

Policy No.: MDOT 750

Effective Date: June 1, 2024

Approved by: 
Secretary

Date: May 31, 2024

MDOT Complete Streets

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to:

1. Satisfy the statutory requirement to adopt a Statewide Complete Streets Policy for highway, transit, and airport facilities, as mandated under Transportation Article § 2-112, §5-408.1, §7-310, and §8-204.1;
2. Facilitate the planning, design, and construction of transportation options that are safer and more accessible to all users of all ages and abilities who bike, walk, take transit, drive or use electric personal assistive mobility devices (EPAMDs);
3. Accomplish four primary goals:
 - a) Establish a framework for future Complete Streets guidance and assigns modal responsibilities that support equitable decision-making in Complete Streets implementation;
 - b) Require the implementation of planning and design principles from Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) Maryland Transit Administration's (MTA) Bus Stop Design Guide, and State Highway Administration's (SHA) [Context Driven: Access and Mobility for All Users Guide](#), or Context Guide, to address safety, access, and mobility for all users on all projects in MDOT right-of-way in the following cases:
 - i. When implementing a capital improvement project, such as construction or reconstruction of a roadway, intersection, or bridge.
 - ii. When permitting new or reconstructed streets to access MDOT right-of-way; or
 - iii. When there is an opportunity to improve safety for all users by applying proactive engineering safety countermeasures to resurfacing projects.
 - c) Prioritize communication to staff, partner agencies, and the public to build awareness around safer interactions for transit, motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and those using EPAMDs and expand the implementation of the Context Guide in underserved communities; and
 - d) Delegate authority to approve design waivers for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations to the Secretary of MDOT.
4. Define certain terms within the context of this Policy.

Reference(s)

[Transportation Article, § 2-112, Annotated Code of Maryland](#)
[Transportation Article, § 2-602, Annotated Code of Maryland](#)
[Transportation Article, § 5-101, Annotated Code of Maryland](#)
[Transportation Article, § 5-408.1, Annotated Code of Maryland](#)
[Transportation Article, § 7-101, Annotated Code of Maryland](#)
[Transportation Article, § 7-102, Annotated Code of Maryland](#)
[Transportation Article, § 7-310, Annotated Code of Maryland](#)
[Transportation Article, § 8-101, Annotated Code of Maryland](#)

[Transportation Article, § 8-102, Annotated Code of Maryland](#)
[Transportation Article, § 8-204.1, Annotated Code of Maryland](#)
[Transportation Article, § 8-629, Annotated Code of Maryland](#)
[Transportation Article, § 8-630, Annotated Code of Maryland](#)
[Transportation Article, § 8-635, Annotated Code of Maryland](#)
[Transportation Article, § 8-901, Annotated Code of Maryland](#)
[Transportation Article, § 8-908, Annotated Code of Maryland](#)
[FHWA's Safe System Approach for Speed Management](#)
[Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan](#)
[Maryland Strategic Highway Safety Plan](#)
[Maryland Vulnerable Road User Assessment](#)
[SHA Context Driven: Access and Mobility for All Users Guide](#)
[SHA Pedestrian Safety Action Plan](#)
[United States Department of Transportation National Roadway Safety Strategy](#)

Scope

This Policy is applicable to all capital improvement projects within MDOT right-of-way, such as construction or reconstruction of a roadway, intersection, or structure, as well as resurfacing projects. Pursuant to State statute, this policy does not apply to corridors where specific users are prohibited. Applicable projects that have not completed the NEPA process or will not achieve 30 percent design within 6 months of the Policy effective date, are also subject to this Policy and shall be reevaluated for opportunities to establish a Complete Streets Objective Statement, or an equivalent statement of project intent, that addresses safe access for all users.

The Policy is applicable to the following modal administrations:

1. The SHA, MTA, and the Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA) as defined by Maryland law.
2. The Policy also applies to enforcement, driver education and licensing, and behavior modification monitoring of insured motorists administered by the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA), as well as programs and initiatives supported by The Secretary's Office (TSO) and the Maryland Port Administration (MPA). For these MDOT modes, the Policy shall apply to the work of all employees, contract employees, contractors, consultants, local governments, developers and third parties, working within or on MDOT assets or rights-of-way.
3. The Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) projects constructed in any section of MDOT right-of-way. The MDTA will continue to refer to SHA guidelines and standards for the design of transportation facilities on Maryland's network. In cases where ramps, roads, and structures in MDOT right-of-way abut planned or existing multimodal connections, MDTA shall refer to the Policy.

This Policy rescinds all previous modal policies, processes, and procedures related to and including the 2012 SHA Complete Streets Policy and applicable sections of the [MDOT 701 Practical Design Policy](#). Applicable sections include Roadways (A-I), Transit (A-C), and Bridge (A-B). Akin to Practical Design, however, this requires the development of an objective statement that emphasizes safety, communication, and quality in planning and design.

Responsible Party
Assistant Secretary of Planning and Project Development

POLICY

I. Policy Statement

- A. The MDOT shall aim to create a safe, comprehensive, integrated, and connected network to accommodate all users in a manner that is suitable to the existing and planned land use context as defined by the Context Guide. Consideration of the safety of all lawful users shall be included in the planning, design, construction, and reconstruction of any transportation facility within MDOT right-of-way. The Maryland Strategic Highway Safety Plan and the United States Department of Transportation National Roadway Safety Strategy articulate broad roadway safety goals.
- B. The MDOT recognizes “Complete Streets” as an approach to planning and designing for all modes of transportation. Complete Streets focuses on creating a safe environment for all users including those who employ human-powered means of travel, which includes walking and bicycling with or without the use of mobility aids and may also include using other human-scaled or micro-mobility devices that may be electric-powered or electric-assisted, such as e-bikes and e-scooters.
- C. The MDOT will apply “Complete Streets” to all projects within MDOT right-of-way that connect people walking, bicycling, or using e-bikes, scooters, or mobility devices to transportation options.
- D. The MDOT projects should employ national best practices in Complete Streets design to provide opportunities for mode shift and improve access for all users consistent with Maryland’s Context Guide, Pedestrian Safety Action Plan, Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment, Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, and other MDOT guidance documents.
- E. The MDOT Safe System approach empowers and encourages communities to claim ownership of safe streets and public spaces. All modes shall review and update respective public involvement practices to incorporate capacity building approaches that emphasize outreach to underserved communities on applicable projects. The six principles of the Safe System approach as defined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) shall be incorporated as appropriate. The six principles are:
 - i. Death and serious injuries are unacceptable,
 - ii. Humans make mistakes,
 - iii. Humans are vulnerable,
 - iv. Responsibility is shared,
 - v. Safety is proactive, and
 - vi. Redundancy is crucial.

II. Complete Streets Implementation

- A. The Policy shall be implemented on applicable projects starting January 1, 2025. Within **six months** of the adoption of this Policy, each mode shall develop a Complete Streets Implementation Approach in collaboration with the Office of Active Transportation and Micromobility at TSO, SHA, and MVA’s Highway Safety Office to identify appropriate context driven applications of this Policy that provide equitable access to safer crossings of highways, safer traversing along highways, access to

transit, and convenient connections to healthy food and life's opportunities. These implementation plans will include review and update of related policies and guidelines to ensure full and consistent implementation of this Policy.

- B. Implementation of the Policy will be framed by several policies, design guidelines, and project development protocols.
- C. The MDOT will review current policies and guidelines and adopt a compliance process to ensure full and consistent implementation of this Policy. Within **90 days** after adoption of this Policy, TSO shall complete an initial review of planning, design, and other guidance documents from MDOT modes for compliance with the Policy. The results will be provided to the modes to assist in the development of their Complete Streets Implementation Plans. The review will include, but not be limited to, the following documents:
 - i. SHA Accessibility Policy & Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities along State Highways <https://roads.maryland.gov/mdotsha/pages/index.aspx?PageId=26>
 - ii. SHA Bicycle Policy and Design Guidelines https://roads.maryland.gov/ohd2/bike_policy_and_design_guide.pdf
 - iii. State Highway Access Manual (including TIS Guidelines) <https://roads.maryland.gov/mdotsha/pages/Index.aspx?PageId=393>
- D. Several aspects of Practical Design require design choices that may conflict with context driven principles. Sections of the [Practical Design Implementation Guidance](#), for applicable modal units and projects, shall be revised to prioritize, where lawful, improved safety opportunities for modal shift and increased access to diverse, affordable, and convenient transportation options for all users as core returns on investment.
- E. A Complete Streets Objective Statement, or equivalent statement of project intent, shall be adopted for all roadway projects in MDOT right of way where more than one mode is lawfully permitted. For projects that have not previously progressed past 30 percent or have not completed the NEPA process, this objective statement shall be developed prior to 30 percent design or during the planning phase and shall be maintained throughout the project life cycle.
 - i. Where bicycle use is planned or existing, the objective statement shall identify a target for an improved or maintained Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) score via the latest available Statewide LTS model.
 - ii. The objective statement shall evaluate safety for all users, to the extent such historical crash data are available, and identify opportunities to improve vulnerable road user access.
 - iii. Other measures shall be considered for non-motorists, for example, pedestrian level of comfort (PLOC), as they are adopted by the modes. All applicable measures for the relevant modes shall be addressed in the objective statement.
- F. The MDOT will implement techniques based on FHWA's *Safe System Approach for Speed Management*, which provides methods to help practitioners understand the impacts of speed on traffic safety and explore the link between speed management and the Safe System Approach. When speed limits are proactively lowered to address safety risks and implemented alongside speed management treatments, practitioners can expect that operating speeds and crash frequency and severity will decrease. All applicable projects will prioritize safer driving speeds and access for vulnerable road users, where permitted. The SHA shall lead periodic evaluations of the impact of speed management techniques on

crashes and document successful safety approaches as Context Driven Case Studies on the [Context Driven Web Portal](#) for public viewing.

- G. Applicable MDOT projects shall define a measure of effectiveness for engaging key stakeholders, especially vulnerable road users and underserved communities, during planning and design. When there are competing needs among users and/or modes, safety shall be the highest priority; particularly safety for the most vulnerable road users while adhering to the facility's context and addressing mobility and accessibility for all permitted users.
- H. When construction activities necessitate, temporary closures of bicycle and pedestrian routes shall be coordinated with local jurisdictions and pertinent partners to avoid unnecessary impacts to access to the extent practicable. Permanent severance or elimination of an existing bicycle or pedestrian route shall not be considered unless the project provides for construction of a feasible alternative route, or such an alternative route already exists. The MDOT shall work to ensure that transportation options for people walking, bicycling, taking transit, and or operating an EPAMD will not be negatively impacted by any new transportation project or improvement to an existing transportation facility, including impacts to complete bicycle and pedestrian networks from limited-access highway projects. Expanding opportunities for short, non-motorized trips is critical to meeting the State's safety and emissions targets. Transit providers are encouraged to design and implement innovative treatments such as modular bike lanes, curb extensions, and floating bus stops to preserve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity on multimodal corridors and in dense communities.
- I. All modes shall work with the developer community, local governments, and respective Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances (APFO) to ensure Complete Streets design features are provided within MDOT right-of-way pursuant to this Policy, the [Context Guide and the Context Driven Toolkit](#) on all applicable projects. Developers seeking access to MDOT right-of-way will be subject to policies in SHA's Access Manual. Developers shall be encouraged to incorporate Complete Streets design features outside MDOT right-of-way to the extent feasible.
- J. To strengthen the connection between transportation investments and land use and address historical disinvestment in underserved communities, all modes shall coordinate with the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) and the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) through TSO on initiatives and programs that support or are impacted by Complete Streets. The coordination shall inform an interagency Sustainable Growth Work Plan action item for the Subcabinet to determine how best practices in traffic safety and multimodal planning can expand access to housing, jobs, and healthy food.
- K. Appropriate bicycle and pedestrian accommodation at transit facilities and on transit modes will be provided. Where facilities cannot be provided, a waiver is required to be submitted to TSO. The MTA will coordinate with local jurisdictions and other partners to improve pedestrian and bicycle access to transit. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) is also encouraged to apply sustainability and multimodal planning and design principles to projects to improve station access, increase transit usage, and further reduce vehicle trips.
- L. The MDOT's projects shall continue to be planned, designed, constructed, operated, and maintained in accordance with applicable [Federal and State Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) guidelines](#). Other uses of the right-of-way,

- such as parking, loading, curbside management, and green infrastructure, should also be considered.
- M. Applicable MDOT projects shall include prioritization and accommodation of transit-oriented development where supportive infrastructure for transit is existing or planned. Modes shall evaluate local master plans for planned walking and bicycling connections to transit. The responsible mode will ensure all projects within MDOT right-of-way including, to the extent the APFO permits, developer projects, provide accessible and convenient facilities for pedestrians connecting to bus, rail, and micromobility, where appropriate.
 - N. The SHA shall work with the Maryland Highway Safety Office to establish or develop more aggressive Safety Performance Functions (SPFs). The SHA shall adopt related crash reduction or crash modification factors (CRF/CMF) for all Context-Driven Toolkit engineering safety countermeasures based on established SPFs and maintain a CRF/CMF clearinghouse when there is not an existing accepted industry CRF/CMF, including access management, advanced technology/ITS, bicyclists, pedestrians, roadway, and speed management. While CMFs do not yet exist for many safety countermeasures, safety improvements should not be precluded simply because there is not yet an established CMF.
 - O. The MDTA projects shall also be designed in accordance with the Policy, when access to a transit, walking or bicycling facility, like a transit stop or a regional trail head, is planned or available within a reasonable distance of MDTA's project limits.
 - P. The MAA shall incorporate Complete Streets design features to the extent appropriate and feasible for airport facilities and shall ensure consistency with appropriate Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requirements.
 - Q. The justification for any exception is to be documented, approved, and signed by all appropriate modal representatives. Justification should reflect consideration of the impacts to surrounding communities and identify safe alternate routes within the scope and objective of the transportation project for which exemption is sought. This Policy requires the Secretary's approval of all waivers and assigns the development of the framework for the waiver process leading up to the Secretary's approval to the modes and MDTA.
 - R. A clear and specific Complete Streets Implementation and Waiver Process shall be developed or identified by each mode and MDTA and included in each Complete Streets Implementation Plan. Thresholds for approved exceptions shall be defined by each mode in the Complete Streets Implementation and Waiver approach. This process shall permit exceptions to the Policy which may be applicable where circumstances or laws exist that prohibit or limit the ability to provide favorable conditions for all modes. A Complete Streets Waiver Process, an overview of roles and responsibilities for undertaking that process, and adequate public notice shall be published and monitored to ensure departmental accountability for implementation of this Policy.
 - S. Accommodations for cyclists and pedestrians will not be required where:
 - i. the use of the transportation facility by that user group is prohibited by law,
 - ii. the cost of new accommodation would be excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use,
 - iii. current and future need as determined by land use, user volumes, safety data, or population densities cannot be demonstrated,
 - iv. state or local governments do not include such accommodations in their bicycle/pedestrian master plans,

- v. construction of bicycle/pedestrian accommodations is not constructable due to engineering design limitations,
- vi. construction of such accommodations would be unsafe for potential users.
- T. Excessively disproportionate cost increases must be noted in the justification reviewed and approved by the Secretary.
- U. When existing right-of-way is a limiting factor, projects shall balance accessibility and mobility for all users with consideration to the context of the project area and local needs.
- V. The best approach to reducing the cost of maintaining bicycle and pedestrian facilities is to plan for future maintenance in the project design phase, selecting sustainable and resilient materials and effectively locating street trees. Maintenance activities can also provide opportunities to comply with ADA and should be used to make facilities as accessible as possible. Every effort must be made by the leading agency to address surface conditions, debris, encroaching vegetation, signage, and markings for the life of the project or the project agreement. Where a lead agency is unable to participate in maintenance or cost share opportunities, the State shall perform its due diligence to investigate innovative alternatives or technical assistance to deliver and maintain the project.
- W. On or before November 15 each year, each MDOT mode and MDTA shall submit a report to the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Project Development at TSO, providing status updates on all projects subject to the Policy, including reports on applicable safety and accessibility performance metrics and speed management case studies.

III. Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy, the following words have the following meanings:

- A. Complete Streets means as defined in [Maryland Transportation Article §8-901](#)
- B. Complete Streets Design Features means design features that accommodate and facilitate safe and convenient access and mobility to facilities by all users, including bicyclists, motorists, pedestrians, and public transportation users.
- C. Complete Streets Objective Statement means MDOT's specific, objective statement of fact that articulates the transportation problem being addressed and what is needed to solve that problem. Safety, accessibility, and mode shift are priority transportation problems to be addressed. All applicable roadway projects lawfully permitting more than one mode of transportation will identify an objective statement which prioritizes multimodal options, improved accessibility, and the application of Complete Streets design features identified in the Context Guide and defined in [Maryland Transportation Article § 2-112](#).

Authorized/Supporting Documents
MDOT 701 Practical Design Policy

Modal Administrator/Executive Director Endorsements

This Complete Streets Policy demonstrates MDOT's commitment to providing safer, more accessible, and more convenient mobility options for all lawful users of Maryland's transportation system.

Endorsed by: William Pines Date: MAY 31, 2024
William Pines, PE, SHA

Endorsed by: Holly T. Arnold Date: MAY 31, 2024
Holly T. Arnold, MTA

Endorsed by: Ricky D. Smith Sr. Date: MAY 31, 2024
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Endorsed by: Jonathan Daniels Date: MAY 31, 2024
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Endorsed by: Christine Nizer Date: MAY 31, 2024
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Endorsed by: Bruce Gartner Date: MAY 31, 2024
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