

**Summary of Public Comments and Responses for Complete Streets
Community Engagement Plan Workshops
Held September 23, 2020 at 1pm and 7pm**

- **Recommendation:** Host events at schools to provide education on safe pedestrian and cycling practices.
 - o Yes, we have done this in an ad hoc way. In addition, information has been shared at public events as well as initiatives sponsored by the Horizon Foundation. We appreciate the suggestion and are looking for improved collaboration with schools and other community organizations.
- **Recommendation:** Include notifications in school communications in your outreach.
 - o Yes, we have reached out to the schools and school system and are working to increase and expand our communications to them.
- **Recommendation:** A list of projects online will be helpful, especially if noting which are "next-in-line."
 - o We are considering ways this can be done across County departments in the coming months. Also, our Community Engagement Plan will include a Citizens Guide to participation, so the public knows when input from the public is most encouraged.
- **Recommendation:** Having a one-stop-shop to see status of transportation projects.
 - o We are considering ways this can be done across County departments.
- **Recommendation:** Include a local online daily news feed called "Patch" in your outreach.
 - o Great idea. We will look into this.
- **Recommendation:** Include Grassroots, FIRN, HCC, Bridges to Housing, and other service organizations to improve outreach to under-represented communities.
 - o Thank you for your suggestion. We will include them on our outreach list.
- **Recommendation:** Permit the public to provide suggestions electronically outside of the public meetings which would be available for everyone to read.
 - o Yes. This is already being done on many projects. We hope to make this possible for all County transportation projects. Also, the public can always provide feedback by calling the Office of Transportation at 410.313.4312, emailing us at transportation@howardcountymd.gov, or writing us at 3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043.
- **Recommendation:** The most dangerous aspect of biking in County streets is the bike lanes that disappear at intersections. Important to address.

- Often this is the case across the country. Some new designs are being proposed by National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) to accommodate cyclists at intersections that the County is considering and hopes to address in the coming year in revising of the County's transportation design manual. This is part of our Complete Streets policy implementation.
- **Recommendation:** Pedestrian safety be included with the Drivers Ed classes at High Schools.
 - Driver's Education class curriculum is determined by MDOT's driver's permit test, however, there may be opportunities we can investigate for the County to collaborate with schools in other ways to educate students on pedestrian safety. In addition, it could be addressed as part of the County's Strategic Road Safety Plan 2021-2015.
- **Recommendation:** To color code projects online on County website to let us know the stage the project is in, if there are delays, when/if public input is welcome, and how to give input.
 - We will include this idea as one to consider as the County works to consolidate and streamline our transportation project websites for the public to easily access project status and information.
- **Question:** How is outreach handled with underserved communities?
 - That is an important question as they often don't feel included in the planning process. The County is working towards improving its communication and relationships with these communities and relying on our network of organizations in Howard County that already serve them to assist us. We are also trying to develop relationships with organizations in specific geographic areas that we haven't connected with in the past and ask them to assist in our outreach to their communities. If you have other ideas about how to reach out to underserved communities, we encourage you to contact us at the Office of Transportation at transportation@howardcountymd.gov.
- **Question:** What is a typical timespan for a major or minor capital project?
 - That's very difficult to respond to, because all projects major or minor have unique circumstances and challenges that will impact the timeframe, as well as how successful our public engagement has been. However, it is an important point and we will see if we can do our best to address it in the Community Engagement Plan.
- **Question:** Can you provide an example of a major project and a minor project from the recent past for context?
 - A minor project could be, for example, after a road has recently been resurfaced for typical maintenance, there is an opportunity to repaint the road to now include bike lanes alongside the vehicular traffic lane. A major project would be something on the scale of fixing a bridge or redesigning a roadway with road widening and additional lanes.
- **Question:** Has the Bike Share/rental in downtown Columbia been successful?
 - The restart of the Howard County Bikeshare program was August 13. It has been getting some use, but we're looking for more usage out of that system. Currently, it is nowhere near capacity.
- **Question:** Has there been an increase in bike traffic since the pandemic started?

- Anecdotally, we have noticed an increase in both bicycle and pedestrian activity, but currently we don't have actual data to prove it.
- **Question:** Have you thought about the potential impact of scooters on Howard County as is seen in DC and Baltimore?
 - We worked with the County Council to pass legislation ensuring that any e-scooter operator in Howard County must comply with specific requirements, including applying for a permit showing they are able to safely and responsibly operate here. Plus, we are trying it in a limited and targeted area in the initial test year.
- **Question:** How can we find out what projects are happening or will be constructed in the future?
 - It is difficult to give a concrete response concerning construction timeframes, usually because there are so many unknowns in the process which can cause delays. As the County is able to consolidate project information and more easily update project timelines, it should be possible for Project Managers to better inform the public of estimated constructions start and end dates.
- **Question:** How do we learn what County projects are scheduled to be implemented?
 - The County uses a variety of methods to inform the public of the next major stages of a transportation project – County social media, the Ball Bulletin, press releases posted on the County website at <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/>, and project websites. If you are not able to find the information you need, you can also call the County or if you know what department is currently managing the project (e.g., Office of Transportation, Public Works), you can reach out to them directly.
- **Question:** Is this a regionally based plan or an overall plan for all regions?
 - The Community Engagement Plan is a guide for Howard County to address project planning and target outreach as individual projects move forward. The Plan helps us to target the best partners to help the County disseminate project communications.
- **Question:** Is Howard County considering adding diagonal cross walks for intersections and 4 way stops (e.g., Boston)?
 - That is something that will be considered in this next version of the transportation design manual which we will be writing over the course of the coming year.
- **Question:** Is it possible to have recurring pop-up "slow streets"/"open streets" during the pandemic?
 - We are researching the feasibility of slow streets for Howard County currently. If you have suggestions, please let us know by emailing us at: transportation@howardcountymd.gov.
- **Question:** Is there a site that lists transportation projects impacting pedestrians/bicyclists interact with others?
 - Howard County's Bicycle Master Plan, *BikeHoward*, and Pedestrian Master Plan, *WalkHoward*, help guide the process of project implementation and clarify our goals for bicycle and pedestrian access, safety, and connectivity.

- **Question:** Is there a way to check the status of any road/sidewalk project online or do I need to contact my district representative for information?
 - Currently, information on different projects is located on different department project sites. The County plans to address this in the coming months to consolidate project information and status into one location so they are easier to find and track.
- **Question:** Request for contact email address. You can contact us at the Office of Transportation at transportation@howardcountymd.gov.
- **Comment:** Concern the Community Engagement Plan is “cumbersome.”
 - The Community Engagement Plan is intended to be a comprehensive plan for the County agencies to use and refer to. We will create a Citizens Guide that will function like an executive summary and be more useful for members of the public.
- **Comment:** Wanted to ask about the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO). The current HoCo design manual specifies American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).
 - NACTO design standards will be considered in the coming year’s revisions to the County’s transportation design manual. This is part of our Complete Streets policy implementation.
- **Comment:** Look forward to seeing the Citizen’s Guide to Community Engagement.
 - We will be posting the final document on the Complete Streets website, which will include the Citizen’s Guide, where you registered for this workshop in the coming weeks at: <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/completestreets>.
- **Comment:** Simple restriping projects can make a big difference for safety of vulnerable users.
 - Agreed, striping is a valuable tool to guide all users of the roads about how to safely interact with other users. We will be addressing these opportunities as we work to update the transportation design manual in the coming year.