

Town of Stow <b>COMPLETE STREET POLICY</b>	
Effective Date	February 1, 2016
Planning Board Vote of Support	January 5, 2016
Board of Selectmen Vote to Adopt Policy	January 26, 2016

**Vision and Purpose:**

Complete Streets are designed and operated to provide safety, comfort, and accessibility for all the users of our streets, trails, and transit systems, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, commercial vehicles, and emergency vehicles and for people of all ages, abilities, and income levels. Furthermore, Complete Streets principles contribute toward the safety, health, economic viability, and quality of life in a community by improving the pedestrian and vehicular environments in order to provide, safe, accessible, and comfortable means of travel between home, school, work, recreation, and retail destinations. Complete Streets also further equity objectives by providing safe forms of travel for Stow residents of all income levels.

Therefore, the purpose of the Town of Stow’s Complete Streets Policy is to further Stow’s Master Plan Transportation Vision of improving safety and providing alternatives to the single occupancy vehicle, accommodating all road users by creating a roadway network that meets the needs of individuals utilizing a variety of transportation modes, while maintaining the rural and scenic qualities of Stow that data has shown to be important to residents. It is the intent of the Town of Stow to formalize the plan, design, operation, and maintenance of streets so that they are safe for users of all ages, all abilities and all income levels as a matter of routine. This Policy directs decision-makers to consistently plan, design, construct, and maintain streets to accommodate all anticipated users including, but not limited to pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, emergency vehicles, and freight and commercial vehicles in a manner that is sensitive to the rural and scenic character of Stow.

**Core Commitment:**

The Town of Stow recognizes that users of various modes of transportation, including, but not limited to, pedestrians, cyclists, transit and school bus riders, motorists, delivery and service personnel, freight haulers, and emergency responders are legitimate users of roadways and deserve safe facilities. “All Users” includes users of all ages, abilities, and income levels.

The Town recognizes that all roadway projects – including new construction, maintenance and reconstruction – are potential opportunities to apply Complete Streets design principles. The Town will, to the maximum extent practical, design, construct, maintain, and operate all streets to provide for a comprehensive and integrated street network of facilities for people of all ages and abilities.

Complete Streets design recommendations shall be incorporated into all publicly and privately funded projects, as appropriate. All transportation infrastructure and street design projects requiring funding or approval by the Town of Stow, as well as projects funded by the State and Federal government, including but not limited to Chapter 90 funds, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the MassWorks Infrastructure Program, Capital Funding, and other state and federal funds for street and infrastructure design shall adhere to the Town of Stow Complete Streets Policy to the extent practicable. Private developments and related roadway design components shall also adhere to the Complete Streets principles as practicable, with consideration of environmental, aesthetic and historic features.

The Complete Streets Working Group will utilize information from current town planning documents and existing conditions to provide informed judgment regarding the desirability and feasibility of

applying Complete Streets principles for routine roadway maintenance and projects, such as repaving, restriping, and so forth.

### **Project Feasibility:**

In determining whether a pedestrian and bicycle upgrade is practicable, feasible or otherwise excessively disproportionate to the probable future use, the Complete Streets Working Group will consider the following plans, specifications or metrics:

- a. Planning Board Sidewalk Policy cost per linear foot figures
- b. Priorities outlined in the Pedestrian Walkway Subcommittee Final Report; Master Plan and Complete Streets Prioritization Plan as amended.
- c. Impacts to wetlands resource areas as defined by Section 2 of Article 9, Wetlands Protection, of the Town of Stow General Bylaw and the MA Wetlands Protection Act, areas in the Floodplain District as defined in the Zoning Bylaw, and Areas of Habitat Significance as shown in the Stow Open Space and Recreation Plan.
- d. Impacts to protected open space
- e. Topography
- f. Land taking and easements
- g. Impact to public shade trees
- h. Impact / relocation of stone walls and other historically significant features

### **Project Exclusion**

Transportation infrastructure projects, including but not limited to roadway reconstruction, reconfigurations, rehabilitation, upgrades or repairs may be excluded from review by the Complete Streets Working Group where documentation and data indicate that any of the below metrics apply, and provided that such exclusion is documented in an annual progress report to be submitted to the Board of Selectmen each year.

1. Roadways where specific users are prohibited by law, such as interstate freeways or pedestrian malls. An effort will be made, in these cases, for accommodations elsewhere.
2. Cost and/or associated environmental or physical impacts of accommodation for public work are excessively disproportionate to the need or probable future use. In determining whether a pedestrian and bicycle upgrade is excessively disproportionate to the probable future use, the Complete Streets Working Group will consider the following plans, specifications or metrics noted under the *Project Feasibility* section of this Complete Streets Policy.
3. Other Town policies, regulations, or requirements which consistently contradict or preclude implementation of Complete Streets principles. In instances in which other town policies, regulations or requirements consistently contradict or preclude implementation, the Complete Streets Working Group will assess whether it is practical and/or feasible to recommend amendments to said requirements for consistency with Complete Streets commitments as set forth in this policy.

### **Best Practices**

The Town of Stow Complete Streets Policy will focus on developing a connected, integrated network that serves all road users. Complete Streets will be integrated into policies, planning, and design of all types of public and private projects, including new construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, repair, and maintenance of transportation facilities on streets and redevelopment projects. As practicable, recommendations from the Complete Streets Working Group for incorporating complete streets elements will occur in projects' beginning stages prior to design.

Complete Streets principles include the development and implementation of projects in a context-sensitive manner in which project implementation is sensitive to the community's physical, environmental, economic, and social setting. The context-sensitive approach to process and design allows for goals and solutions to develop based on consideration of stakeholder and community values. The purpose of this approach is to preserve and enhance scenic, aesthetic, historical, and environmental resources while improving or maintaining safety, mobility, and infrastructure conditions.

Implementation of the Town of Stow Complete Streets Policy will be carried out cooperatively within all relevant departments in the Town of Stow and, to the greatest extent possible, among private developers, and state, regional, and federal agencies.

The Town of Stow recognizes that “complete streets” may be achieved through single elements incorporated into a particular project or incrementally through a series of smaller improvements or maintenance activities over time.

The latest design guidance, standards, and recommendations available will be used in the implementation of Complete Streets, including the most up-to-date versions of:

- The Massachusetts Department of Transportation [Project Design and Development Guidebook](#)
- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission's [Healthy Community Design Toolkit](#)
- The United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration's [Manual on Uniform Traffic Design Controls](#)
- The Architectural Access Board (AAB) 521CMR Rules and Regulations
- Documents and plans created for the Town of Stow, including but not limited to:
  - Bicycle Network and Pedestrian Priority Plan (MAPC, 2013)
  - Town of Stow Sidewalk Prioritization Plan (2013)
  - Pedestrian Walkway Subcommittee Final Report (January 2012)
- AASHTO Highway Manual

### **Working Group Composition**

A Complete Streets Working Group comprised of the Stow Permit Team, including members of relevant Boards and Committees where applicable, shall be designated by the Board of Selectmen to implement this initiative. The Complete Streets Working Group will be a multidisciplinary team, with potential input and representation from: Chamber of Commerce, Board of Selectmen, Council on Aging, Board of Health, Highway Department, Planning Board, Police, Fire, Conservation and other committees, departments or organizations as applicable.

### **Implementation**

The Town shall make complete streets practices a routine part of everyday operations, shall approach every transportation project and program as an opportunity to improve streets and the transportation network for all users, and shall work in coordination with other departments, agencies, and jurisdictions to achieve complete streets. The Complete Street Working Group will serve three key functions:

1. To increase communication and develop partnerships among various stakeholders
2. Ensure the implementation of the Complete Streets Policy, and where necessary, provide alternatives to existing practices that may act as impediments to implementation.
3. Regularly update and solicit feedback on potential projects with the general public to ensure consideration of community perspectives.

The Complete Streets Working Group, in conjunction with relevant departments, shall integrate Complete Streets principles in all new planning documents, as applicable (master plans, open space and recreation plan, etc.), laws, procedures, rules, regulations, guidelines, programs, and templates and make

recommendations for zoning and subdivision codes in line with their existing updated timeline. The Complete Streets Working Group will lead, coordinate or assess the following supporting implementation roles:

- The Planning Department, in consultation with the Complete Streets Working Group shall maintain a comprehensive inventory of pedestrian and bicycle facility infrastructure that will highlight projects that eliminate gaps in the sidewalk and bikeway network.
- The Town will evaluate projects within the Capital Improvement Plan to encourage implementation of this Policy.
- The Town will secure training for pertinent Town staff and decision-makers on both the technical content of Complete Streets principles and best practices, as well as community engagement methods for implementing the Complete Streets Policy. Training may be accomplished through workshops and other appropriate means.
- The Town will utilize inter-department coordination to promote the most responsible and efficient use of resources for activities within the public way.
- The Town will seek out appropriate sources of funding and grants for implementation of Complete Streets policies.

### **Annual Schedule**

Each year the Complete Streets Working Group will meet as needed in the months of November and December to develop and update a multi-year workplan. The annual workplan meetings will provide opportunity for the Complete Streets Working Group to coordinate efforts with Highway Department maintenance and upgrade timelines and goals for the current and following fiscal year as applicable, in order to identify upcoming implementation and funding opportunities.

The Complete Streets Working Group will schedule recurring update meetings, not less than biannually, to outline and update an evolving action plan based on the annual workplan. The action plan may include but not be limited to information regarding:

- priority complete streets implementation sites;
- funding opportunities;
- analysis of technical, financial and environmental feasibility;
- outreach efforts to stakeholder groups and the public.

### **Evaluation of Effectiveness**

The Complete Streets Working Group will develop performance measures to periodically assess the rate, success, and effectiveness of implementing the Complete Streets Policy. The Permit Team described above will determine the frequency of assessment and utilize appropriate metrics for analyzing the success of this policy. These metrics may include the total number of new bicycle lanes, the linear feet of new pedestrian accommodation, number of retrofitted pedestrian facilities or amenities, number of intersection improvements made to improve Level of Service (LOS) and safety for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists, rate of crashes by mode, rate of children walking or bicycling to school, and/or number of trips by mode. These metrics will be compiled into a report by the working group and presented to the Board of Selectmen no less than annually.