

Issues Update

Complete Streets

Background Information

In the near future, City staff will bring to Council various items related to the standards associated with the construction and reconstruction of public infrastructure. Prior to these discussions with Council, staff wanted to provide some background information on the Complete Streets concept. This concept, while not addressing the engineering specifications related to development, does provide an overview of many of the design standards that will be discussed with Council.

It should be noted that although the Complete Streets concept contains many individual components (wider sidewalks, bike lanes, two-way traffic, street furniture, etc.), the overall goal is to create a “complete street” and as such the end goal should not be on any one of the individual components, but putting in place a standard that enables equal access to the public way for all users.

Connection to the Comprehensive Plan

It should be noted that many, if not all, of the standards included in the Complete Streets concept have already been adopted by Council as part of the Comprehensive Plan. A list of the items related to Completed Streets found within the Comprehensive Plan is listed below.

- Critical Success Factors & specific action items
 - Invest in Our Infrastructure & Transportation
 - Green Infrastructure
 - Adopt Complete Streets
 - Require Sidewalks
 - Require Connectivity
 - Narrower Streets
 - Transit Oriented Development
 - New Infrastructure Design Plan
 - Safe & Attractive Infrastructure
 - Traffic Calming
 - Enforce Accessibility
 - Safe Streets
 - Street Trees
 - Walkability
 - Way Finding
 - Support Sustainability
 - Require Street Trees
 - Narrower Streets
 - Bike Parking Requirements
 - Require Connectivity

- Wider Tree Lawns
 - Increase Public Transportation
 - Complete Streets
 - Tree Plan
 - Way Finding
- Reinvest in Neighborhoods
 - Tree Plan & Policies
 - Complete Streets
 - Directional Signage
- Grow Employers & Jobs (studies have shown that a Complete Street attracts new development)
- Keep Taxes & Fees Competitive (broadening the tax base can result in lower taxes for all property owners)
- Improve District 150 (implementing a Complete Streets policy in older neighborhoods will make them more attractive to new residents and businesses)
- Reduce Crime (Complete Streets have been shown to reduce crime by causing more people to walk and more “eyes on the street”)

What is Complete Streets?

As indicated in the attached Issues Brief from the National Complete Streets Coalition (Item 1), *“Complete streets are streets that work for all users, not just those using a car.”* This philosophy was also stated by US Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood in 2009, *“The right of way doesn’t just belong to cars – it belongs to pedestrians and bicyclists as well.”*

The Complete Streets: Fundamentals document (Item 2), also produced by the National Complete Streets Coalition provides a concise overview of what is commonly considered items important to creating a complete street. It must be emphasized that there is no one definition or example of a complete street; each community, and each street can use a variety of different tools to develop a complete street as long as the components used lead to an environment that is usable and friendly to vehicular and non-vehicular traffic.

Where have Complete Streets been Adopted?

Numerous communities have adopted Complete Street policies in order to provide guidance for infrastructure development. In addition to local governments, several states, including Illinois have adopted a Complete Streets policy. The State policy, adopted in 2007, states in part that *“In or within one mile of an urban area, bicycle and pedestrian ways shall be established in conjunction with the construction, reconstruction, or other change of any State transportation facility...”* The text of the Public Act is included as Item 3.

Process going Forward

The process for the adoption of new standards for construction and design is anticipated to be accomplished by a discussion of policy, direction from Council on specific policy questions, adoption of standards by Council, and finally amendments to all impacted City Codes.

This Issues Update is designed to provide a preview of one component of the larger discussion related to the Manual of Practice. Staff will continue to provide Council with background information on a variety of issues prior to actual policy discussions.

Finally, from a historic viewpoint, attached is a position paper (Item 4) from American Society of Municipal Engineers, issued in 1931, and lamenting the fact that pedestrians were no longer able to walk on highways because of new design standards. So while the Complete Streets name may be new, the concern over allowing equal access and use of the public way is not.

The Problem:

Communities around the country have built many miles of streets and roads that are unsafe for people traveling by foot, bicycle or taking transit. These roadways often lack sidewalks, crosswalks, space for bicyclists, and make no room for transit riders and no accommodation for people with disabilities.

We need to provide people with transportation choices in order to get to work, school, shops and medical visits, and to take part in social, civic and volunteer activities. We need to change old road building habits so that road projects consistently take into account the needs of everyone using the roads. By completing our road network for all travelers, regardless of age or ability, we will improve safety, help reduce America's dependence on oil, and provide opportunities for physical activity. Safe, multi-modal streets in business districts also become engines for economic revitalization.



The Solution:

Complete streets are streets that work for all users, not just those using a car. Instituting a complete streets policy ensures that transportation agencies routinely design and operate the entire right of way to enable safe access for drivers, transit users and vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists, as well as for older people, children, and people with disabilities. More than 200 jurisdictions spanning all regions of the country have adopted complete streets policies through legislation, internal agency policies, and design manuals.



What a Complete Streets Policy Does:

Complete Streets policies are flexible enough to use in daily transportation planning practices and ensure that our transportation investments produce high quality streets that do not create barriers for children, disabled people, older persons, or those who do not drive. A federal Complete Streets policy will result in better roads around the country and better use of dollars invested in building and maintaining the transportation system.

Safe and Complete Streets: Issue Brief

The Benefits:

Complete streets provide a full menu of transportation options to meet the needs of everyone using the road. Children are able to safely travel to school, those on foot and bike have convenient routes to their destinations, and public transportation is accessible by all users.



Left and Right: Don Burden

Complete streets policies are **cost effective** because they save money on retrofits by building streets right the first time and reduce congestion by providing more transportation options. Creating complete streets has been shown to spur economic development by improving conditions for existing businesses and attracting new development.

*La Jolla Blvd
San Diego, CA*



after

Complete Streets **fight congestion and reduce our dependence on foreign oil** by providing transportation choices and allowing people to leave the car at home – they are essential if we are serious about helping people drive less and save money on gas.

Complete streets **improve safety** for everyone using the road and **encourage healthy and active lifestyles**. One study found that 43% of people with safe places to walk within 10 minutes of home met recommended activity levels, while just 27% of those lacking safe options were active enough.



before



after

*Edgewater Dr
Orlando, FL*

Left and Right: Don Burden

Organizations that support Complete Streets include:

AARP • Alliance for Biking and Walking • America Bikes • America Walks • American College of Sports Medicine • American Council of the Blind • American Institute of Architects • American Planning Association • American Public Health Association • American Society of Landscape Architects • Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals • Campaign to End Obesity • City of Boulder • Easter Seals • Environmental Defense Fund • Friends of the Earth • Humana • League of American Bicyclists • National Association of City and County Health Officials • National Association of REALTORS® • National Recreation and Parks Association • Natural Resources Defense Council • Paralyzed Veterans of America • Partnership for Prevention • Prevention Institute • Rails-to-Trails Conservancy • Sacramento Air Quality Management District • Safe Routes to School National Partnership • Smart Growth America • Strategic Alliance for Healthy Food and Activity Environments • Transportation For America • Trust for America's Health • U.S. Conference of Mayors • YMCA of the USA

COMPLETE STREETS:

FUNDAMENTALS

The streets of our cities & towns are an important part of our communities. They allow children to get to school & parents to get to work. They bring together neighbors & draw visitors to neighborhood stores. These streets ought to be designed for everyone – whether young or old, on foot or on bicycle, in a car or in a bus – but too often they are designed only for speeding cars or creeping traffic jams.

Now, in communities across the country, a movement is growing to **complete the streets**. States, cities, & towns are asking their planners & engineers to build roads that are **safer, more accessible, & easier for everyone**. In the process, they are creating better communities for people to live, play, work, & shop.

What are Complete Streets?

Complete Streets are streets for everyone. They are designed & operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, & public transportation users of all ages & abilities are able to safely move along & across a complete street. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, & bicycle to work. They allow buses to run on time & make it safe for people to walk to & from train stations.

What do Complete Streets policies do?

Creating complete streets means transportation agencies change their approach to community roads. By adopting a Complete Streets policy, communities direct their transportation planners & engineers to routinely design & operate the entire right of way to enable safe access for all users, regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation. This means that every transportation project will make the street network better & safer for drivers, transit users, pedestrians, & bicyclists – making your town a better place to live. The National Complete Streets Coalition has identified the elements of an ideal Complete Streets policy to help you write one for your town: www.completestreets.org/elements

What does a “complete” street look like?

There is no singular design prescription for Complete Streets; each one is unique & responds to its community context. A complete street may include: sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), special bus lanes, comfortable & accessible public transportation stops, frequent & safe crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, roundabouts, & more. A complete street in a rural area will look quite different from a complete street in an urban area, but both are designed to balance safety & convenience for everyone using the road: www.completestreets.org/manytypes



Charlotte, NC Department of Transportation

Why do we need Complete Streets policies?

Incomplete streets – those designed with only cars in mind – **limit transportation choices** by making walking, bicycling, & taking public transportation inconvenient, unattractive, & too often, dangerous. Changing policy so that our transportation system routinely includes the needs of people on foot, public transportation, & bicycles means that walking, riding bikes, & riding buses & trains will be **safer & easier**. People of all ages & abilities will have more options when traveling to work, to school, to the grocery store, & to visit family.

Making these travel choices more convenient, attractive, & safe means people do not need to rely solely on automobiles. They can replace congestion-clogged trips in their cars with swift bus rides or heart-healthy bicycle trips. Complete Streets **improve the efficiency & capacity** of existing roads too, by moving people in the same amount of space – just think of all the people who can fit on a bus or streetcar versus the same amount of people each driving their own car. Getting more productivity out of the existing road & public transportation systems is vital to **reducing congestion**.

Complete Streets are particularly prudent when communities are tightening their budgets & looking to ensure long-term benefits from investments. A well-balanced transportation budget can incorporate Complete Streets projects with little to no additional funding, accomplished through re-prioritizing projects & allocating funds to projects that improve overall mobility. Many of the ways to create more complete roadways are **low cost, fast to implement, & high impact**. Building more sidewalks & striping bike lanes has been shown to create more jobs than traditional car-focused transportation projects.

National Complete Streets Coalition

1707 L St NW, Suite 250 • Washington, DC 20036

202.955.5543 • info@completestreets.org

www.completestreets.org



What are some of the benefits of Complete Streets?

Complete streets can offer many benefits in all communities, regardless of size or location. The National Complete Streets Coalition has developed a number of fact sheets: www.completestreets.org/factsheets

Complete Streets improve safety. A Federal Highways Administration safety review found that streets designed with sidewalks, raised medians, better bus stop placement, traffic-calming measures, & treatments for disabled travelers improve pedestrian safety. Some features, such as medians, improve safety for all users: they enable pedestrians to cross busy roads in two stages, reduce left-turning motorist crashes to zero, & improve bicycle safety.

Complete streets encourage walking & bicycling for health. The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention recently named adoption of Complete Streets policies as a recommended strategy to prevent obesity. One study found that 43% of people with safe places to walk within 10 minutes of home met recommended activity levels; among individuals without safe place to walk, just 27% were active enough. Easy access to transit can also contribute to healthy physical activity: nearly one third of transit users meet the Surgeon General's recommendations for minimum daily exercise through their daily travels.



Don Burden, Walkable and Livable Communities Institute



Don Burden, Walkable and Livable Communities Institute

Complete Streets can lower transportation costs for families. Americans spent an average of 18 cents of every dollar on transportation, with the poorest fifth of families spending more than double that figure. In fact, most families spend far more on transportation than on food. When residents have the opportunity to walk, bike, or take transit, they have more control over their expenses by replacing car trips with these inexpensive options. Taking public transportation, for example, saves individuals \$9,581 each year.

Complete Streets foster strong communities. Complete streets play an important role in livable communities, where all people – regardless of age, ability or mode of transportation – feel safe & welcome on the streets. A safe walking & bicycling environment is an essential part of improving public transportation & creating friendly, walkable communities. A recent study found that people who live in walkable communities are more likely to be socially engaged & trusting than residents of less walkable neighborhoods. Additionally, they reported being in better health & happier more often.

How can I get a Complete Streets policy adopted in my community?

Advocating for Complete Streets means working with your neighbors & local policymakers, including elected officials & government staff. Ways to start the conversation include talking about:

- schools that have no sidewalks out front,
- bus stops that are not accessible for people in wheelchairs,
- missing crosswalks by the grocery store,
- no safe routes to bicycle to work, &
- other particularly problematic & unsafe streets.

Work together to identify ways to make these places safer & more attractive & present your ideas to others. Make your case & show examples of what your streets could like.

The National Complete Streets Coalition's website has many resources to help. Modify & use the introductory presentation in your community, show it at PTA & neighborhood association meetings & to your local chamber of commerce. The website also has information on finding other local advocates, developing a good policy, & effectively implementing that policy. Check them out at www.completestreets.org

The National Complete Streets Coalition offers **interactive full-day workshops** led by national experts to help communities establish a common vision for their streets; develop a Complete Streets policy that builds on local expertise; & implement Complete Streets policies by identifying ways to change the transportation decision-making process: www.completestreets.org/workshops

Need transportation planning & engineering professionals who are ready to help design & construct complete streets? Our Complete Streets Partner firms can offer the expertise & dedication you need: www.completestreets.org/help

National Complete Streets Coalition Steering Committee:

AARP • Active Living by Design • Alliance for Biking & Walking • America Bikes • America Walks • American Council of the Blind • American Planning Association • American Public Transportation Association • American Society of Landscape Architects • Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals • City of Boulder • Institute of Transportation Engineers • League of American Bicyclists • National Association of Area Agencies on Aging • National Association of City Transportation Officials • National Association of REALTORS • National Center for Bicycling and Walking • Ryan Snyder Associates • Safe Route to School National Partnership • Smart Growth America • SvR Design Company • Transportation for America



Public Act 095-0665

SB0314 Enrolled

LRB095 09575 LCT 29775 b

AN ACT concerning roads.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The Illinois Highway Code is amended by adding Section 4-220 as follows:

(605 ILCS 5/4-220 new)

Sec. 4-220. Bicycle and pedestrian ways.

(a) Bicycle and pedestrian ways shall be given full consideration in the planning and development of transportation facilities, including the incorporation of such ways into State plans and programs.

(b) In or within one mile of an urban area, bicycle and pedestrian ways shall be established in conjunction with the construction, reconstruction, or other change of any State transportation facility except:

(1) in pavement resurfacing projects that do not widen the existing traveled way or do not provide stabilized shoulders; or

(2) where approved by the Secretary of Transportation based upon documented safety issues, excessive cost or absence of need.

(c) Bicycle and pedestrian ways may be included in pavement resurfacing projects when local support is evident or bicycling

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LRB095 09575 LCT 29775 b

and walking accommodations can be added within the overall scope of the original roadwork.

(d) The Department shall establish design and construction standards for bicycle and pedestrian ways. Beginning July 1, 2007, this Section shall apply to planning and training purposes only. Beginning July 1, 2008, this Section shall apply to construction projects.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect July 1, 2007.



C. W. S. SAMMELMAN, SECRETARY
4359 LINDELL BLVD., ST. LOUIS, MO., U. S. A.

GREATER FLORIDA
CIVIC ASS'N.

GEORGE C. WARREN, General Chairman
HIGHWAY SIDEWALKS COMMITTEE
P. O. BOX 1869, BOSTON, MASS.

Boston, October 13, 1931.

To Friends of Nature:-

NEGLECT OF THE PEDESTRIAN - HIGHWAY SIDEWALKS.

Thirty years ago nearly every one, to a greater or less extent, practiced the healthful, educational exercise of open-air walking along the highways. Present observation of fall foliage coloring makes one realize how much has been lost through the modern development of the highways, for the benefit of auto-ists, and elimination of safety and comfort for the pedestrian. This results from the near-universal road construction practice of no provision for walkways, until it is absolutely unsafe, under present conditions, for one to undertake to walk along the highways. And yet people do so walk to such an extent that thousands of deaths and serious accidents occur every year to highway pedestrians in every State of the United States and Province of Canada. In fact the God-given right of humanity to walk and the still legal right to use the highways for that purpose have been circumvented by passage of Acts, in practically every State, which provide many millions of dollars of annual expenditures for roadways but prohibit expenditure of State funds for construction of walkways along State highways. This notwithstanding that every dollar of highway expenditure is a tax against practically every citizen through:

1. Gasoline Tax to automobile users, which includes nearly everyone.
2. State bond issues, which are a tax on every State taxpayer.
3. Federal Aid, which provides funds to assist the State in highway construction and which is ultimately a tax against practically every citizen of the country.

Could anything be more unjust?

Two years ago at its 35th Annual Convention held in Philadelphia, the American Society of Municipal Engineers began constructive efforts toward reformation of this injustice. One of the first necessities, to meet the situation, is the enactment of remedial State Legislation in every state, which is a large task and requires the fullest possible cooperation.

Already such legislation pertaining to State Highway Sidewalks has been enacted in the States of New Jersey, New York and Massachusetts.

The Massachusetts Act, which finally and unanimously passed the legislature and was signed by the Governor on June 10, 1931, reads as follows;

"The (State Highway) Division shall from time to time construct sidewalks along such parts of the state highways as it determines public necessity and convenience requires." It is submitted that this is a good general model for enactment in all States. The law is pending in other States and must be enacted by all before full legal relief is accomplished.

During the present year, Pennsylvania has enacted similar legislation affecting County and Township Highways. Other States should follow this lead.

We enclose some publications more specifically outlining the Highway Sidewalks Branch of the work of the American Society of Municipal Engineers, which we commend to the most careful and active consideration of all citizens.

If more information is desired on this subject, please communicate direct with the undersigned or with any State member of our Committee.

It is hoped that many will financially assist in the work, one means of which is application for membership in the Society. Will all such please communicate with the Secretary at the home office of the Society in St. Louis, as given on this letterhead.

Your heartfelt consideration and activity are solicited.

Yours very truly

George C. Warren, Chairman
Highway Sidewalks Committee
P. O. Box 1869, Boston, Mass.