Item #11
File #1066

RESOLUTION ADOPTING A COMPLETE STREETS POLICY FOR THE TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD

WHEREAS, the Town of West Hartford actively promotes safe streets through design, education and enforcement of all of its transportation network; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets are Right-of-Ways that are planned, designed, constructed, operated and maintained in such a way as to enable safe, comfortable and convenient access along and across the Right-of-Way by users of all ages and abilities, including but not limited to, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, emergency, freight and commercial vehicle operators; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets may include facilities and amenities, including but not limited to, pavement markings and signs; sidewalks and pedestrian safety improvements such as medians, curb extensions and crosswalks; ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessible curb ramps and accessible pedestrian signals; transit shelters and signage and improved pedestrian and bicycle access to transit stops and stations; bicycle detection at intersections and wide travel lanes, bike lanes, or shared use lanes; bicycle parking facilities; street trees, landscaping, street lighting, street furniture; and adequate drainage facilities, including opportunities for storm water quality treatment facilities; and

WHEREAS, the Town's Bicycle Advisory Committee advocates for and the Town's Master Bike Plan recommends "Adopt[ing] a Complete Streets Policy"; and

WHEREAS, the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development has specifically recommended "Promot[ing] an integrated and balanced 'complete street' transportation systems which provides the best possible service, mobility, convenience, and safety while reinforcing positive social, economic, and environmental influences on West Hartford"; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council adopted a resolution directing the Town Manager to consult with interested stakeholders and prepare a policy that demonstrates the Town's commitment to the development of Complete Streets for the benefit of the entire community; and

WHEREAS, the Town conducted a comprehensive, robust and participatory outreach effort designed to engage important stakeholder groups and the general public in the preparation of this Complete Streets Policy; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF WEST HARTFORD that the attached Complete Streets Policy is adopted and shall be applicable to the planning and design of all new Complete Streets Improvements initiated after the adoption hereof.

Van Winkle
(3/24/15)

Town of West Hartford
Complete Streets Policy
DRAFT – 3/19/15

1. VISION

Complete Streets are necessary to promote an integrated and balanced transportation network. Complete Streets strive to provide the best possible blend of service, mobility, and convenience, and safety while reinforcing a positive social, economic, and environmental influence on West Hartford. These are goals identified and outlined in the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development.

Complete Streets are a vital component of the Town's transportation network and contribute directly to the health, safety, economic vitality and quality of life in the West Hartford Community. Through implementation of Complete Streets principles, the transportation network in West Hartford will be safe, accessible, comfortable and convenient for all transportation users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, emergency, freight and commercial vehicle operators of all ages and abilities.

It is also important to recognize that Complete Streets do involve two additional principles: compromise and financial commitment, however, because of these efforts they result in projects which reflect a best effort to balance all of the competing interests and influences.

The Town of West Hartford's Complete Streets Policy (Policy) will guide Town officials when designing, constructing and maintaining the transportation network with all users in mind.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

a. Definition(s):

"Complete Streets" - Right-of-ways that are planned, designed, constructed, operated and maintained in such a way as to enable safe, comfortable and convenient access along and across the Right-of-Way by users of all ages and abilities and modes of transportation

Complete Streets Improvements- Facilities and amenities associated with the transportation network, that are recognized as contributing to Complete Streets, such as, but not limited to, pavement markings and signs; sidewalks and pedestrian safety improvements such as medians, curb extensions and crosswalks; ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessible curb ramps and accessible pedestrian signals; transit shelters and signage and improved pedestrian and bicycle access to transit stops and stations; bicycle detection at intersections and wide travel lanes, bike lanes, or shared use lanes; bicycle parking facilities; street trees, landscaping, street lighting, street furniture; and adequate drainage Facilities, including opportunities for storm water quality treatment Facilities.

Facilities – An area or structure which is built, installed or established to serve a particular purpose or transportation mode/user.

Maintenance Activity – Ordinary repair designed to keep Facilities in safe working condition, such as, but not limited to, mowing, cleaning, sweeping, spot repair, concrete joint repair, pothole filling water, sewer and drainage or other utility installation or repairs.

Right-of-Way – An area, public or private, dedicated for use by pedestrians and vehicles. Right-of-way includes thoroughfares such as streets, highways, bike paths and walkways and normally incorporates curbs, lawn strips, street trees, sidewalks, lighting, signage, drainage facilities, street furniture and other similar features.

b. All Users and Modes of Transportation

The Town of West Hartford (Town) will plan, design, construct, operate and maintain appropriate Facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, children, the elderly and people of all abilities in all new construction, reconstruction, and repaving improvements subject to the exceptions contained herein. In doing so, the Town acknowledges that there are many legitimate motorized and non-motorized users of the streets, including individuals, commercial operators and emergency responders, among others, that require accommodation and deserve safe Facilities.

c. Applicability

All new Complete Streets Improvements and phases fall under this policy. The Town will approach every planned Complete Streets Improvement as an opportunity to create safer and more accessible streets for all users. Complete Streets improvement phases include, but are not limited to planning, programming, designing, engineering, construction and reconstruction, operation and maintenance.

Complete Streets principles will be applied to all new Town or State sponsored improvements and privately funded projects and developments that impact the right-of-way, consistent with Connecticut General Statutes. Application of said principles will begin at the earliest phase of a project.

Complete Streets may be achieved by implementing single elements into a project, completing a series of improvements over the course of time or through major network level improvements.

It is important to note that Maintenance Activities alone are not Complete Streets Improvements, nor should they prompt street improvements that necessitate Complete Streets consideration except those improvements which may be necessary to satisfy legal mandates such as the Americans with Disabilities Act. To the maximum extent possible, provisions for safe access shall be made for pedestrians and bicyclist during Maintenance Activities.

d. Exceptions

The Town is committed to Complete Streets and application of said principles will begin at the earliest phase of a project, except in the following extraordinary circumstances:

1. **Where pedestrians and bicyclists are prohibited by law from using the Facility.** In such an instance, alternative facilities and accommodations shall be considered within the same transportation corridor.

2. **Where the existing Right-of-Way is physically constrained by utilities, topography, environmental features, etc.) and unable to accommodate all users.** In this case, alternatives such as revised lane configurations, additional signage, traffic calming improvements, obtaining additional Right-of-Way or other measures shall be considered to accommodate all users.

3. **If the cost of constructing Complete Streets Improvements is disproportionate to the current need or anticipated future demand for such improvements.**

4. **Where the application of Complete Streets Improvements would be impractical and have a detrimental impact on nearby land uses within each zoning district, the transportation network or the environment.**

All requests for exceptions shall be submitted at the earliest project phase (e.g. during initial project planning and budgeting) and may include the following elements if available: a narrative, site photographs, project site map, drawings and any other supporting data. All proposed requests for exception shall be posted to the Town's website and shall be subject to a seven (7) day public comment period. At the end of the public comment period, all comments received, if any, shall be included in the final documentation for exception request. Said final documentation shall be transmitted in the form of an exception request to the Town Manager.

The Town Manager, acting in his or her capacity as the "Local Traffic Authority", in consultation with the Directors of Community Services and Public Works and upon recommendation from the Town Engineer shall determine whether the application of Complete Streets principles or improvements meets one or more of the exceptions outlined above.

All granted exceptions shall be posted to the Town's website and shall be incorporated into the annual report to the Town Council.

Where exceptions are granted, parallel accommodations for the category of users excluded shall be considered on alternate routes within the transportation system.

3. NETWORK

The Town recognizes that its infrastructure includes a transportation network that should provide convenient access and safe travel for all users within the Town. The network provides access to housing, jobs, schools, businesses, parks and recreation facilities, as well as to networks beyond the Town's borders. Thus, this policy must reinforce collaboration among the many partners and stakeholders affected by the implementation of Complete Streets for all transportation users.

4. DESIGN GUIDANCE

The Town will follow accepted or adopted design standards and use the best and latest design standards available, including the following:

- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)
  - A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets (6th Edition, 2011)
  - Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities (4th edition, 2012)
  - Guide for the Planning, Design and Operations of Pedestrian Facilities (2004)

- American Planning Association (APA)
  - Complete Streets: Best Policy and Implementation Practices (2012)
  - U.S. Traffic Calming Manual (2009)

- Federal Highway Administration (FHA)
  - 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 (2010)

- National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)
  - Urban Bikeway Design Guide (2nd edition, 2014)
  - Urban Street Design Guide (2013)

- U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board
  - Accessible Rights-of-Way: Design Guide

a. Context Sensitivity

The implementation of this Policy shall reflect the context and character of the existing built and natural environments in Town and the goals and policies of the Plan of Conservation and Development. Improvements shall be designed and implemented in accordance with existing land uses, and may require public engagement to fully consider neighborhood input and potential impacts

b. Performance Measures

The application of Complete Streets will be a process that requires regular evaluation to determine progress and effectiveness. Some of the performance measures that will be evaluated include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Miles of bicycle lanes, routes, or trails built / dedicated by width and type
- Number of bicycle parking Facilities installed
- Number of traffic calming Facilities built / installed
- Number of traffic control signs/signals installed/ upgraded
- Linear feet of pedestrian accommodations built or repaired
- Number of crosswalks built or improved
- Number of ADA accommodations built / installed
- Number of transit accessibility improvements built
- Number of street trees planted
- Maintenance Activities of existing Complete Streets Facilities.
- Number of exceptions approved
- User data - bicycle, pedestrian, transit and traffic
- Bicycle and pedestrian accident data
- Total dollar amount spent on Complete Streets Improvements

5. IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of Complete Streets will require cooperation and collaboration between many stakeholders on a regular basis. As such, the Town will take the following steps to facilitate the process:

- The Planning Division shall review and propose revisions to all appropriate land use ordinances, policies and regulations to support the implementation of Complete Streets.

- The Planning and Engineering Divisions shall review, revise or recommend changes to all policies, procedures and design standards associated with site plan and other requirements for public and private development to ensure best practices are utilized to support Complete Streets.

- The Town shall continue to identify regional, state and federal funds to implement Complete Streets Improvements to supplement the Town's Capital Improvement Program.

- The Town shall promote collaboration and coordination between Town departments and other transportation and planning agencies, including the Connecticut Department of Transportation and Capitol Region Council of Governments that work within the

Right-of-Way and utilize the transportation network for programmatic purposes in order to make the most efficient use of limited financial resources.

- The Engineering Division shall establish necessary procedures to ensure the application of Complete Streets principles at the earliest design stage.

- The Town shall encourage staff professional development in the area of Complete Streets through attendance at seminars, conferences and workshops.

- The Town shall actively promote public information and education and solicit feedback about Complete Streets to West Hartford stakeholders including but not limited to, Boards and Commissions, residents, community groups and leaders, the business community, and the private development community.

- The Community Services Department shall submit an annual report to the Town Council that documents progress, including performance measures contained herein, in implementing this policy.

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Policy has been drafted by researching various best practice examples (American Planning Association and other municipal jurisdictions) and soliciting input from a broad group of community stakeholders in West Hartford.

DRAFT