

Complete Streets Report Executive Summary

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Complete Streets Report Executive Summary State of Connecticut Department of Transportation

Complete Streets Vision

To ensure that Connecticut's transportation infrastructure is safe, accessible and comfortable for all users with appropriate connections within and between communities.

The Report

The Connecticut Department of Transportation recently released its first-ever report on complete streets.

Prepared in-house, the Department's *Complete Streets Report*, illustrates the agency's continuing efforts and improvements in this area.

The agency envisions this to be a living document, updated through periodic agency webletter releases of *Streetlights on Complete Streets*.

Changing Our Ways

The Department has embraced the complete streets philosophy and has begun the process of formalizing this through its activities relating to (1) policies and practices, (2) infrastructure improvements and (3) alternatives systems (trail network).

The complete streets movement is changing the emphasis of roadway design in Connecticut such that non-motorized users are considered **equally** with motorized users.

This means including provisions such as sidewalks, bicycle lanes, wider roadway shoulders, bus turn-outs, and appropriate landscaping in projects.

Reclaiming Main Street, USA as a Complete Street



Pedestrian-Friendly
Wide Sidewalks and Crosswalks with Bulb Outs

Accommodates Vehicular Traffic and Parking

Accessible for Disabled Persons
textured, slip resistant ramps with curb cuts for easy passage

Bicyclist-Friendly
Low Vehicular Speed Design with Bicycle Sharrows

Definitions of Key Terms

Complete Street

A transportation policy and approach whereby facilities are planned, designed, operated and maintained to provide safe mobility, for all users, regardless of age, ability or mode of transportation. Complete street concepts apply to rural, suburban, and urban areas and are sensitive to the context of the community characteristics.

Non-Motorized User

Non-motorized users are persons operating without the aid of a motorized vehicle (car, truck, motorcycle, i.e.) such as pedestrians, bicyclists, equestrians and disabled persons, including those utilizing service animals, mobility aids, wheelchairs or power-driven mobility devices.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, State and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

Bus rapid transit is an innovative, high capacity, cost-effective public transit solution that can significantly improve travel times through heavily-congested areas by using dedicated transit roadways to avoid traffic and quickly transport passengers to their destinations.

Road Diet

A road diet is a technique for designing roadway corridors with a reduced number or effective width of vehicular travel lanes to accommodate more types of users safely. This treatment cannot be used for all locations, but when applied appropriately is an effective tool for accommodating all users.

Alternative Systems

Alternative systems are off-road multi-use trail systems that focus on safety, accessibility, and connectivity for non-motorized transportation users and are designed with the community in mind.

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Policies and Practices

The Department has established a Complete Streets Committee, expanded training and outreach; initiated revisions to design manuals; developed new policies and is applying new field practices.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel Needs Assessment Form

The Department is updating and redesigning its Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel Needs Assessment Form. The form prompts early consideration of bicyclists and pedestrians in the development of every project.

Sidewalk Policy

Recently, the Department's policy on sidewalks was updated to allow greater flexibility in the funding of these components.

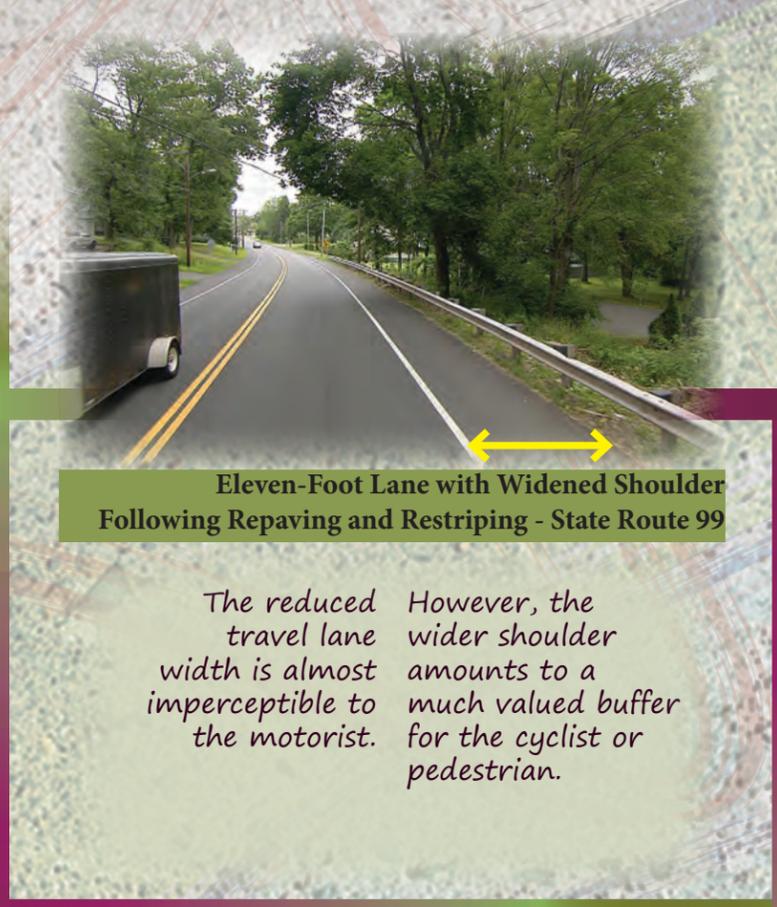
Moreover, exclusive sidewalk projects are now allowed and are prioritized along with traditional road projects.

Eleven Foot Travel Lanes

The Department is making every effort to provide adequate space on State roadways for non-motorized transportation users.

Whenever possible, the goal is to provide a minimum shoulder width of four to five feet with travel lanes no less than eleven feet and no more than twelve feet.

The Vendor-in-Place (VIP) program for state-funded paving projects is making the biggest contribution to this initiative. Of the 183 miles of two-lane secondary roadways that will be resurfaced this year (2013), 94% will accommodate travel lane widths of eleven-feet.



Eleven-Foot Lane with Widened Shoulder Following Repaving and Restriping - State Route 99

The reduced travel lane width is almost imperceptible to the motorist. However, the wider shoulder amounts to a much valued buffer for the cyclist or pedestrian.

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a law that protects the civil rights of persons with disabilities, including access to public transportation facilities.

Priority has been given to improve accessibility at traffic signals at known locations where visually impaired pedestrians could benefit the most from ADA upgrades to maximize limited resources.



Sidewalks are important components of the transportation system for non-motorized transportation users.

What Resources are Required to Continue This Work Effectively and Cohesively?

- Implementation of an overarching complete streets policy for all state agencies, RPOs and municipalities
- Support and direction by the Governor's Office for state agency commissioners to adopt a complete streets policy for their agency, DOT, DEEP, OPM, DECD, etc.

Infrastructure Improvements

Implementation of transportation projects and components that bring about accessible facilities are the real test of our agency's commitment to complete streets.

ADA Upgrades at Signalized Intersections

As part of the Department's American's with Disability Act (ADA) transition plan, steps are being taken to evaluate and improve accessibility for handicapped persons, as necessary, at all state-maintained traffic control signals.

Addressing Needs of Transit Users

As commuter patterns are changing, transit oriented development (TOD) and bicycle use is becoming increasingly popular with transit riders and, often, a necessity.

As funding becomes available, bicycle lockers or storage racks are being installed at train stations to respond to commuter use patterns. Plans to have bicycle racks installed on the new rail cars (M-8's) after delivery are also being finalized.

Currently, bicycle racks are available on all buses in the CT Transit fleet and on a number of other transit district fleets.

Rapid transit systems, like CTfastrak, are designed with amenities friendly to bicyclists, pedestrians and persons with disabilities. As such, CTfastrak buses will accommodate bicycles. Additionally, a five-mile multi-use trail from New Britain to Newington junction for pedestrians and cyclists is being constructed in conjunction with CTfastrak.

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Addressing Stratford Sidewalks

In Stratford, the urbanized area of U.S. Route 1 (Barnum Avenue Cutoff) between Route 113 (Main Street) and Ferry Boulevard is heavily developed with a mixture of large and small retail establishments.

Funding is being sought to initiate a project that will complete the sidewalk network in this area to address pedestrian barriers.



A well-traveled, albeit narrow, walking path is visible in the Stratford Route 1 corridor along the roadside.

Space for pedestrians is limited by guiderail and steep slopes.

Stratford - U.S. Route 1 Facing Eastbound



New Haven - Fair Haven School SRTS Project: Before and After

What Resources are Required to Continue This Work Effectively and Cohesively?

State Match Funds to assist the Department, RPOs and municipalities with the non-federal portion when implementing complete streets type projects.

Once completed, the East Hartford "road diet" will provide a dedicated bike lane from Main Street in East Hartford to Mary Street.

After which, the road is already a two-lane road with wide shoulders to accommodate bicycles.

Coordination meetings with town officials and representatives of CTTransit have been held to review various components.

Additionally, an added benefit of this project is improved connectivity with other nearby systems for non-motorized transportation users.



Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS)

Initiated in 2006, the Connecticut Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program is designed to empower schools and communities to make walking and bicycling to school a safe and routine activity.

Walking or biking to school plays a critical role in keeping children physically active and healthy.

Since the SRTS Program inception, the Department has programmed approximately twelve million dollars for these projects. Typical projects are comprised of new sidewalk installations and/or upgrades to existing pedestrian and bicycle crossings in the vicinity of schools.

East Hartford "Road Diet"

The East Hartford "road diet" project along Burnside Avenue (U.S. Route 44) is a first of its kind in Connecticut and has been well received by the community. In this case, an existing four-lane road will be restriped to a two-lane road in order to provide a dedicated bicycle lane and vehicle parking for residents as well as formal bus turn-outs.

This is not a treatment that can be applied to every corridor but, when used appropriately, is an effective tool for accommodating pedestrian, bicyclist and vehicular traffic.

An educational component is being included in the project that will include collaboration with CT Transit, local law enforcement and other stakeholders in the community.

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Alternative Systems

Although some might argue that multi-use trail systems are not a component of Complete Streets, the Department believes that there is room in the definition for both on and off-road systems. Alternative systems, such as multi-use trails, can offer safe and functional travel ways for these users when designed with the community in mind.

Addressing Gaps in the State Network of Multi-Use Trails

Options continue to be evaluated for closing the gaps in the statewide trail network. The need and the interest is there but available funding for design, property acquisition and construction continues to be a major obstacle.

Realistically, the Department cannot complete all of the trail gaps with available funding sources. The East Coast Greenway will be the primary focus in the coming years as it is considered a critical segment in the national effort to connect Florida to Maine.

Assistance with Local and Regional Priorities

The Department recognizes that there are many other trails of regional and local significance required for connecting within communities.

Changes as a result of the federal transportation bill are also altering eligible activities and the available funding for local and regional initiatives. In the face of this, the Department remains committed to assisting the regional planning organizations in achieving their local project goals.

East Coast Greenway (ECG) Signage

The East Coast Greenway (ECG) is a national effort to connect Florida to Maine for non-motorized transportation users. Its completion will be a primary focus for the Department in the coming years as it is considered a critical segment.

Department maintenance crews are installing interim route ECG signs on state roads, while the CT DEEP agreed to install signs on all trail portions and the individual municipalities are responsible for installing signs along their roads.

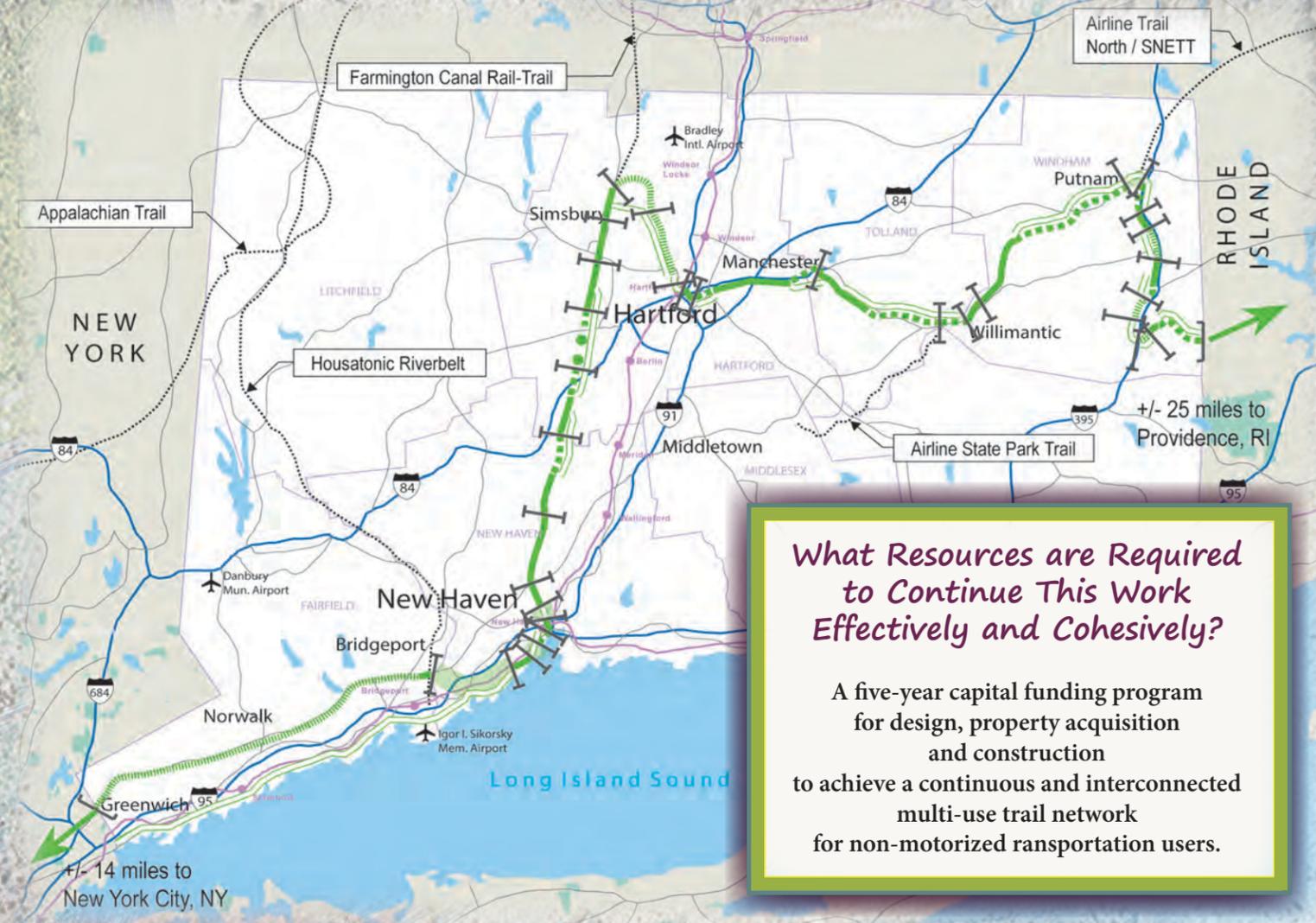
Merritt Parkway Trail Feasibility Study

This is a feasibility study for a multi-use trail in the Merritt Parkway corridor. The anticipation is that this trail could serve as an alternative east-west system, a major connecting link in the East Coast Greenway - connecting daily commuters and general users via a non-motorized pathway to major urban and transportation centers.

Putnam Bridge Non-Motorized Access over the CT River

In addition to work to rehabilitate the William H. Putnam Bridge carrying Route 3 over the Connecticut River, the Department is also currently working with stakeholders through an advisory committee on a Putnam Bridge Multimodal Trail Connections Feasibility Study.

This is the last remaining Connecticut River crossing without non-motorized access.



What Resources are Required to Continue This Work Effectively and Cohesively?

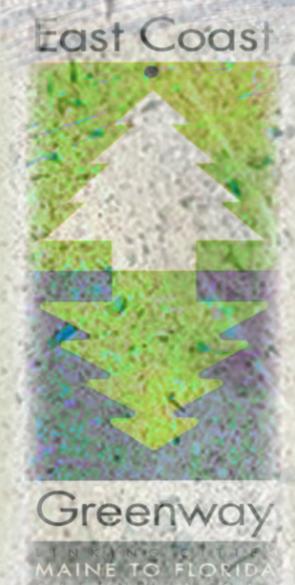
A five-year capital funding program for design, property acquisition and construction to achieve a continuous and interconnected multi-use trail network for non-motorized transportation users.

Routes currently available for non-motorized travelers from Naubuc Avenue in Glastonbury to Downtown Wethersfield:

- 8 miles via the Charter Oak Bridge (Hartford)
- 9 miles via the Rocky-Hill Glastonbury Ferry
- 27 miles via the Portland Bridge (Middletown)

versus the proposed 2-mile Putnam Bridge sidepath.

The initiative has been the first joint venture of its kind for Connecticut - a true team effort between the Department, the CT DEEP and the East Coast Greenway Alliance.



The new federal transportation bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), was enacted in late 2012 and resulted in some changes to program rules as well as reduced the level of available funding that will continue to slow progress.