

Staff Draft

# Countywide Bikeways

## Functional Master Plan

A Comprehensive Amendment to the  
1978 Master Plan of Bikeways



October 2003

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
The Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning  
8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

## ABSTRACT

**TITLE** Staff Draft, Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan, A Comprehensive Amendment to the 1978 Master Plan of Bikeways

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The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

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**PLANNING AGENCY** The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
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**ABSTRACT** This document contains the text, supporting maps and tables for the Staff Draft of the Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan. It serves as a comprehensive amendment to the 1978 Master Plan of Bikeways. The document recommends identification of 180 Countywide Bikeways, totaling nearly 500 miles. The document also contains recommended bikeway design standards for the County, recommends a methodology for implementation, and identifies related policies and programs necessary to effectively and efficiently implement the plan's goals over next 15 to 20 years.

## THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission is a bi-county agency created by the General Assembly of Maryland in 1927. The Commission's geographic authority covers most of Montgomery and Prince George's counties. The Commission's planning jurisdiction, the Maryland-Washington Regional District, comprises 1,001 square miles; its parks jurisdiction, the Metropolitan District, comprises 919 square miles.

The Commission has three major functions:

1) The preparation, adoption, and from time to time, amendment or extension of *the General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District Within Montgomery and Prince George's Counties*

2) The acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of a public park system.

3) In Prince George's County only, the operation of the entire County public recreation program.

The Commission operates in each County through a Planning Board appointed by and responsible to the County government. The Planning Boards are responsible for preparation of all local master plans, recommendations on zoning amendments, administration of subdivision regulations and general administration of the parks.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission encourages the involvement and participation of individuals with disabilities, and its facilities are accessible. For assistance with special needs (e.g., large print materials, listening devices, sign language interpretation, etc.), please call the Community Relations Office, 301-495-4600 or T.D. 301-495-1331.

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## NOTICE TO THE READER

An area master plan, after approval by the County Council and the adoption by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, constitutes an amendment to The General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for Montgomery County. As such, it provides a set of comprehensive recommendations and guidelines for the use of publicly and privately owned land within its planning area. Each area master plan reflects the vision of future development that responds to the unique character of the local community within the context of the Countywide perspective.

Area master plans are intended to provide a point of reference with regard to public policy. Together with relevant Countywide functional master plans (such as the Master Plan of Highways Within Montgomery County, Maryland; the Master Plan for Historic Preservation; and the Master Plan for the Preservation of Agricultural and Rural Open Space), they should be referred to by public officials and private individuals when decisions are made that affect the use of land within the plan boundary. Local municipalities also adopt ordinances and approve plans that may provide guidance for public and private decisions.

Master plans generally look ahead about 20 years from the date of adoption, although they are intended to be updated and revised every 10 years. It is recognized that circumstances will change following adoption of a plan and that the specifics of a master plan may become less relevant over time. Generally, sketches or drawings in an adopted master plan are for illustrative purposes only and are intended to convey a general sense of desirable future character rather than a specific commitment to a particular detailed design.

Functional Master Plans such as this plan are developed through a process similar to that of an area master plan and are also considered amendments to the General Plan for the County. Functional master plans provide guidance for the preparation and update of area master plans. Unlike area master plans, functional master plans do not typically recommend changes in existing zoning and are not accompanied by sectional zoning map amendments.

## THE MASTER PLAN PROCESS

**STAFF DRAFT PLAN** – This document is prepared by the Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning for the presentation to the Montgomery County Planning Board. The Planning Board reviews the staff Draft Plan, makes preliminary changes as appropriate, and approves the Plan for public hearing. When the Board's changes are made, the document becomes the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan.

**PUBLIC HEARING (PRELIMINARY) DRAFT PLAN** – This document is a formal proposal to amend an adopted master plan or sector plan. Its recommendations are not necessarily those of the Planning Board; it is prepared for the purpose of receiving public hearing testimony. The Planning Board holds a public hearing and receives testimony on the Draft Plan. After the public hearing record is closed, the Planning Board holds public Worksessions to review the testimony and revise the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan as appropriate. When the board's changes are made, the document becomes the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan.

**PLANNING BOARD (FINAL) DRAFT PLAN** – This document is the Planning Board's recommended Plan and it reflects the revisions made by the Board in its Worksessions on the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan. The Regional District Act requires the Planning Board to transmit the Plan directly to the County Council with copies to the County Executive. The Regional District Act then requires the County Executive, within sixty days, to prepare and transmit a fiscal impact analysis of the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan to the County Council. The County Executive may also forward to the Council other comments and recommendations regarding the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan within the sixty date period.

After receiving the Executive's fiscal impact analysis and comments, the County Council may hold a public hearing to receive public testimony on the Plan. After the record of this public hearing is closed, the Council's Planning, Housing and Economic Development (PHED) Committee holds public Worksessions to review the testimony and then makes recommendations to the County Council. The Council holds its own Worksessions, then adopts a resolution approving the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan, as revised.

**ADOPTED PLAN** – The Master Plan approved by the County Council is forwarded to The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for adoption. Once adopted by the Commission, the Plan officially amends the various master or sector plans cited in the Commission's adoption resolution.

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Existing, Planned and Proposed Countywide Bikeways