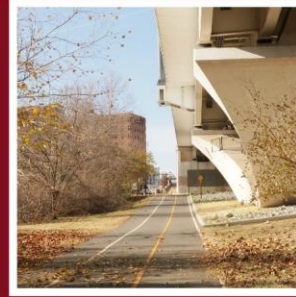


MD 210 Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity Project: Phase I Improvements



2024 RAISE Grant Application: Project Readiness



1. Project Readiness

The MD 210 Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity Project (project) began as a planning study in July 2021. Neighboring communities, including disadvantaged communities, were first engaged in November 2021 with a public meeting, and the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) presented the study’s findings to the public in December 2022. The first phase of improvements transitioned into preliminary design in January 2023 and the Project is anticipated to begin construction in 2026.

Public engagement will continue to play a pivotal role in both shaping the project and informing residents about upcoming plans. MDOT will continue additional public engagement sessions at four different stages throughout the course of the project. The first point of engagement was through a mailed newsletter and survey in May 2023. Additional sessions are anticipated after environmental permitting, after right-of-way acquisition and coordination with utilities, and after construction has been completed. MDOT has also closely coordinated with Prince George’s County Department of Public Works and Transportation and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC).

The project is currently at a feasibility level of concept development and will complete 30 percent design after completing required National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analyses and documentation prior to beginning final design, which is anticipated to be completed by December 2025. In preparation for construction, MDOT will also complete plat preparation, applicable right-of-way acquisitions, and coordinate with relevant utilities. Should right-of-way (ROW) be required, all real property and ROW acquisition will be completed in a timely manner in accordance with 49 CFR Part 24, 23 CFR Part 710, and other applicable legal requirements. Delays in ROW acquisition and utility coordination are not anticipated because the proposed alignment uses existing infrastructure where possible. Table 1 provides the project schedule.

The State Highway Administration (SHA) proposes to advance this project through design through pre-award authority and a letter of no prejudice with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and is committed to certifying as appropriate with the district office this is an eligible cost and activity. If awarded, the SHA will send a written request to the FHWA for pre-award approval under 2 C.F.R. 200.458 for costs related to progressing the project from 30% design to final design.

Table 1. Project Schedule

Task	Start Date	Completion	Duration (Months)
NEPA Approval	January 2024	August 2024	8
Public Engagement #2	February 2024	August 2024	6
Final Design*	August 2024	December 2025	20
Grant Agreement	December 2024	December 2024	1
Environmental Permitting	December 2024	March 2026	16
Plat Preparation	August 2024	April 2025	9
ROW Acquisition	May 2025	April 2026	12
Utility Coordination	May 2024	April 2026	24
Public Engagement #3	March 2026	May 2026	3
Advertisement	May 2026	May 2026	1
Bid Opening	June 2026	June 2026	1
Bid Award	July 2026	July 2026	1

Task	Start Date	Completion	Duration (Months)
Construction	August 2026	November 2028	28
Public Engagement #4	August 2028	November 2028	4

**MDOT SHA proposes that Final Design could be completed under pre-award authority if granted by USDOT*

2. Environmental Risk

Required Approvals

The project will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, NEPA, and all other applicable state and federal regulations (for example, pedestrian and bicycle facilities must meet state and federal standards for width, grade, signing, and materials). The project will also comply with SHA’s utility permit and ROW acquisition process.

Information about the NEPA Status of the Project

The NEPA process is underway and is in the first month of analysis. A Programmatic Categorical Exclusion is anticipated, and the anticipated date of completion of the final NEPA determination is August 2024. The NEPA process has been funded locally and is not part of the grant request or included within the Project budget.

Information on Reviews, Approvals, and Permits by Other Federal and State Agencies

As part of the NEPA review, at the federal level, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) coordination is required. Further desktop review using the [Information for Planning and Consultation online consultation tool](#) will be completed along with any required USFWS follow-up. At the state level, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) review will be coordinated to identify and confirm the level of impact to state protected species and sensitive aquatic resources. Should SHA cultural resources staff identify potential project impacts requiring review by the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT), MHT coordination will be completed. Should the project require ROW to access nearby M-NCPPC property, Section 4(f) coordination will be completed including M-NCPPC and FHWA review. Likewise, should the project incur Section 4(f) use of cultural resources as determined by SHA cultural resources staff, Section 4(f) coordination will be completed with MHT and FHWA review. The USFWS, DNR, and cultural resources reviews are anticipated to take approximately 3 months to complete. Section 4(f) coordination, if needed, is anticipated to take approximately 4 months to complete.

Environmental Studies

The anticipated Programmatic Categorical Exclusion will serve as a detailed record of known project impacts and possible mitigation for those impacts. Neither additional separate environmental studies nor documents are anticipated for the proposed project.

Discussions with MDOT and SHA

Frequent discussions are ongoing between MDOT and SHA staff regarding the project’s compliance with NEPA and other applicable federal environmental reviews and approvals. Most recently staff from MDOT and SHA have been meeting weekly to discuss the status and next steps for the proposed project.

Public Engagement

One benefit of this project will be reducing greenhouse gas and air pollution emissions in all neighboring populations, including disadvantaged communities, through a modal shift from

carbon-intensive single-occupancy vehicle trips to zero-carbon bicycling and walking trips, consistent with the state’s [Commuter Choice Maryland Program](#). Another major benefit will be improving safety conditions for community members completing trips through active transportation. Engagement with these neighboring communities has been a priority during all project phases. A preliminary study for the project was initiated in fall 2021, and two community public meetings have been held, the first in November 2021 and the second in December 2022. The first meeting was to solicit feedback from the public on the area’s needs, and an online survey was live on the project website before and after the meeting. The second meeting was to present the study’s recommended improvements and announce the transition to the preliminary design phase. SHA held a virtual meeting in 2021 updating the public on the preceding Bicycle/Pedestrian Study. Virtual tools improve transparency and access to information and participatory input on transportation-related decisions. Virtual formats of public engagement incorporate engaging interactive formats and align with the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Engagement.

The SHA Public Involvement Plan provides a framework for community collaboration and outreach throughout the span of the project. The agency has identified four key milestones in the project schedule, including during project kickoff, prior to NEPA analysis, prior to construction, and after project completion. The agency has also developed a comprehensive list of community organizations to continue engaging and involving in the project, including community and cultural centers, faith-based institutions, neighborhood associations, schools, and small businesses. For additional detail about the extensive public engagement process for the Project, please refer to the attached Merit Criteria, Section 7: Partnership and Collaboration.

State and Local Approvals

Receipt of Tribal Government, State, and Local Approvals and Fulfillment of Federal Transportation Requirements

The project aligns with the statewide long-range transportation plan ([the Playbook](#)) and the Prince George’s County Comprehensive Plan ([Plan Prince George’s 2035](#)) by using a Complete Streets approach to design, operate, maintain, and retrofit existing transportation infrastructure to improve travel conditions and enable safe and comfortable active transportation. The project is also consistent with the [2050 Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan](#) and the Transportation Planning Board’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the National Capital Region. As the project advances, the project will be funded through SHA’s Fund 88 (Bicycle Retrofit Fund) and will be presented in future comprehensive transportation plans. The project is included in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022–2025 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) with Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) ID 6524. The current project is listed in the National Capital Transportation Planning Board (NCRTPB) FY 23-26 TIP with TIP ID T6524.

Assessment of Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Delays in the ROW process, the incurrence environmental impacts, and delays in the permitting process are three major potential risks to project implementation. Table 2 lists strategies SHA and project partners will undertake to mitigate those risks.

Table 2. Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Project Risks	Mitigation Strategy
Delays in ROW Process	MDOT will maintain close relationships with stakeholders throughout the project area. The shared-use path is limited in width, and alignment uses existing infrastructure, where possible, to avoid delays in acquiring new ROW.

Project Risks	Mitigation Strategy
Environmental Impacts	The project is anticipated to have a low environmental impact due to its location and proximity to existing transportation assets such as the Maryland Route 210 (MD 210) noise barrier. SHA's previously completed MD 210 Corridor Study provides insight on identified resources and constraints.
Delays in Permitting Process	MDOT and SHA have a strong relationship with Prince George's County. SHA and the County will work closely to communicate transparently through the design and construction process. SHA has strong working relationships with regulatory agencies and a programmatic agreement with FHWA to streamline the NEPA process for minor projects.
Utility Relocation	MDOT and SHA hold frequent meetings with utility providers and closely coordinate efforts to identify utility intersections and relocation needs early in the project implementation process, as completed for ongoing and past projects. MDOT and SHA will continue these relationships throughout the course of this project.

3. Technical Capacity

Federal Funding

MDOT is responsible for numerous transportation projects annually. For example, the MDOT Consolidated Transportation Program currently allocates SHA over \$1.6 billion to its Major Construction Program for FY 2024 alone. Capital transportation projects that include federal funding such as the MD 210 Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity Project are standard for the agency.

The MDOT has vast experience receiving and administering Federal funds and programs. On January 12, 2024, USDOT announced Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) was awarded the State's first ever Mega grant for the I-895 at Frankfurst Avenue Interchange Improvement project. MDOT also received historic funding to support the Frederick Douglas Tunnel and Amtrak's Northeast Corridor from the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Rail Program. MDOT has also received recent awards from the ATTAIN, RAISE, CRISI, NEVI Set-aside, and RCE programs. From the RAISE program specifically, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) received an FY 2023 RAISE award for the Mondawmin Transit Hub project and both MTA and the Maryland Port Administration have received several RAISE, BUILD, and TIGER awards over the past fifteen years.

Federal Regulations

The numerous projects MDOT and SHA are responsible for implementing annually are completed in compliance with federal requirements including Title VI as well as contract and procurement requirements including Buy America, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act, and the Davis-Bacon Act. For example, the community engagement efforts for the proposed project adhered to Title VI requirements regarding equal treatment, access, and rights in multiple ways including offering translation services at public meetings and for the initial newsletter.

Project Planning

MDOT and SHA work closely with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and NCRTPB, the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) servicing the project area, regarding project implementation and incorporation into long-range development plans and adding

projects to the TIP/STIP through the MPO planning process. At SHA, Regional and Intermodal Planning staff coordinate with county and municipal governments and with Maryland's seven MPOs to develop SHA's portion of Maryland's STIP and each metropolitan area's TIP. The current project is listed in the NC RTPB FY 23-26 TIP with TIP ID T6524. As confirmed by NC RTPB staff, the project is consistent with the regional transportation goals adopted in their Regional Transportation Priorities Plan and identified in the Washington region's metropolitan transportation plan, Visualize 2045.

To deliver the project, MDOT will rely on its long history of working relationships and partnerships across jurisdictions, government agencies, the community, and engineering and construction consultants. MDOT is experienced with interagency coordination: MDOT SHA holds a monthly meeting with federal, state, and local bodies to ensure project planning, environmental reviews, and design and implementation move forward smoothly. Prince George's County will assume responsibility for the maintenance of the new shared-use path and can maintain the full length of the pathway in a state of good repair, as demonstrated by its ongoing maintenance of other similar pathways throughout the county, including the connecting Henson Creek Trail. The ability of MDOT to work collaboratively with local government agencies and stakeholders will enable the agency to seamlessly transition between phases of the project, remaining mindful of community input along the way.

Project Delivery

Some recent examples of SHA project efforts of similar size, scope, and complexity to the proposed project include the retrofit of MD 187 in Montgomery County, where SHA, in collaboration with local stakeholders, reconfigured the existing roadway to improve bicycle accommodations.

SHA also administers the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) on behalf of FHWA. The program promotes projects that enhance mobility and accessibility, as well as the cultural, aesthetic, historic, and environmental aspects of Maryland's transportation network. TAP funds projects that create bicycle and pedestrian facilities, restore historic transportation buildings, convert abandoned railway corridors to pedestrian trails, and mitigate highway runoff. SHA assists TAP project sponsors to obtain necessary approvals and, as such, has the technical experience and expertise to deliver the environmental approvals for the project.

Prince George's County also has an extensive background in the planning and construction of new multiuse trails. The County forecasts that its population will grow to over 1 million residents by 2030. The County's [Formula 2040 Plan](#) targets providing all county residents with easy access to the trail network, defined as 15 minutes by either walking or cycling. There are currently over 300 miles of public trails in Prince George's County.

Similar in impact to the project, MDOT is currently undertaking another multiuse pathway project, the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail, which extends through Maryland and the District of Columbia. The Anacostia Riverwalk Trail serves as a vital transportation option for residents and visitors alike traveling to key destinations such as Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium, the National Arboretum, the National Mall, and Bladensburg Marina Park. Over 19 of the planned 28 miles have been completed to date and are heavily used. With the latest segment completed in 2016, the project demonstrates MDOT's commitment and ability to construct new and useful multimodal connections.