

GRAY COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

Vision and Purpose

The Town of Gray Complete Streets Policy advocates for the fundamental concept that all streets and roadways should be designed and operated to be safe and accessible for current and future users. This includes pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, or transit riders, regardless of age or ability.

Complete Streets principles contribute to the safety, health, economic vitality, and quality of life in a community by providing accessible and efficient connections between home, school, work, recreation, and commercial centers. Ultimately, our vision for Gray is to have a well-connected network of streets, bike-pedestrian trails, and other transportation facilities that balance the needs of all users and appropriately relate to the existing built environment in capacity and scale.

Definitions

- A. Complete Streets – Streets that are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities.

Implementation

This policy is a statement of serious intent crafted to guide future transportation and other development in Gray. However, Complete Streets improvements may need to be phased in as funding becomes available or routine work is completed. This Policy applies to all streets in Gray, including public roads and private development and subdivisions, and regardless of the funding source. Special emphasis should be placed on adding bike and pedestrian capacity that can be accomplished with little or no additional expense, such as providing bike lanes where existing pavement is adequate or where road shoulders are sufficient to allow for safe bicycle use.

The design of new streets provides the best framework for integrating many Complete Streets principles, while existing streets may be more challenging to retrofit. For redeveloped streets, it may be necessary to prioritize simple, cost-effective changes to create a multi-modal environment, such as restriping to reduce vehicular lane widths and create bike lanes, adding crosswalks, flower planters, planting trees, or other streetscape improvements.

The Gray Town Council, Planning Board, and staff should view every project and phase related to transportation -- from design and planning to construction and maintenance -- as an opportunity to improve the street network to make it safer and more accessible for all users. Projects that are located within the public right-of-way and/or are included within the town's annual or multi-year capital improvement plans should specifically reference how the project addresses complete streets issues.

Ongoing collaboration between neighboring municipalities and with transportation agencies such as the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT), Maine Turnpike Authority (MTA) and the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS), will ensure a complete network in both Gray and the greater region. The Town of Gray will also coordinate regularly with utility providers, and other users of the public right-of-way to ensure the principles and practices of Complete Streets are embedded within their planning, design, construction, and maintenance activities.

Complete Streets improvements may include facilities and amenities such as (but not limited to):

- Pavement markings and signs;
- Street and sidewalk lighting;
- Sidewalks and pedestrian safety improvements such as medians;
- Pedestrian refuge islands, curb extensions and crosswalk enhancements;
- Improvements that provide Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance such as curb ramps, landing pads, and accessible pedestrian signals;
- Bicycle detection at intersections and other bicycle accommodations such as bike lanes or wider shoulders;
- Street trees, landscaping, and/or street furniture;
- Environmentally-friendly strategies such as using impervious surfaces in lieu of pavement and green infrastructure techniques (using vegetation, soils, and other elements and practices to absorb and filter stormwater at its source) to limit the impacts of stormwater.

Additional implementation activities may include:

- Encouraging town staff to participate in relevant Complete Streets training which may including viewing webinars, and/or attending workshops or conferences;
- Where needed and appropriate, hiring consultants with Complete Streets training and expertise;
- Developing project checklists that incorporate Complete Streets elements in the Town's overall design processes;
- Establishing design manuals that clearly set forth the standards to be followed for bike and pedestrian installations including signs and markings; and
- Directing the Planning Board, Ordinance Advisory Committee, and the Ordinance Review Committee to integrate Complete Streets policies and practices into the Town of Gray's zoning codes and ordinances.

Connectivity

The Town of Gray wishes to create and maintain a connected, intermodal system throughout the town. Modifications (such as repurposed rights-of-way) that improve the overall network and better connect fragmented portions of the town should take priority over those that affect single, isolated roadways. An interconnected system makes all trips as short as possible, allows pedestrians and bikes to flow through the system without inconvenience, and relieves traffic congestion by providing many alternate routes to the same destination. New developments and redevelopment projects are encouraged to provide connections internally as well as to adjacent existing street networks.

The focus should be on remediation of deficient or non-existent sidewalks and crosswalks, remediation of deficient roadways, and installation of MaineDOT-approved share-the-road signage. Bike racks, and facilities for vehicular parking to accommodate intermodal uses should also be encouraged..

The development of Complete Streets in Gray should consider the local context, issues, and obstacles unique to the town. Specific factors to consider are man-made barriers such as I-95 (in particular the role of bridge crossings in east-west connectivity), as well as natural barriers such as lakes, rivers, and streams. Local priorities should include roadways or other facilities that:

- Are part of the priority corridor or pedestrian node network identified in the Gray, Maine 2018 *Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan* (and as it may be updated going forward);
- Provide primary access to one or more significant destinations, such as schools, recreation facilities, shopping or employment centers;
- Provide access across a natural or man-made barrier such as a river or freeway;

- Are in an area where a relatively high number of users of non-motorized transportation modes exist or can be anticipated;
- Provide, or could provide, continuity or connectivity links for an existing trail or path network;
- Provide access to neighboring communities (these may contribute to the larger regional network and require multimodal access).

Complementary Policies and Plans

The Gray Complete Streets policy complements multiple policies and plans adopted by the town. As of 2020 these include the:

- *Town of Gray's 2003 Comprehensive Plan*
- *2018 Gray, Maine Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan*
- *2013 Sustain Southern Maine Gray Village Area Growth Study*
- *2012 Hancock Triangle Block Plan*
- *2011 Monument Square Master Plan*
- *2006 Gray Village Master Plan.*

Design Standards and Guidelines

The Town of Gray should consult, or be informed by, the best and latest design standards as they become available. As of 2020, examples include:

- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Green Book
- AASHTO Guide for the Planning, Designing and Operating Pedestrian Facilities
- AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Guidelines
- Institution of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach
- ITE Neighborhood Street Design Guidelines
- National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Street Design Guide
- NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide
- Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS) Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Design Guidelines
- U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)

When fulfilling this Complete Streets Policy, the Town will generally follow the design manuals, standards, and guidelines above, as applicable, but should not be precluded from considering innovative or non-traditional design options that offer a comparable level of safety for users.

Exceptions

While it is important to consider all uses in transportation projects throughout the Town of Gray, exceptions may be granted if a project meets one or more of conditions listed below. The Council will to determine the decision making process for reviewing and granting/refusing exceptions:

- It is located in a corridor where non-motorized use is prohibited by MaineDOT or the Maine

Turnpike Authority, such as I-95; The cost of accommodation is excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use.

- There is a documented absence of current or future need.
- There are severe environmental or topological constraints, such as wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, or other critical areas;
- It involves ordinary maintenance activities such as mowing, snowplowing, sweeping, spot repair, joint or crack sealing, or pothole filling;
- There is insufficient space to safely accommodate new bike-ped facilities or amenities;
- The existing right-of-way is unable to accommodate pedestrian, bicycle, or transit facilities due to width restrictions or is impractical due to space or financial limitations;
- A parallel or nearby facility provides a reasonable level of similar accessibility to destinations;
- It is located outside the areas the Town of Gray has identified as appropriate for sidewalks.

Performance Measures

The Town should adopt performance measures to track the progress of Complete Streets implementation. Examples of performance measures might include:

- Improvements in safety such as new ADA-compliant crosswalks or sidewalks;
- Changes to vehicular speed signage.

Such measures could be incorporated into relevant plans, manuals, policies, processes and programs. Public Works and the Planning Department should include the above or other relevant measures to the Town Council annually.