

**RECOMMENDATION
THAT THE TPB DEVELOP A *REGIONAL COMPLETE STREETS POLICY***

**TPB CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)
JUNE 8, 2011**

The CAC requests that the TPB develop and approve a *Regional Policy on Complete Streets*. A *complete streets* approach recognizes that 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.

Why do we need a Regional Complete Streets Policy?

- *Improve safety and perceptions of safety* – A regional policy will support the regional goal of reducing injuries and deaths on our streets.
- *Help meet broader regional goals and strategies* – The region broadly agrees that we need to promote walkable, mixed-use, more compact communities, and give people more options for getting around. These objectives can be supported through a *complete streets* approach to street design, planning, and engineering.
- *Provide regional leadership* – The TPB needs to put a finer point on its existing policies. If we believe in *complete streets*, we need to say it, clearly.
- *Save money* – A *complete streets* approach will save money in the long run. By building streets right in the first place, we will avoid expensive costly retrofits later.
- *Public Health* – A complete streets policy supports federal and regional public health efforts and promotes the linkages between public health and the built environment.
- *Economic Activity* – A network of complete streets is safer and more appealing to residents and visitors, which is good for retail and commercial development.
- *Climate / Environmental* – A regional policy will support efforts to reduce ground level pollution, GHG emissions, and decreases noise pollution.
- *Quality of Life / Environmental Justice* – A variety of transportation options allow everyone – particularly people with disabilities, older adults, children under 16, and those without cars – to get out and stay connected to the community.

What is the regional planning context related to complete streets?

- TPB policies promote key principles linked to *complete streets*:
 - Improved pedestrian and bicycle safety
 - Walkable mixed-use communities
 - Community Connectivity
 - Reduced reliance on driving
- These policies were articulated in the TPB' *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the National Capital Region* (2010), *COG's Region Forward* (2010) and the *TPB Vision* (1998).

- Many of the TPB's member jurisdictions have approved *complete streets* policies.

Some specifics:

As a group of citizen volunteers who are not experts on this topic, the CAC is not in a position to provide direction regarding the specific components of this policy. However, we would recommend the following:

- As a starting point, the process for developing a regional policy should begin with the "Ideal Complete Streets Policy" from the National Complete Street Coalition: www.completestreets.org. TPB staff should also research and potentially draw from the *complete streets* policies that have been developed by other MPOs.
- The regional policy should emphasize the regional goals that will be served by the implementation of *complete streets* policies and plans. These include regional transportation objectives such as the reduction in VMT, congestion and auto-dependence. They also include broader regional goals such as the creation of economically vibrant, mixed-use communities.
- A regional *complete streets* policy should note there is not a one-size-fits-all approach—a Complete Street will not look the same in Purcellville as in Petworth. But the policy should emphasize commonalities throughout the region and the benefits of a *complete streets* approach for all types of communities.
- The regional policy should emphasize that *complete streets* planning is a common-sense approach that is cost-effective. Particularly on the regional level, it should not be perceived as a bureaucratic or rigid set of rules.
- 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 movement or document why walking, bicycling, public transit, and/or freight considerations are irrelevant to that project. In addition, the policy should require implementing agencies to document that each project, including freeway expansion projects, would at least not degrade the level of service for pedestrians, bicyclists, and bus riders. To avoid excessive burdens, full *complete streets* documentation could be delayed until a project is proposed for addition to the TIP, rather than for its first addition to the CLRP.
- In addition to articulating an overarching Regional *Complete Streets* Policy, the TPB's policy should encourage the TPB's member jurisdictions to develop their own *complete streets* policies, if they have not already done so.

- The TPB's Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee should take the lead in developing this policy, but the process for developing the policy should also interface with the Access for All Advisory Committee, the CAC and the task force or committee that will oversee development of the TPB's Priorities Plan.