a driver to determine a person standing near a crosswalk is preparing to cross or staying on the sidewalk for other reasons. The current code makes crossing intent clear.

As Maryland is a “Stop for Pedestrians” jurisdiction per §21-502, if this recommendation is not deleted, change “the driver of a vehicle must yield to pedestrians” to “the driver of a vehicle must stop for pedestrians”.

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Partially Agree. While these discussions have failed in Maryland in the past, this is the law in Virginia. There are pedestrian safety benefits to changing this law, and we should strive to make this change.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends updating the Key Action B-3e description to include the following text:

B-3e: Pursue a modification of Maryland Code §21-502 to indicate that the driver of a vehicle must yield tostop for pedestrians waiting to cross the street, not just those already in the crosswalk.

Currently, state law requires pedestrians enter the street at a crosswalk at an uncontrolled intersection to gain the right-of-way and cause drivers to stop. In practice, this creates situations where drivers maintain elevated speeds through marked and unmarked crosswalks, frightening pedestrians into waiting until there is a gap in traffic before taking the opportunity to cross the street. To support improved driver yielding, additional signage in advance of crosswalks should be installed across the county, particularly at locations where there may be sight distance issues.

Precedent: Virginia law requires drivers to yield to pedestrians “at” a crosswalk, not “in” a crosswalk.

Goals: Pedestrian Safety

Leads: State Delegation

B-4 Climate Change Recommendations (Pages 74-75)

Highlight the plan’s relationship to climate change mitigation/adaptation.

Commenter: Montgomery County Climate Action Plan Coalition

Planning Staff Response: Agree.

Recommended Action: On page 74, add the following in the description of Key Action B-4a:

B-4a: Use master planning processes to focus growth in Downtowns, Town Centers, and along Growth Corridors to expand walkable places in the county.

To increase walking, plans need to encourage situations where walking is preferable. Creating dense mixed-use clusters and adding density to existing mixed-use clusters is the most effective way to achieve this goal. Thrive Montgomery 2050 strongly emphasizes this approach. Making it easier to walk to more destinations within the same distance will encourage more people to choose walking over other travel modes, which will reduce vehicle miles traveled and transportation emissions in the county.

Goals: Walking Rates, Comfortable/Connected Pedestrian Network

Lead: Montgomery Planning

On page 75, add the following in the description of Key Action B-4c:

B-4c: Revise minimum acreage requirements for school sites to facilitate smaller school footprints better integrated into adjacent communities.

Minimum acreage requirements can discourage the use of smaller sites and buildings that are embedded within walkable neighborhoods in favor of larger tracts at the edge of the community that are less conducive for walking. Revising minimum acreage requirements would allow more walkable infill parcels to be considered for schools, making it more likely that future students will walk to school. Increasing the likelihood that students will walk to school has numerous benefits, including operational savings from reduced busing, reduced transportation emissions.

Goal: Walking Rates

Lead: MCPS

Key Action B-4d (Page 75)

Key Action B-4d appears to apply this overlay along very long lengths of Boulevards, which somewhat erodes the purpose of the Boulevard street type.

In lieu of overlays, would a better approach be to carve out Town Center designations around stations? That would use existing tools and avoid complexity/confusion of new overlays. Or, per MCDOT/Planning staff discussions on 4/11/2023, consider rephrasing as “Growth Overlays”. Incorporating land use (and other topics) as additional elements will better support achieving the intended transportation components here.

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Agree with Modifications. Thrive Montgomery 2050, the county’s recently approved general plan, identifies many of Montgomery County’s planned bus rapid transit corridors as growth corridors. Growth corridors are intended to be transformed into multimodal corridors, lined with denser residential and commercial development, a tight grid of streets, more frequent safe crossings and slow travel speeds. While a Town Center designation may be appropriate for planned BRT station areas, to effectively implement Thrive Montgomery 2050, a new street type or overlay is needed to apply to the areas between transit stations. That said, the reference to “a transit corridor overlay” may be misleading.

Recommended Action: Therefore, Planning staff recommends changing Key Action B-4d as follows:

B-4d: Update the CSDG to include a [transit c]Growth Corridor overlay to provide additional context-based guidance on crossings and target speeds.

Montgomery County’s rail and bus rapid transit corridors (Figure 25) pass through both Urban and Suburban areas, but existing guidance for the Boulevard street type in the CSDG does not recommend adequate target speeds and protected crossing spacing along existing and planned transitways—features necessary to enhance pedestrian safety, improve pedestrian comfort, and shorten walking trips. As transit corridors such as Georgia Avenue, Veirs Mill Road, and University Boulevard account for 10% of fatalities and severe injuries but only 1.3% of roadway miles, more frequent protected crossings and lower target speeds are needed on these roads to achieve Vision Zero.

Goals: Comfortable/Connected Pedestrian Network, Pedestrian Safety

Leads: MCDOT, Montgomery Planning

[Key Action B-4g \(Page 78\)](#)

Oppose Open Parkways as they generate residential cut through traffic and make it more difficult to access amenities within the adjacent parkland. Open Parkways do not achieve the Pedestrian Master Plan Vision.

Opposition to this being permanent, especially the Friday closure.

Commenter: Byeforde Rock Creek Highlands Citizens Association, Anonymous

Planning Staff Response: Open Parkways are not inherently a problem. Any adverse impacts, such as spillover traffic onto residential streets, must first be evaluated to determine if there is a problem. If a problem is confirmed, the county should evaluate ways to mitigate the impacts of spillover traffic onto residential streets. Additionally, the proposed modification clarifies that the recommendation is focused on weekends and holidays only.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends the following change to Key Action B-4g:

B-4g: Study [Make]making the Open Parkways along Beach Drive and Sligo Creek Parkway permanent.

Montgomery County should build on the success of the Open Streets program by taking steps to make [\[it\]weekend and holiday Open Parkway days and times](#) permanent. The Rock Creek and Sligo Creek Parkway trails are some of the most popular in the county. Opening Beach Drive and Sligo Creek Parkway to active transportation permanently will provide more safe, comfortable, and direct spaces for walking and bicycling.

Precedent: San Francisco recently made JFK Drive through Golden Gate Park car-free.

Goal: Comfortable/Connected Network

Lead: Montgomery Parks

[Key Action B-4h \(Page 78\)](#)

Supports Key Action B-4h to provide public seating, restrooms in Downtowns, Town Centers and along Boulevards. Public restrooms should have adult changing tables or family bathrooms available.

Commenters: Jane Lyons-Raeder, Marybeth Cleveland, Game Changers

Supports expanding Key Action B-4h to include respite locations.

Commenter: Sligo Park Hills Community Association

Supports expanding Key Action B-4h to include parks and trails.

Commenter: Civic Federation

Should Urban Districts or another entity implement Key Action B-4h? Enhanced street furnishing is beyond the scope of maintenance for MCDOT.

While some of these facilities might be within MCDOT facilities, there may need to be other Lead Agencies identified. Restrooms, for example, are unlikely to be MCDOT facilities unless they're incorporated into transit centers.

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Agree.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends changing Key Action B-4h and the description to read:

B-4h: Provide public seating, restrooms and other pedestrian amenities in Downtowns, Town Centers, parkland, and along Boulevards.

Enjoyable walking often requires more than just a sidewalk and a place to safely cross the street. For example, not having a place to rest along a walking route may reduce walking for the elderly, people with disabilities, and others. Providing public seating [in Downtowns and Town Centers and along Boulevards] makes it easier for these individuals to walk in areas of the county with the greatest pedestrian activity. Benches and other seating can be provided along the sidewalk and also set back from the street in pocket parks and other small green spaces. Likewise, access to public restroom facilities is an equity issue that can be a determining factor for some when it comes to the decision about if and how to make a trip. Public restrooms should provide an adult changing table or family bathroom option. Public drinking fountains and trash receptacles make the pedestrian experience better for all by providing hydration (including for four-legged friends) and making it easier for people to keep public spaces clean. All of these amenities should be built as part of public and private projects that interact with the streetscape.

Goal: Walking Rates, Comfortable/Connected Pedestrian Network, Equitable and Just Pedestrian Network

Lead: MCDOT, Montgomery Planning, Urban Districts, Montgomery Parks

Recommendation B-5 (Page 79)

Consider stating that SHA does not require sidewalks/bike paths in the right-of-way to be lit as Montgomery County does.

Commenter: County Executive

Revise Recommendation B-5 title to *Lighting for Roadways, Intersections, and Pedestrian and Bike Facilities.*

Commenter: Larry Cole

Planning Staff Response: Agree.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends modifying Recommendation B-5 as follows:

B-5: [Light pathways and crossings]Lighting for Roadways, Intersections, and Pedestrian and Bike Facilities

Pedestrians should be able to see where they're going when walking at night, feel secure walking in the dark, and feel confident that drivers will see them when crossing the street. However, only 32% of surveyed residents say they are satisfied with the quality of overhead lighting along pathways and at crossings. While Montgomery County requires sidewalks or sidepaths within the right-of-way to be lit, the State Highway Administration does not have a similar requirement along state roadways.

Key Action B-5c (Page 81)

Key Action B-5c is not practical because repair efforts will not occur on weekends or holidays, and the public reports malfunctions, so they are not immediately known. Also, this is a maintenance recommendation, not a build one.

Commenter: Greater Colesville Citizens Association

We cannot "ensure" streetlight repair timelines. Outage of single fixtures is usually not a major safety concern if nearby fixtures are operable.

Perhaps adjust this phrasing to read something like "Reducing this to 24 hours, particularly at locations with greater risk of conflicts, will ensure that..."

Be mindful that streetlight repairs are almost entirely at the behest of energy companies. Seeking that they complete repairs at a 600% faster rate will likely incur substantially higher costs that will be either passed on to regulatory authorities or to ratepayers, depending on how companies are compelled to comply with this.

Consider rephrasing to suggest working with energy companies on a improvement plans.

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Agree with Modifications.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends moving Key Action B-5c to become Recommendation MA-4 and Key Action MA-4a as follows:

MA-4: [B-5c: Ensure malfunctioning streetlights are returned to service within 24 hours]Minimize street light repair time.

Lighting is an essential element of public safety. Currently, the average repair time for a broken MCDOT streetlight is seven days. [Reducing this to 24 hours]Minimizing the amount of time a street light is broken will ensure that Montgomery County pedestrians continue to comfortably travel in their communities at night.

MA-4a: Street lighting owners should publicize response improvement plans and track their progress.

MCDOT and the utility companies responsible for maintaining the county's street lighting should publicize the length of time it takes to bring street lights back to service after different types of outages. These entities should endeavor to continue reducing lighting outages.

Goals: Pedestrian Safety, Walking Rates

Leads: MCDOT, PEPCO, Potomac Edison, BGE

Key Action B-6c (Page 81)

Include MCDOT as a Lead if this recommendation is expected to include MCDOT facilities.

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Agree.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends adding MCDOT as a lead agency in Key Action B-6c.

B-6c: Study and compare how different surface materials, colors, and other streetscape elements can mitigate urban heat island effects, including information on cost, maintenance, and longevity of materials, as well as identifying standards to encourage effective implementation.

Beyond encouraging the planting of more native canopy street trees to cool pedestrian pathways, changing how streetscape elements like sidewalks, roadways and parking lots are designed can also provide cooling benefits for pedestrians. Additional research is necessary to determine what materials can effectively lower thermal temperatures while also providing a high-quality pedestrian experience. This effort will complement the urban heat island efforts underway by the county's Department of Environmental Protection and the *Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan Design Guidelines (2023)*, which

contain streetscape material, vegetation, shading and other recommendations to achieve “cool streets”.

Goal: Comfortable/Connected Pedestrian Network

Lead: Montgomery Planning, MCDOT

Key Action B-7a (Page 82)

Better bus stop access and accessibility is needed. Either reintroduce/expand the Bus Stop Improvement Program.

Commenter: League of Women Voters

Planning Staff Response: Agree.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends adding the underlined text to Key Action B-7a:

B-7a: Increase funding for the Annual Sidewalk Program and other related Capital Improvement Program efforts, including the Bus Stop Improvements capital funding program, to address missing, broken, or substandard sidewalks and other infrastructure.

Additional funding is needed to address the large demand for sidewalk projects.

Goal: Comfortable/Connected Pedestrian Network

Leads: County Executive, County Council, MCDOT

Key Action B-7f (Page 85)

Be sure to target this recommendation to areas where residential communities are separated from local goods and services.

Commenter: Rich Kuzmyak

Planning Staff Response: Agree.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends updating the B-7f description to make clear that the priority locations for funding should be those where making improvements would make it easier and more direct for people to access local goods and services on foot.

The description would read:

B-7f: Offer monetary support to Homeowners Associations, Condominium Associations, and commercial properties for providing pedestrian connections

through their property and reconfiguring existing parking lots to be more pedestrian friendly.

Many residential communities and commercial areas were constructed at a time when pedestrians were not prioritized. While today, pedestrians are a larger priority and Montgomery Planning and county agencies work with those pursuing private development projects on pedestrian-friendly site and frontage design, there are not many opportunities currently to encourage property owners who are not pursuing redevelopment to make pedestrian-friendly changes. This key action would provide a sum of money annually to support two types of important projects:

- 1) The provision of pedestrian shortcut connections and through-block connections across common areas of Homeowners Association and Condominium Association property—where these connections would improve pedestrian access to local businesses, transit, and community destinations.
- 2) The reconfiguration of parking lots to be more pedestrian friendly—reducing the number and severity of conflicts between motor vehicles and pedestrians.

Goals: Comfortable/Connected Pedestrian Network, Walking Rates, Pedestrian Safety

Leads: MCDOT, County Executive, County Council

B-7, B-8 Climate Change Recommendations (Pages 85, 88)

Highlight the plan's relationship to climate change mitigation/adaptation.

Commenter: Montgomery County Climate Action Plan Coalition

Planning Staff Response: Agree.

Recommended Action: Add the following in the description of Key Action B-7g:

B-7g: Fund off-site pedestrian and bicycle access improvements to transit stations as part of the main capital project or through a parallel effort.

Non-motorized access to transit stations should be an essential component of their construction. These investments can provide substantial public benefits, including reduced transportation emissions and increased economic development, but poor pedestrian and bicycle connectivity in the surrounding area makes it difficult for these projects to reach their full potential. Non-motorized access should be a higher priority than motorized access.

Goals: Comfortable/Connected Pedestrian Network, Walking Rates

Leads: MCDOT, MDOT SHA

Add the following in the description of Key Action B-8e:

B-8e: Require development projects in areas with impervious surface caps or other similar limitations to prioritize construction of all required sidewalks and bikeways to standard dimensions.

Certain parts of the county have limits on the amount of impervious surface that can be built to maintain local and regional water quality. In these parts of the county, development projects have moved forward with internal sidewalk networks on only one side of streets to stay under the area's respective impervious surface cap. This makes it more difficult for pedestrians to travel through these communities and encourages driving for walkable trips, increasing the county's transportation emissions and the climate impact of development. Pedestrian pathways and bikeways required by applicable master plans, the CSDG, the Zoning Code, and county regulations need to be prioritized in all communities.

Goal: Comfortable/Connected Pedestrian Network

Leads: Montgomery Planning, MCDOT

[Key Action B-9a \(Page 89\)](#)

Complete Streets built on Thrive Montgomery 2050, which proposed more widespread traffic calming. The Fiscal Impact Statement for Thrive noted the need for substantially increased traffic calming funding, which is critically important to implementing more proactive traffic calming.

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Agree.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends rewriting Key Action B-9a as follows to recommend additional funding for traffic calming:

B-9a: Increase funding for traffic calming countywide to encourage a more proactive traffic calming installation approach. [Assess existing traffic calming implementation and the impact of CSDG standards and related procedures on new traffic calming implementation.]

The CSDG increases the type and location of potential traffic calming infrastructure in Montgomery County, but ensuring additional traffic calming infrastructure is installed,

especially in a proactive way in the locations it is most needed, requires additional funding. [Conduct a study to understand where traffic calming has been installed, how long it took to install, how these improvements reduce crash risk, changes to motor vehicle speeds, etc. and determine if changes could be implemented to improve the program.]

Goals: Comfortable/Connected Pedestrian Network, Pedestrian Safety

Lead: MCDOT

Key Action B-9b (Page 89)

Oppose Key Action B-9b. Pedestrian volumes should remain a factor in deciding where to install pedestrian improvements to allow the limited funding available to be used where the need is greatest.

Commenter: Greater Colesville Citizens Association

*Instead of deemphasizing pedestrian volumes completely, change this to using pedestrian *demand* in lieu of existing volumes.*

I don't expect we'll put in signals to cross Country Connectors if it's for only 2 or 3 single family homes, or if we'll expend resources to build new sidewalk on the 2nd side of a small cul-de-sac street when there are other higher needs. Ignoring current or potential pedestrian volumes can lead to the implementation of the wrong safety countermeasures (e.g. implementing a full traffic signal where a ped beacon would meet the need).

We are also legally required to adhere to the MUTCD, which requires volume considerations for many actions. We can potentially use pedestrian "demand" without running afoul of the MUTCD.

Montgomery Planning should not be listed as a Lead Agency.

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Agree with Modifications.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends modifying Key Action B-9b as follows:

B-9b: [Deemphasize pedestrian volumes as a determining factor in deciding where to install pedestrian or connectively improvements] Use modeled pedestrian demand instead of observed pedestrian volumes in deciding if or where to install pedestrian connectivity improvements.

Through the Traffic Engineering Study process, community members can identify safety and connectivity issues and request MCDOT address them with the appropriate

treatments. Frequently, the rationale for not installing a safety/connectivity treatment is that the volume of pedestrians who would utilize the improvement is too low. A location with low pedestrian volumes could be a result of many factors including inadequate pedestrian facilities or high vehicle speeds. The observed demand is not indicative of potential demand when current conditions are not safe.

Goal: Comfortable/Connected Pedestrian Network

Lead[s]: [Montgomery Planning,] MCDOT

Key Action B-10a (Page 90)

There are significant financial implications to assuming control of State roads, both for us and the State, including funding for maintenance, operations, capital needs, and liabilities.

This recommendation assumes the County can and would have the money and resources to implement changes on state highways quicker than SHA if they were transferred to the County.

Yes, SHA has burdensome and at times unhelpful bureaucracy, but more than not the delays are due to funding rather than bureaucratic inertia. Moving the roads from SHA to MCDOT would not solve the funding problem.

It's unlikely the State is going to provide the County the resources to properly maintain these roads. This is more likely to add substantial costs to the County and reduce the County's ability to address the other recommendations of this plan & this recommendation should be removed.

Commenter: County Executive

Concern that the cost of taking control of state highways is high due to operations and maintenance requirements.

Commenter: Greater Colesville Citizens Association, Civic Federation

Support. Wants Piney Branch Road included in the recommendation.

Sligo Park Hills Community Association

Would county control make improvements along formerly state roads happen more quickly than they do today?

Commenter: Lee Keiser

Planning Staff Response: Agree with Modifications. Transferring control of certain state highways to county control would have several benefits. The first is increased design flexibility. The second is improved accountability for achieving county goals. The third is a streamlined design process to allow

improvements to happen more quickly. While certain state roadway control scenarios may have significant financial implications, the intent of the key action is to understand the full range of possible options and identify the most beneficial.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends changing Key Action B-10a as follows:

B-10a: [Evaluate different approaches to assuming control of state roadways in Downtowns, Town Centers, and along master-planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors in Montgomery County.]Develop an approach to achieving increased county control over state highways, beginning in Downtowns, Town Centers, and along Thrive Montgomery 2050 Growth Corridors.

Roadway transfer is not a simple issue and identifying the most appropriate path forward will require study and significant local-state coordination. In particular, developing a strategy to fund ongoing operations and maintenance for the transferred roadway mileage is of utmost importance. This key action is the start of the conversation that needs to happen to make this recommendation a reality.

Goals: Comfortable/Connected Pedestrian Network, Walking Rates, Pedestrian Safety, Equitable and Just Pedestrian Network

Leads: County Executive, State Delegation

Key Action MA-2a (Page 92)

Sidewalks should be checked every two years to ensure that adjacent landscaping has not encroached on sidewalks and paths. Where encroachments occur, adjacent property owners should be notified that vegetation should be removed within two feet of the sidewalk or path.

Commenter: Larry Cole

Planning Staff Response: Agree with Modifications.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends updating the description of Key Action MA-2a as follows:

MA-2a: Audit major county and state roadways seasonally for vegetation overgrowth and erosion that reduces the effective width of sidewalks, restricts sidewalk accessibility, and limits visibility. Any identified issues should be immediately addressed and monitored so they do not reoccur.

Like snow in the winter, vegetation can intrude into the sidewalk, narrowing its effective width or making it impassable, degrading accessibility and safety. [MCDOT should develop a plan for how often streets and pathways will be audited.](#)

Goals: Pedestrian Safety, Comfortable/Connected Pedestrian Network

Leads: MCDOT, MDOT SHA, County Council

Key Action MA-2d (Page 93)

This recommendation would add hundreds of miles of manual labor. Any expansions of county snow-clearing responsibilities would necessitate major increases to the operating budget for personnel and equipment (or contracting), and potentially capital and right-of-way needs for new or expanded maintenance facilities. These costs are likely to be so substantial as to be infeasible, and this recommendation should be removed from the plan.

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Agree with Modifications.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommend changing Key Action MA-2d as follows:

MA-2d: [Study the benefits and costs of assuming county responsibility for snow clearance.](#) [\[Assume county responsibility for snow clearance on sidewalks\]](#) along all Downtown Boulevards, Town Center Boulevards, Downtown Streets, Town Center Streets, and Bus Rapid Transit Corridors.

Sidewalks that are not cleared of snow are inaccessible to people with disabilities and can present a safety hazard, particularly on arterial roadways (e.g., to access a bus stop, a person might choose to walk in the roadway rather than on the sidewalk). The county already clears 60 miles of sidewalks along arterial roadways, and the Shovel Our Sidewalks Act has added sidewalks along 19 similar roads in Equity Emphasis Areas (a similar geography to EFAs) to this list.

The recommendation builds on the county's commitment in the Shovel Our Sidewalks Act and recognizes that even with rigorous enforcement of the county requirement that property owners clear snow from sidewalks within 24 hours, uncleared sidewalks within the 24-hour window would present a significant safety hazard. These sidewalks along major roads are too important for pedestrian connectivity to rely on individual property owners to ensure they are shoveled.

Goals: Equitable and Just Pedestrian Network, Walking Rates, Pedestrian Safety

Lead: MCDOT

Key Action P-1a (Page 95)

County employees need to drive more safely. While red light-running is rampant at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road, the frequent occurrence of Ride-On bus drivers running the red light and cutting off pedestrians in the crosswalk is the most egregious. (I have personally witnessed this happen even in groups of two or three buses and recently even by an articulated FLASH bus, the County's premier transit service. The current driver expectation of punishment in such a high-visibility location apparently must be quite low.) In addition to punishing drivers who break the law, MCDOT should also consider adopting an operation policy to require bus drivers to stop on a yellow light as long as it is safe to do so.

Commenter: Larry Cole

Require all current county and public agency vehicles to have backup cameras and require all future new vehicles have forward and rear pedestrian detection equipment.

Commenter: Civic Federation

Planning Staff Response: Agree with Modifications.

Recommended Action: Planning Staff recommend amending the description of Key Action P-1a as follows:

P-1a: Ensure county and public agency vehicles are safe for pedestrians.

M-NCPPC, MCDOT, MCPS, and other public agencies have control over procurement of their own vehicles. The county's Climate Action Plan recommends the complete electrification of the county and public agency fleets. To the extent possible and where appropriate, these same fleets should be comprised of smaller vehicles with enhanced pedestrian visibility, when larger vehicles are not required to execute job duties. In addition, all current county and public agency vehicles should be equipped with backup cameras when feasible. Vehicles purchased in the future should have forward and rear pedestrian detection equipment.

To ensure compliance with traffic laws, county agencies should consider additional driver monitoring technologies. The county should adopt a policy that county and public agency drivers should stop on a yellow signal as long as it is safe to do so.

Goal: Pedestrian Safety

Leads: County Executive, Montgomery Parks, MCPS, MCDGS

Key Action P-1b (Page 95)

This recommendation is OK but would need to include an override for emergency response activities.

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Agree.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends the following change to Key Action P-1b:

P-1b: Install speed governors or intelligent speed control devices in county and public agency vehicles to ensure their drivers adhere to the speed limit.

The county and public agencies should set an example when it comes to driving safely by setting an upper limit for how fast vehicles can go using speed governor technologies. [Emergency vehicles should be exempt from this policy.](#)

Goal: Pedestrian Safety

Leads: County Executive, Montgomery Parks, MCPS, MCDGS

Education Recommendations (Pages 97, 98, 104)

Strengthen pedestrian education and enforcement recommendations.

Commenter: Bruce Schwalm

Ensure drivers understand their responsibilities at intersections and elsewhere to improve pedestrian safety.

Commenters: League of Women Voters, Mike Bailey

Support for conducting pedestrian and bicycle safety educational programs in partnership with agencies such as MCPL, MCPS, and MCR. Additionally:

- *We need pedestrian education, and that means education that actually sticks and changes bad behavior.*
- *Pedestrian and bicycle safety education needs to include the requirement for them to use paths rather than use roads when a sidewalk is available.*

Commenter: Cathie Cooper

Planning Staff Response: Education is an important component of improving the pedestrian experience in Montgomery County. Education should effectively articulate where walking and rolling can and should take place given the presence of different types of infrastructure, including sidewalks and paths.

Planning staff does not recommend any changes to pedestrian education and enforcement as the two recommendations in the draft plan that are focused on pedestrian and bicycle safety education are sufficient:

P-4a (Page 104): Conduct pedestrian and bicycle safety educational programs in partnership with agencies such as MCPL, MCPS, and MCR.

P-4c (Page 104): Shift the programming and education elements of the county's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program to MCPS and create SRTS initiatives, including pedestrian/bicycle education, in individual schools.

Planning staff does not recommend changes to driver education recommendations because the topic is addressed in the following recommendations:

P-1d (Page 97): Develop legislation to create a new class of commercial driver's license required to operate vehicles with identified pedestrian safety and visibility issues.

P-1e (Page 98): Develop legislation to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety by implementing a knowledge test requirement as part of the driver's license renewal process.

Key Action P-1e (Page 98)

Require the county to mail to each resident at least yearly all changes to traffic rules and regulations, instead of requiring drivers to have an in-person knowledge test every eight years.

Commenter: Civic Federation

Planning Staff Response: Agree with Modifications.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends amending Key Action P-1e:

P-1e: Develop legislation to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety by implementing a knowledge test requirement as part of the driver's license renewal process.

Over time, rules and regulations governing the transportation system change, and new roadway striping, signage, facilities, and signalization approaches are implemented. However, unless a Maryland driver's license has expired for a year or more, there is no requirement to retake either the driving skills or knowledge tests upon license renewal. A knowledge testing requirement, with the option to retake as many times as necessary to pass, would provide an opportunity to bring drivers up to date on changes to the transportation system and relevant laws and regulations since their last license renewal between five and eight years earlier. This would result in better driving and increased safety for all road users. Efforts should be taken to ensure this new requirement does not place an undue burden on the Motor Vehicle Administration. Additionally, each year the

county should mail a postcard to all county households identifying changes to traffic rules and regulations that have taken effect over the past year.

Goal: Pedestrian Safety

Lead: State Delegation

P-1 New Key Action (Page 98)

There should be a tax credit or requirement for people to get pedestrian detection systems for their cars.

Commenter: Civic Federation

Planning Staff Response: Agree.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends adding the following key action to Recommendation P-1 to explore requiring or incentivizing pedestrian detection systems in cars registered in Montgomery County:

P-1X: Study requiring or incentivizing the use of pedestrian detection systems in vehicles registered in Montgomery County.

Pedestrian detection systems are becoming increasingly common in new motor vehicles. These systems inform drivers about pedestrians in their vicinity and may perform automatic braking to avert a pedestrian crash. The county should study whether requiring or incentivizing the use of these technologies would be a cost-effective approach to reducing pedestrian injuries and fatalities.

Lead: County Executive, County Council

Goals: Pedestrian Safety

Key Action P-2e (Page 102)

The plan's recommendations for more pedestrian crossing time but not increasing traffic signal cycle lengths need to be reconciled.

If pedestrian safety is the highest County priority, traffic signalization phasing and timing decisions should be made on that basis. DC's operation of 16th Street handles large rush hour traffic flows into and out of the District but still manages to have good pedestrian crossing times, and in the off-peak the traffic signal system is timed to keep speeds low. While Montgomery County for the most part does not have a grid street network like the District does, MCDOT should investigate the potential for controlling speeding problems by adjusting traffic signal cycles.

Consider creating a database of the pedestrian timings at each intersection including what walking speed the crossing time was based on (Key Action P-2e, Page 102)

Commenter: Larry Cole

Planning Staff Response: Agree. In some locations, pedestrian crossing time should be increased (Key Action EA-3a). In other locations, it may be more appropriate to shorten the traffic signal cycles to allow pedestrians more frequent opportunities to cross the street (Key Action P-2e).

Recommended Action: Planning Staff recommend the following change to Key Actions P-2e:

P-2e: Reduce pedestrian wait times by developing a policy on target and maximum traffic signal cycle lengths by street type.

Longer signal cycle lengths result in increased pedestrian delay and non-compliance with signals and make pedestrian travel less convenient. As a result, satisfaction with pedestrian signal wait time is 44% countywide. Establishing target signal cycle lengths by street function and land-use context will more safely and efficiently accommodate pedestrians.

Precedents: Seattle established maximum and target signal cycle lengths for different types of streets. London is actively working to shorten signal cycles to reduce pedestrian delay with a goal of “pedestrian time saved.”

Note: Key Action P-2e and Key Action EA-3a may somewhat work at cross purposes, as providing more time for pedestrians to cross the street may require a longer signal cycle length. There may not be an opportunity to implement both key actions at the same intersection.

Goals: Comfortable/Connected Pedestrian Network, Pedestrian Safety

Lead: MCDOT

Key Action P-4c (Page 104)

The education component of Safe Routes to School (SRTS) goes beyond what occurs directly on school grounds, which is why Departments of Transportation are typically the home of SRTS programs. The County’s SRTS program also integrates the engineering and education sides of SRTS which would be removed under this recommendation.

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Agree with Modifications.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends the following change to Key Action P-4c:

P-4c: [Shift the programming and education elements of the county’s Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program to MCPS and create SRTS initiatives, including pedestrian/bicycle education, in individual schools.] Integrate Safe Routes to School into the MCPS curriculum and day-to-day activities.

Encouraging and supporting students walking to school can be most effectively undertaken by MCPS. The MCPS system is so large that a successful SRTS program requires higher staffing levels and closer attention. Creating SRTS initiatives at MCPS schools using teacher-coordinators and parent volunteers, in concert with complementary recommendations to encourage walking, will put MCPS in the best position to increase the number of students walking.

Goals: Walking Rates, Pedestrian Safety

Leads: MCPS, MCDOT

[Key Action P-5a \(Page 105\)](#)

The lead agency for Key Action P-5a is MCPD (Police), not MCPS (Public Schools).

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Agree.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends changing the lead agency to MCPD.

P-5a: Prioritize locations for additional school crossing guards and advocate for additional funding.

Increasing the number of crossing locations staffed with crossing guards would allow more students to walk to school and reduce hazard busing, improving student health and safety while reducing the school district’s vehicle miles traveled and operating costs.

Goals: Pedestrian Safety, Walking Rates

Lead: ~~[MCPS]~~MCPD

Key Action P-5b (Page 106)

Rephrase Key Action P-5b. Walking and biking school buses are intended to improve walking/biking rates within the school walkshed and not to replace students being bussed. Consider deleting the text “and the reduction in conventional school buses needed to transport kids to school.”

Commenter: County Executive

Highlight the plan’s relationship to climate change mitigation/adaptation.

Commenter: Montgomery County Climate Action Plan Coalition

Planning Staff Response: Agree.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends changing Key Action P-5b as follows:

P-5b: Fund Walking School Buses to reduce the [need for motorized school buses.] number of students being driven to school.

A walking school bus is a group of students walking to/from school with the guidance of adults. They help students get to school in the same way that school buses do, but in a more active, independent, and healthful way. Funding could be used to incentivize participation, provide promotional materials, and other general support. Reducing vehicular trips to schools lowers the likelihood of student-involved pedestrian crashes at arrival and dismissal and minimizes the transportation emissions associated with the public school system. The success of this effort would be measured by the number of students walking to school as part of Walking School Buses [and the reduction in conventional school buses needed to transport kids to school].

Goal: Walking Rates

Lead: MCPS

Key Action P-7a (Page 109)

The last sentence in Key Action P-7a references the illustration “to the right”, but it’s currently located below. Verify directionality when ready for final copy.

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Agree.

Recommended Action: Planning staff will make this technical correction.

Key Action P-7b (Page 110)

There are many locations where stop bars don't exist at all, or which have been neglected for so long that they are not visible/functional. Consider as supplemental strategies to Key Action P-7b: flashing stop signs at critical intersections; raised crosswalks; double posting of stop signs where visibility is impaired; adding painted stop "boxes" or writing "STOP" at the intersection.

Commenter: Rich Kuzmyak

Planning Staff Response: Agree with Modifications.

Recommended Action: Planning Staff recommends adding the following to the description of Key Action P-7b:

P-7b: Ensure vehicular stop bars are located at least four feet behind the crosswalk.

Stop bars indicate where motor vehicles are supposed to stop when approaching a stop or signal-controlled intersection. They should be installed at least four feet behind the crosswalk—greater than four feet if required by roadway conditions. There are many locations across the county where stop bars are missing completely, either because they have worn away or were never installed in the first place. If this marking is missing, installed too close to a marked crosswalk, or installed within an unmarked crosswalk, there will be conflict between pedestrians and motor vehicles. Properly installed stop bars effectively delineate pedestrian crossing space.

Goal: Pedestrian Safety

Leads: MCDOT, MDOT SHA

Key Action P-7d (Page 111)

Remove Key Action P-7d. Is there any case where the breakaway pole has injured a pedestrian or bicyclist? Removing breakaway poles increases the crash severity and goes against Vision Zero, and can run afoul of other State and Federal requirements.

Commenter: County Executive

We oppose eliminating breakaway traffic signals and other poles in locations with pedestrian activity. That would just increase the injury rate for vehicle operators.

Commenter: Greater Colesville Citizens Association

Planning Staff Response: Agree with Modifications.

Recommended Action: After review of the relevant section of the AASHTO Roadside Design Guide, Planning staff recommends amending Key Action P-7d to read:

P-7d: Eliminate breakaway traffic signal and other poles in [locations with pedestrian activity]the immediate vicinity of transit stops and other areas of significant pedestrian activity.

Breakaway poles are installed along roadways to reduce the severity of motor vehicle crashes. When a car hits a breakaway pole, the pole snaps off and moves away from the car, absorbing its energy and lowering crash severity for its occupants. However, when hit, breakaway poles become projectiles, enhancing the risk of injury and fatality for pedestrians in the area, even those not struck by a motor vehicle. Additionally, when used for a pedestrian signal, the base of a breakaway pole can make it difficult for a wheelchair user to maneuver close enough to use the push button. In areas with pedestrian activity, breakaway poles should not be used.

Goal: Pedestrian Safety

Leads: MCDOT, MDOT SHA

[Recommendation P-8 \(Page 112\)](#)

Supports increasing the number of Automated Traffic Enforcement locations with the following changes:

- *Supplementary in-person police enforcement is needed to reinforce the posted speed limit. Other methods of improving the usefulness of cameras should be considered such as keeping a log of ALL speeding violations and having MCPD contact the worst repeat offenders.*
- *Police enforcement to protect pedestrians should be at least eight times what it is currently and MCPD should consider having a dedicated group of motivated officers in charge of enforcement so that proper training and accountability are assured. A list of all potential traffic and pedestrian-related violations should be included on the County's Vision Zero website, along with a tally of all tickets given for each offense every year.*
- *The assessment of the adequacy of police enforcement of pedestrian safety needs to be focused on the reduction of pedestrian collisions and fatalities not on tickets given or hours spent on enforcement.*
- *Consideration should be given to discussing with the State Delegation the possibility of allocating the fines collected for pedestrian violations to pedestrian enforcement and pedestrian improvements rather than going into the state's general coffers as with other traffic violations.*
- *Interest in ATE being used for other violations like running stop signs, etc.*

Commenters: Larry Cole, Rich Kuzmyak, Sligo Park Hills Community Association

Consider adding narrative to recognize the need to consider Equity in Automated Traffic Enforcement implementation, minding that some communities have had historic underinvestment &/or have over-designed facilities conducive toward higher speeds, and both of these -by design- can induce higher rates of violations in communities least able to afford these costs.

Enforcement in Equity areas should be done concurrently with efforts to reduce violation rates by design.

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Agree with Modifications.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends changing Recommendation P-8 and its description to read:

P-8: [Increase the number of Automated Traffic Enforcement (ATE) locations]Increase traffic enforcement activities.

[The goal of the county’s ATE program of speeding cameras and other similar devices should be to eliminate dangerous driving behaviors and make the transportation system safer. An Insurance Institute of Highway Safety study from 2016 found that Montgomery County ATE reduced likelihood of speeding by 62% and severe/fatal crash likelihood by 39% along roads where ATE was present.²⁶ To bring these benefits countywide, the network of ATE devices needs to be much more extensive. If a driver breaks traffic laws in the county, they should be confident that they will receive a ticket. With the likelihood of a pedestrian being killed in a traffic crash dramatically increasing as a function of vehicle speed, improving compliance with speed limits will save pedestrian lives.]Enforcement is an important strategy to help achieve Vision Zero and make the county a better place to walk. Engineering and education both provide substantial benefits, but ensuring traffic laws are followed is essential. The following key actions identify approaches to increasing the depth and breadth of traffic enforcement countywide.

Planning staff recommends changing Key Action P-8a to read:

P-8a: [Develop a plan to increase the number of ATE devices countywide.]Increase the number of Automated Traffic Enforcement (ATE) locations.

The goal of the county’s ATE program of speeding cameras and other similar devices should be to eliminate dangerous driving behaviors and make the transportation system safer. An Insurance Institute of Highway Safety study from 2016 found that Montgomery County ATE reduced likelihood of speeding by 62% and severe/fatal crash likelihood by 39% along roads where ATE was present.²⁶ To bring these benefits countywide, the network of ATE devices needs to be much more extensive.

A plan should be developed to increase the number of these devices to address as many different kinds of traffic violations as are permitted by state law. If a driver breaks traffic laws in the county, they should be confident that they will receive a ticket. With the likelihood of a pedestrian being killed in a traffic crash dramatically increasing as a function of vehicle speed, improving compliance with speed limits will save pedestrian lives.

Equity should be a significant consideration in ATE implementation. Many of the county's Equity Focus Areas are where the larger, faster roadways are located. These roadways would be strong candidates for ATE to improve safety within EFAs. At the same time, ATE installation would likely lead to more fines for people living in EFAs, those who may be least able to afford these costs. Implementation should take this tradeoff into account and consider approaches to mitigating it.

Goal: Pedestrian Safety

Leads: County Executive, MCPD, County Council, State Delegation

Planning staff recommends adding a key action to Recommendation P-8 to read:

P-8X: Increase in-person traffic enforcement activities.

While there are many benefits to automated enforcement, there are opportunities to provide enhanced in-person traffic enforcement, especially of violations that automated enforcement does not detect or in locations where automated enforcement is not present. Of particular relevance for this master plan include violations of pedestrian right-of-way, stop sign compliance, and other pedestrian-vehicle conflicts. Strategies should be developed to identify the best approach to increasing this necessary enforcement activity.

Lead: County Executive, County Council, MCPD, Montgomery Parks

Goals: Pedestrian Safety

New Recommendation P-9 (Page 112)

Reduce automobile speed limits comprehensively to ensure pedestrian safety

Commenters: Adam Carlesco, WABA

Planning Staff Response: Agree.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommend adding the following recommendation and corresponding key actions to address this comment:

P-9: Comprehensively lower speed limits countywide.

Higher traffic speeds are directly linked to increased crash severity. In pursuit of Vision Zero, the county should continue efforts to lower speed limits in neighborhoods and along major roadways, with a goal of having the roadway's posted speed limit match the target speed outlined in the Complete Streets Design Guide.

Key Actions:

P-9a: Support state legislation to allow jurisdiction-wide speed limit reduction.

Montgomery County's ability to lower the posted and statutory speed limit along residential streets is limited by state law. Recent legislative efforts to allow jurisdictions to lower speed limits to no less than 15 miles per hour have failed (HB 404 in 2022). The county should support all legislation that offers local agencies more flexibility in setting speed limits in-line with county goals.

Precedent: Washington, D.C. lowered speed limits on residential streets across the city to 20 mph.

Goal: Pedestrian Safety

Lead: State Delegation

P-9b: Ensure speed limits and observed speeds along county roads are in line with target speeds identified in the Complete Streets Design Guide.

This key action seeks to reduce the discrepancy between the roadway's intended speed (target speed) and the actual speed of travel by motor vehicles (observed speed). In addition to changing posted speed limits, achieving this key action will require changes to roadway geometry and other factors to make the roadway design speed compatible with the target speed.

Goal: Pedestrian Safety

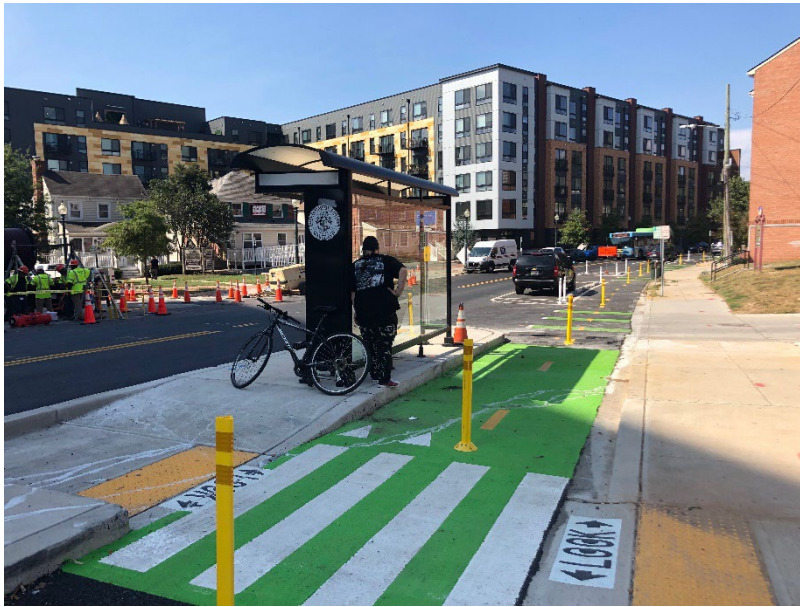
Lead: MCDOT, MDOT SHA

Expand Access Recommendations (Page 113)

Floating bus stops need to be designed safely.

Commenter: National Capital Area Chapter of the American Council of the Blind of Maryland

Planning Staff Response: Agree. A floating bus stop locates bike lanes behind bus stops to avoid conflicts between bicyclists and buses. While this configuration improves safety for bicyclists, it creates additional conflicts for pedestrians, and is especially concerning to people with little or no vision.



Floating bus stop along 2nd Avenue in Downtown Silver Spring

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommend no change be made in response to this comment. The Montgomery County Department of Transportation has demonstrated a commitment to working closely with members of the disability community to ensure the design of floating bus stops mitigates pedestrian-bicycle conflict.

Key Action EA-1a (Page 113)

Given the maintenance and safety issues with brick sidewalks, these should not be recommended materials for future community design standards.

Maintaining brick sidewalks is the responsibility of the Urban Districts, not MCDOT.

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Agree with Modifications.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommend the following change:

EA-1a: Prioritize the repair of brick sidewalks that have identified accessibility challenges. Require new or rehabilitated brick sidewalks to be constructed using non-slip materials and with patterns, spacing, and installation methods designed to minimize disturbance for wheeled vehicles.

Bricks and pavers are challenging surfaces to walk or roll on if they are poorly maintained. Addressing these accessibility issues by repairing these sidewalks with like material in line with best practices and then ensuring continued accessibility is essential to the ongoing use of brick and other non-concrete paving treatments.

Goals: Equitable and Just Pedestrian Network, Walking Rates

Leads: [\[MCDOT\]Urban Districts](#), MDOT SHA, Montgomery Planning

Key Action EA-3a (Page 117)

The plan's recommendations for more pedestrian crossing time but not increasing traffic signal cycle lengths need to be reconciled.

If pedestrian safety is the highest County priority, traffic signalization phasing and timing decisions should be made on that basis. DC's operation of 16th Street handles large rush hour traffic flows into and out of the District but still manages to have good pedestrian crossing times, and in the off-peak the traffic signal system is timed to keep speeds low. While Montgomery County for the most part does not have a grid street network like the District does, MCDOT should investigate the potential for controlling speeding problems by adjusting traffic signal cycles.

Consider creating a database of the pedestrian timings at each intersection including what walking speed the crossing time was based on (Key Action P-2e, Page 102)

Commenter: Larry Cole

Planning Staff Response: Agree. In some locations, pedestrian crossing time should be increased (Key Action EA-3a, Page 117). In other locations, it may be more appropriate to shorten the traffic signal cycles to allow pedestrians more frequent opportunities to cross the street (Key Action P-2e, Page 102).

Recommended Action: Planning Staff recommend the following change to Key Actions EA-3a:

EA-3a: Lower the pedestrian walking speed standard at signalized intersections frequented by older pedestrians, younger pedestrians, and those with disabilities.

An assumed pedestrian walking speed is used to calculate how much time is necessary to allot for pedestrians to cross the street. The current maximum pedestrian walking speed is 3.5 feet per second in the MdMUTCD, but the county uses a slower walking speed in certain situations. The county should use a pedestrian walking speed of 2.5 feet per second to calculate pedestrian crossing time in locations frequented by older pedestrians, younger pedestrians, and those with disabilities.

Precedent: Seattle lowers assumed walking speed to 2.5 feet per second in certain circumstances.

Note: Key Action P-2e and Key Action EA-3a may somewhat work at cross purposes, as providing more time for pedestrians to cross the street may require a longer signal cycle length. There may not be an opportunity to implement both key actions at the same intersection.

Goals: Pedestrian Safety, Equitable and Just Pedestrian Network

Leads: MCDOT, MDOT SHA

Key Action EA-4c (Page 120)

We want more uniform devices with uniform response. Do not recommend differentiating Accessible Pedestrian Signal buttons from Pedestrian Call buttons.

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Agree.

Recommended Action: In the interest of uniformity and ease of maintenance, Planning staff recommends removing this key action.

[EA-4c: For APS locations where every signal cycle has a pedestrian phase, provide signage that pressing the button is not required to cross the street.]

Pedestrians often arrive at an intersection unsure if they need to press the button to trigger a pedestrian crossing phase. For locations where a pedestrian phase is provided every cycle, informing pedestrians that there is no need to press the button makes the pedestrian experience easier and increases confidence in pedestrian signals overall. Appropriate signage to communicate this information has not yet been included in the federal Manual on Uniform Traffic Control devices, but once this has taken place, the key action can be implemented.

Precedent: In San Francisco, APS at locations where there is always a pedestrian signal read “Accessible Message Only” so people know they do not need to press to safely cross.

Goal: Comfortable/Connected Pedestrian Network

Leads: MCDOT, MDOT SHA]

EA-9 New Key Action (Page 125)

Ensure that approved maintenance of traffic plans in regard to pedestrian accommodation during construction are followed but also improved. The MCDOT division chief in charge of design should be required to sign off on all diversions of pedestrians during construction, as well as diversions from ADA Best Practices and diversions from county roadway standards. Detailed reasons should be included with the package submitted for sign-off.

Violations of approved plans are rampant with unexpected sidewalk closures, lack of handicapped access, and other unsafe conditions; these conditions are easily seen as part of the construction at the Planning Department’s former headquarters at 8787 Georgia Avenue and the storage area allowed in the Spring Street median drastically reduces the sight distance of pedestrians approaching the marked crosswalk at Woodland Drive. All worksites should be required to post a contact name and number at the Department of Permitting Services along with a link to the approved traffic plan. In addition to ensuring that the contractor doesn’t violate the approved plan, more care needs to be taken in the approval of the plan itself. For example, the restarted Purple Line work has been active on Bonifant Street for many months with the segment west of Georgia Avenue completely closed to traffic and the segment east of Georgia Avenue restricted to eastbound traffic only. Yet the pedestrian signals to cross Bonifant Street at Georgia have not been modified at all, forcing pedestrians to wait unnecessarily or encourage them to violate the DON’T WALK because there is no longer conflicting Bonifant Street traffic.

Commenter: Larry Cole

Planning Staff Response: Agree with Modifications. County legislation from 2020 improved the maintenance of pedestrian detours through construction zones. While there continue to be concerns, many of these are along state highways where maintenance of traffic is the state’s responsibility. One helpful update to county policy would be the publication of approved pedestrian detour plans in an easily accessible format so members of the public can understand what is permitted and follow up with the appropriate staff if they believe a permit condition is not being adhered to.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends adding a key action to Recommendation EA-9:

EA-9X: Publish approved Maintenance of Traffic plans in an easily accessible format.

Maintenance of Traffic plans explain how different travel modes will be accommodated due to construction projects. These plans are developed so travel can continue safely and with minimal detour through these areas. However, the approved plans are not readily available for public review, and it is not straightforward for community members to know who to contact about a potential violation. Making the plans accessible and providing points of contact will make it easier for pedestrian access to be maintained appropriately.

Goals: Equitable and Just Pedestrian Network

Leads: MCDOT, MCDPS

C: BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN PRIORITY AREA PRIORITIZATION

Complete BiPPA Tiers (Page 129)

It would be useful to include the full list of areas and their BiPPA ratings, perhaps in the Prioritization Methodology, so that users can see how they were grouped into the various Tiers.

It'd also be useful to have the area ratings included as a layer on MCAtlas/PedPlan, allowing PLOC to be toggled on/off. And consider also including this as a layer on MCAtlas/BikePlan.

There appear to be a lot of areas and corridors not included in any of these Tiers. Is there a presumed Tier 4 of unranked areas?

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Yes, there are many areas and corridors that are not included in Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3.

Recommended Action: Planning staff will add a table for all lower priority BiPPA areas not identified in the “Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Area Prioritization” section to the Prioritization Methodology appendix before the plan is transmitted to County Council.

BiPPA Prioritization Transparency (Page 129)

Increase transparency in the prioritization methodology. Provide two examples of arriving at the final score for a specific area (perhaps one in an EFA and one outside). These should be in the plan document itself.

Commenter: Lee Keiser

Planning Staff Response: Agree with Modifications.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends adding two examples of score calculations to the Prioritization Methodology appendix.

CIP Cross References (Page 129)

Cross-reference existing CIP projects in the different geographies in all tiers. Define “currently-funded”: does this mean the project is in the current fiscal year budget or is it in the actual construction stage. Given that design funding can proceed for several years before construction, “currently funded” can be difficult to define.

Commenter: Lee Keiser

Planning Staff Response: Agree. “Currently-funded” should be defined as projects that are mostly funded through construction in the six-year CIP.

Recommended Action: Planning Staff recommends adding CIP project numbers to the relevant BiPPA Name in Table 28, Table 29, Table 30 and Table 31.

Tier Assignment Inconsistencies (Page 136)

There are Inconsistencies in Tier Assignments: Wilson Lane in Tier 2 has sidewalks and crosswalks. Bradley Blvd is in Tier 3 but has no sidewalks for the most part and crosswalks every half mile. Further, one mile of this Bradley Blvd. segment is in CIP #P501733. It’s confusing to see on a lower tier a roadway within a CIP without pedestrian infrastructure score, while a close by location with infrastructure is in a higher tier.

Similarly, Wilson Lane between Bradley and River is in Tier 3, and has sidewalks and proximity to two schools. Tier confusion arises, in part, in not knowing the extent to which existing pedestrian safety infrastructure counts toward a final score.

Commenter: Lee Keiser

Planning Staff Response: Agree.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends moving Bradley Boulevard between Huntington Parkway and Downtown Bethesda (Map Reference #5 in Tier 3) into the “Funded in Capital Budget BiPPAs” tier, as this project is currently funded in the Capital Improvements Program as project #P501733.

Planning staff will review the Wilson Lane prioritization. If this review indicates that a change is needed, Planning staff will propose this change at a future work session.

D: COMPLETE STREETS DESIGN GUIDE AREA TYPE DESIGNATIONS

Downtown Life Sciences Center (Page 150)

FARs here tend to only be between 1.0 to 1.5, and the development we've been seeing has been extremely suburban in nature.

Commenter: County Executive

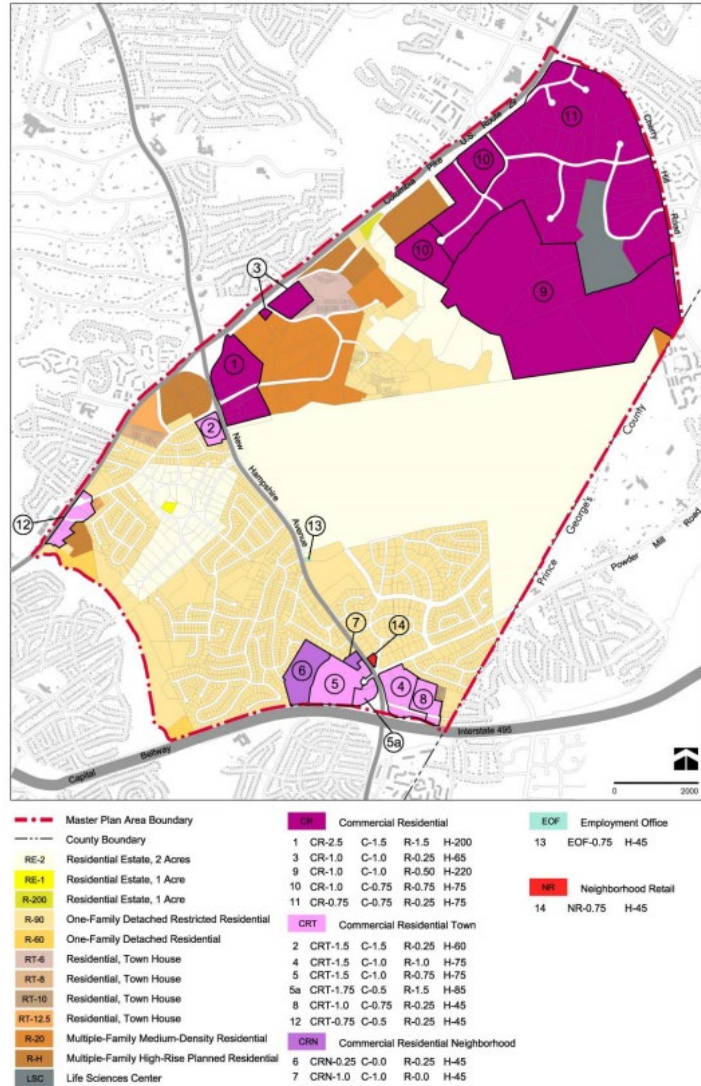
Planning Staff Response: Disagree. While Planning staff agrees that changes are needed to the CSDG area designation for the Life Sciences Center, it is appropriate to defer decisions about the area type designation to the ongoing Great Seneca Plan: Connecting Life and Science, which is anticipated to be approved by the County Council in 2024.

Downtown Life Sciences/FDA Village (Page 151)

With FARs only in the range of 0.75 to 1.0; far from the 3.0 to 5.0 in more clearly Downtown areas but very in-line with densities in other Town Centers.

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Disagree. The Council designated the Life Sciences / FDA Village area as a Downtown in 2022 as part of Bill 24-22 at the request of the Planning Board and Planning staff sees no reason to reconsider this decision. That is because the area is a major planned employment center with a consolidated area of commercial-residential zoning designations and planned transit service. The plan envisions a potential of 25.4 million square feet of commercial development, as well as 15,000 dwelling units. As shown in the map below, buildings can be as high as 220 feet in Zone 9, which is the heart of the area.



White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan Zoning Map

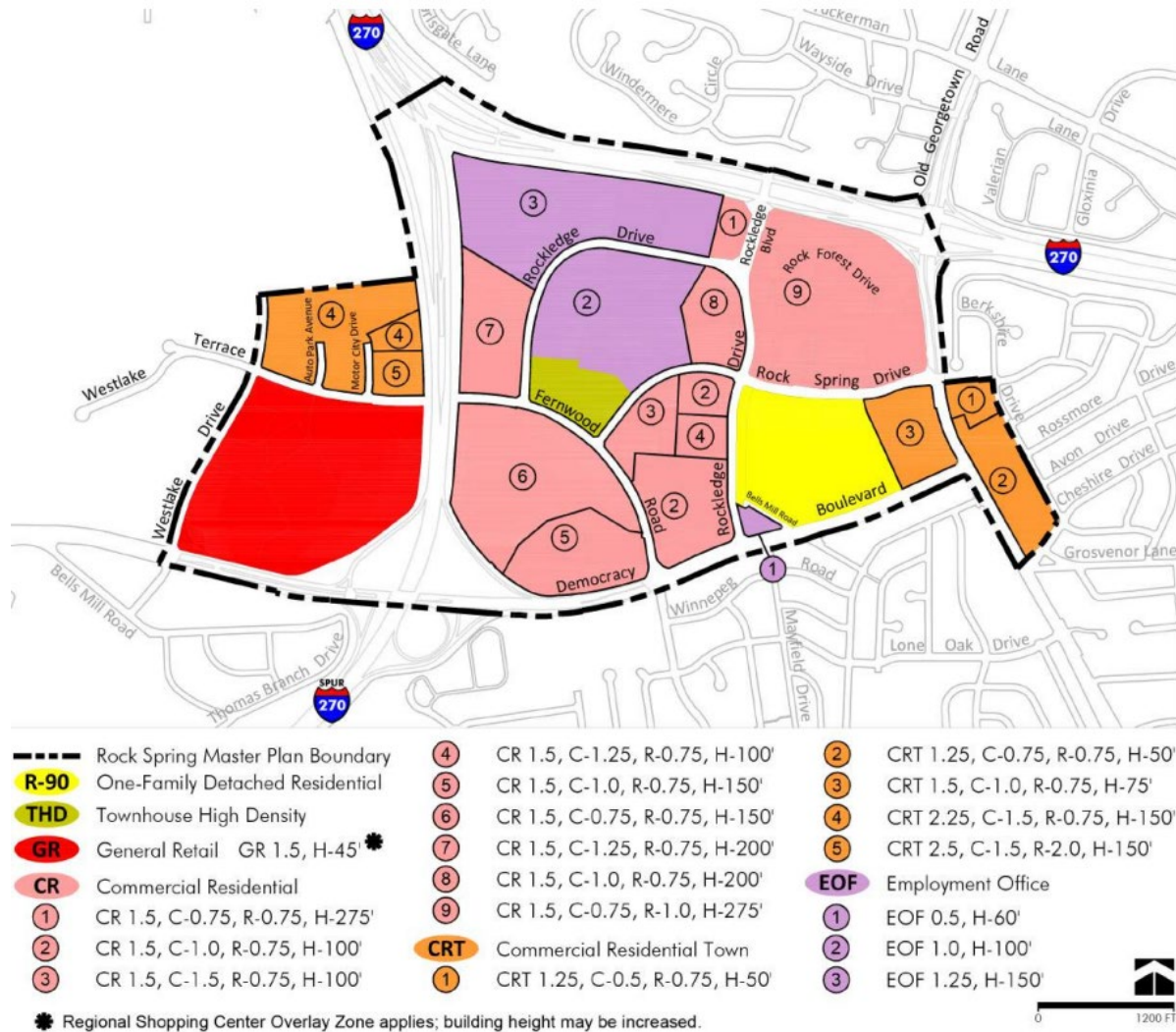
Downtown Rock Spring (Page 152)

FARs here are mostly between 0.75 to 1.5; far from the 3.0 to 5.0 in more clearly Downtown areas but very in-line with densities in other Town Centers.

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Disagree. The Council designated the Rock Spring area as a Downtown in 2022 as part of Bill 24-22 as the request of the Planning Board and Planning staff sees no reason to reconsider this decision. This area a major employment center with consolidated area of commercial-residential and employment zoning designations, high levels of anticipated pedestrian and bicyclist activity and Non-Auto Driver Mode Share (NADMS) goals, as well as planned transit service. The plan

envision a potential of 10 million square feet of commercial development, as well as 4,600 dwelling units, with building heights up to 275 feet.



Rock Spring Sector Plan Zoning Map

Briggs Chaney Town Center (Page 159)

Either this plan or the Fairland / Briggs Chaney plan should consider a larger area. I'd suggest including Greencastle ES, the RSC and Community Center, and the Woodvale + Centre apartments in between. Maybe include Automotive Blvd if the master plan thinks we may see/want redevelopment there (currently proposed as Briggs Chaney Industrial Area).

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Agree. The Fairland and Briggs Chaney Master Plan has recommended changes to the CSDG area designations. Therefore, it is appropriate to defer decisions about the area type designation to the upcoming Planning Board work sessions on the Fairland and Briggs Chaney Master Plan.

Burtonsville Town Center (Page 161)

Consider including the Elementary School. Since that'd technically be a driveway, I'm not sure it makes a massive difference, other than sending a message of what'd be expected of design at/around the school.

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Agree. Designating schools to be part of Downtown or Town Center areas should be based on whether the school's siting and design creates a unified area with the Downtown or Town Center. In the case of Burtonsville Elementary School, the location of the elementary school is such that it can be a cohesive part of the Town Center, even though designating the elementary school as part of the Town Center is unlikely to impact street design.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends adding Burtonsville Elementary School to the Town Center boundaries as shown in the following map.

Burtonsville Town Center



Map of Burtonsville Town Center including Burtonsville Elementary School

Cloverly Town Center (Page 165)

Consider including the RE-2 lot on the west leg of the NH/Briggs Chaney intersection. If that ever redeveloped, this would help ensure that we can condition the Town Center design along that frontage & we don't end up a couple hundred feet short on that side.

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Disagree. As this change will not impact street design, we do not believe a change is needed to the Town Center area, for the following reasons: 1) the frontage of this property is already designated by the Pedestrian Master Plan as a Town Center, and 2) this property has a recent

preliminary plan approval (Mar Thoma Church of Washington, 120200080) that largely meets Town Center standards.

Four Corners Town Center (Page 170)

Consider including the high school.

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Disagree. As the University Boulevard Corridor Master Plan is currently underway and the boundary includes Blair High School, Planning staff recommend deferring any modifications to the area type boundary to that plan.

Briggs Chaney Industrial Area (Page 205)

Check in with the planners for the Fairland/BC Plan on whether they envisioned this remaining industrial, or if this should all be Town Center. Based on their Preliminary Recommendations it seems like they envision a Town Center here.

Commenter: County Executive

Planning Staff Response: Agree. The Fairland and Briggs Chaney Master Plan has recommended changes to the CSDG area designations. Therefore, it is appropriate to defer decisions about the area type designation to the upcoming Planning Board work sessions on the Fairland and Briggs Chaney Master Plan.

E: PEDESTRIAN SHORTCUTS

Kersey Road-Auth Lane Shortcut (Page 216)

Opposes pedestrian shortcut #186 (Kersey Road to Auth Lane) for several reasons:

- Firstly, the stream over which the bridge would be built is in very poor condition, is heavily eroded, and is in need of major stream restoration.*
- The shortcut in question is used only by local pedestrians to cross from one neighborhood street to another.*
- I do not believe that building a convenient neighborhood shortcut is a sufficient justification for further deforestation of our beautiful woods.*
- This project is an unjust and inequitable use of county resources and does not meet the goals of the County's Racial Equity and Social Justice Act. It is located in an affluent neighborhood, and it is not possible to make the bridge ADA accessible due to the steep surrounding terrain. Therefore*

a pedestrian bridge built here would only be able to be used by able-bodied walkers. I believe that the county's resources should be directed toward other more equitable and just projects.

Commenter: Joseph Elbaum, Mona and Sol Freishtat

Potential support for a bridge connecting Kersey Road to Auth Lane, but not a path because:

- *Continuous use "has created a safe dirt path which maintains the natural beauty of this forested area."*
- *A formal walkway would create an enticing extended "track" for skateboarding and scootering, which would be a safety issue for all users.*
- *Lighting would destroy the natural beauty of this area*

Commenter: Elliott Klonsky

Planning Staff Response: Disagree. Pedestrian shortcuts provide more direct connections than the existing sidewalk or trail network. These connections save pedestrians time and encourage walking as a mode of transportation. This specific connection has broader community support and has been used in its current form for decades.

MCDOT is in the process of designing a bridge over the stream at this location, which would make the use of this corridor much more accessible year-round and in different weather conditions.

While steep slopes make it challenging to ultimately provide a trail connection between Kersey Road and Auth Lane that meets ADA standards, formalizing this connection as some sort of maintained pathway will make walking easier and safer for pedestrians of all ages and abilities.

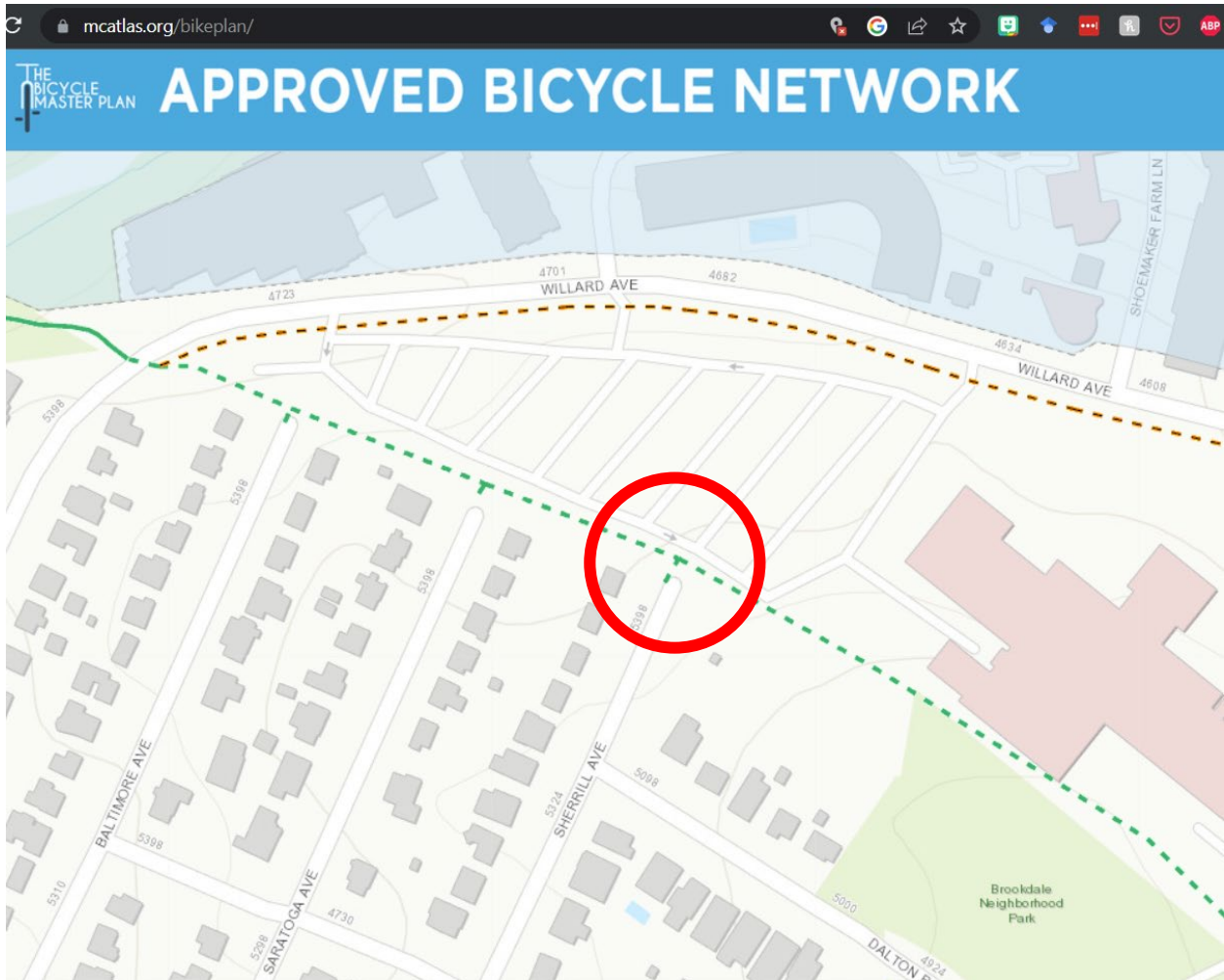
At this point, with the design process in motion, Planning staff defers to MCDOT about the feasibility of this connection. If MCDOT finds the project infeasible or inadvisable, the County Council could remove this recommendation from the plan.

[Sherill Avenue Shortcut \(Page 230\)](#)

The shortcut identified as Map Reference #85 should be removed from the plan because it is not an existing pedestrian connection, there is no easement, and the Special Exception that governs the GEICO property precludes such a connection.

Commenter: Sam Tacheron

Planning Staff Response: Disagree. While the current GEICO property may be governed by the Special Exception mentioned, future redevelopment may provide an opportunity to make this connection. The connection is already recommended in the Bicycle Master Plan. The connection from Sherill Avenue to the future Willard Avenue Trail is in the public right-of-way.



The Bicycle Master Plan already identifies a bicycle-pedestrian connection at this location.

F: COUNTRY SIDEPATHS

No public comments received.

6: IMPLEMENTATION

No public comments received.

7: MONITORING

No public comments received.

8: APPENDICES

Prioritization Methodology (Appendix page 137)

The methodology for prioritizing projects should be moved from the appendix to the body of the plan so that it can be put into better context.

Commenter: Larry Cole

Planning Staff Response: Disagree. Methodologies are more appropriately located in an appendix.

9: TABLE OF CONTENTS

References (Front Matter)

Add a list of references used to create the Pedestrian Master Plan.

Commenter: Larry Cole

Planning Staff Response: Agree.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends adding a reference section to the plan and will present it to the Planning Board at the final work session.

10: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

No public comments received.

11: INTRODUCTION

No public comments received.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: Updated Version of Summarized Public Testimony Comment Matrix