

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202

MEMORANDUM

TO: TPB Technical Committee

FROM: Michael Farrell, Transportation Planner
Department of Transportation Planning

SUBJECT: Comments Received and Proposed Responses for Revising the
Regional Complete Streets Policy and Template

DATE: April 26, 2012

At the April 18th meeting, TPB members provided comments on a draft regional Complete Streets Policy and Template. The Citizens Advisory Committee and the Virginia Bicycling Federation also submitted comments on the draft document.

The overall response from the TPB was favorable towards the changes made since the March 21st meeting. There were numerous questions and suggestions, however. A member suggested that a provision should be added to the template to clarify that access to existing facilities should be maintained during construction projects. The Prince William County representative suggested that a provision should be added to the policy template providing for exempting projects from providing access to particular user groups if doing so would be inconsistent with local, State, or agency laws, policies, or plans. Some members suggested changing the definition of a Complete Street to reduce the number of exempt or non-applicable projects, and adding links to additional documentation in the TIP form.

The Citizens Advisory Committee was broadly supportive of the changes. The Virginia Bicycling Federation representative suggested that agencies should describe how they will accommodate each user group in the TIP project description form, not just whether they will accommodate.

Based on comments received, we have prepared a revised draft with only one change to the policy template, highlighted in the attached document, as follows:

A sentence was added to Inclusions; “Access to existing facilities, especially for persons with disabilities, should be maintained during construction.”

Responses to other suggested changes are as follows:

1. An exemption in the Policy Template for projects for which providing access to a particular user group would be inconsistent with a current agency plan or policy.

This exemption has been added to the TIP project description form, but not to the Template. The Template is only a suggested language, not binding on the TPB members, and agencies are free to add or remove exemptions when they develop their own policies.

2. Change the Complete Streets definition to reduce the number of exempt or nonapplicable projects.

The provisions for exempt or nonapplicable projects in the TIP document have been streamlined to address this concern without requiring any change in the Complete Streets definition.

3. Add more details on type of accommodation in the TIP sheet.

Detailed information on how users will be accommodated on particular facilities is best provided through the regional information clearinghouse, rather than the TIP. The TIP includes many projects that have not yet been designed, so a statement of intent to accommodate is all that can be expected.

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Complete Streets Policy for the National Capital Region

4/26/2012

Transportation Planning Board Technical Committee

I. Background

The Transportation Planning Board wishes to encourage walking, bicycling, and the use of public transportation as safe, convenient, environmentally friendly, and economical modes of transportation that enhance economic development and promote physical activity, health and independence for all people. These goals are embodied in the TPB's *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the National Capital Region* (2010), COG's *Region Forward* (2010) and the TPB *Vision* (1998). The TPB also believes that the most cost-effective way to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users is to integrate them into the design of transportation facilities from the beginning, rather than retrofit facilities to accommodate them later.

On June 15th, 2011 the Citizens Advisory Committee requested that the TPB develop and approve a regional policy on Complete Streets, and the TPB Chair directed staff to work with the relevant subcommittees to create a proposal. The resulting *Complete Streets Policy and Guidance* documents have been drafted with extensive input from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee, the Citizens Advisory Committee, the Bus Subcommittee, the Freight Subcommittee, a Stakeholders Workshop, and the TPB Technical Committee.

II. Definitions

(1) COMPLETE STREET.

A complete street safely and adequately accommodates motorized and non-motorized users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, freight vehicles, emergency vehicles, and transit riders of all ages and abilities, in a manner appropriate to the function and context of the facility.

(2) COMPLETE STREETS POLICY.—The term “complete streets policy” means

A directive 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, freight vehicles, and emergency vehicles, in a manner appropriate to the function and context of the relevant facility.

(3) COMPLETE STREETS PRINCIPLE;—The term “complete streets principle” means
A specific component of a Complete Streets policy.

III. Policy Statement

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board endorses the concept of Complete Streets and strongly encourages its member jurisdictions and agencies that do not already have a Complete Streets policy, or who are revising an existing policy, to adopt a Complete Streets policy that includes common elements that the TPB believes reflect current best practices, as represented by the attached *Complete Streets Guidance and Policy Template*.

IV. Documentation and Reporting

1. Within 120 days of the adoption of this policy, and every two years thereafter, Transportation Planning Board staff shall conduct a survey of the TPB member agencies regarding their adoption and implementation of Complete Streets policies.
2. Within 120 days of the adoption of this policy, and every two years thereafter, Transportation Planning Board member agencies shall report in the regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Project Database on the pedestrian and bicycle facilities that have been newly created or substantially improved.
3. Within two years of the adoption of this policy, implementation of Complete Streets principles will be documented in the regional Transportation Improvement Program, using the attached TIP submission form. Agencies shall indicate which users shall be accommodated as part of the transportation project, and if a user group will not be accommodated the agency shall indicate the reason why it will not be accommodated.
4. Within two years of the adoption of this policy, the TPB shall create a regional information clearing house, which shall provide access to state and local project web sites where detailed and timely information on the design of transportation projects can be found, so that the public may judge whether and how well such projects implement Complete Streets principles.

V. Promotion

With six months of the adopting of this policy, the TPB will sponsor training on Complete Streets best practices for personnel responsible for the design, construction, and maintenance of streets.

Attachment A

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Complete Streets Guidance and Policy Template

4/26/2012

I. Complete Streets Guidance: Ten Elements of an Ideal Complete Streets Policy

The following ten elements, which are endorsed by the National Complete Streets Coalition, should be part of a comprehensive Complete Streets policy. An ideal Complete Streets policy:

- Includes a vision for how and why the community wants to complete its streets.
- Specifies that “all users” includes pedestrians, bicyclists and transit passengers of all ages and abilities as well as trucks, buses and automobiles.
- Encourages street connectivity and aims to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected network for all modes.
- Is adoptable by all agencies to cover all roads.
- Applies to both new and retrofit projects, including design, planning, maintenance, and operations for the entire right of way.
- Makes any exceptions specific and sets a clear procedure that requires high-level approval of exceptions.
- Directs the use of the latest and best design standards while recognizing the need for flexibility in balancing user needs.
- Directs that complete streets solutions will complement the context of the community.
- Establishes performance standards with measurable outcomes.
- Includes specific next steps for implementation of policy, such as
 - Revising agency procedures and regulations to reflect the policy
 - Developing or adopting new design guides
 - Offering training for staff responsible for implementing the policy
 - Gathering data on how well streets are serving different user groups

II. Complete Streets 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

1. Roadways, shoulders, sidewalks, shared use paths, street crossings, pedestrian signals, signs, street furniture, landscaping, lighting, transit stops and facilities, rail crossings, and all connecting pathways should be designed, constructed, operated and maintained so that all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicles and riders, freight vehicles, emergency vehicles, motorists, and people with disabilities, can travel safely and independently. Access to existing facilities, especially for persons with disabilities, should be maintained during construction.
2. Transportation projects should address the need for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross facilities as well as travel along them. The design and construction of new facilities should not preclude the provision of future improvements to accommodate future demand for walking and bicycling, especially in order to access transit.
3. Transportation projects should comply with up-to-date design standards, particularly standards relating to providing access for individuals with disabilities.
4. Complete Streets principles should be applied in due consideration of the urban, suburban, or rural context in which a project is located, as well as applicable federal, state, local environmental requirements, and the effects of right of way widening on adjacent property owners and residents. While all users should be accommodated, modal priorities may vary by area and facility.

Exemptions

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

This policy does not apply:

1. To a new transportation facility 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. To a transportation facility which prohibits, by law, use of the facility by specified users, in which case a greater effort should be made to accommodate those specified users elsewhere in the travel corridor.

3. When the cost to the exempted project in achieving compliance with the applicable complete streets policy would be excessively disproportionate (as per FHWA guidance), as compared to the need or probable use of a particular complete street; or,
4. When 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 (as per FHWA guidance) to implement the applicable complete streets policy.
5. To passenger and freight rail projects, which shall not be required to accommodate other motorized users in the railway right of way, although safe and adequate rail crossings for motorized and non-motorized users should be provided.
6. To transportation projects which do not provide for direct use by the public, such as maintenance facilities, drainage and stormwater management facilities, education and training, transportation security projects, beautification, and equipment purchase or rehabilitation.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FOR FY 2011-2016 PROJECT DESCRIPTION FORM



BASIC PROJECT INFORMATION

1. Submitting Agency:
2. Project Name (from CLRP Project):
3. Phase Name:

	Prefix	Route	Name	Modifier
4. Facility:				
5. From (_ at):				
6. To:				

7. Description:
8. Agency Phase ID:
9. Projected Completion Year:
10. Project Status:
 - New Project
 - In previous TIP, proceeding as scheduled
 - In previous TIP, delayed or reprogrammed
11. Completed:

Environmental Review

12. Type: PCE; CE; DEA; EA; FONSI; DEIS; FEIS; F4; N/A
13. Status: Proposed for preparation; Under preparation; Prepared for review; Under review; Approved

Complete Streets

14. Does this project provide for direct use by the public?
 - Yes (e.g. roadways, shoulders, sidewalks, shared use paths, street crossings, pedestrian signals, signs, street furniture, landscaping, lighting, transit stops and facilities, rail crossings)
 - No (e.g. transportation support facility, drainage project, equipment purchase/rehabilitation, environmental mitigation, enhancement/beautification, security, education/training)

If Yes, answer #15

15. The following users will be accommodated on this facility:
 - All Pedestrians Bicyclists Transit vehicles and riders Freight vehicles
 - Emergency vehicles Motorists People with disabilities
16. If no accommodations are included above, identify the reason or the specific exemptions from the appropriate Dropdown Menu :
 - As of the effective date of the adoption of the policy, at least 30% of the design phase is complete
 - The affected facility prohibits, by law, use by the user group(s) omitted above
 - The cost of accommodating the omitted user group(s) would be excessively disproportionate as compared to the need or probable use
 - There is a documented absence of a need within the design life of the facility
 - Accommodation of the omitted user group(s) on the affected facility would be inconsistent with local, State, or agency laws, policies, or plans.
 - Other (Explain: _____)

Capital Costs

FISCAL YEAR	AMOUNT	PHASE	SOURCE	FED	STA	LOC

CLRP PROJECT DESCRIPTION FORM
