

4.09 COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

PURPOSE: To establish practices and procedures for ensuring that all types of roadway users are considered with all new street and street reconstruction projects within the City of Albert Lea.

POLICY STATEMENT:

This Complete Streets Policy incorporates the simple and basic concept that streets and roadways should be designed, constructed, and operated to be safe and accessible for all transportation users whether they are pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, vehicular motorists or trucks.

Further, Complete Streets are designed to improve mobility and connectivity, improve health, increase safety, enhance neighborhoods, businesses and institutions, and advance the quality of life for all Albert Lea citizens and visitors.

ROADWAY SYSTEM:

The City of Albert Lea roadway system consists of the following roadways functional class in descending order of importance; Principal Arterial, Minor Arterial, Major Collector, Minor Collector, and Local. All roadways will be evaluated for complete streets, however the City realizes there will be more benefit to the public by focusing resources based on the order of functional class, and projects may need to be prioritized.

USERS

The City of Albert Lea will ensure that the safety, access, and convenience of all users of the transportation system are accommodated in all future roadway projects, as defined in the Exceptions element of this Policy, including: pedestrians (including persons with mobility aids), bicyclists, transit users, persons with disabilities, youth, seniors, mobility scooter riders, motorcyclists, private motorists, commercial vehicle drivers, freight providers, emergency responders, and adjacent land uses.

ALL PROJECTS (ALL NEW AND COMPLETE RECONSTRUCTION PROJECTS)

Develop as many transportation improvement projects as possible in an affordable, balanced, responsible, and equitable way that accommodates and encourages travel by motorists, bicyclists, public transit vehicles and their passengers, and pedestrians.

For the City of Albert Lea, Complete Streets may be achieved through single projects or incrementally through a series of smaller improvement activities over time.

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 Americans with Disabilities (ADA) compliant accessibility; transit accommodations including improved pedestrian access to transit stops and bus shelters; bicycle accommodations including bicycle storage, bicycle parking, bicycle routes, shared-use lanes, wide travel lanes or bike lanes as appropriate; and street trees, boulevard landscaping, and street furniture.

EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions to this Policy shall only be granted when the City Engineer recommends, and the City Council determines that any of the following are evident:

- a. The project is occurring on a roadway where non-motorized use is prohibited by law; or
- b. A cost and/or health impact assessment demonstrates that the cost for a particular Complete Street project would be excessive compared to the need, public health benefit, safety improvement and probable use of that particular street; or
- c. There is absence of use by all, except motorized road-users that would continue in the future even if the street were a Complete Street; or
- d. An alternative facility has been previously provided at that location; or
- e. A legal and/or regulatory impediment or constraint exists.

Bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities shall be included in new street construction, reconstruction, and other transportation improvement projects, except under one or more of the following conditions. Any condition approval shall follow the implementation process outlined in the corresponding element in this Policy.

- a. A project involves only ordinary maintenance activities designed to keep assets in serviceable condition, such as bituminous overlay, mowing, cleaning, sweeping, patching, joint repair, crack-filling, or pothole filling, or when interim measures are implemented on temporary detour or haul routes;
- b. There is insufficient space to safely accommodate new facilities, as determined by the City Engineer and City Council;
- c. Where determined by the City Engineer and City Council to have relatively high safety risks;
- d. Where the City Council exempts a project due to excessive and disproportionate cost of establishing a bikeway, walkway or transit enhancement as part of a project;

- e. Where jointly determined by the City Engineer and City Council that the construction is not practically feasible or cost effective because of significant or adverse environmental impacts on neighboring land uses, including impacts from right-of-way acquisition.

CREATE A NETWORK

The City of Albert Lea recognizes the absolute necessity of promoting pedestrian, bicycle and public transportation network connectivity as an alternative to the automobile in order to provide transportation options and to protect all road users, reduce negative environmental impacts, promote healthy living, and advance the well-being of commuters. Furthermore, the City acknowledges that as public spaces, roads must be designed to afford safety and accessibility to all users. Finally, the City recognizes that the full integration of all modes of travel in the design of streets and highways will help increase the capacity and efficiency of the road network, hopefully reduce traffic congestion by improving mobility options, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and therefore improve the general quality of life.

JURISDICTIONAL (PROJECT) APPLICATION

The Policy shall apply to all local and/or private development transportation improvement projects whether proposed and/or constructed by the City or private developer, unless specifically excluded through the Exceptions element of the Policy. Federal, State, and County transportation improvement projects shall be encouraged to consider inclusion of Complete Streets elements.

- a. All transportation infrastructure and street design and construction projects requiring funding or approval by the City of Albert Lea shall adhere to the City of Albert Lea Complete Streets Policy
- b. Projects funded by the State or Federal government, including but not limited to, Municipal State Aid funds, Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, or other State and Federal funds for street and infrastructure design shall adhere to the City of Albert Lea Complete Streets Policy, subject to and as may be modified by funding agency guidelines, rules and standards.
- c. Private developments and related or corresponding street design and construction components shall adhere to the City of Albert Lea Complete Streets Policy.
- d. To the extent possible, state-owned streets shall comply with the City of Albert Lea Complete Streets Policy, including the design, construction, and maintenance of such streets within City limits, subject to and as may be modified by Mn/DOT guidelines, rules and standards.

DESIGN CRITERIA

The design of new or reconstructed facilities should anticipate likely future demand for bicycling, walking and transit facilities and should not preclude the provision of future improvements, said design criteria must be guided by national or state recognized standards (i.e. AASHTO, Mn/DOT Road Design Manual, Mn/DOT Bikeway Facility Design Manual) for the City of Albert Lea. For example, under most circumstances bridges (which last 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.

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.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The City shall evaluate the financial impacts of any proposed complete streets improvements including the initial installation costs and long-term maintenance costs.

CONTEXT SENSITIVITY

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 network; or
- e. Whether nearby routes that provide a similar level of convenience and connectivity already exist.

IMPLEMENTATION

City staff will be responsible for implementation of this Policy. The City Engineer will be responsible for providing recommendations to the City Council for consideration.

The City Engineering Department will work closely with other relevant City Departments and community stakeholders during the project development phase to ensure that the needs of all street users are adequately addressed with each project.

The City shall make Complete Streets practices a routine part of everyday operations, shall approach every transportation project and program as an opportunity to improve streets and the transportation network for all users, and shall work in coordination with other departments, agencies, and jurisdictions to achieve Complete Streets.

The City will evaluate projects within the Capital Improvement Plan to encourage implementation of this policy.

The City will secure training for pertinent City staff and decision-makers on both the technical content of Complete Streets principles and best practices, as well as community engagement methods for implementing the Complete Streets Policy. Training may be accomplished through workshops or other appropriate means.

The City will utilize inter-departmental coordination to promote the most responsible and efficient use of resources for activities within the public way.

The City will seek out appropriate sources of funding and grants for implementation of Complete Streets policies.

Council Approval: 4-13-15