



## NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

*Planning Division*

### STAFF REPORT

#### Ordinance 2018-05, Complete Streets Ordinance (TXT 16-217), Second Reading

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**To:** Peter D. Lear, CPA, CGMA, City Manager  
**Thru:** Scott Williams, Neighborhood Development Services Director  
Frank Miles, MPA, Planning Manager  
**From:** Christopher Whittaker, AICP, Planner  
**Date:** March 12, 2018

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#### I. GENERAL INFORMATION

**Project:** Ordinance 2018-05, Petition No. TXT 16-217, Complete Streets Ordinance  
**Request:** To Approve Ordinance 2018-05, Petition No. TXT 16-217 Complete Streets Ordinance  
**Location:** City-wide

#### II. BACKGROUND

At the time that the City of North Port was originally designed (late 1950's to early 1960's), the prevailing pattern for development provided for single-use Euclidian zoning, with large pockets of residential development and limited areas for commercial and office development located mostly along arterial roadways or at the intersection of arterial and collector roadways. An additional trait that was prevalent at that time, particularly in newer communities, was the limited inclusion of facilities serving non-automobile traffic. This continues to be an issue in many platted lands communities, including North Port, where hundreds of miles of local roadways were built mainly within neighborhoods, anticipating development that did not occur until many of the roadways were at the end of their useful life. An additional issue that is particular to North Port and many other platted lands communities in coastal areas is the disconnection of neighborhoods from one another and from what are now known as Activity Centers due to the extensive network of canals that serve the community's stormwater conveyance needs.

As the City has grown, the amount of traffic using the limited roadway network has become an increasing concern for residents, due to the way that the City's roadway network and drainage system were designed by General Development Corporation, the original developers of most of the City. In much of the City, neighborhoods are disconnected from one another and are only accessible via a limited number of arterial and connector roadways, with no bridges or roadways connecting adjacent neighborhoods via local streets in much of the City. This is also the case for individuals

wanting to bike or walk within the City, since much of the City was designed during a time that non-motorized travel was largely neglected by transportation engineers. Consequently, there were few sidewalks built and limited shoulder area or bicycle lanes for bicyclists.

Over time, these issues have led to a variety of concerns, both locally and at the national level. First, the development of a roadway network that forces all traffic onto a small number of roads has created conditions that have required these roads to be widened as the population has grown and has created a situation where an accident along these roadways can cause the roadway network to be affected across a wide area.

The lack of connectivity between neighborhoods has additionally stressed these roadways and, combined with the lack of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in much of the city, has served to steer people to driving rather than using other options. This has also made it difficult for children, young adults, elderly residents, and others that are unable to drive to be able to get to medical appointments, jobs, or to shopping and recreational activities. T

here are few opportunities for active mobility that are built into everyday activities for most City residents due to a lack of sidewalks and bicycle facilities and the orientation of most buildings away from the street front, the lack of facilities has factored into increases in obesity and other health issues that can be mitigated through being active or from incorporating activity into everyday tasks such as going to school, work, or shopping.

Over the last two decades, over 1,200 communities and agencies throughout the US, including the Florida Department of Transportation, have adopted Complete Streets polices. Regionally, Manatee County, Lee County, and the cities of Cape Coral, Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, and Punta Gorda have adopted Complete Street Policies that address the need to develop a transportation network that is inclusive for all user types, whether it be auto, bicycle, pedestrian, transit, or for freight vehicles. These solutions also address the needs of a variety of users across all levels of age and physical ability.

On January 29, 2016, the City Commission held a workshop in which Staff provided an overview of what Complete Streets are and how the development of a City-wide complete streets program would supplement and enhance the language that is included in the City's Urban Design Standards Pattern Book and the West Villages Pattern Book. Based on this discussion, Commission recommended that Staff develop a Complete Streets Policy and to bring this item back to Commission for discussion and/or approval.

Subsequent to this, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has expanded its Complete Streets Policy to encompass a Complete Streets Handbook and a Context Classification Guide. In addition, FDOT has incorporated language into the Florida Greenbook and the FDOT Design Manual to address the development of a complete streets network along both State-maintained and locally maintained roads while providing guidance for cities looking to develop similar systems.

Because there are few FDOT roads located within the City limits (US 41 and Interstate 75) and the descriptions that are included in the FDOT Complete Streets Handbook and other documents are

mainly applicable to higher speed, higher capacity roadways than what are found in the City's Activity Centers and along the City's arterial and collector roadways, the City has seen a need to develop its own set of policies to supplement FDOT's recommendations that would allow for the implement of complete streets solutions that would meet the needs of the City and the users of its transportation network. Within the Activity Centers, language within the City's various Pattern Books states the desire to create multi-modal transportation networks that provide accessibility for bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users, in addition to providing for auto and freight travel.

### **III. RECOMMENDATION**

That the North Port City Commission Approve Ordinance 2018-05, Petition Number TXT 16-217, Complete Streets Ordinance Amending Article 4 of Chapter 37 of the City of North Port Unified Land Development Code.

### **OTHER OPTIONS**

- 1) Deny
- 2) Approve with additional conditions or modifications

### **IV. STAFF ANALYSIS & FINDINGS**

Based on researching various ordinances and policies, Staff has determined that the best path of action was to amend Chapter 37 Article IV of the Unified Land Development Code to require future roadways and the redevelopment of existing roadways to provide for a context sensitive approach, as shown in the State's Complete Streets Handbook and in other reference materials that have been implemented throughout Florida and the US and identified in the proposed ordinance. The proposed ordinance also serves to encourage the development of bridges for pedestrians, bicyclists and neighborhood electrical vehicles that could also be used for smaller emergency or public safety vehicles to allow for better access between neighborhoods.

What is proposed is language that reinforces and improves upon the City's policies to incorporate Complete Streets policies that are reflective of national context sensitive and complete streets standards through the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and National Association of City Transportation Officials, and of standards set forth by the Florida Department of Transportation in the Florida Greenbook, the Florida Complete Streets Guidebook, and the updated Florida Design Manual (<http://fdot.gov/roadway/fdm/>). The proposed ordinance language would also encourage the development of a bridge network that is identified in the City's Comprehensive Plan and in the City's Urban Design Standards Pattern Book.

Subsequent to the submittal of the Ordinance to the Planning and Zoning Advisory Board, the city's Transportation Engineer contacted Planning Staff and suggested the following modifications to the proposed changes to Article IV:

- 1) In Section 37-41 A: widening the minimum bicycle lane size to 7' feet (if possible) in compliance with FDOT guidelines.

- 2) In Section 37-42 B: Providing a minimum size for subdivisions to be subject to providing bicycle lanes.
- 3) In Section 37-41 D: Consider doubling the minimum number of bicycle racks that are required for non-residential buildings and sites in the City.

At their regular meeting on March 6, 2018, the North Port City Commission voted 4-1 to to advance Ordinance No. 2018-05 to a second reading to be held on March 27, 2018 with the modifications to Chapter 37 stated in the previous paragraph as well as several additional modifications. The additional modifications were:

- Modification of Section 37-29 H. to change the second “shall” in the paragraph to “may”.
- Modification of Section 37-42 F. to change “work toward” to “promote” and to add language to allow gasoline powered golf carts and similar vehicles with an engine size of less than 50cc.

#### **V. PLANNING AND ZONING ADVISORY BOARD**

On February 15, 2018, at their regularly scheduled meeting, the Planning and Zoning Advisory Board, in a unanimous 6-0 vote, recommended that the North Port City Commission approve Ordinance 2018-05, Complete Streets Ordinance. The only suggestion given by the Board was to provide some minor wordsmithing to the staff report and document that would not affect the overall themes provided.

#### **VI. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICIES**

Land Use Policies 2.1.11, 2.2.3, 2.3.7, 2.4.5, 2.5.4, 2.5.5, 2.6.2,2.7.20, 4.9, 4.13, 4.19, 5.5, 13.1, and 13.6

Transportation Policies 1.1 and 4.8, Objectives 5 and 9

#### **VII. PUBLIC NOTICE**

A notice for hearing was published in the North Port Sun on February 1, 2018 (Exhibit A).

#### **VIII. REVIEW PROCESS**

- Staff has reviewed this petition and found it to be in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan and the Unified Land Development Code.
- Ordinance 2018-05 has been reviewed by the City Attorney for Form and Correctness.

**IX. PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULE**

**Planning and Zoning Advisory Board  
Public Hearing**

February 15, 2018  
9:00 AM or as soon thereafter

**City Commission  
Public Hearing      First Reading**

March 6, 2018  
1:00 PM or as soon thereafter

**Second Reading**

March 27, 2018  
6:00 PM or as soon thereafter

**EXHIBITS**

A) Notification of Publication of Legal Ad

