Pedestrian Level of Comfort

The Pedestrian Level of Comfort analysis (PLOC) was created by the Montgomery County Planning Department for two reasons:

1) To identify locations in the existing walking network that are uncomfortable due to inadequate or incomplete sidewalks and crossings.
2) To quantify how different investments will increase connectivity.

The approach was inspired by the Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) analysis conducted for the Montgomery County Bicycle Master Plan.

The Pedestrian Level of Comfort analysis is a work in progress. The Planning Department will be retaining assistance from a private contractor in FY 2019 to refine the methodology and the metrics that will be used to evaluate pedestrian connectivity. The sections below describe the pedestrian level of comfort and metrics as they exist in Fall 2018.

Pedestrian Connectivity Methodology

PLOC scores range from High-Quality to Unacceptable.

- High-Quality: This walking environment enables parents to walk with young children with a moderate level of supervision.
- Acceptable: This walking environmental is comfortable for families, but parents would hold the hands of young children.
- Unacceptable: This walking environment is uncomfortable, and most adults will only walk if they have no other option.

Sidewalks and crossings are scored based on a "weakest link" approach in which the comfort of a segment of the network is governed by its most uncomfortable characteristic. For example, along the north side of Randolph Road, south of Selfridge Road, the lack of an adequate width buffer between the sidewalk and the road gave the walking routes on both sides of the street an "unacceptable" rating.

Sidewalk and street crossings are evaluated using different methodologies. Sidewalk scoring considers the following inputs:

- Adjacent Planned Land Uses
    - Urban
        - Mixed-use or high-density land use zones
        - Within ½ mile of rail or 1/4-mile from bus rapid transit stations
    - Suburban
- Walkway Width (sidewalk or sidepath):
    - Less than 3.5 feet
    - 3.5 to less than 5 feet
    - 5 feet to less than 8 feet
    - 8 feet or more
- Walkway Type
    - Pedestrians only

    - Shared with bicyclists
- Walkway Quality:
    - Presence of a buffer that is at least 5 feet wide
    - Frequency of obstructions
- Traffic Volume on Adjacent Roadway

Each leg of the intersection is analyzed as a separate street crossing. Street crossings are scored using the following inputs:

- Adjacent Planned Land Uses
        - Mixed-use or high-density land use zones
        - Within ½ mile of rail or 1/4-mile from bus rapid transit stations
- Presence of Traffic Control
    - Traffic Signal
    - Stop Sign
    - No Traffic Control
- Presence of a Right Turn on Red Restriction
- Cross Street Characteristics
    - Number of Lanes
    - Posted Speed Limit
- Presence of a Median
- Presence of a Crosswalk Marking