



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION

3430 Court House Drive ■ Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 ■ 410-313-0702

Bruce Gartner, Administrator

bgartner@howardcountymd.gov

FAX 410-313-1655

TDD 410-313-2323

Subject: Complete Streets Policy – Six Month Implementation Update

To: Howard County Council

From: Bruce Gartner, Administrator, Office of Transportation

Date: April 8, 2020

On October 7, 2019, Howard County Council passed Council Resolution 120-2019, adopting a Complete Streets Policy for the County. The policy specifies several implementation activities, as well as semi-annual reporting to County Council to describe progress. This memorandum is the first of those reports. The County Administration, Office of Transportation, Department of Public Works, and Department of Planning and Zoning are pleased to report that significant implementation progress has been made in the six months since the policy was adopted. While the team is hopeful that we can continue moving forward with the plan outlined below, the current pandemic, reduced government operations and recently announced County hiring freeze could impact our progress.

Progress made during the last six months

County Executive Calvin Ball hosted a Transportation Forum in Elkridge on December 2, 2019, to allow residents to hear directly from the County's subject matter experts in the planning, design, operations, and maintenance of the County's transportation systems, as well as to ask specific questions of those experts and County Executive Ball. The Office of Transportation, Department of Public Works, and Police Department were represented. Information was presented on Complete Streets in general as well as several specific projects. A number of bicycle, pedestrian, and Complete Streets projects have been completed since the adoption of the Complete Streets policy. They include:

- New sidewalk on Foundry Street near the Savage Mill
- New roundabout and pedestrian crossings at Foundry Street and Washington Street near the Savage Mill
- New pedestrian crosswalk and refuge island across Vollmerhausen Road at Castleford Drive
- White Acre Road Complete Streets improvements in Oakland Mills including traffic calming, bike lanes, pedestrian crossing improvements, bus stop improvements and rain gardens

The Office of Transportation, in conjunction with other County staff, established a Complete Streets Implementation Team (CSIT). The CSIT consists of an equal number of internal and external stakeholders who are guiding and tracking implementation of the policy.

Members of the CSIT are as follows:

Internal stakeholders:

Tom Auyeung, Department of Public Works, Engineering
Chris Eatough, Office of Transportation
Chad Edmondson, Department of Planning and Zoning
Kris Jagarapu, Department of Public Works, Highways
Christiana Rigby, Howard County Council
Sam Sidh, Howard County Executive's Office
Paul Walsky, Department of Recreation and Parks

External stakeholders:

Carl Gutschick, Private Sector Engineer
David Nitkin, Howard County General Hospital
David Ramsay, Howard County Public Schools
Kristin Russell, Columbia Association
Larry Schoen, Multimodal Transportation Board
Cory Summerson, Public Works Board
Jennifer White, Horizon Foundation

The CSIT held an orientation session on December 11, 2019 and regular monthly meetings on January 8, February 5, March 4, and April 1, 2020.

- The January 8 meeting consisted of group introductions, establishment of ground rules, a presentation on the content of the policy, and staff responses to questions from the group.
- The February 5 meeting included a review of current design processes and engagement procedures, both of which will be updated as the Complete Streets policy is implemented.
- The March 4 meeting focused on public engagement. Jennifer White presented a number of ideas for engagement processes that effectively involve a variety of stakeholders. The bulk of the meeting was a working session of all CSIT members present, who presented ideas for improving the County's engagement procedures in the context of Complete Streets. An introduction to project prioritization was also provided.
- During the April 1 meeting, held online, the CSIT reviewed draft information on a Community Engagement Plan and potential Design Manual updates, and also provided comments on a draft of this memorandum.

During this time the Core Team, a group of County staff involved in Complete Streets implementation, met multiple times to advance updates to the Design Manual. As draft elements are developed, they will be presented to the CSIT and to the public.

Progress anticipated during the next six months

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a constantly changing environment in which planning in advance has been made more difficult than usual. Under normal operations, the CSIT would have anticipated the following activities before the next semi-annual report to County Council.

- Continued monthly CSIT meetings.
- Continued staff work on updating the Design Manual, in cooperation with the CSIT. The CSIT has been provided some preliminary information in these updates and will continue to play a role in their development. Design Manual updates are due within two years of the adoption of the policy, or by October 2021. County staff is aiming to complete those updates in early 2021.
- Review of Subdivision and Land Development Regulations for potential updates. Although these updates are due within nine months after the Design Manual updates are complete, the CSIT and County staff will look for opportunities to institute some updates more quickly.
- Throughout this process, the CSIT will be informed on the specific sections of the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations that will be updated
- Development of a prioritization process. This process, specified by the policy to be completed by October 2020, will use metrics specified in the policy to prioritize transportation projects based on their Complete Streets benefits. The results would inform the annual capital budgeting process.
- Development of a process to track and report on performance measures. The semi-annual report each spring would report on progress made during the previous year. For example, progress made in 2020 would be described in the spring 2021 report.
- Development of updated public engagement procedures.
- Replacement of the 1999 policy for sidewalks on public right of way.
- Involvement of stakeholders in the above processes, likely starting with online engagement until COVID-19 restrictions are eased.

The CSIT will be working with County Administration over the next two months to determine the impact of the COVID-19 restrictions on our ability to accomplish these tasks and will provide an interim report to the County Council in July 2020 to highlight any potential changes in these plans.

Funding

The proposed FY21 capital budget includes funding that will be critical to the progress of the Complete Streets policy and project implementation in Howard County. This funding includes:

- Engineering Study Program (J4219): \$380,000 to complete the update of the Design Manual.
- Road Resurfacing (H2014): \$4.9 million to resurface roads, including addition of bike lanes.
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure capital budget areas (below) to advance project implementation for new pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and maintenance of existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Howard County FY 2021 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Bicycle and Pedestrian Related Projects

Budget item	Description	FY21 Budget (thousands)
K5035	School Route Pathways or Sidewalks	\$480
K5043	Sidewalk Repair Program	\$1,000
K5054	Roadside Improvement Program	\$500
K5061	Pedestrian Plan Projects	\$500
K5062	State Roads Sidewalk Retrofit Program	\$240
K5066	Bicycle Plan Projects	\$1,900
K5068	ADA Ramps Upgrade Program	\$1,000
K5069	Bituminous Curb Replacement Program	\$350
T7107	Downtown Columbia Patuxent Branch Trail Extension	\$600
J4230	Sanner Road Improvements	\$350
J4248	Savage Area Complete Streets	\$600
C0332	Bus Stop Improvements	\$350
Total		\$7,870

Summary

Significant progress has been made on Complete Streets Implementation in the six months since adoption of the Complete Streets policy. Tasks are on track through coordination between the Complete Streets Implementation Team and the consultant and capital projects to implement Complete Streets are progressing.

The next six months are uncertain times due to potential disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, but the Complete Streets Implementation Team and County staff remain focused on advancing tasks to the best of their abilities.

Continued funding in the FY21 capital budget will be critical to maintaining progress on the Design Manual update and on implementation of Complete Streets projects.

cc: CSIT Members
Amy Gowan, DPZ Director
Jim Irvin, DPW Director
Diane Jones, County Council Administrator