



September 8, 2023

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

TO: Jennifer A. Jenkins  
Council Administrator

William M. Hunt  
Deputy Council Administrator

THRU: Josh Hamlin   
Director of Budget and Policy Analysis

FROM: Lavinia A. Baxter  
Senior Budget and Policy Analyst

Alex Hirtle  
Budget and Policy Analyst 

RE: Policy Analysis and Fiscal Impact Statement  
CB-069-2023 Urban Street Design Policy and Standards  
CR-067-2023 Walkable Urban Street Act of 2023  
CR-068-2023 Specifications and Standards – 2023 Urban Street Design Standards

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**CB-069-2023/CR-067-2023/CR-068-2023** (*sponsored by: Councilmember Olson*)

Assigned to the Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment (TIEE) Committee

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AN ACT CONCERNING Urban Street Design Policy and Standards...

A RESOLUTION CONCERNING Walkable Urban Streets Act Of 2023 Roads And Sidewalks - Design and construction standards and requirements...

A RESOLUTION CONCERNING Specifications and Standards – 2023 Urban Street Design Standards...

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**Fiscal Summary**

**Direct Impact:**

*Expenditures:* Increased project costs due to increased standards for roadway projects.

*Revenues:* No impact.

**Indirect Impact:**

Potential additional revenue from the increased foot traffic in downtown centers.

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**Legislation Summary:**

CB-069-2023, CR-067-2023 and CR-068-2023, sponsored by Council Member Olson, together form a package of legislation that was presented and introduced, respectively, on July 5, 2023 and referred to the Transportation, Housing, Energy and Environment (TIEE) Committee. This package does three things: (1) approves the new 2023 Urban Street Design Standards, (2) incorporates and codifies the new 2023 Urban Street Design Standards into the Department of Public Works and Transportation’s “Specifications and Standards for Roadways and Bridges”, and (3) codifies the new 2023 Urban Street Design Standards as part of the County’s Urban Street Design Policy.

**CR-067-2023 Walkable Urban Streets Act**

CR-67-2023 approves the new 2023 Urban Streets Design Standards. The new 2023 Urban Street Design Standards are intended for use in the designing of new and retrofit streets in the eight Regional Transit Districts and twenty-six Local Centers. In August 2017, the 2017 Urban Street Design Standards were promulgated. It is the purpose of CR-67-2023 to revise the 2017 Urban Street Design Standards.

**CR-068-2023 Specifications and Standards – 2023 Urban Design Standards**

CR-68-2023 incorporates and codifies the new 2023 Urban Street Design Standards into the Department of Public Works and Transportation’s “Specifications and Standards for Roadways and Bridges (2007)”, as set forth in CR-67-2023 and consistent with the Council’s 2014 approval of its most current general plan for the County, Plan 2035.

Exhibit A - Urban Street Design Standards - sets forth the following revisions:

1. Amends and adopts the 2017 General Specifications and Standards for Highway and Street Construction and Signals. Standards shall be incorporated into the County code.
2. Adds on language on page 5 “transit priority design standards”
3. Adds language of no more than maximum travel lanes 2, 3, or 4 required to maintain LOS E based on most recent published traffic volumes (ADT and AADT). P. 6
4. Adds language to the chart on page 12 that “additional urban street types *shall* be used in Regional Transit Districts and Local Centers and current standards are prohibited.”
5. Appendix B – Additional Design Considerations adds language on intersection design standards based on National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) and strikes language allowing appropriateness for individual projects. P. 36
6. Exhibit B, formally titled “Specifications and Standards for Roads and Bridges 2007” amends inclusion files in Section 1. The included language amends the legislation to account for urban street design standards. It adopts exhibit A, where there is underlined language generally pertaining to Regional Transit and Local Centers Urban Street Design Standards.

### **CB-069-2023 Urban Street Design Policy and Standards**

CB-069-2023 adds the new 2023 Urban Street Design Standards set forth in CR-067-2023 to the Prince George’s County Code to supplement the Urban Street Design Policy that is already codified. The Urban Street Design Policy and Standards are consistent with the County Council’s 2014 approval of its most current general plan for the County, Plan Prince George’s 2035.

CB-069-2023 removes the term *principles* and adds the word *standards* to Section 23-146, currently titled Urban Street Design Policy. In section (a) the bill removes the term *principles* and references the 2023 Urban Streets Design Standards incorporated in the 2007 version and revised in 2023 of the Department of Public Works and Transportation *Specifications and Standards for Roadways and Bridges*. In section (b) the word “Urban” is removed, and the title “Regional Transit Districts and Local” is added, which is language consistent in Plan 2035. In the Plan, Regional Transit Districts is defined as:

“Eight centers with extensive transit transportation infrastructure and the long-term capacity to become mixed-use, economic generators for the County and Regional Transit Districts. Each is categorized as either a Regional Transit District or Local Center.”

*Approved General Plan p. 19*

The eight regional transit districts are Branch Avenue Metro, College Park, Greenbelt, Largo Town Center Metro, New Carrollton, National Harbor, Prince George’s Plaza and Suitland.

Additionally, the bill requires annual reporting from DPW&T and a ten-year plan for compliance around Regional Centers. CR-068-2023 incorporates by resolution the 2023 Urban Street Design Standards into section I of the code.

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## **Current Law/Background:**

In 2012, Council Member Olson introduced “Complete and Green Streets” ([CB-083-2012](#)), the US Department of Transportation design approach which *required safe and adequate public facilities in the roadway for motorized and non-motorized users, including pedestrians, bicycles, motor, freight, emergency, and transit vehicles, in a manner appropriate to the function and context of the facility.*<sup>1</sup> Section 23-146 in the code titled Urban Street Design includes the language of CB 086-2015, the year the County began to follow the 2014 General Plan and the “General Plan Road Guidelines.” Since the County adopted the Urban Street Design Standards for Regional Transit Centers in 2017, the criticism has been that there was little standardization and consistency in implementation, and the County has lagged behind other jurisdictions in implementing the standards.

This bill seeks to update the code to the latest national standards. Some changes include prohibiting slip lanes and arterials that encourage cars to speed, promoting 2-4 travel lane widths, buffers, bike, and pedestrian facilities, a max speed of 25 miles per hour and 10-foot lanes widths (11’ for bus routes), 15’ minimum corner turning radius, buffered sidewalks and bike facilities.

The legislative package consists of two Resolutions and one Bill: CR-067-2023 adopts urban street design standards, of which resolutions are historically used for this; CR-068-2023 provides specifications and standards for infrastructure such as roadways and bridges- Section 23-128 of the County Code requires this, and CB-069-2023 amends the part of the County Code this legislation is pertinent to for sections 23-105 (DPIE Director authority), 23-146 (project costs approval), and 23-615 (Complete and Green Streets policy).

Amendments for both Resolutions and the Bill were issued on September 12<sup>th</sup>, and are not reflected in the original text of this document, nor implemented into a revised draft for all three pieces of legislation. Readers are encouraged to review these documents which should be available prior to the beginning of the Committee meeting.

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## **Resource Personnel:**

- Julio Murillo, Chief of Staff, District 2 Council Office
- Kathleen Canning, Legislative Officer

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## **Discussion/Policy Analysis:**

Currently, there is a 16-year high in U.S. traffic fatalities, and many cities are earnestly laying the groundwork for longer-term transformative changes to their streets.<sup>2</sup> One of the issues here in Prince George’s County is the lag between the County’s change from a primarily rural

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<sup>1</sup> [Prince George's County Council - Reference No. CB-083-2012 \(legistar.com\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [NACTO in 2022: Cities Taking the Lead | National Association of City Transportation Officials](#)

environment to an urban one. Transportation planners have cited the need for County roads to go on a road diet due to an overbuilt environment. With the County growing increasingly urban, this bill seeks to bring County transportation planning and design in line with universal design standards for urban roads. Implementation is the onus of developers who have the task of building new roads connected to residential and commercial projects.

Urban street standards incorporate all aspects of roadway design, including street design elements, intersection design elements, and design controls.<sup>3</sup> The Department of Public Works and Transportation has expressed issues with the establishment of certain standards, which they believe are not realistic due to conflicts with utilities, right-of-way impact, and building structure conflicts. They would like to maintain a waiver process to accommodate specific issues. Additionally, the Department seeks to include the concerns of all stakeholders, including developers, who will have the task of implementation before this legislation is finalized.

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## **Fiscal Impact:**

### *Direct Impact*

Enactment and adoption of CB-069-2023/CR-067-2023/CR-68-2023 is likely to have an adverse direct fiscal impact on the County. There is no prescribed funding for the changes that will be added to the code and operating procedures. These changes will likely add cost to projects developers will have to implement. While these design changes will ostensibly help to reduce the number of traffic accidents and fatalities (the human cost), there is a fiscal impact to retrofit older urban roadways and to build more amenities such as bike lanes, buffers, wider sidewalks, lane markings, and street parking. Retrofitting is a cost that the County will have to absorb.

### *Indirect Impact*

CB-069-2023/CR-067-2023/CR-068-2023 will likely have a favorable indirect fiscal impact on the County. The prescribed policies will add value and amenities to local roadways to make the County safer and promote economic development. Studies show that walkable/bikeable urban streets help to attract people to small local businesses that may be within urban centers because sidewalks promote more foot traffic and street parking promotes more visitors. This legislative package may also promote:

- Increased property values;
- Increased safety and security and decreased crime;
- Increased employment;
- Increased retail sales; and
- Increased commercial and property tax receipts.

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<sup>3</sup> [Urban Street Design Guide | National Association of City Transportation Officials \(nacto.org\)](https://www.nacto.org/resources/urban-street-design-guide/)

*Appropriated in the Current Fiscal Year Budget*

No.

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**Effective Date of Proposed Legislation**

The proposed Act, CB-068-2023 shall take effect forty-five (45) calendar days after it becomes law.

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If you require additional information or have any questions about this fiscal impact statement, please call me.