


F R O M	NAME & TITLE	Michelle Pourciau, Director	CITY of BALTIMORE	M E M O	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Department of Transportation (DOT) 417 E Fayette Street, Room 527			
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill Report 17-0102			

TO Mayor Catherine E. Pugh

DATE: March 26, 2018

TO: Respective City Council Land Use and Transportation Committee

FROM: Department of Transportation

POSITION: Support with Amendments

RE: City Council Bill 17-0102 - Complete Streets

INTRODUCTION

FOR the purpose of requiring the Transportation Department to construct and operate a comprehensive Complete Streets Transportation System; creating a Complete Streets Coordinating Council to make certain recommendations and oversee certain activities regarding the Complete Streets Transportation System; establishing certain design standards and requiring the Transportation Department to use the latest and best Design 2 standards in constructing and operating the Complete Streets Transportation System; requiring the Transportation Department, in consultation with the Coordinating Council and after public notice and a public comment period, to adopt a Complete Streets Manual to carry out this Ordinance; requiring that the Transportation Director, in consultation with the Coordinating Council, to prepare an Annual Complete Streets Report, assessing the status of the Complete Streets Transportation System, and to conduct public meetings and other community engagement and outreach activities to present the Complete Streets Annual Report to the public and to solicit input; specifying that the requirements of this Ordinance apply to all project phases undertaken by, under the authority of, or subject to the supervision of the Transportation Department for the improvement of any street, subject to certain exceptions; defining certain terms; providing for special effective dates; and generally relating to the construction and operation of a transportation system, accommodating all travel modes, that ensures the safety, security, comfort, and convenience of all users.

The Baltimore City Department of Transportation strongly supports the Complete Streets concept. The department is of the belief that the city's transportation network should be balanced and built to accommodate all users safely and efficiently. Additionally, the transportation network should be inclusive and reliable for all pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, freight, and cars. The success of our network is reliant upon the effectiveness and safety of our roadways to mobilize our populous, thus well-built complete streets are imperative to promote the health, security, access, commute times, environmental sustainability, economy, and communities they were built to serve. The Baltimore City Department of Transportation is committed to investing in the formation of a robust network of multi-modal transportation and livable streets; however, said investments must be made within the parameters of budgetary constraints, and such will require planning over time.

- Under its new vision, the Baltimore City Department of Transportation has initiated the city's first ever Comprehensive Transportation Plan. The plan is targeted to engage in a complete analysis of the city's public space and rights-of-ways. It will identify and prioritize the needs of the decaying infrastructure and technology, analyze current and future demands on a limited right-of-way, identify and address pressing safety issues, and evaluate potential opportunities for public space investments that will catalyze neighborhood improvements. Additionally, it will comprehensively examine financial constraints to aid in the prioritization of investments of a limited resource pool and assist in the growth of asset acquisition. The plan will establish processes for performance measurements, and will provide a vision for transportation in the city moving forward, including recommendations for ensuring a comprehensive multimodal network that meets the needs of today, as well as long-term;

- The Department has established an internal Complete Streets review committee to evaluate all current construction and implementation projects with a Complete Streets lens to ensure that current projects provide Complete Streets elements;
- The Department is in the process of developing a public education campaign that will emphasize and promote Complete Streets principles, such as encouraging safer driving habits, anticipated to be released Spring of 2018;
- Over the next year, DOT is committed to working in conjunction with the Department of Public Works on the development of a Design Manual to establish exceptional standards for engineering practices within the city;
- DOT is committed to developing a comprehensive Complete Streets Implementation Plan over the next year that establishes guidance for integrating a Complete Streets approach into our planning, design, and engineering practices.

The Department of Transportation looks forward to continuing these efforts, and will dedicate focused attention to the evaluation all of the Departments investments, including creating safer, and more accessible streets for all.

PURPOSE/PLANS – Complete Streets is a global framework that seeks to enhance mobility for all users. Integrating Complete Streets into city planning requires that agencies work cohesively in the innovation of street design, or redesign, to think beyond traditional passenger vehicles. Complete Streets are a comprehensive network of transportation that provides an outstanding experience for all users, regardless of mode of travel.

The Department has implemented Complete Streets since the 2009 Resolution. In 2013, the Department revisited the policy to craft a variety of improvements. Since 2013, the Department has, and continues, to implement numerous elements of Complete Streets. Examples include the following:

- Improved walkability through:
 - Construction of over 15,000 square feet of new sidewalk between FY16-17;
 - New high lumen LED street lighting across nearly half the city;
 - New and refreshed crosswalks;
 - Over 2,376 new ADA-compliant curb ramps;
 - The E. North Avenue Reconstruction project, which includes enhanced sidewalks, crosswalks, ADA ramps, bump outs to reduce pedestrian crossing distances, lighting enhancements, and street plantings;
 - Initiation of Park Circle intersection construction, seeking to add new sidewalks and ADA curb ramps, along with improved bus shelters;
 - Sharp-Leadenhall Streetscape project to improve pedestrian safety and mobility through new enhanced lighting, sidewalk reconstruction, ADA curb ramps; and
 - Being awarded TIGER funding to study the Hanover Street Corridor for multimodal access, just to name a few.
- Improved Bikability through:
 - Adoption of a Bike Master Plan and adding bike facilities based on recommendations within this plan;
 - Installation of 175 new bike racks in the public right-of-way;
 - Potomac Street Cycle Track installation, which aims to slow down vehicles and improve access for bicyclists and pedestrians;
 - Ongoing construction of Central Avenue, to include dedicated bike lanes and installation of new bike racks, as well as pedestrian improvements such as bump outs, ADA compliant pedestrian crossings and sidewalks, and countdown pedestrian signals with APS push button stations, and enhanced street lighting;
 - Current construction of Midtown Streetscape project, which enhances both pedestrian and bicycle safety and access through improved signage, a new resurfaced Cycletrack, new countdown pedestrian signals, ADA curb ramps, traffic calming elements, and bump outs; and
 - Creation of a brand new Bike Share system with hundreds of bikes and over 50 stations.

- Improved Transit Access with:
 - Construction of new priority bus lanes and transit signal priority;
 - Installed 200 improved bus pads across the city in the past 2 years; and
 - Ongoing coordination with MTA on various projects that will improve transit access.
- Improving Freight Access to ensure the Department maintains a vital commercial base within the city by:
 - Successfully being awarded the TIGER grant for construction of a new Broening Highway, which also comprised a Complete Streets component to ensure trucks are not traveling through residential areas.
- Additionally, the Department has a number of ongoing maintenance projects focusing on streets and the public right-of-way through resurfacing, sidewalk and curb ramp repairs, and actively identifying scheduled resurfacing projects where there may be an opportunity to implement complete streets elements such as bike lanes.

Furthermore, Baltimore City Department of Transportation has completed improvements at over 16 intersections that were designed to enhance safety for pedestrians by narrowing travel lanes, slowing turning vehicles and shortening crossing distances for pedestrians. The Department will continue this type of programming through capital improvement projects, ongoing maintenance, and any special grant awards that may be received.

BRIEF HISTORY – In 2009, the Baltimore City Council approved a Complete Streets Resolution (Council Bill 09-0433). Baltimore City Department of Transportation adopted a Complete Streets policy in 2013.

FISCAL IMPACT – The proposed Council Bill 17-0102 will have fiscal impacts on the Baltimore City Department of Transportation, as well as other city agencies' operations, and capital budgets. This legislation will require hiring consultants for technical expertise, hiring new full-time staff to coordinate and facilitate the proposed coordinated council as well as manage all associated reporting and programmatic requirements. These efforts will also have significant impact on existing and future infrastructure projects, resulting in estimated additional ongoing costs of over 5-25% of project costs, or \$5 million annually, due to adding certain features that may require relocation of existing utilities or requiring changes to existing designs. The legislation does not propose any additional funding to be added for Complete Streets improvements, which will impact existing limited and dwindling resources. While infrastructure repair demands have been consistent or increasing, federal and state funding for such improvements have decreased over the years. The Department is committed to implementing Complete Streets; however, this legislation as written will require more than standard funding to be expended, taking away from regular, essential maintenance demands and critical infrastructure improvements that typically take precedence. New sources of funding are needed to ensure enhanced Complete Streets implementation.

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT POSITION –

The Department of Transportation respectfully favors City Council Bill 17-0102; however, with amendments to be further discussed and deliberated with Council and the Committee. While in agreement that projects should be planned, designed, and engineered to improve safety for all, the Department believes that this legislation, as written, will put significant constraints on daily operations.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Katelyn McCauley at Katelyn.McCauley@baltimorecity.gov, (443) 677-9391.

Sincerely,



Michelle Pourciau
Director