



FAIRFAX COUNTY

# Safe Streets for All Program Recommendations

DRAFT 2021





## Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Prioritizing Safety</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Principles of a Safe Streets for All Approach</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Program Recommendations</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Glossary of Abbreviations .....	7
Funding + Staff Capacity Building .....	8
Policy + Planning .....	10
Street Design + Traffic Engineering .....	12
Equity + Social Justice .....	14
Education + Traffic Safety Culture .....	15
Monitoring + Evaluation .....	16

# Introduction

This document provides a framework for a Fairfax County Safe Streets for All Program designed to address systemic transportation safety issues with a focus on active transportation users and equity on roads in Fairfax County. The framework includes proposed education, policy, planning, programmatic and design strategies that can be implemented in a phased approach. Some of the strategies could be implemented as pilots; others require close coordination and support from stakeholder agencies, or will need one-time or recurring funding.

Potential strategies are presented within the following framework:

- **Proposed Program Recommendations** – A list of potential short-, medium-, and long-term strategies that would help advance traffic safety in Fairfax County.
- **Stakeholders** – Key stakeholders that FCDOT will need to coordinate with to implement the recommendation.
- **Implementation Timeframe** – Recommendations are assigned a likely implementation timeframe depending on complexity, funding needs and stakeholder buy-in. The timeframe does not yet reflect priority or impact of a recommendation, or if the recommendation requires a single action or an ongoing commitment. Implementation will occur in a phased approach as staff capacity and resources allow.

## Key Stakeholders

- BOS – Board of Supervisors
- CTB – Commonwealth Transportation Board
- DEI – Department of Economic Initiatives
- DMB – Department of Management and Budget
- DPD – Department of Planning and Development
- DPWES – Department of Public Works and Environmental Services
- CEX – Office of the County Executive
- FCDOT – Department of Transportation
- FCPA – Park Authority
- FCPD – Police Department
- FCPS – Public Schools
- HD – Health Department
- LDS – Land Development Services
- NCS – Neighborhood Community Services
- NPS – National Park Service
- OPA – Office of Public Affairs
- VDOT – Virginia Department of Transportation



## Prioritizing Safety

Complete streets aim to prioritize safety for all users, regardless of mode of transportation, age, race, income, or ability. While the status quo accepts traffic deaths and injuries as inevitable, safe streets programs work towards eliminating traffic injuries and fatalities through a combination of engineering, education, policy, and planning. Reducing traffic-related deaths in Fairfax County will require a data-driven approach to project implementation and prioritization of investments.

Nationally, pedestrians and bicyclists are more likely to be involved in a traffic collision that results in a severe or fatal injury. Communities of color and low-income communities experience traffic crashes disproportionately.

**In Fairfax county, during the five-year study period, from 2014 – 2018, there was an**

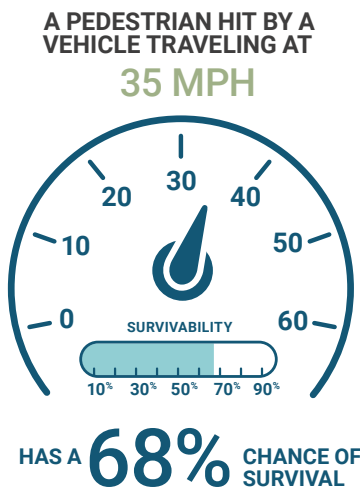
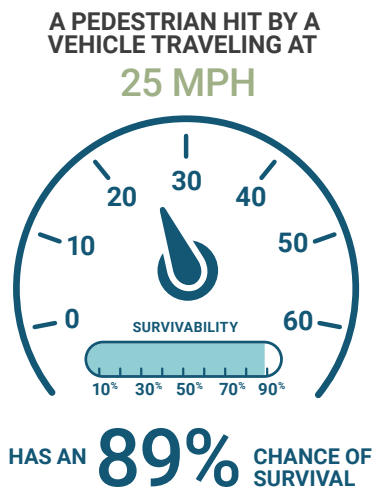


**average of 189 pedestrian crashes and 68 cyclist crashes per year.**

The maps on the following pages show the distribution of all pedestrian and bicycle crashes throughout Fairfax county, highlighting where clusters and fatal crashes occurred.

Speed is a factor in many of these instances. The one recorded fatal cyclist collision occurred on a road with a speed limit between 36 and 50 miles per hour. For pedestrian collisions, roadways with a speed limit of 25 miles per hour or lower had the lowest rate of fatal or severe crashes. This is consistent with findings that suggest that speed is one of the most significant determinates of severe and fatal collisions involving pedestrians. At 25 miles per hour, nearly nine in ten pedestrians will survive the collision. At 40 miles per hour, only 35% of pedestrians will survive.

Furthermore, the perception of safety by the public can be a significant barrier in encouraging



Tefft, B. C. Impact speed and a pedestrian's risk of severe injury or death. Accident Analysis & Prevention 50 (2013) 871-878.

active transportation. People who choose to drive might have otherwise walked or biked, but felt that the current infrastructure prioritizes people who travel in cars, and puts active transportation users at risk. Complete streets not only directly addresses unsafe street design, but can indirectly address traffic safety by reducing the number of motor vehicles on the road.



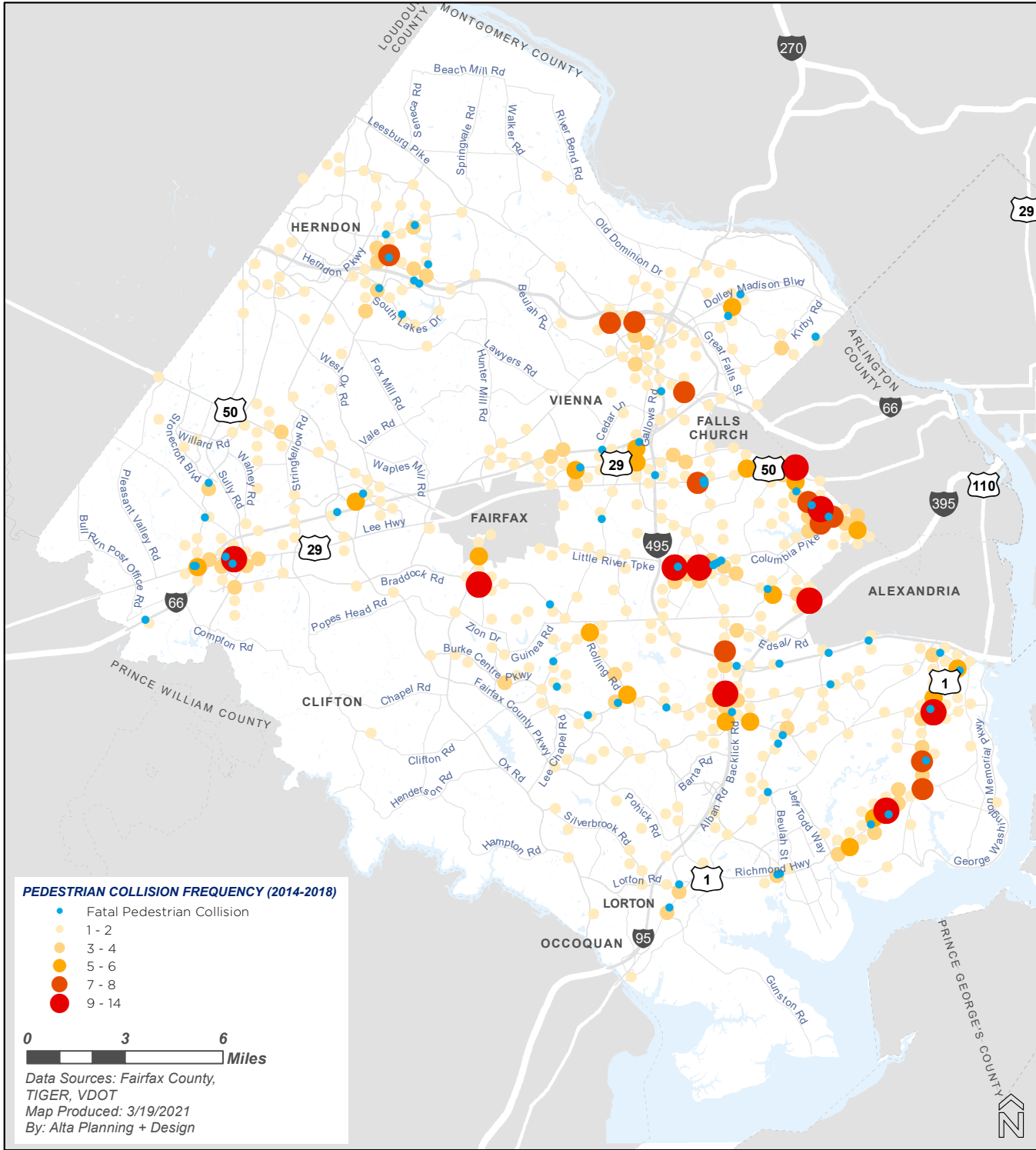
**When asked to describe their experience using active transportation in Fairfax county, 27% of public survey respondents (265 of 999) stated that the current active transportation network feels unsafe.**

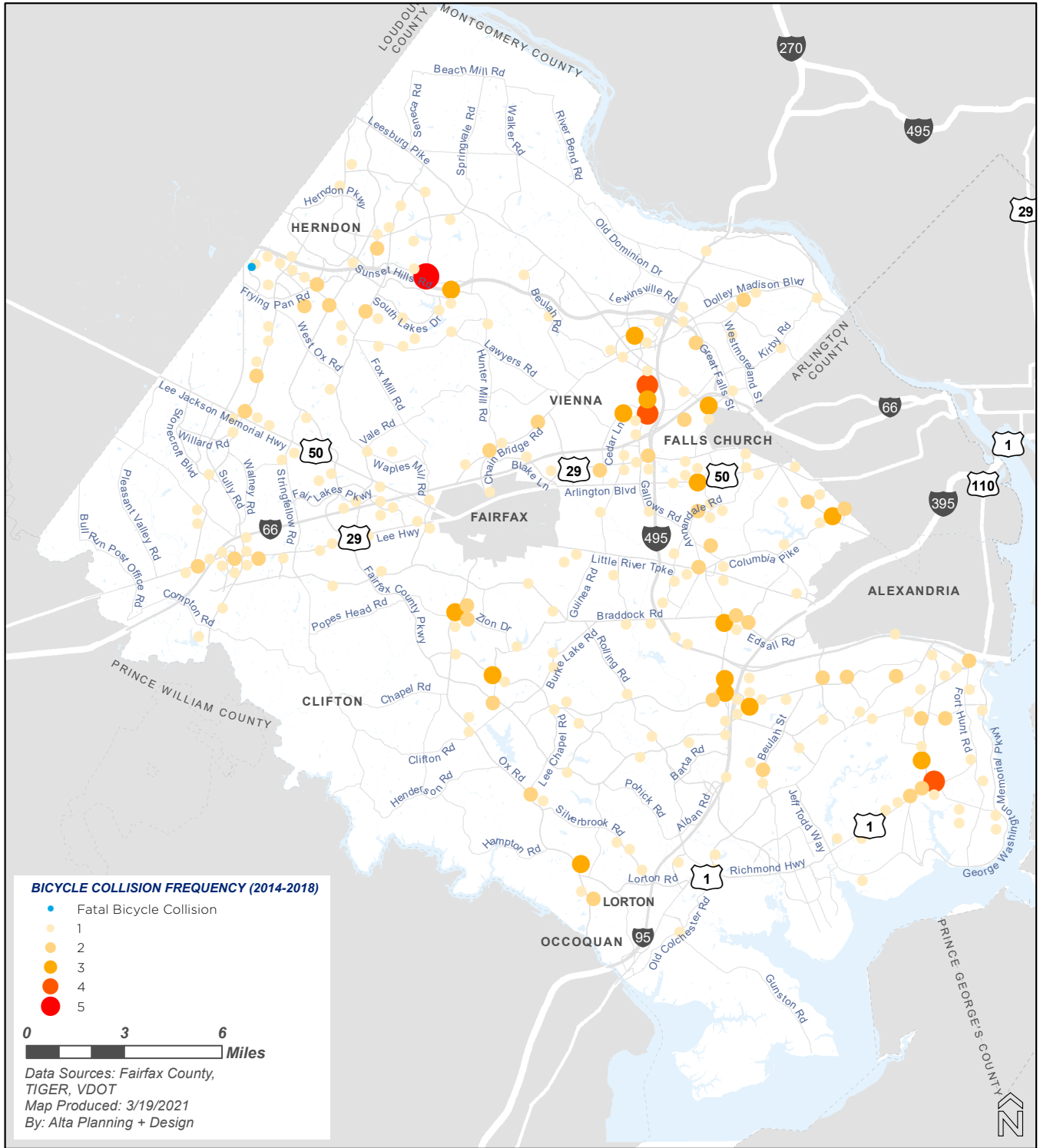
**The following comments are a sample of responses to the ActiveFairfax public survey that asked users to describe their experience walking, or riding a bike, scooter or another small vehicle in Fairfax County.**

- I purposely chose my neighborhood because of its sidewalks. I can walk to the grocery stores, library, bus stops, church, etc.
- “I tried biking in my area, but I gave up because I don’t feel that it’s safe. Walking is fairly safe, but drivers seldom yield to pedestrians even when pedestrians are in the crosswalk and have the right of way.”
- “It is frustrating and dangerous. Even with marked, dedicated bike lanes and sharrows vehicles do not yield/acknowledge bicycles. And I am not referring to just distracted drivers: at least six drivers in the past year have deliberately targeted me on my bicycle with harassment and physical threats.”











## Principles of a Safe Streets for All Approach

- Traffic deaths and serious injuries are avoidable and should not be accepted.
- Protecting human life is the highest priority.
- The people who design, build, and manage roads have a shared responsibility to prevent crashes that result in serious injury or death.
- All road users have a shared responsibility to prevent crashes that result in serious injury or death.
- Rather than waiting for crashes to occur and reacting, a proactive approach should be taken to make the transportation system safe for all users including pedestrians, cyclists, and people traveling in vehicles.
- A safe system means a system that is designed for all ages and abilities, including youth and elders, and individuals with physical, visual, or cognitive disabilities.
- Lack of safety should not be a trade-off for faster mobility. Pedestrians and cyclists are particularly vulnerable, and speed is a fundamental predictor of crash survival. Rather, the transportation system should be both safe and efficient for all users.





## Funding + Staff Capacity Building

Proposed Program Recommendations	Stakeholders	Implementation Timeframe
Establishment of a Safe Streets for All program focused on the implementation of the proposed recommendations below.	FCDOT; BOS; CEX; DEI; VDOT	Short
Establishment of an interdisciplinary Task Force to provide oversight of the Safe Streets for All Program.	Various agencies and community organizations	Short
Creation of at least one staff position to run the Safe Streets for All Program and monitor performance. Grow staff capacity as needed.	FCDOT; BOS ; DMB	Short
Allocation of adequate funding and maintenance of safety related equipment, marking and signage such as Rapid Flashing Beacons, Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons, crosswalk markings, Yield to Pedestrian signage, street and walkway lighting, etc.	FCDOT; VDOT; DPWES; BOS; DMB	Short
Requirement of every transportation-related project (studies, capital projects, comprehensive plan amendments; etc.) to include an active transportation expert on the consultant team.	FCDOT; VDOT	Short
Prioritization of maintenance and active transportation capital improvements along high-risk pedestrian and bicycle corridors and to provide access to major activity centers.	FCDOT; DPWES; BOS; VDOT	Short
Allocation of dedicated funding for the Safe Streets for All Program for implementation of pilot projects, studies and other safety-related non-capital efforts such as educational campaigns.	FCDOT; BOS	Short

## Funding + Staff Capacity Building, cont'd.

Proposed Program Recommendations	Stakeholders	Implementation Timeframe
Development of a locally funded Safe Routes to School program in partnership with FCPS. Create at least one staff position to run the Safe Routes to School Program serving students K-12 and provide dedicated funding for programming and studies. Scale up staff capacity as needed.	FCDOT; FCPS; BOS; NCS; HD ; DMB	Medium
Development of a Safe Routes to Parks and Trails and Community Services program in partnership with FCPA, NOVA Parks and NPS, NCS, and the HD.	FCDOT; FCPA; NOVA Parks; NPS; BOS; NCS; HD	Medium
Determination of maintenance responsibility for all sidewalk and trail segments. Allocation of adequate funding, staffing and equipment to clear sidewalks, bikeways and transportation trails of hazards, debris and obstructions.	FCDOT; VDOT; BOS; DPWES; DMB ; FCPA; NOVA Parks; FCPD; General Assembly, CTB	Medium
Allocation of adequate funding for sidewalks, bikeways and transportation trails for resurfacing, restriping and reconstruction.	FCDOT; BOS; DPWES; DMB ; FCPA; NOVA Parks; NPS; VDOT; General Assembly, CTB	Medium
Development of an inclusive Slow Streets Program to supplement the Traffic Calming Program and provide dedicated funding.	FCDOT; DMB; VDOT; BOS	Medium
Allocation of adequate funding to expedite building out the active transportation network.	FCDOT; BOS; FCPA; NOVA Parks; NPS	Long



## Policy + Planning

Proposed Program Recommendations	Stakeholders	Implementation Timeframe
Development of a Safe Streets for All Policy that prioritizes the protection of human life in the planning, design, and operation of Fairfax County’s roadway network. Set short-, medium- and long-term targets.	FCDOT; VDOT; FCPD; HD; BOS; DPD; LDS	Short
Development of a comprehensive Complete Streets Policy to provide the transportation and land use connection.	FCDOT; VDOT; DPD; BOS; LDS	Medium
Development of strategies that prioritize active transportation safety in planning and funding efforts using data, targets, and metrics.	FCDOT; VDOT; DPD; BOS	Short
Development of a policy that encourages public and private sector employers to provide safe and convenient access for active transportation users and transit riders to their main building entrance from the public street, sidewalk or trail, as well as secure bike parking.	FCDOT; DEI; Employers	Short
Identification of potential updates to the Comprehensive Plan Transportation Plan Map and the Transportation Policy Plan Transportation Element to reflect a Safe Streets for All approach.	FCDOT; VDOT; DPD; BOS	Medium
Development of a walkway maintenance and snow/ice removal regulation, adopt a sidewalk, and a trail maintenance and snow/ice removal policy that directs property owners to keep sidewalks and trails along roads in front of their property free of debris, vegetation, snow and ice. Provide a needs-based waiver system for low-income residents and develop a plan to do the maintenance work at these locations.	FCDOT; VDOT; DPWES; NPS; OCA; BOS	Medium
Development of a county-wide lighting plan based on equity, environmental and safety factors.	FCDOT; VDOT; DPWES; FCPA; NOVA Parks; NPS; BOS	Medium

## Policy + Planning , cont'd.

Proposed Program Recommendations	Stakeholders	Implementation Timeframe
Development of a policy that would reduce the speed limit on local streets in residential and business districts to 15 mph on the state-maintained network.	VDOT; FCDOT; BOS; General Assembly; CTB	Medium
Completion of an active transportation safety audit within a mile of each public school and provide adequate funding for safety improvements, prioritizing high risk/high traffic areas.	FCDOT; FCPS; NCS; HD; DMB	Medium
Completion of an active transportation safety audit within a mile of each public park, community service location, and high capacity transit route. Provide adequate funding for safety improvements, prioritizing high risk/high traffic areas.	FCDOT; FCPA; NOVA Parks; NPS; NCS; HD; DMB; VRE; WMATA	Medium
Monitor and revise Virginia state laws and policies related to traffic safety including policies addressing topics such as distracted driving, 15mph speed limit, reduction of vehicle miles traveled, in-vehicle safety technology, and storage of snow/ice on walkway, bikeways and ramps.	FCDOT; VDOT; DPD; DEI; OCA; BOS; Advocates; General Assembly; CTB	Medium
Development of a policy that would require new developments (rezoning and by-right) to provide adequate and safe access to their property for active transportation users, including improvements to the closest safe street crossing.	FCDOT; VDOT; LDS; DPD; DEI; General Assembly	Long



## Street Design + Traffic Engineering

Proposed Program Recommendations	Stakeholders	Implementation Timeframe
Consistent application of design solutions that simplify and narrow intersections, reduce conflicts for all users, and prioritize the safety of active transportation users.	FCDOT; DPD; DEI; VDOT	On-going
Consistent implementation of planned active transportation facilities and any streetscaping requirements including providing crosswalks on all four legs of an intersection. Ensure that streetscaping does not encroach on active transportation facilities.	FCDOT; VDOT; DPD; LDS; DEI; Development Community; BOS; FCPS; DPWES; FCPA; NOVA Parks; NPS	On-going
Design of new active transportation facilities prioritizing safety, comfort and convenience for facility users, using a complete streets design approach (narrow medians, travel lanes and/or reduce number of travel/turn lanes before reducing the recommended widths of the planned active transportation facility).	FCDOT; DPD; VDOT; BOS	Short
Design of new and improved existing public facilities such as schools, parks and community services to prioritize safety, comfort and convenience for people accessing the facility using active transportation. If applicable, provide access from several directions.	FCDOT; DPWES; FCPS; FCPA; LDS; NCS; NOVA Parks; VDOT	Short
Implementation of technological innovations to address traffic safety issues.	FCDOT; VDOT; DEI	Short
Reduction of posted speed limits and operational vehicle speeds on roadways that provide direct access to residential, commercial, institutional, recreational, or civic land uses and transit stations, and along bus transit and high-risk corridors.	FCDOT; VDOT; General Assembly	Medium
Development of a county-wide Complete Streets Design Guide that reflects best practices in Safe Streets for All design, context sensitive design (transportation-land use connection), active transportation facility design, and placemaking principles. Incorporation of guidance on how to implement the county-wide trail network in a variety of land use contexts and quick-build interim implementation strategies.	FCDOT; VDOT; DPD; DEI; HD	Medium



## Street Design + Traffic Engineering , cont'd.

Proposed Program Recommendations	Stakeholders	Implementation Timeframe
Review of bus stop locations to ensure that they can be safely accessed from both sides of the street. Relocation of bus stops as needed and construction of sidewalks or trails to bus stops from surrounding neighborhoods. Implementation of amenity improvements such as lighting, shelters, benches, trash cans, and bike racks to high ridership bus stops.	FCDOT; VDOT; WMATA	Medium
Identification of a pilot high-risk corridor to implement a safety study that analyzes crashes, engages stakeholders and residents, identifies appropriate countermeasures and implements quick-build strategies. This pilot will serve as a guide to refine the project delivery process and test the durability of quick-build solutions.	FCDOT; VDOT; DPD; DEI ; NCS	Medium
Design of new roads with design speeds not to exceed the target operational speeds, which should be informed by the land use context, potential left turn conflicts and pedestrian activity in the area.	FCDOT; VDOT	Medium
Application of design techniques to control speeds on collectors and arterials, prioritizing high-risk corridors, residential areas and commercial areas.	FCDOT; VDOT	Medium
Review of VDOT Road Design Manual for opportunities to improve design standards to better meet active transportation needs and Safe Streets for All principles, and work with VDOT to make updates as needed.	FCDOT; VDOT	Medium
Establishment of grade separated or signalized crossings for trails crossing at uncontrolled interchange ramps.	FCDOT; VDOT	Long



## Equity + Social Justice

Proposed Program Recommendations	Stakeholders	Implementation Timeframe
Collection of race, ethnicity, and disability data of pedestrian and bicycle crash victims and analyze data for disparities.	FCDOT; FCPD; DMV	Short
Prioritization of maintenance and capital improvements in high need areas in close partnership with the affected community, especially the most at-risk populations.	FCDOT; VDOT; FCPS; FCPA; NOVA Parks; NCS; HD; DPWES	Short
Prioritization of engagement of people experiencing vulnerabilities and groups disproportionately impacted by bicycle and pedestrian crashes in community engagement efforts, including studies and capital projects. Development of measures to assess impact.	FCDOT; VDOT; FCPS; NCS; HD	Short
Creation of walk and bicycle audits in partnership with communities, especially the most at-risk populations, to determine community-identified safety concerns and develop solutions. Allocation of adequate funding to implement recommendations.	FCDOT; VDOT; FCPS; NCS; HD; FCPA ; FCPD	Medium

## Education + Traffic Safety Culture

Proposed Program Recommendations	Stakeholders	Implementation Timeframe
Development and implementation of a communications strategy for the Safe Streets for All program.	FCDOT	On-going
Allocation of staff training on planning and design approach to Safe Streets for All best practices, including active transportation accommodations through work zones.	FCDOT; VDOT; LDS; DPWES	Short
Creation of regular and targeted campaigns in multiple languages using culturally appropriate strategies to educate the public about traffic safety and safe travel behaviors, especially as related to the highest collision factors.	FCDOT; WMATA; COG; FCPS; NCS; FCPA; NPS; NOVA Parks; OPA; HD; FCPD; VDOT	Short
Encouragement of private and public sector employers to provide road safety education to all employees.	FCDOT; Employers	Short
Creation of multi-modal traffic safety education to students K-12 (as part of the curriculum or through special events).	FCDOT; FCPS; Private Schools	Medium
Creation of multi-modal traffic safety education to adults through subsidized classes. Evaluation multi-modal safety education in Drivers Ed courses and Driving Schools, providing additional guidance if necessary, and monitoring implementation.	FCDOT; FCPA; NCS; DMV; Community Partners	Medium
Creation of a web page on the Fairfax County website that serves as an interactive “clearinghouse” for road safety information.	FCDOT; OPA	Medium
Creation of engaging public outreach experiences, through temporary street and intersection redesigns that develop community awareness of the benefits of road safety interventions.	FCDOT; Community Groups; FCPS; VDOT; DPD	Medium
Implementation of speed feedback signage at high collision locations, along high-risk corridors, and in school zones.	FCDOT; VDOT; FCPD	Medium



## Monitoring + Evaluation

Proposed Program Recommendations	Stakeholders	Implementation Timeframe
Identification of multi-modal road safety performance measures and set short, medium and long term targets.	FCDOT; VDOT; FCPD	Short
Identification of the most common factors (i.e. alcohol, time of day, speeding, turning, distracted drivers, land use, type of available infrastructure, etc.) related to pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular crashes and the most affected populations (i.e. age, race, etc.)	FCDOT; FCPD; VDOT; HD	Short
Collection and review of multi-modal near-miss and minor crash data to identify potential crash locations.	FCDOT; Community Organizations	Short
Establishment of an interactive digital map on the County website to systematically collect transportation safety concerns from residents.	FCDOT; FCPA; NOVA Parks; NPS; NCS; HD; DIT	Medium
Development of active transportation performance measures that are appropriate for the county and also for specific projects (safety, comfort, convenience). Consider supplementing the website with a corresponding hot line and application.	FCDOT; HD; DPD;	Short
An Annual Safe Streets for All Report Card.	FCDOT	Short
Installation of additional permanent automated counters at key locations to track active transportation facility usage over time.	FCDOT; VDOT	Short
Establishment of manual or automated spot counts of active transportation users at a defined set of locations to identify and track gender gaps over time.	FCDOT	Short
Take advantage of technological innovations such as AI cameras or private vehicle sensors to analyze traffic safety or maintenance issues and monitor effectiveness of countermeasures after implementation.	FCDOT; VDOT	Short
Evaluation of the effectiveness of transportation safety improvements before and after implementation.	FCDOT; VDOT; FCPD; DPWES; HD ; FCPD	Medium



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