

Draft Regional Complete Streets Policy

12/20/2011

Definitions

- (1) COMPLETE STREET.—The term “complete street” means a travel corridor that safely and adequately accommodates motorized and non-motorized users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, freight vehicles, and transit riders of all ages and abilities.
- (2) COMPLETE STREETS POLICY; COMPLETE STREETS PRINCIPLE.—The terms “complete streets policy” and “complete streets principle” mean
 - (A) A transportation law, policy, or principle at the local, state, regional, or federal level that ensures the safe and adequate accommodation, in all phases of project planning, development, and operations, of all users of the transportation network, including pedestrians and transit riders of all ages and abilities, bicyclists individuals with disabilities, motorists, and freight vehicles; and
 - (B) The consideration of the safety and convenience of all users in all phases of project planning, development, and operations.

A Voluntary Policy

Compliance with the regional Complete Streets policy is strictly voluntary. In particular, no project shall be excluded from the regional Transportation Improvement Program based on its compliance or noncompliance with the regional Complete Streets policy. The regional Complete Streets policy shall not supercede any State, jurisdictional, or agency policy.

Proposed Complete Streets Policy of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

Beginning on the effective date of this policy, all federally funded transportation projects in the National Capital Region should accommodate the safety and convenience of all users in accordance with Complete Streets principles.

Inclusions

1. All projects funded through the Transportation Improvement Program should accommodate the safety and convenience of all users in accordance with Complete Streets principles. Roadways, sidewalks, shared use paths, street crossings, pedestrian signals, signs, street furniture, transit stops and facilities, and all connecting pathways should be designed, constructed, operated and maintained so that all users, including

pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicles and riders, freight vehicles, motorists, and people with disabilities, can travel safely and independently.

2. Complete Streets principles should apply to new road construction and road modification projects, including design, planning, construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, maintenance, and operations, for the entire right of way. In particular,
 - The design and construction of new facilities should anticipate likely future demand for bicycling and walking facilities and not preclude the provision of future improvements.
 - Transportation projects should address the need for bicyclists and pedestrians to cross corridors as well as travel along them. Even where bicyclists and pedestrians may not lawfully travel on a roadway that is being improved or constructed, they will likely need to be able to travel along that corridor and to cross that corridor safely and conveniently. Therefore, adequate and nearby parallel travelways should be provided or improved and the design of intersections and interchanges should accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians in a manner that is safe, accessible and convenient.
 - Safe and adequate rail crossings for motorized and non-motorized users should be provided. Where safety and security considerations permit, rail transit and freight rail projects should accommodate non-motorized users within the travel corridor, especially on new and reconstructed rail transit and freight rail bridges.
 - Transportation projects should address the need for pedestrians and bicyclist to access transit. Transit users rely on walking and cycling to link transit stops with destinations and special attention must be given to facilities near transit for traveling along roads, crossing roadways, and connectivity to destinations.
3. Improvements for the safe and convenient travel by pedestrians or bicyclists on, along, and across streets should be fully assessed, considered, and documented as a routine element of pavement resurfacing projects.
4. Transportation projects should comply with up-to-date design standards, particularly standards relating to providing access for individuals with disabilities. Construction, maintenance and operations should be conducted in such a manner as to maintain safe and adequate access for pedestrians, including individuals with disabilities.
5. Complete Streets principles should be applied in due consideration of the urban, suburban, or rural context in which a project is located. While all users should be accommodated, modal priorities may vary by area and facility. One size does not fit all.

Exemptions

1. This policy should not apply to a new road construction or modification project for which, as of the effective date of the adoption of the policy, at least 30 percent of the design phase is completed.
2. An affected roadway prohibits, by law, use of the roadway by specified users, in which case a greater effort should be made to accommodate those specified users elsewhere in the travel corridor, including on (or along) parallel roadways and roadways that cross or otherwise intersect with the affected roadway.
3. The cost to the exempted project in achieving compliance with the applicable complete streets policy would be excessively disproportionate (as defined in the 2001 US Department of Transportation Guidance on Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel), as compared to the need or probable use of a particular complete street; or
4. The existing and planned population and employment densities or level of transit service around a particular roadway are so low that there is a documented absence of a need to implement the applicable complete streets policy,

While safe and adequate rail crossings should be provided, passenger and freight rail projects should not be required to accommodate other motorized users in the railway right of way.

5. Project-specific exemptions should be approved by a senior manager of the responsible agency.

Documentation and Reporting

1. Transportation Planning Board staff shall conduct an annual survey of the TPB member agencies regarding their adoption and implementation of the regional and agency Complete Streets policies.
2. Transportation Planning Board member agencies will be asked to report periodically on the pedestrian and bicycle facilities that have been newly created or substantially improved.
3. Compliance with the regional Complete Streets policy shall be documented in the regional Transportation Improvement Program. However, no project shall be excluded from the regional Transportation Improvement Program based on its compliance or noncompliance with the regional Complete Streets policy.

Promotion

1. Each Transportation Planning Board member agency and jurisdiction is encouraged to adopt its own Complete Streets policy, if it has not already done so.
2. As feasible, the Washington Region will conduct training on Complete Streets best practices for personnel responsible for the design, construction, and maintenance of streets.