

# **City of Bath, Maine**

## **COMPLETE STREETS POLICY**

### **Vision**

Promoting pedestrian, bicycle, and public transportation travel reduces negative environmental impacts, promotes healthy living, advances the well being of travelers, supports the goal of compact development, and meets the needs of the diverse populations that comprise our communities. The vision of the City of Bath is of a community in which all residents and visitors, regardless of their age, ability, or financial resources, can safely and efficiently use the public right-of-way to meet their transportation needs regardless of their preferred mode of travel.

### **Policy**

The City will plan for, design, construct, operate, and maintain an appropriate and integrated transportation system that will meet the needs of motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, wheelchair users, transit vehicles and riders, freight haulers, emergency responders, and residents of all ages and abilities.

Transportation facilities that support the concept of complete streets include, but are not limited to pavement markings and signs; street and sidewalk lighting; sidewalk and pedestrian safety improvements; Americans with Disabilities Act and Title VI compliance; transit accommodations; bicycle accommodations, including appropriate signage and markings; and streetscapes that appeal to and promote pedestrian use.

The system's design will be consistent with and supportive of local neighborhoods, the historic downtown, and the Route 1 corridor, recognizing that transportation needs vary and must be balanced in a flexible, safe, and cost effective manner.

### **Projects**

Those involved in the planning and design of projects within the public right-of-way will give consideration to all users and modes of travel from the start of planning and design work.

Transportation improvements shall be viewed as opportunities to create safer, more accessible streets for all users. This shall apply to new construction, reconstruction, and rehabilitation. The City of Bath's Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee shall be briefed on potential future projects of this nature during or immediately following the annual development of the city's capital improvement program. This will allow the Committee to provide its views regarding complete streets policy early in the planning and design process.

### **Exceptions**

Exceptions to this policy may be made under the circumstances listed below:

1. Street projects may exclude those elements of this policy that would require the

accommodation of street uses prohibited by law;

2. Ordinary maintenance activities such as mowing, snowplowing, sweeping, spot repair, joint or crack sealing, or pothole filling do not require that elements of this policy be applied beyond the scope of that maintenance activity;
3. Ordinary maintenance paving projects may only exclude the elements of this policy that would require increasing pavement width. However, when such projects do occur, the condition of existing facilities supporting alternate transportation modes should be evaluated as well as the appropriateness of modifying existing pavement markings and signage that supports such alternate modes. This exception does not apply to street reconstruction projects;
4. Street reconstruction projects and maintenance paving projects which involve widening pavement may exclude elements of this policy when the accommodation of a specific use is expected to:
  - a. require more space than is physically available, or
  - b. be located where both current and future demand is proven absent, or
  - c. drastically increase project costs and equivalent alternatives exist within proximity, or
  - d. have adverse impacts on environmental resources such as streams, wetlands, floodplains, or on historic structures or sites above and beyond the impacts of currently existing infrastructure.

In order for an exception to be granted under the conditions stated above and prior to finalizing the design and budget for the intended project, the Director of Public Works must first consult with the City Planner and City Manager.

If the City Manager concludes that an exception to the policy is warranted, the Manager or a staff representative to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee shall consult with the Committee regarding the project and the requested exception. If a difference of opinion exists between the Committee and staff, the Committee may forward its concerns to the City Council for its consideration.

Street projects may exclude the development of sidewalks in areas falling outside those identified as appropriate for sidewalks on the basis of an adopted sidewalk policy or other plans.

### **Intergovernmental Cooperation**

The City will cooperate together and with other transportation agencies including the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) to ensure the principles and practices of complete streets are embedded within their planning, design, construction, and maintenance activities.

### **Design Criteria**

The City, through its Public Works and Planning Departments, shall develop and adopt

design criteria, standards, and guidelines based upon recognized best practices in street design, construction, and operation. To the greatest extent possible, the City shall adopt the same standards with particular emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle markings and wayfinding signage.

Resources to be referenced in developing these standards shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the latest editions of:

1. American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, Guide for Planning, Designing, and Operating Pedestrian Facilities, and Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities;
2. Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach;
3. National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Bikeway Design Guide;
4. U.S. Access Board Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines;
5. Highway Capacity Manual and Highway Safety Manual; and
6. the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

The City will be permitted to consider innovative or non-traditional design options that provide a comparable level of safety and utility for users as those listed above.

### **Performance**

The Director of Public Works shall report to the City Council on an annual basis on the transportation projects undertaken within the prior year and planned within the coming year and the extent to which each of these projects has met the objectives of this policy.

### **Community Context & Network**

Implementation of this Policy shall take into account the goal of enhancing the context and character of the surrounding built and natural environments. Transportation facilities, including roads, should be adapted to fit and enhance the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

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

1. Corridors providing primary access to one or more significant destinations such as a parks or recreation areas, schools, shopping/commercial areas, public transportation, or employment centers;
2. Corridors serving a relatively high number of users of non-motorized transportation modes;
3. Corridors providing important continuity or connectivity links to existing pedestrian or bicycle networks;
4. Projects identified in regional or local thoroughfare, bicycle, and pedestrian plans.