Planning Department

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MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Selectmen ***Date:*** May 29, 2014

From: Kristen Guichard, Assistant Town Planner KAG

Subject: Recommendations for the Complete Streets Policy

At its meeting of May 20, 2014 the Planning Board voted unanimously to recommend the adoption of the Complete Streets Policy.

Also, at its meeting of May 27, 2014 the Acton 2020 Implementation Committee voted unanimously to recommend the adoption of the Complete Streets Policy.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION

Acton Board of Health - Telephone 978-929-6632 - Fax 978-929-6340

May 29, 2014

TO: Steve Ledoux, Town Manager

FROM: Doug Halley, Health Director

SUBJECT: Complete Street Policy

Attached with this memo is a draft Complete Street Policy for the Board of Selectmen's consideration. A Complete Street provides safety, comfortability and accessibility for all users and for multiple forms of travel. Adoption of a Complete Street Policy addresses two goals of the Acton 2020 Comprehensive Community Plan:

Goal #2	Ensure environmental sustainability by reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses
Goal#3	Improve connections, particularly emphasizing safe and pleasant ways to travel through walking, biking and public transportation

The Complete Street Policy was developed with the assistance of Chris Kuschel, Regional Planner MAPC. The policy was drafted from recently adopted policies in Littleton and Maynard. A committee was formed to review, amend and edit the draft in accordance with the needs of Acton. The committee consisted of Corey York, DPW Director; Jim Snyder-Grant, Land Stewardship Committee; Jim Yarin, Transportation Advisory Committee; Jonathan Stackhouse, Police Department; Kristin Domurad-Guichard, Assistant Town Planner; Randall Bashta, Sidewalk Committee; Bettina Abe, Sidewalk Committe and myself.

After the draft Complete Street Policy was finished it was presented to the Sidewalk Committee, Planning Board, 2020 Committee and the Transportation Advisory Committee. Each of these Boards or Committees unanimously recommended approval of the Complete Street Policy to the Board of Selectmen. It is now ready for consideration by the Board of Selectmen.

Chris Kuschel from MAPC has committed to providing a presentation for the Board of Selectmen and to answer any questions that the Board may have. Please let me know what date and time this can be scheduled for consideration so that I can inform Chris. Thank you.

Town of Acton **COMPLETE STREET POLICY**	
Effective Date	
Expiration Date	None
Date Last Revised	
Planning Board vote to recommend	May 20, 2014
Selectmen vote to adopt policy	

COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

WHEREAS, Goal #3 of the Acton 2020 Comprehensive Community Plan is to improve connections, particularly emphasizing safe and pleasant ways to travel through walking, biking, and public transportation; and

WHEREAS, Integrating existing and proposed off-road paths, conservation and recreation trails and ways, including the Assabet River Rail Trail and the Bruce Freeman Trail with Town streets create a safe network for transportation would help realize Goal #3; and

WHEREAS, Goal #2 of the Acton 2020 Comprehensive Community Plan is to ensure environmental sustainability by reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets is an approach to community transportation using design principles to ensure the safety, comfort, and accessibility for users of all ages, abilities, and income levels and for all the users of our streets, trails and transit systems, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, users of wheelchairs and other power-driven mobility devices, commercial and emergency vehicles; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets can reduce congestion by providing safe travel choices that encourage non-motorized transportation options, increasing the overall capacity of the transportation network as well as decreasing consumer transportation costs and overall carbon footprint; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets support economic growth and community stability by providing accessible and efficient connections between home, school, work, recreation and retail destinations by improving the pedestrian and vehicular environments throughout communities; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets enhance safe walking and bicycling options for school-age children, in recognition of the objectives of the national Safe Routes to School program and Physical Activity Guidelines; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets can help reduce crashes and injuries and their costs.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Selectmen adopts this Complete Streets Policy.

Vision and Purpose:

Complete Streets are designed and operated to provide safety and accessibility for all the users of our streets, trails and transit systems, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, commercial vehicles, and emergency vehicles and for people of all ages and of all abilities. Furthermore, Complete

Streets principles contribute toward the safety, health, economic viability, and quality of life in a community by providing accessible and efficient connections between home, school, work, recreation and retail destinations by improving the pedestrian and vehicular environments throughout communities. Complete Streets can also reduce the Town's carbon footprint and contribute to a more sustainable built environment. The purpose of the Town of Acton's Complete Streets Policy, therefore, is to accommodate all street users by creating a street network that meets the needs of individuals utilizing a variety of transportation modes. It is the intent of the Town of Acton to formalize the planning, design, operation and maintenance of streets so that they are safe for all users of all ages and abilities as a matter of routine. This Policy directs decision-makers to consistently plan, design, construct and maintain streets to accommodate all anticipated users including, but not limited to pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, emergency vehicles, and freight and commercial vehicles.

Core Commitment:

The Town of Acton recognizes that users of various modes of transportation, including, but not limited to, pedestrians, cyclists, transit and school bus riders, motorists, users of wheelchairs and other power-driven mobility devices, delivery and service personnel, freight haulers, and emergency responders, are legitimate users of streets and deserve safe facilities. "All Users" includes users of all ages and abilities.

The Town recognizes that all building and infrastructure projects, both new or reconstruction, as well as routine maintenance projects, are potential opportunities to apply Complete Streets design principles. The Town will, to the maximum extent practical, design, construct, maintain, and operate all properties over which it has any control to provide for comprehensive and integrated networks of travel consistent with Complete Streets principles.

Complete Streets design principles shall be incorporated into all publicly and privately funded projects. To the maximum extent practical:

(1) All transportation infrastructure, and street design and construction projects requiring funding or approval by the Town of Acton shall adhere to the Town of Acton Complete Streets Policy.

(2) Projects funded by the State or Federal government, including but not limited, Chapter 90 funds, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), MassWorks Infrastructure Program, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), or other State and Federal funds for street and infrastructure design shall adhere to the Town of Acton Complete Streets Policy, subject to and as may be modified by funding agency guidelines and standards.

(3) Private developments and related or corresponding street design and construction components shall adhere to the Town of Acton Complete Streets Policy.

(4) To the extent possible, state-owned streets shall comply with the Town of Acton Complete Streets Policy, including the design, construction, and maintenance of such streets within Town boundaries, subject to and as may be modified by MassDOT guidelines and standards.

Exemptions:

(1) State Route 2 through the Town of Acton.

(2) All transportation facilities that are limited to non-motorized transportation modes, such as multi-use paths, pedestrian paths and malls, bicycle paths, and walking and hiking trails.

(3) Other transportation infrastructure may be exempt from this Policy, upon approval by the Board of Selectmen, where documentation and data indicate that:

(A) The cost or impacts of implementing this Policy are excessively disproportionate to the need for this Policy and the benefits derived from its implementation.

(B) Other Town policies, regulations, or requirements contradict or preclude the implementation of this Policy, after such policies, regulations, and requirements have been examined and updated to be consistent with the Town of Acton Complete Streets Policy

Best Practices:

The Town of Acton Complete Streets Policy will focus on developing a connected, integrated network that serves all street users. Complete Streets principles will be integrated into policies, planning, and design of all types of public and private projects, including new construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, redevelopment, repair, and maintenance of transportation facilities on, adjacent to, and related to streets, as allowed by law and regulation.

To the greatest extent possible, implementation of the Town of Acton Complete Streets Policy will be carried out cooperatively within and between all departments in the Town of Acton, private developers, and State, regional – including the Acton Boxborough Regional School District – and federal agencies.

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. 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. It includes goals related to livability, connectivity and sustainability with greater participation of those affected in order to gain project consensus. The overall goal of this approach is to preserve and enhance scenic, aesthetic, historical, and environmental resources while improving or maintaining safety, mobility, and infrastructure conditions.

The Town of Acton recognizes that Complete Streets principles 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, and recommendations available will be used in the implementation of Complete Streets including:

- The Massachusetts of Department of Transportation Project Design and Development Guidebook
- 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 Design Controls.
- The Architectural Access Board (AAB) 521CMR Rules and Regulations
- Documents and plans created by and for the Town of Acton, such as bicycle/pedestrian network plans and conservation/recreation trails plans.

Complete Streets implementation and effectiveness should be constantly evaluated for success and opportunities for improvement.

Implementation:

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 streets and the transportation

network for all users, and shall work in coordination with other departments, agencies, and jurisdictions to achieve Complete Streets.

The Town shall review and either revise or develop proposed revisions to all appropriate planning documents (master plans, open space and recreation plan, etc.), zoning and subdivision rules and regulations, laws, procedures, rules, regulations, guidelines, programs, and templates to integrate Complete Streets principles so as to be consistent with the Town of Acton Complete Streets Policy. A complete streets advisory group of relevant stakeholders selected by the Town Manager or his/her designee will facilitate the implementation of this initiative.

The Town shall maintain a comprehensive map and inventory of pedestrian and bicycle facility infrastructure that will prioritize projects to eliminate gaps in the sidewalk, bikeway, and conservation/recreation trails network.

The Town will reevaluate prioritizations of Capital Improvement Projects to encourage implementation of this Policy.

The Town will train pertinent town staff and decision-makers on the content of the Town of Acton Complete Streets Policy and best practices for implementing this Policy through workshops and other appropriate means.

The Town will conduct a needs assessment to determine and appropriately plan for future financial costs, capital or otherwise associated with implementation of this Policy.

The Town will seek out appropriate sources of funding and grants for implementation of Complete Streets policies.

Evaluation:

The Town will develop performance measures to periodically assess the rate, success and effectiveness of implementing the Town of Acton Complete Streets Policy. The advisory group of relevant stakeholders designated by the Town Manager will determine the frequency of assessment and utilize appropriate metrics for analyzing the success of this ordinance. These metrics may include the total number of new bicycle lanes, the linear feet of new pedestrian accommodation, number of retrofitted pedestrian facilities or amenities, number intersection improvements made to improve Level of Service (LOS) and safety for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists, rate of crashes by mode, rate of children walking or bicycling to school, and/or number of trips by mode.