

# Complete Streets in the Washington Region

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee

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Item 5

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# What are Complete Streets?

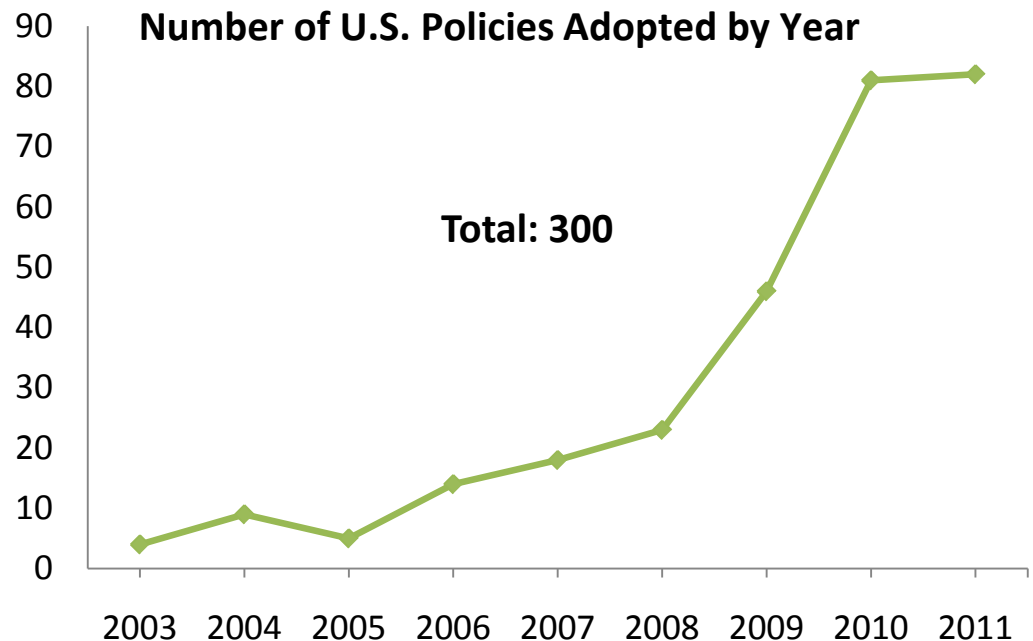
“Complete Streets are for Everyone”

- 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 National Movement

- 15 states have enacted some form of Complete Streets legislation.
  - 11 additional states have put statewide Complete Streets policies, design guidelines, or administrative procedures in place.
- 31 Metropolitan Planning Organizations, 25 Counties, and over 200 cities have also enacted 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)



# Federal Policies

- No formal policy called “Complete Streets”, but...
- **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.”

# 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
- Revised policy currently under development

# 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)
- Loudoun County – Countywide Transportation Plan , Ch. 4 (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.”

# 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”

Tysons Corner



# 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



# Development of a Regional Policy Guidance and Template

- June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011 - CAC requested that the TPB Develop and Approve a Regional Policy on Complete Streets
  - Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee to take the lead
    - Also work with the CAC, Access for All, the Bus Subcommittee, and the task force for the TPB's Priorities Plan
    - Use ideal Complete Streets policy from Complete Streets Coalition as a starting point
- TPB Chair and Vice-Chair suggested that TPB staff and relevant Subcommittees develop a proposal

# 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”
  - A regional policy would “act as a catalyst to encourage complete streets across the region”
  - Use ideal Complete Streets policy from Complete Streets Coalition as a starting point

# Committee Review Process

- TPB Staff worked with the Relevant Subcommittees
  - Successive drafts were vetted
  - DOT's and TPB Technical Committee members provided extensive comments
    - From "Policy" to "Guidance and Template"
    - Less detail on implementation
  - January 30<sup>th</sup> Stakeholder Workshop
  - Current draft reviewed by TPB Tech on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, Freight Subcommittee March 8<sup>th</sup>, CAC March 15<sup>th</sup>
- March 21<sup>st</sup> TPB Meeting

# Draft Complete Streets Guidance and Policy Template

- Purpose – Encourage TPB member agencies to adopt their own policies, provide model
- Defines Complete Street, Complete Streets Policy
- Guidance - “Ten elements of an ideal policy”
  - Complete Streets Coalition
- Policy Template

*“Beginning on the effective date of this policy, all transportation projects in (insert Jurisdiction or Agency) shall accommodate the safety and convenience of all users in accordance with Complete Streets principles.”*

- Inclusions

- All users, all transportation facilities
- Design, construction, operations & maintenance
- Address need for pedestrians to cross facilities
- Use up to date design standards
- Context-sensitive, allows for modal priorities
  - Flexibility in how to accommodate, not whether to accommodate

- Exclusions

- At least 30% of design complete when policy adopted
- User prohibited by law
- Cost of accommodation excessively disproportionate to need or use or
- Documented lack of need due to low existing and planned density
- To rail projects, though safe and adequate crossings should be provided

# Proposed Next Steps

- Documentation

- Survey TPB members every two years on their Complete Streets policies
- Update Bicycle and Pedestrian Project Database every two years
- Track implementation of Complete Streets principles in the regional Transportation Improvement Program.
  - Details are to be proposed by TPB staff, TPB Technical Committee

- Promotion

- TPB will sponsor training on Complete Streets best practices

# Comments at TPB Meeting

- Citizens Advisory Committee
- Virginia Bicycling Federation
- TPB Members
- Next steps