Executive Office of the Mayor
Vaughn D. Spencer

August 11, 2015

EXECUTIVE ORDER 2-2015:
COMPLETE STREETS

WHEREAS, the City of Reading seeks to design and maintain a public right of way that safely and adequately accommodates all users and all modes of transportation; and

WHEREAS, road and sidewalk space is a limited public good that must be shared by public transit service, pedestrians, taxicabs, bicycles, vehicles, sidewalk vending and cafes, bicycle racks, newsstands, bus stops and shelters, newspaper boxes and planters, among other things; and

WHEREAS, increasing public transit use, walking and bicycling offers the potential for a healthier citizenry, cleaner air, reduced traffic congestion, economic development, more livable neighborhoods, less reliance on fossil fuels and imported sources of energy, and more efficient use of road space and resources; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Transportation is challenging mayors and local elected officials to take significant action to improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians of all ages and abilities over the next year;

NOW THEREFORE, I, Vaughn D. Spencer, by the authority vested in me by the Reading Home Rule Charter, do hereby order as follows:

SECTION 1: VISION, USERS, AND MODES

A. The City of Reading shall develop a safe, reliable, efficient, integrated, and connected multimodal transportation system that best-enables access, mobility, economic development, aesthetics, and health and well being for people of all ages and abilities.

B. This transportation system shall be designed and operated in ways that, to the greatest extent possible, ensure the safety, security, comfort, and convenience of pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit/paratransit users, assistive mobility device users, skateboarders, motorists, emergency responders, freight providers, and users of other common modes of transportation.

C. When there is conflicting needs among users and modes, the following prioritization will apply: (1) above all, safety is paramount, followed by mobility; (2) among modes, pedestrians shall come

first citywide, followed by the next most vulnerable types of users; and finally, (3) seek balance among all modes involved. It is recognized that all modes cannot receive the same type of accommodation and space on every street, but the overall goal is that everyone—young, old, and of varying ability—can safely and conveniently travel across the network.

SECTION 2. INCLUSION AND EXCEPTIONS

A. The City shall approach every transportation improvement and project phase as an opportunity to create safer, more accessible streets for all users. These phases include, but are not limited to: planning, programming, design, right-of-way acquisition, subdivision and land development, new construction, construction engineering, reconstruction, operation, repair, and maintenance. Other changes to transportation facilities on streets and rights-of-way, including capital improvements, re-channelization projects and major maintenance, must also be included.

B. Any exception to this policy, including for eligible private projects, must be reviewed and approved by a committee comprised of the Managing Director, the Director of Public Works and the Zoning, Planning, and Historical Preservation Division Manager and be documented with supporting data that indicates the basis for the decision. Such documentation shall be publicly available.

C. Exceptions may be considered for approval when the project involves:

1. An accommodation that is not necessary on corridors where specific user groups are prohibited;
2. Costs of accommodation that are excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use, when factoring in both current economic conditions and economic benefits of initial capital cost;
3. A documented absence of current and future need exists;
4. Transit accommodations that are not required where there is no existing or planned transit service;
5. Routine maintenance of the transportation network that does not change the roadway geometry or operations, such as mowing, sweeping, and spot repair; or
6. A reasonable and equivalent project existing along the same corridor that is already programmed to provide facilities exempted from the project at hand.

D. Accountability measures tied to performance measures shall be used when granting exemptions, and impacts shall be estimated as needed.

SECTION 3. JURISDICTION AND NETWORK CONNECTIVITY

A. The policy shall apply to all City-owned transportation facilities in the public right-of-way including, but not limited to, streets, sidewalks, alleys, bridges, and all other connecting pathways. Privately constructed and owned streets, sidewalks, alleys, and parking lots will be encouraged, where possible, to also adhere to this policy through funding requirements and development review.

B. The City shall foster partnerships with PennDOT, the Reading Area Transportation Study (Berks County's Metropolitan Planning Organization), the Reading School District, its municipal authorities, adjacent municipalities, private developers, public and private utilities, and to develop facilities and

accommodations that further the City's vision of a connected, integrated network and continue such infrastructure beyond the City's borders.

C. Reading's street network, while already a robust asset, will further benefit from the following connectivity improvements:

- Identify opportunities to enhance the network through maintenance activities
- Address deficiencies at railroad crossings
- Fill gaps in trail network
- Identify and repair sidewalk segments that form functional gaps
- Proceed with implementation of the ADA Transition Plan
- Consistent enforcement of sidewalk clearing in winter
- Creation of a street (and sidewalk) occupancy program, including coordination with utilities

SECTION 4. CONTEXT SENSITIVITY AND COMPLETE STREETS TASK FORCE

A. Context sensitivity to the community's overall surroundings, its current and planned buildings and land uses, and current and expected transportation needs of all people must be a factor in decision-making. Context sensitive design allows roadway design decisions to be more flexible and sensitive to community values, and to better balance economic, social, and environmental objectives.

B. Outreach and involvement of the community is essential to ensuring context sensitivity. As implementation begins, community engagement and education efforts shall accompany tactical pilot projects. Institutional stakeholders that develop their own master plans must be included, and the Reading School District in particular must be coordinated with, which may be best done through the Safe Routes to School program. Other stakeholders shall be identified and engaged, as well, with a special effort made to incorporate the Latino population.

C. To facilitate this engagement activity, a Complete Streets Task Force shall be established for the City of Reading. The Mayor shall appoint members of the task force, with each contributing towards the group's need for diverse representation of the stakeholders recognized above. There will be no limits to the terms and seats of members of the task force at this time.

D. The purpose of the Complete Street Task Force shall be to promote and advance both the broader vision and implementation details of this Complete Streets policy, while ensuring that the needs of all users and all modes are addressed throughout the planning and design process.

SECTION 5: DESIGN GUIDANCE AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

A. The City shall use the best and latest design guidance, standards, and recommendations available to maximize design flexibility and innovation, and always be aware that design solutions should balance user and modal needs. This includes a shift toward designing at the human scale for the needs and comfort of all people and travelers, in considering issues such as street design and width, desired operating speed, hierarchy of streets, and connectivity. Design criteria shall not be purely prescriptive but shall be based on the thoughtful application of engineering, architectural, and urban design principles. These materials include, but are not limited to:

- The United States Department of Transportation Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Regulations and Recommendations

- The United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration's Manual of Uniform Traffic Design Control
- The United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration Traffic Monitoring Guide
- The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Street Design Guide
- The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Bikeway Design Guide
- The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Official's (AASHTO) Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets
- The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Official's (AASHTO) Guide for Planning, Designing and Operating Pedestrian Facilities
- ITE Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach
- Municipal topographic map
- PennDOT Smart Transportation Guidebook
- Documents and plans created for and approved by the City of Reading, including but not limited to the Comprehensive Plan

B. The City shall measure the success of this policy using, but not being limited to, the following performance measures:

- Number of crashes and severity of injuries
- Injuries and fatalities for all modes
- Number of curb ramps
- Number of countdown signals
- Miles of accessible routes
- On-time arrivals for BARTA
- Sidewalk condition ratings
- Travel time in key corridors (point A to point B)
- Emergency vehicle response times
- Number of audible traffic signals
- Number of students who walk or bike to school
- Access to industrial property (trucks)
- Commercial vacancies in downtown improvement district (DID)
- Number of mode users: walk, bike, transit
- Bike route connections to off-road trails (equity across all districts of the City)
- % of city that is within two miles of a 'low stress' bike route
- Number of employees downtown
- Number of bike share users
- Progress towards STAR Community standards: (a) drive alone max 25% and bike/walk min of 5%; (b) 50% of household spending less than 15% of household income on transportation; and (c) bike/pedestrian fatalities – progress toward Vision Zero
- Citizen and business surveys of satisfaction with streets and sidewalks
- Number of bicycle friendly businesses recognized by the League of American Bicyclists
- Number of bike parking spaces

The Complete Streets Task Force will present an annual report to the Mayor and City Council showing progress made in implementing this policy. The annual report on the annual increase or

decrease for each performance measure contained in this executive order compared to the previous year(s) shall be posted on-line for each of the above measures.

SECTION 6: ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS

A. Green Streets: In addition to providing safe and accessible streets in the City of Reading, care shall be given to incorporate best management practices for addressing storm water runoff. Wherever possible, innovative and educational storm water infrastructure shall be integrated into the construction/reconstruction or retrofit of a street.

B. Attention to Aesthetic: Complete Streets are beautiful, interesting and comfortable places for people. The design of cities begins with the design of streets, as community places where people want to be. As part of Reading's public realm, streets shall be held to a higher standard for urban design at a human scale. Multi-modal accommodations and all City projects in the right-of-way shall be approached as opportunities to enhance the aesthetic qualities of Reading and its public realm through the thoughtful creation of place. Wherever feasible, streetscapes shall protect and include street trees and native plants, and incorporate landscape architecture, public art, pedestrian amenities and wayfinding signage, sidewalk cafes and street-facing retail, and/or other elements that enhance the attractiveness of Reading and foster healthy economic development.

SECTION 7. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND STARTING POINTS

A. The City of Reading shall view Complete Streets as integral to everyday transportation decision-making practices and processes. To this end, the policy shall be implemented through the following directives:

- The Department of Public Works, the Department Community Development, and other relevant departments, agencies, or committees will incorporate Complete Streets principles into all existing plans, manuals, checklists, decision-trees, rules, regulations, and programs as appropriate (including, but not limited to the Comprehensive Plan, Capital Program, and other appropriate planning tools)
- The Department of Public Works, the Department of Community Development, and other relevant departments, agencies, or committees will review current design standards, including subdivision regulations which apply to new roadway construction, to ensure that they reflect the best available design standards and guidelines, and effectively implement Complete Streets, where feasible
- When available, the City shall encourage staff professional development and training on non-motorized transportation issues through attending conferences, classes, seminars, and workshops
- City staff shall identify all current and potential future sources of funding for street improvements and recommend improvements to the project selection criteria to support Complete Streets projects
- The City shall promote inter-departmental project coordination among City departments with an interest in the activities that occur within the public right-of-way in order to better use fiscal resources
- The City shall develop and institute better ways to measure performance and collect data on how well the streets are serving all users
- Every Complete Streets project shall include an educational component to ensure that all users of the transportation system understand and can safely utilize Complete Streets project elements

- The City shall educate on and enforce proper road use behavior by all users and all modes, and adopt additional laws and regulations as necessary to ensure people are protected to the greatest extent possible.

B. The implementation of Complete Streets shall begin through the consideration of the following potential starting points:

- Incorporate policy into the 2025 Comprehensive Plan
- Participate in the U.S. DOT's Mayors' Challenge for Safer People, Safer Streets
- Continue to pursue certification as a walk friendly and bike friendly city
- Adopt stronger laws and regulations against street harassment
- Begin work on a Vision Zero policy aimed at preventing all traffic injuries and fatalities
- Engage the Reading School District in the Safe Routes to School program
- Identify and build a pilot project
- Identify priority streets for potential repurposing
- Work on connections to and between trails, including improved signage
- Seek funding support through all identifiable sources
- Ensure that all bridge projects include sufficient pedestrian and bicycle accommodations
- Distribute the policy to PennDOT, local utilities, and other key agencies
- Ensure consistency in street projects to create broader community benefits
- Preserve and further maximize on-street parking for both convenience and commerce
- Build intersections right the first time, and correct existing issues wherever possible

SECTION 8. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Order shall be effective immediately.

By direction of Vaughn D. Spencer, Mayor