



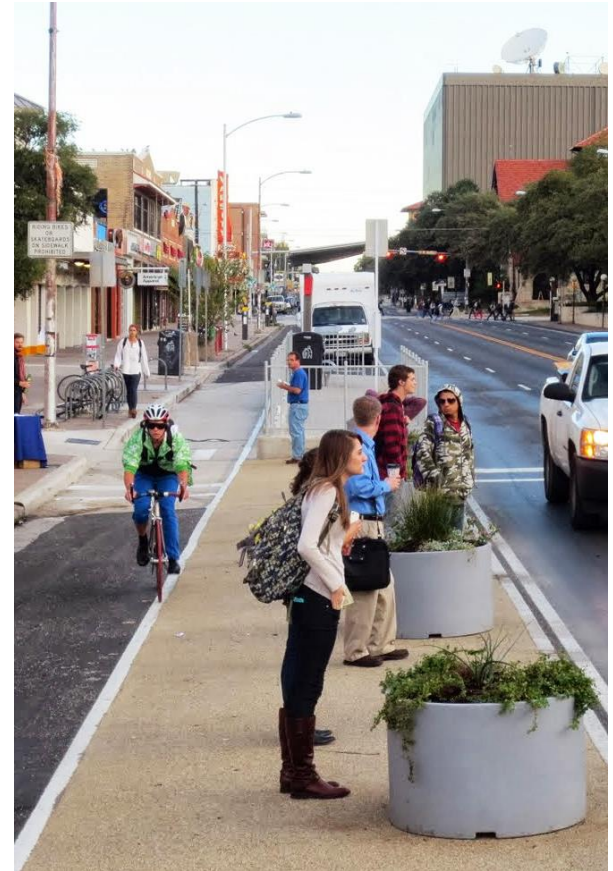
# Complete Streets Policy in Howard County

March 18, 2020



# Agenda

- Introduction
- What are Complete Streets?
- What are the benefits?
- Details of Howard County's Complete Streets policy



# WHAT ARE COMPLETE STREETS?

## Howard County Complete Streets Policy - Passed by Council Resolution 120-2019 on 10/7/19



### What is a complete street?

Complete streets are safe streets for all. They vary in different places and contexts, but they often include some or all the elements below.



#### Sidewalks

Facilitate travel for all users, including people in wheelchairs, with level, unobstructed, and wide walkways

#### Curb ramps

Accommodate wheelchairs, baby strollers, and bicycles with smooth transitions between sidewalks and roadways

#### Roadway

Manage travel speed, enhance safety, and provide predictability

#### Crosswalks

Direct pedestrians to preferred, clearly marked street crossing locations and increase driver awareness

#### Grass buffer

Separate the street and sidewalk and provide space for trees, light posts, and signs

# Complete Streets ...

- Consider the context of the community, so one size doesn't fit all
  - This is especially important in Howard County, with its wide range of contexts from rural to suburban to urban
- Don't mean that every street has sidewalks, bike lanes, and transit
- Come in all shapes and sizes, such as ...



# Rural roads with shared use paths





# Paved shoulders





# Low traffic, shared residential streets





# Narrower residential streets





# Main Streets









# Protected bike lanes





# WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Communities across the country have benefited from Complete Streets in many ways. Here are a few:





# Safety

Well-designed Complete Streets keep speeds manageable, resulting in fewer and less severe crashes for everyone using the street.



# The economy

Even modest investments in Complete Streets across the country have created jobs, reduced retail vacancies, and increased property values. And having travel choices reduces the amount of money a typical family spends on transportation.





# Health

People who live in walkable, bikeable communities get more exercise than those who don't, reducing the risk of obesity and chronic disease.



# Children

One of the reasons more of our children are overweight than ever before is because they have fewer opportunities for active living. Complete Streets give kids more opportunities to travel on their own, improving their physical health and mental well-being.





# Older adults

By 2025, nearly 1 in 5 Americans will be 65 or older. According to surveys, about half of all non-drivers over the age of 65 would like to get out more often. Complete Streets allow older adults to travel safely whether they're driving or not, helping them stay active in their communities.



Source: *Planning Complete Streets for the Aging of America*, AARP

# The environment

Complete Streets tend to reduce emissions and noise pollution. Many projects also repurpose overly wide streets to reduce stormwater runoff.





# Equity

Lower-income folks, people of color, and older adults are disproportionately at risk in traffic crashes. Complete Streets can help.

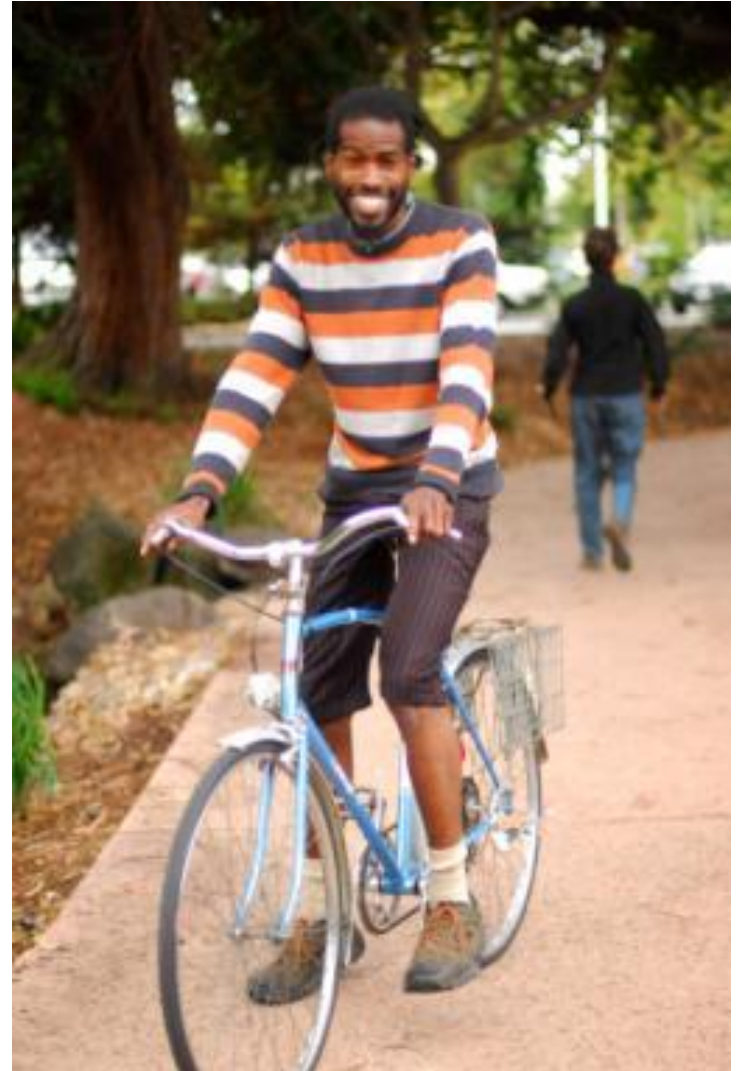


# Connectivity

A connected network of Complete Streets provides a wide range of transportation choices for everyone.

## Quality of life

Communities with Complete Streets are happier communities, because people are more likely to know and trust each other.





# DETAILS OF HOWARD COUNTY'S COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

## How does the Howard County Complete Streets Policy improve our streets?

### Safety



Ensures our streets are designed and maintained with safety for all as the top priority. Includes pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders and drivers.

### Coordination



Brings all relevant agencies together, ensures they are all contributing and pulling in the same direction. Includes Howard County, State Highway Administration and developers.

### Equity



Prioritizes transportation improvements in communities with vulnerable populations. Factors include poverty, racial minorities, limited English proficiency, disabled, elderly and carless.

### Public Input



Gives the community a strong voice and provides transparency throughout the entire process, including the early concept stages.

# Howard County Complete Streets Policy

Council Resolution 120-2019,

Adopted October 7, 2019

## **Vision:**

To ensure that Howard County is a place for individuals of all backgrounds to live and travel freely, safely, and comfortably, public and private roadways in Howard County shall be safe and convenient for residents of all ages and abilities who travel by foot, bicycle, public transportation or automobile, ensuring sustainable communities Countywide.





# Complete Streets policy

- The purpose of the Complete Streets policy is to update the County's practices to ensure that streets are planned, designed, built, operated, and maintained for the benefit of everyone
- The policy has ten elements to make that happen

# Complete Streets policy

## 1. Vision

To ensure that Howard County is a place for individuals of all backgrounds to live and travel freely, safely, and comfortably, public and private roadways in Howard County shall be safe and convenient for residents of all ages and abilities who travel by foot, bicycle, public transportation or automobile, ensuring sustainable communities Countywide.





# Complete Streets policy

## 2. Scope

- All types of transportation projects
- Both County capital projects and private development projects
- Ultimately, create a continuous, connected network of Complete Streets

# Complete Streets policy

## 3. Exceptions

- Exceptions may be considered when:
  - An accommodation that is not necessary on corridors where specific user groups are prohibited;
  - A justifiable absence of current and future need exists and is not recommended in any existing planning documents;
  - A project of equivalent scope and schedule exists or is already programmed for funding within the next five years to provide connectivity for all users; or
  - Cost of accommodation or degree of impact is grossly disproportionate to the need or probable use.





# Complete Streets policy

## 4. Conflicting or competing needs

- Provides guidance on trade-offs between modes of travel, prioritizing safety
- Support for investment in traditionally underserved communities

## 5. Creating a network

- Describes importance of a network, requiring coordination with other jurisdictions



# Complete Streets policy

## 6. Coordination and engagement

- Charges the County with development of public outreach procedures that reach all communities

## 7. Design guidelines

- Charges the County with updates to design guidance in accordance with best practices for multimodal street design





# Complete Streets policy

## 8. Context sensitivity

- The level of improvements should take into consideration roadway classification, land use, and adopted plans
- Consider the scale and character of the community
- Projects should reflect the desires of affected communities
- “At the planning phase of a capital project, before scope and budget are finalized, the County will obtain public input to identify transportation needs related to all modes of travel. Input will explicitly be sought from traditionally underrepresented populations in the project area.”



# Complete Streets policy

## 9. Performance measures

- Used to:
  - Track implementation progress
  - Prioritize projects
  - Evaluate alternatives for design
- 13 performance measures are specified in the policy



# Complete Streets policy

## 9. Performance measures (continued)

- “Equity shall be incorporated into every performance measure listed above to the extent data are available.”
- Vulnerable Population Index based on:
  - Poverty
  - Non-Hispanic, Non-White
  - Hispanic
  - Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
  - Disabled
  - Elderly
  - Carless

# Vulnerable Population Index

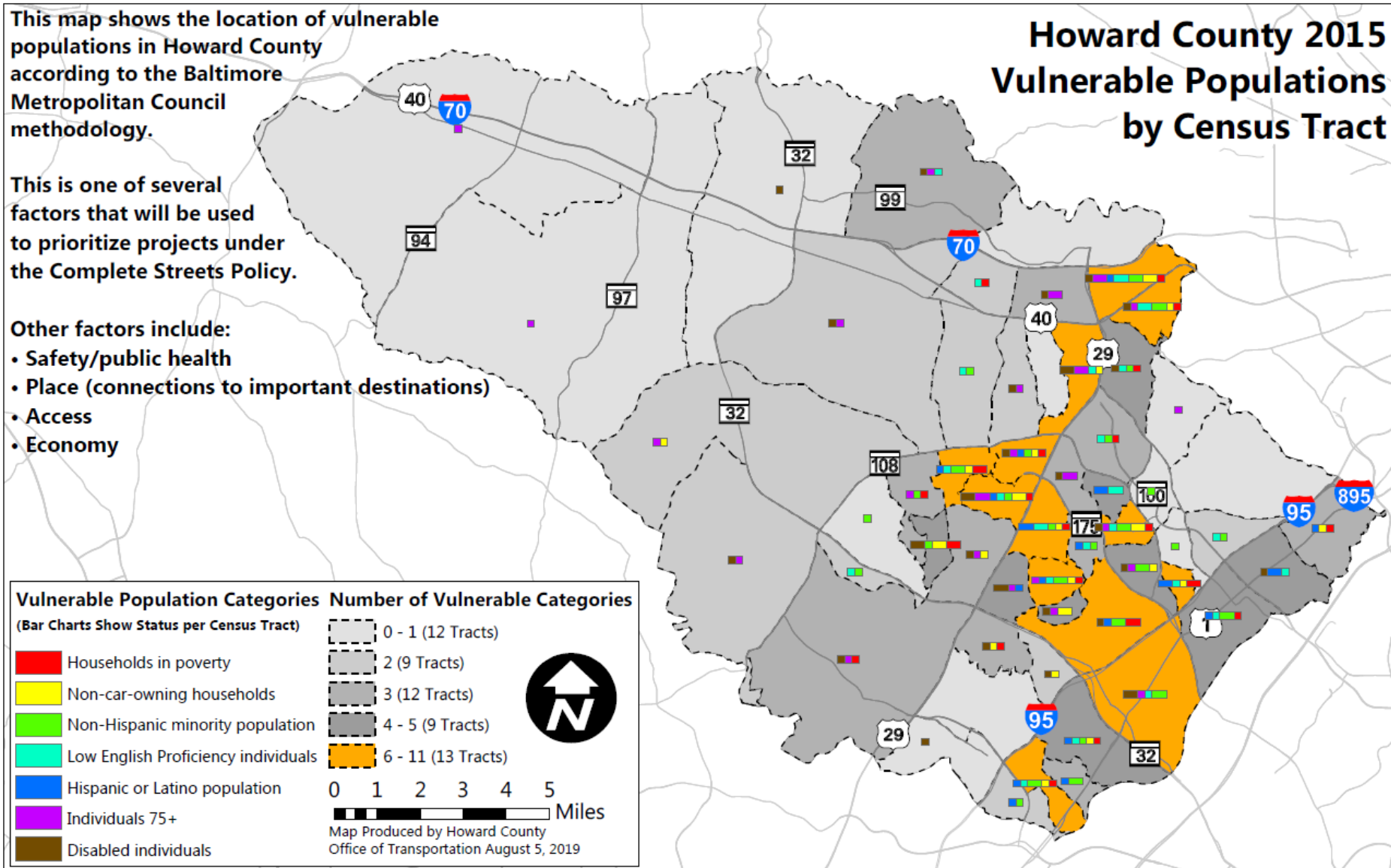
This map shows the location of vulnerable populations in Howard County according to the Baltimore Metropolitan Council methodology.

This is one of several factors that will be used to prioritize projects under the Complete Streets Policy.

Other factors include:

- Safety/public health
- Place (connections to important destinations)
- Access
- Economy

## Howard County 2015 Vulnerable Populations by Census Tract



# Complete Streets policy

## 10. Implementation

- This section includes specific actions to be taken by the County, along with timeframes
- Details will be discussed in a moment



# Next Steps (continued)

- Design Manual updates within 18 months  
(led by a Design Manual Working Group)
- Project prioritization process within 12 months
- Updates to Subdivision and Land Development Regulations after Design Manual updates are complete
- Public outreach procedures within 12 months
- Education and training





**THANK YOU!**

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