TOWN OF WINDSOR
AGENDA REPORT

Town Council Meeting Date: May 5, 2010

To: Mayor and Town Council
From: Richard W. Burtt, Public Works Director/Town Engineer
Subject: Complete Streets Concepts Presentation

Recommendation to Council:
Receive information on Complete Streets and provide direction to staff on Complete Streets concepts for future revisions of the Town’s street design guidelines and standards, and General Plan Circulation Element policies.

Background and Discussion:
In February 2010, several council members attended the 5th Annual New Partners for Smart Growth: Building Safe, Healthy and Livable Communities Conference in Seattle, Washington. The conference included a workshop on Complete Streets concepts. The workshop provided an introduction to Complete Streets policies and featured leaders from several communities that have begun an effort to implement Complete Streets concepts. Upon return from the conference, Mayor Salmon requested that a presentation on Complete Streets concepts be made to the Town Council.

The intention of Complete Streets concepts is to foster street designs that will increase the viability of travel choices such as walking, bicycling, and public transportation. Complete Streets are designed and operated so they work for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. If such choices are safe, convenient and comfortable, the likelihood of someone choosing to walk, bicycle or ride transit increases, especially if the networks are continuous and connect to destinations. Complete Streets have the potential to convert vehicle trips to walking, bicycling and transit trips, leading to an anticipated decrease in vehicle miles traveled, vehicle emissions, and fuel use. Instead of sprawling, higher speed roadways Complete Streets let residents safely walk, bicycle, and ride transit so that daily commutes and errands provide healthy exercise, save money, and reduce traffic and pollution. Another key projected benefit includes an increased sense of community.

Complete Streets concepts can be incorporated into the Town’s roadway system in several ways. Complete streets have identifiable features that can be included in a set of street design guidelines, giving designers the details they will need to create Complete Streets. Features that may be found on a complete street include reduced lane widths, wider sidewalks, wide bike lanes, on-street parking, planter strips or tree wells, median islands with trees and vegetation, comfortable and accessible transit stops, increased pedestrian crossing opportunities, accessible
pedestrian signals, sidewalk bulb-outs, and pedestrian-sized street lighting. These features would be expected to vary based upon a street’s expected traffic volumes and target travel speeds. A Complete Street in a rural area will look quite different from a complete street in an urban area, and a Complete Street in a neighborhood will look different from a town center street. The street standards are another resource document that would need to be updated, to ensure consistency is provided to street designers. In addition to updating street design guidelines and standards, policies need to be updated in order to provide the necessary support for Complete Streets concepts. Specifically, the California Complete Streets Act of 2008 requires that local jurisdictions incorporate relevant policies into the General Plan Circulation Element when next updated.

If acceptable to the Town Council, staff would incorporate the concepts of Complete Streets into the next update of the Town’s Street Design Guidelines, the Street Standards and the Circulation Element of the Town’s General Plan. Staff is currently working on the update to the Street Design Guidelines and Street Standards and anticipates bringing this item before the Town Council later this year.

Prepared By:

Richard W. Burtt  
Public Works Director/Town Engineer

Recommended By:

Matthew Mullan  
Town Manager