

# CITY OF PORTSMOUTH

CITY COUNCIL POLICY No. 2013 – 01

## COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

**WHEREAS**, an objective of the City of Portsmouth’s 2005 Master Plan is to “ensure that all transportation projects in Portsmouth provide for full consideration of all modes (automobile, truck, bicycle, pedestrian, transit) in their design, as appropriate;” and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council recognizes that in support of this objective it will be beneficial to provide guidance to City Boards, Committees and Departments as to project planning, design standards, implementation and monitoring;

**NOW THEREFORE**, the City Council adopts the following policy:

### **I. VISION**

Streets and roadways in the City of Portsmouth will be convenient, safe and accessible for all transportation users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicles and riders, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities.

### **II. CORE COMMITMENT**

#### **Definition**

“Complete Streets” means streets that are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, so that pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation users of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across as street.

#### **All Users and Modes**

The City of Portsmouth will plan for, design, construct, operate and maintain appropriate facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicles and riders, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities in all new construction and retrofit or reconstruction projects subject to the exceptions contained herein.

#### **Planning**

The City will incorporate Complete Streets principles into the City’s Master Plan, area plans, transportation plans, the Zoning Ordinance and Site Plan Review Regulations, standards and specifications documents, and other plans, manuals, rules, regulations and programs as appropriate. Implementation of projects supported by adopted plans shall be a priority under this policy.

#### **Projects and Phases**

The City of Portsmouth will approach every transportation improvement and project phase as an opportunity to create safer, more accessible streets for all users. These phases include, but are

not limited to: planning, programming, design, right-of-way acquisition, construction engineering, construction, reconstruction, operation and maintenance.

Complete Streets principles will be applied on all new City projects and privately funded developments, and incrementally on existing streets through a series of small improvements and activities over time.

Maximum financial flexibility is important to implement Complete Streets principles. All sources of transportation funding, public and private, should be drawn upon to implement Complete Streets within the City of Portsmouth.

It is understood that maintenance activities do not necessarily trigger requirements for major street improvements and should not be expected to do so. However, maintenance activities do present some opportunities that can improve the environment for other roadway users.

### Exceptions

Complete Streets principles will be applied in all street construction, retrofit, and reconstruction projects except in unusual or extraordinary circumstances contained below. Even under the conditions outlined below, a project's impact will be evaluated for the effect it would have on the usefulness of the street for all users, now and in the future, and the ability to implement other adopted plans in the future.

- 1 Where pedestrians and bicyclists are prohibited by law from using the facility.  
In this case, alternative facilities and accommodations shall be provided within the same transportation corridor, and the ability to reasonably and conveniently cross the facility will be part of the facility design and construction.
- 2 Where existing right-of-way does not allow for the accommodation of all users.  
In this case alternatives shall be explored such as obtaining additional right-of-way, use of revised travel lane configurations, paved shoulders, signage, traffic calming, education or enforcement to accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, transit vehicles and riders and persons with disabilities.
- 3 Where the cost of establishing walkways or bikeways or other accommodations would be disproportionate to the need, particularly if alternative facilities are available within a reasonable walking and/or bicycling distance.
- 4 Where application of Complete Streets principles is unnecessary or inappropriate because it would be contrary to public safety and increase risk of injury or death.
- 5 Where the construction is not practically feasible or cost effective because of unreasonable adverse impacts on the environment or on neighboring land uses, including impact from right-of-way acquisition.
- 6 Ordinary maintenance activities designed to keep street and other transportation assets in serviceable condition or when interim measures are implemented on temporary detour or haul routes. However, all temporary detours shall comply with temporary traffic control requirements of the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
- 7 Ordinary public works or utility maintenance activities, including, but not limited to: water, sewer and storm sewer main repairs; installation of new or removal of existing

water or sewer service lines, installation or repair of fire hydrants, installation or repair of private utility fixtures.

Exclusive of exceptions 6 and 7 above, any determination that a project that will not meet Complete Streets principles based on the above exceptions will have said determination reviewed and confirmed by City Council.

### III. BEST PRACTICES

#### Design Guidance and Flexibility

The City shall follow accepted or adopted design standards and use the best and latest design standards available, including:

- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)
  - *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities* (4th Edition, 2012)
  - *Guide for the Planning, Design and Operations of Pedestrian Facilities* (2004)
- American Planning Association (APA)
  - *Complete Streets: Best Policy and Implementation Practices* (2010)
- American Planning Association (APA) & American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE)
  - *U.S. Traffic Calming Manual* (2009)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
  - Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)
  - PEDSAFE: Pedestrian Safety Guide and Countermeasures Selection System
- Institution of Transportation Engineers (ITE)
  - *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach* (2010)
  - *Neighborhood Street Design Guidelines* (2010)
- National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)
  - *Urban Bikeway Design Guide* (2nd Edition, 2012)
  - *Urban Street Design Guide* (2013)
- U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (the Access Board)
  - *Accessible Rights-of-Way: A Design Guide*
- Active Transportation Alliance
  - *Complete Streets Complete Networks: A Manual for the Design of Active Transportation*

#### Context Sensitivity

The implementation of this Policy shall reflect the context and character of the surrounding built and natural environments, and enhance the appearance of such.

#### Performance Measures

Complete Streets should be continuously evaluated for success and opportunities for improvement. This policy encourages the regular evaluation and reporting of progress through the following performance measures:

- User data – bike, pedestrian, transit and traffic
- Crash data
- Use of new projects by mode
- Compliments and complaints
- Linear feet of pedestrian accommodations built

- Number of ADA accommodations built
- Miles of bike lanes/trails built or striped
- Number of transit accessibility accommodations built
- Number of street trees planted
- Number of exemptions from this policy approved

#### IV. IMPLEMENTATION

The City views Complete Streets as integral to everyday transportation decision-making practices and processes. To this end:

1. The Planning Department, Department of Public Works, and other relevant departments, agencies or committees shall incorporate Complete Streets principles into the City's Master Plan, the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plans, and other appropriate plans, and other manuals, checklists, decision trees, rules, regulations, and programs as appropriate.
2. The Planning Department and Department of Public Works shall review current design standards, including subdivision and site plan review regulations, to ensure that they reflect the best available design guidelines, and effectively implement Complete Streets.
3. When available, the City shall encourage staff professional development and training on non-motorized transportation issues through attending conferences, classes, seminars, and workshops.
4. City staff shall identify current and potential future sources of funding for street improvements and recommend improvements to the project selection criteria to support Complete Streets projects.
5. The City shall promote project coordination among City departments and agencies with an interest in the actives that occur within the public right-of-way in order to better use fiscal resources.
6. The Planning Department shall make an annual report to the City Council showing progress made in implementing this policy.

This policy shall take effect upon the passage by the City Council.

Adopted by the Portsmouth City Council on: **October 7, 2013.**  
Ratified by the Portsmouth City Council on: January 13, 2014.  
Ratified by the Portsmouth City Council on: January 11, 2016.  
Ratified by the Portsmouth City Council on: January 16, 2018.  
Ratified by the Portsmouth City Council on: January 8, 2020.  
Ratified by the Portsmouth City Council on: January 24, 2022.  
Ratified by the Portsmouth City Council on: January 16, 2024.