

July 1, 2015
Smart Growth America Complete Streets Technical Assistance Workshop
6 Months Report
Hot Springs, Arkansas
Jean Wallace, Parks & Trails Director

The City of Hot Springs, Arkansas benefited from a Smart Growth America Technical Assistance Workshop held on September 18, 2014. A spirited group of 30 community and city leaders met with the Smart Growth technical assistance team of Craig Williams and Michael Dannemiller. Roger Millar, Director, National Complete Streets Coalition and Suzanna M. Perea, EPA's Region 6 Smart Growth/Green Infrastructure Coordinator joined us as well.

A hybrid workshop agenda of policy development and implementation was proposed since Hot Springs had already drafted a Complete Streets Policy based on citizen enthusiasm and input. This draft policy was critiqued during the workshop and many solution oriented revisions were suggested to strengthen policy language specifically for the Connectivity, Design, Context and Implementation components. After much discussion and based on the follow-up Technical Assistance Report and Suggested Next Steps from our consultants, the idea to re-format our draft policy to reflect Smart Growth America's ten best practice Complete Streets elements emerged. Therefore, Hot Springs Planning Assistant, Daniel Messplay, researched every one of the best policies from the cities mentioned during the workshop, took the basic intent from our old draft and merged everything into a new draft.

City staff (Deputy City Manager, Public Works, Planning & Development, Parks & Trails and City Engineer) met several more times and finalized the draft policy. On February 17, 2015, the City Board of Directors unanimously approved Hot Springs Complete Streets Policy with a dedicated funding source of 20% of the Street Department's paving budget. These same departments have met several times since February and have prioritized Complete Street elements on streets scheduled for paving in 2015. We will continue this activity through the years to ensure that all streets on the paving list are reviewed for Complete Streets eligibility.

In March, we were contacted by the Federal Highways Administration and asked to submit an article on our 2014 SmartGrowth Technical Assistance experience, our Complete Streets initiative, and subsequent 2015 Complete Streets Policy success. We were then featured in the April 2015 FHWA's Fostering Livable Communities Newsletter. To read the article, click on this link:

http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/newsletter/april_2015/