



TOWN OF STONINGTON

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STONINGTON COMPLETE STREETS POLICY & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

BACKGROUND

The Town of Stonington has been a hub of multimodal transportation from its earliest days, being centrally located on the New England coast, ships and railroads all converged here for transport and commerce. Over the decades, the region has adapted and evolved along with modes of transportation. This prime location today attracts over a million visitors a year, utilizing the existing transportation system. This document expands the first *Complete Streets* Policy signed by the Board of Selectmen in 2008.

VISION AND INTENT

The Town of Stonington commits to the development and maintenance of a complete and well-connected transportation network that meets the needs of all residences and provides users of all ages, abilities and travel modes. This includes, but is not limited to: pedestrians, bicyclists, wheelchair users, transit users and motorists in all transportation projects. This implementation plan outlines specific actions and strategies to ensure the successful integration of *Complete Streets* principles into the town's transportation planning, design, and construction processes. The aim is to encourage non-motorized modes of transportation and a *Complete Streets* culture that promotes healthy living and active communities.

A *Complete Street* is safe for all users. *Complete Streets* policies create an integrated, frictionless system to ensure comfort and improved safety guidelines for all users. *Complete Streets* are welcoming and inviting for all, aids in sustainability and economic vitality, with added improved mental and physical wellness. *Complete Streets* are defined by the Federal Highway Administration as a design model that promotes safe and convenient means for people to get around, regardless of the mode of transportation they utilize.

Policy Overview

Users and Modes- This policy shall ensure that the safety and convenience of all users of the transportation network are accommodated creating frictionless road access to include: pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, people with disabilities, the elderly, motorists, freight providers, emergency responders, and adjacent property owners, residents, and visitors.

Type of Projects- All new construction and reconstruction/retrofit projects shall account for the needs of all modes of transportation and all users of the road network.

Coordination with other agencies, departments, and commissions- The Town shall coordinate and build working relationships with relevant agencies including, but not limited to: Town Departments and Commissions, CT Department of Transportation (CT DOT), and the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments.

Exceptions- Facilities for all users will be included in the construction, reconstruction, retrofit, repaving, and rehabilitation of Town streets except under one or more of the following conditions:

- Accommodations that are not necessary on corridors where specific user groups are prohibited.
- Documentation that there is an absence of a current or future need.
- The cost for accommodations for a particular mode is excessively disproportionate to the need and potential benefit of a project.
- The project involves ordinary maintenance activity designed to keep improvements in an acceptable condition such as cleaning, sealing, patching, and micro-surfacing.

GOALS

The goal of Stonington's *Complete Street* policy is to create and build a culture that will rebalance transportation modes providing safe access for all users.

Specific goals are the following:

1. To make Stonington roads safer by requiring all new construction and reconstruction, retrofit, and maintenance projects to consider and incorporate the needs of all modes of transportation and all users of the road network.
2. Develop a multimodal transportation network plan with the assistance of all Town departments and commissions.
3. Establish a Stonington Streets subcommittee advisory group with input from the Plan of Conservation and Development Implementation Committee (POCD) and other Town commissions.
4. Regularly include Stonington *Complete Streets* guided improvements in routine repairs and roadways maintenance, including crosswalk repainting, signage installation and improvements, lighting audits and updates, and sidewalk and curb ramp repair and improvements.

5. Education and engagement with the community and stakeholders.
6. Establish a consistent and reliable communication chain with the LTA (Local Traffic Authority), CT DOT, our state departments, and the District 2 office. Inform CT DOT of the Town's Commitment to *Complete Streets* and recommend that CT DOT to apply *Complete Streets* improvements on state rights-of-way (ROW) within the Town.

JURISDICTION

This *Complete Streets* Policy shall apply to all Town owned streets and land within the public ROW. All *Complete Streets* improvements must be coordinated between all relevant Town of Stonington departments such as, but not limited to, Public Works, Planning Department, Police Department, Emergency management, Public Health, Tree Warden, and Senior Services. All new private development projects, which propose improvements within the public ROW, shall comply with this *Complete Streets* policy. Approval of necessary permits shall be contingent upon meeting the *Complete Streets* requirements. Private development projects proposing privately owned ROWs are required to be reviewed for consistency with the Complete Streets policy as part of the approval process. Owners of private streets shall also be encouraged to adhere to this policy. The State of Connecticut controls several principal transportation corridors that traverse Stonington. The Department of Public Works and Planning Department will work cooperatively with the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CT DOT) to plan and recommend the implementation of these *Complete Streets* improvements within these ROWs. Public Act PA 09-154 and the CT DOT *Complete Streets* Policy shall be applied to all planning, design, construction and major maintenance within State controlled ROWs.

Utility companies' planning, construction, and major maintenance can create both opportunities and barriers to *Complete Streets* improvements. The Department of Public Works and Planning Department shall coordinate with the utility companies to ensure that projects and *Complete Streets* improvements are coordinated. The First Selectman, Department of Public Works and Planning Department shall also coordinate *Complete Streets* planning and construction with the SCCOG, and adjacent municipalities to facilitate effective application of resources.

DESIGN GUIDANCE

Complete Streets initiatives within public ROWs shall conform to the following standards:

AASHTO | American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials

FHWA | Federal Highway Administration

MUTCD | Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices

NACTO | National Association of City Transportation Officials

DIVERSE USERS AND MODES

This herein policy is established to ensure and guide that all streets within the Town's jurisdiction are built to prioritize all road users, regardless of mode of transportation. Specific areas should be

prioritized to provide greater equity, provided the population's socioeconomic need and reliance on alternative transportation methods. Stonington's *Complete Streets* policy provides equity for all road users regardless of limitations connected to income, age, race, location of residence, education, or sex. Direct routes to destinations are essential to the design of the transportation networks. Safety and equity is prioritized for all Stonington road users, coupled with mobility.

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2. Pedestrian needs are required to receive prioritization, then followed by prioritization of the next most vulnerable user in each case in accordance with Connecticut-mandated law.
3. Strive to remove bias through public education and awareness to create a frictionless system, affording greater accessibility to active transportation modes.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION & MANDATED COORDINATION

In Stonington, there is an overlap between state and town jurisdiction and coordination of the local transportation network. This comprises of Stonington's Public Works, Planning & Zoning, Police Commission as the LTA, Police Department, First Selectman, Town Planner, Grant Administrator, and others. All work is guided by how projects align within the Town's POCD. This also includes coordination with the CT DOT and the SCCOG. The community's local active transportation advocacy group, Bike Stonington, also stands as a supporting ally to bring perspective to transportation equity issues and proposed solutions at a local level.

The implementation of *Complete Streets* will require cooperation and collaboration between many stakeholders on a regular basis. As such, the Board of Selectmen will take the following steps to facilitate the process:

- a) Implement and review the *Complete Streets* Policy within POCD updates and through the Implementation Committee.
- b) Support a Complete Streets Sub-Committee of the POCD to ensure the goals of the POCD are actioned and consistently reviewed.
- c) The head of the Planning Department and, as relevant, the Planning & Zoning Commission shall review and propose revisions to all appropriate land use ordinances, policies and regulations to support the implementation of *Complete Streets*.
- d) The Public Works and Planning Departments shall establish necessary procedures to ensure the application of *Complete Streets* principles at the earliest design stage.
- e) The Director of Administrative Services, along with the First Selectman, shall encourage staff professional development in the area of *Complete Streets* through attendance at seminars, conferences and workshops.
- f) The Board of Selectmen, in coordination with relevant town Departments and Boards, shall actively promote public information and education and solicit feedback about *Complete Streets* to the community using outreach strategies that make use of natural gathering spaces. Meetings should provide the ability for townspeople to attend and participate virtually when feasible.

Complete Streets Policy is intended to be the **default** approach for all projects, removing barriers to design, implementation, and funding. This requires a shared understanding and vision in leadership, education, outreach, and departmental coordination. All users and modes of transportation are to be thought of and prioritized within all project phases, including construction disruptions to the normal flow of the transportation network.

The *Complete Streets* Policy will be implemented:

1. Within two (2) years of the effective date of this policy, there shall be an inventory and audit all applicable procedures, policies, plans, ordinances, documents, training programs, performance measures, and other guidance documents to be consistent with this policy. The purpose of this audit is to identify areas where tenets of this policy need to be incorporated. This includes, but is not limited to, funding, planning, designing, operating, and maintaining transportation infrastructure as well as potential updates or revisions to the zoning code. This audit will be used to incorporate this policy into updates to various Town procedures, plans, and policies as they are scheduled. As part of this work, there will be a *Complete Streets* Plan created in accordance with CT regulations.

2. The Department of Public Works, in cooperation with the Town's LTA, Planning Department and Commission, shall review current design standards and amend them as necessary using the sources identified in the Design Standards section of this document. This acts to ensure that they are compliant with the *Complete Streets* Policy. All maintenance and ongoing operational projects account for the needs of all network users and modes of transportation within these projects:

- Resurfacing
- Repaving
- Restriping
- Rehabilitation
- Sidewalk Additions
- Maintenance
- Other types of changes to the transportation system

Within construction disruptions, all users and modes of transportation are to be provided safe and efficient travel alternatives that prioritize not infringing on the ROW or sidewalk.

3. Relevant Town Departments, in coordination with relevant Commissions, shall offer educational opportunities including, but not limited to workshops, training, and webinars on active transportation and *Complete Streets* learning opportunities for Town employees, community organizations, and the public.

4. The First Selectman shall work with relevant Town staff to identify potential sources of funding for both short- and long-term projects, as well as recommend improvements to the project selection criteria as described in the Project Selection Criteria section of this document.

CRITERIA FOR PROJECT SELECTIONS

Relevant Town Departments, in coordination with relevant Commissions, shall identify projects to be pursued during each fiscal year. These projects shall be ranked in order of potential impact, cost and feasibility and shared as part of the budget process. Selected projects may include, but are not limited to, those identified in the Town's Complete Streets Plan. Additionally, funding shall be considered for projects that benefit underserved populations, seeking to alleviate disparities in health, safety and economic opportunity and optimize connections both within and between different neighborhood and land uses.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The First Selectman, Director of Public Works and Town Planner, with input from additional Town staff and Commissions, shall develop a written, annual review that evaluates the implementation of the *Complete Streets* Policy and identifies benchmarks to ensure successful implementation in the coming year. Each annual review shall list ongoing and completed transportation projects during that fiscal year. If any exceptions are applied to transportation projects pursuant to Exceptions to *Complete Streets* Requirements herein, such projects and the relevant exceptions should be identified in the annual report. The Town shall assign appropriate responsibility to collect and monitor data to determine compliance with the benchmarks identified in the annual review. Such benchmarks may include, but are not limited to:

- Mileage of new and existing bicycle infrastructure, (e.g., on street bicycle lanes, bicycle parking, and off-street paths and trails).
- Linear feet (or mileage) of new and existing pedestrian infrastructure (e.g., sidewalks, trails, transit amenities).
- Number of new and existing ADA-compliant infrastructure (e.g., curb ramps, pedestrian buttons)
- Number of pedestrian and bicycle lighting improvements.
- Number of bicycle amenities, such as repair stations and storage racks.
- The number and percentage of designated transit stops accessible via sidewalks and curb ramps.
- The number, locations, and causes of collisions, injuries, and fatalities by each mode of transportation.
- Percentage of children walking or bicycling to school.
- Percentage of adults walking, bicycling, carpooling/ridesharing, or riding public transit to work.

Adopted by Board of Selectmen November 8, 2023