



Diane Nichols Tradd
Assistant City Manager/DPD Director

August 2, 2018

John Robert Smith, Senior Policy Advisor
Smart Growth America
1707 L St. NW, Suite 250
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. Smith,

Attached please find the final Complete Streets follow up memo from the City of Lowell per our MOU with Smart Growth America. We have had several staffing changes detailed in the report that has slowed some of our progress, but we are still moving several major projects forward.

Sincerely,

Yovani Baez-Rose
Neighborhood Planner

City of Lowell Complete Streets Workshop—progress report

Since the six month progress report was submitted the City of Lowell has seen a number of changes. Lowell has a new City Manager, Eileen Donohue started as Manager on April 11 as the city's previous City Manager retired on April 1. Three new City Councilors were elected in November and on the staffing level there have also been changes which have impacted our progress. The city hired a new Director of Public works, a new Transportation Engineer started a couple months ago, and a new City Engineer is scheduled to begin in early August. The transition in administration and staff has slowed some of the progress towards Complete Streets implementation over the last several months.

Projects that were in design/development in the last report are still in the planning stages. Those projects include:

- High Street – Walk audit
- Cabot Street at Merrimack Street
- Bridge Street at French Street
- Westford Street at Wilder Street
- Westford Street at Stedman Street
- Rourke Bridge at Pawtucket Street
- Wood Street – From Princeton Blvd to Rourke Bridge
- Church Street – Gorham/Appleton/Green/Middlesex Street

The new Transportation Engineer has already reengaged the consultants working on these projects to be brought up to speed and weigh in on early design development. We anticipate all of these projects will move forward, but are still in the process of determining available funding and prioritizing the locations. During this time of transition two major development projects for the city have continued to move forward. The Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Bridge Project (TIGER) selected a contractor who is currently working with the city to coordinate construction schedules and work through necessary detour and public information process. The TIGER Bridge project is a \$13,389,750 grant from the United States Department of Transportation's TIGER VII Discretionary Grant Program to repair and rehabilitate six canal bridges in Lowell.

By taking an innovative and partnership focused approach, this project will rehabilitate and replace a network of critically important bridges over several canals in Lowell, to eliminate weight restrictions that currently interfere with transportation circulation and compromise public safety, economic opportunity, and access to education in the downtown area. The goals of this project are to replace or repair deficient bridges, remove load restrictions, improve safety, improve pedestrian access, provide bicycle accommodations and retain/ replicate historic elements. The conditions of these bridges have not been good for drivers, cyclists, pedestrians—particularly those with difficulty walking longer distances for many years, because of sidewalk closures and detours. Due to weight restrictions buses are forced to take circuitous routes to avoid bridge crossings resulting in longer travel times and increased traffic on smaller side roads that are not necessarily best equipped to handle the traffic volumes. The city looks forward to the completion of all these bridges and the improved flow of movement throughout the city.

The city recently completed an RFP process to bring dockless bikeshare to Lowell. We had four applicants respond with proposals and the city is currently in the process of scheduling interviews. The hope is to launch a pilot program in the city during the fall and plan for a larger roll out in the spring. The city involved representatives from the University during the proposal review process and is going to expect any bikeshare company coming to Lowell to be in close contact with the University during operations. The city has a committee of staff and community residents working on the bikeshare roll out. During the city's recent community outreach sessions for the Open Space and Recreation Plan the Planning Department staff heard from residents that improved bikelanes and access (in general) is a priority. Residents have asked the city to consider a biking master planning process, and we hope data from the bikeshare pilot program can help inform our decisions regarding the improvement and expansion of our existing infrastructure.

The Complete Streets policy is still a guiding principle when the city is working on any new projects. As new staff settle into their positions and we roll out a bikeshare pilot program, we anticipate moving on to the next step of our complete streets implementation process and are thankful to Smart Growth America for coming to Lowell and helping us get on this path.