

# COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

## Definition

Complete Streets are streets that are designed—or redesigned—and operated to allow safe access to all people, regardless of age, ability, income, ethnicity, or chosen mode of travel, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders.

## Purpose and Need

The adoption of a Complete Streets policy will facilitate the following:

- Develop a more comprehensive, integrated and connected transportation network that offers a wide variety of choices, as outlined in the City’s comprehensive plan, *plaNorfolk2030*;
- Improve safety for all users of transportation;
- Embrace streets as public spaces promoting placemaking and creating a sense of community;
- Improve aesthetics of streets by designing them as a whole, from building face to building face, not just pavement;
- Stimulate the local economy by spurring private investment and raising property values by giving people options to commute and improving aesthetics;
- Promote better health through more options for healthy lifestyles that include walking and bicycling;
- Combine transportation choice with environmental strategies, increasing opportunities for environmental stewardship through the addition of green infrastructure, reduction of fuel consumption and reduced demand for motor vehicle infrastructure;
- Incorporate sustainable stormwater management strategies in street infrastructure; and
- Optimize the effectiveness of the transportation network by maximizing the number of transportation options available within the public right-of-way.

## Policy

Norfolk shall develop, operate and maintain an integrated, connected network of streets that are safe and accessible for all people, regardless of age, ability, income, ethnicity, or chosen mode of travel, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders, in a balanced, responsible and equitable manner consistent with and supportive of the surrounding community.

Norfolk shall incorporate Complete Streets infrastructure in keeping with surrounding uses and sufficient to enable reasonably safe travel along and across the right-of-way. Every street in Norfolk shall strive to have:

- Sidewalks
- An area (verge or splash area) separating sidewalks from road lanes, as well as other innovative approaches to address environmental stewardship and stormwater management
- Safe pedestrian crossings and intersections that accommodate all users
- Vehicle and bicycle parking accommodations appropriate to both serve adjacent land uses and as traffic calming
- Bike facilities or identified reasonable alternatives, such as a parallel street with facilities
- Transit accommodations where part of transit routes
- Travel lanes appropriate to serve the adjacent land uses and the overall function of the road

## Scope

The Norfolk Complete Streets Policy shall apply to all phases of design, planning, construction, maintenance, and operations of all transportation projects within the City by public or private entities including:

- New construction of streets or street segments
- Reconstruction of streets or street segments, including utility upgrades and resurfacing projects

Where projects involve other jurisdictions or other transportation agencies, Norfolk will work with those jurisdictions or agencies to implement this policy.

## Exceptions

Any exception to this policy will be considered by the Director of Public Works and the Director of City Planning. Any exceptions granted will be documented with supporting data that indicates the basis for the decision. Such documentation shall be publicly available.

Circumstances for exceptions may include:

- Emergency repairs. However, all existing Complete Streets infrastructure will remain or be replaced in the instance of emergency repair.
- Affected transportation facility prohibits, by law, use by specified users (such as an interstate freeway or pedestrian malls)
- Cost would be excessively disproportionate to the need or probable future use
- Inclusion of such infrastructure would be contrary to public safety
- Environmental or social impacts outweigh the need for these accommodations

## Design Guidelines

Norfolk shall follow accepted or adopted design guidelines, using the best and latest design guidelines available. These guidelines include, but are not limited to:

- The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Bike and Urban Street Design Guides;
- International Transportation Engineers (ITE) “Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach”;
- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) guides;
- US Access Board Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) ; and
- FHWA Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide

In recognition of context sensitivity and the need to introduce Complete Street infrastructure into an already built environment, Norfolk shall consider both the Character District (as outlined in *plaNorfolk2030*) and the street type in implementing a flexible, innovative and balanced approach that follows appropriate design guidelines and provides a comparable level of safety for all users.

## Implementation

Norfolk shall incorporate Complete Streets into City decision-making processes with the following actions:

- **Plans, Manuals, etc.** The Department of Public Works, the Department of City Planning and other relevant departments shall incorporate Complete Streets principles into all plans, manuals, checklists, decision-trees, rules, regulations, and programs as appropriate
- **Street Design Guidelines.** The Department of Public Works shall create Street Design Guidelines, incorporating Character District and appropriate street network typologies as decision making components for Complete Streets infrastructure
- **Asset Inventory.** The Department of Public Works shall develop and maintain an inventory of sidewalks, street lanes and widths, bicycle facilities and crosswalks
- **Multi-Disciplinary Design Team.** The City shall utilize a multi-disciplinary design team to:
  - Coordinate the implementation of the complete street policy
  - Collaboratively approach each street design decision process
  - Promote the most responsible and efficient use of fiscal resources for activities that occur within the public right-of-way
  - Identify Complete Street opportunities
- **Funding.** The City shall actively seek funds necessary for improvements in the right-of-way in support of this policy
- **Training.** The City shall train pertinent staff in the engineering, parks and recreation, planning, and transportation on the content of the Complete Street principles
- **Additional Opportunities.** The City shall develop a process to involve the private sector in implementing complete streets infrastructure.

## Performance Measures and Reporting

Norfolk shall measure the success of this Complete Streets policy using, but not limited to, the following performance measures:

- Total miles of new bike lanes or sharrows
- Total number of new bike racks installed, both public and private
- Total linear feet of new pedestrian sidewalk accommodation
- Total number of new curb ramps installed along city streets
- Total number of new pedestrian countdown signals installed

An annual report will be made to the City Council showing progress made in implementing this policy. This report will also be posted online for each of the above measures.