



TOWN OF AGAWAM

Department of Public Works

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Christopher J. Golba • Superintendent

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Richard A. Cohen, City Council,
CC: File
From: Michelle C. Chase, P.E., Town Engineer and Christopher J. Golba, DPW Superintendent
Date: February 1, 2016
Subject: Complete Streets Policy

Mayor Cohen and City Councilors,

It is with great pleasure that the Department of Public Works and Engineering Division issue our support for Agawam's Complete Street Policy. As you may already know, Complete Streets are streets that are designed with all modes of transportation in mind. They are for users of all ages and abilities and promote safety, healthy lifestyles, economic viability and improve quality of life.

We believe that in Agawam, people should have the right to use the Town's public ways be it in their car, on a bus, bicycle, wheelchair, or walking and feel safe and comfortable doing so. It is important that we do everything in our power to create a safe environment for everyone. This policy will help the Town of Agawam meet those goals.

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) has established a funding program to encourage municipalities to routinely incorporate Complete Streets design elements into their local, state and federal road projects. This program was created in order to support the Healthy Transportation Policy and was in response to MGL Chapter 90I. MassDOT has allocated \$12.5 million for the first two years of the program state wide. Funding beyond FY 2017 will be determined based on the success of the program. This funding is only available to municipalities that meet their application criteria. Adoption of an acceptable municipal Complete Streets Policy is one of those criteria.

Agawam Engineering has been working in conjunction with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and West Springfield's Engineering Department to create a comprehensive policy that is tailored to the Town of Agawam's needs. The goal is to improve the transportation infrastructure using a context sensitive design approach that takes into consideration everyone involved while still enhancing the character of the Town. This policy calls upon both standard and innovative design guides to be used in a way to help make our streets safer for all modes of transportation.

It should be noted MassDOT will not review Complete Streets policies until after they are adopted by the municipality. However, the Engineering Division has attended several MassDOT led workshops in which they have provided extensive guidance on developing successful policies. We have also consulted with the PVPC and West Springfield and have reviewed some of the best policies in


Massachusetts. Currently, there are at least 27 cities and towns in Massachusetts that have adopted Complete Streets policies/ordinances/manuals and that number is growing every week. These municipalities include but are not limited to: Acton, Boston, Beverly, Framingham, Holyoke, Littleton, Northampton, Salem, Somerville, and Springfield. West Springfield anticipates approving their policy very soon as well.


Once the Complete Streets policy is adopted by the Town and approved by MassDOT, Agawam will receive funding from MassDOT to assist in the creation of a Project Prioritization Plan. The purpose of this plan will be to gather information from not only the various departments in Town, but also the public and surrounding communities in order create a list of projects and assess their demand. Projects will be evaluated using criteria to be determined and a 5-year project plan will be created and submitted to MassDOT for approval. Once receiving approval, Complete Streets grants will be awarded and funding will be reimbursed similar to that of our current Chapter 90 program. This prioritization plan will be continuously evaluated and modified as the needs and demands of the Town change year over year.

MassDOT has just issued an aggressive timeline which the Town is dedicated to meeting. MassDOT will start reviewing adopted policies this month. Funding for Prioritization Plans begin in March. Plan reviews begin in June. And funding for projects will be allocated as early as August of 2016. Projects for this first round of funding will need to be completed by July 2017. So, as you can see, it is essential that this policy be adopted as soon as possible.

This complete streets program created by MassDOT is very exciting and is an opportunity to improve the quality of life for the people of Agawam. Please review the policy, if you have any questions, suggestions, concerns or if you would like to see examples of what types of projects are anticipated, please do not hesitate to contact the Town Engineer, Michelle Chase at 821-0625.

Sincerely,


Michelle C. Chase, P.E.
Town Engineer


Christopher J. Golba
DPW Superintendent