



# **Village of Great Neck Plaza**

## **Complete Streets Policy Guide**

Adopted  
February 1, 2012

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## **I. Vision and Purpose<sup>1</sup>**

The Village of Great Neck Plaza (“The Village”) recognizes the importance of taking a well-balanced approach to transportation planning and providing optimal transportation accessibility and choices for its residents and visitors. The Village believes that the public right-of-way is more than just a conveyor of vehicles, and that it instead serves a vital role in shaping a community’s landscape and livability. The present network of roads, in many cases, provides for the needs of motor vehicles to the exclusion of alternative modes of transportation, including cycling and walking.

The Village therefore seeks to create a road system that will accommodate the needs of all users and will integrate safety improvements and sustainable practices to reduce congestion, minimize environmental impacts, promote healthier lifestyles, encourage economic growth, and increase overall efficiency.

This policy is being considered to be consistent with New York State Law, effective February 15, 2012 that requires state and local transportation agencies to consider Complete Streets designs that will make streets and roadways across the state safe and accessible to all New Yorkers.

Under the state law, Complete Streets design principles will be considered on New York State Department of Transportation projects and local and county projects which receive both federal and state funding and are subject to state DOT oversight. Complete Streets principles facilitate improved joint use of roadways by all users, including pedestrians, motorists, and bicyclists as well as promote a cleaner, greener transportation system with reduced traffic congestion and the resultant air pollution. Design features may include sidewalks, bicycle lanes, crosswalks, pedestrian control signalization, bus pull outs, curb cuts, raised crosswalks, ramps, and traffic calming measures.

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<sup>1</sup> The Village of Great Neck Plaza hereby thanks and appreciates the Town’s sharing with us its adopted Complete Streets Policy Guide. Since we are an incorporated Village within the Town of North Hempstead, we have utilized the Town’s policy as the guidance model in preparing the policy for our Village.

## II. Policy Statement

The Village will use its best reasonable efforts to provide for the needs of all motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, children, persons with disabilities, movers of commercial goods, users of public transportation, and seniors. The planning, construction, reconstruction, retrofit, maintenance, alteration, or repair of streets, bridges, or other portions of the transportation network undertaken by the Village in the public right-of-way shall seek to incorporate these needs. The Village shall view all transportation improvements as opportunities to improve safety and accessibility for all roadway users and recognizes bicycles, pedestrians, and mass transit modes as integral elements of the transportation system.

What does a Complete Street look like in Great Neck Plaza?

- Calming or slowing speeds for motor vehicles
- Minimizing potential for vehicle conflicts to reduce accidents (fewer collisions and lessening their severity)
- Increasing safety (and the perception of safety) for pedestrians, bicyclists and all non-motorized users
- Reducing the need for police enforcement
- Enhancing the street environment (e.g., streetscape amenities, such as benches, bus shelters, bicycle racks)
- Increasing access for all modes & all users of transportation

### **III. Definitions**

#### *Complete Streets*

Complete streets are those designed and operated to accommodate all users, across a full range of transportation modes. Users must be able to travel safely along and across a complete street network.

#### *Ideal Cross Section*

Complete Streets are designed to provide the optimum number of travel lanes, paths and walkways, and their specific dimensions, for each functional classification of roadway and associated design speed.

#### *Roadway Network*

A multi-modal, integrated system of public thoroughfares that includes local and arterial roads (exclusive of limited-access highways), walkways, paths, trails and fixed-route transit corridors.

#### *Users*

Motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, children, persons with disabilities, movers of commercial goods, and transit riders of all ages and abilities utilizing all modes of ground transportation.

## **IV. Needs and Benefits**

### *Safety*

From 2006-2008 there were 307 accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists within the Town of North Hempstead (“The Town”) in which the Village is located. While the causes of these accidents are numerous and varied, a common contributing factor is roadway design, specifically road layouts, site lines and signal patterns that favor the efficient movement of motor vehicles to the detriment of non-motorized modes of transportation. Adequate provisions for safe non-motorized travel were often an afterthought.

### *Senior Mobility*

A common complaint voiced by seniors to village officials is that they encounter a hostile and unsafe environment when crossing certain streets within the Village. In a Complete Streets community, a number of techniques are deployed to increase the safety and convenience for senior pedestrians. These include re-timing of traffic signals to account for slower walking speeds, introducing sidewalk ramps and seating options, constructing sidewalk bulb-outs and median refuges to shorten crossing distances, and improving signage, street markings and lighting.

### *Safer Routes to School*

At the other end of the spectrum, a Complete Streets community offers a safer environment for school children through such techniques as traffic calming to reduce traffic speeds in and around school zones and improving street crossings.

### *Environment*

Improved roadway designs are a significant factor in reducing carbon emissions and achieving sustainability goals. Providing residents with an efficient transportation network that supports alternative modes reduces the number of motorized trips and miles traveled.

A Complete Streets policy may also incorporate innovative techniques in the selection of paving materials, drainage structures and street lighting. Increased use of porous pavements greatly reduces the amount of stormwater runoff and associated pollution sedimentation. The use of LED streetlight fixtures as an alternative to the traditional metal halide and high pressure sodium greatly reduces the amount of energy consumed and a longer service life.

### *Congestion Relief*

Traffic congestion is not only an inconvenience but is detrimental to the environment and the economy in terms of increased emissions and time lost to delays. A Complete Streets community encourages more efficient use of the road network by offering alternatives to the automobile through innovative design. Promoting and providing non-auto travel options such as walking, bicycling, carpooling and public transportation can reduce the demand for roadway use by single-occupancy vehicles during peak hour travel and help ease congestion.

### *Health*

The growing epidemic of obesity has communities nationwide searching for ways to improve the built environment and promote healthier living. The lack or inadequacy of sidewalks and bicycle paths are often cited as contributing factors. Complete Streets provide opportunities for increased physical activity by incorporating active design elements that promote walking, jogging and cycling.

### *Economic Activity*

A major intended benefit of a Complete Streets policy is the increase in the patronization of local businesses. Establishments located along popular pedestrian routes should hopefully experience an increase in customer traffic. In an auto-dominated streetscape, customers often bypass local options in search of larger centers, which are perceived as having a greater parking supply.

## **V. Local Examples**

The Village of Great Neck Plaza has long embraced Complete Streets concepts well in advance of adopting a formal policy. Since 2001, the Village has completed five specific projects in the downtown worth noting. All involve main access streets in the downtown that were formerly subject to numerous complaints of speeding, unsafe conditions for pedestrians and pedestrian/vehicle accidents.

### ***Barstow Road Roundabout and Other Electronic Safety Devices***

Construction of a modern roundabout at the intersection of Barstow Road and South Station Plaza was the Plaza's first completed Local Safe Streets and Traffic Calming (LSSTC) grant awarded by the New York State Department of Transportation. The roundabout, Phase I of this LSSTC project, was completed in the fall of 2003. In February 2004 Phase II was completed, which included installation of electronic speed awareness devices and flashing pedestrian safety signs at multiple locations in the Village. The roundabout was dedicated and named in 2005, "The Walter Handelman Roundabout" in honor of the Village's late engineer, Walter Handelman, who spearheaded and oversaw the construction of this project.

Previously this intersection had a small traffic circle and raised-concrete island which was created by the Village for channelization, more visible stop signs and right-turn separator. However, the 120-ft. length crosswalk with limited pedestrian refuge made this a most difficult pedestrian crossing. The features of the redesign of the modern roundabout included the following:

- Installation of a modern roundabout to reduce conflict points, simplify traffic movements, reduce vehicle speeds and move pedestrians away from circulating vehicle movements
- Bulb-out sidewalks installed to reduce crossing distances for pedestrians
- Contrasting pavement coloring (brick color) for more visible pedestrian crossings
- "Yield" markings on the pavement and in highly visible reflective signs at all approaches for pedestrians in crosswalks
- Pedestrian refuges in "splitter" islands minimize exposure of pedestrians to traffic
- Mountable curb accommodates public buses and other large vehicles

### ***Great Neck Road***

A major effort to improve public safety on a street within the Village was the renovation of Great Neck Road from Middle Neck Road to Bayview Avenue, a 0.9-mile roadway. A county road, located within the Village, Great Neck Road had not been renovated, upgraded or even repaved for some 80 years. After winning approval from the county and neighboring villages, the Village completed a major redesign of Great Neck Road.

Great Neck Road was the Plaza's second LSSTC grant, which was completed in the summer of 2008. The features of the redesign of Great Neck Road included the following:

- One lane in each direction of travel was removed – “Road Diet”
- Left/U-turn lanes provided at intersections
- Roadway resurfaced with new asphalt to increase skid resistance
- Consistent, wider landscaped median was re-established
- Bulb-out sidewalks to reduce crossing distances for pedestrians
- High-visibility crosswalk markings and warning signs
- Countdown pedestrian signal displays
- Pedestrian refuges in median to minimize exposure of pedestrians to traffic
- 2' safety zone between travel lane and parked vehicles to improve safety for drivers entering/exiting their vehicles, and for shared uses for bicyclists

### ***Bond Street Bulb-outs***

Bond Street is a local village road with one travel lane in each direction with on-street metered parking between Grace Avenue and North Station Plaza. This section of Bond Street provides a main access way to the Great Neck railroad station as the entrance is located on the south side of North Station Plaza which is fed directly from southbound traffic heading there from Bond Street. Bond Street's 44-foot width is a wide local street that makes it difficult for pedestrian crossings and its busy intersections with turning vehicles presents opportunities for conflicts for pedestrians attempting to cross to frequent the local restaurants, train station and retail stores in the downtown area.

The Bond Street redesign was completed in the summer of 2010. It was the Plaza's third LSSTC grant project. The features of the redesign include the following:

- Sidewalk bulb-outs or extensions on four corners of 0.1-mile downtown roadway
- Shorter pedestrian crossing time and distances
- Crossing distance of 44 feet was shortened 14 feet to a 30 foot crossing, making it faster, and easier for pedestrians, especially for those who are slower moving and physically challenged
- Installed ADA crosswalk ramps
- Retained on-street parallel parking

### ***Barstow Road/North Station Plaza and Linden Place Traffic Calming***

Barstow Road, North Station Plaza and Linden Place are all local village streets. The existing condition in July 2009 showed these suburban local streets are one lane in each direction with wide crossings for pedestrians and a skewed intersection with Linden Place and Barstow Road. There were observations of numerous conflicts with turning vehicles

and pedestrians crossing at this busy intersection to access the Andrew Hotel, Colbeh Restaurant, New York Sports Club, Great Neck railroad station, and Jon's Park located further north on Barstow Road at Grace Avenue. This was the Plaza's fourth LSSTC grant project completed in September 2010.

The features of the redesign of these roadways included the following:

- Normalized intersection to reduce "skew"
- Bulb-outs or extensions on corners to slow vehicles entering intersection
- Median islands at every approach to slow vehicles and provide pedestrian refuges
- Shortened pedestrian crosswalks & increased signage, installed ADA crosswalk ramps
- Rehabilitated pavement with asphalt overlay and new pavement markings
- Provided streetscaping/landscaping improvements
- Retained on-street parallel parking
- Reduced conflicts with turning vehicles, lessened "rolling stops" and improved pedestrian safety by building more sidewalks, median island refuges, bulb-outs and tightening/normalizing intersection

#### ***Middle Neck Road Pedestrian & Bicyclist Enhancements Project (TEP)***

A fifth project, which was not an LSSTC grant, but a Transportation Enhancement Project (TEP) reimbursement grant, involved pedestrian and bicyclists enhancements, traffic calming and beautification of the access way to the Great Neck train station along Middle Neck Road and No. Station Plaza.

**Problem:** The Great Neck railroad station is a busy LIRR commuter train station with numerous fast approaching vehicles in its "kiss and ride" drop off area, wide undefined travel lanes, and limited pavement markings to direct pedestrians arriving on foot, in buses, taxis and on bicycles.

**Opportunity:** How can we better arrange the paved areas, provide pedestrian refuges and median areas and more visible crosswalks and pavement markings to better direct motorists and enhance safety and utilization of mass transportation by all users and modes of travel including pedestrians, bicyclists, the physically challenged, etc. to the train station?

**Opportunity:** How can we provided a better arranged and protected bicycle rack system for encouraging this mode of travel to the train station?

**Opportunity:** How can we provide a more attractive, enhanced walkway, and a quiet respite to enjoy public art on the way to/from the train station?

Benefit: Great Neck train station is one of the busiest stations on the Port Washington Branch with approximately 14,000 passengers per day that utilize this station. This TEP grant provided for safer stop off/pick up area, improved access for pedestrians, bus patrons, and bicyclists.

Benefit: TEP grant provided for enhanced, protected bicycle parking facilities to encourage alternate travel mode via bicycles to the Great Neck train station.

Benefit: TEP grant provided for enhanced, aesthetic improvements, including new site furnishings, decorative paving in village's brick standard, site lighting, trees/plantings, and public art at busy, intermodal Great Neck train station.

Benefit: TEP grant provided for improved handicapped access by widening sidewalk areas adjacent to the ticket building and café area, as well as the bus drop off/pick-up areas.

## **VI. Program Guidelines**

The Village's Complete Streets Policy includes a number of design elements intended to enhance not only safety but sustainability as well.

### *Applicability*

While roads can theoretically be retrofitted in accordance with a Complete Streets policy at any time, there are certain circumstances which present a logical opportunity to evaluate and potentially redesign an existing street. These include roads undergoing full depth pavement repair/placement and roads undergoing horizontal realignment. All road projects of this magnitude will be reviewed for the feasibility of incorporating Complete Streets design elements.

All elements of a Complete Streets policy are not practical for all streets and there is great variety in the nature of streets with the Village's road network. The selection of appropriate design elements will largely be a function of a street's functional classification, traffic volume, and accident history.

### *Recommended Items*

Establishing an accessible, safe, and well-connected transportation network means incorporating design elements and guidelines that address the needs of all users while remaining flexible and relevant. Complete Streets support a livable community by including shorter blocks and wider sidewalks, as well as standard traffic calming measures and a functional design aesthetic that is hospitable and welcoming to non-vehicular users. Recommended items include, but are not limited to, median islands, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible transit stops, frequent crossing opportunities, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, and more.

## *Sustainable Design Elements*

Potential right-of-way design improvements for increased sustainability of the roadway network range from changes in landscaping and lighting to the utilization of alternative pavement materials. These alternations can result in energy savings, minimize drainage problems, and reduce pollution.

### Lighting

If feasible and appropriate, Complete Streets shall employ lighting techniques that increase safety for all users, minimize light pollution and glare, and are energy efficient. An example of this LED (light-emitting diode) fixtures which utilize less energy than traditional street lights and generally require less maintenance over time. If feasible, the utilization of solar power resources is also encouraged to operate these lighting systems.

### Landscaping

Bioswales, xeriscaping (use of indigenous and drought-resistant plantings to minimize the need for water), trees, and rain gardens can serve as decorative landscaping while at the same time provide greater filtration and retention of stormwater runoff. Addition of these types of green elements can also reduce the urban heat island effect which occurs when pavement is exposed to the sun and increases temperatures.

### Paving materials

Similar to stormwater treatment through landscaping, introduction of pervious pavement/paving stone or porous cement allows for the capture of a greater amount of stormwater than traditional paving materials. These alternative pavement types filter runoff before ground penetration and can reduce flooding.

## *Specific Design Standards*

### Local Streets

The vast majority of the Village's transportation network is comprised of roads with the functional classification of "local street." Local streets are typically 30' from curb to curb centered within a 50' right-of-way. Most of the Village's local streets do have sidewalks, but are generally built to a 4'-wide standard instead of the current 5'. Wheelchair accessible ramps are not as common on local streets as they are on the major thoroughfares.

Though usually unmarked, most local streets allow for one travel lane in each direction with parallel parking permitted along the curblines. It is frequently the case, however, that two vehicles traveling in opposite directions cannot pass if there are vehicles parked

along both curbs. Other common hazards are obstructed sidewalks and poor sightlines. Most local streets are characterized by driveways from which drivers drive out to the street. Visibility may be further reduced if there is overgrown vegetation blocking the view of pedestrians and other vehicles.

To the extent practicable, the Village will employ the following Complete Streets design elements for local streets:

#### Lane Widths

- 10'-12' travel lanes, generally unmarked
- 7'-8' parking lanes
- 4'-6' sidewalks with ADA compliant curb ramps

#### Pedestrian Safety

- Crosswalks for school routes
- LED streetlight fixtures
- Pedestrian-scale lighting

#### Drainage/Landscaping

- Porous pavement
- Bioswales
- Xeriscaping
- Street trees and shrubs
- Planters
- Stormwater street pits for small trees or large shrubs

#### Collectors and Minor Arterials

Unlike most counties in New York State, municipalities in Nassau County generally do not maintain major streets and thoroughfares. However, there are County roadways within the Village that may be functionally classified as either “collector” or “minor arterial.” These include Middle Neck Road, Great Neck Road, Cutter Mill Road and Grace Avenue. These thoroughfares provide the best opportunity to employ Complete Streets design elements.

These “main streets” are typically categorized by higher traffic volumes, a high percentage of commercial traffic, some with multiple travel lanes in each direction and high pedestrian volumes accessing local shops and services. On-street parking is usually permitted. Sidewalks are usually wider than 4', but are often obstructed by streetlight poles, utility poles, garbage cans and street trees. While many street intersections have traffic signals and crosswalks, there are often periods where numerous vehicular turning movements leave no opportunity for a safe crossing.

The Village, to the extent practicable, will seek to have the following design elements utilized on main thoroughfares:

#### Lane Widths

- 10'-12' marked travel lanes
- 7'-8' marked parking lanes
- 4'-6' sidewalk system with ADA compliant curb ramps and 5'-6' dedicated bicycle lanes *or* 10' combined bicycle and pedestrian walkways
- Minimum 6' landscaped median or 3' green spaces adjacent to sidewalk

#### Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety

- Textured/stamped crosswalks
- Crosswalk timers/audible signaling devices
- Sidewalk curb extensions
- Cyclist safety enhancements, such as bicycle lane stripings and pavement marking
- Improved signage
- Bus shelters

#### Drainage/Landscaping

- Porous pavement
- Bioswales
- Xeriscaping
- Street trees and shrubs
- Planters
- Stormwater street pits for small trees or large shrubs

#### Lighting

- LED streetlight fixtures
- Pedestrian-scale lighting

#### Street Furniture

- Parking meters
- Kiosks
- Benches
- Bicycle racks
- Trash receptacles

#### *Exceptions*

Although encouraged elsewhere, this policy does not apply to roadways that are outside the jurisdiction of the Village, specifically those roads administered by New York State Department of Transportation, Nassau County Department of Public Works, the Town of North Hempstead, or those under the control of other incorporated villages.

### *Coordination with Other Jurisdictions*

While the Village seeks a consistent and comprehensive application of its Complete Streets policy, much of the road network is under the jurisdiction of other entities as stated above. Whereas the Village cannot mandate that any other entity adopt a similar policy, the Village will endeavor to coordinate with these other entities to promote continuity across jurisdictional boundaries.

### *Conformance to other codes and standards*

Dimensional requirements and operational standards for roadway design are found at the local, state and federal levels. Of particular relevance are the Nassau County *Regulations for the Subdivision of Land*, the New York State *Highway Design Manual* and AASHTO *Policy on the Design of Highways and Streets*. While the Village generally believes that its Complete Streets policy is in conformance with these standards, there may be instances where a conflict arises. The Village will coordinate with the applicable agencies to ensure compatibility.

## **VII. Implementation**

The Village intends to begin implementation of its Complete Streets policy upon adoption by undertaking the following steps:

### *Inventory and Assessment*

The Village intends to perform a full inventory of its road network broken down by functional classification and further categorized by traffic volume, presence and condition of sidewalks, access ramps and crosswalks. Popular walking routes and streets with transit facilities will also be assessed.

### *Develop Priority List*

While it will take many months before every road is evaluated and, where warranted, improved, the Village can identify which roads need attention first. Criteria for priority listing shall include;

- physical condition of the pavement, sidewalks, streetlights, drainage structures and street furniture;
- A higher than average volume of pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorized transportation modes;
- A higher accident rate, particularly vehicle/pedestrian accidents;
- The presence of vehicle /pedestrian hazards and conflicts, even if the street has a low accident rate;

### *Pursue Additional Funding Sources*

The Village will continue to vigorously pursue grants at the local, state and federal levels to fund projects as it has done since 2001.

### *Monitor Performance*

It is important to track the performance of roads that have been improved utilizing Complete Streets principles. Accident rates will be checked against the prior condition to gauge the effectiveness of the policy in terms of improving traffic and pedestrian safety. Wherever possible, the Village will obtain data to determine if there have been reductions in travel times, vehicular miles traveled, and accidents as a result of the Policy.

The Village will seek to compare power consumption of new streetlights with prior conditions in order to quantify both the cost and the energy savings. Wherever such data is available, the Village will assess whether the creation of walkable downtowns is effective in generating new customer traffic and additional revenues for local businesses.