
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.

The County Council approved \$70.9 million in FY14 expenditures in support of pedestrian safety. The FY14 Approved Operating Budget includes \$7.5 million for pedestrian safety initiatives. In addition, the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) includes \$63.4 million in expenditures for FY14.

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 (HIAs), 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 HIAs.

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 County-wide 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 in support of 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.
 - 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.

FY14 APPROVED ENHANCEMENTS

Department of Transportation

- Add local funding for County-wide Pedestrian Safety Education/Outreach in high schools (\$100,000).

Public Information Office

- Enhance funding for Pedestrian Safety Public Education Campaign (\$50,000).