

KEEDYSVILLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TRANSPORTATION

INTRODUCTION

The Transportation Element of the Keedysville Comprehensive Plan includes the classification of the streets, characteristics of all modes of transportation that exists in town, discussion relative to the issues involving movement in the community, and goals, policies, and implementation strategies to accomplish expanded and efficient multi-modal transportation. This chapter is part of a policy document rather than a particular transportation plan so there will be no specific projects or changes in traffic movement that are mandated in this narrative. It will discuss various options of movement throughout the community: automobile, public bus transit, bicycle, and pedestrians. It will, also, address the major roadways that connect Keedysville to other towns, parts of the County, and region and will include the functional classification of roadways from the latest adopted Washington County Comprehensive Plan.

Street Classification

Street classification maps are adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan as are the goals, policies, and implementation strategies. Washington County's Transportation map (page T-1A) shows the network of roadways that are used by residents of the Town after leaving Keedysville. Streets in Keedysville are owned and maintained by the Town and classified as local streets, except for Main Street (MD 845 A) which is classified as a minor collector and is owned and maintained by the State.

Interstate Routes 70 and 81 provide an excellent transportation network to Washington County and the region with other parts of the State, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. Maryland Routes 66, a major collector, and Maryland Routes 67 and Alternate Route 40, minor arterials, connect to the interstate system and provide access from Keedysville to other communities, shopping, and multiple employment opportunities. The principal vehicular access to this transportation network from Keedysville is Maryland Route 34, a minor arterial, which enables the Town's residents to enjoy a rural quiet lifestyle within commuting distance to employment centers. Route 34 is the east/west connection to Boonsboro and Sharpsburg and bypasses the outskirts of Town which takes major traffic off Main Street. The Town should take an active role in protecting the safety of MD 34 by limiting access points, buffering for residential areas, and limiting commercial development. Highway Plan Standards are defined in the Functional Classification Systems Table on page APA-3 in Appendix A.

Past Comprehensive Plan Recommendations

The 1997 Comprehensive Plan's transportation objective was to establish and maintain a transportation network that safely and efficiently circulates people, goods, and services around the community. Transportation policies cited were:

- The transportation system plan will address all modes of travel and shall be consistent with local, neighboring, county, and state land use policies and transportation planning.
- Transit issues and needs of the community for public transportation services should be studied and monitored periodically with appropriate actions being taken to meet the needs of the community.
- New development shall be planned to include streets, parking, and access to the existing traffic patterns to avoid inefficient circulation and enhance the safety and convenience of residents.
- The Town will participate in any available county or region-wide transit service program for those who cannot drive or who do not own automobiles. Of special concern are programs which provide transportation for senior citizens.

These are all valid policies and are consistent with the goals of the municipal element which encourages jurisdictional cooperation when planning future infrastructure. However, some policies relative to transportation are not able to be supported, currently, due to the rural nature of the town and a lack of ridership for public transportation. The growth in population and the future development of the Town Growth area of Boonsboro to the east may make it economical for public transportation to be provided by County Commuter transit service to both communities; however, there is not service at this time to Keedysville.

Although there is MARC rail service in nearby Brunswick; park and ride facilities for commuters to car pool; and commercial air transportation at the Hagerstown Regional Airport; transportation by car is the only way to access those services currently. However, the Washington County 2002 Comprehensive Plan does consider a long term improvement to rural areas for bus transit which specifically names service to Boonsboro and Sharpsburg which could include service to Keedysville. Also, senior transit services are provided on a limited basis by the Southeastern Senior Center on Mount Vernon Drive.

Needs and Proposed Facilities

Although Route 34 relieves much of the traffic in Town, a substantial number of trips per day travel on Main Street, Dogstreet Road and Coffman Farm Road to get to Route 34. South Main Street (845A) had an average daily trip count (ADT) of 752 in 2008. Traffic counts for Route 34 in 2008 were 4850 ADT measured .20 of a mile east of Maryland 65 and 6840 ADT measured at .10 of a mile west of US 40 in Boonsboro. It is noteworthy that the ADT for Main Street has decreased from the 2003 number by 323 ADT in 2008.

Main Street is considered to be a constrained street since it has a 50 foot right of way that is narrower than the 60 feet characteristic of a minor collector; and, buildings that are close to the street which is typical of a historic town. In order to maintain proper setbacks in the Zoning Ordinance when reviewing and approving development plans, proposed street rights of way should be described and standard details should be prepared for normal and constrained streets, sidewalks, street trees, and street lights that are either existing or planned.

This analysis and preparation should, also, be done to determine the feasibility of pedestrian and bicycle paths being constructed through the Town. Balancing pedestrian and vehicular traffic policies to determine the optimal balance is needed before construction of street scape improvements takes place. In addition, providing parking on the street is necessary since there is not parking on many sites. Since some of the narrow sidewalks are in need of repair or on some roads nonexistent, vehicular speed can create an unsafe situation for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The topography and built environment on Main Street makes major widening of the street unlikely; however, infrastructure improvements could be made to improve safety for pedestrians. Sidewalks, curbs or a striped pedestrian/bicycle shared path should be placed within the right of way on Dogstreet and Coffman Farm Road. However, Coffman Farm Road, Dogstreet, and Mount Hebron Road are all County roads and improvements would need to be requested from the County. The community should monitor traffic in the area and request financial and technical assistance for Main Street improvements from the State Highway Administration (SHA) to address safety, parking and traffic volume concerns.

Shared Use Path System

A path for pedestrians and bicyclists (hereafter referred to a shared use plan) can provide short distance transportation and lowers parking requirements provided in the Zoning Ordinance, in addition to providing recreational benefits for the Town's residents. A shared path system is preferred over a separate bicycle path and pedestrian path due to the limited space that is available in an already built environment.

Planning bicycle paths and pedestrian walkways generally requires a fair amount of planning; may require acquisition of land; and, needs the support and commitment of public officials. Some communities elect to establish a bicycle and pedestrian advisory committee that would study and recommend efficient and safe routes to the elected officials. The design and feasibility of a shared path throughout Town should be considered in the long term plans of the Town and is dependent on funding and a need to connect the Town with services. Paths on Main Street do not appear to be feasible; however, the abandoned railway right of way is an option that is shared by the County as represented in their 2002 Comprehensive Plan bicycle path plan. The use of the alignment of the abandoned rail road right of way may be an excellent option to connect Maryland Route 34 with a center of Town where parking is available; however, this option would require coordination with the County and the State.

Streets in Town that are designated as confined roadways may not be able to incorporate a standard shared path in the roadway design detail due to lack of space; however, well maintained concrete or asphalt sidewalks should be available to pedestrians in these areas. Shared pathways and sidewalks should be handicap accessible and merchants or residents should be encouraged to maintain a five foot pathway in front of their properties for those who are physically challenged.

The Zoning Ordinance would need to be amended to provide text to require dedication of land and construction of a shared path in new development. Actual design of a shared path should be placed in the Town's standard details. Proper warning devices for intersections and roadways and the appropriate distance for crossings should be included. Appropriate signage, striping, and traffic calming should be considered for streets that maintain a bicycle and pedestrian path that shares the road with vehicular traffic. Although the construction of a shared path in Town is a timely process that would most likely require securing a grant; and, the need to be planned and designated in the Town's Capital Improvement Program, the project could be phased and would provide many benefits to residents and tourists.

The Washington County Bicycle Route Map, page APA-7 found in Appendix A, depicts the existing bicycle routes to Keedysville. Although there is an existing route from Sharpsburg to Keedysville on the shoulders of Maryland Route 34, the path continues south on Mt. Briar Road and does not continue to Boonsboro which is used by pedestrians and bicyclists.

Off-Street Parking

Off-street parking is on private land and should be encouraged and paved with a dust free pavement. The lack of off-street parking on Main Street results in parking on the street and on the sidewalks which leaves little room for pedestrians to walk.

Public Transit

Currently there are no transit services serving Boonsboro, Keedysville or Sharpsburg, although there has been discussion on a route that would provide service to all three towns if the proposed route was looped. The number of trips proposed for this route should be discussed if such a proposal occurs since the lapsed time between routes would discourage riders if it were too long. As commercial services become more plentiful in Boonsboro, due to its designation as a Town Growth area, bus services may be necessary for those who do not maintain vehicles such as senior citizens.

Parking

Parking appears to be at a premium in the area of Town classified as Medium Density Residential and zoned Town Residential. Narrower right of way on Main Street results in residents parking on sidewalks. Although there is a partial alley system in Town, it does not serve all of Main Street. Any review of commercial applications for use permits along Main Street should continue to require dedicated parking off site or a written arrangement for off site parking before approval. Shared parking requirements should be re-defined in the Zoning Ordinance to implement this goal.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS

1. Develop a balanced, efficient, and equitable transportation system that provides a range of transportation options that reinforces the livability and sustainable neighborhoods in Town.
2. The transportation system should support a strong and diverse economy and provide parking areas for those shops and services in Town.
3. Minimize the number of low occupant vehicular trips by supporting any efforts to extend public transportation via a County Commuter route to Keedysville, Boonsboro, and Sharpsburg.
4. Support and seek funding for bicycle and pedestrian shared use paths as a component of the recreational and transportation activities planned for the Town.
5. Provide traffic calming on streets that are considered unsafe due to lack of sidewalks or vehicular speed.

POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Policy T.1: Coordinate with state and federal agencies, local governments, and providers of transportation services when planning and funding transportation links and services.

Implementation Strategies

1. Coordinate funding and development of transportation projects with public and private investment and in combination with other jurisdictions, if possible.
2. Support striping and signage along Maryland Route 34 between Keedysville east to Boonsboro to provide alternate short range transportation and recreational opportunities for citizens and tourists.
3. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to provide parking criteria that solidifies shared parking in the Town Residential zoning district and explore shared parking when two land uses operate at the different times.
4. Discourage commercial truck traffic routes through residential neighborhoods.
5. Design and construct well lighted and safe parking areas that are compatible with adjacent residential areas.
6. Provide handicap accessible parking areas and bicycle rack parking in areas of Town that can support bicycle routes, if established.
7. Encourage bioretention areas for storm water management and pervious paving in new parking areas when at all possible.
8. Coordinate new entrance locations planned for new development along MD 34 with SHA to protect the safety of MD 34.

Policy T.2: Educate Citizens on the Transportation Goals, Policies, and Implementation Strategies.

Implementation Strategies

1. Provide information on the web site and at Town Hall if bicycle paths and County Commuter service becomes available in future years.

Policy T.3: Provide Street classification designations and descriptions in the Town's Standard Details and Specifications. Describe streets, confined streets, bicycle pedestrians paths and other transportation related improvements.

Implementation Strategies

1. Provide standard details and specifications for all types of motor vehicles, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian, for each street classification. Include sidewalks, street lights, and street trees that are in conformance with this Plan.

Policy T.4: Support a bicycle and pedestrian path.

Implementation Strategies

1. Make development of a shared path plan a Town effort with coordination from the County; establish a mechanism to ensure coordination.
2. Develop a bicycle and pedestrian program that focuses on safe, direct routes that serve all neighborhoods.
3. Promote bicycling and walking and encourage safe travel habits.
4. Safe and convenient bicycle parking should be provided along routes to link nearby shopping, residential communities, park lands and other activity centers.

Policy T.5: Amend the Zoning Ordinance to include the option of traffic calming devices, when necessary, and add selected measures to the Town's Standard Details and Specifications.

Implementation Strategies

1. Consider traffic calming measures in areas where there are safety issues or hazard due to vehicular/pedestrian conflicts and consult the proper authorities before making decisions.

Policy T.6: Support Public Transit.

Implementation Strategies

1. Support and encourage public transit services to provide transportation opportunities for the seniors who live in Town.

Policy T.7: Improve parking, sidewalks, streets for pedestrian/vehicular safety.

Implementation Strategies

1. Support improvements to Main Street by repairing or installing sidewalks, curb, parking and streetscape and apply for grant assistance from the State Highway Administration utilizing funding from the Community Safety and Enhancement Program and/or Streetscape Program.
2. Implement shared bicycle/pedestrian paths through Town where feasible.
3. Install or repair sidewalks through Town to create a safe and continuous path system.
4. Require new development assess transportation impacts, provide a well connected street network including pedestrian and bicycle facilities and connect with adjacent neighborhoods.