

# EPA Technical Assistance for Sustainable Communities

## Building Blocks

### Technical Assistance Tool: Complete Streets

Cuyahoga County, Ohio – May 2, 2013

To: Alison Ball, Special Programs Manager; Cuyahoga County Planning Commission

From: Roger Henderson, National Complete Streets Coalition

Date: May 11, 2013

Re: Suggested Next Steps as Outcome of Technical Assistance

#### 1. Key Issues Addressed during the Site Visit

An excellent and wide range of interests were represented at the workshop. Representatives from Cuyahoga County Planning Commission took the lead in organizing the workshop and Cleveland State University served as host. A delegation from the City of Cleveland spoke about their progress since adopting a CS policy in late 2011 – this served as inspiration for the other 58 communities within Cuyahoga County. County Public Works, NOACA (MPO) and Ohio DOT were also represented. Although only one ODOT person attended, he was not shy and participated fully – this helped the group identify the challenges ahead. These challenges include the following:

- NOACA’s Executive Director, Grace Galluci, offered opening remarks that NOACA supports complete streets. One challenge is the imminent release of a draft Regional Transportation Plan that does not mention complete streets. NOACA’s Governing Board adopted the Long-Range Transportation Plan update, entitled 2035+, on May 10, 2013 that includes the following statement (page 41):
  - *“Complete Streets Policy: NOACA staff will explore development of a complete streets policy to make sure that all projects that are awarded NOACA-attributable funds provide safe and reasonable accommodations for all roads users, unless the project falls under one or more agreed upon exceptions. The development of this policy will involve obtaining input from a variety of stakeholders, provision of resources to project sponsors including design guidance, revision and improvement of related agency processes, as well as the involvement and support of NOACA Governing Board and advisory committee members.”*
- ODOT and County Public Works engineers, in general, are not aware of the importance of complete streets. Education and awareness efforts are needed.
- ODOT’s representative at the workshop expressed several times that barriers in the form of State and Federal law and policy are blocking ODOT from building bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Key issues moving forward are discussed in this memo.

#### 2. Targeted Policies/Ideas/Strategies Discussed during the Workshop

The following strategies were identified and embraced by the 25 or so still in attendance at the end of the workshop:

- Organize for follow-up under the leadership of Glenn Coyne, Cuyahoga County Planning Commission
- Form committee (s) to sustain momentum
- Educate the public, elected officials in each jurisdiction, and engineers (especially at ODOT)

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- Pursue various strategies to bring engineers and planners who work on plans and projects in the public realm to work together. Forge mutual understanding and respect among and between the engineering and planning communities.
- Initiate public presentations about complete streets (and perhaps other topics of interest)
- Pursue a unified complete streets policy at the Countywide level, however, allow each jurisdiction to tailor some elements to their specific needs and communities
- Seek additional complete streets workshops to assist in educating the engineering community, developing a unified CS policy, to engage the public, to share best practices for all sizes of communities, and to guide implementation
- Share information about studies and best practices. Share 'success' and 'not so successful' stories about complete streets implementation
- Conduct a policy audit encompassing all applicable village, town, city, County, regional, State and Federal transportation-related policies. The audit should identify those policies that may be in conflict with implementing complete streets and recommend specific text changes that can be used by the community to advocate changes.

### **3. Actions to Address Policies/Strategies**

Breakout of policies and strategies with direct actions and how to accomplish those actions; identify what study, plan, projects or other source needs to be updated. It could be the code, development standard, etc.

Strategy – Glenn Coyne to present complete streets to the appropriate countywide body (e.g. Planning Commission or technical committee) with specific suggestions on organizing to develop/consider a countywide CS Policy.

Consider integrating complete streets into the soon-to-be released public draft of the Long-Range Transportation Plan, as per introductory remarks by MPO (NOACA) Executive Director Grace Galluci

### **4. Timeframe for Accomplishing Actions**

Calendar year 2013

### **5. Implementation Coordination**

The follow-up will be coordinated by Executive Director Glenn Coyne, FAICP, and his staff at the Planning Commission.