



Staff Report

Date: October 2, 2014

To: Mayor Elizabeth Brekhus and Councilmembers

From: Elise Semonian, Senior Planner

Subject: Council review of proposed General Plan amendment for Complete Streets

Recommendation

Review the proposed Complete Street General Plan amendment and direct staff to refer the amendment to outside agencies for the required 45-day comment period.

Background and Discussion

Staff is recommending a general plan amendment to include a Complete Streets policy in the Town General Plan to put the Town in a position to apply for grant funding through the OneBayArea Grant (OBAG) program through the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). MTC is the Regional Transportation Planning Agency and Metropolitan Planning Organization for the San Francisco Bay Area. TAM is responsible for programming funding for all transportation programs in Marin County.

More detailed information on the OBAG grants can be viewed at these links to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission web site:

http://www.mtc.ca.gov/funding/onebayarea/complete_streets.htm

For the OBAG cycle subsequent to FY 2015-16, jurisdictions must adopt housing elements and have general plans that comply with the Complete Streets Act of 2008 by January 31, 2015. The schedule allows the town to meet the housing and complete streets policies through one general plan amendment.

Specifically, the town is required to modify its circulation element to “plan for a balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users of streets, roads, and highways for safe and convenient travel in a manner that is suitable to the rural, suburban, or urban context of the general plan. For purposes of this paragraph, ‘users of streets, roads, and highways’ mean bicyclists, children, persons with disabilities, motorists, movers of commercial goods, pedestrians, users of public transportation, and seniors.” (California Government Code Section 65302(b)(2)).

Staff is proposing the text in the attached draft resolution.

Prior to action on a general plan, State law requires the council to refer the amendment to a number of outside agencies (Bay Area Air Quality Management District, schools, water districts, etc.) and provide 45 days for comment (CA Govt. Code §65352). Therefore, staff is only requesting council review the text and direct staff to circulate it for comment. The Council will consider the amendment at a public hearing after the comment period.

Fiscal, resource and timeline impacts

Failure to adopt the housing element and general plan amendment by January 31, 2015, will disqualify the town from OBAG grant funding. The amendment would not change the adopted Town Council policy to consider complete streets (Resolution 1809). The proposed general plan resolution would allow the Town Council to consider the financial feasibility of implementing complete streets for any project. Adoption of the general plan amendment will have no immediate fiscal impact other than the cost of staff time to prepare and present the staff report and publish notice of the public hearing in the Marin IJ.

Alternative actions

None recommended.

Environmental review (if applicable)

The amendment would be considered exempt under 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines, which is a general exemption for projects with no potential for a significant effect on the environment.

Attachments

1. Draft Complete Streets General Plan amendment resolution
2. Complete Streets Resolution 1809

TOWN OF ROSS

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF ROSS APPROVING A MINOR TEXT AMENDMENT TO THE ROSS GENERAL PLAN 2007-2025 TO ADD REFERENCE TO THE COMPLETE STREETS POLICY IN THE CIRCULATION ELEMENT

WHEREAS, the Ross Town Council recognizes the importance of a transportation network that encourages healthy, active living, promotes transportation options and independent mobility, increases community safety, reduces environmental impact and supports greater social interaction and community identity by providing safe, comfortable, and convenient travel for all users, including bicyclists, children, persons with disabilities, motorists, emergency vehicles, pedestrians, users of public transportation, seniors, youth, and families; and

WHEREAS, on February 14, 2014, the Ross Town Council adopted Resolution 1809 to consider the installation of Complete Streets transportation elements in each capital project and development project in the Town of Ross and to implement the installation of those improvements with the framework of its General Plan; and

WHEREAS, Assembly Bill 1358, The California Complete Streets Act (2008) requires the Town to modify its general plan circulation element to plan for a balanced multimodal transportation network and the safe and convenient travel of all users of streets and roads; and

WHEREAS, incorporation of the Complete Streets Policy into the Town General Plan will enable the Town to apply for certain transportation grants and funding programs; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council of the Town of Ross hereby resolves that the Town Council determines the project to be exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines sections 15301 (existing facilities) and 15061(b)(3)(no potential to cause a significant effect), and approves the General Plan Amendment which would add language to the Circulation Element referencing the Town's adopted Complete Streets policy as the first Circulation Plan Amendment for 2014 to the Town of Ross General Plan 2007-2025, as follows:

At Part V Easy and Safe Travel Throughout Ross, under Ross General Plan Policies add the following new policy statement:

"7.9 Complete Streets. Provide 'Complete Streets' that are safe, comfortable, and convenient routes for walking, bicycling, and public transportation to increase use of these modes of transportation, enable active travel as part of daily activities,

reduce pollution, and meet the needs of all users of the streets for safe and convenient travel, including bicyclists, children, persons with disabilities, pedestrians, users of public transportation, seniors, youth, and families, motorists, movers of commercial goods, consistent with the other goals, objectives, and policies of this plan.”

At Part V Easy and Safe Travel Throughout Ross, under Action List of New Ideas add the following new implementation statement for Complete Streets:

“7.C Incorporate ‘Complete Streets’ Design Features. The Town shall approach every transportation project and program as an opportunity to improve the transportation network for all users, and shall work in coordination with other departments, agencies, and jurisdictions to achieve Complete Streets. As feasible, the Town shall incorporate Complete Streets design features, such as accessible curb ramps, crosswalks, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and paved shoulders, into existing streets to improve the safety and convenience for all users.”

The foregoing resolution was duly passed at a regular meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Ross held on the ____ day of _____, 2014, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Elizabeth Brekhus, Mayor

ATTEST:

Linda Lopez, Town Clerk

TOWN OF ROSS

RESOLUTION NO. 1809

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF ROSS RESCINDING RESOLUTION 1718 AND SETTING A GOAL TO INCREASE BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRIPS AND DIRECTING STAFF TO CONSIDER AND INCLUDE COMPLETE STREETS TRANSPORTATION ELEMENTS IN DEVELOPMENT AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS WITHIN THE TOWN OF ROSS

WHEREAS, the Town of Ross acknowledges the benefits and value of reducing vehicular modes of travel and replacement with other modes of travel such as public transit, walking and bicycling; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Ross recognizes that Complete Streets, which serve the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, the disabled and automobile users generally provide for the safest travel conditions and the best use of tax payer dollars; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Ross General Plan 2007-2025 Policy 7.8 is to “encourage travel via bicycle and walking by providing and maintaining safe pedestrian and bicycle routes along main arteries in Ross;” and

WHEREAS, the Ross Town Council adopted on July 15, 2010, the Town of Ross 2010 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, which describes projects, policies and a network of desired non-motorized improvements; and

WHEREAS, the Ross Town Council adopted a Complete Streets policy by Resolution 1718 and now desires to amend the policy to include nine elements required to receive funding through the OneBayArea Grant (OBAG) program; and

WHEREAS, Town staff is responsible for ensuring the installations of improvements for all modes of travel through the review of private development and capital improvement projects; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council rescinds Resolution 1718; and

LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED, that the Ross Town Council sets a goal to increase bicycle and pedestrian trips to 20% of all local trips by 2020; and

LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED, that the Town Council directs its staff to consider the installation of Complete Streets transportation elements in each capital project and development project in the Town of Ross and to implement the following principals and policies within the framework of its Code, General Plan and Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan 2010:

1. Serve all Users - All Town transportation improvements will be planned, designed, constructed, operated and maintained to support safe and convenient access for all users, and increase mobility for walking, bicycling and transit use.

2. Context Sensitivity – The planning and implementation of transportation projects will reflect conditions within and surrounding the project area, including the character of the street. Project planning, design and construction of complete streets projects should include working with residents, merchants, and other stakeholders.

3. Complete Streets in all Departments – All Town departments whose work affects the roadway will work towards making complete streets practices a routine part of everyday operations and approach every relevant project, program, and practice as an opportunity to improve streets and the transportation network for all categories of users. Staff will work in coordination with other departments, agencies, and jurisdictions to maximize opportunities for complete streets, connectivity, and cooperation.

4. All Projects and Phases. The complete streets policy will apply to all roadway projects including those involving new construction, reconstruction, retrofits, repaving, rehabilitation, or changes in the allocation of pavement space on an existing roadway, except those projects determined to be exempt.

5. Plan Consultation and Consistency. Maintenance, planning, and design of projects affecting the transportation system will be considered for consistency with the Bicycle and Pedestrian plan and any other relevant plans adopted by the Town Council.

6. Street Network/Connectivity - The Town of Ross will seek to create a connected network of facilities accommodating all modes of travel, as feasible.

7. Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee Consultation – If the Town of Ross develops a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee in the future, transportation projects shall be reviewed by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee early in the planning and design stage, to provide the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee an opportunity to provide comments and recommendations regarding Complete Streets features to be incorporated into the project. The Town will continue to solicit input from local bicycle and pedestrian advocacy groups in early project development phases to verify bicycle and pedestrian needs for projects.

8. Evaluation – The Town will evaluate implementation of complete streets policies by periodically tracking the number of miles of bike lanes and sidewalks, accident statistics, number of street trees planted, or by other methods.

9. Process – The Town Manager will ensure that complete streets principles and practices will be included in street construction, reconstruction, repaving, and rehabilitation projects, as well as other plans. Exempt projects will include those that involve ordinary or emergency maintenance activities designed to keep facilities in serviceable condition, or when it is not practically feasible to implement the policy. The Town Council may exempt a project if the costs of providing accommodation are excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use, or if construction is not practically feasible or cost effective because of adverse environmental impacts such as impacts to historic structures, drainage, waterways, flood plains, native vegetation or impacts on neighboring land uses.

The foregoing resolution was duly and regularly adopted by the Ross Town Council at its regular meeting held on the 14th day of February 2014, by the following vote:

AYES: Council Members Russell, Brekhus, Hoertkorn, Kuhl, Small

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

P. Rupert Russell, Mayor

ATTEST:

Linda Lopez, Town Clerk