

Prince George's County
Planning Department

Municipal Grant Writing Workshop Series

***Workshop #2:
Mechanics of Grant
Writing***

March 4, 2026



Municipal Grant Writing Workshop

This workshop is brought to you by the Prince George's County Planning Department's Planning Assistance to Municipalities and Communities (PAMC) Program, which provides free technical assistance funding for municipalities and communities who are interested in revitalizing and enhancing the appearance and function of their communities.

PAMC



Elizabeth Mekonnen

Planner II

Neighborhood Revitalization Section,
Community Planning Division

Elizabeth.Mekonnen@ppd.mncppc.org

301-952-4363



Josephine Selvakumar

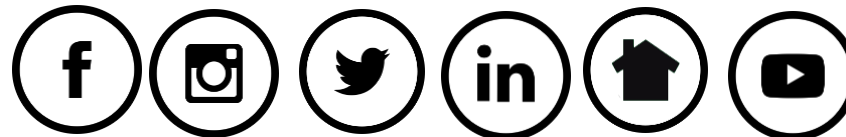
Planning Supervisor

Neighborhood Revitalization Section,
Community Planning Division

Josephine.Selvakumar@ppd.mncppc.org

(301) 952-3551

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Review of Session #1

- **Understand the project** and opportunities for phasing and break-out elements to better match sources and uses
- **Know your funder(s)** beyond just the basic grant requirements
- **Develop a grant program plan** for ease of tracking, workload distribution, and prioritization/opportunity costs
- **If the NOFO caught you by surprise**, it may be a No Go
- **Consider the opportunity costs** of pursuing each grant
- **Set a “go/no go” decision point** for each grant you may pursue



Source: PowerPoint Stock

Grant Cycle



The grant writer must:

- Know the project(s) scope, schedule, and budget.
- Help prioritize needs and wants.
- Know the funder(s) and eligible use(s) of grant funds.
- Assess organizational capacity to deliver at all phases.
- Create a plan that matches organizational goals with fund sources and uses.

Making a “Go/No Go” Decision



- Eligibility of agency
- Eligibility of uses
- Leadership support



- Amount available
- Core project function
- Restrictions
- Period of availability
- Administration & compliance



- Alignment with criteria
- Readiness
- Relationship with funder
- External support



- Due date
- Workload/level of effort
- Previous grant status
- Capacity to deliver
- Intangibles

Pop Quiz

Grant Essentials

Source: PowerPoint Stock



Question 1

How long should you assume is the period between submitting a grant and announcement of grant awards?

- 2-3 months
- 4-6 months
- 6-9 months
- 9 months or longer



Source: PowerPoint Stock

Question 2

Can grant funds be spent as soon as the award announcement is made?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always



Source: PowerPoint Stock

Question 3

On federal grants, an environmental clearance (NEPA) is required....

- Only for Construction Projects
- For Construction and Non-Construction Projects
- When Directed by the Program Officer



Source: PowerPoint Stock

Question 4

Funds will be sent by the granting agency prior to the start of work...

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always



Source: PowerPoint Stock

Question 5

A "Single Audit" is required for any grant recipient receiving federal funds in the prior calendar year greater than

- \$250,000
- \$500,000
- \$750,000
- \$1,000,000
- What the heck is a "single audit"



Source: PowerPoint Stock

Understanding Grant Opportunities

Vocabulary

Key Terms & Conditions

Preparing to Respond



Project/Program Vocabulary

- **Capital asset** means land, buildings (facilities), equipment, and intellectual property (including software), whether acquired by purchase, construction, or manufacture.
- **Capital expenditures** means additions, improvements, modifications, replacements, rearrangements, reinstallations, renovations, or alterations to capital assets that materially increase their value or u
- **Operating cost** means the ongoing, day-to-day expenses incurred by an organization such as rent, utilities, salaries, supplies, etc.
- **Discretionary grant** is awarded based on the discretion of the granting agency or organization. Unlike mandatory grants, which are allocated based on predetermined criteria, discretionary grants allow the awarding body to choose which applications to fund based on their alignment with specific goals and objectives.
- **Bond bills** are requested by members of the Maryland General Assembly for organizations or local governments to fund capital projects.
- **Community Project Funding** (aka “earmark”) is a type of grant award whereby members of Congress request federal funding for specific projects in their districts during the annual appropriations process. Funding is allocated to named projects if approved by the Appropriations Committees and included in legislation

Application Vocabulary

- **Notice of Funding Opportunity** provides information on the award, such as who is eligible to apply, the evaluation criteria for selecting a recipient or subrecipient, the required components of an application, and how to submit the application
- **Standard Forms** means government-wide standard data sets and forms for grant application packages,
- **Unique Entity Identifier** means the authoritative identifier for those doing business with the federal government (Ex: 693JJ32540021)
- **Responsiveness Review** means the criteria that make an application or project eligible or ineligible for selection.
- **Review or Merit Criteria** means the substantive basis on which applications will be evaluated.



Source: Grants.gov

Award Vocabulary

- **Federal award** means the instrument setting forth the terms and conditions of a grant, loan, or contract. May also refer to **the federal grant agreement**.
- **Federal award date** means the date when the authorized official of the Federal agency signed (physically or digitally) the Federal award or when an alternative, consistent with the requirements of 31 U.S.C. 1501, is reached with the recipient.
- **Period of performance** means the time interval between the start and end date of a Federal award, which may include one or more budget periods.
- **Subrecipient** means an entity that receives a subaward from a pass-through entity to carry out part of a Federal award.



Source: US Department of Transportation

An announcement by press release, letter notification, agency event, etc. does not constitute a federal award.

Finance Vocabulary

- **Budget period** means the time interval from the start date of a funded portion of an award to the end date of that funded portion, during which recipients and subrecipients are authorized to incur financial obligations of the funds awarded.
- **Cost sharing or matching funds** means the amount that must be provided by a recipient as part of a grant award.
- **Indirect cost** means those costs incurred for a common benefitting more than one cost objective and not readily assignable to a specific grant activity. Also known as “overhead.”
- **Single Audit** is a comprehensive audit of a non-Federal entity's financial statements and compliance with federal program requirements, typically required for entities that expend \$1 million or more in federal funds annually.
- **Simplified acquisition threshold** means the dollar amount below which a recipient may use small purchase procedures to expedite the purchase of items at or below the simplified acquisition threshold. (Currently SAT is \$350,000)

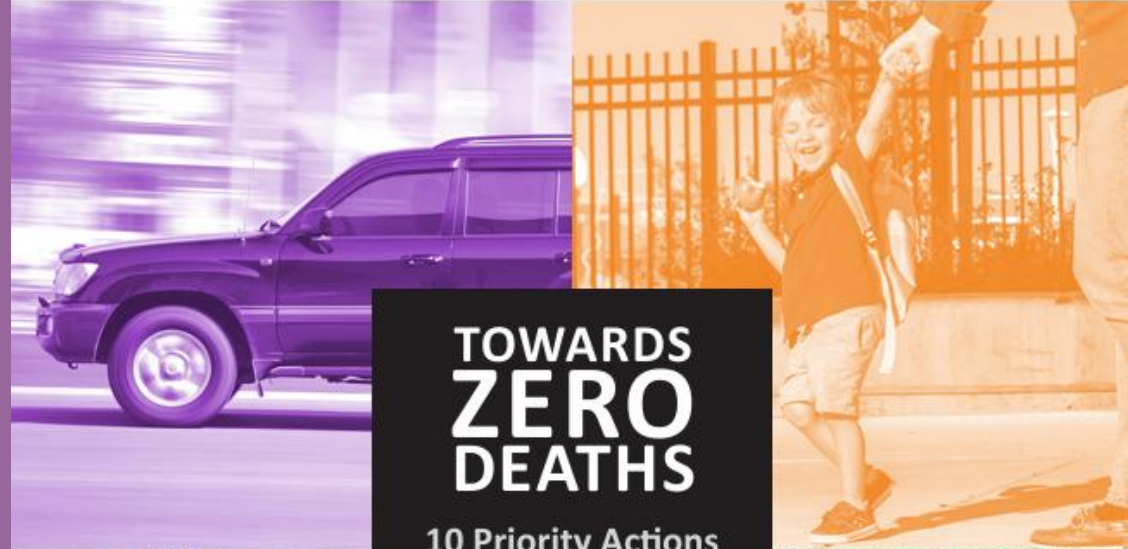


Source: US Department of Transportation

An announcement by press release, letter notification, agency event, etc. does not authorize money to be spent on a project.

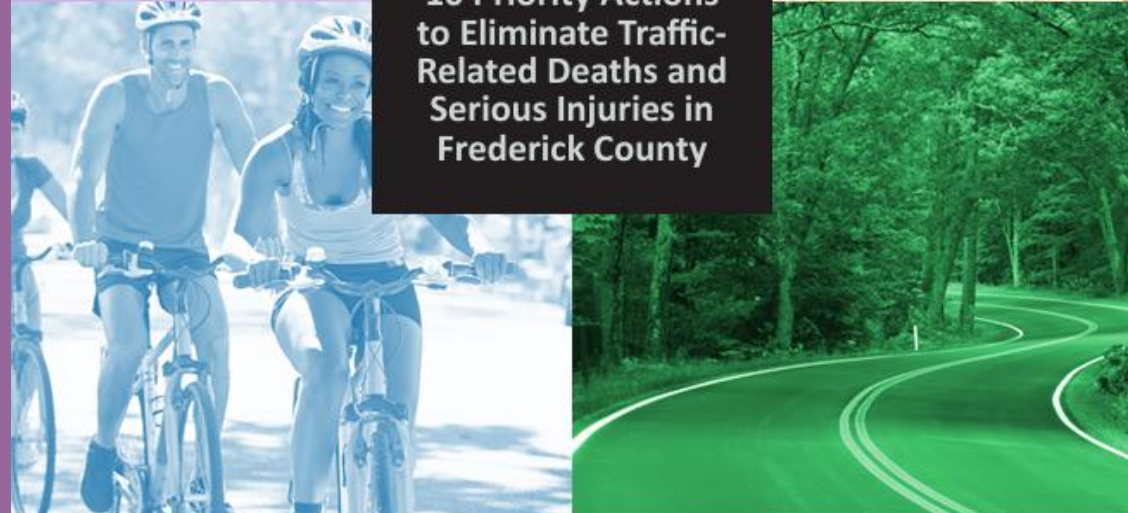
This Week's Case Study

*Frederick County
Safe Streets for All Implementation Grant*



**TOWARDS
ZERO
DEATHS**

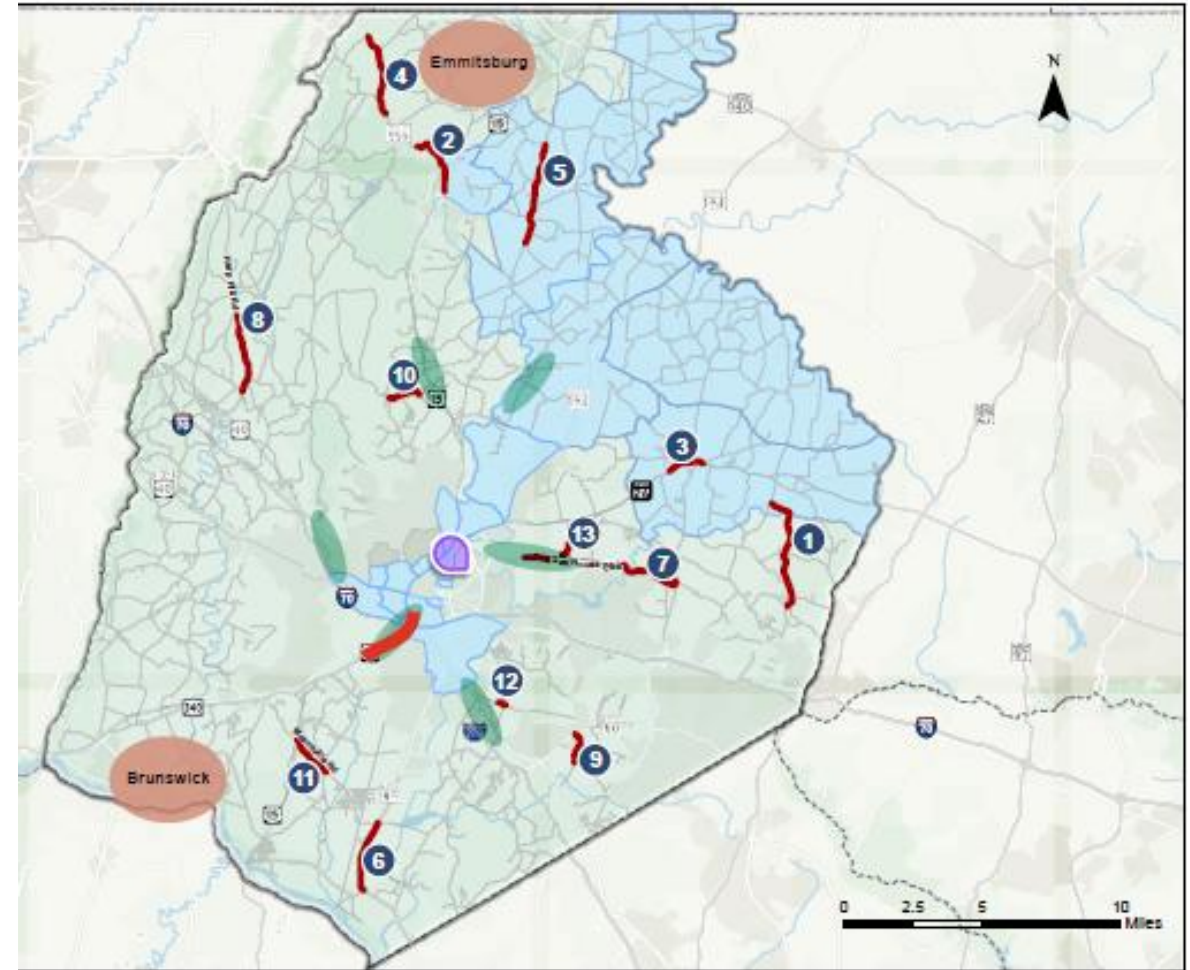
**10 Priority Actions
to Eliminate Traffic-
Related Deaths and
Serious Injuries in
Frederick County**



MARCH 2022

Quick Background

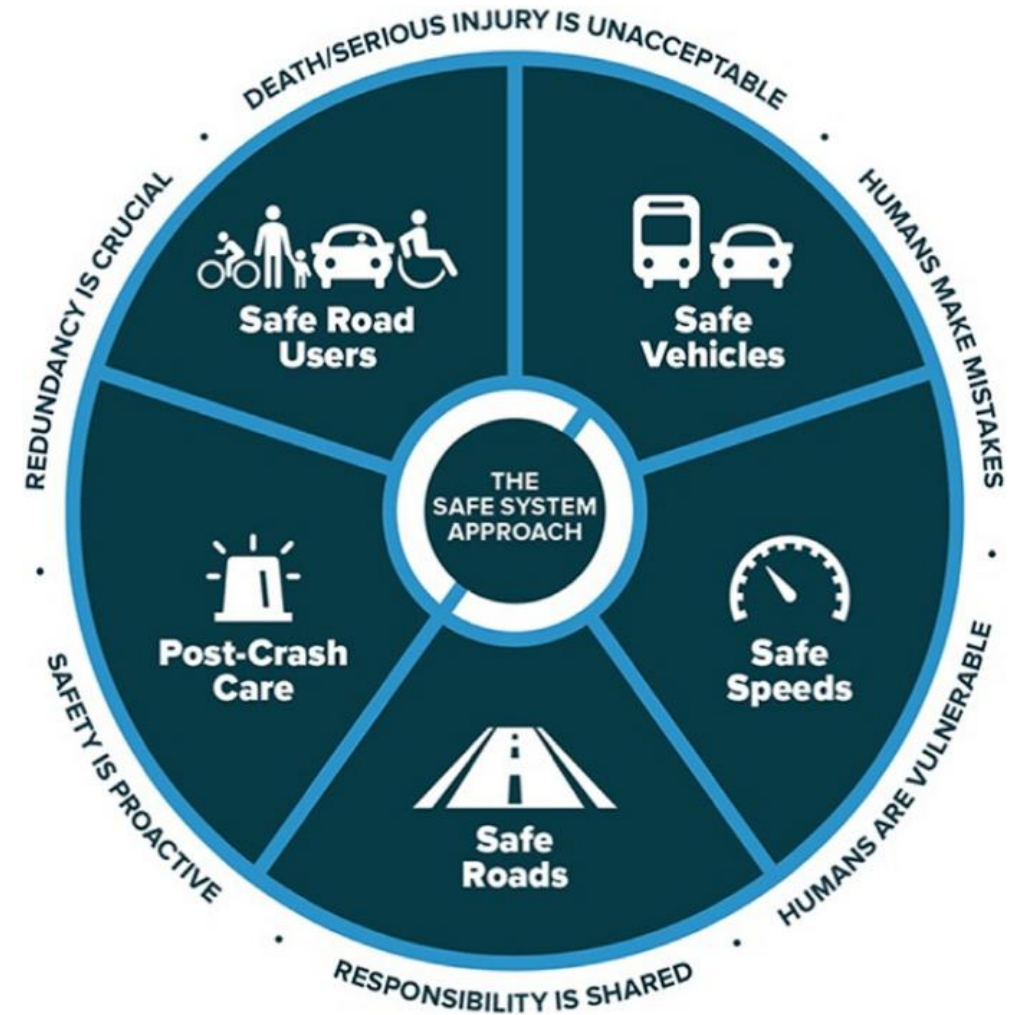
- **98 fatal crashes and 1515 crashes resulting in serious injuries between 2015 – 2019.**
- **County Executive identified road safety as a priority issue and directed creation of a local road safety plan; completed in 2022.**
- **Received 2 grants/\$1.2 million from USDOT Safe Streets for All**
 - FY 23 – Supplemental Planning & Demonstration
 - FY 24 – Supplemental Planning & Demonstration
- **Unsuccessful implementation grant in FY 25 and FY 26.**



Source: Federick County SS4A Grant Application

USDOT Safe Streets for All Grants

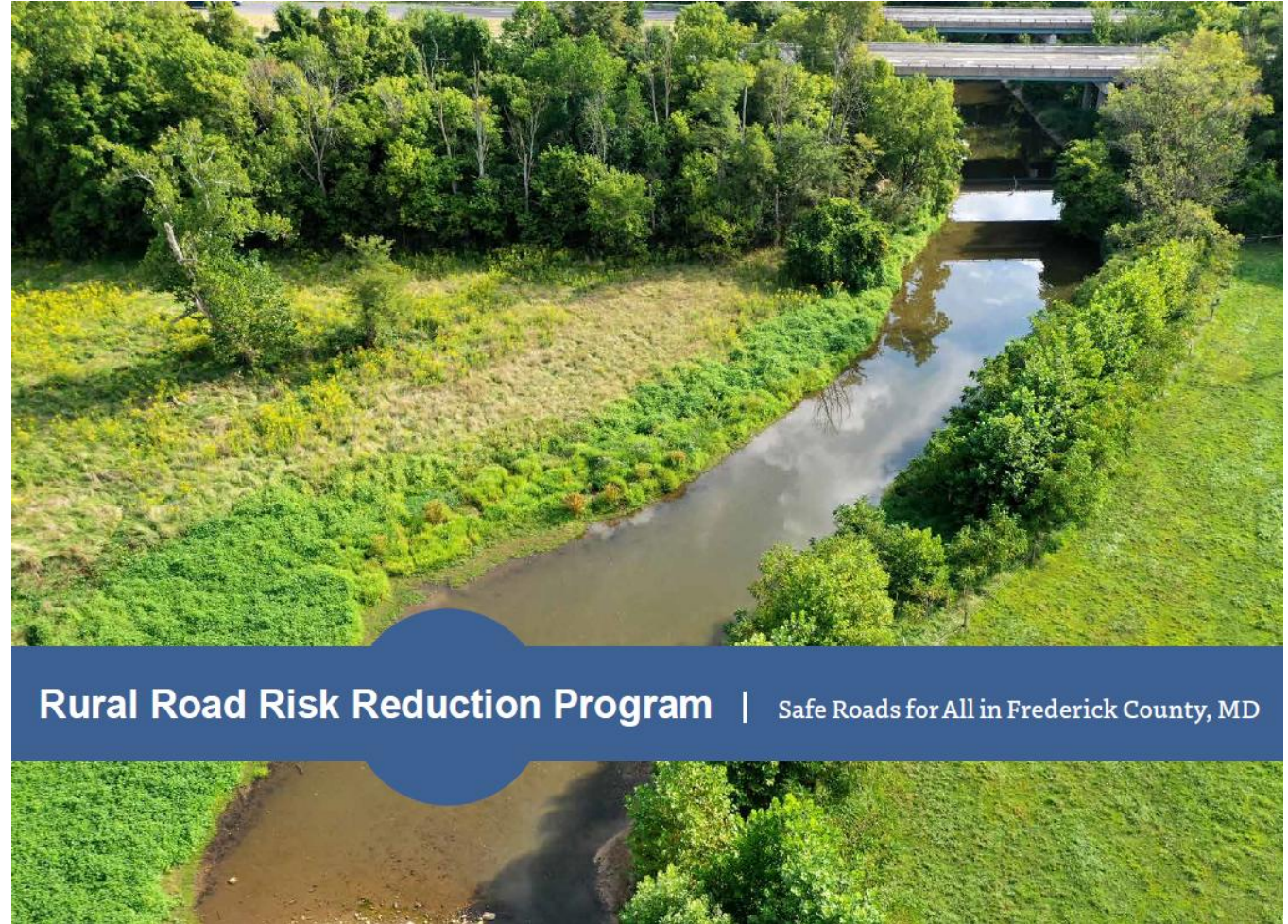
- Focused on preventing serious injuries and fatalities
- Competitive, discretionary grants
- \$1 billion annually available only to local and regional agencies.
- Funds available for:
 - Comprehensive Safety Action Plan
 - Supplemental Planning
 - Road safety audits
 - Corridor studies
 - Pedestrian and bicycle studies
 - Feasibility studies
 - Demonstration Projects
 - Implementation Activities



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Implementation Grant Application

- Requested \$8.7 million with \$2.8m match (exceeds 20% requirement).
- Included 4 projects:
 - Municipal sidewalks and safety
 - Rural systemic improvements
 - School zone improvements
 - Gas House Pike
- 30% of funds were directed to underserved communities; 94% of funds in rural areas.
- Construction application not funded in FY 25/FY 26.



Rural Road Risk Reduction Program | Safe Roads for All in Frederick County, MD

Activity

*Review and Evaluate
Frederick County SS4A Application*



Source: PowerPoint Stock

Source: PowerPoint Stock

Selection Criteria Example

#	Criteria	Responding Details
Safety Need	The safety problem to be addressed is described, including historical trends, fatal and serious injury crash locations, contributing factors, and crash types by category of road user.	
	Crashes and/or crash risk are displayed in a high-injury network or similar geospatial risk visualization.	
	Safety risk is summarized from risk models, hazard analysis, the identification of high risk roadway features, road safety audits/assessments, near miss data, and/or other proactive safety analyses.	

Overall Score:

- High
- Medium
- Low
- Non-Responsive

Selection Criteria Example

#	Criteria	Responding Details
Safety Impact	Is the proposal likely to reduce or eliminate roadway fatalities and serious injuries?	
	Does the proposal employ low-cost, high-impact strategies over a wide geographic area?	
	Do projects and strategies align with and comprehensively address identified safety problems?	
	Are the projects primarily on a high-injury network or address high-risk roadway features correlated with severe crash types	
	Does the proposal use evidence-based strategies and measure safety impact through models, studies, or Crash Modification Factors?	
	Will the project have safety benefits that persist over time?	

Overall Score:

- High
- Medium
- Low
- Non-Responsive

Selection Criteria Example

#	Criteria	Responding Details
Engagement & Collaboration	Ensure investment in preventing roadway fatalities and serious injuries in underserved communities including rural communities.	
	Include demographic analysis, both quantitative and qualitative, and stakeholder engagement as part of the development and implementation process.	
	Included or will include meaningful engagement with the public during all phases of the project such as planning, design, construction, and implementation.	
	Leverage partnerships within their jurisdiction, with other government entities, non governmental organizations, the private sector, academic institutions, and/or other relevant stakeholders to achieve safety benefits while avoiding negative consequences for the community.	

Overall Score:

- High
- Medium
- Low
- Non-Responsive

Group Activity

GROUP #1

- Review Selection Criteria #1 (Demonstrated Safety Need) on page 5.
- AND review Selection Criteria #3 (Engagement & Collaboration) on Page 10. Independently

GROUP #2

- Review Selection Criteria #2 (Safety Impact) for Projects #1 (Systemic Improvements) on Page 6 (Schools on the Rural High Injury Network) and Page 7.

GROUP #3

- Review Selection Criteria #2 (Safety Impact) for Projects #3 (Gas House Pike) on Page 8 and #4 (Municipal Partnership Projects) on Page 9.

• Individually

- Review the selection criteria for your group
- Review the Frederick County “Rural Road Risk Reduction Program” grant application for your sections

• Then as a group

- Identify how Frederick County has responded to the criteria
- Give the county a score: High, Medium, Low, Non-Responsive

USDOT Feedback

- **Clear path from planning through implementation**
- **Strong projects and strategies, well documented/evidence-based.**
- **Budget reasonable and appropriate but miscalculation of benefits per KSI prevented.**
- **Strong collaboration with municipalities, but no details on community engagement during implementation**



Source: PowerPoint Stock

Grant Preparation

Budget, Schedule, and Readiness/Risk



Developing a Project Budget

ITEM NO.	CATEGORY CODE	DESCRIPTION	QTY.	UNIT	UNIT COST	TOWN QTY.	TOWN COST	COUNTY QTY.	COUNTY COST	TOTAL COST
CATEGORY 1 - PRELIMINARY										
1001	130875	MOBILIZATION AND DEMOBILIZATION	1	LS	\$ 222,897.20		\$187,233.65		\$35,663.55	\$ 222,897.20
1002	120500	MAINTENANCE OF TRAFFIC	1	LS	\$ 167,172.90		\$140,425.24		\$26,747.66	\$ 167,172.90
1003	130840	CONSTRUCTION STAKEOUT	1	LS	\$ 55,724.30		\$46,808.41		\$8,915.89	\$ 55,724.30
1004	110100	CLEARING AND GRUBBING	1	LS	\$ 25,000.00		\$21,000.00		\$4,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
1005	120690	TUBULAR MARKERS	165	EA	\$ 25.00		\$21.00		\$4.00	\$ 25,000.00
CATEGORY 1=							\$ 395,488.30	\$ -	\$ 75,331.10	
CATEGORY 2 - GRADING										
2001	201030	CLASS 1 EXCAVATION	1,745	CY	\$ 40.00	1,020	\$40,800.00	725	\$29,000.00	\$ 69,800.00
2002	202065	COMMON BORROW	1,200	CY	\$ 40.00	800	\$32,000.00	400	\$16,000.00	\$ 48,000.00
2003	210011	REMOVAL OF EXISTING COMBINATION CURB & GUTTER	3,450	LF	\$ 30.00	3,450	\$103,500.00		\$0.00	\$ 103,500.00
2004	210025	REMOVAL OF EXISTING PAVEMENT	495	CY	\$ 135.00		\$66,825.00	90	\$52,650.00	\$ 119,475.00
CATEGORY 2=							\$ 253,125.00	\$ 52,650.00	\$ 200,475.00	

Item	Description	SS4A Request		SS4A Non-Federal Match		Total SS4A Project Cost	Other Fed Funds
		Itemized Estimated Costs of (A) Supplemental Activities	Itemized Estimated Costs of (B) Planning, Design, and Development Activities	Itemized Estimated Costs of (C) Carrying Out Projects and Strategies	Itemized Estimated Costs of (D) Supplemental Activities		
Project 1 - Rural Systemic Improvements							
3001	MIX 2 CONCRETE FOR MISCELLANEOUS			320,000		320,000	1,720,000
3002	CLASS 3 EXCAVATION			25,800		25,800	250,000
3003	STABILIZED			50,000		50,000	1,367,400
3004	12 INCH REIN			249,480		249,480	270,000
3005	15 INCH REIN			70,000		70,000	1,950,000
3006	18 INCH REIN			175,000		175,000	1,175,000
3007	24 INCH REIN			75,000		75,000	775,000
3008	15 INCH CORR			197,500		197,500	1,545,500
Project 2 - Rural School Zone Improvements							
Gas House Pike							
	Final Design	\$ 50,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50,000	\$ -
	ROW/Utilities	\$ 3,000,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,000,000	\$ -
	Construction	\$ 200,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 200,000	\$ -
	Construction Management	\$ 500,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 500,000	\$ -
Project 3 - Gas House Pike							
Brunswick - H Street/Sounder Road							
	Final Design	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 25,000	\$ -	\$ 25,000	\$ -
	ROW/Utilities	\$ 475,000	\$ -	\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ 575,000	\$ -
	Construction	\$ 25,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 25,000	\$ -
	Construction Management	\$ 600,000	\$ -	\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ 700,000	\$ -
Project 4a - Brunswick - H Street/Sounder Road							
Emmitsburg - N. Seton Avenue							
	Final Design	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 125,000	\$ -	\$ 125,000	\$ -
	ROW/Utilities	\$ 570,000	\$ -	\$ 25,000	\$ -	\$ 595,000	\$ -
	Construction	\$ 30,000	\$ -	\$ 2,000,000	\$ -	\$ 2,030,000	\$ -
	Construction Management	\$ 500,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 500,000	\$ -
Project 4b - Emmitsburg - N. Seton Avenue							
Frederick - Jefferson Street Roundabout							
	Final Design	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,975,000	\$ -	\$ 1,975,000	\$ -
	ROW/Utilities	\$ 470,000	\$ -	\$ 25,000	\$ -	\$ 495,000	\$ -
	Construction	\$ 30,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 30,000	\$ -
	Construction Management	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,445,000
Subtotal Budget for (C)		\$ 8,700,000	\$ -	\$ 2,845,000	\$ -	\$ 11,545,000	\$ -
TOTAL BUDGET		\$ 8,700,000	\$ -	\$ 2,845,000	\$ -	\$ 11,545,000	\$ -
For all Activities (A), (B), and (C)		\$ 8,700,000	\$ -	\$ 2,845,000	\$ -	\$ 11,545,000	\$ -

OMB Number: 4040-0008
Expiration Date: 06/30/2028

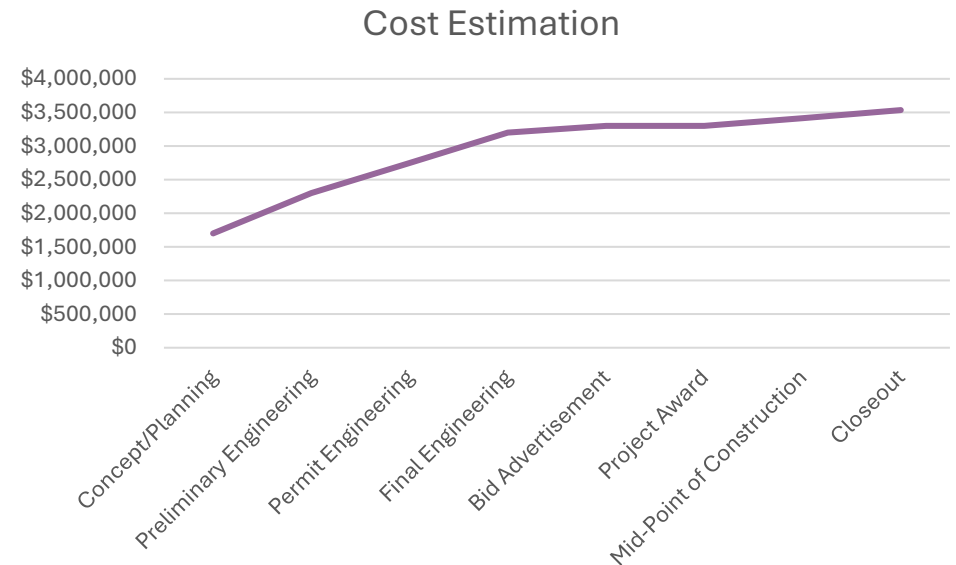
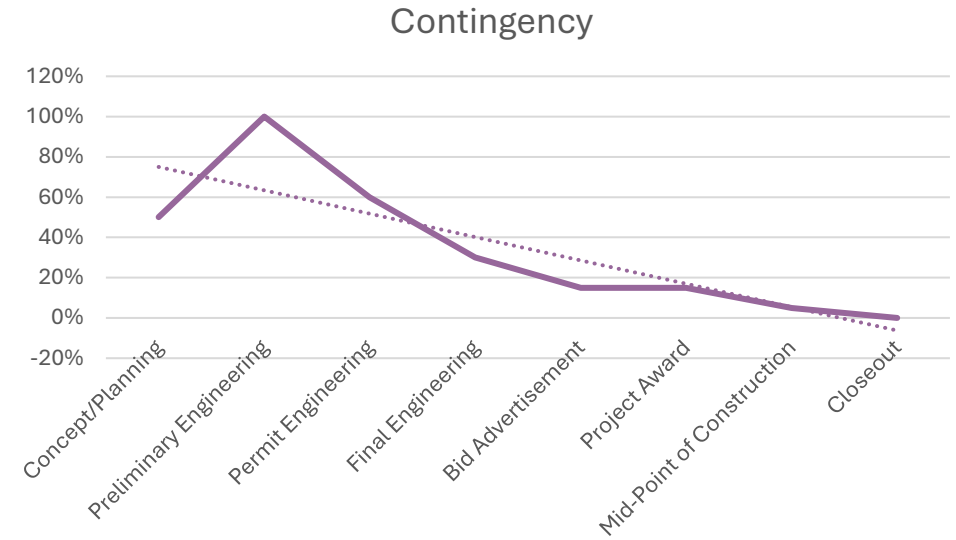
BUDGET INFORMATION - Construction Programs

NOTE: Certain Federal assistance programs require additional computations to arrive at the Federal share of project costs eligible for participation. If such is the case, you will be notified.

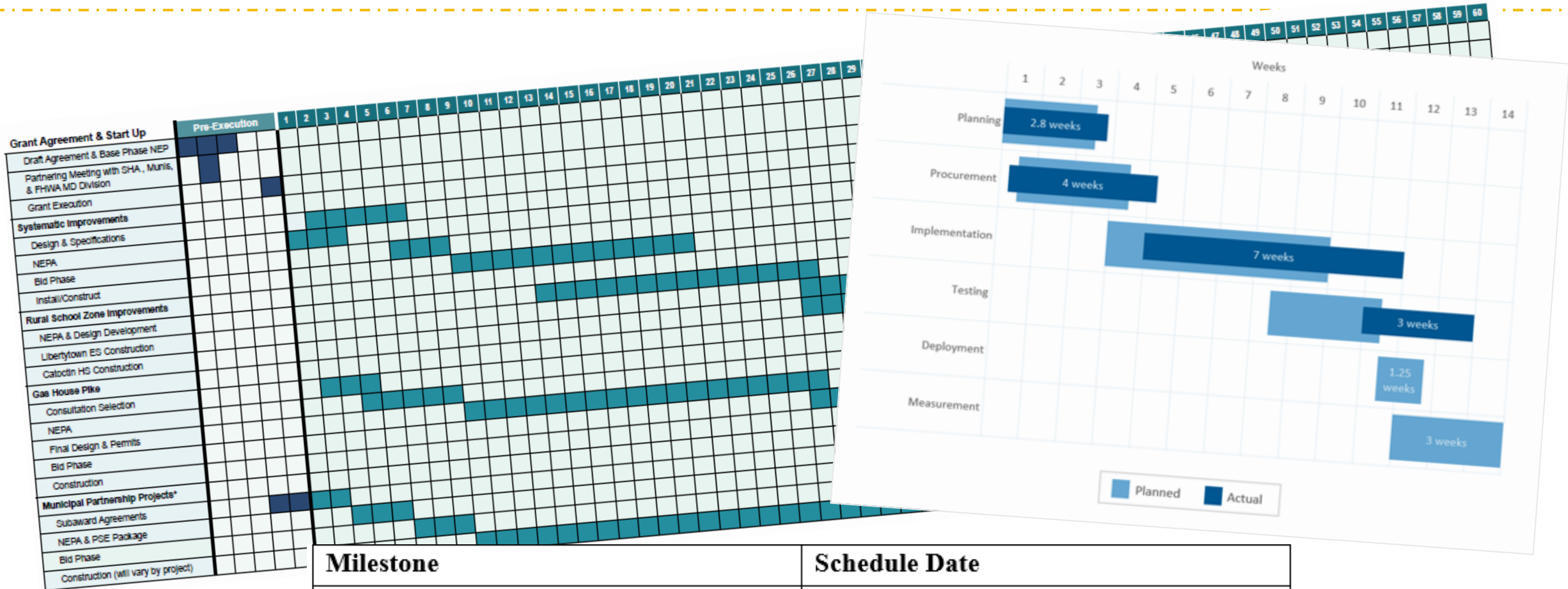
COST CLASSIFICATION	BUDGET INFORMATION - Construction Programs		
	a. Total Cost	b. Costs Not Allowable for Participation	c. Total Allowable Costs (Columns a-b)
1. Administrative and legal expenses	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
2. Land, structures, rights-of-way, appraisals, etc.	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
3. Relocation expenses and payments	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
4. Architectural and engineering fees	\$ 720,000	\$ 0	\$ 720,000
5. Other architectural and engineering fees	\$ 100,000	\$ 0	\$ 100,000
6. Project inspection fees	\$ 150,000	\$ 0	\$ 150,000
7. Site work	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
8. Demolition and removal	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
9. Construction	\$ 10,575,000	\$ 0	\$ 10,575,000
10. Equipment	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
11. Miscellaneous	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
12. SUBTOTAL (sum of lines 1-11)	\$ 11,545,000	\$ 0	\$ 11,545,000
13. Contingencies	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
14. SUBTOTAL	\$ 11,545,000	\$ 0	\$ 11,545,000
15. Project (program) income	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
16. TOTAL PROJECT COSTS (subtract #15 from #14)	\$ 11,545,000	\$ 0	\$ 11,545,000
FEDERAL FUNDING			
17. Federal assistance requested, calculate as follows: (Consult Federal agency for Federal percentage share.) Enter the resulting Federal share.	Enter eligible costs from line 16c. Multiply X <input type="text" value="80"/> %	\$ 8,700,000	

Developing a Project Budget

- Document your assumptions
- Take note of ineligible/non-reimbursable costs.
- Prepare the full cost of the project
 - Administrative/Indirect
 - Planning
 - Engineering
 - Construction
 - Right of Way, Permitting, Environmental Mitigation
 - Construction Management and Inspection
 - Contingency
- Consider inflation (year of expenditure)



Sharing Your Project Schedule



Milestone	Schedule Date
Planned NEPA Completion Date:	Same Date Agreement is Signed
Planned Construction Substantial Completion and Open to Public Use Date:	June 1, 2029
Planned SS4A Final Report Date:	May 30, 2031

Developing a Project Schedule

- If possible, use Grant Award + 1 month, 1 quarter, etc. rather than specific dates.
- If dates are required, remember that it will take time from grant award announcement to grant award.
- Stay within the maximum time allowed.
- Show a reasonable amount of detail.
- Document assumptions.
- Consider the time required for external reviews and approvals, procurement, etc.
- Be realistic.



Source: Prince George County Council

Explaining Project Risks/Solutions

- Unless otherwise stated, grantors want to fund projects that are ready and likely to succeed.
- Risk is neither good nor bad; it just needs to be addressed and mitigated.
- Risk has budget, scope, and schedule implications.
- Do not be afraid to share the potential problems. Doing so shows maturity of the grant applicant and supports your readiness arguments.
- Risk relates to internal and external factors and shifts as the project progresses.

Readiness	Status
State and Local Planning Approvals	The National Capital Transportation Planning Board (MPO) has indicated that the SS4A projects do not need to be added to the TIP.
Roadway Design Standards	SS4A projects will follow the MDOT design standards and local roads.
Right of Way	All spot and systemic improvements will occur within the operational right of way. Any sidewalk improvements implemented by the municipalities will be prioritized so that right of way is not needed, but if right of way is needed it will be acquired in conformance with the URA.
NEPA	Not yet started, but will qualify as a Categorical Exclusion's under § 771.117(c) 3, 8, 22, and/or 27.
Section 106, Section 4(f)	No protected properties are likely to be affected; coordination will occur with the SHPO.

Readiness	Status
Utility Relocation	None on high injury network systemic improvements. If sidewalk construction occurs in the municipalities, then storm drains may be affected; but project selection would encourage that no other utilities could be impacted due to cost and delay impacts.
Partnership and Implementation Agreements	MDOT has indicated its support for the projects (see letter from Secretary Wiedefeld.) SHA has indicated that it will take responsibility for construction management of spot and systemic improvements along state-owned roadways. Municipalities will be permitted to use eligible county contracts that comply with federal requirements and allow municipalities to draw down from that contract. We will also designate a project manager to work with the municipalities to advance their selected project(s).
Public Engagement	Community meetings will be held and property owners potentially affected by construction will be coordinated with.

Wrap Up



Thank you



Agency Presentation



Allison Gost

