

BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION POLICY

REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL



Blue Ribbon Committee on Transportation Policy

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BACKGROUND AND COMMITTEE CHARGE

The Blue Ribbon Committee on Transportation Policy was re-established by Mayor Spear in August 2012 with a sunset date of April 15, 2013. At that time, the Committee was charged to develop policies, principles and positions for the City's approach to transportation, including but not limited to:

- Public transportation options
- Access for bicycle and pedestrian travel
- Parking availability and access
- Control/management of traffic
- Travel routes through the City
- "Complete Streets" / Sustainable Design

The committee was comprised of the following members: Councilor Ken Smith (Chair), Councilor Brad Lown, Bill Lyons, Rick Chellman, Paige Roberts, Cliff Sinnott and Eric Gregg.

The Committee held its first meeting in September 2012 and met monthly through April 2013.

KEY TOPICS DISCUSSED

Over the course of six meetings, the Committee heard presentations from staff and others on the following topics, and discussed how these topics might be included in transportation policies for the City of Portsmouth:

- Transportation policies and strategies contained in the 2005 Master Plan, and considerations for the 2015 Master Plan (in progress)
- "Complete Streets" policies
- Planning for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Sustainable transportation
- Street classifications and design standards
- "Green Streets" and Low Impact Development (LID)
- Traffic calming
- The interaction between land use policies and transportation
- Public transportation
- Regional coordination in transportation planning and funding

The following sections summarize the information presented and discussed, and identify the related policy recommendations presented later in this report.

MASTER PLAN TRANSPORTATION POLICIES AND STRATEGIES¹

Under NH state law, the Planning Board is required to prepare and periodically amend and update a Master Plan – a set of goals, objectives and strategies that together guide development in the City. The City updates its Master Plan every 10 years, and the Planning Board and City Council adopted the last Master Plan update in 2005. In February 2013 the Planning Department began the process of developing the next update, which will be under way for the next two years. The City’s Master Planning process begins with the completion of an Existing Conditions and Trends report that compiles current available data on the topics covered in the Master Plan; presents growth projections; and identifies key issues that the City should address in the coming decade. The Master Plan then presents a Vision statement, Goals and Objectives, and an Implementation Program. The Plan is organized around topical areas that include: Land Use, Housing, Economic Development, Transportation, Community Facilities and Services, Natural Resources and Open Space, Natural Hazards and Emergency Management, Recreation, and Cultural and Historic Resources. As with the rest of the Master Plan, the Transportation goals, objectives, and strategies overlap with other topical areas. The Master Plan demonstrates how transportation systems both shape and are shaped by the City’s historical and future growth and development.

Transportation priorities identified in the 2005 Plan focused on increasing walkability, providing a range of transportation options, and resolving parking issues. Transportation-related policies and strategies addressed four key areas: infrastructure, regulations and standards, public transit, bicycle and pedestrian systems, and parking.

The Committee reviewed the 2005 Master Plan Implementation Program, which included 56 transportation-related strategies, and discussed the status or progress made on each strategy. The Committee discussed how the Committee’s recommendations can support and inform the Master Plan update. The Committee also considered whether priorities have shifted since 2005 and discussed the benefits of providing performance measures or other indicators to gauge whether a strategy has been successfully implemented.

Many of the topics covered in subsequent meetings of the Committee were included in the 2005 Master Plan recommendations.

Related Recommendations (see Committee Recommendations section)

1. Integrate transportation goals into land use planning and management by updating the Master Plan, which will include an update of transportation data and baseline information and a revision of transportation goals, objectives, and strategies.
8. Track progress and measure effectiveness of strategies to support transportation goals.

¹ Appendix C: Item 1

COMPLETE STREETS²

Complete Streets are streets that are safe, comfortable, and convenient for travel for everyone – motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation riders. They incorporate safe and accessible pathways. They are designed to be context appropriate.

The transportation-related objectives in the 2005 Master Plan included a Complete Streets statement, and the Planning Board’s site plan review regulations were revised in January 2012 to incorporate a Complete Streets policy statement.

The Committee discussed Complete Streets concepts and principles and considered the relationship to other transportation policies, such as improving bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, calming traffic, implementing street design standards, and supporting sustainability.

The Committee reviewed a Complete Streets Policy drafted by the Planning Department for the City. In adopting this policy, the City would commit to following nationally recognized street design standards and reference best practices in street management.

Related Recommendation (see Committee Recommendations section)

2. Support creation of Complete Streets through adoption of a Complete Streets Policy.

BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN PLANNING³

In addition to the Master Plan, bicycle and pedestrian recommendations are included in the City’s Safe Routes to School Action Plan (2010), which focuses on strategies to encourage students in grades K through 8 to walk or bicycle to school. Bicycle and pedestrian planning is also supported in the Transportation Vision report produced by Sustainable Portsmouth in 2011.

The Committee considered the benefits of completing a Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan which would:

- Take a comprehensive inventory of all of the City’s bicycle and pedestrian accommodations;
- Evaluate how well the City is serving bicyclist and pedestrian needs;
- Prioritize and schedule improvements on a system-wide basis.

A Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan can help to guide capital investments and identify additional funding options. The Plan would be a tool for coordinating city-wide projects, policies, and programs related to active transportation. This Plan would also provide a way for the City to evaluate and measure progress towards improving bicycle/pedestrian amenities.

Related Recommendation (see Committee Recommendations section)

3. Improve the City’s walkability and bikability and expand bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure connections throughout the City and the region by creating a bicycle/pedestrian master plan, ongoing participation in Safe Routes to School programs, Bicycle Friendly and Walk Friendly Community Designations.

² Appendix C: Item 2

³ Appendix C: Item 3

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION⁴

The grassroots Sustainable Portsmouth group has produced a five-year plan that outlines strategies to help the City achieve sustainability goals (balancing economy, environment, and equity) by supporting sustainable transportation policies and positions. The plan acknowledges that achieving sustainable transportation requires partnerships with the public sector that plans and invests in transportation as well as private sector businesses either operating transportation or directly involved in transportation. The plan envisions a future where public transit, walking, and biking play significant roles in the Portsmouth's transportation system.

Sustainable transportation was also the focus of the report, *Bridging Our Communities*, which was produced as an outcome of the Regional Transportation Dialogue in 2012 organized by Portsmouth Listens and Sustainable Portsmouth.

Adopting a system-based approach to transportation is a way to incorporate sustainable principles into transportation planning and management. A systems-approach envisions individual transportation components as part of a regional, inter-connected, and balanced system that includes facilities for driving, public transit, walking, biking, and parking.

The Committee discussed the use of indicators and baseline measurements presented in the plans as a means of gauging whether or not specific actions are effective and have the desired impact. The Committee also discussed the importance of regional collaboration to achieve shared transportation goals.

Related Recommendations (see Committee Recommendations section)

2. Support creation of Complete Streets that are designed 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 a street.
3. Improve the City's walkability and bikability and expand bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure connections throughout the City and the region.
5. Improve the efficiency, convenience, and affordability of regional public transportation facilities and services.
7. Provide sufficient parking to support a balanced multi-modal transportation system.
8. Track progress and measure effectiveness of strategies to support transportation goals.

STREET CLASSIFICATIONS AND DESIGN STANDARDS⁵

Functional street classification systems use a hierarchy based on vehicle movement and property access. These systems are used to design roads that support different speeds, volumes, and types of traffic. Roads are classified as urban or rural first and then by whether they are a collector, arterial, or local. In addition, arterials are classified as minor or principal arterials. Arterial roads are those with highest speeds, longer trips and accommodate the greatest number of trips and all types of motorized vehicles. Collector roads provide a balance between access and mobility – speeds are a little slower, trips are a little shorter, and there are a moderate number of access points (side roads or driveways). Local streets provide easy access to individual properties (high number of access points) and generally have slow speeds and shorter travel distances.

⁴ Appendix C: Items 4-6

⁵ Appendix C: Item 7

In conventional classification systems, the functional street classes are used to recommend values for lane width, posted speeds, geometric design, and intersection design.

Currently, the City does not have a city-specific functional classification for its streets, other than what is defined by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation using the conventional (federal) system of classifying roads as arterials, collectors and local streets. As an example, Woodbury Avenue is classified as a minor arterial. Woodbury Avenue is interconnected with and provides access to principal arterials.

Within the local street network there is great variety of design due to historical development patterns. The Portsmouth Subdivision Regulations provide minimum standards for new streets based on land uses (residential, commercial, industrial).

The Committee discussed some of the shortcomings of the current street standards:

- Apply only to new streets;
- Provide no guidance for retrofits of existing streets and related improvements (e.g. street trees, street furniture, traffic controls, bike and pedestrian facilities);
- May not reflect current related City practices such as the Public Works Department's roadway and sidewalk construction design standards and the City Council's policy related to sidewalk materials.

“Complete Streets” standards add additional criteria beyond the traditional classifications, considering the character of the street and street frontage, accommodations for all types of users (both vehicular and non-vehicular), in addition to adjacent land uses and traffic volumes (see section on Traffic Calming below).

Various cities including Charlotte, San Francisco, Seattle and New York City, have adopted their own local street design standards. Some of the standards give guidelines on movement, context and land use. Others stress right-of-way improvements and travel-way guidance.

The Committee discussed the benefits of providing street design standards that are appropriate to the local context and that incorporate traffic calming (see section on Traffic Calming below).

Related Recommendations (see Committee Recommendations section)

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Support creation of Complete Streets that are designed 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 a street.4. Provide context-sensitive guidance on street design and management including development of a local street classification system and updating of street design standards. |
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GREEN STREETS⁶

“Green Streets” is an approach to street design that serves environmental sustainability goals. It often refers to Low Impact Design (LID) techniques which address drainage and stormwater runoff issues.

Optimal stormwater management looks beyond simply removing rainfall as quickly as possible (which risks negative environmental impacts associated with both stormwater quality and quantity). Instead it focuses on efforts to retain and treat – or even eliminate – runoff at the source through cost-effective green infrastructure.

Sustainable features of Green Street design include reducing the amount of pavement by narrowing the road width or incorporating pervious surfaces, maximizing pavement reflectivity, incorporating landscaping that helps treat stormwater at the source, accommodating low-emission travel modes.

The Committee discussed recent and existing development projects and recent street improvement projects in the City that have incorporated low impact design techniques and that this can also have the added benefit of reducing infrastructure costs in some cases.

Related Recommendation (see Committee Recommendations section)

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| 4. Provide context-sensitive guidance on design of streets that consider environmental impacts and include standards for landscaping and managing stormwater quality and quantity. |
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TRAFFIC CALMING⁷

As defined by the Institute of Transportation Engineers, “traffic calming” involves implementing physical measures to control traffic speeds or volumes. It does not include non-structural measures such as speed limits, enforcement, and driver education.

Different types of traffic calming address volume control and speed control. Volume control is primarily related to restricting access such as with full street or partial (or one-way) closures, by constructing median barriers or forced-turn islands that prevent traffic from certain movements when approaching an intersection. Speed control may involve vertical deflection (e.g. speed humps), textured pavements, and horizontal deflection (e.g. roundabouts), and road or lane narrowing.

The Committee discussed the advantages and disadvantages of these different types of controls for pedestrians and bicyclists and the added challenges for street maintenance that some of these measures present. The Committee also considered the benefits of using these types of controls as opposed to relying on stricter traffic enforcement. The Committee also discussed the possibility of converting existing one-way streets in certain areas of the downtown and whether that had potential to improve circulation and calm traffic.

⁶ Appendix C: Item 8

⁷ Appendix C: Item 9

Related Recommendations (see Committee Recommendations section)

2. Support creation of Complete Streets that are designed 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 a street.
4. Provide context-sensitive guidance on street design and management including development of a local street classification system and updating of street design standards.

LAND USE POLICIES⁸

Areas where land use and transportation interact include the road network and the area along the roadway. The adjacent land uses will influence the type of vehicle and non-vehicle travel and the design of the roadway. The manner and degree of pedestrian accommodations will be influenced by the types of adjacent land uses and the dimensional characteristics of the built environment. The manner and degree to which bicycle are accommodated are influenced by the type and capacity of the road network. The location and routing of public transit is influenced by the context of the land uses and populations they are intended to serve.

The Committee discussed how land use policies can influence which transportation modes people choose. For example, the proximity of employment centers to transportation networks will influence mode choice and demand. The design and siting of buildings can determine how pedestrians and/or bikes are accommodated. Parking requirements can influence how buildings are sited and where different types of land uses are located. In addition, the committee discussed how parking supply and demand is impacted by land uses and can also be a factor in transportation mode choices.

Related Recommendation (see Committee Recommendations section)

1. Integrate transportation goals into land use planning and management.
7. Provide sufficient parking in the downtown to support a balanced multi-modal transportation system.

TRANSPORTATION DATA / INDICATORS⁹

Transportation data includes information on transportation mode choices, traffic counts, accident locations, and planned infrastructure improvements. This data comes from a variety of local, state, and federal agencies as well as private sources.

The Committee discussed the challenges of gathering reliable and up-to-date data regarding transportation mode choices and preferences. Tracking data on a consistent and regular basis is important for determining the impact of transportation policies and projects.

Related Recommendation (see Committee Recommendations section)

8. Track progress and measure effectiveness of strategies to support transportation goals.

⁸ Appendix C: Item 10

⁹ Appendix C: Item 11

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION¹⁰

Public transportation available in Portsmouth consists primarily of bus service. Bus routes include COAST and Wildcat regional fixed routes, COAST's seasonal downtown service, intercity service from C&J Trailways and Greyhound, senior/paratransit transportation provided by COAST, and a City partnership with the Mark Wentworth Home.

COAST (Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation) was established and incorporated as a non-profit in 1981 and was established as an independent public agency by the NH legislature in 1985. COAST is overseen by a Board of Directors that includes representatives from the City of Portsmouth and other communities in the service region. COAST services are funded through federal and local public funds as well as through farebox and advertising revenues.

Fixed-route service in Portsmouth includes COAST's regional Routes 2 and 7, COAST's local "trolley" service (Routes 40/41), and Wildcat Transit's regional Route 4. COAST Route 2 provides service between Portsmouth and Rochester and has an annual ridership of 169,000. COAST Route 7 provides service between the Portsmouth Transportation Center, the Fox Run Mall and Greenland, Newmarket, Stratham, and Exeter and has an annual ridership of about 9,000. COAST Routes 40 and 41 operate within Portsmouth city limits and provide service between the downtown, Pease Tradeport, and along Lafayette Road, with a combined annual ridership of about 121,900.

COAST recently started a pilot project (the Clipper Connection) that provides express service for the commuter population heading to and from the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and the businesses of Pease Tradeport. These routes operate only during morning and afternoon peak hours.

Paratransit (ADA) services provided by COAST include a reduced fare on fixed routes as well as reservation-based service for eligible riders within $\frac{3}{4}$ a mile of a fixed bus route.

Senior transportation is provided through a City partnership with the Mark Wentworth Home. The service is reservation based and operates 4 days a week.

Wildcat Transit's Route 4 connects from downtown Portsmouth to UNH and is free for students and faculty.

The communities served by COAST provide a local annual funding contribution that helps to support the fixed route and paratransit services. Each community's share of local funding is calculated using a blended average of four factors: population residing within one-half mile of bus routes, employment within one-half mile of bus routes, weekly service miles provided within the community, and number of riders boarding within the community.

In addition to the local match for the regional fixed route and paratransit services, Portsmouth also shares the costs for the Downtown Trolley (which operates in the summer months) as well as the Vintage Christmas Trolley (which operates during the month of December). The cost of Routes 40 and 41 are shared between the City and the Pease Development Authority.

¹⁰ Appendix C: Item 12

The Portsmouth Transportation Center is owned by the NHDOT and operated by C&J Trailways. COAST buses stop at this location as well. Greyhound provides intercity service out of downtown Portsmouth with a stop at the High Hanover Parking Garage.

The Committee discussed the rising costs of public transportation as well as the opportunities for increasing revenues and ridership. It is important for the City and regional transportation providers to continue to collaborate to provide multi-modal transportation alternatives. The Committee also considered how public transportation facilities are integral components of a sustainable transportation system, which also includes parking, bicycle lanes and paths, pedestrian areas, rail, as well as bridges and roads.

Related Recommendations (see Committee Recommendations section)

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">5. Provide efficient, convenient, affordable, and accessible local and regional public transportation facilities and services.6. Provide leadership for regional collaboration to improve connections between local and regional transportation systems. |
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REGIONAL COORDINATION¹¹

Regional transportation infrastructure includes the federal and state highway systems, rail, and airports. Within Portsmouth at present, active rail is exclusively used for freight and there are no immediate plans to add passenger rail service. Amtrak provides passenger service out of Dover and Exeter, and C&J Trailways buses provide connections from Portsmouth to those locations. Passenger airlines do not currently operate out of Portsmouth, although the Pease Airport terminal is equipped for passenger service.

Portsmouth is part of an Urbanized Area (UZA) as defined by the Census Bureau following the conclusion of each decennial census. UZAs are Census-designated areas consisting of a central core and adjacent densely settled territory that together contain at least 50,000 residents. Within UZAs, transportation projects that utilize federal funding are coordinated through a “metropolitan transportation planning” process that involves participation from the community level to the state level to determine transportation priorities. Designated Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) carry out the metropolitan planning process. The Portsmouth region’s designated MPO is the Rockingham Planning Commission. Key elements of the region’s metropolitan planning process include development of a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), updating of a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), implementation of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), planning for congestion management, monitoring of air quality, and Travel Demand Modeling.

The criteria currently used by the MPO to evaluate regional transportation priorities consist of:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Project Feasibility & Readiness | Mobility (multimodal) |
| Accessibility (multimodal) | Congestion |
| Safety | Preservation of Infrastructure |
| Land Use/Transportation Integration | |

¹¹ Appendix C: Item 13

The Committee discussed the importance for ongoing regional collaboration as well as the challenges presented by decreasing state and federal funding for transportation infrastructure.

Related Recommendation (see Committee Recommendations section)

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| 6. Provide leadership for regional collaboration to improve connections between local and regional transportation systems. |
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COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

GOALS

- Provide a transportation network that is safe and accessible for all people and all transportation modes.
- Design transportation infrastructure that supports economic vitality and is sensitive to community and environmental context.
- Provide affordable and convenient options for all transportation modes.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES

1. Integrate transportation goals into land use planning and management.

Strategies

- Incorporate the recommendations of this report into city-wide land use planning in order to maximize the opportunities presented by redevelopment to achieve the City's transportation goals
- Update the Master Plan to address the recommendations of this report:
 - Update transportation data and baseline information to address issues identified in this report.
 - Revise transportation goals, objectives, and strategies to reflect relevant recommendations of this report.
- Revise site plan review and subdivision regulations to implement relevant recommendations of this report including improvements to access management, connectivity and circulation.

2. Support creation of Complete Streets that are designed 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 a street.

Strategies

- Adopt a Complete Streets policy (see recommended resolution in Appendix A, item 1).
- Ensure that the design of transportation projects on public streets within the City, including those funded and managed by NHDOT and private parties as well as by the City, are consistent with the Complete Streets policy.
- Consider designation of key transportation corridors leading into the downtown in which to focus investments in pedestrian, bicycle, and transit components.
- Evaluate the feasibility, potential benefits, and cost implications of converting one-way streets in the downtown core to two-way traffic.

3. Improve the City's walkability and bikability and expand bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure connections throughout the City and the region.

Strategies

- Develop a city-wide bicycle and pedestrian plan:
 - Identify bicycle and pedestrian needs and deficiencies;

- Identify and prioritize bicycle and pedestrian facility improvements, including sidewalks, crosswalks, on-road bike lanes, shared use paths and bicycle parking;
 - Develop standards and guidelines for bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including bicycle parking;
 - Develop standards for bicycle signage on roadways, such as Share the Road;
 - Estimate implementation costs and identify funding sources, responsibilities and phasing.
- Pursue designation as a Bicycle Friendly Community
 - Adopt a Bicycle Friendly Communities Action Plan (see Appendix A, item 2).
 - Submit application for Bicycle Friendly Communities Designation in 2014.
 - Pursue designation as a Walk Friendly Community
 - Adopt a Walk Friendly Communities Action Plan (see Appendix A, item 3).
 - Submit application for Walk Friendly Communities designation in 2014.
 - Continue active participation in Safe Routes to School Program to encourage and facilitate students to walk or bike to and from school.
 - Work with Rockingham Planning Commission / Metropolitan Planning Organization to develop appropriate connections between bicycle routes in the City and regional bicycle and recreational trail routes, including the New Hampshire Seacoast Greenway and future Hampton Branch rail-to-trail.
4. Provide context-sensitive guidance on design of streets that considers abutting land uses, neighborhood character, and environmental impacts.

Strategies

- Develop a local classification system for City streets.
 - Develop design standards for each street class including street and travel lane widths, accommodations for bicycles and transit, sidewalks, intersections and landscaping.
 - Continue to develop and implement innovative standards for managing stormwater quality and quantity.
5. Provide efficient, convenient, and affordable regional public transportation facilities and services.

Strategies

- Work with public transit providers to eliminate service redundancies and increase efficiencies, increase public transit ridership, and improve public transit infrastructure.
- Continue ongoing collaboration with COAST including exploring opportunities for new services.
- Work with COAST to ensure acceptable access to and from transit stops and the adjacent sidewalk networks for passengers that are mobility impaired.

6. Provide leadership for regional collaboration to improve connections between local and regional transportation systems.

Strategies

- Continue active representation and participation in Rockingham Planning Commission metropolitan transportation planning process including priority-setting for State and Federal investments in the regional transportation system.
- Continue active representation and participation in inter-community and inter-state transportation projects.
- Provide opportunities to inform and engage community members in planning for regional transportation projects.

7. Provide sufficient parking in the downtown area to support a balanced multi-modal transportation system.

Strategies

- Ensure that development and redevelopment projects implemented in the Central Business District are consistent with the City Council's Guiding Principles for Parking in the CBD (see Appendix A, item 4).
- Identify opportunities for building and/or expanding public parking structures in the downtown core.

8. Track progress and measure effectiveness of strategies to support transportation goals.

Strategies

- Work with regional and state partners including Rockingham Planning Commission, Seacoast Commuter Options Transportation Management Association, NHDOT, COAST and Commute Green NH to collect and analysis data on transportation choices and practices.
- Develop a set of indicators related to transportation initiatives to measure success.

APPENDIX A: RECOMMENDED POLICIES AND STANDARDS

1. Draft Complete Streets Policy
2. Bicycle Friendly Communities Action Plan
3. Walk Friendly Communities Action Plan
4. City Council Guiding Principles for Parking in the Central Business District (Approved March 19, 2012)

DRAFT COMPLETE STREETS 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 the 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)
- 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 activities 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.

ACTION PLAN FOR BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

We, the undersigned municipal elected officials, make decisions every day affecting the health and safety of our residents, the efficient conduct of commerce and delivery of government services, and the long term quality of life in our communities.

Cities across the globe are managing diverse issues such as pollution, congestion, traffic safety, accessibility, social inclusion, and economic growth. Increasing urbanization and sprawl is generating extra demand for quality public spaces and recreation opportunities. A renewed emphasis on security and the costs of dealing with the emerging epidemics of obesity and physical inactivity are stretching limited resources even further.

Solutions to these many challenges are equally diverse and complex. This Action Plan recognizes one policy initiative that addresses these challenges and contributes to many of the solutions necessary to improve the quality of life in cities: increasing the percentage of trips made by bicycle by making communities more bicycle-friendly.

We recognize that increasing bicycle use can:

- Improve the environment by reducing the impact on residents of pollution and noise, limiting greenhouse gases, and improving the quality of public spaces.
- Reduce congestion by shifting short trips (the majority of trips in cities) out of cars. This will also make cities more accessible for public transport, walking, essential car travel, emergency services, and deliveries.
- Save lives by creating safer conditions for bicyclists and as a direct consequence improve the safety of all other road users. Research shows that increasing the number of bicyclists on the street improves bicycle safety.
- Increase opportunities for residents of all ages to participate socially and economically in the community, regardless income or ability. Greater choice of travel modes also increases independence, especially among seniors and children.
- Boost the economy by creating a community that is an attractive destination for new residents, tourists and businesses.
- Enhance recreational opportunities, especially for children, and further contribute to the quality of life in the community.
- Save city funds by increasing the efficient use of public space, reducing the need for costly new road infrastructure, preventing crashes, improving the health of the community, and increasing the use of public transport.
- Enhance public safety and security by increasing the number of “eyes on the street” and providing more options for movement in the event of emergencies, natural disasters, and major public events.
- Improve the health and well being of the population by promoting routine physical activity.

Therefore we, the undersigned municipal elected officials, are committed to taking the following steps to improve conditions for bicycling and thus to realizing the significant potential benefits of bicycling in our community. We hereby adopt the following Action Plan for Bicycle Friendly Communities:

1. Adopt a target level of bicycle use (e.g. percent of trips) and safety to be achieved within a specific timeframe, and improve data collection necessary to monitor progress.
2. Provide safe and convenient bicycle access to all parts of the community through a signed network of on-and off-street facilities, low-speed streets, and secure parking. Local cyclists should be involved in identifying maintenance needs and ongoing improvements.
3. Establish information programs to promote bicycling for all purposes, and to communicate the many benefits of bicycling to residents and businesses (e.g. with bicycle maps, public relations campaigns, neighborhood rides, a ride with the Mayor).
4. Make the City a model employer by encouraging bicycle use among its employees (e.g. by providing parking, showers and lockers, and establishing a city bicycle fleet).
5. Ensure all city policies, plans, codes, and programs are updated and implemented to take advantage of every opportunity to create a more bicycle-friendly community. Staff in all departments should be offered training to better enable them to complete this task.
6. Educate all road users to share the road and interact safely. Road design and education programs should combine to increase the confidence of bicyclists.
7. Enforce traffic laws to improve the safety and comfort of all road users, with a particular focus on behaviors and attitudes that cause motor vehicle/bicycle crashes.
8. Develop special programs to encourage bicycle use in communities where significant segments of the population do not drive (e.g. through Safe Routes to Schools programs) and where short trips are most common.
9. Promote intermodal travel between public transport and bicycles, e.g. by putting bike racks on buses, improving parking at transit, and improving access to rail and public transport vehicles.
10. Establish a citywide, multi-disciplinary committee for nonmotorized mobility to submit to the City Council a regular evaluation and action plan for completing the items in this Action Plan.

ACTION PLAN FOR WALK FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

We, the undersigned municipal elected officials recognize the benefits of walking as a key indicator of healthy, efficient, socially inclusive and sustainable communities and acknowledge the universal rights of people to be able to walk safely and to enjoy high quality public spaces anywhere and at anytime. We are committed to reducing the physical, social and institutional barriers that limit walking activity. We will work with others to help create a culture where people choose to walk through our commitment to this Action Plan and its strategic principles:

- Increased inclusive mobility
- Well designed and managed spaces and places for people
- Improved integration of networks
- Supportive land-use and spatial planning
- Reduced road danger
- Less crime and fear of crime
- More supportive authorities
- A culture of walking

Therefore we, the undersigned municipal elected officials, are committed to taking the following steps to improve conditions for walking and thus to realizing the significant potential benefits of walking in our community. We hereby adopt the following Action Plan for Walk Friendly Communities:

- Provide clean, well-lit sidewalks free from obstruction, and with sufficient opportunities to cross roads safely and directly;
- Ensure seating is provided in outdoor public spaces in quantities and locations that meet the needs of all users;
- Provide protection for pedestrians from weather and climate elements with landscaping and facilities as appropriate (for example shade (trees) or shelter);
- Provide coherent and consistent information and signage systems to support exploration and discovery on foot including links to public transportation;
- Build and maintain high-quality networks of connected, functional and safe walking routes between residential areas and local destinations;
- Provide an integrated, extensive and well-equipped public transportation service with vehicles which are fully accessible to all potential users;
- Design public transport stops and interchanges with easy, safe and convenient pedestrian access and supportive information;
- Encourage a pedestrian-friendly driving culture with targeted campaigns and enforcement of road traffic laws;
- Maintain reduced traffic speeds in residential districts, shopping streets and around schools;
- Reduce the impact of busy roads by installing sufficient safe crossing points, ensuring minimal waiting times and enough time to cross for the slowest pedestrians;

- Ensure that facilities designed for cyclists and other non-motorized modes do not compromise pedestrian safety or convenience;
- Conduct pedestrian audits by day and after dark to identify concerns for personal security and then target areas for improvements (for example, with brighter lighting and clearer sightlines);
- Provide training and information for transport professionals to increase awareness of the concerns of pedestrians for their personal security and the impact of such concerns on their decisions to walk;
- Involve all relevant agencies (especially transport, planning, health, education and police), at all levels, to recognize the importance of supporting and encouraging walking and to encourage complementary policies and actions;
- Consult on a regular basis with local organizations representing people on foot and other relevant groups including young people, the elderly and those with limited ability;
- Collect quantitative and qualitative data about walking (including the motivations and purpose of trips, the number of trips, trip stages, time and distance walked, time spent in public spaces and levels of satisfaction);
- Actively encourage all members of the community to walk whenever and wherever they can as a part of their daily lives by developing regular creative, targeted information, in a way that responds to their personal needs and engages personal support;
- Create a positive image of walking by celebrating walking as part of cultural heritage and as a cultural event, for example, in architecture, art-exhibitions, theatres, literature readings, photography and street animation.

GUIDING PARKING PRINCIPLES FOR CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS

(Approved by the Portsmouth City Council on March 19, 2012)

Overall Principles: A balanced mix of retail/restaurant, office, and residential uses is key to downtown vitality.

A downtown parking supply that is convenient, viable and central to downtown destinations is key to the short-term and long-term health of the City's retail, restaurant and office economy.

1. Insuring an adequate supply of parking for retail/restaurant and office users in the downtown is primarily a City responsibility.
2. Parking for new downtown residential development is primarily a private responsibility with residents wanting convenient parking right where they live.
3. We need to plan for future reuse, redevelopment and full occupancy of buildings in the Central Business Districts. If it is too difficult, expensive or unpleasant to find parking, retail/restaurant/cultural destination customers may prefer to visit elsewhere and offices may prefer to locate elsewhere.
4. The City should strive to play a lead role in developing and managing parking facilities:
 - Parking management and supply decisions are interconnected and a comprehensive, unified approach to decision-making is needed.
 - The value of private parking facilities should be recognized as a resource. These resources are not part of the public parking supply under the City's long-term control and opportunities to manage private lots are limited.
5. Address peak parking demand needs in order to avoid perfect Friday/Saturday night storm when residents/customers can't find parking:
 - Manage parking at the garage (for example, flat rate pricing for special events).
 - Increase the supply of convenient parking.
6. Parking should support economic development including businesses (office, retail, restaurant) and visitors/customers.
7. The parking garage should be priced and managed so that it has high occupancy more frequently (improve utilization of what we've got).
8. The primary reason for parking revenues is to be able to provide an adequate supply of safe, convenient parking. Pricing structures should be simple and easy for customers to understand.
9. Parking management strategies should recognize that there is a difference between the needs of long-term parkers who may be more likely to use the garage or use parking immediately adjacent to downtown, and short-term parkers running a quick errand.
10. Price and manage more desirable on street parking spaces to favor users who are highly motivated to use them. Give customers and residents the option to stay and pay.

11. Information on parking options should be easily accessible to parking users, including through technology options.
12. Parking planning should take a comprehensive, sustainable and big picture approach by taking a broad range of costs and benefits into account when making decisions.
13. All parking resources should place value on aesthetics, security, accessibility and user information.
14. Consider ways to incentivize use of “remote parking”.
15. Surface parking lots should be located at the periphery of the downtown and should not be allowed to create a “dead zone” barrier to comfortable pedestrian movement.
16. Parking management programs should take into consideration hospitality industry workers.
17. Incentives for residents should be provided at the parking garage, but shouldn’t compromise best practices.
18. Parking resources should be provided to support downtown activity (streets are for people as well as cars) and should therefore be designed and located in such a manner that recognizes the following:
 - Parking resources should enhance – not detract from – downtown vitality, walkability and the pedestrian experience;
 - Parking resources should accommodate pedestrians (bump-outs, plazas), bicycles (bike parking) and transit (space to pull over);
 - Parking structures should be incorporated into the commercial streetscape; and
 - The needs of an aging population should be taken into account when it comes to parking.
19. Parking strategies should be revenue neutral.
20. Parking management plans should recognize the short-term parking needs of retail and hospitality industry for loading zones.
21. Encourage public transit and other transportation modes, but recognize strong customer/resident preference for personal vehicle use as well as very limited regional public transit infrastructure.

APPENDIX B: MEETING MINUTES

[Available on the City's Planning Department web site www.cityofportsmouth.com/planning]

September 11, 2012
October 9, 2012
November 13, 2012
December 12, 2012
January 15, 2013
February 12, 2013
March 13, 2013
April 2, 2013
April 10, 2013

APPENDIX C: PRESENTATIONS AND HANDOUTS

[Available on the City's Planning Department web site www.cityofportsmouth.com/planning]

1. Status of Transportation Strategies included in 2005 Master Plan
2. Complete Streets
3. Bicycle / Pedestrian Planning
4. Sustainable Transportation Presentation
5. Sustainable Portsmouth Five Year Sustainability Plan: Transportation Final Report
6. Bridging our Communities: Summary and Final Group Reports
7. Street Classification and Street Design Standards Presentation
8. Green Streets Presentation
9. Traffic Calming
10. Land Use and Transportation
11. Transportation Data / Resources List
12. Public Transportation
13. Regional Coordination