

# Item #4: Process to Develop a Regional Complete Streets Policy

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Bus Subcommittee  
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# What are Complete Streets?

## “Complete Streets are for Everyone”

- They are designed, built, and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of diverse ages and abilities.
- National Complete Streets Coalition ([completestreets.org](http://completestreets.org)) has been promoting the Complete Streets concept since 2005.
- The USDOT encourages “States, local governments, professional associations, community organizations, public transportation agencies, and other government agencies” to adopt policies requiring the integration of walking and bicycling into the transportation system
- As of August 2011, 31 Metropolitan Planning Organizations, 26 States, 25 Counties, and 202 Cities had adopted Complete Streets Policies\*
- Example: Wilmapco (which includes MDOT and Cecil County, MD) adopted a Complete Streets Policy as part of their 2030 Regional Transportation Plan (2007)
  - Follows FHWA Guidance Closely
  - Similar to the current draft policy for the Washington region
  - Wilmapco staff report no legal issues regarding their Complete Streets policy

# An Early Example: the Oregon Bicycle Bill (1971)

- Key Provisions:
  - “Routine Accommodation”
    - *“Footpaths and bicycle trails...shall be provided” as part of every transportation project*
  - Exceptions
    - Public safety (freeways)
    - “Cost excessively disproportionate to need or probable use”
    - “sparsity of population or other factors indicate the absence of any need”



Oregon Governor Tom McCall signs the Bicycle Bill

# Citizens Advisory Committee Recommendation

- At its June 15th Meeting the CAC requested that the TPB Develop and Approve a Regional Policy on Complete Streets
  - TPB Chair and Vice-Chair suggested that TPB staff and relevant Subcommittees develop a proposal
  - No adverse comments
- At its July 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting the TPB Technical Committee was briefed on the CAC Recommendation
- CAC suggested that the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee take the lead
  - Also work with the CAC, Access for All, the Bus Subcommittee, and the task force for the TPB's Priorities Plan

# Reasons for a Regional Complete Streets Policy

- Cost (cheaper than retrofitting)
- Supports TPB Vision, Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, and Region Forward Goals
  - Walkable, mixed-use activity centers
  - Health and Fitness
  - Economic/retail activity & tourism
  - Climate/Environmental
  - Environmental justice
  - Continuous pedestrian and bicycle network
- “If the Region supports Complete Streets, we should say so”

# CAC Goals

- “Streets should be designed, built, and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of diverse ages and abilities”
- Each TPB member jurisdiction should adopt a Complete Streets policy by 2014
  - A regional policy would “act as a catalyst to encourage complete streets across the region”

# Recommendations

- Use the ideal Complete Streets policy from the National Complete Streets Coalition as a starting point
- Not “one size fits all” – different facilities are appropriate in different places
- “Particularly on the regional level, it should not be perceived as a bureaucratic or rigid set of rules”, however ....
- Document Exceptions:
  - “The TPB Complete Streets policy should require implementing agencies to publicly report to the TPB how each project would accommodate walking, bicycling, public transportation, and freight or document why ...(these modes) ... are irrelevant to that project.”
  - Document that each project, including freeway expansions, will not downgrade the level of service for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users
  - Documentation requirements apply to projects proposed for addition to the TIP, but not CLRP

# Federal Policies

- No formal policy called “Complete Streets”, but...
- FHWA Design guidance (April 2011):
  - “Bicycle and pedestrian ways **shall be established** in new construction and reconstruction projects in all urbanized areas ..... In rural areas, paved shoulders should be included in all new construction and reconstruction projects on roadways used by more than 1,000 vehicles per day”
  - Exceptions:
    - Prohibited
      - Make an effort to accommodate elsewhere in the ROW or corridor
    - Cost excessively disproportionate to need or probable use (excessive = 20% of project cost)
    - Sparsity of population or other factors indicate an absence of need
      - Absence of need should apply for the design life of the facility
    - Exceptions shall be approved at a senior level with supporting data



# US DOT Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation

March 15, 2011

- **Policy Statement:** “Every transportation agency, including DOT, has the responsibility to improve conditions and opportunities for walking and bicycling and to integrate walking and bicycling into their transportation systems .... transportation agencies are encouraged to go beyond minimum standards to provide safe and convenient facilities for these modes.”
- **Recommended Actions:** “The DOT encourages States, local governments, professional associations, community organizations, public transportation agencies, and other government agencies, to adopt similar policy statements on bicycle and pedestrian accommodation as an indication of their commitment to accommodating bicyclists and pedestrians as an integral element of the transportation system.”

# Federal Complete Streets Bill

(HR 1780, May 5, 2011)

- “All transportation projects under the jurisdiction of the MPO shall accommodate the safety and convenience and safety of all users in accordance with complete streets principles”
  - Applies to all federally funded transportation projects
- Exceptions:
  - Prohibited users (freeways)
    - Shall make a greater effort to accommodate those users elsewhere
  - Cost excessively disproportionate to need or probable use
  - Lack of demand owing to sparsity of population or other factors
  - Exceptions must be approved by a senior manager

# State Policies in the Washington Region

## – DDOT Complete Streets Policy

- Action Agenda: Create a “walk-centric, bike-centric” city
- Departmental Order No. 06-2010
  - “network as a whole shall accommodate the safety and convenience of all users, recognizing that certain individual corridors have modal priorities”
  - Exceptions : Safety, Excessive Cost, Absence of Need

## – VDOT: “Policy for Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation” (2004)

- “VDOT will initiate all highway construction projects with the presumption that the projects shall accommodate bicycling and walking”
  - Exceptions: Safety, Excessive Cost, Lack of Demand, Environmental
- Secondary Street Acceptance Requirements 2009

## – MDOT: “Strives” to provide facilities “wherever possible”

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2002)
- Code of Maryland: “Access to and the use of transportation facilities by pedestrians and bicycle riders **shall be considered ...**”
- Access “shall be considered ... in all phases” (SHA Memorandum, 2003)
- Exceptions:
  - Cost, ROW, Structures, Utilities, Historic, Environmental, Safety, Highway Capacity

# Federal and State Policy Trends

- 1950's – Prohibition on Building Sidewalks with Highway Money
- 1970's - Permission
- 1990's - Encouragement
  - “Shall consider”
- 2000's - Mandatory
  - “Routine Accommodation”
  - “Complete Streets”



# Local Policies

- Alexandria - Council Resolution 2444 (2011)
  - “the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services **shall make Complete Streets practices a routine part of everyday operations**”
- Arlington - Master Transportation Plan (2007)
  - “Arlington **will work to transform** its current roadway network into “Complete Streets.”
- Fairfax County – Tysons Corner Master Plan (2010)
- Montgomery County – Road Code (Bill 4806), Article II, page 26 (2007)
  - “Each County road and street must be designed so that the safety and convenience of all users of the roadway system - including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, automobile drivers, commercial vehicles and freight haulers, and emergency service vehicles - is accommodated. Each road and street must facilitate multi-modal use and assure that all users can travel safely in the public right of way.”
- M-NCPPC – Prince George’s County – Countywide Master Plan of Transportation (2009)
  - “vision of providing roadways that accommodate all modes of transportation”
  - **Policy 2:** “All road frontage improvements and road capital improvement projects within the Developed and Developing Tiers **shall be designed to accommodate** all modes of transportation. Continuous sidewalks and on-road bicycle facilities **should be included to the extent feasible and practical.**”
- Rockville – Complete Streets Policy (2009)
  - “New construction and re-construction roadway projects in the City **shall accommodate** users of all ages and abilities including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, motorists and adjacent land users.”

# Committee Review

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
  - July 19<sup>th</sup> Reviewed CAC Proposal
    - Staff suggested that a draft policy be developed based on CAC proposal, Federal and local models
    - Draft Policy Posted for Subcommittee & Public Comment
  - September 26<sup>th</sup> Reviewed the Draft Policy
    - Based on Federal Complete Streets bill, Local models
    - Voluntary policy
    - Documentation of compliance
      - Self-reporting
      - TIP form
- Citizens Advisory Committee - October 19
  - Liked language
  - Suggested stricter reporting requirements
  - Use compliance reporting in the TIP as a performance measure

# Draft Policy: Key Provisions

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

- Would apply to all projects funded through the Transportation Improvement Program
- Urban, suburban or rural context and local modal priorities should be considered – one size does not fit all
- Projects should anticipate future demand for walking and bicycling
- Projects should address the need for pedestrians and bicyclists to access transit, and to cross corridors as well as travel along them

# Exemptions

- Projects with design more than 30% complete as of the effective date of the policy
- User group legally prohibited from using roadway
  - Should make effort to accommodate elsewhere within the ROW
- Cost excessively disproportionate to need or probable use (follow FHWA guidance on excess cost)
- Documented lack of need due to low population or employment density
- Project exemptions to be approved by a senior manager



# Next Steps

## Draft Policy = Not Final

- Will change based on Committee and public feedback
- For transparency, comments should be posted on the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee Blog

## Concept of a regional Complete Streets policy has considerable support

- CAC, Access for All, Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee, Washington Area Bicyclist Association, Washington Safe Routes to School Network

## Proposed Review Process

- Access for All - October 27
- TPB Technical Committee – November 4<sup>th</sup>
- Post revised policy - November 8<sup>th</sup>
- Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee - November 15<sup>th</sup>
- TPB Technical Committee, TPB - December

## Consensus Policy is the Goal