


FROM	NAME & TITLE	Rudolph S. Chow, P.E., Director	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Department of Public Works 600 Abel Wolman Municipal Building		
	SUBJECT	CITY COUNCIL BILL 17-0102		

DATE: March 16, 2018

TO

The Honorable President and Members
of the Baltimore City Council
c/o Natawna Austin
Room 400 – City Hall

I am herein reporting on City Council Bill 17-0102, introduced by Councilman Dorsey.

The purpose of this bill is to require the Department of Transportation to, among other things, construct and operate a comprehensive Complete Streets Transportation System; create a Complete Streets Coordinating Council to make certain recommendations and oversee certain activities regarding the Complete Streets Transportation System; establish certain design standards and require the Transportation Department to use the latest and best design standards in constructing and operating the Complete Streets Transportation System; requiring the Transportation Department, in consultation with the Coordinating Council and after public notice and a public comment period, to adopt a Complete Streets Manual to carry out this Ordinance; requiring that the Transportation Director, in consultation with the Coordinating Council, to prepare an Annual Complete Streets Report, assessing the status of the Complete Streets Transportation System, and to conduct public meetings and other community engagement and outreach activities to present the Complete Streets Annual Report to the public and to solicit input; and generally relating to the construction and operation of a transportation system, accommodating all travel modes, that ensures the safety, security, comfort, and convenience of all users.

The legislation calls for the Department of Transportation (DOT) to construct and operate a “comprehensive complete streets transportation system,” which would follow certain standards outlined in the legislation. This bill, if approved, would also require the creation of a Coordinating Council, which would be chaired by the Director of DOT, and would be comprised of directors of other city agencies, including the Director of the Department of Public Works (DPW), as well as a representative of the Maryland Transit Administration. The Director of DOT would be required to consult with this Council to adopt a complete streets manual as a guide in the development of a “complete streets transportation system,” as well as project prioritization, project delivery, and equity in community engagement, among other standards. The Coordinating Council would be required to meet at least once per quarter, if not more frequently, and would have the responsibilities of: reviewing the status of projects, identifying new projects, and promoting interagency cooperation in both pursuing project funding and in community engagement.

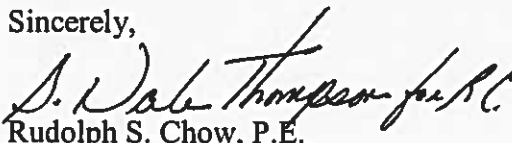
DPW supports the concepts of interagency cooperation, strategic project prioritization, and equitable community engagement. While DOT has the responsibility of planning, constructing, and maintaining Baltimore’s transportation infrastructure, DPW would like to point out that every visionary plan needs to accommodate certain practical considerations, as would any complete streets plan. The following are examples of what accommodations would have to be considered:

- Most public and private utilities occupy portions of the rights-of-way. Street, sidewalk and alley designs need to allow for DPW to retain access to its water, wastewater and stormwater utilities in order to perform its maintenance, repair, and replacement functions.

- The legislation requires the consideration of several factors when developing street typologies. Stormwater management and green infrastructure are listed separately (§40-38.B.9. and B.10.), which is appropriate since they are two different types of infrastructure and should be treated as such. Green infrastructure can refer to a range of bumpouts, tree plantings, rain gardens, and other bioretention facilities, to name just a few. Stormwater management facilities must be specially located, designed and maintained to effectively treat or retain stormwater. In addition, the term “stormwater management” could include grey infrastructure such as storm drains, inlets, manholes, and more. It is important that the need for both above-ground and below-ground stormwater management facilities is taken into consideration when designing for complete streets.
- Over the next year, DPW will be constructing stormwater management facilities throughout the city to comply with its Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit. §40-30.1 of the legislation provides a listing of guidance documents to assist DOT in the design of a complete streets manual. While this list is not meant to be restricted to just these documents, DPW did want to point to the “Urban Street Stormwater Guide,” developed by the National Association of City Transportation Officials, as another good source for providing guidance on best practices for sustainable stormwater management in the public rights-of-way.
- DPW provides mechanical street sweeping throughout the city and is in the process of expanding street sweeping services in the central area. In order for this program to be effective, the street sweeping vehicles need adequate space and access to drive alongside the curb. Barriers such as parked cars or bollards could restrict the effectiveness of this program that improves the cleanliness of the city and is an important component of the MS4 permit compliance. The legislation states that overlays for certain routes must be considered when developing street typologies (§ 40-38. B. 5.); therefore, street sweeping routes should be considered for inclusion.
- The width of streets and alleys is important from an operations perspective, as solid waste collection vehicles, snow plows, and other utility vehicles need sufficiently-wide clearance and turn radii in order to perform their duties.
- Trash and recycling receptacles placed along sidewalks and at bus stops for public use are an important tool for preventing litter and keeping the city clean. Any restrictions on sidewalk width should include exceptions for these receptacles. Over the next few years, DPW will be placing hundreds of new, solar-powered compacting trash cans along pedestrian thoroughfares and near bus stops. DPW will need discretion for placing these cans and access to service them.
- Performance Measures for the required annual report are listed in § 40-47. DPW has concerns about §40-47 (E) Infrastructure Data, as “infrastructure” is not defined and may be broadly interpreted to include underground infrastructure or other infrastructure that is not related to complete streets.

The Department of Public Works respectfully requests that the points raised in this report be taken into consideration during the deliberations surrounding City Council Bill 17-0102.

Sincerely,



Rudolph S. Chow, P.E.
Director