



The City of Fitchburg

Massachusetts

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EXECUTIVE ORDER

WHEREAS: The Complete Streets concept is an initiative to design the public right-of-way to accommodate all users safely and efficiently in a context sensitive way.

WHEREAS: Designing streets with consideration of these principles contributes toward the safety, health, economic viability and quality of life in a community by improving the pedestrian and vehicular environments and providing safer, more accessible and comfortable means of travel between home, school, work, recreation and retail destinations promoting more livable communities (MA DOT).

WHEREAS: The Massachusetts Department of Transportation has announced a new Complete Streets Funding Program.

WHEREAS: The program requires that municipalities adopt a Complete Streets Policy in order to participate in this program.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED that the City of Fitchburg adopt the following policy.

City of Fitchburg Complete Streets Policy

Vision and Intent

Complete Streets are designed and operated to provide safety and accessibility for all users of roads, 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, including the handicapped and elderly.

The City of Fitchburg's designation as a Gateway City underscores the importance of approaching transportation projects within the scope of this policy from a Complete Streets perspective. By definition, Gateway Cities have a population greater than 35,000 and less than 250,000; a median household income below the state average, and a rate of educational attainment of a bachelor's degree or above that is below the state average. Many residents depend on alternate modes of transportation as a way of life, especially in densely populated areas with public services, community supports, and attractions that drive the local economy. That said; the use of bicycles in particular, both for recreation and commuting in Fitchburg lags behind many Massachusetts communities. This appears largely attributable to the city's challenging topography, the lack of employment-based commuting opportunities and various socio-economic contributors.

The purpose of this Complete Streets Policy is to make incremental improvements to the City of Fitchburg's transportation network by integrating the needs of all prospective users into everyday planning and design procedures.

Under this policy, decision-makers will, to the greatest extent practicable, plan, design, and construct streets to accommodate all anticipated users including, but not limited to, pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, emergency vehicles, transit, freight and commercial vehicles. Such procedures support our overarching vision to provide a safe, convenient, and comfortable transportation network that serves all citizens.

All Users and Modes

It is the expressed intent of this policy to include the needs of all people, regardless of how they travel, into the City of Fitchburg's everyday transportation decision-making process. This includes all users (regardless of their age, ability, ethnicity, or income) across all modes (pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, commercial vehicles, and emergency vehicles).

Projects and Phases

The City of Fitchburg shall approach all transportation projects covered by this policy as an opportunity to create safer, more accessible streets for all users.

Complete Streets infrastructure improvements which address the needs of all users shall be added to the maximum extent practicable to all projects involving construction, reconstruction, expansion within the public way, retrofit of streets, bridges, or other public portions of the transportation network, from the inception of the planning and design stages to final approval and implementation.

Exceptions

Any exception to this policy must be approved by the Commissioner of Public Works, the Director of Community Development or the Fitchburg Planning Board as indicated below for projects/activities that fall within their respective jurisdictions. Exceptions may be granted when any of the following apply:

1. Cost of accommodation is determined to be excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use.
2. Project does not fit within the context sensitivity objectives of this policy and there is no apparent current or future need.
3. Specific users are prohibited from the corridor (such as interstate freeways or pedestrian malls)
4. Site conditions render implementation infeasible.

Any exceptions granted under this policy shall be documented.

Network

Under this policy, the City of Fitchburg will gradually create a network of streets to serve all users, with special emphasis on creating fast, low-cost, high-impact changes in areas of critical need. Rather than applying this policy to a small number of disconnected streets, the overarching vision is to create a connected, integrated system that allows all users to navigate the City of Fitchburg in a safe, comfortable, and convenient manner.

While all modes will not receive the same type of accommodation and space on every street (due to considerations such as terrain, width of public way, typical use, etc.) these changes will greatly expand overall transportation options for residents traveling between the City of Fitchburg's various destinations.

Jurisdiction

Implementation of the policy will be carried out cooperatively among various local and statewide jurisdictions. They are;

- The Fitchburg Department of Public Works – For Chapter 90 funding and other projects implemented by the department.
- The Fitchburg Community Development Department – For MassWorks Public Infrastructure grants, Community Development Block Grants and other relevant grant programs administered by the department
- The Fitchburg Planning Board – For projects requiring either Site Plan Review or Special Permits which impact the built environment and/or transportation access.
- The Montachusett Regional Transit Authority – For accessibility improvements to and for determination of new bus stop and kiosk locations.
- The Massachusetts Department of Transportation – For coordination and information sharing of all projects planned or implemented which may impact multi-modal access by city residents.
- Private Owners and Developers where possible to improve accommodations outside the public way.

For each project subject to review, the respective authority will be asked to incorporate the attached checklist, where applicable, as part of the project review process.

Design

The latest design guidance, standards, and recommendations available will be used in the implementation of this policy, 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 (2009).
- The Architectural Access Board (AAB) 521CMR Rules and Regulations
- Documents and plans created for the City of Fitchburg, such as bicycle and pedestrian network plans.

The City of Fitchburg will allow for flexible approaches to design to balance modal and user needs.

Context Sensitivity

Community context will be an important factor in all transportation decision making. Transportation projects will be planned, designed, and constructed in a manner that is sensitive to the existing built environment, while taking into account future anticipated transportation needs. Recognizing the challenges presented by Fitchburg’s topography, which is among the hilliest in the country, the city will selectively target its limited resources to improve alternative transportation modes (via roads and trails) which present the most easily traversable grades and which serve the principal purpose of connecting Fitchburg to contiguous communities, and/or to major points of interest or use within the city itself, including those that will augment its unique natural, cultural, and historical features.

Performance Standards

The City of Fitchburg shall put into place performance measurements to determine the success of this policy. These measures may include, but are not limited to:

- Total miles of bike lanes/trails built or striped
- Number of ADA accommodations built
- Number of transit accessibility accommodations built

- Number of new curb ramps installed along city streets
- Number of new street trees planted
- Crosswalk and intersection improvements
- Percentage of transit stops accessible via sidewalks and curb ramps
- Rate of crashes, injuries, and fatalities by mode

The City, through its Community Development Department and DPW will determine the most appropriate system of metrics for analyzing its overall success in implementing this policy and will be responsible for documenting the results of this analysis no less than annually.

Implementation Steps

The City of Fitchburg shall make Complete Streets practices a routine part of everyday operations, and shall approach applicable transportation projects and programs 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.

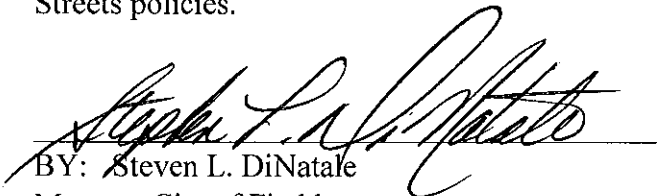
The City of Fitchburg shall review and either revise or develop proposed revisions to all appropriate planning documents (master plans, open space and recreation plan, etc.), zoning and subdivision codes, laws, procedures, rules, regulations, guidelines, programs, and templates to integrate Complete Streets principles. A committee of relevant stakeholders designated by the mayor will be created to implement this initiative.

The City of Fitchburg shall maintain a comprehensive inventory of pedestrian and bicycle facility infrastructure that will prioritize projects to eliminate gaps in the sidewalk and bikeway network.

The City of Fitchburg will advise pertinent city staff and decision-makers on the content of Complete Streets principles and best practices for implementing policy.

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

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


BY: Steven L. DiNatale
Mayor – City of Fitchburg

Date: 5/10/16