

Which Planning Document Governs for Bikeway and Sidewalk Design Along a Roadway Segment?

Montgomery County is committed to expanding the multi-modal transportation network so that no matter how you get around, whether it is by driving, walking, rolling, or biking, the trip is comfortable and as efficient as possible. While the Planning Department has a deeply rooted history in multi-modal transportation planning, the best practices of the field have evolved at a rapid pace over that last 10 or even five years. Since 2018 the Planning Department has adopted countywide transportation plans including the 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan*, the 2018 update to the *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways*, the 2023 *Pedestrian Master Plan* and the 2021 and the most recently updated 2024 *Complete Streets Design Guide*. Not to mention the various master and sector plans and their associated Design Guidelines which have recommendations that aim to alter and improve the design of roadways, bikeways, and sidewalks.

What this means for developers or property owners who need to upgrade the roadways along their frontage, or for government agencies looking to build new transportation projects, is that it can be confusing to determine which Planning Department policy document governs the final design of the transportation infrastructure in the public rights of way.

To ensure transparency and consistent application of the appropriate planning document, Staff has developed a framework that shows when each document applies. This is accompanied by two flow charts for easier reference.

Please be aware there are rare exceptions to when this decision tree does not apply. Reaching out to area staff for confirmation on the appropriate guiding document is strongly encouraged before major design and budgeting efforts for any significant project gets underway.

Decision Tree for Determining the Appropriate Bikeway (organized by document)

1. When does the 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan* apply? The bikeway recommended in the 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan* applies under the following conditions:
 - The road is master-planned; AND
 - The applicable sector plan is older than the *Bicycle Master Plan* (approved prior to 2018); AND
 - The Bicycle Master Plan identifies a specific facility for the roadway segment

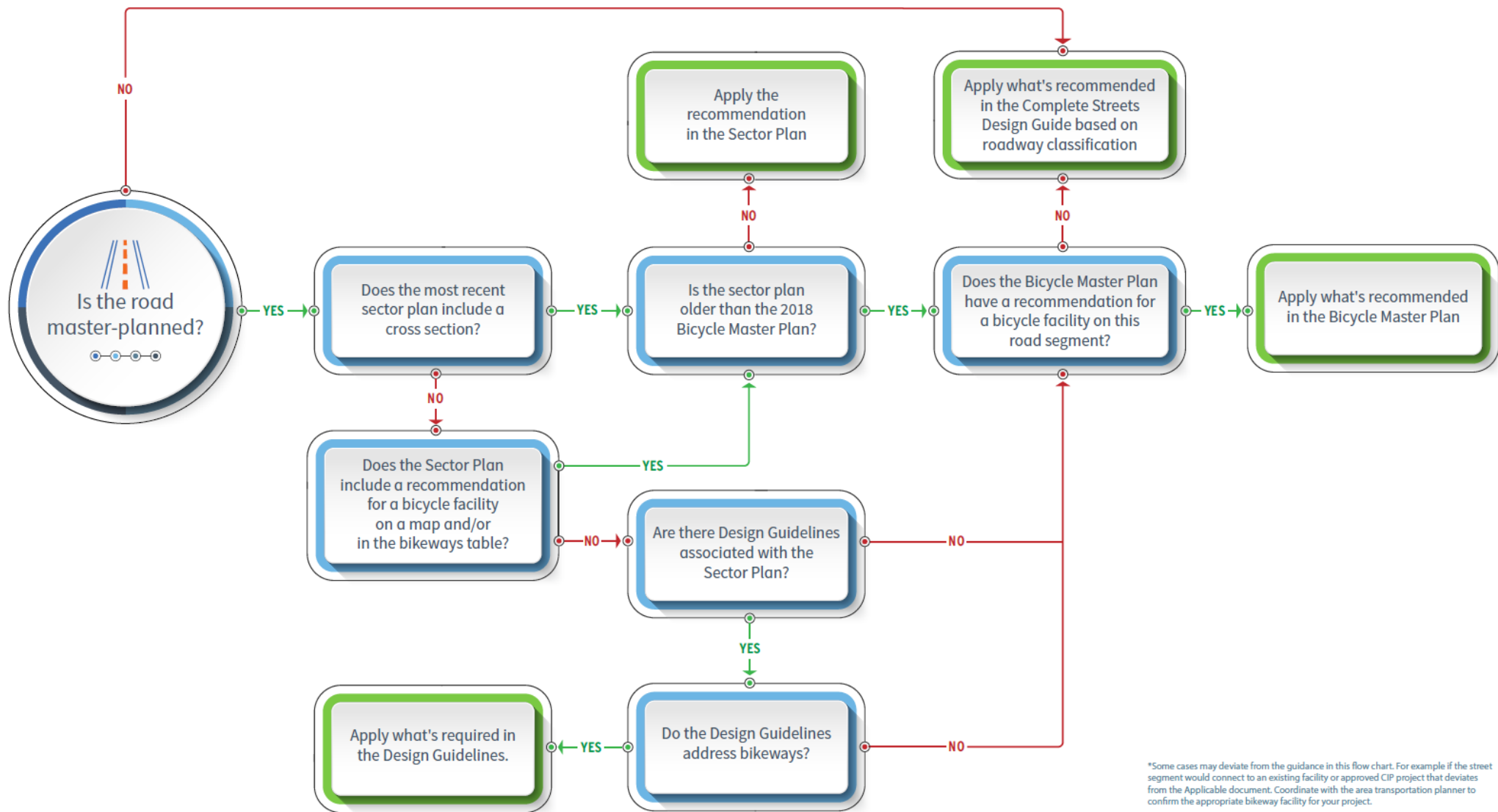
2. When does the Sector Plan apply? The bikeway recommended in the Sector Plan applies under the following conditions:
 - The road is master-planned; AND
 - The Sector Plan includes a cross section of the roadway, and the Sector Plan was adopted after the 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan*; OR
 - The Sector Plan includes a recommendation for a bikeway on a map and/or in a bikeway recommendations table, and The Sector Plan was adopted after the 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan*; OR
 - There are Design Guidelines for the sector plan, but they don't address bikeways

3. When does a Sector Plan's Design Guidelines apply? The bikeway recommended in the Sector Plan's Design Guidelines applies under the following conditions:
 - The road is master-planned; AND
 - The Sector Plan was adopted after the 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan*; AND
 - There is not a cross section for the roadway; AND
 - There is not a recommendation for a bicycle facility or map in the Sector Plan; AND
 - There are Design Guidelines associated with the Sector Plan, which address bikeways

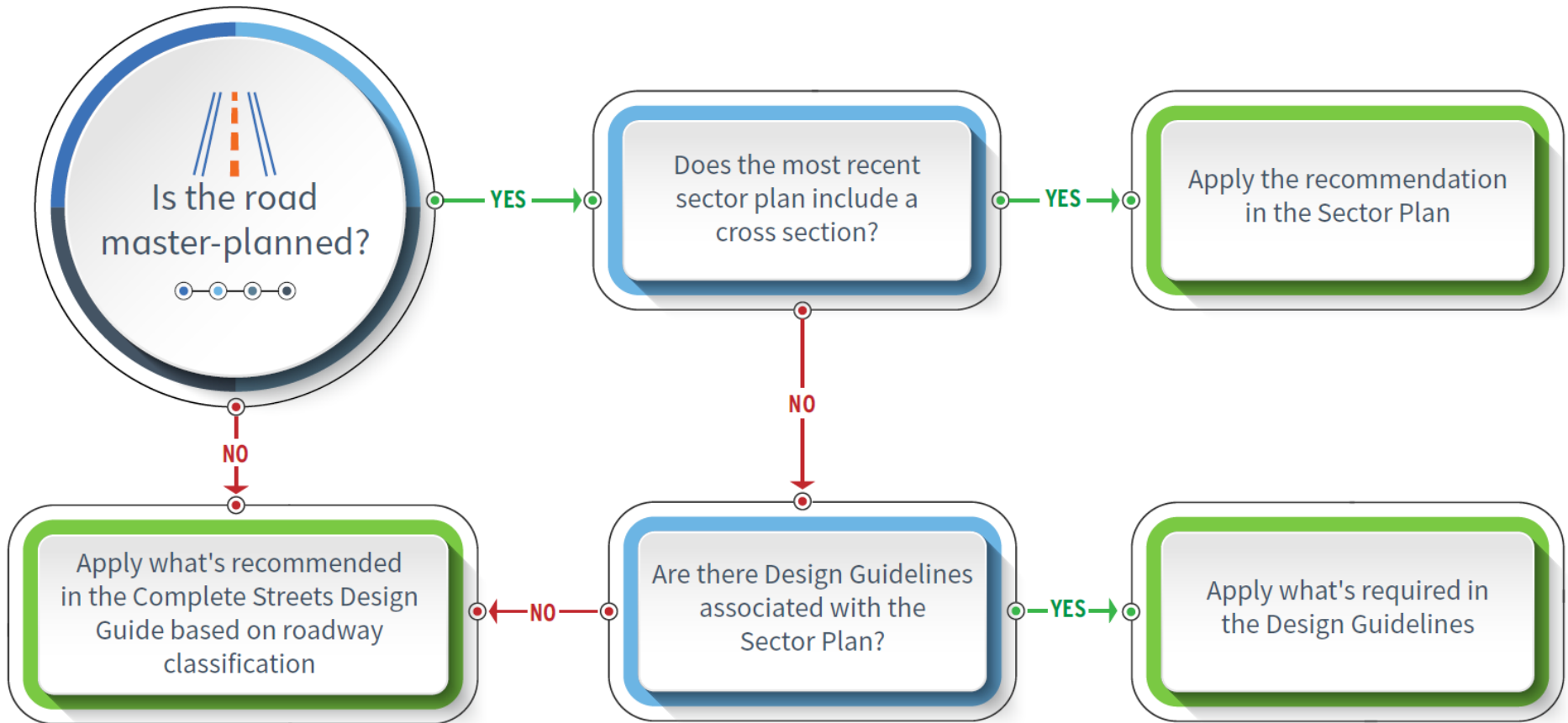
4. When does the 2024 *Complete Streets Design Guide* Apply? The bikeway recommended in the 2024 *Complete Streets Design Guide* applies under the following conditions:
 - The road is not master-planned; OR
 - The road is master planned, but the Sector Plan is older than the 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan*, and the Bicycle Master Plan doesn't have a recommendation for a bicycle facility on this roadways segment; OR
 - The road is master planned, and the Sector Plan does not have a cross section for the roadway, the Sector Plan does not include a map or table of recommended bikeways within the plan area, there are no Design Guidelines, or if there are Design Guidelines, they don't address bikeways, AND the 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan* does not have a recommended bicycle facility for this roadway segment

Decision tree for determining the appropriate sidewalk design (organized by document)

1. When does the Sector Plan apply? The sidewalk and street buffer recommended in the Sector Plan applies under the following conditions:
 - The road is master-planned; AND
 - The Sector Plan includes a cross section of the roadway
2. When does a Sector Plan's Design Guidelines apply? The sidewalk and street buffer recommended in the Sector Plan's Design Guidelines applies under the following conditions:
 - The road is master-planned; AND
 - The Sector Plan does not include a cross section of the roadway; AND
 - There are Design Guidelines associated with the Sector Plan
3. When does the *2024 Complete Streets Design Guide* Apply? The sidewalk and street buffer recommended in the *2024 Complete Streets Design Guide* applies under the following conditions:
 - The road is not master-planned; OR
 - The road is master planned, but the Sector Plan does not include a cross section of the roadway and does not have associated Design Guidelines



*Some cases may deviate from the guidance in this flow chart. For example if the street segment would connect to an existing facility or approved CIP project that deviates from the Applicable document. Coordinate with the area transportation planner to confirm the appropriate bikeway facility for your project.



*Some cases may deviate from the guidance in this flow chart. For example if the street segment would connect to an existing facility or approved CIP project that deviates from the Applicable document. Coordinate with the area transportation planner to confirm the appropriate bikeway facility for your project.