

# City of Kingston Zoning Working Group



August 4, 2025

To: John Schultheis, City Engineer

CC: Steve Noble, Mayor; Emily Flynn, Director, Health & Wellness

From: Zoning Working Group

## **Subject: Implementation of Street Design Standards**

Thank you again for meeting with the City of Kingston Zoning Working Group earlier this year. We appreciated the opportunity to discuss how transportation planning and design are being approached in the city.

From our conversation, we understand the following:

- The Engineering Department is not currently using or referencing the Street Design Standards adopted by the Common Council.
- A key reason for this is the complexity of funding sources and the need to comply with the design standards set by external agencies.

As you know, Article 5 of the zoning code outlines clear guidance for the development of new streets and the retrofitting of existing ones. We fully recognize the unique challenges of updating infrastructure in a historic city like Kingston, where rights-of-way are inconsistent and multiple stakeholder interests must be balanced.

That said, the Street Design Standards were intentionally developed to be adaptable. According to the adopted code, these standards must be followed for all projects considered street retrofits.

The Standards vary by location and existing conditions, and include a formal deviation process that allows for administrative flexibility by the Engineering and Public Works Departments. Importantly, this process includes input from the Complete Streets Advisory Council, creating space for public dialogue around trade-offs and constraints.

To support better alignment between policy and practice, we respectfully offer the following recommendations:

- **Long-Term Staffing:** The City should consider hiring a dedicated transportation engineer whose primary responsibility is the implementation of the Street Design Standards. This specialized role is essential to ensure the standards are applied consistently and

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effectively. As a short-term solution, we suggest that city staff involved in street design projects should seek relevant training opportunities, such as via NACTO.

- **Integration into New Projects:** For projects that are led by outside consultants, the Street Design Standards should be incorporated from the outset into the Consultant's work.
- **Integration into Grant-Funded Projects:** Furthermore, any grant applications related to street retrofit projects should explicitly reference and align with these standards. If there are true conflicts with the standards of another agency, we should explore whether there is any potential to reconcile the standards.
- **Ongoing Projects;** We encourage the Engineering team to review current projects to determine whether their designs can be adjusted to better comply with the Street Design Standards with minimal cost or effort.

We appreciate the work being done by the Engineering Department and recognize the many constraints involved. Our hope is that more consistent implementation of the Street Design Standards will lead to more consistent and forward-thinking transportation improvements across Kingston that further the intent of the form-based code zoning code.

Sincerely,

Kingston Zoning Working Group

*Tanya Garment, Public Member*

*Ines Yupanqui, Public Member*

*Norah Maki, Public Member (alternate)*

*Rebecca Holderness, Public Member*

*Joshua Stratton-Rayner, Public Member*

*Bartek Starodaj, City of Kingston Housing Initiatives*

*Suzanne Cahill, City of Kingston Planning Director*