

**TOWN OF FAIRHAVEN**  
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**COMPLETE STREETS POLICY**  
APPROVED February 8, 2021

**1. Vision and Purpose**

The Town's vision is to integrate a Complete Streets approach into its transportation practices, policies and decision-making and create a community with a connected network of transportation infrastructure that promotes health and well-being, encourages economic viability, facilitates social equity and supports environmental sustainability.

This policy is to be inclusive of all users regardless of age or ability such as children, seniors and those with disabilities, neighborhoods with vulnerable populations and all modes of transportation including: motorists, cyclists, emergency responders, school buses, freight and commercial vehicles, and pedestrians, including those with disabilities who may rely on mobility devices such as wheelchairs.

The purpose of the policy is to set forth procedures and to formalize the planning, design, operation, and maintenance of our roads and related rights-of-way to create a connected network of infrastructure which will accommodate to the extent feasible and practical, every mode of travel that is consistent with and supportive of the community.

**2. Core Commitment**

A Complete Street is a public right of way intended to be designed and shared by numerous users and modes of transportation to the extent practical including, but not limited to, pedestrians, cyclists, emergency responders, commercial vehicle operators, public transit and school buses, and motorists. Complete Streets are also intended to provide safe travel networks for all users of all ages and abilities.

- The Town recognizes that Complete Streets design principles may be achieved through single components incorporated into a particular roadway project, or through smaller improvements or maintenance activities over time. Examples of improvements that contribute to Complete Streets elements include but are not limited to street and sidewalk lighting, sidewalk improvements, accessibility improvements, including compliance with the latest standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), crosswalks, pavement markings, landscaping, and roadway improvements.
- The Town will, to the maximum extent feasible, design, construct, maintain, and operate all roads to provide for an inclusive and integrated network of facilities for people of all ages and abilities.
- The Town, where practicable, will work to integrate Complete Streets principles and design elements into all publicly and privately funded roadway projects, including new road

construction, reconstruction, resurfacing, and rehabilitation or maintenance projects. This includes road design projects and transportation infrastructure requiring funding or approval by the Town of Fairhaven, as well as projects funded by the state and federal government.

- Special attention should be given to efforts which enhance the overall transportation system and its connectivity. Specifically, priority should be given to corridors providing primary access to one of more significant destinations such as schools public transportation, recreation areas, and retail plazas.

All *private developments* and related road design elements or corresponding road-related elements, including but not limited to connections to the town's transportation network, shall also comply with Complete Street principles and this policy, and should demonstrate compliance to the extent feasible and practical during the local review and approval process.

State-owned roadways and associated projects should also comply with this Complete Streets Policy to the extent feasible and practical, including proposed improvements and maintenance projects of such roadways within Town boundaries.

Additionally, efforts shall be made to integrate and connect the Town's residents to its extensive trail network throughout the community and region via Complete Streets improvements.

If a representative of the Town participates in a meeting involving the design and planning of programs, transportation projects, or private development projects not under the Town's jurisdiction, the representative shall advocate and encourage that the project be carried out in accordance with the principles of this Complete Streets Policy.

### **3. Exceptions**

The Town's goal is to apply Complete Streets practices and policies, as appropriate and practical, to all transportation projects and private development projects that affect the Town's roadways' rights-of-way. It is recognized, however, that incorporation of Complete Streets elements into a project may not always be feasible or practical. Consequently, exceptions may be required under the following circumstances:

1. The project involves a roadway where specific users, i.e. cyclists and/or pedestrians, are prohibited by law. For these cases, an effort will be made for accommodations elsewhere.
2. Where such facilities or actions would constitute a threat to public safety.
3. Implementation costs or the effects on private property or requirements to purchase additional right of way to establish accommodations are excessively disproportionate to the need or number of users.
4. Projects on designated scenic roads, rural roads or private roads where certain actions may not be practical or feasible due to such items as ownership and environmental impacts.
5. Where the implementation would contradict other Town policies and regulations.

A project that involves emergency repairs or ordinary maintenance activities designed to keep streets in serviceable condition, such as roadway mowing, street sweeping, minor roadway repairs and normal re-paving, pothole filling, public infrastructure, and utilities repair, and takes place within the existing public street right-of way will be exempt from this policy not needing any

special review or approvals. Repair and maintenance projects as defined by Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Engineering Directive E-14-006 "Design Criteria for MassDOT Highway Division Projects" may be used by the Town as guidance to determine those project types to be exempt from this policy.

If the responsible agency or department believes a project is exempt from this policy, a request will be submitted to the approving Board or Department as part of the local approving process with supporting documentation and justification as deemed appropriate. The authorizing Board or Department may ask the designated Complete Streets Committee (as defined below in Section 6) for an advisory opinion and/or recommendation. After considering the proposed exemption and supporting documentation including the Complete Streets Committee's opinion, the Board (or Department) would formalize a decision on the exemption.

#### **4. Best Practices**

The Town of Fairhaven Complete Streets Policy is focused on developing a connected, integrated network that safely accommodates all users (pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists) and also fits with the character of the community. 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 all road and redevelopment projects.

Implementation of the Town of Fairhaven Complete Streets Policy will be carried out cooperatively within all departments in the Town, with multi-jurisdictional cooperation, to the greatest extent possible, among private developers, abutting communities and state, regional, and federal agencies. It is anticipated that the Town's governing Board will designate a committee (the COMMITTEE) with broad background and expertise that will, as part of its responsibilities, oversee implementing the Policy and Plan.

Complete Streets principles include the development and implementation of projects in a context-sensitive manner in which project implementation is sensitive to the needs of the users; is compatible with the community's physical, economic, and social settings; and integrates the community's goals, objectives, and values. The context-sensitive approach to process and design includes a range of goals by considering stakeholder and community values on a level plane with the project need. The success of the Complete Streets Policy lies with the project development process that includes:

1. Consideration of the land use and transportation context.
2. Identifying any gaps or deficiencies in the network for various users.
3. Completing an evaluation of the tradeoffs to balance the needs of all users of all abilities.

The Town of Fairhaven recognizes that Complete Streets objectives may be achieved through single elements incorporated into a particular project or incrementally through a series of smaller improvements or maintenance activities over time.

The latest design guidance, standards, practices, and recommendations available can be used in the implementation of Complete Streets and include, but not limited to:

- The Massachusetts of Department of Transportation, *Project Development and Design Guidebook and current Engineering Directives*, 2006 (or later version)

- Massachusetts Department of Transportation Engineering Directive E-14-006, *Design Criteria for MassDOT Highway Division Projects*, 2014
- Massachusetts Department of Transportation, *Separated Bike Path Guidelines*, 2015 (or later version)
- Massachusetts Department of Transportation, *Municipal Resources Guide for Walkability*, 2019 (or later version)
- American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*, 2018 (or latest version)
- American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2012 (or later version)
- Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach, An ITE Recommended Practice*, 2010
- Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), *Neighborhood Street Design Guidelines, A Recommended Practice*, 2011
- National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), *Urban Street Design Guide*, 2013 (or later version)
- National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), *Urban Street Bikeway Design Guide*, 2014 (or later version)
- National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), *Urban Street Transit Design Guide*, 2015 (or later version)
- National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), *Don't Give Up at the Intersection*, 2019 (or later version)
- National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), *Designing for All Ages & Abilities*, 2017 (or later version)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), *Small Towns and Rural Multimodal Networks*, Washington, D.C., December 2016 (or later version)
- American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Public Policy Institute, *Planning Complete Streets for an Aging America*, 2012 (or later version)
- Active Transportation Alliance, *Complete Streets, Complete Networks: A Manual for the Design of Active Transportation*, 2012 (or later version)
- United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)*, 2009 (or later version)
- The Architectural Access Board (AAB) 521 CMR Rules and Regulations,
- Town of Fairhaven design standards, guidelines and practices pertaining to streets and roads, driveway access, signage and other related items, and
- Documents and plans created by or for the Town of Fairhaven, such items, if available, as bicycle and pedestrian network plans, transportation master plan, land use plans, open space and recreation plans, capital improvement plans

In addition to the above, other sources of information and resources available to provide guidance in implementing the Complete Streets Policy include, but are not limited to, the following organizations:

- Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE)
- American Planning Association (APA)
- American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE)
- National Complete Streets Coalition (NCSC)
- Smart Growth America (SGA)

- National Safe Routes to School (SRTS)
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC)
- American Public Health Association (APHA)
- Center of Disease Control (CDC)

When accomplishing this Complete Streets Policy, the Town will use the above manuals, guidelines, and standards, as appropriate, but should not be prevented from considering new or non-traditional planning & design possibilities that will increase the level of safety of all users of any age or ability.

### **5. Performance Measures**

The Town shall utilize performance measures to track the progress, effectiveness, and success of this Complete Streets Policy. Performance shall be measured on an annual basis by the designated COMMITTEE that will work with appropriate Town departments and other resources to gather and summarize this information. The possible initial measures to be used by the town are:

- Increase in linear feet of new pedestrian accommodations (sidewalks, trails, etc.) and the number of cyclist improvements (shared lane markings, bike lanes, etc.)
- Number of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations (i.e. curb ramps) installed or built
- Secure bicycle parking spaces added
- Number of pedestrian/cyclist related crashes
- Miles of on-road bike lanes (separated or not) built or marked
- Number of segments of roadways improved which connect to existing trails

Performance measures will be reviewed at least annually by the COMMITTEE and appropriate adjustments made by the COMMITTEE in order to best measure program toward achieving Complete Streets.

### **6. Implementation**

As stated in Section 4, to oversee implementation of the Complete Streets Policy and Plan, the Board of Selectmen shall appoint an existing committee to assume the responsibilities. The COMMITTEE may be comprised of officials from various town departments or other representatives determined by the Board of Selectmen.

The designated COMMITTEE would provide general oversight to ensure compliance with this Complete Streets Policy and monitoring the implementation of the Prioritization Plan.

Periodically, the COMMITTEE will meet to review the Plan implementation progress as well as updating the Plan with new projects or new priorities. As part of the monitoring process, the COMMITTEE may also inquire as to the progress various departments are making relative to updating or modifying the various town documents including zoning and subdivision codes, laws, procedures, rules, regulations, guidelines, programs, templates, and design manuals in order to integrate, accommodate, and balance all transportation needs in Fairhaven and be consistent with the Policy.

The Town shall make Complete Streets practices a routine part of everyday operations, shall approach every transportation project and program as an opportunity to improve roads and the transportation network for all users, and shall work in coordination with other departments, agencies and jurisdictions to achieve Complete Streets.

The responsible Town boards and department will, as appropriate, review and either revise or develop proposed revisions to all appropriate planning documents (comprehensive plans, open space and recreation plans, etc.), zoning and subdivision bylaws, laws, procedures, rules, regulations, guidelines, programs, and templates to integrate the Complete Streets Policy and its principles in all project review processes.

As new land development projects are proposed and undergo review by the appropriate permitting boards, the project proponent should be made aware by the appropriate department or Board of the Complete Streets Policy and Prioritization Plan and the proposal can be checked for compatibility with the Policy and Plan. If mitigation is required of the project proponent, the actions should also be consistent and possibly build off the Policy and Plan.

The Town intends to develop and maintain a comprehensive inventory of pedestrian and bicycle facility infrastructure that will prioritize projects to eliminate gaps in the sidewalk and bikeway network, and provide opportunities for expansion.

As part of the budgeting process for projects in the Capital Improvement Plan, the Town may periodically reevaluate the decision making process and ranking system related to Complete Streets to include prioritization criteria that will give extra weight to projects that enhance access or mobility for those on foot or riding bicycles.

As new Town transportation related projects are proposed, the COMMITTEE may be asked by the project proponent (or responsible department) to review proposal in relation to the being consistent with the Complete Streets Policy and provide confirmation or input.

If changes, updates, or additions to the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan are proposed, the COMMITTEE will discuss the potential inclusion into the Plan and potential changes in priorities of current or new projects. The key factors in relation to setting priorities may include but not be limited to:

- Ownership (local vs. state owned facility),
- Location (near schools or public recreation areas),
- Potential high pedestrian & bicycle demand areas
- Project readiness (engineering/permits)
- Impacts & complexity of action
- Costs
- Consistency with Local Plans
- Livability
- Safety and Security
- ADA accessibility/compliance
- Mobility & connectivity
- Public health outcomes

To the extent practical, the Town will encourage appropriate staff and decision makers to attend workshops and other training opportunities so that everyone working on the implementation of the


policy understands the concepts of Complete Streets principles and implementation practices.

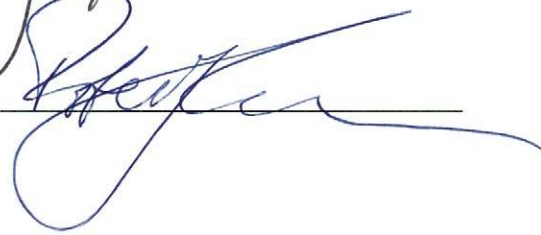
The Town will utilize inter-department coordination to promote the most responsible and efficient use of resources for activities within the public way.

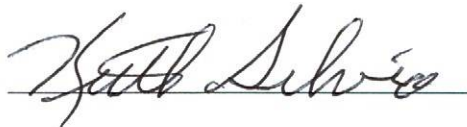
The Town will seek out appropriate sources of funding and grants for continued implementation of the Complete Streets Policy and Plan.

**FAIRHAVEN BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

APPROVED:

  
\_\_\_\_\_, Chair

  
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Date: February 8, 2021