



Providence Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Jorge O. Elorza, Mayor

Staff Report: Proposed Green and Complete Streets Ordinance *(For Discussion)*

Presented at January 20, 2021 BPAC meeting

Project Background

Councilor David Salvatore introduced a “Green and Complete Streets” ordinance at the Providence City Council meeting on December 3, which would “pave the way for safer streets in Providence, while codifying the City’s commitment to developing infrastructure that is safe, reliable, sustainable, and accommodating to all residents” according to the Council press release. Councilor Salvatore modeled the structure on a similar ordinance that was passed in Central Falls in 2018. The ordinance language is available at <https://bit.ly/3qpNICm>

The ordinance was co-sponsored by Councilors Anthony, Espinal, Goncalves, LaFortune, and Kerwin.

Great Streets Plan Recommendation

The Great Streets Plan includes a recommendation for an ordinance to replace the 2012 Complete Streets resolution. Excerpted language from this recommendation is below:

It is recommended that the City of Providence’s Complete Streets Ordinance include the following:

- **Performance Measures** *[such as Total miles of connected Urban Trails built, Number of new curb ramps installed along city streets, Number and type of traffic calming devices installed, Number of new street trees planned, Crosswalk and intersection improvements, Percentage of transit stops accessible via sidewalks and curb ramps, Bicycle and pedestrian count data, Transit ridership data, including automated passenger counter (APC) data]*
- **Urban Design Factors** *[such as streetscape improvements, landscaping and street trees, human-scaled lighting, public art, street furniture, wayfinding signage, and active ground floor uses]*
- **Construction detour accessibility:** *requiring safe accommodations for people walking and riding bicycles during construction.*
- **Environmental Justice:** *Providence should take steps to ensure that these investments are meaningful to front-line communities: establish working relationships with community stakeholders; create with them investment strategies to address specific needs; and define a reporting mechanism to assess productivity.*



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Summary of proposed ordinance

The ordinance amends the City Ordinance Section 1. Chapter 23, “Streets, Sidewalks and Public Places” to add Article VII, “Green and Complete Streets”, which contains:

- **Sec. 23-167. - Vision and purpose:** states importance of streets for wide range of users and commits the City to work toward a multimodal and ecologically sustainable transportation network on those streets
- **Sec. 23-168. - Definition:** this is about safe access for all users of all modes and all ages and abilities, and improving environmental quality
- **Sec. 23-169. - Scope of applicability:** all city-owned or private streets and parking lots must have these principles integrated in the “design of new, rehabilitated or reconstructed facilities” including the City’s Capital Improvement Plan. State and utility projects are also required to adhere to this.
- **Sec. 23-170. - Exceptions:** Any exceptions must be approved by City Council with a recommendation from the City Plan Commission, and may be granted based on such factors as:
 - An affected roadway prohibits, by law, use by specified users, in which case a greater effort shall be made to accommodate those specified users elsewhere, including on roadways that cross or otherwise intersect with the affected roadway;
 - The activities are ordinary maintenance activities designed to keep assets in serviceable condition (including, but not limited to, mowing, cleaning, sweeping, spot repair and surface treatments such as chip seal or interim measures);
 - The Director of the Department of Public Works issues a recommendation that the application of this article is unnecessary or unduly cost prohibitive.
 - Other available means or factors indicate an absence of need, including future need.
- **Sec. 23-171. - Design standards:** The City should follow the best and latest design standards (including NACTO and several others) and use a context-sensitive approach.
- **Sec. 23-172. - Performance measures and reporting:** Requires annual report from DPW & Planning submitted to City Council that document 15 specified performance measures.
- **Sec. 23-173. - Green and Complete Streets Advisory Council:** Establishes composition as 3 city staff, 2 mayoral appointees (including 1 BPAC member) and 2 Council appointees.
- **Sec. 23-174. – Implementation:** Integrate all this into existing plans, procedures, and standards. Encourage staff professional development in these areas and interdepartmental coordination. Find funding sources for these sorts of projects and include education of road users. Improve access to public transit.

Staff Recommendations

- Sec. 23-170(a) should be amended to read “Applications for waivers or exceptions shall be reviewed and approved by the City Council, with a recommendation from the ~~Providence City Plan Commission~~ **Green and Complete Streets Advisory Council**. All documentation regarding any waiver or exception application shall be publicly available.”



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- The ordinance should statutorily establish the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission and clearly articulate the comparative responsibilities in relation to the newly-established Green and Complete Streets Advisory Council.
- Sec. 23-169(a) should be amended to read “All **citypublicly**-owned transportation facilities in the public right-of-way including, but not limited to, streets and all other connecting pathways, as well as parking lots on **citypublicly**-owned land, shall be designed and constructed in conformance with the policy...”
- Sec. 23-174(a) and (b) should be amended to instruct “City staff” instead of “The Green and Complete Streets Advisory Council” to proactively review and integrate these principles into existing plans and standards.
- The ordinance should integrate the performance measures recommended in the Great Streets Plan into Sec. 23-172
- The ordinance should add language about urban design factors, construction detour accessibility, and environmental justice as recommended in the Great Streets Plan

Respectfully submitted by Alex Ellis.