



NORTON DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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TOWN OF NORTON COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

Vision and Intent

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The Town of Norton is located approximately 30 miles south of Boston and 18 miles north of Providence, RI. Norton has a land area of 29 square miles and a population (as of the 2010 census) of 19,031 residents. Norton is a family friendly community, with an abundance of natural resources and affordable housing opportunities. It is also easy to reach from Routes 123, 140, and Interstate 495, which bisects the Town.

The Town of Norton's Master Plan and Open Space Plan have identified several goals consistent with those expressed as part of this policy. Most relevantly, the plans stressed the following:

- Preserve the character of the Town while improving traffic flow.
- Improve pedestrian safety, create walkable neighborhoods.
- Enhance the safety of key intersections.
- Connect parks, playfields and other public lands with walkways and bikeways to create a network of parks and open space within Norton and neighboring towns.
- Provide a variety of transportation choices.

The Town of Norton aims to meet these goals to improve the health and safety of its residents and acknowledges that Complete Streets principles contribute to the safety, health, economic viability and quality of life in the community by providing accessible and efficient connections between home, school, work, recreation and commercial destinations. The purpose of the Town of Norton's Complete Streets Policy 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 Norton 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, school buses, transit, freight and commercial vehicles.

Core Commitment

Users and Modes

The Town of Norton recognizes that users of the transportation network, including, but not limited to, pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, emergency responders, transit and school bus riders, delivery and service personnel, and freight haulers, are legitimate users of streets and deserve safe facilities. Furthermore, it is understood that "all users" includes people of all ages, abilities and income levels.

All Projects and Phases

The Town recognizes that all public and private roadway projects (new construction, as well as all maintenance and reconstruction projects) are potential opportunities to apply Complete Streets design principles that will improve safety, mobility and accessibility. As such, The Town and its public and private partners shall design, construct, maintain and operate all streets in accordance with this Complete Streets Policy to provide for a comprehensive and integrated network of facilities for people of all ages and abilities.

The Town's Highway Superintendent, in consultation with the Department of Planning & Economic Development, the Town's elected boards and Complete Streets Working Group will use best judgment regarding the feasibility of applying Complete Streets principles for routine roadway maintenance projects.

Clear, Accountable Exceptions

A transportation infrastructure project may be excluded from the requirements of this policy, upon approval by the Board of Selectmen, provided, that any such exemption includes documentation and data that indicates that any of the following apply:

- Facilities where specific users are prohibited, such as interstate freeways or pedestrian malls.
- Projects where cost or environmental impacts of accommodation are determined to be excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use.
- Projects where there is a documented absence of current and future need.

In addition, the following may also be reasons for granting an exception:

- Transit accommodations are not required where there is no existing or planned transit service.
- Routine maintenance of the transportation network that does not change the roadway geometry or operations; such as mowing, sweeping, and spot repair.
- Where a reasonable and equivalent project along the same corridor is already programmed to provide facilities exempted from the project at hand.

Exceptions to this Complete Streets Policy will be considered provided that formal documentation requesting an exception from the Complete Streets Policy is filed with the Complete Streets Working Group that outlines the reason for the request and provides the appropriate supporting documentation. The Complete Streets Working Group shall include a representative from the Highway Department, the Planning & Economic Development Department, the Police department, the Fire Department, the Schools, the Board of Selectmen and the Conservation Department, as well as appointees from the community. A public hearing shall be held to allow for public input and a vote must be recorded to allow for a project or facility to be exempt from Norton's Complete Streets Policy. Recommended exemptions shall be forwarded to the BOS for final approval and vote.

Best Practice

Network

The Town of Norton 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. The Town of Norton 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.

Jurisdiction

Where feasible, Complete Streets design recommendations will be incorporated into all publicly and privately funded projects. This includes transportation infrastructure and street design projects requiring funding or approval by the Town of Norton, projects funded by the State and Federal government (such as the Chapter 90 funds, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), MassWorks Infrastructure Program, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Capital Funding and other state and federal funds for street and infrastructure design) and to privately funded developments. 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.

Implementation of the Town of Norton’s Complete Streets Policy will be carried out cooperatively within all relevant departments in the Town of Norton and among private developers, and state, regional, and federal agencies. The following provides an outline of the key personnel or groups involved in the implementation of the Town of Norton’s Complete Streets Policy:

Highway Superintendent

- Responsible for ensuring that Complete Streets principles are incorporated into all Town initiated projects (new construction, rehabilitation, repair, maintenance).

Planning & Community Development Director

- Responsible for ensuring that Complete Streets principles are incorporated into all private developments (commercial, industrial, residential).

Complete Streets Working Group

- Responsible for ensuring that all town policies, rules and regulations and programs are consistent with the Complete Streets Policy, for developing performance measures that will track and assess the implementation of Complete Streets principles, for reviewing all exception requests and acting as the community’s liaison to the public.

Board of Selectmen

- Responsible for granting all exception requests from the Complete Streets Policy.

Design

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

- The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Project Development and Design Guide
- The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Separated Bike Lane Planning & Design Guide
- The United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration’s Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
- The Architectural Access Board (AAB) 521CMR Rules and Regulations
- The United States Access Board Public Rights of Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG)
- AASHTO: A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets
- AASHTO: A Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities
- AASHTO: Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities
- NACTO: Urban Street Design Guide
- NACTO: Urban Bikeway Design Guide

- NACTO: Transit Street Design Guide
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks
- Documents, plans and studies created for the Town of Norton, such as bicycle and pedestrian network plans, Master Plans, Town Policies, traffic management plans, and all other related documentation.

Implementation of Complete Streets principles will also rely on the need for a balanced approach to transportation design; one that provides flexibility to best accommodate all users and modes given the unique characteristics of the surrounding community. Norton recognizes that as a rural community, some roads may offer greater or lesser degrees of accommodation for each type of user while still ensuring basic accommodation is provided for all permitted users.

Context Sensitivity

Complete Streets principles include the development and implementation of projects in a manner that is sensitive to the community’s physical, economic and social setting. This “context-sensitive” approach to planning and design gives significant consideration to stakeholder and community values such as livability, and encourages public participation of those affected in order to gain project consensus. This approach intends to preserve and enhance scenic, aesthetic, and historical areas while protecting environmental resources and improving or maintaining safety, mobility and infrastructure conditions.

Performance Measures

The Complete Streets Working Group will develop performance measures to periodically assess the rate, success and effectiveness of the Complete Streets Policy. The primary focus of this Working Group will be ensuring the implementation of the Complete Streets Policy and, where necessary, altering existing practices and overcoming barriers that may act as impediments to implementation. The Working Group will also regularly update and solicit feedback on potential projects with the general public to ensure that the perspectives of the community are considered and incorporated.

The Complete Streets Working Group will also determine appropriate metrics for analyzing the success of this policy. These metrics may include, but may not be limited to: the total number of new bicycle lanes, the linear feet of new pedestrian accommodation (including sidewalks), 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.

Implementation

Implementation Steps

Implementation of the Complete Streets Policy will be carried out cooperatively within all departments in the Town of Norton with multi-jurisdictional cooperation, as well as among private developers, and state, regional, and federal agencies.

The Town, with input from the Complete Streets Working Group shall review and either revise or develop proposed revisions to all appropriate planning documents (master plans, open space and recreation plan, etc.), zoning and subdivision codes, laws, procedures, rules, regulations, guidelines, programs and templates to integrate Complete Streets principles in all projects.

The Town shall maintain a comprehensive inventory of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities and/or infrastructure that will highlight projects that eliminate gaps in the sidewalk and bikeway network and connect those users to the existing transit network.

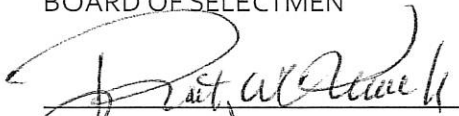
The Town will re-evaluate Capital Improvement Projects prioritization to encourage implementation of Complete Streets principles.

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.

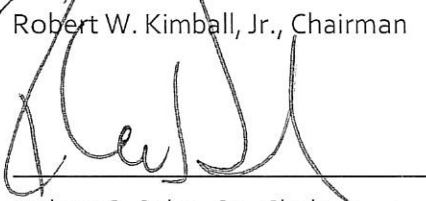
The Town will seek out appropriate sources of funding and grants for implementation of Complete Streets policies.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

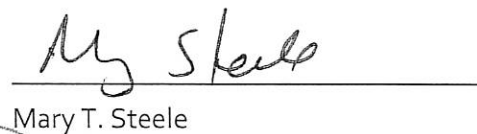


Robert W. Kimball, Jr., Chairman

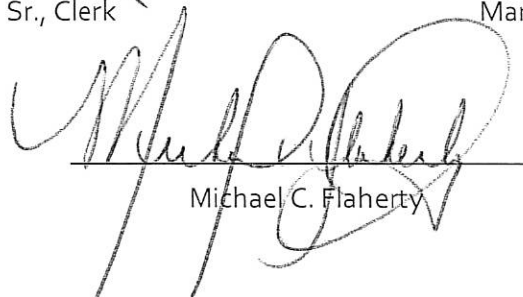
Bradford K. Bramwell, Vice-Chairman



Robert S. Salvo, Sr., Clerk



Mary T. Steele



Michael C. Flaherty

Dated: 10/05/17

