

Status of the Complete Streets Program

**TR § 8-908
(Chapter 171, Acts of 2022)**

A Report to the Maryland General Assembly

Senate Finance Committee

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

House Appropriations Committee

House Environment and Transportation Committee

and

Baltimore City Delegation

Maryland Department of Transportation

February 2025

Introduction

This report is prepared in accordance with Chapter 171 of the Acts of Maryland, 2022 (House Bill 73), which requires that:

- (a) On or before December 31 each year, the Department shall submit a report to the Senate Finance Committee, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, House Appropriations Committee, House Environment and Transportation Committee, and Baltimore City Delegation to the General Assembly in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, on the status of the Program.*
- (b) the report required under subsection (a) of this section shall include:*
 - (1) the status of any grant projects funded by the program; and*
 - (2) a discussion of whether there is a need to reevaluate the program to ensure that it is meeting the goals stated in § 8–903(b) of this subtitle.*
- (c) the report required under subsection (a) of this section shall be made available on the department’s website.*

Background

The Complete Streets Program, established by Chapter 721 of the Acts of Maryland, 2018 (House Bill 535), is a competitive matching grant program within the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), which seeks to provide matching grants to certified local governments to encourage the following activities:

- a. the regular and routine inclusion of complete streets design elements and infrastructure during the planning, design, construction, and reconstruction of new or existing locally funded roads;
- b. the adoption of retrofit street ordinances designed to provide safe access to users of multiple modes of transportation; and
- c. the development of ranking systems for complete streets projects that consider the needs of underinvested and underserved communities in specific geographic regions of the state.

The law states that “funds for the Program shall be as provided by the Governor in the State budget.” It further specifies that the law “may not be construed to require the Maryland Department of Transportation to provide staff or operating expenses for the administration of the Complete Streets Program established under Section 1 of this Act until money is appropriated in the State budget for the Program.”

Program Status

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) is focused on delivering a transportation network that safely serves all transportation users including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motorists who may all be vulnerable road users at some point in their day. Road and street design safety improvements are critical to saving lives and meeting Maryland's Vision Zero goals.

Although the Complete Streets grant program is unfunded, MDOT has advanced initiatives to expand the implementation of Complete Streets statewide.

First, MDOT continues to deliver on Secretary Wiedefeld's charge to take a fresh look at regulations, policies and capital transportation program investments to remove barriers to achieving a safe, accessible and multi-modal transportation system. This is why in 2024 MDOT completed an 18-month effort to update the 2012 Complete Streets policy. The update included:

- Review and prioritization of all related guidance and manuals impacting complete streets;
- New policy language expanded to include all MDOT modes and MDTA;
- Training, outreach, and engagement; and
- Implementation plans.

In 2025, MDOT will launch the next phase of the complete streets policy implementation.

Second, the Final FY 2025-2030 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) introduced in January 2025 increases funding for complete streets and restores funds that support this activity. Specifically, the CTP:

- Provides \$124.5 million for the Complete Streets Program at the State Highway Administration, an increase of \$27.5 million over last year's budget;
- Provides \$20.8 million for the Kim Lamphier Bikeways Network Program, restoring reductions taken in the Draft FY 2025-2030 CTP;
- Provides \$54.3 million for SHA's ADA Retrofit program, fully restoring the FY 2026-FY 2030 reductions taken in the Draft CTP;
- Provides \$182.4 million to SHA's Sidewalks program, fully restoring the FY 2026-FY 2030 reductions taken in the Draft CTP; and,
- Provides \$78.6 million for SHA's Bicycle Retrofit program, fully restoring the FY 2026-FY 2030 reductions taken in the Draft CTP.

These investments by MDOT supports the State Highway Administration (SHA) in the implementation of its Pedestrian Safety Action Plan which addresses road user vulnerability due to poorly designed state roads. Concurrently, SHA is coordinating with Maryland Highway Safety Office (MHSO) to update the Vulnerable Road User Assessment which addresses both State and local roads and which will be included in Maryland's upcoming Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

Third, in 2024 Governor Wes Moore announced \$16 million in grants for 36 bicycle, pedestrian and trail projects across Maryland.

Complete Streets Policy

Complete Streets is an approach to planning, designing, building, operating, and maintaining streets that enable safe access for users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. It is a key component of advancing and retrofitting infrastructure to connect Marylanders to life's opportunities. In June 2024, Secretary Wiedefeld signed, along with each modal administrator and Executive Director of the MDTA, a new Complete Streets policy for the Department that required updated guidance and a streamlined waiver process to support implementation beginning on January 1, 2025. Each mode assigned Complete Streets "champions" to lead the development of supplemental guidance, also known as implementation plans. Each modal implementation plan explains how the organization will deliver the policy. The implementation plans will be launched in 2025.

Ahead of the new policy's enactment in 2024, MDOT conducted a 12-month cohesive policy audit to align with priorities of the Moore-Miller Administration. The audit included a complete review of relevant policies, guidance, initiatives, and manuals referenced by each mode that supports multimodal, sustainability, and traffic safety goals associated with Complete Streets.

During this policy audit, MDOT identified a list of documents and reviewed them for its applicability to standard Complete Street policy elements such as bicycle, pedestrian, and transit access. Tracking and coordinating updates of MDOT's guidance is crucial to ensuring the holistic and effective implementation of the Complete Streets policy.

Each document was assigned a measure of impact on policy implementation and priority level for updating with more than thirty-five documents reviewed in the audit. The list of documents was informed by input from each modal administration, and the most relevant documents at the time were reviewed and prioritized through this effort.

During the second half of 2024, MDOT completed an initial curriculum of six trainings tailored to practitioners, county and municipal governments, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), bicycle and pedestrian safety advocates, elected officials, and industry partners. Trainers updated participants on Complete Streets policy development and implementation and introduced them to the design elements and other best practices included in MDOT's policy and programs.

To further advance implementation of the new Complete Streets policy, MDOT partnered with Smart Growth America's Complete Streets Leadership Academy (CSLA) and local jurisdictions to deploy demonstration projects on state-owned roadways in communities across the state. The program helped SHA engineers to identify barriers to implementing safety measures and to develop strategies for incorporation into Complete Streets implementation plans. The goal of the CSLA is to use lessons learned from first-ever demonstration projects built on State roads to enhance and inform future collaboration with the community and implementation of MDOT's Complete Streets policy. CSLA projects included installation of temporary traffic safety measures on US 1 in Howard County, US 40 in Hagerstown, and at an intersection on MD 924 in

the Town of Bel Air. Initial feedback collected by local jurisdictions indicated an overall positive impact to speed, accessibility, and safety for vulnerable road users. A final report is expected to be delivered by Smart Growth America in early 2025.

Pedestrian Safety Action Plan

The Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP) is a program of investments in Complete Streets safety improvements for 23 priority corridors in underserved areas in Maryland. SHA continues to spend the \$86.5 million allocated in the Draft FY 2025 – 2030 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) for the implementation of the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan and related complete streets improvements (see page SHA-SW-6 of the CTP).

Currently, the first cohort of corridors slated for PSAP improvements are in design and include MD 650 from North Hampton Drive to Powder Mill Road; MD 2 from MD 177 to MD 648; US 1 from Gorman Road to Patuxent River; MD 650 from MD 193 to Montgomery County line; MD 410 from MD 500 to MD 212; and MD 150 from MD 700 to MD 702. MD 650 is anticipated to receive notice to proceed for construction in 2025. All corridors are also subject to the updated Complete Streets policy if they have not yet achieved 30% design by January 1, 2025.

A second set of locations slated for PSAP improvements launched in December 2024. Cohort 2 includes roadway segments located on MD 193 in Montgomery County, MD 214 and MD 201 in Prince George's County, US 40 in Washington County, MD 3 in Anne Arundel County, MD 235 in St. Mary's County, MD 528 in Worcester County, and US 40 in Harford County.

SHA hosted several public meetings to inform the public about these projects and collect feedback from stakeholders. MDOT will continue to provide ample opportunities for public engagement and input in 2025 and beyond, in route to delivering safer street corridors for all.

Kim Lamphier Bikeways Network Program

The Kim Lamphier Bikeways Network Program (Bikeways Program) was founded in 2011 by MDOT and provides state funding for planning, design and construction of bicycle infrastructure such as protected bike lanes and shared-use paths. The program is named for the late Kim Lamphier, a Montgomery County native and longtime Baltimore County resident who advocated for bicycling access throughout Maryland.

From FY2012-FY2024, the Bikeways Program has awarded funding for bicycle facility improvements to 62 unique jurisdictions. Funding via the Bikeways Program is designed to be administered flexibly and can be used to improve and retrofit both state and local roads. The Bikeways Program plays a vital role supplementing MDOT funding which can only be used on state roads as well as federal funding for bicycle facilities with more stringent requirements.

The Bikeways Program provided \$2.1 million in state funding for 10 projects in Fiscal Year 2025. This was a reduction from \$4.7 million and 18 projects in Fiscal Year 2024. This year's awards included \$380,000 for construction projects, \$75,000 for minor retrofits, and \$1.7 million for design projects.

This year's awards primarily fund bicycle facility planning and design in Ocean City, Baltimore City, Odenton, White Plains, Town of North East, and Greenbelt, with the remainder building shared-use paths in Fort Meade and St. Michaels as well as a minor retrofit project in Mount Rainer.

The Bikeways Program has markedly improved in the past five years in terms of safety benefits and administration. Despite the reduction of State funds from previous years, it continues to have a significant impact on bicycle accommodations in Maryland. The Bikeways Program funds projects, allows local jurisdictions to advance priorities, and delivers assistance that is easy to navigate for projects which otherwise may not have advanced. In the years to come, the Bikeways Program can continue to advance MDOT goals for safety and Complete Streets and leverage federal funds set aside for multimodal improvements by providing a match for large construction grants. The Bikeways Program shows MDOT's commitment to the Complete Street program's goals and the alignment of local, state and federal policies.

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is a federally funded formula program that MDOT administers on a competitive basis for community projects designed to strengthen the transportation system. Grants can assist projects that create bicycle and pedestrian facilities, convert abandoned railway corridors to pedestrian trails, mitigate highway runoff, and other transportation-related enhancements. TAP Fiscal Year 2025 grants provided \$12.9 million in federal funding for 17 projects.

SHA and its Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) partners awarded 17 TAP grants in FY2025 to local jurisdictions. The Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB) awarded funding to seven projects in its planning area, totaling \$4.7 million; the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) awarded six projects in its planning area, totaling \$3.8 million; and the Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) awarded funding to one project totaling \$79,968. The remaining \$4.3 million went towards eligible projects for State-flex funds.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is an eligible project type under TAP, which is federally funded, reimbursable, and administered by the State Highway Administration (SHA). Eligible sponsors may apply for TAP funding of a SRTS project that supports infrastructure projects or non-infrastructure activities that encourage K-12 students to use active transportation to safely get to school. Non-infrastructure activities can include implementing education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation practices and programs. Federal funds allocated to this program must benefit school children in grades K-12 and requires a 20% non-federal cash match contribution. Currently SHA manages 17 active SRTS projects totaling approximately \$5.65 million. Three SRTS projects were awarded funding in FY25 as a part of TAP, totaling more than \$600,000.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

The RTP is another federal program providing funds for an array of trail types including projects for pedestrian, bicycle, equestrian, off-highway vehicle and paddle sports and activities. Under

provisions of the grant, states must award 40% of allocations for projects that facilitate diverse uses of recreational trails, 30% for activities related to motorized recreation, and 30% for activities related to non-motorized recreation.

This year's RTP awarded grants to nine projects, totaling \$1.03 million. Projects include trail improvements in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Caroline County, the campus of Mount St. Mary's University, wayfinding improvements in the City of Frederick, a mountain bike trail in Garrett County, and a bridge restoration in Betterton in Kent County.

Carbon Reduction Program

A new federal program established in the Federal 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) provides funds for projects designed to reduce transportation emissions, defined as carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from on-road highway sources. In FY25, MDOT awarded \$11.2 million in CRP funding to state agencies and local governments for projects which complement MDOT's TAP and RTP programs. Notably, this round of CRP funding included a multimodal project to finish designing the remaining 9.5 miles of the first 15 miles of the Frederick Douglass Rail Trail, located on MDOT right of way from Easton to Tuckahoe State Park. Trailhead amenities are anticipated to be included within the towns of Queen Anne and Cordova, as well as a crossing over MD 404, and segments that will be subject to MDOT's updated Complete Streets Policy, for example within the Queen Anne Historic District. The trail repurposes rail alignments throughout, shares the road with vehicles on MD 303, connects to business and schools along MD 309, and provides access to parking for trail users at key locations.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Accessibility Funds

The State Highway Administration (SHA) administers accessibility funds, which includes a mix of state and federal funding streams. These funds address pedestrian and bicyclist safety, connectivity between destinations, and serve the increasing demand for sidewalks and pedestrian paths.

The Sidewalk Reconstruction for Pedestrian Access Fund upgrades existing pedestrian facilities along state highways to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility guidelines and the SHA Accessibility Policy & Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities along State Highways. The scope for this fund includes upgrading existing non-compliant sidewalk to ADA compliance and connecting short gaps between existing sidewalks.

The New Sidewalk Construction for Pedestrian Access fund serves current and future demand for sidewalks, enhances network connectivity and addresses existing safety issues by providing ADA-accessible facilities. The scope for this fund includes, but is not limited to, constructing new sidewalk where none exists.

Together, the Final FY 2025 – 2030 CTP includes \$182.4 million for projects from these two funds.

Finally, the Bicycle Retrofit fund upgrades Maryland highway facilities to accommodate bicycles by serving future rider demand, enhancing network connectivity, and addressing existing safety issues. The scope for this fund includes, but is not limited to, constructing on-road facilities (marked bicycle lanes or marked shared-use lanes) or off-road facilities, such as shared-use paths. The Final FY 2025 – 2030 CTP includes \$78.6 million for projects from this fund.

ADA Street and Sidewalk Improvements for Baltimore City can be found on TSO Line 9 of the Final FY 25 – 30 CTP. This program includes \$8.2 million in grant funding to support transportation infrastructure improvements to sidewalks, curb ramps, pedestrian signals, tracking for multimodal transit assets, and more. Significant improvements are expected in 2024, 2025, 2026, and 2027.

Additional MDOT Complete Street Activities

MDOT also led or participated in several local and statewide events supporting K-12 students walking, rolling, and biking to work. MDOT is also developing more opportunities for state and local progress in mode-shifting from driving to nonmotorized transportation through the award-winning Sidewalk Data Collaboration, Walktober, and other aspects of the Walk Maryland program and Bike to Work Month. Below is a summary of some of the key changes to the 2024 program which have led to steady increases in public participation in MDOT's active transportation initiatives:

- Event speakers and content curated based on goals, survey responses, and hot topics including a nationally known speaker paired with a Maryland-specific project or case study for each of 5 Walkinars.
- This year we added a Secretary Panel Walkinar, featuring Sustainable Growth Sub-cabinet members from MDH, DHCD, MDP, and MDOT, attracting more participation than any of the other Walkinars.
- Maryland Department of Health (MDH) added a registration website with optimized user experience to reduce barriers to information.
- MDOT leveraged a new partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to connect with all 24 school systems in Maryland.

Other growing areas of focus for the MDOT team include micromobility and transit accessibility. Mobility hubs can transform transportation systems when strategically placed across Maryland. These multimodal amenities bring together buses, trains, bikes, e-scooters, and ride-sharing services, into one convenient location. MDOT continues to explore opportunities to support this through transit oriented development. Mobility hubs require innovative spaces where public transit, bike and car-sharing, and micromobility can safely co-locate to address the “first and last mile” challenge of completing a multimodal, non-motorized, or low-powered electric mobility device trip.

More broadly, MDOT's Model Complete Streets Initiative supports, monitors, and reports out on the development, adoption, and implementation of the:

- Pedestrian Safety Action Plan;

- Vulnerable Road User assessment;
- Statewide sidewalk inventory;
- Complete Streets policy update;
- Bicycle facility design guidance;
- State Trail Plan update; and
- Expanded local technical assistance for bike, walk, and roll projects and programs.

MDOT will continue to coordinate and drive this array of active transportation strategies under the umbrella of the Model Complete Streets Initiative, ensuring that all modes work together to position Maryland as a national leader in setting and achieving traffic safety and mode-shift goals.