

## **TOWN OF PORTLAND, CONNECTICUT COMPLETE STREETS POLICY**

### **I. VISION, GOALS & PRINCIPLES**

#### **VISION**

To improve the streets of Portland making them safer and more accessible for all users including pedestrians, cyclists, people with mobility challenges, transit users, and motorists. To encourage non-motorized modes of transportation and a Complete Streets culture that promotes healthy living.

#### **GOALS**

The overarching goal of this policy is to gradually transform Portland from a community that disproportionately encourages automobile travel to one that invests in transportation infrastructure equitably across all modes to the benefit of all citizens. Specific goals are the following:

1. Make Portland roads safer by increasing the capacity for various uses while decreasing the rate and severity of vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle crashes;
2. Enable healthier lifestyle choices by providing an expanding variety of walking and bicycling options;
3. Promote a Complete Streets culture in Portland through education and events,
4. Encourage private sector economic development that will benefit from, and contribute to, a more livable community;
5. Expand the network of safe walking and bicycling routes to schools;
6. Connect with other town/citizen's action groups in Portland that have goals related to Complete Streets.

#### **PRINCIPLES**

The National Complete Streets Coalition states: "By planning, designing, and constructing Complete Streets, communities of all sizes – whether rural hamlets, small towns, or booming metropolises – are able to provide the quality access to jobs, health care, shops, and schools their residents deserve, while also achieving greater economic, environmental, and public health benefits." Application of Complete Streets policy is not a one size fits all process. Some streets are more adaptable to change than others. The following principles shall guide the planning and implementation of all Complete Street improvements:

1. All Users and All Modes: All users and all modes should benefit from Complete Streets improvements;
2. All Projects & Phases: All transportation projects shall incorporate Complete Streets improvements – from new construction to maintenance, it is anticipated that most complete streets improvements will be planned and completed concurrently with other scheduled roadway projects, but some complete streets improvements may be implemented independently of other road improvements and maintenance. Priority or

special consideration shall be given to locations/improvements identified in the Complete Streets Policy Maps discussed in more detail in Section III;

3. Network: Complete Streets policy should encourage a network understanding/approach to the town's transportation system;
4. State law: Public Act 09-154 states: "From funds received by the department or any municipality for the construction, restoration, rehabilitation or relocation of highways, roads or streets, a reasonable amount shall be expended to provide facilities for all users, including, but not limited to, bikeways and sidewalks with appropriate curb cuts and ramps. On and after October 1, 2010 not less than one percent of the total amount of any such funds received in any fiscal year shall be so expended."
5. Jurisdiction: Complete Streets policy shall address all agencies involved in transportation: Department of Public Works (DPW), Emergency Management Services (EMS), CT Department of Transportation (CTDOT), Middletown Area Transit (MAT);
6. Design: Standards and guidelines shall refer to latest editions of guidance documents published by American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), American Planning Association (APA), National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), and the U.S. Access Board;
7. Exceptions: Shall be made according to clear criteria and authorization stipulated within this policy document;
8. Context Sensitivity: Land use context and flexibility shall be considered relative to potential Complete Streets improvements;
9. Performance Standards: Performance standards shall be established with measurable outcomes.

## II. USERS AND MODES

This transportation system shall be designed and operated in ways that improve the safety, comfort and convenience of pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit users, assistive mobility device users, motorists, emergency management services, freight providers, and users of other common modes of transportation.

When there is conflicting needs among users and modes, the following prioritization will apply:

1. Safety is the highest priority, followed by mobility;
2. Among modes, pedestrian needs shall receive priority, followed by the next most vulnerable user in each case;
3. Strive for balance among all modes involved in each case. It is recognized that all modes cannot receive state of the art accommodation within every right-of-way (ROW – the publicly owned transportation corridor), but the overall goal is that all users of varying ability can safely and conveniently use the transportation network.

## III. PROCEDURES

The Town of Portland commits to applying Complete Streets principles at the outset of all

transportation improvement projects. Each project shall be approached as an opportunity to improve the safety and accessibility of the street/ROW for all users. Projects may include, but not be limited to, subdivision, new development, new construction, major maintenance (such as resurfacing, storm drainage, curb repair, etc.), and privately-funded projects. Improvements through planning, programming, design, and ROW acquisition shall be considered. Examples of such projects may be specific such as sidewalks and crosswalks or general such as traffic calming, enhanced traffic enforcement, and 'Road Diets'. Priority or special consideration shall be given to locations/improvements identified in Complete Streets Policy Maps:

1. Complete Streets Priority Areas (attached as pdf file "Complete Streets Map final 6-23-16")
2. Existing & Possible Sidewalks (attached as pdf file "Sidewalks Map final 6-21-16")
3. Possible Bike Routes & Multi-Use Paths (attached as pdf file "Bike Routes Map final 6-21-16")

The following procedural guidelines shall be followed:

1. A new project is identified and brought to the attention of the First Selectman / Board of Selectmen;
2. Input is gathered from relevant stakeholders - The CSG, Town Engineer, Planning, Public Safety and Public Works departments - regarding current Complete Streets needs in the area of the project;
3. Planning, Public Works, and Finance departments will develop a project budget to include recommended Complete Streets improvements and present for approval to the Board of Selectmen.

#### IV. JURISDICTION & NETWORK CONNECTIVITY

This Policy shall apply to all Town owned streets and land within public ROWs. Additionally, the State of Connecticut controls three principal transportation corridors that traverse the town including routes, 66, 17, and 17A. The Town shall work cooperatively with Connecticut Department of Transportation to plan and implement Complete Streets improvements within these ROWs. At a minimum, PA 09-154 An Act Improving Bicycle and Pedestrian Access and the Connecticut Complete Streets Policy EX.0.-31, shall be applied to all planning, design, construction and major maintenance within state controlled ROWs. Wherever possible, the Town's Complete Street policy shall be considered, especially where a state ROW provides Complete Streets network connectivity identified in the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development. Owners of privately owned streets and ways shall also be encouraged to adhere to the policy.

Private utility companies operate within Town and State ROWs. Their planning, construction, and major maintenance can create both opportunities and barriers to Complete Streets improvements. The Town shall coordinate with the private utilities to ensure that utilities projects and Complete Streets improvements are coordinated wherever possible.

The Portland School District encourages students to walk to school and has established standards that stipulate the distance a student can be expected to walk if sidewalks and safe crossings are provided. The Town shall coordinate Complete Streets improvements to ensure safe routes to schools including sidewalks, road crossings and multi-use routes that encourage walking and bicycling to school.

The Town shall also coordinate Complete Streets planning and construction with Middletown Area Transit, River COG (Council of Governments), and adjacent municipalities to facilitate effective application of resources.

#### NETWORK CONNECTIVITY

The Town shall identify gaps in the sidewalk and trail network that upon completion will improve connectivity and facilitate completion of a Complete Streets network. Ideally there should be non-motorized ways to get to key areas in Portland including the recreational areas, the economic development areas, and schools. Connections between the Village District/Town Center and Riverfront Recreation area are specifically mentioned in the town's 2016 POCD. These improvements are considered high priority projects.

Existing pedestrian crossings shall be evaluated for safety and functionality. The expansion of the sidewalk network will require the implementation of new crossings. All new crossings shall be determined based on accepted standards related to speed limit, site lines, stopping distance, etc.

The Air Line Trail (ALT) will provide unprecedented connectivity across the southern part of town for bicyclists and pedestrians. Additional multi-use pathways shall be investigated that connect to the ALT such as the existing north-south utility corridors. Town and State open space areas shall also be evaluated for potential multi-use trail connectivity.

#### V. DESIGN GUIDANCE & PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

All Complete Streets improvements within public ROWs shall conform to the following standards. Of the following list, AASHTO and MUTCD are considered the definitive design guides for changes within the State ROW. Because Complete Streets design is an evolving field, the latest edition of these standards shall be referenced for design guidance:

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)

- A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets

- Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities

- Guide for the Planning, Design and Operations of Pedestrian Facilities

American Planning Association (APA)

- Complete Streets: Best Policy and Implementation Practices

- U.S. Traffic Calming Manual

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

- Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)

PEDSAFE: Pedestrian Safety Guide and Countermeasures Selection System

Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE)

Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach

National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)

Urban Bikeway Design Guide

Urban Street Design Guide

U.S. Access Board

Accessible Public Rights-of-Way: Planning and Designing for Alterations

## VI. INCLUSION & EXCEPTIONS

The Town of Portland commits to applying Complete Streets principles at the outset of all transportation improvement projects. Each project shall be approached as an opportunity to improve the safety and accessibility of the street/right of way for all users.

Exceptions shall be made if the following criteria render Complete Streets improvements unworkable:

1. Where specific users are prohibited by law from using the ROW (i.e. pedestrians and bicyclists within a limited access highway);
2. Cost is disproportionate to the current need or projected future need for Complete Streets improvements or funding is not available;
3. There is an absence of current and future need (i.e. a rural road that carries low Average Daily Traffic (ADT) and is remote from neighborhoods, schools, or points of interest);
4. Emergency repairs within Town ROWs (pre-existing Complete Streets elements impacted by these repairs must be restored to their original condition).

Protocol - Exceptions shall be granted according to the following:

The town shall issue Request for Exceptions (RFE) at the earliest project phase by posting the RFE on Town website and distribute to stakeholders including Complete Streets Group. Allow a 14 day public comment period and record comments as an Exhibit to the RFE.

Decisions regarding exceptions shall be decided by the First Selectman (Local Traffic Authority) in consultation with other Selectmen, a designated Complete Streets Group member, Directors of Public Works and Planning, and considering public input. A determination of exception will conform to one or more of the four allowable exceptions listed above.

## VII. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

Implementation of Complete Streets improvements represents a continuum that will require periodic and sustained evaluation to measure progress and effectiveness. To facilitate that

regular evaluation, the Director of Public Works shall provide a written report to the Board of Selectmen on an annual basis by the first of February on the progress and effectiveness of the Complete Streets policy and any exceptions granted during the previous calendar year. If requested, the CSG can work with the Public Works Department, to help create a form that can be used to provide the annual written report. The measurement of all Complete Streets Improvements for the previous calendar year are to include the following:

I. Funding:

Total dollar amount spent on Complete Streets Improvements

- a. Town funds
- b. Grant funds
- c. Other funds

II. Sidewalks/Pedestrian/Transit Improvements:

1. Lineal feet of sidewalks and other pedestrian accommodations built or improved
  - a. Within ½ miles of schools
  - b. Outside ½ miles of schools
2. Number and description of crosswalks installed or improved
3. Number and description of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations installed or improved
4. Number and description of public or private transit accessibility improvements installed or improved by type and number

III. Bicycling Improvements:

1. Lineal feet of bicycle lanes, routes, or trails built by width and type
2. Number and description of bicycle parking facilities installed

IV. Traffic Calming:

1. Number and description of traffic calming measures implemented
2. Number of new traffic control signs/signals installed that assist with the town's Complete Streets policies
3. Number of street trees planted

V. Maintenance Activities:

Description of Maintenance Activities of existing Complete Streets Facilities

VI. User & Crash Data:

1. Bicycle and pedestrian traffic counts
2. Motor vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian accident data

VII. Exceptions:

Number of Request for Exceptions requested and approved, including dates and committee members

September 24, 2016

END