



Date: April 3, 2020

Date of Meeting: April 1, 2020

Meeting Location: George Howard Building

Work Order Number: 32089-005

Project: Howard County Complete Streets

Meeting Description: Complete Streets Implementation Team Meeting #4

Participants:

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Introduction

The purpose of the meeting was to provide members of the Howard County Complete Streets Implementation Team (CSIT) an overview of the update memo to County Council, the status of the Design Manual updates, and a discussion about the draft Community Engagement Plan. This meeting was held using video conferencing software due to restrictions on in-person meetings due to COVID-19.

Jeff Riegner and Chris Eatough welcomed all attendees.

Members of the CSIT were provided a copy of the draft minutes from the March 5 meeting in advance. David Ramsay made a motion to approve the minutes and Chris Eatough seconded the motion. Carl Gutschick asked that his name be added to the minutes, as he participated by phone. Larry Schoen abstained from voting. The group unanimously approved the minutes.

Jeff and Leah Kacanda led the group through the presentation attached to these minutes. Jeff provided a review of the update memo to County Council and the status of Design Manual updates, then Leah led the discussion about the draft Community Engagement Plan.

Review of Update Memo to County Council

Jeff provided an update on the status of the memo to County Council (memo), noting that forecasting upcoming work on implementation is particularly challenging given the changes we are facing due to COVID-19.

Chris informed the CSIT that comments on the memo are due by Friday, April 3 at 5:00 pm.

Christiana Rigby shared that the April County Council meeting may be delayed until May. Chris noted that the change in date of the Council meeting does not change the six month deadline imposed by the Complete Streets ordinance.

Kris Jagarapu noted that the Department of Public Works (DPW) is focused on other issues due to the Coronavirus response and does not have time to dedicate to Complete Streets implementation. He asked if completion of the memo could be paused until May.

Christiana shared that she was unsure if an extension can be provided, given that the original timeline was imposed via a public process. Christiana will check with Gary Kuc, the County Solicitor, to determine the appropriate process moving forward. She noted that she does not see an issue with the report deadlines as much as the rest of the deadlines stipulated in the Ordinance.

Jeff clarified that the memo captures a moment in time, and even if the reporting deadline is changed, the moment captured will reflect the first six months of activity. He asked the group about the benefits of deferring delivery of the memo by a month.

Kris clarified that the memo captures what has been accomplished to date, but there may be an issue with the schedule moving forward. Since DPW is spending more time on other issues, the 24-month schedule for implementation may no longer be viable.



Larry asked to hear from Sam Sidh on whether delays to the schedule are necessary due to changing staffing needs. Sam stated he is comfortable with providing the memo to County Council by the April 7 deadline, and will review the language in the memo that speaks to potential delays due to the pandemic. Kris confirmed that he is also comfortable with sending the memo to Council and acknowledged that DPW is still concerned with the implementation timeline moving forward.

Jeff noted that a possible change in schedule due to COVID-19 is noted in the current draft memo. The intent of the memo is to detail original intentions for the next six months. Jeff asked Christiana whether she had any thoughts on the schedule changing. Chris noted that the section of the memo regarding a possible change in schedule should be reviewed by all CSIT members in acknowledgement of changing resources. Sam agreed that he is comfortable with providing the memo so long as it allows flexibility. Christiana agreed that flexibility is critical.

Jeff provided a summary on the contents of the memo, which focuses on progress made during the last six months. Jeff then described the progress anticipated during the next six months, including continued monthly CSIT meetings, continued work on the Design Manual by County staff, review of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations (SALDR) for potential updates, development of a prioritization process, development of a process to track and report on performance measures, and updated community engagement procedures. Jeff noted that there is a 1999 sidewalk policy that may be replaced by the updates to the Design Manual. He added that community engagement activities will be held sometime during the next six months to update the public on implementation progress. He also clarified that this list reflects goals for the next six months before there were mitigating circumstances.

Larry asked whether the CSIT would receive detailed status updates on the updates to the Design Manual. Jeff affirmed that the CSIT would be seeing detailed updates on Design Manual progress, but not on the SALDR because that review has not yet begun. Larry asked whether the memo to Council could be more explicit in how the CSIT would be involved with the updates to the Design Manual. Christiana noted she would also appreciate more details regarding the update of the SALDR, due to public advocate interest in the issue. Larry noted that more detail should be included in report to Council. Jeff reiterated that the SALDR has not yet been reviewed, so there isn't any more specific information to provide just yet.

Chris presented information on the funding elements included in the memo. The budget includes the \$380,000 in the Engineering Study Program for the updated of the Design Manual. He noted that he has not yet received the number for road resurfacing which includes the addition of bike lanes. He also identified \$6.57M to advance pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and maintenance of existing facilities. Christiana noted that \$4.9M is the allotted budget for road resurfacing, and Sam confirmed that is correct. There were no questions about funding.

Status of Design Manual updates

Jeff then provided a progress report on the Design Manual updates. The County has agreed to proceed with a street typology approach to classify the County's streets. He noted the manual will address intermediate arterial, minor arterial, collector, and local streets, but will not deal with principal arterials because those are controlled by the State and outside the scope of the County's Complete Streets policy. Jeff shared a matrix illustrating how the transportation classification might relate to land use context. Preliminary land use contexts include mixed-use, higher-density residential, lower-density residential, commercial, industrial, and rural. Street typologies will be developed for each land use and street type, i.e. mixed-use intermediate arterial, or lower-density residential collector. The list of street types and land use contexts may change over time as specific updates to the Design Manual are considered.

Jeff then shared a sample typical section. He noted that guidance regarding lane width, bicycle facility type, appropriate pedestrian facilities, etc. would be provided for each street type. Bike corridors designated in *BikeHoward* would be an overlay that would emphasize lower stress bicycle facilities.

Jeff then reviewed additional considerations for the Design Manual team, including right-of-way widths by street type, crosswalk types and implementation guidance, shared-use pathway design guidance, sidewalk policy, maintenance of traffic for people walking and biking, guidance for private roads, guidance for scenic roads, and potential incorporation of the new edition of AASHTO's *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets* (the "Green Book"). Jeff noted the new Green Book provides a lot more guidance on walking, biking, and transit infrastructure than previous editions.



Jeff said that some of this information could be included in the memo. Larry replied the details do not need to be included in the memo, but the memo should note that Design Manual information is being shared with the CSIT and the CSIT is providing feedback. Larry noted he would like to see a copy of the Green Book. Jeff noted many municipalities do not use the Green Book as a standalone document but incorporate it into their own manuals. Kris noted he will be reviewing the 2018 Green Book once he receives it.

Jeff noted that WRA is reviewing the differences between the County's current Design Manual and the guidance provided in the 2018 Green Book to see what would need to change.

Larry posed a hypothetical scenario: sometimes two developers build adjacent to one another but do not provide a pedestrian way between the two. Where would this level of connectivity get addressed? Jeff replied that the requirement to provide a sidewalk would be in the SALDR, but the design specifications for that sidewalk would be in the Design Manual.

Community Engagement Discussion

Leah provided an overview of the outline of the draft Community Engagement Plan (CEP). She noted that there will be separate document sections for staff and constituents. She reviewed the vision statement for the Complete Streets policy and that there will likely be a separate vision statement for the CEP developed with CSIT feedback.

Larry asked whether there will be an opportunity for on-site feedback from the public, and whether it would be possible to utilize an application to collect data on gaps in the bicycle and pedestrian network. Chris responded that the TellHoCo app is an option for collecting that kind of data. Currently TellHoCo is used to collect information on maintenance, and this would require a new category for long term planning. All parties acknowledged that this is a significant staff resource issue.

Leah shared the current six guiding principles which were developed based on CSIT feedback. She then reviewed the current CEP goals which were developed based on feedback from the CSIT to date, noting that objectives and performance measures will be developed in consultation with County staff once the goals are finalized. Larry asked how the goals will apply to selecting projects and developer projects. Chris commented that public engagement for developer projects is currently codified, and any change to that process would require a code revision. Christiana and Chad clarified that current requirements are codified but there is some flexibility available.

Leah explained that it is important to define the term "community." The current list of community members includes the general public, advocates, neighborhood population, project adjacent population, and the vulnerable population. Chris identified frequent users of the facility as a missing category that would provide critical feedback on project design. Christiana said frequent users should be easier to reach because they are frequenting the site and could be reached by posting on the site. Leah responded that adjacent low-stress corridors could also be a good location for posting information about the project. Jennifer White identified non-profit groups and advocates for the neighborhood population as another separate stakeholder category that should receive notification so they can inform the populations they work with. She noted many individuals may fall into multiple categories of the population.

Leah stated that a draft of the CEP will be shared with the CSIT for review and comment before the next CSIT meeting.

Carl asked if there will be any information on conflict resolution, since there are often differences of opinion during these processes, and often those opinions directly conflict with principles of engineering or with each other. Leah suggested that this plan should be used to establish what issues the County will and will not compromise on. Larry noted that people are more willing to live with an outcome they disagree with if they are heard and feel there has been a fair process.

Jennifer asked what the timeline is for feedback. Jeff responded that the County will distribute the document to allow enough time for two weeks to review and make edits before the next meeting, and a goal of finalizing the document by the end of September. Jennifer asked whether it is possible to test or pilot some of the engagement strategies before the plan is finalized, especially since the County will likely be doing more virtual engagement over the coming months. Chris identified the Broken Land Parkway park-and-ride access project as a project that will require public engagement. David Ramsay noted that Howard County School District has to reach out to community members for the redesignation of walk areas this fall. He is open to collaborating on how to leverage online tools to engage the community.



Next Steps

Jeff noted two action items: comments on County Council memo are due by 5:00 pm this Friday, April 3, and the team will further develop the draft of Community Engagement Plan for distribution to the CSIT by April 10 for review and comment.

The next CSIT meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 6 at 3:00 pm.

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Vice President