



# HUNTSVILLE

Michelle Gilliam Jordan, AICP  
Director  
Planning Department

Department of Urban Development

10/21/2016

John Robert Smith  
and Emiko Atherton  
Smart Growth America (SGA)  
National Complete Streets Coalition  
1707 L St. NW, Suite 250  
Washington, DC 20036

RE: City of Huntsville Complete Streets Implementation One Month Status Update

John Robert and Emiko:

On September 19, 2016, the clock started on the City of Huntsville's one year Complete Streets Implementation strategy per the Next Steps Memo agreed upon by Smart Growth America and the City of Huntsville.

In that time, the BIG Picture Huntsville staff worked on several of the items in the Next Steps Memo. Together with Mayor Battle and our leadership team, we drafted a Vision Statement for Huntsville's Complete Streets Policy. We then brought this vision statement to our Bicycle Advocacy and Safety Council (BASC) for discussion. BASC suggested the addition of a sentence inspired by the Next Steps Memo. Our policy's final vision statement is as follows:

## Design a mobile and accessible transportation network.

Create a mobility system that will:

- prioritize the movement of people,
- improve public health,
- reduce fuel consumptions,
- reduce demand for single occupancy vehicles and
- increase public safety.

On September 22, 2016, the City of Huntsville finalized our agreement with the Land Trust of North Alabama "for the acquisition, maintenance, and promotion of greenway space." The goal of this partnership is to facilitate the buildout of the city's Greenway Master Plan. Greenways will be part of our Complete Street Policy, thanks to a suggestion from our Complete Streets policy leadership team.

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During the City of Huntsville's complete street project selection, we will look at the end points of each proposed road diet, or other complete street makeover, and see if the same end points can be connected by a greenway in the Greenway Master Plan. If so, the Mayor prefers we build out a greenway to connect these points, rather than change on-street infrastructure. This discussion will continue as we draft our policy.

After receiving the Next Steps Memo, the BIG Picture staff reviewed several Complete Streets policies made available by Smart Growth America in the resources section of the Next Steps Memo. We determined we'd like to model our policy after the policies in West Hartford, CT and Chattanooga, TN. However, there will be some unique aspects to our policy that we did not see in any other policies reviewed.

First, complete streets will be a targeted annual discussion during the development of the city's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Beginning in 2017, during the summer prior to each subsequent fiscal year, relevant department heads will gather with the Mayor to suggest or discuss Complete Street projects to be added to the CIP. Prioritization of these projects will also occur at this annual meeting.

Secondly, the policy will have an attached list of prioritized Complete Streets projects when adopted, or as an amendment soon after. This list will be based on a set of prioritization criteria written into the policy. These measures are to avoid the widespread demand for every street in Huntsville to get a Complete Streets makeover as soon as the policy is adopted. The prioritization criteria will be used as a litmus test for each Complete Street project request that comes to the City from citizens, businesses, or other interested parties. The Mayor and our BIG Picture staff were fortunate to receive guidance on these two unique aspects of our policy from Emiko Atherton when she visited us.

On September 27, Emiko Atherton visited Huntsville to discuss the Next Steps Memo and our progress thus far. She provided us with insight on the Mayor's initiative to include a prioritized list of potential complete streets projects with the passage of our complete streets policy in the Spring. She discussed the importance of including the public in the creation of prioritization criteria. Emiko suggested we

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involve concerned citizens, the very people who may demand instant Complete Streets, in the writing of our prioritization criteria. That way, when the city has to say “no” or “not yet” to a project, we can point to the citizens’ own input in the prioritization criteria for justification. Emiko followed up after our meeting with an email of suggested project selection criteria from jurisdictions around the country. BIG Picture staff are reviewing these resources in preparation to query the public for input into our complete streets project selection criteria.

The BIG Picture staff is currently drafting a Mayoral resolution to authorize the Urban Development Department to draft a Complete Streets policy by March 2017. This resolution will go before Council in November, 2016, meeting the three month deadline stipulated in the Next Steps Memo.

The City of Huntsville is benefiting greatly from the technical assistance offered by Smart Growth America and thanks you.

Sincerely,

Dennis Madsen  
Director Urban and Long Range Planning

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