

COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

October 2010



VISION

This Complete Streets Policy incorporates the simple and basic concept that streets and roadways should be designed and operated to be safe and accessible for all transportation users whether they are pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders or vehicular motorists. Transportation shall include all multi-modal users regardless of age or ability.

PURPOSE/BENEFIT

Complete streets will create transportation corridors that are safe, functional and aesthetically attractive for all users as supported by the following principles:

1. Safety
 - a. The guiding principle of Complete Streets is to provide safety for all road users.
2. Public Health
 - a. The City of Big Lake can promote public health and physical activity through the built environment.
3. Access and Transportation Equity
 - a. Not all residents of the City drive a vehicle and rely on safe alternative modes of transportation such as walking or biking.
4. Affordable Transportation Choices
 - a. Gas prices are constantly fluctuating and alternative modes of transportation should be supported.
5. Economic Development
 - a. Walking and biking offer additional means to access businesses and encourage economic development.
6. Environment
 - a. Complete Streets supports many transportation options that help lessen dependence on oil and promote cleaner air.
7. Cost Effectiveness
 - a. Designing roads with all users in mind from the beginning saves costly retrofits.
8. Quality of Life/Social Capital
 - a. Walkable neighborhoods increase community interaction and create sense of community pride.

POLICY

1. The City of Big Lake will seek to enhance the safety, access, convenience and comfort of all users of all ages and abilities, including pedestrians (including people requiring mobility aids), bicyclists, transit users, motorists and freight drivers, through the design, operation and maintenance of the transportation network so as to create a connected network of facilities accommodating each mode of travel that is consistent with and supportive of the local community, recognizing that all streets are different and that the needs of various users will need to be balanced in a flexible manner.
2. Transportation improvements will include facilities and amenities that are recognized as contributing to Complete Streets, which may include street and sidewalk lighting; sidewalks and pedestrian safety improvements such as median refuges or crosswalk improvements; improvements that provide ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant accessibility; transit accommodations including improved pedestrian access to the Big Lake Station; bicycle accommodations, shared-use lanes, wide travel lanes or bike lanes as appropriate; and street trees, boulevard landscaping, street furniture and adequate drainage facilities.
3. Early consideration of all modes for all users will be important to the success of this Policy. Those planning and designing street projects will give due consideration to bicyclists and pedestrians, from the very start of planning and design work. This will apply to all roadway projects, including those involving new construction, reconstruction, or changes in the allocation of pavement space on an existing roadway (such as the reduction in the number of travel lanes or removal of on-street parking).
4. Bicyclist and pedestrian transportation users shall be included in street construction, re-construction, re-paving, and re-habilitation projects, except under one or more of the following conditions:
 - a. A project involves only ordinary maintenance activities designed to keep assets in serviceable condition, such as mowing, cleaning, sweeping, spot repair, concrete joint repair, or pothole filling , or when interim measures are implemented on temporary detour or haul routes.
 - b. The City Engineer and City Staff determine there is insufficient space to safely accommodate new facilities.
 - c. The City Engineer and City Staff determine there are relatively high safety risks.
 - d. The City Council exempts a project due to the excessive and disproportionate cost of establishing a bikeway, walkway or transit enhancement as part of a project.

- e. The City Engineer and Staff jointly determine that the construction is not practically feasible or cost effective because of significant or adverse environmental impacts to streams, flood plains, remnants of native vegetation, wetlands, steep slopes or other critical areas, or due to impacts on neighboring land uses, including impact from right of way acquisition.
5. It will be important to the success of the Complete Streets policy to ensure that the project development process includes early consideration of the land use and transportation context of the project, the identification of gaps or deficiencies in the network for various user groups that could be addressed by the project, and an assessment of the tradeoffs to balance the needs of all users. The context factors that should be given high priority include the following:
 - a. Whether the corridor provides a primary access to a significant destination such as a community or regional park or recreational area, a school, a shopping / commercial area, or an employment center;
 - b. Whether the corridor provides access across a natural or man-made barrier such as a river or freeway;
 - c. Whether the corridor is in an area where a relatively high number of users of non-motorized transportation modes can be anticipated;
 - d. Whether a road corridor provides important continuity or connectivity links for an existing trail or path network; or
 - e. Whether nearby routes that provide a similar level of convenience and connectivity already exist.
6. The design of new or reconstructed facilities should anticipate likely future demand for bicycling and walking and should not preclude the provision of future improvements. [For example, under most circumstances bridges (which last for 75 years or more) should be built with sufficient width for safe bicycle and pedestrian use in anticipation of a future need for such facilities].
7. The City will maintain a comprehensive inventory of the pedestrian and bicycling facility infrastructure integrated with the Capital Improvements Plan and will carry out projects to eliminate gaps in the sidewalk and trail networks.
8. Complete Streets may be achieved through single projects or incrementally through a series of smaller improvements or maintenance activities over time.
9. The City will generally follow accepted or adopted design standards when implementing improvements intended to fulfill this Complete Streets policy but

will consider innovative or non-traditional design options where a comparable level of safety for users is present.

10. The City will develop implementation strategies that may include evaluating and revising manuals and practices, developing and adopting network plans, identifying goals and targets, and tracking measures such as safety and modal shifts to gauge success.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Complete Streets Policy will become effective upon approval of the City Council and will be implemented through the following practices:

1. City street construction and reconstruction projects shall be reviewed at staff level by the City Engineer, Public Works Director and City Planner to determine appropriate level of complete street implementation. Greater attention will be made to those projects within the Downtown and TOD Districts.
2. The City will work with governmental agencies such as Sherburne County and Minnesota Department of Transportation to encourage incorporation of the City's Complete Street policy into street and road projects under their jurisdiction.
3. Update City's Comprehensive Plan to include Complete Streets policy.
4. Staff will continuously educate themselves, Council and Planning Commission members about best practices and cost-effective measures to design and construct Complete Streets.
5. Institute a means to measure performance and success of Complete Streets policy.

This Complete Streets Policy was adopted by City Council Resolution 2010-74 on October 13, 2010.

Visual Examples of Complete Streets

