



**Committee:** T&E  
**Committee Review:** At a future date  
**Staff:** Glenn Orlin, Senior Analyst  
**Purpose:** To receive testimony – no vote expected  
**Keywords:** #Pedestrian Master Plan, M-NCPPC

AGENDA ITEMS #2A & 4  
July 25, 2023  
**Discussion**  
**Public Hearing**

## SUBJECT

On May 25, 2023, the Montgomery County Planning Board approved the *Pedestrian Master Plan*. The Plan was subsequently transmitted to the Council. Planning staff will give an overview of this Plan prior to the hearing.

## EXPECTED ATTENDEES (FOR OVERVIEW)

Tanya Stern, Jason Sartori, David Anspacher, and Eli Glazier, Planning staff.

## COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

A Transportation & Environment Committee worksession will be scheduled in September.

## DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

- 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.
- The 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 for the county’s future pedestrian/bicycle capital investments.
- The Planning Board Draft can be viewed at: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Pedestrian-Master-Plan-Planning-Board-Draft-Clean-Final-Web.pdf>
- The Plan’s Appendices can be viewed at: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Pedestrian-Master-Plan-Appendices.pdf>

### This report contains:

Executive Summary of the Final Draft Plan

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The Pedestrian Master Plan is the first countywide plan in Montgomery County to make recommendations to improve the pedestrian experience in a holistic way. An important element in the county’s 2017 Vision Zero Action Plan and 2021 Climate Action Plan, the Pedestrian Master Plan supports the Thrive Montgomery 2050 goal to “develop a safe, comfortable and appealing network for walking, biking and rolling.” The plan documents the pedestrian experience in Montgomery County today, and makes recommendations in line with national and international best practices so being a pedestrian here is even better in the years ahead.

The plan envisions a county where walking (and rolling using a mobility device) is safer, more comfortable, more convenient and more accessible for pedestrians of all ages and abilities. In line with this vision, the plan includes the following goals:

- 1) Increase Walking Rates and Pedestrian Satisfaction
- 2) Create a Comfortable, Connected, Convenient Pedestrian Network
- 3) Enhance Pedestrian Safety
- 4) Build an Equitable and Just Pedestrian Network

The plan featured significant in-person and virtual engagement to understand the issues important to pedestrians in all areas of the county and from people of different backgrounds, ages, and types of mobility. A description of engagement activities can be found in the Engagement appendix.

In addition to community engagement, the plan included first-of-its-kind data collection and analysis to support effective plan recommendations. These innovative efforts included:

**a) Countywide Pedestrian Level of Comfort (PLOC) Analysis**

The project team collected information about streetscape features (sidewalk width, traffic buffer width, etc.) for all county roadways and intersections to estimate pedestrian comfort. This data collection supported analysis around comfortable access to schools, transit stations, libraries, and other community destinations – identifying disparities in comfortable access countywide.

**b) Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Student Travel Tally**

The project team worked closely with MCPS to understand student travel patterns by distributing and analyzing a survey that was completed by more than 70,000 students in late 2019. The survey results provide unique insights into which schools already see significant arrivals and departures on foot, and where opportunities for improvement lie.

**c) 2015–2020 Pedestrian Crash Analysis**

The project team summarized the number and severity of pedestrian crashes in Montgomery County over this five-year period. Analysis identified important context, like presence of

lighting and roadway speed limit, to underscore factors related to crash severity and likelihood.

**d) Countywide Pedestrian Survey**

The project team designed, distributed, and analyzed a statistically-valid countywide survey with questions about type and frequency of pedestrian activity, satisfaction with different elements of the pedestrian environment (sidewalks, crosswalk presence, vehicle speed, etc.), knowledge of traffic laws, and others. The survey was distributed to 60,000 randomly-selected households countywide and the results were weighted in line with the county's demographics.

The engagement and data collection efforts are the foundation of the Pedestrian Master Plan. Together, they identify the issues that the plan's recommendations address.

Building on the county's Complete Streets Design Guide – a document that identifies the type and appropriate size of pedestrian facilities for each street type across the county – the Pedestrian Master Plan recommendations are focused on helping the county achieve systemic improvement to the pedestrian experience in several ways:

**1) Design, Policy, and Programming**

These recommendations address systemic issues that negatively affect the pedestrian experience by recommending changes to how pedestrian amenities are designed and constructed, the policies that guide transportation engineering in the county, as well as opportunities for expanded traffic safety education and more robust programming. The design, policy, and programming recommendations are the heart of the Pedestrian Master Plan because they address at a countywide level the issues highlighted through public engagement and existing conditions data collection.

Particularly significant recommendations in this section include:

- Providing more time for younger pedestrians, older pedestrians, and those with mobility issues to cross the street safely
- Updating pedestrian pathway and intersection lighting standards
- Improving driver education, particularly for people driving vehicles with identified pedestrian safety issues
- Adopting a more proactive, data-driven sidewalk construction and maintenance approach
- Increasing the number of places pedestrians can safely cross the street
- Identifying opportunities to change the streetscape to help mitigate climate impacts that affect pedestrians, such as extreme heat.
- Beginning a conversation on the transfer of state highways in more urban areas to county control to provide improved design flexibility and accountability
- Developing a plan to provide public restrooms countywide
- Reimagining Safe Routes to School programming
- Increasing the number of Automated Traffic Enforcement locations countywide

- Removing obstructions like utility poles from pedestrian pathways

**2) Bicycle Pedestrian Priority Area Prioritization**

These recommendations identify where in the county bicycle and pedestrian capital improvement projects should be prioritized in a data-driven way based on equity, comfortable access, safety and other metrics.

**3) Complete Streets Design Guide Area Type Classification**

These recommendations advance the transition from the Road Code area type classification (Urban, Suburban, Rural) to the Complete Streets Design Guide classifications (Downtown, Town Center, Suburban, Industrial, Country) to ensure that pedestrian-friendly streets are provided as roadways are reconstructed in the years ahead.

**4) Pedestrian Shortcut Identification**

These recommendations identify locations where public or private investment will shorten pedestrian trips and make the pedestrian network more accessible.

**5) Country Sidepath Identification**

These recommendations indicate where sidepaths—shared pedestrian and bicycle pathways—should be built along roadways in the more rural parts of the county, in line with guidance in the Complete Streets Design Guide

The Montgomery County Planning Department will track progress in implementing the Pedestrian Master Plan’s vision using a biennial monitoring report and interactive website. The two tools will document how the county is implementing the plan recommendations and striving to achieve the plan’s performance measure targets.