

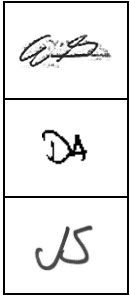
PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN

WORK SESSION #3



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.



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Report Date

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Planning Board Information

MCPB

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SUMMARY

This document contains the following information:

- A summary of public testimony and staff responses.

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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

The April 27 work session covered the following topics:

5. Recommendations Chapter
 - A. Recommendations Overview
 - B. Design, Policy, and Programming Recommendations (through Recommendation P-8)

The May 11 work session is anticipated to cover the remaining comments, including:

5. Recommendations Chapter
 - B. Design, Policy, and Programming Recommendations (beginning with Recommendation P-9)
 - 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

In addition, Planning staff will share revised language on the topics Planning Board members identified in prior work sessions.

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.

Modifications to the plan are displayed as follows:

- Underlines represent additions to the text
- Double underlines represent Planning Board additions to amended text.
- Brackets represent [deletions] from the text.
- Double brackets represent [[Planning Board deletions from amended text]].

WORK SESSION #3 TOPICS (CONTINUED)

This section of the staff report continues with the remaining comments identified in Work Session #2 on April 27, 2023.

5: RECOMMENDATIONS

B: DESIGN, POLICY, AND PROGRAMMING RECOMMENDATIONS

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

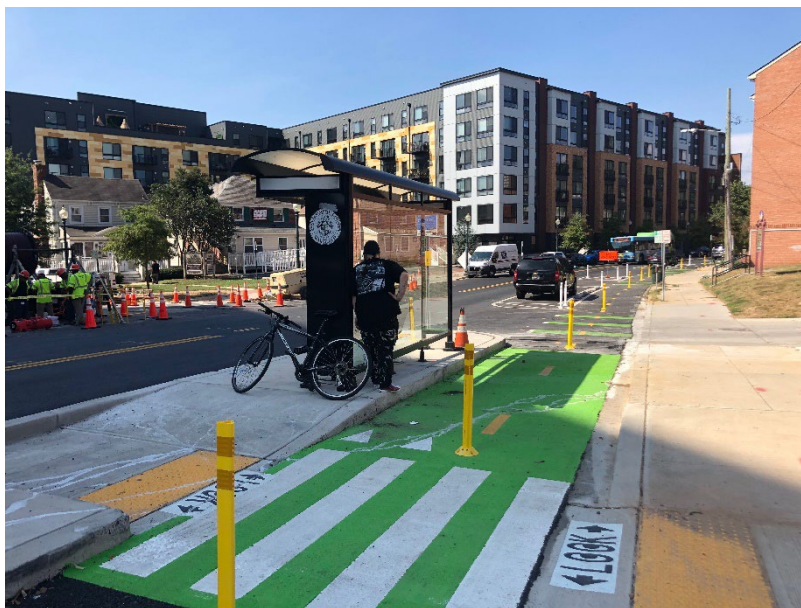
Lead: MCDOT, MDOT SHA

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. The prioritization methodology can be found starting on page 127 of the Public Hearing Draft Appendices.

Recommended Action: Planning staff recommends adding two examples of score calculations to the Prioritization Methodology appendix. The score calculations to be included are as follows:

Bel Pre Road: Georgia Avenue to Layhill Town Center (Tier 1: Map Reference #1)

Step 1: Transportation Factor Score

Factor	Value	Weight	Factor Score (Value x Weight)
Pedestrian Activity	0.050	15	0.750
Bicycle Activity	0.019	9	0.171
Pedestrian Crashes	0.596	15	8.940
Bicycle Crashes	0.323	9	2.907
Pathway Comfort	0.330	9	2.970
Crossing Comfort	0.185	9	1.665
Bikeway Comfort	0.680	5	3.400
Bike Crossing Comfort	0.000	5	0.000
School Access	0.289	12	3.468
Transit Access	0.123	12	1.476
Step One Score			25.747 (Sum of Factor Scores)

Step 2: Equity Adjustment

Factor	Value	Weight	Factor Score (Value x Weight)
Equity	0.995	5	4.975

Step 3: Total Score

Geography	Step 1 Score	Step 2 Score	Total Score (Step 1 Score + Step 2 Score)
Bel Pre Road: Georgia Avenue to Layhill Town Center	25.747	4.975	30.722

Cedar Lane/Summit Avenue: Rockville Pike to Kensington Town Center (Tier 2: Map Reference #6)

Step 1: Transportation Factor Score

Factor	Value	Weight	Factor Score (Value x Weight)
Pedestrian Activity	0.060	15	0.900
Bicycle Activity	0.137	9	1.233
Pedestrian Crashes	0.124	15	1.860
Bicycle Crashes	0.502	9	4.518
Pathway Comfort	0.335	9	3.015
Crossing Comfort	0.578	9	5.198
Bikeway Comfort	0.220	5	1.100
Bike Crossing Comfort	0.000	5	0.000
School Access	0.008	12	0.096
Transit Access	0.052	12	0.624
Step One Score			18.544 (Sum of Factor Scores)

Step 2: Equity Adjustment

Factor	Value	Weight	Factor Score
Equity	0.000	5	0.000

Step 3: Total Score

Geography	Step 1 Score	Step 2 Score	Total Score (Step 1 Score + Step 2 Score)
Cedar Lane/Summit Avenue: Rockville Pike to Kensington Town Center	18.544	0	18.544

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.

Moving the Bradley Boulevard BiPPA from Tier 3 into the “Funded in Capital Budget BiPPAs” tier will open up a slot in Tier 3 for another project because Tier 3 contains 100 geographies, and this change creates a vacancy. Planning staff recommends shifting Clopper Road from Clarksburg Road to Richter Farm Road into Tier 3, as it is the next highest ranked project. If the Planning Board supports this recommendation, Planning staff will update the tables and maps for the “Funded in Capital Budget BiPPAs” tier and Tier 3 accordingly.

Planning staff reviewed the scoring for the segment of Wilson Lane between Bradley Boulevard and Downtown Bethesda in relation to Bradley Boulevard between Huntington Parkway and Downtown Bethesda.

While Bradley Boulevard scores better than Wilson Lane in many criteria (including Pedestrian Pathway Comfort and Pedestrian Crossing Comfort), due to a lack of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, Wilson Lane scores much more strongly in terms of school and transit access, which accounts for its higher priority in the scoring. Using the variable weights identified in the plan appendix, this segment of Wilson Lane scores about 16.17 points, while Bradley Boulevard scores 12.41 points. Neither geography overlaps with an Equity Focus Area. The scoring breakdown is in the table below.

Factor	Weight	Wilson Lane Value	Wilson Lane Factor Score (Value x Weight)	Bradley Boulevard Value	Bradley Boulevard Factor Score (Value x Weight)
Pedestrian Activity	15	0.15	2.25	0.02	0.30
Bicycle Activity	9	0.26	2.34	0.29	2.61
Pedestrian Crashes	15	0.09	1.35	0.04	0.60
Bicycle Crashes	9	0.08	0.72	0.05	0.45
Pathway Comfort	9	0.22	1.98	0.54	4.86
Crossing Comfort	9	0.17	1.53	0.28	2.52
Bikeway Comfort	5	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.35
Bike Crossing Comfort	5	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.10
School Access	12	0.18	2.16	0.05	0.60
Transit Access	12	0.32	3.84	0.00	0.02
Sum of Factor Scores			16.17		12.41

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

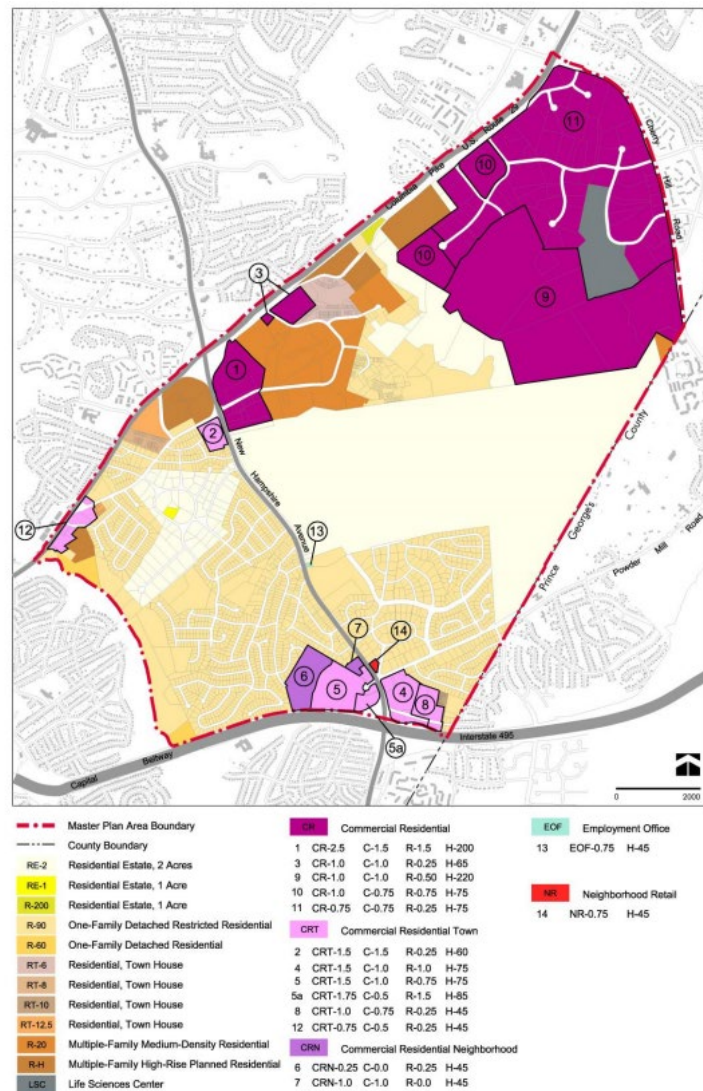
Planning Staff Response: Disagree. While Planning staff agrees that changes are needed to the CSDG area designation for the Life Sciences Center, it is appropriate to defer decisions about the area type designation to the ongoing Great Seneca Plan: Connecting Life and Science, which is anticipated to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

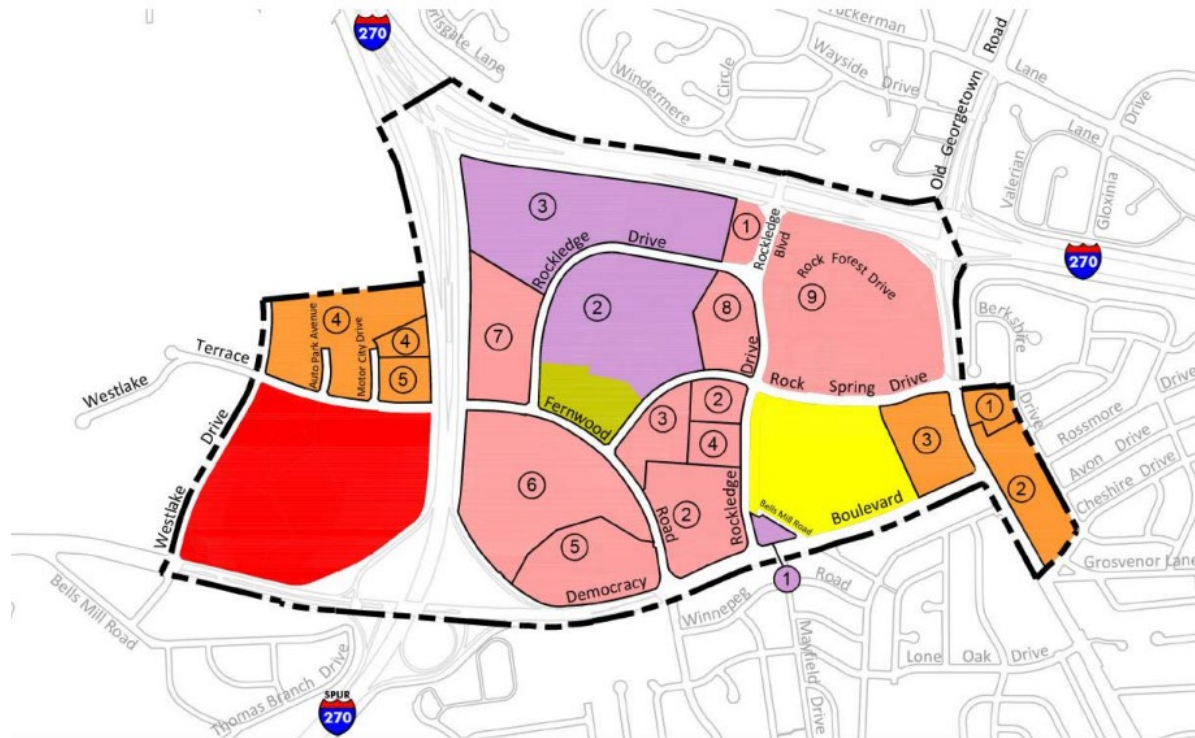


Downtown Rock Spring (Page 152)

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 envisions 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 Master Plan Boundary	4 CR 1.5, C-1.25, R-0.75, H-100'	2 CRT 1.25, C-0.75, R-0.75, H-50'
R-90 One-Family Detached Residential	5 CR 1.5, C-1.0, R-0.75, H-150'	3 CRT 1.5, C-1.0, R-0.75, H-75'
THD Townhouse High Density	6 CR 1.5, C-0.75, R-0.75, H-150'	4 CRT 2.25, C-1.5, R-0.75, H-150'
GR General Retail GR 1.5, H-45'	7 CR 1.5, C-1.25, R-0.75, H-200'	5 CRT 2.5, C-1.5, R-2.0, H-150'
CR Commercial Residential	8 CR 1.5, C-1.0, R-0.75, H-200'	EOF Employment Office
1 CR 1.5, C-0.75, R-0.75, H-275'	9 CR 1.5, C-0.75, R-1.0, H-275'	1 EOF 0.5, H-60'
2 CR 1.5, C-1.0, R-0.75, H-100'	CRT Commercial Residential Town	2 EOF 1.0, H-100'
3 CR 1.5, C-1.5, R-0.75, H-100'	1 CRT 1.25, C-0.5, R-0.75, H-50'	3 EOF 1.25, H-150'

Regional Shopping Center Overlay Zone applies; building height may be increased.

0 1200 FT

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.

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.

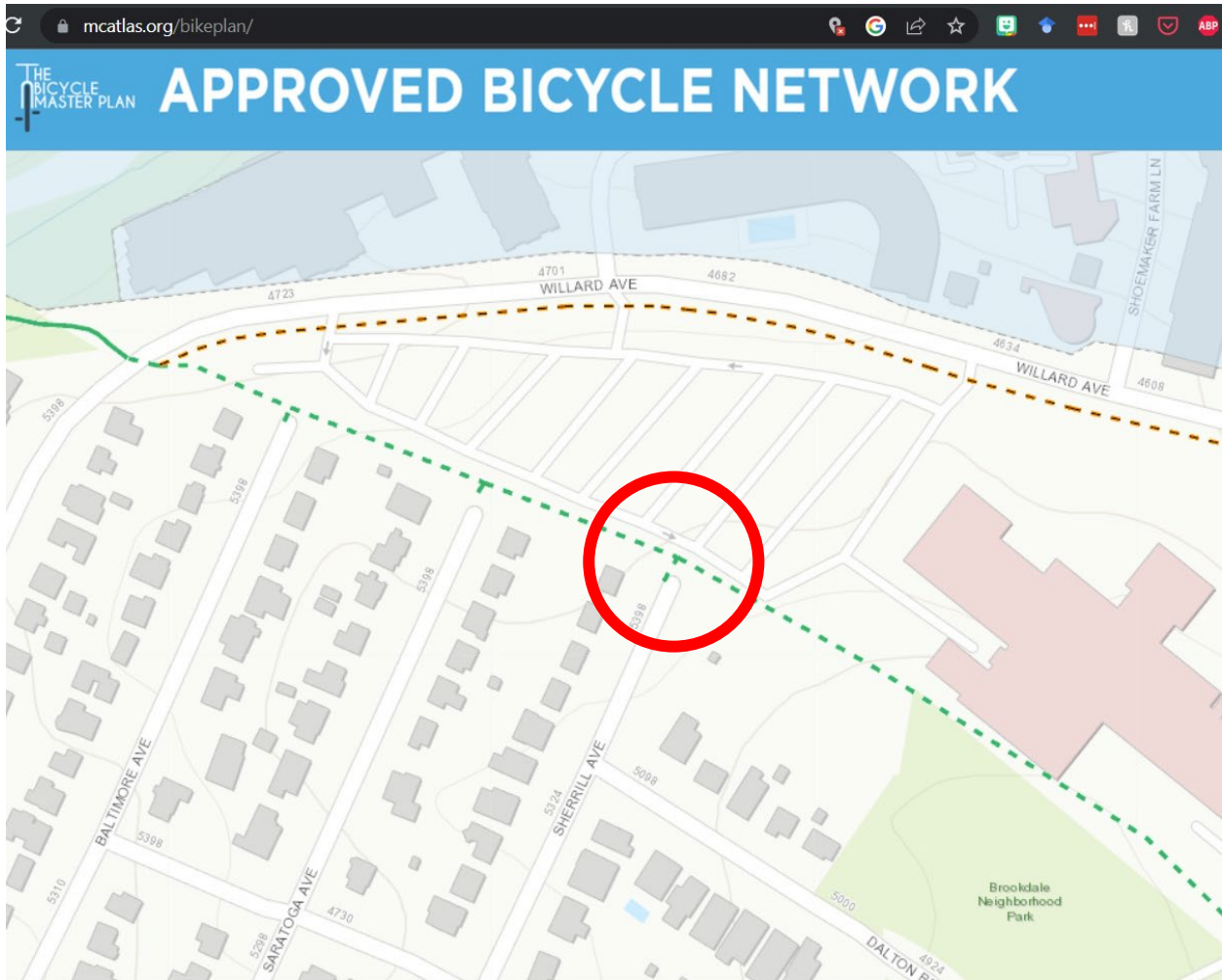
At this point, with the design process in motion, Planning staff defers to MCDOT about the feasibility of this connection. If MCDOT finds the project infeasible or inadvisable, the County Council could remove this recommendation from the plan.

[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.

REQUESTED REVISIONS

RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT

Planning Board Direction in Work Session #1: On page 7, paragraph 5, change “for equity communities” to “across race, ethnicity, income, English language proficiency, and disability” as shown below:

The Existing Conditions Report includes analysis to determine if countywide findings also hold true [for equity communities] across race, ethnicity, income, English language proficiency, and disability. This work relied on several data sources:

- Montgomery Planning’s Equity Focus Areas (EFAs) are areas of the county where “lower income communities of color who may speak English less than very well” live. These data points were combined with pedestrian comfort and crash data to better understand disparities in comfortable access and pedestrian safety.
- Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Title I/Focus Schools/High FARMS Rate Schools designations allow for school mode choice (how students are arriving at and departing from school) comparisons and comfortable access analysis between schools that have different population characteristics.
- The Countywide Pedestrian Survey asked questions about the pedestrian experience, activity, and perception—breaking out responses by race, age, ethnicity, and reported disability.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Key Action MO-1g (page 273)

Planning Board Direction in Work Session #1: In addition to modifying the Planning Board Draft to specify that targets will be revisited as part of the Pedestrian Master Plan Biennial Monitoring Report, as proposed by Planning staff, the Planning Board also directed Planning staff to indicate that objectives and metrics should be revisited as follows:

MO-1g: Consider [[revising]] revisiting the objectives, metrics, and [[the]] targets for each objective as part of the Pedestrian Master Plan Biennial Monitoring Reports.

As the Pedestrian Master Plan is implemented, there may be opportunities to add or remove objectives, change metrics, and adjust objective targets in response to county policy, changes in existing conditions, and other factors.

Goal: Walking Rates

Lead: Montgomery Planning

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Planning Board Direction in Work Session #1: Change the note for Table 11 on page 38 as follows:

Table 11. Sidewalk Gap Mileage by Street Classification and Land Use

Street Classification	Existing Sidewalks (miles)	Gap Mileage			
		Urban	Transit Corridor	Exurban/Rural	Total
Controlled Major Highway	20	1	0	0	1
Major Highway	214	5	7	38	50
Parkway	3	0	0	0	0
Arterial	205	7	11	80	98
Minor Arterial	62	1	2	5	8
Business	79	2	0	0	2
Primary Residential	227	4	7	45	56
Industrial	12	0	0	1	1
Country Road	2	0	0	3	3
Rustic Road	2	0	0	0	0
Exceptional Rustic Road	0	0	0	1	1
Local Streets	1,367	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	2,193	20	27	173	220

Note: Missing sidewalks on local streets are not classified as sidewalk gaps **[[because traffic volumes and speed limits often allow for a comfortable experience for those pedestrians traveling in the roadway]]**.

DESIGN, POLICY, AND PROGRAMMING RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Action B-1a (page 64)

Planning Board Direction in Work Session #2: There was a lengthy discussion about Key Action B-1a during the work session. Planning staff proposed the language below in advance of Work Session #2.

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

Planning staff requests clarity on the following points regarding the prioritization of sidewalk projects.

Planning Staff Understanding

- Publicly requested sidewalks projects (**Type A Sidewalks**) that have begun the public engagement process should continue to advance to construction (roughly one year of projects).
- Publicly requested sidewalk projects that have not begun the public engagement process (**Type B Sidewalks**) should be prioritized using a data-driven approach (roughly ten years of projects).
- Sidewalks gaps that have not been publicly requested (**Type C Sidewalks**) should be prioritized using a data drive approach.

Additional Direction Needed

- Should **Type B Sidewalks** and **Type C Sidewalks** be prioritized equally?

Planning Staff Recommendation: Yes. **Type B Sidewalks** should not receive any additional preference or priority over **Type C Sidewalks**.

The purpose of this recommendation is to shift from a sidewalk construction process dependent on requests to one that uses data to prioritize building the highest-value sidewalks. This has equity benefits and provides more long-term value for the limited sidewalk construction resources available. There are many sidewalk gaps across the county, and the fact that **Type B Sidewalks** were previously requested by the public does not make them more important than **Type C Sidewalks**. **Type B Sidewalks** and **Type C Sidewalks** should be analyzed in a data-

driven way, and the strongest scoring projects should be constructed first.

Planning staff will provide the Planning Board with revisions to this Key Action at the May 25, 2023 work session, based on the Planning Board's direction.

Key Action B-4c (page 75)

Planning Board Direction in Work Session #2: Update Key Action B-4c to be less of a directive and to consider colocation opportunities to facilitate smaller school footprints better integrated into adjacent communities as follows:

B-4c: Encourage MCPS to r[R]evise minimum acreage requirements for school sites and consider colocation opportunities 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-4g (page 78)

Planning Board Direction in Work Session #2: Clarify Key Action B-4g to indicate that the recommendation is intended to make the open parkways permanent, as currently operated, and to study and mitigated any adverse impacts on adjacent neighborhood streets as follows:

B-4g: Make the Open Parkways currently operating 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 (including Fridays along Sligo Creek Parkway) 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. Spillover effects to adjacent neighborhood streets should be studied and any negative effects should be mitigated.

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

Goal: Comfortable/Connected Network

Lead: Montgomery Parks

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

Planning Board Direction in Work Session #2: Discuss Key Action B-4h with Montgomery Parks and provide revised language about public restrooms in parks.

Planning Staff Recommendation: Planning staff recommends making the following change to Key Action B-4h after consultation with Montgomery Parks staff:

B-4h: Provide public seating, restrooms and other pedestrian amenities in Downtowns, Town Centers, [\[\[parkland\]\] priority park locations](#), 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](#)

Key Action B-8e (page 88)

Planning Board Direction in Work Session #2: Revise Key Action B-8e to be less of a directive while still emphasizing that constructing sidewalks and bikeways per county standards is a priority as follows:

B-8e: Prioritize construction of all required sidewalks and bikeways to standard dimensions for [[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-9b (page 89)

Planning Board Direction in Work Session #2: Change “modeled pedestrian demand” to “potential pedestrian demand” to reflect that anticipated pedestrian demand rather than actual pedestrian forecasts, should be a factor in determining where to install pedestrian improvements:

B-9b: Use [[modeled]] potential pedestrian demand instead of observed pedestrian volumes in deciding if or where to install pedestrian connectivity improvements. [Deemphasize pedestrian volumes as a determining factor in deciding where to install pedestrian or 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 P-1a (page 95)

Planning Board Direction in Work Session #2: Revise Key Action P-1a to include reference to pedestrian collision avoidance technology as a way to ensure that county and public agency vehicles are safe for pedestrians.

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]] pedestrian detection and collision avoidance technologies installed.

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-1e (Page 98)

Planning Board Direction in Work Session #2: Revise Key Action P-1e provide more flexibility in how the county will notify the public of changes to traffic rules and regulations.

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]] notify all county households identifying changes to traffic rules and regulations that have taken effect over the past year.

[Key Action P-4c \(page 104\)](#)

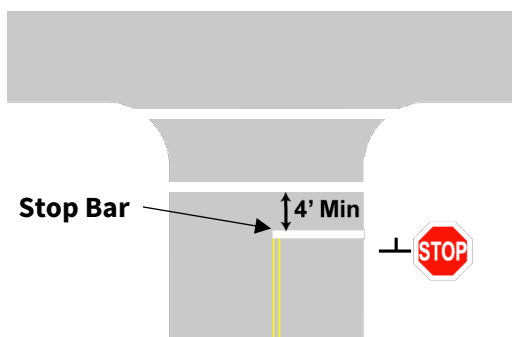
Planning Board Direction in Work Session #2: Consult with MCPS about school-related recommendations, particularly Key Action P-4c.

Current Status: Planning staff has provided MCPS additional opportunities to provide feedback on relevant plan recommendations. At time of staff report posting, no feedback has been received.

[Key Action P-7b \(page 110\)](#)

Planning Board Direction in Work Session #2: Update the graphic in Key Action P-7b to identify the stop bar:

Requested Change: Planning staff has made the requested change to the graphic:



[Key Action P-8a \(page 112\)](#)

Planning Board Direction in Work Session #2: Update description of Key Action P-8a to streamline the discussion of equity in implementation:

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