



Town of Babylon
Sustainable Complete Streets Policy

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Vision

The story of Long Island's post-war development is well-documented. This development, characterized overwhelmingly by early sprawl, has created a network of streets, arterials and highways which fails to serve the needs of non-auto road users, and in fact often inadequately meets the needs of auto-users.

The Town of Babylon recognizes the absolute necessity of promoting pedestrian, bicycle and public transportation travel as an alternative to the automobile in order to protect all road users, reduce negative environmental impacts, promote healthy living, and advance the well-being of commuters. Furthermore, the Town acknowledges that as public spaces, roads must be designed to afford safety and accessibility to all users. Finally, the Town recognizes that the full integration of all modes of travel in the design of streets and highways will increase the capacity and efficiency of the road network, reduce traffic congestion by improving mobility options, limit greenhouse gas emissions, and improve the general quality of life.

The Town of Babylon therefore establishes and adopts this Sustainable Complete Streets Policy in order to promote modes of transportation other than the automobile, including walking, biking, and mass transit, to make these modes of transportation safe and convenient for users of all ages and abilities, to reduce vehicle miles traveled within the Town and the associated negative environmental impacts, to promote healthy lifestyles, to reduce the cost of commuting and to anticipate and facilitate future demand for walking, biking and other alternative transportation modes.

To effectuate and enforce this Policy, the Town commissions the development of a Sustainable Complete Streets Master Plan (the "Master Plan"), described herein.

Policy Statement

The Town of Babylon shall provide for the needs of drivers, public transportation vehicles and patrons, bicyclists, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities in all planning, programming, design, construction, reconstruction, retrofit, operations, and maintenance activities and products. The Town shall view all transportation improvements as opportunities to improve safety, access and mobility for all travelers within the Town and recognizes bicycle, pedestrian and mass transit modes as integral elements of the transportation system.

Definition

Complete streets are roadways designed to safely and comfortably provide for the needs of all users, including, but not limited to, motorists, cyclists, pedestrians, transit and school bus riders, movers of commercial goods, persons with disabilities, seniors, and emergency users. Sustainable complete streets are complete streets which simultaneously aim to minimize adverse environmental effects, including, but not limited to, issues concerning drainage and stormwater runoff. Sustainable complete streets also form a comprehensive, integrated network supporting sustainable and transit-oriented development, and complementing sustainable land use patterns.

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Road Users

In 2008 there were 716 cyclist fatalities in the United States, or 1.92% of all traffic fatalities. However, the roads of New York State were among the most dangerous in the nation for these users, with a rate over 1.75 times the national average. Though Town-wide data is not available, the need to provide safe, complete streets for all users is evident.

Pedacyclist Traffic Fatalities, 2008¹	Total Traffic Fatalities	Pedacyclist Fatalities	Percentage
U.S. Total	37,261	716	1.92%
NY State	1231	42	3.41%

Pedestrians, bicyclists and transit passengers of all ages and abilities are as important as trucks, buses and automobiles as road users, and should have an equal expectation of safety when using roadways. The purpose of this Policy is to ensure the safety of all users on Town roads, and to improve safety, access and mobility for all road users.

“All users” includes, but is not limited to, motorists, cyclists, pedestrians, transit and school bus riders, movers of commercial goods, persons with disabilities, seniors, and emergency users. All users includes persons of all ages and abilities.

Network

The Town of Babylon Sustainable Complete Streets Policy will result in a fully-connected transportation network for all modes of transit. While not every street can be designed perfectly for every user, the development of a Complete Streets network will allow for “an interwoven array” of streets which adequately serve all modes of transit. This multi-modal network will also ensure safe, easy transfers between modes of transit for all users and will be integrated with sustainable land use development.

In order to define this array, the Town of Babylon will commission a Sustainable Complete Streets Master Plan. This Plan will investigate the roadway network of the Town of Babylon to define existing and future land use, planning and transportation contexts, identify deficiencies, and establish a series of objectives, goals, recommendations, priorities and implementable measures to guide the Town in its introduction of Complete Streets principles.

¹ “Traffic Safety Facts, 2008 Data: Bicyclists and Other Cyclists” [NHTSA National Center for Statistics and Analysis](http://www.nhtsa.gov), (www.nhtsa.gov).

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Roads

This policy shall apply to all roads under the jurisdiction of the Town of Babylon, as well as the roadways of private developments within the Town of Babylon. When at all possible, the Town shall work with other jurisdictions and utilities to apply complete streets treatments to roads not under the jurisdiction of the Town.

Projects

All projects, including design, planning, reconstruction, rehabilitation, maintenance, or operations, undertaken by the Town of Babylon shall be designed and executed in a balanced, responsible and equitable way to accommodate and encourage travel by bicyclists, public transportation vehicles and their passengers, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities, in accordance with established Best Practice Design Guidelines for Complete Streets and Sustainable Complete Streets, in advance of the establishment of specific Best Practices and Design Guidelines for the Town of Babylon in the Town of Babylon Sustainable Complete Streets Master Plan.

The Town of Babylon shall provide for the needs of all users, of all ages and abilities, in all planning, programming, design, construction, reconstruction, retrofit, operations, and maintenance activities and products.

Exceptions

This policy shall not apply to roadways where access by non-motorized users is prohibited by local or superseding legislation, for example, on limited-access highways.

Design Criteria

A New York State Department of Motor Vehicles 2008 Study cited pedestrian or bicyclist error or confusion as a contributing factor in 18.8 percent of all pedestrian/motor vehicle accidents. While there are no doubt instances of pedestrians and cyclists acting inappropriately or dangerously, this figure is a strong reflection of the fact that roads are poorly designed to handle the needs of pedestrians and cyclists, leading to confusing situations that enhance potential pedestrian/motor vehicle conflicts.

Contributing Factor²	Number	Percentage
Driver Inattention/Distraction	2856	19.1%
Pedestian/Bicyclist/Other Ped Error/Confusion	2814	18.8%
Failure to Yield R.O.W.	2020	13.5%

² “Summary of Pedestrian/Motor Vehicle Accidents, 2008” New York State Department of Motor Vehicles.

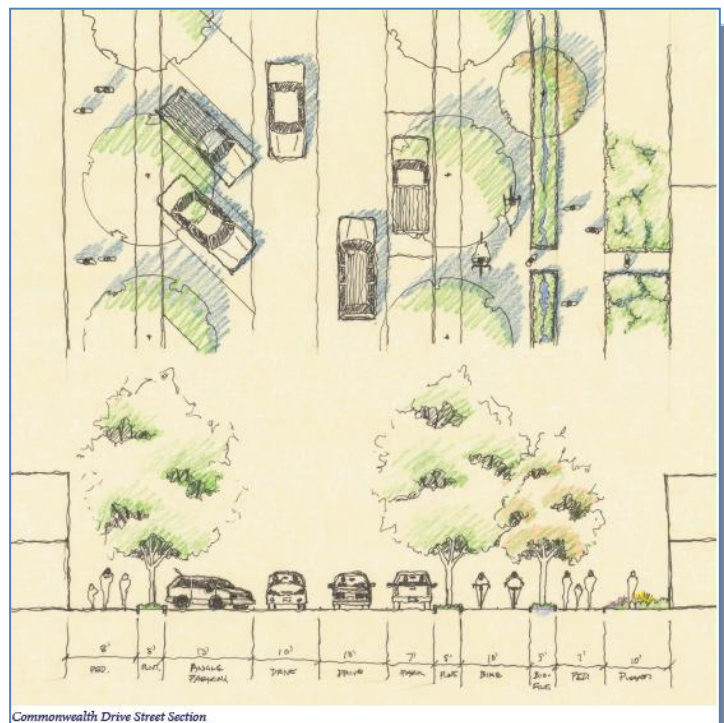
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The Sustainable Complete Streets Master Plan shall include the development of Best Practices and Design Guidelines for the Town's use. Pending the completion of this Town-specific document, the Town shall follow established best policy and practices for complete streets.

In general, the Town's roadways should be redesigned to include medians, narrower travel lanes, secure bike facilities, on-street parking, tree cover, sidewalks, streetscaping and lighting, in accordance with *The Smart Growth Manual*³. The roadway network should provide for the ease of transfer between modes of transit, provide connections to bike and pedestrian facilities at destination points, and prevent interference between modes of transit (for example, bike lockers should not block sidewalks). This requires the participation of Town engineers, planners and architects. Town employees shall attend periodic workshops and trainings to remain well-informed of changes in the field. Project narratives describing the accommodations made for all users, the guidelines for which will be developed in the Sustainable Complete Streets Master Plan, shall be required for all projects.

Local Example: Wyandanch

The Wyandanch Transit Oriented Development Conceptual Design contains recommendations for sustainable complete street treatments in downtown Wyandanch which may serve as a model for Town-wide design guidelines. This design establishes a network of open space corridors amidst the existing network of hedgerows, woodlots and wooded wetlands native to the area. It includes wide sidewalks with vegetative buffers, on-street parking, narrow travel lanes, central planted medians, and in some cases separated bike facilities, all hallmarks of complete streets. The sections here illustrate these concepts.⁴



³ Duany, Andres and Jeff Speck with Mike Lydon, *The Smart Growth Manual* (McGraw Hill, 2010).

⁴ Photo credits: Torti Gallas and Partners, 2010.

Context

Streets should be regarded as a series of open space corridors forming a comprehensive open space system. This system needs to carry vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians of all ages and abilities while minimizing adverse environmental impacts. Design criteria should reflect these needs in guidelines for street and sidewalk widths, tree planting, and stormwater management strategies.

However, roadway design should also complement local land use and development patterns. Appropriate roadway design is crucial in creating walkable, sustainable downtown communities. Streets which successfully accommodate pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles, with a streetscape designed both for pedestrian amenity as well as vehicular movement, are proven to contribute overwhelmingly to the success of vibrant, traditional neighborhoods.

Awareness

The greatest safety device in a pedestrian or cyclist's toolkit is the awareness and consciousness of drivers. Drivers learn to watch for other cars; they are not necessarily trained to be mindful of pedestrians and cyclists, and our transportation network has been constructed in such a way that drivers have not learned how to interact with all users. This Policy will fundamentally change the relationship between driver and pedestrian by creating streets that regard these users equally, with equal right to access and use.

Fiscal Impact

Designing complete streets is not additional work for planners, architects and engineers; it is *different* work. The practitioners of these disciplines have in the past been asked to solve a particular problem – namely, safely and efficiently moving the maximum number of cars past a given point in the shortest time. The Sustainable Complete Streets Policy simply redefines the problem. Under this Policy, these professionals are required to use their knowledge and skills to design roads and a road network that safely and efficiently move all users, motorized and non-motorized. The fiscal impact of this Policy, therefore, is negligible.

Road projects will be funded through the Town's existing process.

The Town will also pursue funding sources for additional complete streets projects outside its normal road resurfacing, restoration and rehabilitation operations. For these funds, the Town shall refer to a priority list established in the Master Plan in its selection of road projects.

Goals and Outcomes

The Sustainable Complete Streets Master Plan shall include a Recommendations and Priorities section which will comprise statistics regarding pedestrian and auto accidents and related fatalities on Town roads, identify problem areas in the Town street network and assess their

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severity, and evaluate the appropriateness of complete streets treatments on each road. The Plan shall establish a list for redesign projects with measurable goals for the reduction of these fatalities as projects are undertaken on Town roads.

The Master Plan shall also include a Performance Measurement section. Traditionally, road performance has been measured by Level of Service, an indication of the auto-centric mentality that has dominated transportation planning. The success of complete streets shall now be gauged with many metrics: the ability to accommodate all users, the increase in bike and pedestrian use spurred, the mileage of bike lanes and shared-use lanes installed and converted, the reduction of average miles per hour of automobiles in pedestrian areas, and the *quality* of the street experience. The Master Plan shall develop a rubric for the new evaluation of street performance. The Master Plan will also include reporting requirements and/or a checklist to be completed by Town planners, architects and engineers for all road projects, describing the accommodations made for all users.

Implementation & Next Steps

This Policy shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

The Town will schedule a Complete Streets Workshop hosted by the National Complete Streets Coalition for its Traffic Engineers, Public Works, Roadway Design and Maintenance Staff, and Transportation, Community Development and Land Use Planners, at the soonest possible date.

The Town will commence a study to develop the Sustainable Complete Streets Master Plan to guide the implementation of this Policy. This Master Plan shall be completed within 18 months of the adoption of this Policy.

Sustainable Complete Streets Master Plan

The Sustainable Complete Streets Master Plan shall contain:

- An evaluation of the current performance of Town roads from a Complete Streets standpoint
- A summary of land-use and community context as it relates to Complete Streets development
- A list of goals and objectives
- A list of priority projects and implementable measures to be enacted as funds become available, along with suggested funding sources
- A bikeway plan
- Design guidelines and criteria
- Best practices and policies
- A rubric for the future evaluation of road performance from a Complete Streets standpoint
- An outline for narrative reports and a checklist to be submitted by Town engineers for all future road projects describing accommodations made for all users