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# COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

Town of Swampscott

Public Meeting	SEPTEMBER 12, 2016
Board of Selectmen Vote to Adopt	NOVEMBER 2, 2016
Effective Date	NOVEMBER 2, 2016
Date Last Revised	N/A

## VISION AND PURPOSE

The Town of Swampscott, encompassing approximately 3 square miles, is located along the Atlantic Ocean in Essex County approximately 12 miles north of Boston. Home to about 14,000 residents with diverse demographic and socioeconomic backgrounds, the town contains neighborhoods, parks, schools, commercial districts, and transit connections to Boston via bus and rail. Negotiating routes laid out during the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> century is challenging for 21<sup>st</sup> century residents and visitors, whether they're traveling by car, bus, bicycle, wheelchair, or other means. A Complete Streets policy aims to make it easy to choose, for any given trip, how to get where you're going.

Although primarily a residential community, Swampscott includes three distinct commercial centers – historic downtown Humphrey Street, the train depot neighborhood village, and Vinnin Square shopping district. Each center faces its own unique challenges as they have adapted and evolved to the automobile-dominated reality of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond. The Town recognizes the importance of maintaining and promoting the vibrancy of these areas and each has been the subject of site-specific studies which have emphasized the consideration of multiple modes of transportation both within the centers and along the roadways providing access to them.

To that end, the *Swampscott Downtown Action and Vision Plan* (2012), *Open Space & Recreation Plan* (2013), *Livable Community Vinnin Square Study* (2013), and *Swampscott 2025 : The Master Plan* (2015) identified several goals and strategies consistent with those expressed as part of this policy. Most relevant, the plans stressed the following:

- Establish a Green Corridor Network to connect existing open space and recreation facilities;
- Maximize benefits of Swampscott's geographic location as a coastal community and public transportation access to Boston to attract new economic investment;
- Improve the waterfront streetscape;
- Construct the Swampscott Rail Trail;
- Improve access for all users;
- Improve connection between the commuter rail station, Humphrey Street, and beaches;
- Improve pedestrian environment in Vinnin Square;
- Increase transit amenities to encourage transit ridership;
- Develop maintenance and design guidelines for roads, paths, islands, and lighting (add special emphasis on developing design guidelines in Olmsted District); and
- Improve handicap accessibility and parking.

A primary goal of this policy is to assemble and codify many of these existing Town findings and objectives into a cohesive document that guides and informs policy makers, engineers, planners, staff, and boards going forward. Complete Streets are designed and operated to provide safety, comfort, and accessibility for all the users of our streets, trails, and transit systems. The Town of Swampscott aims to improve the health of its residents and acknowledges that Complete Streets can increase everyday physical activity by enabling additional walking and bicycling by its residents and visitors. In addition, Complete Streets can help reduce congestion, decrease consumer transportation costs, reduce crashes and injuries, and support economic growth and community stability by encouraging users to choose non-motorized transportation options by providing them with safe, accessible, and efficient connections between places where people live, learn, work, play, and shop.

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA 1990) was enacted to ensure equal participation for people of all abilities and stresses many of the same goals as the Complete Streets initiative. As Complete Streets gains greater influence in street and sidewalk design, there is a clear opportunity to implement complimentary ADA standards thus benefitting the entire community.

The purpose of the Town of Swampscott's Complete Streets Policy, therefore, is to accommodate all road users by creating a roadway network that meets the needs of individuals utilizing a variety of transportation modes. It is the intent of the Town of Swampscott to formalize the plan, design, operation, and maintenance of our streets so that they are safe for all users of all ages, abilities, and income levels as a matter of routine. This policy guides decision makers in consistently planning, designing, constructing, and maintaining streets to reasonably accommodate all anticipated users including, but not limited to, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, commercial vehicles, freight, and emergency vehicles.

## CORE COMMITMENT

The Town of Swampscott recognizes that users of various modes of transportation, including, but not limited to, pedestrians, bicyclists, wheelchair users, transit and school bus riders, motorists, delivery and service personnel, freight haulers, and emergency responders are legitimate users of our roadways and deserve safe facilities. Furthermore, it is understood that "all users" includes residents of all ages, abilities, and income levels.

The Town of Swampscott recognizes that all projects – including new construction, maintenance, and reconstruction – are included as opportunities to implement Complete Streets principles. The Town will, to the maximum extent possible, design, construct, maintain, and operate all streets to provide for a comprehensive and integrated street network 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 Swampscott, as well as projects funded by the Commonwealth and Federal government, including but not limited to Chapter 90 funds, city improvement grants, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the MassWorks Infrastructure Program, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Capital Funding, and other state and federal funds for street and infrastructure design shall adhere to the Town of Swampscott's Complete Streets Policy. Private developments and related roadway design components shall adhere to Complete Streets principles. In addition, to the extent practical, state-owned roadways will comply with the Complete Streets Policy, including the design, construction, and maintenance of such roadways within Town boundaries.

The Town's Capital Improvement Program (a five-fiscal year programming) is reviewed and approved annually by the Capital Improvement Committee (CIC) in accordance with the Town Charter. The CIC is encouraged to consider

Complete Streets principles as it considers the prioritization of proposed projects in its annual report of the capital improvement budget to Town Meeting.

## EXCLUSIONS

Transportation infrastructure projects, including but not limited to roadway reconstruction, roadway reconfigurations, or subdivisions, may be excluded upon approval by the Town Administrator in consultation with the appropriate Town departments, where documentation and data indicate that any of the following apply:

1. Transportation networks 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. Costs or impacts of accommodation are disproportionate to the need or probable future use.
3. Unavailability of funding to implement Complete Streets principles.
4. Other Town policies, regulations, or requirements contradict or preclude implementation of Complete Streets principles.

Transportation projects that do not require the review or consent of a Town decision-making body may also be excluded from application of Complete Streets elements based on the same considerations, as determined by the Town Administrator in consultation with the appropriate Town departments.

## BEST PRACTICES

The Town of Swampscott's Complete Streets Policy focuses 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 for incorporating Complete Streets elements will occur in the beginning stages of projects prior to design.

Implementation of the Town of Swampscott's Complete Streets Policy will be carried out cooperatively among all departments in the Town of Swampscott and, to the greatest extent possible, among private developers and state, regional, and federal agencies. All departments should consider the goals of this policy during their review and commentary process. Findings should be incorporated into official recommendations provided to the appropriate governing bodies prior to public hearings.

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, economic, and social setting. The context-sensitive approach to process and design includes a range of goals by giving significant consideration to stakeholder and community values. It includes goals related to livability with greater participation of those affected in order to gain project consensus. The overall goal of this approach is to preserve and enhance scenic, aesthetic, historical, and environmental resources while improving or maintaining safety, mobility, and infrastructure conditions.

The Town of Swampscott 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’s [Project Design and Development Guidebook](#)
- The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)’s [Urban Bikeway Design Guide](#)
- The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)’s [Urban Streets Design Guide](#)
- The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission’s [Healthy Community Design Toolkit](#)
- The American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO)’s [A Policy on Geometric Design of Highway and Streets](#)
- The United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration’s [Manual on Uniform Traffic Design Controls](#)
- The Architectural Access Board (AAB)’s 521CMR Rules and Regulations
- Documents and plans created for or by the Town of Swampscott, including but not limited to:
  - *Swampscott Downtown Action and Vision Plan (2012)*
  - *Open Space & Recreation Plan (2013)*
  - *Livable Community Vinnin Square Study (2013)*
  - *Swampscott 2025 : The Master Plan (2015)*

## IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the Complete Streets Policy will be carried out cooperatively among all departments in the Town of Swampscott with multi-jurisdictional cooperation, and to the greatest extent possible, among private developers and state, regional, and federal agencies. The Planning Department will serve as the technical review agency for all Complete Streets projects. The Planning Department will forward the project documentation and plans to all applicable Town departments and boards for comment during the review process. A compiled review report from the Planning Department will be submitted to the appropriate governing body. Ultimately, the project will require a vote by the appropriate governing body.

The Town shall make the Complete Streets practices a routine part of everyday operations including ongoing maintenance, 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.

The Town will review and revise or develop proposed revisions to all appropriate planning documents, zoning bylaws, subdivision regulations, laws, procedures, rules, regulations, guidelines, and programs to integrate the Complete Streets principles in all street projects, as feasible.

The Town will maintain a comprehensive priority list of transportation improvement projects including problem intersections and roadways.

The Town will maintain a comprehensive inventory of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and will prioritize projects to eliminate gaps in the sidewalk and bikeway network.

The Town will evaluate the Capital Improvement Program to encourage implementation of Complete Streets principles.

The Town will incorporate Complete Streets principles into the Town of Swampscott’s Master Plan as well as other applicable and future plans.

The Town will secure training for 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 principles.

## EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS

The Town will develop performance measures to periodically assess the rate, success, and effectiveness of implementing the Complete Streets Policy. The Board of Selectmen 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 accommodations, number of retrofitted pedestrian facilities or amenities, number of intersection improvements made to improve mobility 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, including a list of approved exclusions, will be compiled into a report by the Town and presented by the Town Administrator to the Board of Selectmen, at least twice annually.

APPROVED ON : November 2, 2016  
Date

APPROVED BY : BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Naomi Dreeben

Naomi R. Dreeben, Chair

Laura Spathanas

Laura Spathanas, Vice Chair

Donald M. Hause

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