To: Virginia Department of Health/Crater Health District, City of Petersburg
From: National Complete Streets Coalition
Date: June 28, 2018
RE: Petersburg Draft Policy

Workshop Overview
In June of 2018, Emiko Atherton of the National Complete Streets Coalition and Complete Streets Expert, Charles T. Brown of Equitable Cities, LLC, traveled to Petersburg, Virginia to deliver a Complete Streets training and policy development workshop. The purpose of the workshop was for Ms. Atherton and Mr. Brown to lead participants in a day-long exercise to create a draft Complete Streets policy for the City of Petersburg.

Ms. Atherton and Mr. Brown delivered the Complete Streets workshop to a group of stakeholders from the City of Petersburg. The group included representatives from a variety of sectors, including planning, economic development, public works, health, and advocacy to name a few. The workshop began with an overview of the 10 elements of an ideal Complete Streets policy, followed by a working session where participants collectively brainstormed their priorities for a Petersburg-specific Complete Streets policy. The below draft policy is a compilation of those ideas as discussed by participants during the working session.

Draft Policy

Vision
The City of Petersburg envisions a vibrant, connected community. The City is pursuing neighborhood and street design, and planning that allows for use by a variety of transportation modes. As part of providing a safe, equitable, affordable, accessible transportation network, the City prioritizes increasing access to resources for those who have limited access and/or are disproportionately burdened by a lack of access. The intent of this policy is to increase opportunities for physical activity such as walking, biking, and other forms of transportation, and to create a community that is more inclusive and equitable.

Diverse Users
The City is committed to the improvement of transportation equity, enhancements to the built environment, and safe, affordable, and reliable transportation options, as defined by the National Complete Streets Coalition. The City will prioritize its neighborhoods and portions of the built environment with aging infrastructure, and those suffering from long-term deferred maintenance. The City recognizes that four of our seven wards are home to our most vulnerable populations, such as seniors, children, the homeless, persons with disabilities and
mental health challenges, veterans, and persons formerly incarcerated. The City resolves to focus on wards 1, 4, 5 and 6, that are disproportionately burdened by [insert relevant statistic here].

Commitment in all projects and phases
The City recognizes that all transportation projects are potential opportunities to make the transportation network safer as well as more accessible, convenient, affordable, and reliable. These opportunities could include designing and building a new, multimodal corridor, or a simple repaving of lanes to incorporate bicycle facilities.

Therefore, the City will require that all new construction, rehabilitation, reconstruction, retrofit, repair, resurfacing, repaving, restriping, rehabilitation, and all other operations related activities consider the needs of all users of all abilities.

The City also recognizes that construction and repair work can create a burden for users, especially pedestrians, cyclists, and persons with disabilities. Therefore, this policy also requires all public departments and private contractors to provide alternative routes and accommodations for all modes during construction or repair work that infringes on the right of way, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, or accessibility infrastructure so that all people can continue to use the transportation system safely and efficiently.

Clear, accountable exceptions
The City acknowledges that there are occasions when it is reasonable not to accommodate all modes within each transportation decision. Exceptions to this policy include:

1. Projects that were approved or designed before the adoption of this policy.
2. Where the cost of accommodation is excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use.
3. Facilities where specific users are prohibited by law, such as interstate freeways or pedestrian malls. However, an effort will be made in these cases for accommodations elsewhere.
4. Emergency repairs that requires immediate rapid response, so long as the repair is temporary and not a permanent repair.
5. Routine maintenance (e.g., mowing, sweeping and spot repairs) of the transportation network that does not change the roadway geometry or operations. Routine maintenance should not impede accessibility for more than 36 hours.
6. Where a reasonable and equivalent project along the same corridor is already programmed to provide facilities exempted from the project at hand.

The Department of Public Works in consultation with the Department of Planning and Community Development and the Complete Streets Advisory Committee is responsible for approving exceptions.
Exceptions approval process:

- The Complete Streets Advisory Committee (CSAC) will be established and act as the formal review panel. This committee may be made up of subject matter experts and community representatives and will work in consultation with City of Petersburg Department of Public Works and Department of Planning and Community Development.
- Exceptions must be recorded in writing and submitted to the Complete Streets Advisory Committee.
- Within 30 days from receiving the request, the proposed exceptions must be posted to the City’s website and open for public comment for at least 30 days. The Complete Streets Advisory Committee will then review the proposed exceptions and related public comments. After review, the committee will have 2 weeks to make their final recommendations to the CSAC. The Director of the Department of Public Works will use those recommendations to make the final decision on the exception.

Design Guidance

The City aims to empower its staff with the best and latest state-of-the-practice design standards and guidelines to maximize design flexibility. Therefore, the City will review current design standards and gather feedback from the community and local engineering, building, and real estate development experts. Based on feedback received from the aforementioned
groups, the City will craft or select design standards that are consistent with state-of-the-practice standards. Some examples can be found below.

- The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)
- The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Implementing Context Sensitive Design Handbook

Over the next 12 months, the City Planning Commission will review the comprehensive plan, land use ordinances, and transportation policies and select or create new design standards. Over the following 18 months, the City will implement the new design standards.

**Jurisdiction**

The City recognizes that to truly create a transportation network for all users of all abilities, the City must work with multiple jurisdictions and entities to implement Complete Streets. Therefore, the City commits to working with all City departments, especially the Virginia Department of Health/Crater Health District, as well as other interested stakeholders and residents. The City also commits to work with other jurisdictions, including the Crater Planning District Commission, Virginia Department of Transportation, Petersburg Planning Commission, VA State University, and the City Council to coordinate Complete Streets efforts.

The City also acknowledges that many projects that impact the right-of-way are managed and funded by private partners. Therefore, to ensure consistency across the city, the City requires all private development to comply to this Complete Streets policy.

**Land Use**

Historic Petersburg is a vibrant, family-friendly town with a strong faith community, parks, green space, historic architecture, and neighborhood character. The City is committed to prioritizing progressive land use and development policies through the adoption of this Complete Streets policy. These policies will help ensure that Petersburg is a healthy, walkable, accessible, diverse, safe, beautiful, and connected community with a strong sense of place and high quality of life.

The City understands that good transportation planning is sensitive to the surrounding community and current and future land use. Therefore, this policy requires that, moving forward, all new and revised City land use policies, plans, zoning ordinance, or equivalent documents be reviewed for compliance with the Complete Streets policy, including, but not limited to the City’s:

1. State Code
2. Comprehensive Plan
3. Land Use Code
4. Zoning Ordinance
5. Subdivision ordinance

The planning commission will review all the land use ordinances for the City of Petersburg, compare them against the best practices—especially best practices within Virginia—and review them according to state code every 5 years.
Performance Measures
The City is committed to tracking its progress in Complete Streets policy adoption and implementation, particularly as it relates to its allocation of resources, economic development, the environment, equity, safety, and health. Therefore, the City requires the Petersburg City Department of Transportation to collect and analyze Complete Streets performance measurements. The Department of Transportation is required to release the performance measures on an annual basis and present the findings, in person, to the Complete Streets Advisory Committee twice a year.

The City will use (but is not limited to) the following performance measures:

- Amount and types/quality of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities, especially relative to race/ethnicity and income of neighborhood residents;
- Number of and reasons for exemptions granted to Complete Streets policies;
- Amount and location of investments in projects that include pedestrian, bicycle, and/or transit infrastructure relative to race/ethnicity/income/health status;
- Number and location of street trees, drainage improvements, and stormwater management infrastructure relative to race/ethnicity/income/respiratory disease rates;
- Walking, bicycling, and public transit ridership rates by race/ethnicity/income/level of education over time;
- Rates of meeting physical activity recommendations by race/ethnicity/income/level of education over time;
- Reductions in local street flooding;
- Rates of hypertension, heart attack, diabetes, asthma, and other chronic diseases by race/ethnicity/income over time; and,
- Annual community awareness and satisfaction survey and/or focus groups.

Project Selection Criteria
The City recognizes that funding projects that serve all users or all abilities is key to building a comprehensive transportation network. Therefore, beginning in fiscal year 2019, the City will update its project selection process to include a project review by the Complete Streets Advisory Committee. The City will also prioritize transportation projects in its Transportation Improvement Program and Capital Improvement Program that adheres to the following criteria:

- Economic development
- Vulnerable communities
- Health
- Safety
- Active transportation
- Disparate populations

In addition, the City will further prioritize Complete Streets equity by investing in projects in neighborhoods that have been traditionally underserved by the City as it relates to transportation construction, maintenance, and operations.
Implementation
The City shall make Complete Streets a routine part of everyday operations, and approach each transportation project and program as an opportunity to improve the transportation networks for all users of all abilities. To do this, the City will:

1. Create a Complete Streets Advisory Committee by November 30, 2018 to oversee implementation. The committee shall, at a minimum, include representatives from:
   a. Department of Planning and Community Development
   b. Department of Public Works
   c. Virginia Department of Health/Crater Health District
2. Restructure or revise related procedures, plans, regulations, and other processes to accommodate all users on every project by December 31, 2019.
3. Review and revise current design policies by June 1, 2019. Adopt new design guidelines referenced in the “Design” section of this policy by June 1, 2020.
4. Develop and offer Complete Streets training opportunities by March 31, 2019 to: a) Complete Streets Advisory Committee members; and b) the general public. Utilize resources from the National Complete Streets Coalition website and Voices for Healthy Kids website to explain the benefits of Complete Streets.
5. Create a community engagement plan that considers equity by targeting advocacy organizations and underrepresented communities by December 31, 2018. This plan should include outreach to YMCA, sororities and fraternities, barber shops/beauty salons, Petersburg Library, public access, religious groups, neighborhood groups, and festivals. This plan should also reference the pop-up accessible community meetings being completed by the Department of Planning and Community Development.

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Next Steps
At the end of the meeting, Ms. Atherton led the group in a discussion of next steps. Based on that conversation, the group decided that:

● Michelle Peters, Director of Planning and Community Development, will convene a meeting for workshop attendees within a month of receiving this draft policy to discuss next steps and review the policy.
● In addition to the workshop attendees, representatives from the following organizations should also be invited: Planning District Commission, VDOT, VSU, Petersburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority, Petersburg Parks and Leisure Services, Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Authority, faith based community, Petersburg Area Transit, and Volunteerism Office.
● At the next meeting, the group will decide what actions steps need to be taken to move their draft policy towards adoptions. This should involve working with the stakeholders to secure the buy in of the City Council and working with a champion from the City Council to establish a date for adoption.

1https://smartgrowthamerica.org/resources?resource_type=fact-
https://completestreets.voicesforhealthykids.org