Pedestrian Safety

MISSION STATEMENT

Montgomery County is committed to improving pedestrian safety and accessibility for everyone. The County's goals are to reduce collisions and make our community more walkable. The County Executive has created a comprehensive pedestrian safety strategic plan with specific performance measures, timelines and budgets for achieving recommended actions. Ongoing evaluations will ensure the proposed engineering, enforcement, and education solutions are really working. Multiple agencies throughout the County work together to install infrastructure improvements, educate residents on safe driving and walking behavior, enforce traffic laws, encourage safety innovations, and evaluate results to guide future actions.

LINKAGE TO COUNTY RESULT AREAS

- ❖ **An Effective and Efficient Transportation Network**
- ❖ **Healthy and Sustainable Communities**
- ❖ **Safe Streets and Secure Neighborhoods**

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Jeff Dunckel of the Department of Transportation at 240.777.7197 or Corey Orlosky of the Office of Management and Budget at 240.777.2762 for more information regarding this initiative's operating budget.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

County Executive Leggett has pledged to make improving pedestrian safety and making our communities more walkable a priority of his administration. The Pedestrian Safety Initiative, established in December 2007, outlines a comprehensive approach to meet that commitment. This is a collaborative effort of the County Executive, and the County Council, as well as the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's (M-NCPPC) Planning Board and the Maryland State Highway Administration. This plan provides Montgomery County with a blueprint for pedestrian safety activities based on measureable strategies.

The strategic approaches to achieve the goals and objectives of this initiative are as follows:

Strategy 1: Target pedestrian safety improvements in High Incidence Areas;
Strategy 2: Assess and improve pedestrian network and connectivity needs;
Strategy 3: Increase emphasis on pedestrians and bicyclists in the planning process;
Strategy 4: Identify and implement corridor and intersection modifications and traffic calming treatments;
Strategy 5: Upgrade pedestrian signals;
Strategy 6: Assess and enhance street lighting; and
Strategy 7: Modify pedestrian and driver behavior through enhanced enforcement and educational efforts.

RESULTS

Since the start of this initiative, these strategies have seen several successes. Ten High Incidence Areas (HIA) have been identified, with several short-term improvements completed and long-term improvements in progress. The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) has constructed 16 miles of new sidewalk segments, completed 2,500 bus stop improvements, and undertaken 173 new ADA projects. Areas with traffic calming improvements have seen pedestrian collisions decrease by 35 percent. Educational efforts have been conducted in HIAs as well as targeted high risk groups, while enforcement efforts in HIAs have been used to change unsafe pedestrian and driver behaviors. Education, coupled with enforcement, has modified perceptions of risk and responsibility on the roads and sidewalks.

The County Executive recommends $67.8 million in FY14 expenditures in support of pedestrian safety. The FY14 Recommended Operating Budget includes $7.4 million for pedestrian safety initiatives. In addition, the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) includes $60.4 million in expenditures for FY14.

Services dedicated to improving pedestrian safety are general program offerings as well as targeted services. These services address critical needs facing the County at this time and the desired outcome of reduced collisions and resulting injuries while increasing walkability. Below are some of the major County government programs currently supporting pedestrian safety:

Department of Transportation
- Provide a mechanism for communities through Safe Routes to School (SRTS) to increase the ability of students to walk or bike to school safely. Eleven participating communities have seen a drastic decline in the number of collisions within ¼ mile of the school from 1.45 incidents per year to 0.40.
- Participate in the regional Street Smart pedestrian safety education campaign. The twice yearly, four-week media campaigns use transit shelters and bus advertising throughout the county to promote safe pedestrian behaviors and raise awareness of drivers and pedestrians about the importance of bicycle and pedestrian safety.
- Perform traffic calming improvements by treating roadways with pedestrian refuge islands, curb extensions, speed humps, and improved signage and marking, such as recent projects on Arcola Boulevard, Crystal Rock Drive, and Wisteria Drive.
- Develop and implement pedestrian signal timing improvements to provide pedestrians with adequate time to safely cross streets.
- Improve sidewalk connectivity to transportation, commercial, employment, and medical areas throughout the county. Additionally, more direct sidewalk programs exist, such as one targeting MD 355 sidewalks in Hyattstown.
- Provide curb ramps for sidewalks and other accessibility barriers on county roadways through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance program.
- Provide bikeway and pedestrian intersection improvements to conform to the Bethesda Central Business District (CBD) Sector Plan through the Bethesda Bikeway and Pedestrian Facilities program.
- Design and construct an extension from the end of the existing trail in Takoma Park and the Silver Spring Transit Center through the Metropolitan Branch Trail project.
- Conduct targeted 18-month pedestrian safety education campaigns in High Incidence Areas, coordinating enforcement actions with Montgomery County Police Department, including the creation of a pedestrian safety education campaign at nearby high schools, the creation of a 30-member volunteer brigade to conduct bilingual education on the streets, and bilingual education teams to reach at risk groups within the High Incidence Areas.

Department of Police
- Manage and analyze a database of collision data used to inform policy and program decisions through the Police Traffic Division, such as the identification of HIAs, locations for traffic calming improvements, and groups and areas at high risk of being involved in pedestrian collisions.
- Target enforcement of pedestrian safety and traffic safety laws in HIAs and areas around elementary, middle, and high schools in coordination with MCDOT's pedestrian safety education activities.
- Continue to implement countywide speed camera and red light camera enforcement to slow traffic.
- Engage shoppers in parking lots with the "Shop with a Cop" program, where police distribute high-visibility shopping bags to address pedestrian collisions that occur in parking lots.
- Continue the Safe Routes to School Program Grant E which covers nine elementary schools throughout Montgomery County. Police Officers from the School Safety and Education Section visited each school at the beginning of school year 2012-2013 to educate the staff on the program and the upcoming enforcement within their school. Principals were asked to notify parents via the weekly school news letter of the upcoming Safe Routes to School Program and police enforcement in and around the school. Officers from the Traffic Division and District Station Traffic Squads have been working the grant on school days from 7-10AM and 2-5PM as their schedule allows. To date, 63 details have been worked at the various nine schools. Although education is part of the detail, officers have been enforcing numerous pedestrian and vehicle violations to include: speeding in school zones, sign violations, red light violations, and pedestrian violations. Grant E will continue thru this school year and will end December 31, 2013. Overall enhanced enforcement of pedestrian and traffic safety laws help modify perceptions of risk and responsibility on the road and can change behavior and contribute to building a culture of safety. Montgomery County Police have been instrumental in helping reduce the number of pedestrian collisions by:
  - Targeted enforcement in HIAs, issuing nearly 3,000 citations and about 1,000 warnings to both pedestrians and motorists.
  - Targeted school enforcement, issuing more than 500 citations and 400 warnings to both pedestrians and motorists.
  - Special pedestrian crosswalk, operation safe streets corridor, holiday and school enforcements.

Public Information Office
- Implement an education program in cooperation with the Department of Transportation's Pedestrian Safety Coordinator to reach out to selected groups at highest risk of being involved in pedestrian collisions.

- o For FY14, these groups may include high school students, seniors, people in parking lots, and teens and others (both drivers and pedestrians) who are inattentive due to texting and smart phone use.
- Conduct more active social media campaigns to reach out to targeted groups.
- Conduct additional grassroots outreach to targeted groups.

County Executive's Pedestrian Safety Initiative - All Funding Sources
FY14 Recommended Capital Improvements Program and Operating Budget

Department	Project/Program	FY14 Recommended
Capital Improvements Program (CIP)		
Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission	Trails: Hard Surface Design and Construction	$ 300,000
	Trails: Natural Surface Design, Construction, and Renovation	200,000
	Trails: Hard Surface Renovation	168,000
	Total M-NCPPC (CIP)	**$ 668,000**
Department of Transportation	Sidewalk and Infrastructure Revitalization	3,800,000
	Bus Stop Improvements	652,000
	Pedestrian Safety Program	1,665,000
	Streetlight Enhancements - CBD/Town Center	250,000
	Traffic Signal System Modernization	3,112,000
	White Flint Traffic Analysis and Mitigation	248,000
	Intersection and Spot Improvements	1,150,000
	Streetlighting	1,010,000
	Traffic Signals	5,225,000
	Greentree Road Sidewalk	914,000
	MacArthur Blvd Bikeway Improvements	4,610,000
	Frederick Road Bike Path	398,000
	MD 355 Crossing (BRAC)	26,464,000
	MD 355 Sidewalk (Hyattstown)	1,300,000
	Guardrail Projects	310,000
	Advanced Transportation Management System	2,008,000
	Neighborhood Traffic Calming	310,000
	Transportation Improvements for Schools	200,000
	Rockville Sidewalk Extensions	304,000
	Sidewalk Program - Minor Projects	2,365,000
	Bikeway Program - Minor Projects	500,000
	ADA Compliance: Transportation	1,495,000
	Bethesda Bikeway and Pedestrian Facilities	301,000
	Metropolitan Branch Trail	1,118,000
	Total Department of Transportation (CIP)	**$ 59,709,000**
	Total FY14 CIP	**$ 60,377,000**
Operating Budget (PSP)		
Department of Transportation	Pedestrian Safety/General Fund	20,000
	Street Smart Campaign	45,000
	Pedestrian Safety Coordinator	150,498
	Sidewalks/General Fund	116,860
	Contract Crosswalk Treatments	276,990
	Street Lighting/General Fund	454,300
	School Zone Pedestrian Treatments	156,240
	Pedestrian Countdown Signals	164,000
Department of Police	Police Enforcement for HIAs - Overtime	125,000
	Police Enforcement for HIAs - Data Analyst	74,907
	School Safety Program/General Fund	5,676,610
	Safe Routes to School Program Grant E & SHA Grant	59,000
Public Information Office	Pedestrian Safety Outreach Education	50,000
	Total FY14 PSP	**$ 7,369,405**
	TOTAL FY14 RECOMMENDED EXPENDITURES (CIP & PSP)	**$ 67,746,405**

Source: Recommended FY14 Operating and Capital Budgets

Note: *This table is not a comprehensive list of pedestrian saftey activities undertaken by Montgomery County. It displays the capital projects and operating programs that are specifically targeted to improve pedestrian safety. There are additional costs in individual capital projects not displayed above, including sidewalk construction, street lighting, and other elements in support of pedestrian safety. In addition, there are other operating budget programs that support pedestrian safety including traffic enforcement and school crossing guards in the Police Department.*