



Office of the Chairman
Prince George's County Planning Board

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September 7, 2023

The Honorable Thomas E. Dernoga
Chairman
Prince George's County Council
Wayne K. Curry Administration Building
1301 McCormick Drive
Largo, MD 20772

Re: CR-67-203, CR-68-2023 and CB-69-2023

Dear Chairman Dernoga:

Thank you for providing the Planning Board an opportunity to review and comment on proposed District Council legislation. During the September 7, 2023 Planning Board meeting, the following positions were adopted in accordance with the Planning Department staff's recommendations on the proposed legislation. **A Planning Board Analysis of each bill is attached for your consideration and a brief excerpt from each report is provided below:**

CR-67-2023 *A resolution for the purpose of incorporating 2023 Urban Street Design Standards and Specifications as consistent with Plan Prince George's 2035 for Regional Transit Districts and Local Centers in Prince George's County, striving to balance the needs of all users that are business-friendly, walkable, bike-able and transit friendly; generally regarding design and construction standards and urban street designs.*

Planning Board Recommendation: Support with Amendments.
(See Attachment 1 for full analysis)

This resolution and its companion legislation advance the vision, goals, and recommendations of Plan 2035. This legislation will facilitate implementation of Plan 2035 Priority Strategy PD1.6:

Prioritize capital improvement projects that encourage new private investment and create walkable communities. Potential projects include public streets, streetscape amenities, underground utilities, and advanced information and communication technology infrastructure, in first-round downtowns and the Innovation Corridor

This legislation also advances key Plan 2035 strategies to facilitate the transformation of the Regional Transit Districts, Innovation Corridor, and Local Centers to create walkable, mixed-use activity centers that attract and retain new residents and businesses:

Strategy TM1.1: Design all capital road improvements and streetscape enhancements and all new development in the Regional Transit Districts, the Innovation Corridor, and Local Centers to improve multimodal travel for pedestrians, cyclists, transit, and other alternatives to the automobile. The primary transportation improvements in these areas should be focused on pedestrian and bicyclist facilities and public transit upgrades and retrofits.

Strategy HN 1.2: Prioritize public investment in critical infrastructure, streetscape improvements that include landscaping and lighting, public facilities, parks, public art, and other amenities in the Regional Transit Districts and the Innovation Corridor.

The proposed changes to the Urban Design Standards advance the overall goal of creating the pedestrian and bicycle-friendly environment necessary to achieve the County's quality of life and economic development goals but present several challenges that could benefit from additional discussion among planners, policymakers, and other parties who participated in the 2017 drafting of the original standards. The Planning Board recommends further collaboration between the County Council, the Planning Department, the Departments of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement (DPIE), Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T), and other stakeholders to refine the Urban Street Design Standards and to eliminate procedural loopholes that can lead to the construction of suburban streets in the County's urban centers.

Should the proposed legislation advance, the Planning Board would like to recommend the District Council consider amendments to CR-67-2023, and to discuss concerns regarding Exhibit A: The Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation Urban Street Design Standards.

The Planning Board recommends additional conversations between policymakers, county agencies and planners to come up with the best Urban Street Design Standards taking into consideration safety and creating pedestrian friendly environments to move gorgeous Prince George's forward.

***CR-68-2023** A resolution for the purpose of amending the "General Specifications and Standards for Highway and Street Construction" and the "Specifications and Standards for Highway Traffic Signals" of the Department of Public Works and Transportation; and generally regarding urban street design.*

Planning Board Recommendation: Support with Amendments.
(See Attachment 2 for full analysis)

It is the Planning Board's understanding that the Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) is in the process of updating its Specifications and Standards for Highway and Bridge Design. The Planning Board recommends that such an update should seamlessly integrate the County's approach to street and road design and incorporate principles of urban street design within its overall design and construction framework. Maintaining Urban Street Design Standards as a separate document renders them subordinate in function to the Specifications and Standards and increases the likelihood of confusion and conflict.

There are numerous provisions, recommendations, and policies contained within the existing Specifications and Standards that fundamentally conflict with urban street design principles. Therefore, the Planning Board has recommended amendments to Table I-1.5 of the draft Roadway Design Guidelines. Those amendments should be revised to reflect the Planning Board's revisions to Page 14 of the Urban Street Design Standards contained in the Planning Board's comments on CR-67-2023.

If the District Council does not wish to direct DPW&T to create new alternative standards and/or wants to incorporate the standards in CR-67-2023 that direction should be stated in the resolution.

***CB-69-2023** A bill for the purpose of adopting an urban street design policy and standards pursuant to the 2023 Urban Streets Design Standards, incorporated in the Department of Public Works and Transportation's "Specifications and Standards for Roadways and Bridges" (2007), as revised in 2023, consistent with the Council's 2014 approval of its most current general plan for the County, Plan Prince George's 2035; and generally regarding urban street design standards.*

Planning Board Recommendation: Support with Amendments.
(See Attachment 3 for full analysis)

CB-69-2023 adopts the 2023 Urban Street Design Policy and Standards for Prince George's County. The bill as drafted ties the Urban Street Design Standards into the Urban Street Design Policy that was adopted by CB-86-2015.

This bill and its companion legislation advance the vision, goals, and recommendations of Plan 2035. This legislation will facilitate implementation of Plan 2035 Priority Strategy PD1.6:

Prioritize capital improvement projects that encourage new private investment and create walkable communities. Potential projects include public streets, streetscape amenities, underground utilities, and advanced information and communication technology infrastructure, in first-round downtowns and the Innovation Corridor

This legislation also advances key Plan 2035 strategies to facilitate the transformation of the Regional Transit Districts, Innovation Corridor, and Local Centers to create walkable, mixed-use activity centers that attract and retain new residents and businesses:

Strategy TM1.1: Design all capital road improvements and streetscape enhancements and all new development in the Regional Transit Districts, the Innovation Corridor, and Local Centers to improve multimodal travel for pedestrians, cyclists, transit, and other alternatives to the automobile. The primary transportation improvements in these areas should be focused on pedestrian and bicyclist facilities and public transit upgrades and retrofits.

Strategy HN 1.2: Prioritize public investment in critical infrastructure, streetscape improvements that include landscaping and lighting, public facilities, parks, public art, and other amenities in the Regional Transit Districts and the Innovation Corridor.

This legislation also advances transportation, urban design, and placemaking recommendations of the 2009 *Countywide Master Plan of Transportation* and all 38 master, sector, and transit district development plans by ensuring construction of safer, more attractive, and more inviting streets that facilitate pedestrian, bicycle, and transit activity.

As drafted, there are several provisions written in the bill that could prevent quality design and construction of urban streets throughout the County. The Planning Board requests that the District Council consider those concerns and consider making amendments to the bill.

As always, Planning Department staff members are available to work with the Council and your legislative staff on any pertinent legislative matters. Please let us know if we may be of further assistance.

The Honorable Thomas E. Dernoga
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Should you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of the Planning Director at 301-952-3595. Thank you, again, for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of vertical strokes followed by a horizontal line that curves slightly to the right.

Peter A. Shapiro
Chair

Attachments

CR-67-2023 – Planning Board Analysis (Attachment 1)

A resolution for the purpose of incorporating 2023 Urban Street Design Standards and Specifications as consistent with Plan Prince George's 2035 for Regional Transit Districts and Local Centers in Prince George's County, striving to balance the needs of all users that are business-friendly, walkable, bike-able and transit friendly; generally regarding design and construction standards and urban street designs.

The Planning Board has the following comments for consideration by the District Council:

Policy Analysis:

CR-67-2023 was designed to revise the 2017 Urban Street Designs and incorporate the changes into the 2023 Urban Street Design Standards for the County. The resolution updates the design of new and retrofit streets within Plan 2035-designated Regional Transit Districts and Local Centers. The resolution also directs the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) to develop a 10-year plan by January 2025 to bring the streets into compliance with the updated (2023) Urban Street Design Standards.

This resolution and its companion legislation advance the vision, goals, and recommendations of Plan 2035. This legislation will facilitate implementation of Plan 2035 Priority Strategy PD1.6:

Prioritize capital improvement projects that encourage new private investment and create walkable communities. Potential projects include public streets, streetscape amenities, underground utilities, and advanced information and communication technology infrastructure, in first-round downtowns and the Innovation Corridor

This legislation also advances key Plan 2035 strategies to facilitate the transformation of the Regional Transit Districts, Innovation Corridor, and Local Centers to create walkable, mixed-use activity centers that attract and retain new residents and businesses:

Strategy TM1.1: Design all capital road improvements and streetscape enhancements and all new development in the Regional Transit Districts, the Innovation Corridor, and Local Centers to improve multimodal travel for pedestrians, cyclists, transit, and other alternatives to the automobile. The primary transportation improvements in these areas should be focused on pedestrian and bicyclist facilities and public transit upgrades and retrofits.

Strategy HN 1.2: Prioritize public investment in critical infrastructure, streetscape improvements that include landscaping and lighting, public facilities, parks, public art, and other amenities in the Regional Transit Districts and the Innovation Corridor.

The proposed changes to the Urban Design Standards advance the overall goal of creating the pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly environment necessary to achieve the County's quality of life and economic development goals but present several challenges that could benefit from additional discussion among planners, policymakers, and other parties who participated in the 2017 drafting of the original standards. The Planning Board recommends further collaboration between the County Council, the Planning Department, the Departments of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement (DPIE), Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T), and other stakeholders to refine the Urban Street Design Standards and to eliminate procedural loopholes that can lead to the construction of suburban streets in the County's urban centers.

CR-67-2023 – Planning Board Analysis (Attachment 1)

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Should these revisions advance, the Planning Board would like to recommend the District Council consider amendments to CR-67-2023, and to discuss concerns regarding Exhibit A: The Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation Urban Street Design Standards. The proposed amendments are as follows:

On page 3, lines 5 through 9 of CR-67-2023 the language should be revised to read: BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Public Works and Transportation shall [develop a]continue to coordinate with the Planning Department on the development of a new Countywide Master Plan of Transportation, and, following its approval by the District Council, develop a 10-year plan by January 2027[2025] to bring the streets in the County's Regional Transit Districts and Local Centers into compliance with the 2023 Urban Street Design Standards. The Department of Public Works and Transportation shall report annually on progress to the County Council on the comprehensive efforts to bring all these streets into compliance.

The amendment is needed because on September 21, 2021, the District Council adopted CR-79-2021, initiating development of a new Countywide Master Plan of Transportation (CMPOT). The Planning Department Staff Draft CMPOT is currently scheduled for public release by the end of March 2024. On its current schedule, the CMPOT may not be approved by the District Council until October 2025. The new CMPOT will identify the specific recommended Urban Street Design Standards for every street within the County's Regional Transit Districts and Local Centers, based upon the planned land use and mobility context for each street. The Planning Board believes that it would be premature at this time for DPW&T to finalize a plan to retrofit all the County's urban streets; directing DPW&T to perform such a task while the CMPOT is underway creates an opportunity for duplicative work and conflicting recommendations.

Next, the Planning Board recommends three additional BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED clauses be added to the resolution. The clauses would:

- (1) Direct DPW&T to create and lead an interagency working group to further update the Urban Street Design Standards. Such an update should include, but not be limited to, the following topics:
 - a. Development of transit priority lane design standards based upon the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Transit Street Design Guide.
 - b. Development of one or more standards to be used in situations where the curb-to-curb horizontal rights-of-way of an existing street are insufficient to retrofit to a currently existing Urban Street Design Standard. Such standard(s) shall include bicycle accommodation.
- (2) Direct the DPW&T to update the Standards and Specifications for Highway and Bridges to fully integrate the Urban Street Design Standards and, in doing so, treat urban streets on equal standing as other street/road types.
- (3) Encourage the Maryland State Highway Administration and municipalities to design streets within Regional Transit Districts and Local Centers to meet these standards whenever possible.

The Planning Board has numerous concerns with Exhibit A: The Prince George’s County Department of Public Works and Transportation Urban Street Design Standards. Some of the concerns include:

- (a) The 2017 standards do not recognize urban streets as a distinct functional classification, and attempt to marry functional classification, which is determined by how motor vehicles will use a road, and urban street design, which focuses on how all users use a street. Confusion resulting from this discrepancy may contribute to the misapplication of an inappropriate street design standard in urban locations.
- (b) On page 5, the standards add “transit priority design standards” to the Mixed-Use Boulevard Street typology but does not include engineering drawings and design specifications for transit priority measures. Also, it is possible that Neighborhood Connector streets may also require transit priority measures. Transit-priority lanes should be offered as an optional add-on to existing streets, with distinct design attributes including red paint, signage, and transit priority signals.
- (c) On page 5, Note (A) states that the Urban Street Design Standards are required to be incorporated into the existing standards. There should be legislative language added under the appropriate section of the Code, not solely a footnote in an appendix.
- (d) On page 6, the newly added language presents several challenges. The ongoing Master Plan of Transportation update is evaluating the appropriateness of vehicular level-of-service (LOS) requirements, especially in Urban Centers. LOS is a measure of how many vehicles can travel through a given location in a specified time frame. Tying a design standard that intentionally slows motor vehicle movements through an area to facilitate safe non-vehicular movements to a measurement of the ability of a facility to move motor vehicles is inconsistent with the goals of this legislation. LOS E as defined in the Subdivision Regulations and the Transportation Review Guidelines is an increasingly impossible standard to meet anywhere with significant pedestrian, bicycle, and transit activity. Vehicular levels-of-service, as traditionally defined by the traffic engineering industry, should not be used to determine the design of an urban street.

However, while street planning in Prince George’s County considers a variety of factors, streets should generally be constructed to accommodate their anticipated function. As mentioned above, Prince George’s County is on the cusp of a multi-decade effort to remake its 34 designated Centers from auto-dominated suburbs to walkable urban activity centers. In many of these Centers, there is currently very little to no existing development that would generate vehicular traffic. Using current traffic counts to design a street is inappropriate and would require multiple costly reconstructions as vehicular traffic evolves over time. Should new construction be based on traffic counts, the proposed language would require the construction of new streets through areas that currently have no housing or jobs along them at two vehicular through lanes, which would be immediately insufficient should the thousands of dwelling units and new jobs anticipated materialize. The Planning Board agrees that lanes should be phased in, and language should be added to ensure this (see below).

The Planning Board recommends deleting the first sentence of the newly added language. The language is as follows: [No more than the maximum number of travel lanes -- 2, 3 or 4 -- required to maintain LOS E based on most recent published traffic volumes (ADT and AADT) shall be used].

To this, the Planning Board recommends adding the following language:

Mixed-Use Boulevards designed to ultimately support four travel lanes should be limited to two travel lanes in initial operation to limit vehicular speeds, unless surrounding land uses and anticipated traffic volumes warrant four travel lanes. The additional horizontal area where the third and fourth lanes would ultimately go can be reserved for on-street parking, transit priority measures, green space, or other non-automobile use.

On page 14, under Summary of Existing Standards and Urban Street Standards Table there are several concerns. The concerns are as follows:

- (a) The language suggests to the reader that the “urban” “current” street types may be used interchangeably with the “additional” urban street types adopted in 2017. The purpose of this was to demonstrate comparisons to the County’s pre-2017 urban street standards. Once the Urban Street Design Standards were in place, this table should have been, and should be, revised to eliminate references to previous urban street design standards that should not, and pursuant to this legislation, would not, be used. This has caused repeated confusion since 2017 and warrants revision. It is the Planning Board staff’s understanding that a revision to the Specifications and Standards for Roadways and Bridges that may incorporate this change is underway.
- (b) The table states that “Mixed Use Boulevard (2, 3, and 4 lane options) shall be the urban street typologies used for arterials and collector roads.” The current Master Plan of Transportation, as amended, generally recommends 80-foot-wide rights-of-way for collector roads. None of the Mixed-Use Boulevard Urban Street types can be constructed in an 80-foot right-of-way. In addition, depending on the local context, some roads envisioned to be collectors may require a barrier-separated bicycle lane or four vehicle travel lanes, which would require the acquisition of additional horizontal rights-of-way. Constructing Mixed-Use Boulevards along streets with less than 86 feet of existing right-of-way could be expensive, and difficult if there are existing structures within the desired right-of-way.

The ongoing Master Plan of Transportation will remedy this issue by assigning the appropriate Urban Street Type to all streets within Plan 2035 Centers. However, this will not occur until the plan is approved in 2025. In the attached revised table, the Planning Board recommends an informational cross-reference between Urban Street Types and Functional Classifications.

- (c) The table recommends a 10-foot maximum lane width for all Urban Streets unless the street contains a bus route. The Planning Board notes 10-foot lanes are generally appropriate in urban areas, but additional language may be warranted to permit 11-foot-lanes on streets with considerable truck traffic, such as those streets with large retail or grocery outlets, or large apartment buildings, where truck traffic will be frequent.
- (d) It should be noted that Section 27-4204(b)(1)(C) of the Zoning Ordinance establishes Pedestrian Access and Circulation requirements for development in the Transit-Oriented/Activity Center Zones, and Section 27-4303(a)(3) contains similar requirements within Planned Development Zones. Sidewalks are public spaces and should be contained within public rights-of-way. The Urban Street Design Standards should reflect the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance to establish consistent public realm design standards for all public streets, and to eliminate confusion, the most expansive sidewalk requirements within the various zones that may exist along a single block should be used for that block.

- (e) The footnote with two asterisk symbols under the table requires the user to refer to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) A Policy on the Geometric Design of Highways and Streets for additional horizontal and vertical design constraints relative to designs. AASHTO guidance generally applies to suburban and rural road and highway designs and not to the design of Urban Streets.

The Planning Board recommends use of the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) guidance such as the NACTO Urban Street Design Guide, upon which the Urban Street Design Standards were based.

- (f) Next, the footnote with three asterisk symbols prohibits multiple turn lanes at intersections. This is an area where discretion may be more appropriate. While provision of multiple turn lanes increases the width of a pedestrian crossing, the absence of multiple turn lanes may cause left turn queues to back up in the travel lanes along a block, increasing congestion. The Planning Board recommends this prohibition be revised to a strong encouragement.
- (g) The newly added language with four asterisk symbols language requires “Transit Priority cross-section to be determined by DPW&T, and NACTO sources” This statement may be confusing: DPW&T determines all County Street cross-sections, consistent with the requirements of standards adopted by the County Council; this statement is redundant, and the use of “and” in this statement suggests that either DPW&T or NACTO sources can be made.

The Planning Board recommends a complete replacement of Page 14 of the Urban Street Design Standards with the language in the attached chart.

On page 36, under Appendix B: Additional Design Considerations Related to Urban Street Design: Turning Radius, the newly added language prohibiting the use of slip lanes and multiple turn lanes should be revised. The Planning Board recommends the language read: Slip lanes shall not be used, and multiple left turn lanes are strongly discouraged.

Lastly, the District Council may want to consider when adopting the Urban Street Design Standards, suburban fire departments, and other agencies who operate large vehicles often object to the establishment of maximum turning radii and other traffic calming measures standard in urban environments. Incorporation of tight turning radii is imperative to create a walkable urban environment, but may require additional resources for orientation, training, and updated equipment for County agencies to gain experience in navigating urban spaces.

In addition, the current Countywide Master Plan of Transportation (CMPOT) generally recommends the provision of rights-of-way associated with traditional suburban road design, such as 120 feet or greater for arterial roads, 90-110 feet for major collectors, and 80 feet for collectors.

It should be noted that dedication and/or approval of the necessary rights-of-way to construct new roads and streets occurs at the time of subdivision pursuant to the recommended rights-of-way within the MPOT, as amended by subsequent master and sector plans. An update to the MPOT to recommend specific street design standards and necessary rights-of-way within the County’s designed Regional Transit Districts and Local Centers is underway but will not be approved before 2025. All stakeholders should be aware that the rights-of-way recommended in County master and sector plans recommend minimum rights-of-way, and that those required by the Urban Street Design Standards may be wider than those recommended in plans.

CR-67-2023 – Planning Board Analysis (Attachment 1)

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The Planning Board recommends additional conversations between policymakers, county agencies and planners to come up with the best Urban Street Design Standards taking into consideration safety and creating pedestrian friendly environments to move gorgeous Prince George's forward.

Impacted Property:

This legislation will affect all roads and sidewalks within the eight Regional Transit Districts and 26 Local Centers that were established by Plan 2035.

Following discussion, the Planning Board voted to support CR-67-2023 with amendments.

CR-68-2023 – Planning Board Analysis (Attachment 2)

A resolution for the purpose of amending the "General Specifications and Standards for Highway and Street Construction" and the "Specifications and Standards for Highway Traffic Signals" of the Department of Public Works and Transportation; and generally regarding urban street design.

The Planning Board has the following comments for consideration by the District Council:

Policy Analysis:

This resolution formally amends the “General Specifications and Standards for Highway and Bridge Design and the Specifications and Standards for Highway Traffic Signals” to incorporate the Urban Street Design Standards contained in CR-67-2023.

It is the Planning Board’s understanding that the Prince George’s County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) is in the process of updating its *Specifications and Standards for Highway and Bridge Design*. The Planning Board recommends that such an update should seamlessly integrate the County’s approach to street and road design and incorporate principles of urban street design within its overall design and construction framework. Maintaining Urban Street Design Standards as a separate document renders them subordinate in function to the Specifications and Standards and increases the likelihood of confusion and conflict.

There are numerous provisions, recommendations, and policies contained within the existing Specifications and Standards that fundamentally conflict with urban street design principles. Therefore, the Planning Board has recommended amendments to Table I-1.5 of the draft Roadway Design Guidelines. Those amendments should be revised to reflect the Planning Board’s revisions to Page 14 of the Urban Street Design Standards contained in the Planning Board’s comments on CR-67-2023.

If the District Council does not wish to direct DPW&T to create new alternative standards and/or wants to incorporate the standards in CR-67-2023 that direction should be stated in the resolution.

Impacted Property:

This legislation will affect urban designed streets in Prince George’s County.

Following discussion, the Planning Board voted to support CR-68-2023 with amendments.

CB-69-2023 – Planning Board Analysis (Attachment 3)

A bill for the purpose of adopting an urban street design policy and standards pursuant to the 2023 Urban Streets Design Standards, incorporated in the Department of Public Works and Transportation's "Specifications and Standards for Roadways and Bridges" (2007), as revised in 2023, consistent with the Council's 2014 approval of its most current general plan for the County, Plan Prince George's 2035; and generally regarding urban street design standards.

The Planning Board has the following comments for consideration by the District Council:

Policy Analysis:

CB-69-2023 adopts the 2023 Urban Street Design Policy and Standards for Prince George's County. The bill as drafted ties the Urban Street Design Standards into the Urban Street Design Policy that was adopted by CB-86-2015.

This bill and its companion legislation advance the vision, goals, and recommendations of Plan 2035. This legislation will facilitate implementation of Plan 2035 Priority Strategy PD1.6:

Prioritize capital improvement projects that encourage new private investment and create walkable communities. Potential projects include public streets, streetscape amenities, underground utilities, and advanced information and communication technology infrastructure, in first-round downtowns and the Innovation Corridor

This legislation also advances key Plan 2035 strategies to facilitate the transformation of the Regional Transit Districts, Innovation Corridor, and Local Centers to create walkable, mixed-use activity centers that attract and retain new residents and businesses:

Strategy TM1.1: Design all capital road improvements and streetscape enhancements and all new development in the Regional Transit Districts, the Innovation Corridor, and Local Centers to improve multimodal travel for pedestrians, cyclists, transit, and other alternatives to the automobile. The primary transportation improvements in these areas should be focused on pedestrian and bicyclist facilities and public transit upgrades and retrofits.

Strategy HN 1.2: Prioritize public investment in critical infrastructure, streetscape improvements that include landscaping and lighting, public facilities, parks, public art, and other amenities in the Regional Transit Districts and the Innovation Corridor.

This legislation also advances transportation, urban design, and placemaking recommendations of the 2009 *Countywide Master Plan of Transportation* and all 38 master, sector, and transit district development plans by ensuring construction of safer, more attractive, and more inviting streets that facilitate pedestrian, bicycle, and transit activity.

As drafted, there are several provisions written in the bill that could prevent quality design and construction of urban streets throughout the County. The Planning Board requests that the District Council consider those concerns and consider making amendments to the bill.

The Planning Board recommends amendments to existing language under Section 23-146(b) on page 2, lines 3 through 9. The language as written could prevent the design and construction of urban streets for the following reasons:

1. Urban and complete streets are generally built to attract and retain urban, walkable development. The streets ensure existing residents, workers, students, and visitors have maximum travel options. Streets often dictate the type of neighborhood that evolves around them; a street designed to facilitate speedy vehicular travel will be dominated by auto-oriented uses. The provision of streets to support and attract new development and to create places where people want to live, work, shop, and play is not measurable by standard traffic engineering metrics.

CB-69-2023 – Planning Board Analysis (Attachment 3)

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2. It should be noted that “projected need” for Urban Streets in Prince George’s County cannot be quantified through standard traffic engineering metrics, due to induced demand. Induced demand is the phenomenon through which adding a facility or adding capacity to an existing facility results in increased usage. If the County constructs more vehicular travel lanes, more people will drive. Similarly, if the County constructs more bicycle facilities and sidewalks, more people will bicycle and walk.
3. The Urban Street Design Standards contain provisions that allow the operating and/or permitting agencies flexibility to address environmental, geotechnical, or other physical challenges in the design of a facility. Perhaps design flexibility could be included in the standards, not in the Code. Urban Street Design policy and standards are effective if they are drafted so that the sole obstacles to constructing Urban Streets are cost and time.

The Board also recommends the following amendments listed below.

1. Revise Page 2, lines 3 through 9, to read as follows:

(b) All planned County financed and approved road, sidewalk, trail and transit- related construction and reconstruction projects within [Urban] Regional Transit Districts and Local Centers in the County shall [include urban design policy and principles, as set forth in Plan Prince George's 2035, for proposed construction of streets and roads for the project, except when costs shall be demonstrated to be disproportionate to the projected need, or when such facilities would be inappropriate due to the nature of the project, including the context and character of the surrounding built and natural environment of the surrounding neighborhood or area] be constructed pursuant to the adopted County Urban Street Design Standards and the applicable master, sector, or functional master plan.

2. The Council should consider adding Section 23-615(b), the Complete and Green Streets Policy to the bill and consolidate the provisions in that section with 23-146 and add the same amendments listed above to Section 23-615(b).

Impacted Property:

This legislation will affect all planned County financed and approved roads, sidewalks, trails, and transit projects.

Following discussion, the Planning Board voted to support CB-69-2023 with amendments.