Sponsored by: Councilmembers Stan Flemming, Connie Ladenburg, and Rick Talbert
Requested by: Executive/Public Works and Utilities - Transportation Services

ORDINANCE NO. 2014-44s

An Ordinance of the Pierce County Council Endorsing the Concept of Complete Streets, Which Promotes Roadways that are Safe and Convenient for all Modes of Travel; and Identifying Circumstances for Exceptions to Complete Streets Construction.

Whereas, the Complete Streets concept promotes streets that are safe and convenient for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motor vehicle drivers of all ages and abilities; and

Whereas, streets constitute a large portion of the public space and should be corridors for all modes of transportation, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit; and

Whereas, streets that support and invite multiple uses, including safe, active, and ample space for pedestrians, bicycles, and transit, are more conducive to the public life and efficient movement of people than streets designed primarily to move automobiles and trucks; and

Whereas, Pierce County currently has a number of land use and transportation policies, plans, programs and regulatory requirements that focus on various components of the transportation system including congestion management, multimodal coordination, non-motorized improvements, access control, street trees, street lighting, traffic calming, and transit services; and

Whereas, trends in energy and transportation costs, air quality and public health necessitate a more comprehensive approach to mobility within communities that offer a greater variety of mobility choices and which is not strictly automobile based; and

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Whereas, many of the existing roadways where Pierce County residents walk and bicycle are incomplete and lack sidewalks or crosswalks, have lanes too narrow to share with bicyclists, and make no accommodation for transit riders or for people with disabilities; and

Whereas, recent trends indicate that Pierce County will experience increased traffic congestion and travel times as the population increases and the number of commuters to employment centers within the County increases; and

Whereas, there are practical limits to the expansion of roadways in response to traffic congestion; and

Whereas, promoting pedestrian, bicycle and transit travel as an alternative to the automobile reduces negative environmental impacts, promotes healthy living and is less costly to the commuter; and

Whereas, the development of a more complete transportation network or Complete Streets can improve pedestrian safety, increase the capacity of the transportation network and promote improvements in public health; and

Whereas, the Federal Highway Administration has confirmed that designing the street with pedestrians in mind significantly reduces pedestrian risk. About one-third of Americans do not drive, including low-income Americans who cannot afford cars, and an increasing number of older adults. Whether they walk or bicycle directly to their destinations or to public transportation, these individuals require safe access to get to work, school, shops and medical visits, and to take part in social, civic and volunteer activities. In 2006, nearly one quarter of pedestrian fatalities were children (8 percent) and older adults (15 percent); and

Whereas, studies have found that providing more travel options, including public transportation, bicycling and walking facilities, is an important element in reducing congestion. Many studies show that when roads are better designed for bicycling, walking, and taking transit, more people do so; and

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Whereas, the construction of Complete Streets can be an essential component in reducing automobile trips as evidenced by the 2001 National Household Transportation Survey which revealed that 50 percent of all trips in metropolitan areas are three miles or less and 28 percent are one mile or less--distances easily traversed by foot or bicycle. Yet, 65 percent of trips under one mile are now made by automobile, in part because of incomplete streets that make it dangerous or unpleasant to walk, bicycle, or take transit; and

Whereas, a 2007 Washington State Department of Transportation survey found that a lack of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, such as sidewalks and bicycle lanes, is a primary reason why Washington residents do not walk or bicycle more frequently; and

Whereas, the United States Congress and the National Association of Local Boards of Health specifically recommend Complete Streets policies as a strategy to increase pedestrian and bicycle travel modes; and

Whereas, other jurisdictions and agencies nationwide have adopted Complete Streets legislation, including the United States Department of Transportation, numerous state transportation agencies, and cities such as San Francisco, Sacramento, San Diego, Boulder, Chicago, Seattle, Kirkland, Redmond, and Portland; and

Whereas, the Complete Streets concept is supported by the Institute of Traffic Engineers, American Planning Association, United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Public Health Association, and many other transportation, planning, and public health professionals; and

Whereas, on August 26, 2008, the Pierce County Council adopted Resolution No. R2008-89s, which expressed support for the Complete Streets concept and requested that a Complete Streets policy be included as a component of the Transportation Plan Update; and

Whereas, the 2015 update to the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan will contain policies supporting Complete Streets; and

Whereas, the Washington State Legislature adopted a Complete Streets Grant Program in 2011, codified in Section 47.04.320 of the Revised Code of Washington; and

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Whereas, funding from the Washington State Complete Streets Grant Program will only be available to jurisdictions that have adopted a Complete Streets Ordinance; and

Whereas, Sections 4-5, 4-7, and 4-11 of the "Manual on Design Guidelines and Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction in Pierce County" contain requirements of the County for providing pedestrian and bicycle facilities and bus turnouts; and

Whereas, the Pierce County "Standard Drawings" contains design standards for sidewalks, walkways, and paved shoulders; and

Whereas, Titles 17B, "Construction and Infrastructure Regulations - Road and Bridge Design and Construction Standards," and 18J, "Development Regulations - Design Standards and Guidelines," of the Pierce County Code contain requirements of private developers for providing pedestrian and bicycle facilities and bus turnouts on both public and private roads; **Now Therefore,**

BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of Pierce County:

Section 1. Pierce County endorses the concept of Complete Streets, which promotes roadways that are safe and convenient for those of all ages and abilities, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motor vehicle drivers. Pierce County strives to provide and require the implementation of facilities for all users on newly constructed or reconstructed roads. The County Engineer may, in his or her sole discretion, determine that there are exceptions to the provision of these facilities. Among the conditions that may preclude the construction of such facilities are the following:

a. Their establishment would be contrary to public safety; or
b. Their construction is not practically feasible because of significant adverse environmental impacts to streams, wetlands, steep slopes, or other critical areas; or
c. Their construction is not practically feasible because of significant adverse impacts on neighboring land uses, including impacts from right-of-way acquisition; or
d. There is no identified need for the improvement; or
e. In instances where a documented exception is granted by the County Engineer.

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Where these facilities are omitted from a roadway project, the County should consider whether bicyclists and pedestrians can be accommodated by nearby facilities. Aside from new and reconstructed roadways, the County shall consider other measures that can benefit bicyclists and pedestrians, such as standalone shoulder paving projects. Pierce County strives to provide complete street connections to similarly designed roadways of the Washington State Department of Transportation and local Cities and Towns.

PASSED this 5th **day of** August**, 2014.**

ATTEST:

PIERCE COUNTY COUNCIL
Pierce County, Washington

Denise D. Johnson

Denise D. Johnson
Clerk of the Council

Dan Roach Vice Chair
Council Chair

Pat McCarthy

Pat McCarthy
Pierce County Executive
Approved ✓ Vetoed _____, this
19 day of August, 2014.

Date of Publication of
Notice of Public Hearing: July 16, 2014

Effective Date of Ordinance: August 29, 2014

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