



Howard County

Internal Memorandum

Subject: Complete Streets Policy – Twenty-Four-Month Implementation Update

To: Howard County Council

From: Bruce Gartner, Administrator, Office of Transportation

Date: November 2, 2021

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 fourth 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 twenty-four months since the policy was adopted. That this work has advanced even during a pandemic is a testament to the commitment of many County staff and external stakeholders.

The progress for the past six months is detailed below.

Progress made during the last six months

The Office of Transportation continued to facilitate meetings of the 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:

Jessica Bellah, Columbia Association
Carl Gutschick, Private Sector Engineer
Brian Nevin, Howard County Public School System
David Nitkin, Howard County General Hospital
Larry Schoen, Multimodal Transportation Board
Cory Summerson, Public Works Board
Jennifer White, Horizon Foundation

The work of the CSIT was facilitated by our consultant, Whitman Requardt and Associates (WRA). The expertise and commitment of WRA staff was evident during the last 6 months as the workload and complexity increased significantly. WRA also seamlessly managed a change in project manager as Bryan Townsend stepped in to replace Jeff Riegner, who left the firm to pursue another professional opportunity.

The CSIT increased the frequency of meetings as the workload increased, with meetings held on April 9, May 5, May 7, June 2, July 7, July 9, August 4, August 6, September 1, September 3, September 10, September 17, September 24, October 6, October 8 and October 27, 2021. Minutes and agendas for CSIT meetings are posted on the CSIT webpage located here: <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/transportation/complete-streets-implementation-team>.

During this time the Core Team, a group of County staff involved in the Complete Streets implementation, met multiple times to discuss all elements of Complete Streets implementation and advance updates to the Design Manual in advance of CSIT meetings to facilitate discussion.

The dedication of the CSIT and the Core Team is commendable and much appreciated as the last six months required many long meetings and extensive review of materials. The CSIT has provided 981 written comments on the draft Design Manual, of which 834 have been addressed.

Summary of the Draft Complete Streets Design Manual

At the October 8 CSIT meeting, the CSIT finalized a draft version of the Complete Streets Design Manual which is posted for public review as an advisory document on the project webpage: <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/DM-updates>. The draft includes significant changes to Volume III of the Design Manual to incorporate Complete Streets policies and designs and create streets that are safer and more accommodating to all users. In particular, Chapters 1, 2, and 5 of Volume III include the following new and updated material:

- Chapter 1, *Introduction and General Information*, includes new multimodal street types to be used for all new streets as well as the new Community Engagement Plan to be used for all transportation projects.
- Chapter 2, *Street Design*, includes new designs and guidance for protected bike lanes, pedestrian crossings, shared use pathways, motor vehicle speed management, and intersection treatments.
- Chapter 5, *Multimodal Traffic Studies*, includes requirements for additional multimodal traffic studies for non-vehicular road users in preparation for updates to the Subdivision Regulations.

Other more minor updates include:

- Chapter 3, *Design of Bridges, Retaining Walls, and Small Structures*, some updated designs for shared use pathway bridges and underpasses, as well as updated design standards for bridge replacements and retrofits to balance the needs of all modes on County streets.
- Chapter 4, *Adequate Transportation Facilities Test Evaluation Requirements*, was left mostly untouched since this material is typically updated using a specific process and

committee for Adequate Public Facilities. The only change proposed is to remove the escalation of assumed background growth rate of 6% beyond the third year. This is an accuracy correction since evaluation of recent and historic traffic growth data indicated that background growth rates exceeding 3% per year are extremely unlikely.

- In Volume IV, *Standard Specifications and Details for Construction*, several new typical sections were added related to the new multimodal street types and other Complete Streets features. Details providing guidance on design of motor vehicle speed management measures were also provided, and several existing details were modified to adopt the new Volume III guidance.

Summary of the Public Process

The Draft Complete Streets Design Manual was presented and discussed at two public virtual workshops in October 2021.

Workshop 1 which was held on October 14 at 7:00 pm was focused on the background and implementation of Complete Streets policy and an overview of Design Manual updates for the general public. Sixteen people attended Workshop 1, not including staff and consultants.

Workshop 2 was held on October 21 at 2:00 pm and focused on detailed information related to the new material included in the Complete Streets Design Manual specific to engineers and practitioners. Forty-three people attended Workshop 2, not including staff and consultants.

Recordings of the workshops with audio and video are posted on the Complete Streets Design Manual webpage located here: <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/DM-updates>. Feedback was collected during the workshops and through October 28 via an online questionnaire accessed on the project webpage.

We received 160 combined comments and questions from the public including the workshops and the online questionnaire.

Next Steps

- Final Comments received through October 28 have requested edits to strengthen and clarify the Complete Streets aspects of the manual.
- The CSIT will meet again on November 3 and 5 to review and approve language responding to the most recent comments and the CSIT and Core Team will continue to meet throughout the legislative process.
- The Complete Streets Design Manual will be presented to the Public Works Board at their meeting on November 9, 2021 and will be the subject of a vote for approval at their meeting on December 14, 2021.
- The Multimodal Transportation Board (MTB) has been briefed on the Design Manual updates throughout the process and will review and provide an official position on the document before it is submitted to County Council.

- A resolution to adopt the Complete Streets Design Manual will be filed with the County Council for consideration in their January 2022 legislative period.
- After adoption of the Complete Streets Design Manual, work will immediately begin on incorporating Complete Streets policy and concepts into the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations including the transportation aspects of the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance and Volume III - Chapter 4 of the Design Manual (Adequate Transportation Facilities Test Evaluation Requirements). This is required by CR120-2019 within nine months of the Design Manual update. It is anticipated that some changes to the membership of the CSIT and consultant resources will be required as the focus shifts to the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations.
- Education and training for County and private sector engineers using the updated Design Manual to design for Complete Streets is planned for early 2022.

Summary

Significant progress has been made on Complete Streets Implementation in the twenty-four months since adoption of the Complete Streets policy. The Complete Streets Implementation Team and other County staff plan to deliver the final draft of the Complete Streets Design Manual to the County Council in December 2021 for the legislative process in January 2022.

cc: CSIT Members
Amy Gowan, DPZ Director
Tom Meunier, DPW Director
Michelle Harrod, County Council Administrator