

# County Council of Howard County, Maryland

2021 Legislative Session

Legislative day # 5

## RESOLUTION NO. 43 - 2021

Introduced by: Liz Walsh

A RESOLUTION encouraging the County Executive to implement a “Shared Streets Program” to promote the public health, safety, and welfare and the safe use of outdoor space during the State of Emergency due to COVID-19; and generally relating to implementing the “Shared Streets Program”.

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Introduced and read first time on March 1, 2021.

By order Michelle Harrod  
Theodore Wimberly, Administrator to the County Council

Read for a second time and a public hearing held on March 15, 2021.

By order Michelle Harrod  
Theodore Wimberly, Administrator to the County Council

This Resolution was read the third time and was Adopted , Adopted with amendments \_\_\_\_, Failed \_\_\_\_, Withdrawn \_\_\_\_ by the County Council on April 5, 2021.

Certified by Michelle Harrod  
Theodore Wimberly, Administrator to the County Council

NOTE: [[text in brackets]] indicates deletions from existing language; TEXT IN SMALL CAPITALS indicates additions to existing language. ~~Strike-out~~ indicates material deleted by amendment; Underlining indicates material added by amendment.

1           **WHEREAS**, In order to protect the public health, safety and welfare and to control and  
2 prevent the spread of COVID-19, Council Resolution No. 41-2020, adopted on March 20, 2020,  
3 extended the state of emergency declared by the County Executive through Executive Order 2020-  
4 02, issued on March 15, 2020, and stated that the state of emergency shall continue and remain in  
5 effect while the state of emergency and/or the catastrophic health emergency declared by Maryland  
6 Governor Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr. remains in effect or until terminated by Executive Order issued  
7 by the County Executive, whichever is later; and

8           **WHEREAS**, Pursuant to section 6.104(a) of the Howard County Code, the County  
9 Executive may exercise certain emergency functions during a declared state of emergency within  
10 the County, including the control of traffic; and

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12           **WHEREAS**, The need for social distancing and limiting in-door activities and gatherings  
13 will continue for the foreseeable future; and

14  
15           **WHEREAS**, The Horizon Foundation has demonstrated through its “Open Streets”  
16 initiative that reimagining the use of streets, most recently Tamar Drive and Columbia Road, for  
17 biking, walking, and gathering benefits people of all ages and abilities; and

18  
19           **WHEREAS**, The Horizon Foundation has found that Howard County: 1) lacks sidewalks  
20 on Dobbin Road, Little Patuxent Parkway, Route 1, and Route 40; 2) presents disability access  
21 concerns, particularly transitioning from streets to sidewalks, especially in old Ellicott City; and  
22 3) has far too many disconnected bike pathways; and

23  
24           **WHEREAS**, The benefits of walking have been well documented, including maintaining  
25 a healthy weight, improved mood, strengthening bones and muscles, improving balance and  
26 coordination, and preventing or managing various conditions, including heart disease, high blood  
27 pressure, and Type 2 diabetes; and

1           **WHEREAS**, Increasing numbers of residents are seeking to care for their mental and  
2 physical health during the COVID-19 pandemic by utilizing our local parks, sometimes resulting  
3 in overcrowding of these parks, and the parks reaching capacity; and  
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5           **WHEREAS**, Businesses can benefit from the provision of expanded sidewalk space that  
6 enables patrons to more easily socially distance; and  
7

8           **WHEREAS**, Neighboring jurisdictions, including Montgomery County and Baltimore  
9 City, have implemented shared streets programs and are closing certain lanes to traffic, to make  
10 roads safer for pedestrians and cyclists during the pandemic, to allow pedestrians to maintain social  
11 distancing measures, to support local restaurants that are utilizing outdoor space for dining and  
12 curbside pickup, and to support retail businesses that are utilizing curbside pickup; and  
13

14           **WHEREAS**, According to the National Association of City Transportation Officials  
15 website, rethinking how street space is allocated or shared and which uses are prioritized can  
16 help to mitigate the health, economic, and social impacts of COVID-19; and  
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18           **WHEREAS**, Park space pathways and walkable, bikeable space is not accessible to all in  
19 Howard County; and  
20

21           **WHEREAS**, Temporarily modifying current uses of County-controlled sidewalks, roads,  
22 and on-street parking to provide more space that allows safe, socially distanced outdoor activities  
23 and access to outdoor dining and restaurant and retail curbside pickup, will promote the health and  
24 well-being of Howard County residents, and support economic recovery during the current public  
25 health state of emergency.

26           **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the County Council of Howard County,  
27 Maryland this 5 day of April, 2021 that the County Council urges the County  
28 Executive to implement a “Shared Streets Program” that: 1) modifies current uses of County-  
29 controlled sidewalks, roads, and on-street parking; 2) permits certain lane closures to traffic; 3)

1 reduces speed limits and cut-through traffic on certain residential streets and encourages physically  
2 distanced walking, biking, and running in the roadway; 4) modifies certain streets to limit vehicular  
3 traffic and promote foot traffic; 5) allows for buildout of outdoor dining spaces in streets and  
4 sidewalks, known as “streateries”; 6) limits parking in some areas to allow for expanded sidewalk  
5 space around businesses using existing roads, shoulders and sidewalks; 7) permits organizations,  
6 including homeowners associations, community associations, clubs, schools, parent-teacher  
7 organizations, and non-profits to request traffic restrictions; and 8) consults with neighborhood  
8 associations for recommendations for locations that could be utilized for implementing the “Shared  
9 Streets Program”.