The following questions from the public were received via WebEx chat and answered by panelists during the Question and Answer portion of the workshop. Questions and responses have been edited for clarity.

**Why does equity (and project prioritization) not consider the state of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in high Equity Emphasis Area (EEA) communities?** The EEA communities in Columbia already have a network of multi-use paths, while other parts of the County like Elkridge have no bicycle infrastructure to speak of. In terms of bike infrastructure, Elkridge is severely underserved.

The Equity Emphasis Area map shown will be used for two purposes. First, to inform targeted public engagement to groups that have not traditionally participated in the transportation planning process. This outreach approach is detailed in the Community Engagement Plan. Secondly, Equity is one of five inputs to the Transportation Improvement Prioritization System (TIPS), which is included as Appendix B of Chapter 1 of the Design Manual. TIPS is a way to compare proposed projects and prioritize them for funding.

The primary input to TIPS is multimodal safety and access (20 possible points), which includes network connectivity. Good network connectivity means providing infrastructure in areas that currently lack infrastructure. Equity is also considered (10 possible points), along with crash history (10 possible points), system preservation/maintenance (10 possible points), and cost sharing (10 possible bonus points). The County is open to feedback on improving TIPS.

County master planning efforts including WalkHoward and Bike Howard are used to identify gaps in the current pedestrian and bicycle network, and projects that will connect those gaps. These projects will then be prioritized for funding via the TIPS process including a comparison to other proposed transportation improvements.

**Please do not shrink the width of motor vehicle lanes. Oakland Mills Rd lanes are already too skinny.**

Reduction in travel lane width is an issue the CSIT has considered as part of Design Manual updates. Travel lane width not only impacts motor vehicle users, but also other users along the road. In the County currently, vehicular lanes typically range from 10 to 12 feet. Twelve-foot widths used to be the standard width to accommodate larger vehicles like trucks or fire trucks. However wider lanes also increase the operating speeds of vehicles, and the crossing distance for people who need to cross the street.

In order to accommodate space for other modes of travel along an existing roadway, the number of lanes can be reduced or the width of lanes can be reduced. Eleven feet is sufficient to handle truck and bus traffic. For corridors where there is less truck and bus traffic, 10.5 or ten feet may be sufficient.

On Oakland Mills Road, the lanes are currently 11 feet wide and will remain 11 feet wide. A road diet, or reduction in the number of lanes, creates space to accommodate bicycle facilities so that all road users are accommodated as required by the Complete Streets policy.
Please explain how right-of-way limitations impact which roads in the County can be improved. Also speak to the willingness of the County to use eminent domain to obtain land to make Complete Streets improvements.

The County makes sure there’s good understanding of the need for a project; it’s just a fact of politics that there is a reluctance to use eminent domain. What we’re doing is trying to get out there to educate community members, Council members, and users of the corridor on the challenges that we’re having with right-of-way. Controversy over eminent domain can also slow down a project, so it often benefits the County and local land owners if there is a collaborative approach to real estate for transportation improvements.

The County has a lot of older roadways that do not have as much right-of-way available as roads that were designed and built more recently. Often, the County only has 15 feet from the center of the road to maintain the roadway. In these cases, there is often insufficient right-of-way to widen the road or add sidewalks. When we go and do a project along a roadway we try to acquire right of way by offering fair market value, or if a parcel along the roadway goes through a subdivision process, then the adjacent property owners are required to dedicate right of way to the County at no cost. These roadways have residences or property owners that live along those roadways; it is a huge undertaking for staff to acquire right of way. Use of eminent domain for property owners along the roadway is controversial because it involves taking somebody’s land for an improvement. We typically try to work with the property owner rather than take the eminent domain route to make improvements or achieve the same goal.

The proposed Design Manual does not include an educational nor a monitoring component.

- **Education:** How will drivers and bicyclists be informed how to use new bike lanes and safe zones? Will an explanation of bicycle facility function and use be included in County mailings or when notices of drivers license renewals go out?
- **Monitoring:** In shared car and bike situations, will intersection cameras catch problems with lane cutting and other dangerous habits (or designs) for cars and bikes? This type of monitoring is rare, and most accidents are catastrophic and more deadly for bicyclists.

The purpose of Volume III of the Design Manual is to inform how streets are designed and built. The Design Manual does not make provisions for education or monitoring. The Design Manual also is not a document that is frequently read by the public. The driver’s license process is controlled by the State of Maryland, and there are advocates working to change some of the questions on the exam and better educate people as to the rules of the road. Educating people about Complete Streets improvements is a big, long-term effort that will need support and collaboration from many community and advocacy groups.

Regarding monitoring, the County does not monitor intersections with cameras for potential crash issues. There are automated enforcement efforts underway in certain locations within the County which includes capturing red light violations and speed violations. School buses are now also equipped with cameras to record and enforce violations regarding passing a school bus with. The County takes record of citizen concerns about issues or potential issues at intersections. The Department of Public Works observes the intersection and makes any necessary changes or adjustments. When designing an intersection, the goal is safely accommodating all modes of travel.

The County has also adopted a [Strategic Roadway Safety Plan](#) that includes an increase focus on safety that highlights areas where the County can do better, including areas of specific focus and partnerships with the Police on enforcement.
Are impacts on the natural environment considered, such as through the selection of building materials? If so, what are some features that may be termed “earth friendly”? Most illustrative pictures show trees. Are trees usually part of the design?

All of the new proposed Street Types provide a 6 foot permeable buffer area on each side of the street. This area is sized to provide sufficient space for trees to grow without root damage to adjacent sidewalks. Trees adjacent to streets are also prioritized as part of retrofit projects. Volume I of the Design Manual regulates stormwater management requirements, which also applies to transportation projects. The Volume IV design details provide guidance on types of materials, and where pervious materials may be used.

The Adequate Public Facilities Test Ordinance (APFO) and Development Regulation changes are essential for future Complete Streets improvements. How will the improvement of existing roads be conducted/funded?

Changes to Chapter 4, Adequate Public Facilities Test Evaluation Requirements, through the CSIT process were always planned to be minimal since this chapter affects requirements for developers that are dictated by the subdivision regulations in county code and are typically updated by an APFO committee. These comments will be considered, but not in the timeframe of the current Design Manual updates. Revising these items in light of both the new Complete Streets Design Standards to be considered by County Council in January 2022 and the updated General Plan (HoCo By Design) scheduled for consideration in early 2022 will allow the County to provide a more comprehensive update. A specific path forward for updating the subdivision regulations and APFO will be addressed in the next scheduled report to County Council. The only change made to the APFO chapter of the Design Manual (chapter 4) was to remove the escalation of assumed background growth rate to 6% beyond the third year. Evaluation of recent growth data showed that background growth rates exceeding 3% are extremely unlikely.

Retrofits to existing roadways are funded with the County’s Capital Program. All changes will have to be accommodated within the existing funding sources. The goal is to structure projects in a way that addresses Complete Streets. The County will also rely on external funding sources such as grants, the State, and the federal government. If the federal government passes an infrastructure bill, more federal funds will be available for these types of improvements. The County works to coordinate across all capital projects to implement Complete Streets improvements, such as when roadways are resurfaced or when a water or sewer main is replaced. This is more cost efficient and allows for more projects to get done sooner.

APFO was not scheduled for updates prior to the general plan, but background growth percentage, net peak trips per hour, and non-transit credits are added in a significant Downtown Columbia rewrite. Will there be a comparison chart of APFO changes? Will there be a review of APFO expansions recommended in 2015 such as transit inclusion? Will the public be shown if changes implemented result in a net increase or net decrease of developer obligations?

See answer to previous question.

Share that TellHoCo can be used to report bicycle and pedestrian safety issues and for issues with road and shoulder conditions.

Although TellHoCo was not mentioned during the public meeting, it is an excellent way for the public to report bicycle and pedestrian safety issues, as well as any other issues with public infrastructure. Visit www.howardcountymd.gov/tell-hoco to report any non-emergency neighborhood issues to Howard County Government from a smartphone, tablet or desktop computer. “Tell HoCo” is also available as an app for iPhones.
Are changes to accommodate electric vehicles covered in the Design Manual?

This update to the Design Manual does not include any references to electric vehicles, however, the County will consider updates in the near future. Although street design guidance may not be affected, other areas such as parking lot design to accommodate electric vehicle charging stations will be affected.

Most projects follow a "prioritization" implementation. From a budget and planning perspective, will a complete accounting of total costs to implement the Complete Streets Design Manual be reported on? Will there be regular review to determine if the County is falling behind on Complete Streets implementation, holding even, or whether improvements will be met by a certain date?

The Complete Streets policy has a tracking and reporting requirement. The Office of Transportation, with support of the Complete Streets Implementation Team, the Department of Public Works, and the Department of Planning and Zoning are required to provide a report to County Council every six months on progress made in implementing the policy. These reports are filed in October and April. The April report, considered the “annual report” must include information on the following:

- Progress made on each performance measure (performance measures are listed in the policy) during the previous year;
- Public engagement undertaken;
- A description of the Complete Streets related education or training undertaken by the County;
- Exceptions granted to incorporating Complete Streets into transportation projects, citing specific reasons; and
- The measures listed below:
  - Journey to work by mode
  - Percentage of urban/suburban roadway mileage with sidewalks on one or both sides
  - Transit ridership
  - Number (or percentage) of students within the recognized Howard County Public School walk zones (safe walk or bike route to school within the minimum distance set by HCPSS)

Is there a map anywhere that shows how the new Street Types in this Design Manual will be applied to the existing road networks?

The existing functional classification of the street network will remain in place to augment the Street Types; functional classifications will remain a factor in certain criteria.

The new Street Types are primarily for new roadways. Currently, most new roadways are built through the development process. Using land use contexts described in Section 1.3.A and anticipated vehicular volume, the Designer may identify the appropriate street type based on Table 1-13. New streets will typically be assigned a Functional Classification based on the chart in Appendix E of Chapter 1. The Transportation Classification Map provided as Appendix D, will then be updated with new streets and their classification.

For the retrofit of existing streets, it often is not possible to replicate a new Street Type because there is not sufficient space. Designers should follow the guidance in Section 1.3.E, Retrofits Projects, to identified a preferred street cross section, and how to approach trade-offs that may be necessary to accommodate all users of the street.