

# **CITY OF MENDOTA HEIGHTS**

## **LIVING STREETS POLICY**

March 6, 2024

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The City of Mendota Heights shall commit to the “Living Streets” framework in accordance with the provisions set forth in this policy on all future transportation projects. Living Streets refers to street design that provides for multiple modes of transportation as well as reduces environmental impacts and improves quality of life aspects.

### **II. PURPOSE**

The Living Streets Policy will guide the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of all streets within the city. The policy shall apply to all new construction and reconstruction of streets, as well as to all retrofit projects and rehabilitation projects.

### **III. POLICY**

All transportation projects including city, county, state, and private development with construction impacting the public way shall promote the goals of a Living Street design during all phases of planning, design, and construction. The goals of a Living Street design include enabling safe, convenient, and comfortable travel and access for users of all ages and abilities, regardless of their mode of transportation, with an additional emphasis on quality of life aspects.

### **IV. PROCEDURE**

The following framework provides steps and guidance as to how the Living Streets Policy will be implemented and effective within the City of Mendota Heights.

- A. City staff of the Engineering Department are required to review all public and private transportation projects, including those identified within the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), impacting public right-of-way for implementation of the following guidelines. The project manager for a given project shall submit to City staff the Living Streets Worksheet for review, attached as Appendix A. Following review, if the project does not meet the intentions of the Living Streets Policy, City staff shall provide recommended changes. No deviations or exceptions to the worksheet or plans will be made without written request and approval of the Public Works Director once the worksheet has been reviewed and the plans have been approved for construction.

#### **Guidelines:**

1. Consideration must be made for all users in the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of all streets, including but not limited to, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, motorists, and persons with disabilities.

2. Projects shall strive to create a connected network of streets and trails that provides safe and convenient travel options for all users and destinations.
3. Prioritize the safety of all users, with a focus on reducing the number of fatalities and serious injuries resulting from traffic crashes, and include traffic calming improvements where feasible.
4. Encourage the use of sustainable modes of transportation, such as walking, biking, and transit, by providing safe and convenient infrastructure for these modes unless one more of the following conditions are met for an exception:
  - a. Constructing such facilities would no longer be cost effective toward the benefit of the improvement, in which case alternative design options shall be considered for feasibility, exceeds budget costs, or negatively impacts an adjacent property valuation.
  - b. Specific corridors may exclude certain transportation modes, such as interstate freeways, and may not require accommodation for specific users. However, exclusion of certain users on particular corridors should not exempt projects from accommodating other permitted users and alternative options for excluded users shall be considered.
  - c. Facilities have already been programmed for in a future improvement project similar in scope and location.
  - d. Severe limitations are imposed by topography and/or natural resources such that improvements are no longer equitable to construct or maintain.
5. Ensure that all streets are designed and operated to be accessible to persons with disabilities, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable laws and regulations.
6. Engage with the community and stakeholders throughout the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of all streets, to ensure that the needs and concerns of all users are considered and addressed.
7. Identify any opportunities to feasibly improve quality of life aspects by reducing environmental impacts or improving sustainability such as, but not limited to:
  - a. Reducing a project's impervious surface footprint to include additional greenspace, screening, or shading.
  - b. Improving the quality of stormwater runoff and maximizing infiltration by use of rain gardens, sump manholes, or other approved best management practices for pre-treatment.
  - c. Promoting a sustainable future; consider including infrastructure such as Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations and giving thought to ridesharing and transit opportunities. Review for additional opportunities to include sustainable infrastructure and efficiencies within site specific context.
8. Deliver benefits to all users equitably with an additional focus on a corridor's most vulnerable and underserved users.
9. Provide economic benefits by lowering initial costs, reducing long-term maintenance and reconstruction costs, and increasing property value.

- B.** Living Streets shall be designed to be cognizant of the immediate, and surrounding, environment. Careful consideration shall be made not to exclude the needs for any traveler's mode of choice or safety and shall be designed for in accordance with the most recent city, county, state, and federal design standards and guidelines.
- C.** All proposed transportation projects within the City of Mendota Heights shall be reviewed to implement the goals of a Living Street by City staff of the Engineering Department. Living Streets shall be implemented such that improvements are cost effective, meets a community's ideals, and includes consideration for all users. Living Streets are intended to be comparable or less in cost to new construction or reconstruction. The Living Streets Policy does not restrict, advise to, or include any revisions to the City's Street Assessment Policy in effect at the time of a project.
- D.** City staff shall document and report projects and improvements as they are completed to GreenStep Cities as recommended. The Public Works Department can provide annual Living Streets updates at City Council's request.

**V. RESPONSIBILITY**

The Living Streets Policy shall be administered and implemented by virtue of the City's Engineering Department, within the Public Works Department. All transportation projects shall be reviewed in accordance with the guidelines of Appendix A: Living Streets Worksheet. Project Managers are responsible for including all provisions and improvements during construction identified within the Living Streets Policy and Worksheet.