



City of Lowell

Complete Streets Policy

Vision and Purpose:

It is the intention of the City to formalize a Complete Streets Policy in order to create a multi-modal transportation system designed to provide improved mobility and accessibility opportunities for all users regardless of their age, income or ability. The City of Lowell recognizes that Complete Streets principles enhance the community's economic vitality and quality of life through the creation, maintenance and operation of safe and efficient multi-modal facilities. The City of Lowell also recognizes that each of the City's unique and diverse neighborhoods require context sensitive solutions which preserve and enhance their character. Multi-modal, within the context of this policy, includes automobiles, pedestrians, passenger buses, the trolley system, cyclists and freight modes of transportation.

Core Commitment:

The City of Lowell is committed to creating, maintaining and operating a safe and efficient multi-modal transportation network that accommodates all users while preserving the unique character of our neighborhoods.

All transportation infrastructure projects requiring funding or approval by the City of Lowell, including those funded through M.G.L. Chapter 90, City improvement grants, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), MassWorks Infrastructure Program, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), National Park Service, as well as any other transportation infrastructure projects funded by the State of Massachusetts or by the federal government shall adhere to the City of Lowell Complete Street Policy. Applicable projects include pavement resurfacing, restriping, signalization improvements, utility work, roadway widening and public transit projects.

In addition, all proposed revisions to zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, design guidelines, master plans and other land use regulations, guidelines or templates shall integrate the Complete Streets Policy.

Implementation:

In order to effectively implement this policy, the following City Departments are hereby directed to perform the following tasks:

1. Maintain a Transportation Infrastructure Inventory – The Departments of Planning and Development (DPD), Public Works (DPW), and Management Information Systems (MIS) , in coordination with other City departments and MassDOT, shall maintain a GIS based inventory of existing streets, sidewalks, transit routes, trails, crosswalks, bike lanes and other necessary multi-modal infrastructure data.
2. Incorporate Complete Streets Elements into Transportation Projects – The City Engineer and the Transportation Engineer shall consider appropriate Complete Streets design elements and guidelines during the normal course of duties performed, including but not limited to:
 - a. Issuing of Street Opening and Trench Permits;
 - b. Conducting transportation and traffic studies;
 - c. Developing annual pavement marking maintenance program;

- d. Reviewing private development projects, site plans and subdivisions applications;
 - e. Developing transportation plans, policies and designs;
 - f. Making recommendations to City Council and City Manager; and
 - g. Designing alterations and modifications of existing transportation infrastructure.
3. Incorporate Complete Streets Policy into Development Review Process – The Department of Planning and Development - Division of Development Services - shall make recommendations to update the City’s zoning code, master plans, and site plan/subdivision review process as necessary to ensure that new development aligns with the Complete Streets policy and include the necessary infrastructure elements.
 4. Establish a Mode Shift Goal and Performance Metrics - The Department of Planning and Development, in coordination with other City departments and MassDOT, shall establish a goal for travel mode distribution in five year increments. Additionally, performance metrics should be established to gauge the success of the Complete Streets policy. These metrics may include data on bicycle routes created, public transit ridership, travel mode shift, travel times, accidents, and congestion. Progress may be reported through incorporation within other reports such as the yearly budget report or transportation plans.
 5. Enforce Traffic Ordinances - The Lowell Police Department shall provide training to its officers in the rules and ordinances regarding pedestrians and bicyclists and enforce the use of sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes accordingly. LPD may recommend changes to regulations and ordinances to further the Complete Streets policy.
 6. Maintain Pavement Markings and Traffic Signs - The Lowell Police Department will continue to purchase/install/maintain all regulatory and directional street signage and pavement markings per MUTCD standards and Transportation Engineer’s instructions in order to further the Complete Streets policy.
 7. Maintain Streets, Sidewalks and Other Multi-Modal Infrastructures - The Department of Public Works through its Streets, Engineering, Lands and Buildings divisions will maintain City streets, bike lanes, bus stops and sidewalks in accordance with this policy. Any new infrastructure (bike racks, trolley tracks, etc.) will be added to existing maintenance responsibilities as additional required resources are made available.

All other City departments are furthermore directed to be conscientious of the Complete Streets Policy and strive to develop, maintain and operate the City’s transportation infrastructure accordingly.

The City also recognizes that implementation will require training for City staff, officials, and members of the Land Use Boards. Training may be accomplished through workshops and other appropriate means.

Exclusions:

The implementation of the Complete Streets Policy may be excluded in such cases where:

- Local, state or federal law excludes specific users on certain facilities, such as the exclusion of bicyclists on interstate highways.

- The cost or impacts of implementation is disproportionate to the actual need or probable future use of the facility.
- Existing Right-of-Way is insufficient to accommodate all modes of transportation safely.
- Other City policies, regulations, or requirements contradict or preclude implementation of the Complete Streets principles.
- The impact of the proposed Complete Streets design elements would be detrimental to the character of the neighborhood.

Guidelines:

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

- The Massachusetts Department of Transportation Project Design and Development Guidebook;
- Healthy Transportation Policy Directive (P-13-001), dated September 9 , 2014;
- The latest edition of American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) A Policy on Geometric Design of Highway and Streets;
- The United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) (2009).

Policy enacted by City Council on August 11, 2015.

Amended to include definition of multi-modal on March 22, 2016