

# City of Worcester Complete Streets Policy

Last Revision: December 2017

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Complete Streets policy is to facilitate the development of an integrated, multimodal transportation system that provides safe, convenient, and efficient accommodation for all modes of transportation, including walking, bicycling, driving, and transit. Application of Complete Street principles to the planning, design, operation and maintenance of transportation infrastructure and services will positively contribute toward the safety, health, social equity, economic vitality, and quality of life in Worcester by facilitating a broad range of safe and convenient travel options, improving access to neighborhoods and commercial areas, establishing attractive streetscapes and vibrant public spaces, and improving universal accessibility for all users.

## **COMMITMENT AND PRINCIPLES**

The City of Worcester commits to incorporating Complete Streets principles into the planning, design, construction, maintenance, and operation of its streets, transportation infrastructure, and transportation services, as well as related municipal functions, including land use planning, zoning, development, and public health. The following principles will guide this effort:

- The City's Master Plan, Strategic Plan, Bike Master Plan, and Integrated Water Resources Management Plan.
- Complete Streets will collectively accommodate all travel modes, including but not limited to walking, cycling, motor vehicles, transit, delivery services, freight haulers, and emergency responders. Complete Street will provide for the safe and convenient use by people of all ages, economic status and abilities.
- Complete Streets are not a "one size fits all" solution. The physical setting, context, role in the overall transportation network, physical characteristics of the street, and costs will be considered in selecting specific designs and treatments.
- The City will make Complete Streets practices a routine part of everyday operations by approaching every transportation project, development project, and public policy as an opportunity to improve streets and the transportation network for all users, and its departments shall work in coordination with one another as well as other municipalities, organizations and agencies to achieve Complete Streets.
- Complete Streets will be implemented through a combination of coordinated actions, ranging from incremental changes to major capital improvements.
- Complete Streets are best achieved utilizing multidisciplinary design processes and with public participation in policy decisions. Determinations concerning the design and use of streets and transportation infrastructure will be inclusive and transparent.
- Complete Streets shall be incorporated into all publicly and privately funded projects to the extent practicable. The City of Worcester Complete Streets Policy shall apply to all street and transportation projects requiring funding or approval by the City, and to the extent allowed by law, those projects funded by state and federal government sources. Further, appropriate amendments to the zoning ordinance and other applicable development regulations will be proposed to

ensure that private development complies with the Complete Streets principles of this policy.

## **PLANNING AND DESIGN BEST PRACTICES**

To implement Complete Streets, the City of Worcester will utilize best practices that have been successfully employed in other cities throughout the country and have widespread acceptance at the federal, state and local levels.

Where feasible and appropriate for the context, Complete Streets will be achieved by incorporating features such as the following:

- Wider sidewalks, street trees, attractive streetscape, pedestrian scale lighting, curb extensions, ADA compliant curb ramps, crosswalks, and protected mid-block crossings
- Bicycle lanes, shared lane markings, separated bicycle paths, cycle tracks, bicycle parking, bicycle treatments at intersections.
- Traffic calming, left turn lanes, safety improvements, operational improvements, on-street parking, loading zones, and traffic signal upgrades.
- Bus shelters, more frequent transit services, transit fare vending, transit rider information systems, transit priority.
- Access management, buildings oriented to the fronting street, pedestrian/bicycle/transit supportive urban design, and parking requirements fitting the urban context.

### **Design Process**

Design of streets and related infrastructure shall be sensitive to the context of the natural setting and the built environment. Further, the decision-making process for transportation projects will consider a variety of factors such as safety, accessibility, modal choice, sustainability, cost effectiveness, quality of life, and economic development.

The City of Worcester recognizes that current design standards include provisions to allow for flexible design approaches to address the specific circumstances associated with each unique project. The design of Complete Streets will incorporate best practices as exemplified by a broad range of applicable design standards and guidelines, including but not limited to the following:

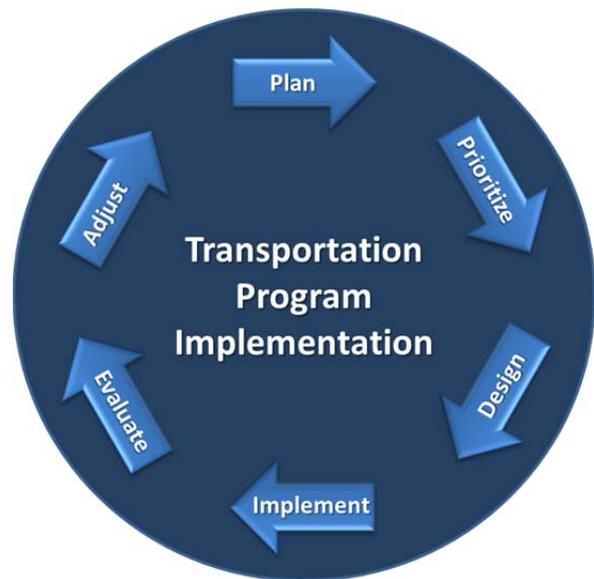
- Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) *Project Development and Design Guidebook*
- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*
- AASHTO *A Guide for Achieving Flexibility in Highway Design*
- AASHTO *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*
- Architectural Access Board (AAB) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Regulations

- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) *Manual on Uniform Traffic Design Controls*
- Institute for Transportation Engineers (ITE)/Congress for New Urbanism *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach*
- National Association of City Transportation Professionals (NACTO) *Urban Street Design Guide*.
- NACTO *Urban Bikeway Design Guide*.
- Other relevant guidance documents developed by the City of Worcester, CMRPC, MassDOT, and FHWA.
- Best practices from other agencies, organizations and communities.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPLETE STREETS

The process of developing a comprehensive multimodal transportation system involves many steps and, taken as whole, is an iterative and ongoing process. The performance of the transportation network and lessons learned from past actions should inform decision making moving forward.

Interdepartmental coordination is a key component of complete streets planning and implementation. While the Department of Public Works & Parks (DPW&P) has primary responsibility for the design, operation and maintenance of transportation infrastructure in the city, other city departments also have roles in establishing policy, planning, coordinating and implementing a safe and efficient transportation network that serves all users.



### Transportation Advisory Group

Community and stakeholder participation is an important aspect of identifying transportation needs and selecting the best solutions to address these needs. The City Manager will therefore establish a Transportation Advisory Group (TAG) consisting of representatives from municipal departments, city boards and commissions, Worcester Public Schools, other relevant agencies, and community stakeholders. The TAG will be multi-disciplinary in nature and should include a diverse range of expertise in related policy, planning, and design fields. The TAG will assist in developing guiding policies, provide input and feedback on transportation proposals, and foster interdepartmental coordination.

The TAG will further the City's implementation of Complete Streets by participating in the development of transportation policy, assisting in the preparation of transportation

plans and studies, and coordinating interdepartmental and stakeholder review of major projects.

### **Implementation Actions**

To achieve Complete Street, the City of Worcester commits to the following implementation actions:

#### *Planning, Policy and Project Development*

1. The City of Worcester will make Complete Streets practices a routine part of everyday operations, and shall approach every transportation project and program as an opportunity to improve streets and the transportation network for all users.
2. The City will foster interdepartmental participation in transportation decision-making to ensure that transportation projects are well coordinated and address the needs of all users. The TAG will be a primary vehicle for ensuring multidisciplinary, interdepartmental coordination, as well as public input at appropriate stages of program and project development.
3. The City will coordinate with the CMRPC, MassDOT, WRTA and the MBTA to ensure consistency between local plans and regional/statewide plans, as well as coordinate major projects.
4. The DPW&P, in coordination with the TAG, will develop a Complete Streets checklist for review of projects. The checklist will be based on the objectives, principals and best practices identified in this policy, and will serve to identify how a proposed project will accommodate various travel modes.
5. As a component of city-wide comprehensive planning efforts, DPW&P and the Division of Planning & Regulatory Services (DPRS) will coordinate to prepare a Long-Range Transportation Plan in association with the forthcoming Master Plan. The TAG will be involved in the development and review of the plan. This plan will serve as a basis for reporting existing conditions (including inventories of streets, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and transit services), identifying both near-term and long-term potential improvements, prioritizing transportation projects, and tracking implementation progress. Supplements updating project prioritization and implementation progress will be prepared annually (see later section on Performance Monitoring). The plan as a whole will be updated periodically.
6. The City will seek out appropriate sources of funding and grants for implementation of Complete Streets policies, including by participating in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts's Complete Streets Certification Program.

#### *Street Construction, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Projects*

Street construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation (CRR) projects include any work to construct new streets, or expand or reconfigure existing streets, or rehabilitate or resurface major arterials, minor arterials and collector streets.

1. DPW&P will maintain a prioritized list of upcoming and anticipated CRR projects. The list will be used to track progress during project development, planning, design and implementation stages.
2. DPW&P will prepare a written summary and Complete Streets checklist for all CRR projects. The description will briefly summarize the configuration of the proposed project and include supplemental concept drawings as applicable.
3. The TAG will meet periodically to review and provide comment on the prioritized list of CRR projects, and individual CRR project summaries and Complete Streets checklists.
4. For projects for which plans, specifications and construction drawings are prepared, the TAG will also review and comment on the 25% design plans prior to their finalization.
5. DPW&P will present the City Manager with an estimate of costs of each project subject to this policy for inclusion in a future capital budget when funding is available. If conditions warrant, the street will be resurfaced until funds are available to implement the proposed plans.

#### *Street Resurfacing Projects*

1. Street resurfacing projects conducted on roads classified as major arterials, minor arterials or collectors will be subject to the provisions specified above for CRR projects.
2. Street rehabilitation or resurfacing projects on other local roadways will be evaluated by DPW&P to determine whether they warrant consideration for additional design treatments. It is anticipated that most resurfacing projects will be able to proceed with in-kind replacement. The TAG will be provided with a list of resurfacing projects for comment prior to their advertisement for bid.

#### *Maintenance*

1. DPW&P will consider all user groups when performing maintenance activities and request funds for and implement programs accordingly.

#### *Operations*

1. DPW&P will consider all user groups when implementing changes to traffic signal operations, lane configurations, signage, on-street parking, or similar operational changes. The TAG will be consulted and provide input into such decisions.

#### *Development Projects*

1. Development projects reviewed by the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals will be evaluated relative to Complete Streets objectives to the extent possible under the currently established review criteria.
2. The City will review and, as appropriate, develop proposed revisions to planning documents, zoning and general ordinances, procedures, regulations, guidelines, and programs to foster development that supports pedestrian, bicycle and transit access or otherwise integrates Complete Streets principles in development projects. The TAG will be consulted in the review and development of such proposals.

### **Performance Monitoring**

DPW&P will work with the TAG to develop performance measures to be monitored on an annual basis. These may include measures such as miles of bicycle and pedestrian network (by type of facility), complete street projects implemented, crash statistics, and similar measures. As part of its ongoing planning work program, DPRS will coordinate with DPW&P to prepare an annual update summarizing progress in implementing Complete Streets in Worcester.

### **Exceptions**

Transportation projects will be evaluated for consistency with Complete Streets objectives using the Complete Streets Checklist developed by the TAG as described previously. Appropriate treatments shall be incorporated into all projects except for the exceptions as noted below:

- (1) Where use by a particular mode is prohibited by law;
- (2) Minor repairs or ordinary maintenance, provided that the needs of all users will be contemplated in conducted such activities as described previously under Implementation Actions;
- (3) The cost would be excessively disproportionate to the need or probable future use over the long term; or
- (4) Inclusion of Complete Streets components would be contrary to public safety.

Projects may be proposed for exclusion under exceptions (3) and (4) above by the Commissioner of Public Works and Parks provided that such determinations will be provided in writing to the TAG for review and comment prior to advancing the project design. If the TAG concurs with the Commissioner's determination, the project may proceed as proposed. If not in concurrence with the Commission's determination, the TAG will conduct a design review meeting where additional options are to be explored prior to proceeding with the project design. If concurrence on a project approach still does not exist, the final determination shall be by the Commissioner of Public Works and Parks.