

Town of Carver

COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

Vision and Intent

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Carver is a small, rural community located in Plymouth County, approximately 40 miles south of Boston and 38 miles east of Providence, RI. The town, which has a total land area of 39.78 square miles, contains many cranberry bog farms, wetlands, habitat areas, residential neighborhoods, an active downtown area, and numerous commercial and industrial businesses. Roadways such as Interstate 495, U.S. Route 44, and State Route 58 provide quick access to the surrounding region for the town's 11,617 residents (2017 American Community Survey data) while also making the town an attractive place to live, work, and play.

Complete Streets are designed and operated to provide safety and accessibility for all users of our roadways, off-road trails, and transit systems, including bicyclists, pedestrians, motorists, emergency responders, transit and school bus riders, and freight haulers, and for people of all ages, abilities, and income levels. Carver intends to improve the health and safety of its residents, the community's economic viability and the overall quality of life by providing accessible and efficient connections between home, work, school, recreation and commercial destinations.

As such, the purpose of the Town of Carver'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, to continue to develop the town's off-road trail network, and to create connections between both facilities. It is the intent of the Town of Carver to formalize the planning, 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.

Core Commitment

Users and Modes

The Town of Carver recognizes that the users of the transportation network, including, but not limited to: bicyclists, pedestrians, 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 the "users" of the transportation network include 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 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 plan, 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.

Special attention should be given to projects which enhance the overall transportation system and its connectivity. Specifically, high priority shall be given to:

- Roadways and/or off-road trails that provide access or connection to one or more significant destinations such as parks or recreation areas, schools, public or community facilities and shopping or commercial areas.
- Roadways and/or off-road trails that provide important continuity or connectivity links to existing pedestrian or bicycle networks.

The Complete Streets Committee (consisting of representatives of the Operations and Maintenance Department, Planning and Community Development, Board of Health, School Department and the Town Administrator's Office) will use their best judgment regarding the feasibility of applying Complete Streets principles for all routine roadway maintenance projects.

Clear, Accountable Exceptions

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

- The facility is one where specific users are prohibited, such as interstate freeways or pedestrian malls.
- The cost or environmental impacts of the accommodation(s) are determined to be excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use.
- The constraints of existing right-of-way or adjacent land inhibits the addition of bicycle, pedestrian, transit or motorist improvements.
- There are protected scenic, historic, and/or environmental features would be adversely impacted.
- The roadway is a rural road, a designated Scenic Road, or is privately owned.
- There is a documented absence of current and future need.

In addition, the following may be situations when an exception is granted:

- Transit accommodations are absent from a proposed project because there is no existing or planned transit service.
- A project involves routine maintenance (mowing, sweeping, and spot repair) of the transportation network that does not change the roadway geometry.
- 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 Committee. That documentation shall outline the reason for the request and provide the appropriate supporting information.

Best Practice

Network

The Town of Carver Complete Streets Policy will focus on developing a connected, integrated network that serves all road users. Complete Streets elements will be integrated into relevant policies, planning efforts and documents, and into the design of all types of public and private projects, including new construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, repair, and to the extent practicable, maintenance of transportation facilities on streets and redevelopment projects. Efforts shall be made to integrate and connect the town's roadway system and off-road trail network throughout the community as well as to extend the off-road trail network wherever useful and feasible. The Town of Carver 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. As such, the town will focus on incorporating Complete Streets elements that are appropriate to the specific area, that complement the physical conditions of the given roadway or trail and that respond to the need of the existing and potential future users of the facility.

Jurisdiction

Where feasible, Complete Streets design recommendations will be incorporated into all publicly and privately funded projects. This includes transportation infrastructure or off-road trail projects requiring funding or approval by the Town of Carver, projects funded by the State and Federal government (such as the Chapter 90 funds, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the MassWorks Infrastructure Program, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Capital Funding and other state and federal funds for street and infrastructure design) and in 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 Carver's Complete Streets Policy will be carried out cooperatively within all relevant departments in the Town of Carver 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 Carver's Complete Streets Policy:

Director of Operations and Maintenance Department

- Responsible for ensuring that appropriate Complete Streets principles are incorporated into all Town initiated roadway or infrastructure projects (new construction, rehabilitation, repair, maintenance) to the maximum extent practicable.

Director of Planning and Community Development

- Responsible for ensuring that appropriate Complete Streets principles are incorporated into all private developments (commercial, industrial, residential) to the maximum extent practicable.

Complete Streets Committee

- 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 granting exception requests and acting as the community's liaison to the public.

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 Carver, 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 community.

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. Carver recognizes that as a rural community, some roads may offer greater or lesser degrees of accommodation for each type of user due to a variety of factors and that each potential project must be evaluated in the context of the town's community and neighborhood character. This "context-sensitive" approach to planning and design considers stakeholder and community values and encourages public participation of those affected in order to gain project consensus. Carver intends to use this approach to preserve and enhance the scenic, aesthetic, and historical areas while protecting environmental resources and improving or maintaining safety, mobility and infrastructure conditions.

Performance Measures

The Complete Streets Committee will develop performance measures to periodically assess the rate, success and effectiveness of the Complete Streets Policy. The primary focus of this Committee 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 Committee 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 Committee 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 and length of new bicycle lanes, the linear feet of new pedestrian accommodation (including sidewalks), number of retrofitted bicycle, pedestrian, and/or transit facilities or amenities, number of intersection improvements made to improve the safety for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists, the number of crashes by mode, number of children walking or bicycling to school and/or number of trips by mode.

