

Town of Bedford COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

Vision and Purpose

Complete Streets are designed and operated to provide safety, comfort, and accessibility for all users of our roadways, trails, and transit systems, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, buses, commercial vehicles, and emergency vehicles. “All Users” includes people of all ages and abilities. 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 and by improving the pedestrian and vehicular environments. The purpose of Bedford’s Complete Streets policy is to accommodate all road users by creating a network that meets the needs of individuals using a variety of transportation modes.

Core Commitment

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

The Town also recognizes that all road projects and adjacent site development, whether developing new roads or maintaining or reconstructing existing roads, are opportunities to apply Complete Streets design principles. The Town will, to the maximum extent practical, plan, design, construct, maintain, and operate all streets to provide for a comprehensive and integrated network of facilities for all users.

All transportation, infrastructure, and street design projects including upgrades or expansions of roads in the public right-of-way shall comply with the Town of Bedford Complete Streets Policy, to the maximum extent practical. Private developments shall comply with the Complete Streets principles. In addition, to the extent practical, state-owned roadways will comply with the Complete Streets principles.

Transportation infrastructure may be excluded from this policy, upon approval by the Selectmen, where documentation and data indicate that:

1. Specific users are prohibited by law, such as limited access highways. In these cases, an effort will be made to provide alternative accommodations.
2. Cost or impacts are excessively disproportionate to the benefit.

Best Practices

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 shall consider the needs and values of both stakeholders and the community and encourage participation of those affected in order to gain project consensus. The overall goal is to preserve and enhance scenic, aesthetic, historical, and environmental resources while improving and maintaining safety, mobility, and infrastructure conditions.

The Town of Bedford recognizes that Complete Streets principles may be achieved by incorporating elements into a project at the start or by adding elements incrementally through a series of smaller improvements or maintenance activities over time.

The latest edition of design guidance documents will be used in the implementation of Complete Streets, including:

- The Massachusetts 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 Control Devices (MUTCD)
- The Architectural Access Board (AAB) 521CMR Rules and Regulations
- Documents and plans created for the Town of Bedford, such as the Great Road Master Plan and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

Implementation

The Town shall make Complete Streets practices a routine part of everyday operations, shall approach transportation projects as an opportunity to improve streets and the transportation network for all users, and shall work in cooperation with other departments, state and federal agencies, and adjoining towns to implement Complete Streets.

The Planning Board shall review and either revise or develop proposed revisions to subdivision rules and regulations, master plans and zoning bylaws to integrate Complete Streets principles.

The Town shall maintain its Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan as a means to prioritize projects to eliminate gaps in the sidewalk and bikeway network.

All road projects will receive a Complete Streets review during conceptual design.

The Town shall make all efforts to avail staff for training on Complete Streets principles and best practices for implementing policy through workshops and other means.

The Town will seek appropriate sources of funding, including grants, for implementing its Complete Streets policy.

Complete Streets implementation and effectiveness will be evaluated annually by the Transportation Advisory Committee for success and improvement opportunities. The findings of the evaluation shall be presented to the Selectmen and shall include performance measures such as infrastructure improvements (i.e. miles of new sidewalks, miles of bicycle accommodations), tracking of public transportation ridership and annual bicycle and pedestrian counts.