



Letter in Support of Athens-Clarke County Complete Streets Policy

Mayor and Commissioners:

As Athens' dedicated pedestrian, transit, and cycling advocacy group, BikeAthens is excited that you are on the verge of passing the Athens-Clarke County Complete Streets Policy. We have reviewed the Policy and polled our membership, and we all agree that this Policy is a great first step towards creating a dynamic, comprehensive, and interconnected transportation network. Once it is adopted, the Complete Streets Policy will make local roads safer and more accessible for all citizens of Athens.

On the eve of tomorrow's vote, BikeAthens has a few minor comments and suggestions we think will strengthen the Policy and make it a more clear and effective document. First, BikeAthens believes Section 2 should be amended to read, "Complete Street improvements that are consistent with freight mobility but also support other modes *shall* be considered on these streets." The Complete Streets Policy already, inherently, balances the needs of all users in a context-sensitive manner. As a result, the Policy intrinsically considers the needs and importance of freight mobility. Adding obligatory language—"shall"—to Section 2 will guarantee that planners and designers consider Complete Streets improvements that are consistent with freight. It will not compel the inclusion of such improvements; but it will ensure that "Roadway projects shall accommodate all users of the transportation system."

Second, BikeAthens would like to see the first sentence of Exemption 8 clarified to reflect the Planning Department's explanation that the Exemption is only to be invoked in unusual or extraordinary circumstances, such as repairing damage after an extreme weather event. The Exemption could read: "The safety or timing of a project is compromised by the inclusion of Complete Streets, such as in the case of a storm or other natural disaster." Again, this more specific language is consistent with the Planning Department's interpretation of the Exemption. It is also in accordance with the goals and purpose of the Policy as a whole.

Finally, the Planning Department has indicated the second sentence of Exemption 8 is meant to be read as a separate Exemption. For the purpose of clarity, BikeAthens would like that change reflected in the final document. Similarly, we would like to see language inserted to clarify that *all* exemptions "must be documented with supporting data and must be approved by the Transportation and Public Works Director." As currently written, the level of support needed for an exemption seems to apply only to this final exemption, but not the others. Making such a change to the language would be consistent with the stated Ideal Complete Streets Policy, which "makes any exceptions specific and sets a clear procedure that requires high-level approval of exceptions." (Emphasis in original)

The entire BikeAthens membership is thrilled that the Athens-Clarke County government is about to pass a Complete Streets Policy. We hope you share our enthusiasm for the Policy and will vote in favor of its adoption on December 4th. Complete Streets are safe streets. Complete Streets are healthy streets. Complete Streets are vibrant streets.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Tyler Dewey, Executive Director BikeAthens

BikeAthens Board of Directors

Members of BikeAthens