

DRAFT

Complete Streets Guidance and Policy Template for the National Capital Region

March 13, 2012

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Complete Streets Guidance and Policy Template is to encourage the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board 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 represent current best practices.

II. Definitions

(1) COMPLETE STREET.—The term “complete street” means a transportation facility that 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. 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

IV. 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, 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.
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, and local environmental requirements. 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.

V. Documentation and Reporting

1. Every two years Transportation Planning Board staff shall conduct a survey of the TPB member agencies regarding their adoption and implementation of Complete Streets policies.
2. Every two years Transportation Planning Board member agencies will be asked to report in the regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Project Database on the pedestrian and bicycle facilities that have been newly created or substantially improved.

3. Implementation of Complete Streets principles will be documented in the regional Transportation Improvement Program. Details are to be proposed by TPB staff and reviewed for recommendation by the TPB Technical Committee.

VI. Promotion

The TPB will sponsor training on Complete Streets best practices for personnel responsible for the design, construction, and maintenance of streets.