



Complete Streets

Supporting safe and accessible roads for everyone
Local advocates toolkit





The photos in this toolkit show some of the many creative ways communities are moving toward Complete Streets that work for all users.

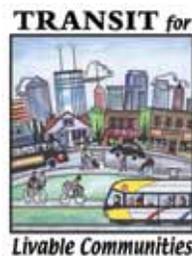


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Nearly every Complete Streets policy begins with a single champion — whether an elected official, a staff person, or an advocate. We hope that you will become that champion in your community!

Introduction

Transportation has broad impacts. At the most basic level, our transportation system impacts our ability to get around, but it also has a big impact on safety, economic development, quality of life, the environment and public health. “Complete Streets” recognizes and maximizes the benefits of all aspects of our transportation system.

For the past 50 years, most road design has focused primarily on one goal—moving as many cars as possible, as quickly as possible. This has often meant that the safety and accessibility needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders are forgotten or addressed at the end of a road project if there is street right-of-way space and money left. Too often, the road-building process has also neglected to fully consider the impact on local residents and businesses along a road—with a focus on cars moving through the area rather than on how a road can contribute to a successful and vibrant community.

Not surprisingly, this paradigm has resulted in roads that move cars fairly well but often are not safe for seniors, children, people with disabilities, and others walking, biking, or taking transit. Because many people don’t feel safe, they drive to their destinations rather than use other options.

Complete Streets seeks to change this paradigm so that pedestrian, bicycle, and transit accommodations are no longer seen as “amenities” to be included when “possible,” but rather as core elements of road design and implementation, left out only if there is a truly compelling reason. Complete Streets is about making sure our kids can safely walk to school, seniors have time to cross the street safely, and parents feel comfortable bicycling to a nearby park or grocery store. Complete Streets is not a

one-size-fits-all solution and will not lead to sidewalks in cornfields or bike lanes on every street—it is about making sure that our transportation and road building systems work for everyone.

Complete Streets is a growing movement in Minnesota and across the country. In 2010, Governor Tim Pawlenty signed a Complete Streets law for Minnesota which directs a supportive Minnesota Department of Transportation to transition to Complete Streets. Local resolutions or policies have also been adopted in Rochester, Hennepin County, St. Paul, Albert Lea, Bloomington, Duluth, and Independence. Numerous other cities and counties are moving to support Complete Streets. Nationally, more than 120 communities and states are supporting Complete Streets. .

Many of these policies were the result of valiant local advocacy from groups who asked cities, counties, or states to rethink how we invest in transportation. Advocacy can play an extremely important role in supporting and encouraging communities to move on Complete Streets by connecting with the public, providing unique perspectives, offering passion, and asking questions of transportation officials that we too often never hear.

This toolkit will help you understand the value of Complete Streets and how you can help make Complete Streets part of your Minnesota community. Much of the information is condensed and localized for Minnesota. There are links to the best of many national resources on Complete Streets. This is the first version of this toolkit, and it will be updated regularly. We anticipate adding technical information in Fall 2010. If you have unanswered questions, comments, or ideas, please contact Vayong Moua at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota at vayong_moua@bluecrossmn.com.

This toolkit was created by the Minnesota Complete Streets Coalition, which includes more than 65 organizations promoting safer roads for everyone. Special thanks to Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, Fresh Energy, and the Minnesota Department of Health for creating most of the content and design.

Benefits of Complete Streets

A local Complete Streets policy can help a community set the path to a transportation system that provides safer access for all road users by articulating the benefits of Complete Streets and providing political support for moving in that direction. By discussing and collaborating on Complete Streets as part of policy discussions, a community can learn to look beyond the current pavement and think about the many impacts of our transportation system.

Some of the many benefits of Complete Streets include:

- **Safety.** The core reason for Complete Streets is to improve safety for all road users. In the past decade, more than 500 pedestrians and bicyclists have been killed on Minnesota roads and more than 20,000 have been injured. We can and must do better.

20,000
number of pedestrians
and bicyclists injured or
killed in Minnesota
in the past decade

- **Public health.** More than 60 percent of Minnesotans are overweight or obese and at risk for serious illness, such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. If left unchecked, obesity will add another \$3.7 billion in health care expenses for Minnesotans by 2020 (*Obesity and Future Health Care Costs*, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Health, 2008). By building roads that help support more walking and biking, communities can help create opportunities for people to be more physically active, while improving public health and reducing health care costs.

60%
percent of
Minnesotans who
are overweight

- **Access and transportation equity.** About 40 percent of Minnesotans do not drive, including children, seniors, people with disabilities, and people who cannot afford a car. Complete Streets helps to ensure that everyone has safe access to lead active and independent lives, while ensuring full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Whether you live in the city, countryside, suburbs, or reservation, Complete Streets supports the ability of all people in their local context to have viable transportation choices.

40%
percent of all
Minnesotans who
don't drive

- **Affordable transportation choices.** Rising and erratic gas prices are taking a larger part of family budgets—money that goes nearly entirely out of the local economy. Complete Streets helps support options that make communities more resilient to gas price spikes and keep more money in the local community.
- **Economic development.** “Complete” streets are built to fit a community’s context to attract people and encourage business by making sure that our roads are places that people want to be.



Designing roads with all users in mind from the beginning saves costly retrofits

➤ **Environment.** Transportation accounts for more than 70 percent of our oil consumption, 25 percent of global warming pollution, and a large portion of local air pollution, like ozone and particulate matter that lead to “air quality alert” days, increased rates of asthma, and even cancer. Complete Streets supports more transportation options that help lessen dependence on oil and promote cleaner air.

➤ **Cost effectiveness.** Road networks typically make up about 30 percent of the land area of cities and account for a significant portion of local budgets. Complete Streets helps ensure an efficiently planned transportation system that reduces gaps, improves traffic flow, and maximizes the investment while also ensuring that we build roads right the first time, rather than having to come back later for costly retrofits.

➤ **Quality of life.** Complete Streets can help calm traffic on residential streets, create walkable neighborhoods, and increase community interaction.

Advocating for Complete Streets in your community

Many of the Complete Streets policies from around the country were initiated or strongly supported by community stakeholders who championed the cause. Here are some tips for getting started in your community. Not all steps are necessary in every case; rather, they provide a good framework. You can do most things with relatively little work, a little patience, and your passion for the cause. As an advocate, your aim is to compel and support action.

➤ **Connect with potential allies to build the case.**

Given the broad benefits of Complete Streets, you have many potential allies including public health, environmental, bicycling, senior, school, business, and neighborhood groups. A good first step is to engage a few potential partners to gauge interest in supporting a local Complete Streets policy. Share ideas, knowledge of local politics, and personal stories, and build a supportive set of information or stories to create a compelling case for action. Having a sense of what Complete Streets can mean for your community will propel action. Review recent road construction projects for positive and negative examples that show both the value and success of well-designed projects and the problems that show a need for Complete Streets. A compelling story can drive a policy forward.

➤ **Evaluate the politics in your community.** Once you have a small set of allies, evaluate the local political environment. This is an often-overlooked step that can help you identify and address potential pitfalls early, rather than being forced to react. Ask a city planner or engineer about previous work on pedestrian, bicycle, and transit planning. Gain a basic understanding of how the local board or council functions and whether there are potential political champions. Determine how road design decisions are made, who is involved, and whether there is a potential staff champion.

Also anticipate potential opponents and think about ways to turn them into supporters, or at least understand and neutralize their concerns. Transportation engineers and home builders and developers may have misconceptions about Complete Streets. It is important to engage and collaborate with these groups. Transportation engineers are often concerned about liability issues because they have to sign off on their projects and can be held legally responsible if they go outside standards and try something creative. Assure them that they will not be left out of discussions. Home builders and developers often worry that they will be forced to pay for sidewalks or other features that they did not have to pay for prior to Complete Streets. Aim to find common ground and suggest ways that they can save money, perhaps through narrower auto travel lanes, less on-street parking, or a better-connected system that helps raise the value of their properties.

➤ **Find a champion on the local council or board.** As an advocate, your opportunity to advance Complete Streets is typically through a city council or county board resolution and policy. Once you have a compelling case for Complete Streets and have thought about the local political environment, it is time to engage your local elected official or a potential champion you have identified. In many cities, this has been the mayor, but city council members and county commissioners have also played important roles in making Complete Streets a reality. Be polite and honest and make your case with a concrete example or story. You don't have to deliver answers—that's part of what a Complete Streets policy process is for—but you should express the need for a new direction.

Once you identify an interested elected official, the next step is typically to inquire about creating a small task force, ideally of staff, elected officials, and stakeholders, to explore ways to move forward with a resolution or policy. This part of the process often includes a forum or retreat with a Complete Streets expert to build collective understanding and support among elected officials and staff. A meaningful Complete Streets resolution or policy is rarely done without a lot of process and collaboration to get everyone on board. We've included a sample resolution from Hennepin County in the Resources section that can serve as a starting point in your community.

- **Reach out to the public and media.** As things begin moving, it is often helpful to raise public awareness of the Complete Streets work through letters to the editor or opinion/editorial pieces in the local newspaper. The goal is to get Complete Streets present and relevant in local community dialogue and public discourse so that when a decision-making body considers a resolution or policy, it will be understood as a common good issue. For more information, see the next section (Talking about Complete Streets).
- **Stay engaged through the process and implementation.** If a small task force is created on Complete Streets, try to be active on it, providing a positive outside voice for progress. If you cannot devote much time to the effort, inquire regularly about updates to keep the momentum for the issue moving. After your community adopts a Complete Streets policy, monitor some future road projects to make sure that implementation is occurring. A Complete Streets policy is only as good as the implementation that comes from it!

- **Stay positive, find ways to work together, and have fun.** If things take longer or are harder than you anticipated, remember the progress that has been made and focus on incremental changes that move you in the right direction. Celebrate successes and thank elected officials, staff, and other advocates who helped make it happen. Remember that you are building relationships and supporting a culture change in the way we build roads, which takes time. Find common ground with opponents and make that the initial focus of work, rather than going after more controversial aspects.

Talking about Complete Streets

Because the new Complete Streets policy is about community and helping to assure the safety of Minnesota's residents, actively communicating the benefits of the new law is critical in order to get public and policymaker buy-in and support for implementing the new law. One way to do that is to seek earned media (newspaper, radio, etc.) and general communications opportunities (conversations, community discussions, etc.). This will initiate a dialogue that will help the public and policymakers understand the new law and its importance to local communities.

Before you embark on a public communications effort it's important to understand the best ways to talk about the new law. Through polling and message-testing, we have found that the best way to talk about Complete Streets is from the standpoint of safety, and especially the safety of seniors and children — two populations especially impacted by road design. While other benefits of Complete Streets (health benefits, positive fiscal impacts, etc.) can and should be discussed, every communications effort should emphasize safety.

To help you communicate the benefits of Complete Streets, we've developed a set of messages:

Lead messages

➤ **Safety.** Currently, too many Minnesotans do not feel safe walking or biking in their neighborhoods or letting their kids walk to school. Too often, Minnesota roads have been built primarily for vehicles, and the needs of children, seniors, and others have not been seriously considered. This can result in roads that simply aren't safe for pedestrians, people with disabilities, bicyclists, transit riders, and drivers themselves.

Supporting fact: In the last decade, more than 500 pedestrians and bicyclists were killed, and another 20,000 injured on Minnesota's roads.

➤ **Choices, accessibility, and equity.** All Minnesotans deserve roads that help them get around their community safely and independently. Complete Streets will help remove transportation barriers for seniors, children, and people with disabilities, and give people cheaper transportation choices.

Supporting fact: 40 percent of Minnesotans do not drive because they are too young, too old, cannot afford a car, have a disability, or choose not to drive.

➤ **Health.** Roads designed strictly to move vehicles have created disincentives for physical activity, a critical component of the effort to reduce the obesity epidemic that Minnesota, like many other states, is facing. Complete Streets will help to assure that Minnesota's roads, highways and streets are safer for pedestrians and other non-motorized users and thereby encourage increased physical activity by people of all ages.

Supporting fact: If left unchecked, the obesity epidemic is projected to add \$3.7 billion to Minnesota's total annual health care spending by 2020.

Supporting messages

➤ **Cost effectiveness.** Complete Streets is a commonsense process that uses taxpayer money more efficiently by better responding to local needs and making sure we build roads right the first time, rather than fix them after a tragedy occurs, when the costs will be much greater.

Supporting fact: In De Pere, Wisconsin, the county highway department saved money by building a narrower major street with roundabouts and bicycle facilities in place of the initially planned four-lane street with traffic signals at two intersections. The changes saved the county \$347,515 (16.5 percent) off the original project estimate.

- **Community development.** Roads designed strictly for cars hurt the economic vitality of many small towns and cities. Everyone is impacted by unsafe roads, which lead to more injuries and fatalities and disincentives for walking, bicycling, and transit use — key components of attractive and livable communities that help support vibrant and profitable businesses and attracts tourism and investment.

Supporting fact: There are countless examples in small towns all across Minnesota where a busy state highway bisects a community.

- **Community engagement.** Complete Streets encourages community participation in developing transportation systems that best meet local safety, health, and community needs.

Supporting fact: Before the implementation of the Complete Streets law, local communities often faced many state-created barriers to designing roads through their towns in a way that served their residents best — barriers that were difficult and often impossible to overcome.

- **Environment.** Complete Streets will support more walking and bicycling, clean transportation choices that reduce our dependence on costly energy sources and help protect Minnesota's rivers, lakes, and air quality.

Supporting fact: 70 percent of oil consumption is used for transportation, and automobiles are the number one source of many local air pollutants that increase rates of childhood asthma and cancer.

General tips for talking about Complete Streets

- **Broaden the name.** The general public does not know about Complete Streets, so connect it immediately with safety. A statement like “Complete Streets: Making roads safer for all Minnesotans” gets the message across in positive manner.
- **Stay positive.** You know that Complete Streets will help your community, and recent polling shows that most Minnesotans agree. The Minnesota Department of Transportation agrees as well and has begun work on Complete Streets.

- **Connect with seniors and children.** Complete Streets will have a big impact on these groups that everyone cares about.

Key messengers

- **Law enforcement officers** are ideal for messages about public safety
- **Individual seniors** can offer compelling personal stories
- **School principals** drive home the need for more walking and biking to school
- **Doctors and nurses** can urge action to support more physical activity

About Minnesota's law

- In 2010, the Minnesota Legislature passed and Governor Pawlenty signed into law a measure known as Complete Streets. The law took effect on August 1.
- Complete Streets requires that Minnesota roads and highways are planned and designed to be safe and accessible for drivers, pedestrians, transit riders, and bicyclists — for all users, regardless of age or ability.
- Specifically, the Minnesota Department of Transportation is required to consider local community needs and all likely road users when designing roadways, and to work with engineers and planners across the state to implement this process. The law applies to new construction, reconstruction, and repaving projects for Mn/DOT.

NOTE: *The new state law applies specifically to roads owned or funded by Mn/DOT. The law can support the efforts of communities to extend the reach of Complete Streets to city, county, and other roads not covered by the law.*

It is helpful to raise public awareness of Complete Streets through letters to the editor or opinion/editorial pieces in the local newspaper. The samples that follow are provided to help you reach out to the public and the media.

Frequently asked questions

How much will it cost to create and implement a Complete Streets policy?

A Complete Streets policy is about maximizing public return on investment. It is not about spending more money, but allocating money differently to support broader transportation outcomes. In some cases, Complete Streets may mean that an individual project costs more money. On some Complete Streets projects, a community can save money by right-sizing the automobile accommodations on a road, building a more connected system, and planning a road to fit into the local context. On all Complete Streets projects, valuable long-term public benefits can be gained from reduced health care costs and increased property values.

Complete Streets also provides a process that helps ensure that we build roads right the first time, rather than fixing them *after* a tragedy occurs or a problem emerges, when the costs will be much greater. Complete Streets applies to projects as they come through the normal funding process, providing an opportunity to improve safety, rather than focusing on costly retrofits.

Complete Streets is not about creating more process, it is about implementing a better process. Complete Streets will help speed project delivery — which reduces costs — by thinking about local context and needs throughout the process, rather than at the end when it becomes more costly to make changes.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation has prepared a report on Complete Streets. The report recommends implementing a state Complete Streets policy because the Department found, after engaging many experts and stakeholders, that “the general consensus is that the benefits of Complete Streets offset the incremental costs.” The report also recognizes that Complete Streets fits in very well with other efforts the Department is taking to maximize the value of transportation investments by making sure that projects are built for local contexts and needs.

What impact will this have on drivers and truck access?

Implementation of a Complete Streets policy will help improve safety for everyone, including drivers. It will also help support more transportation options and reduce congestion. A Complete Streets policy should also help ensure a connected system for trucks and include that as part of the ongoing consideration of road design.

Why do we need a *local* Complete Streets policy?

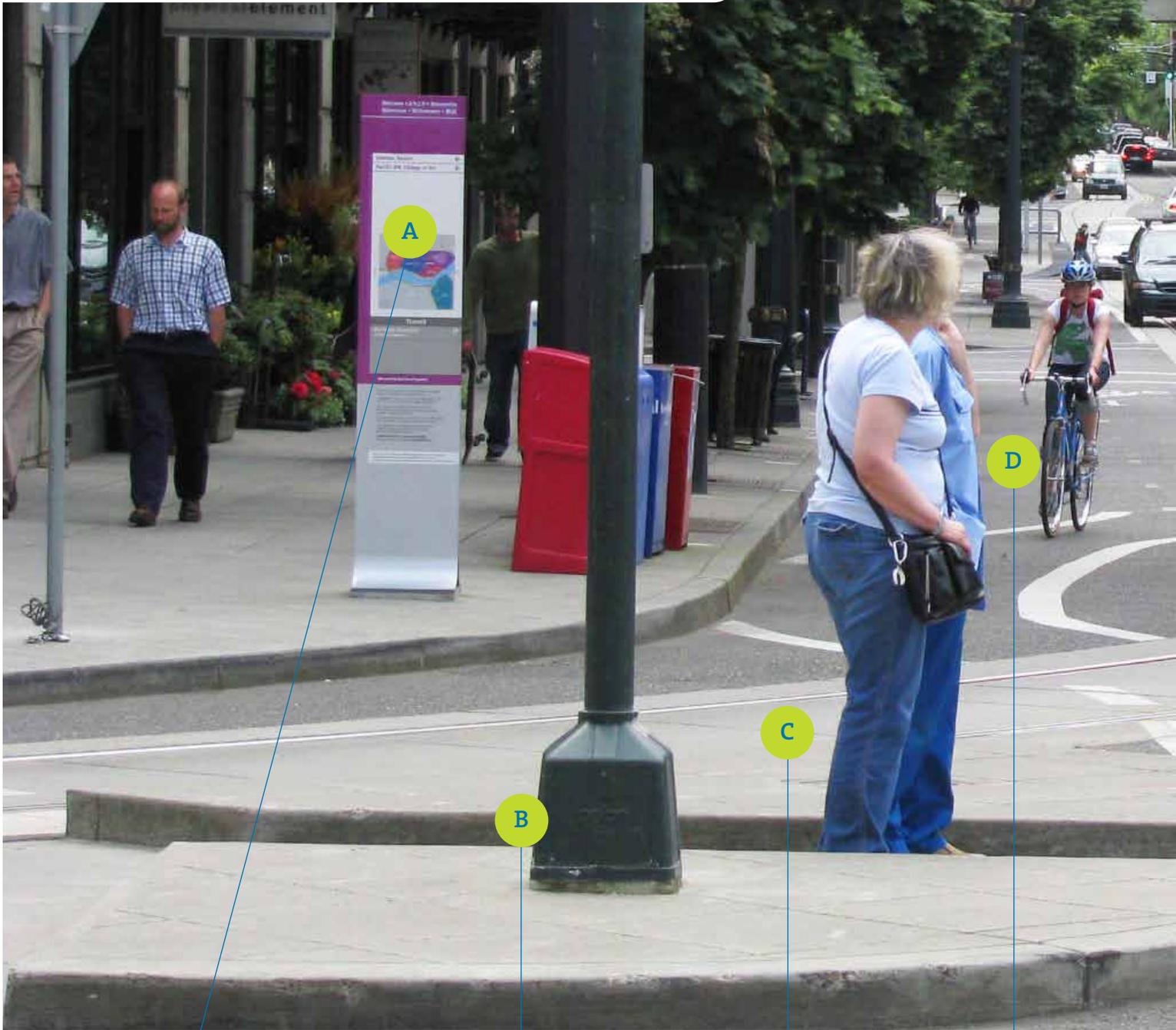
Minnesota’s state law on Complete Streets is a key step toward safer roads for all modes and users. The state law applies only to Mn/DOT-owned and -funded roads. The need for local Complete Streets policies still exists for local transportation authorities so that city and county roads belong to a Complete Streets network.

In many Minnesota communities, people do not feel safe walking or biking in their neighborhoods or letting their kids walk to school. Too often, roads are built primarily to facilitate the movement of motor vehicles, and the needs of children, seniors, and others are overlooked. This can result in roads that are simply unsafe for pedestrians, people with disabilities, bicyclists, transit riders, and drivers themselves. It can also result in roads that harm the economic vitality of main streets and the quality of life that draws people to our communities. Everyone is impacted by unsafe roads, which can lead to more injuries and fatalities — very real barriers in our transportation system and disincentives for walking, bicycling, and transit use.

A Complete Streets policy can help identify solutions to help communities move forward with a balanced approach to transportation investments that maximize total public benefit. While many communities are moving in a Complete Streets direction without a specific policy, a formal policy supports progress locally and across the state.

Streets that work for everyone

“Complete streets” are different in every community, but all are designed to balance safety and convenience for everyone using the road.



Clear signage is welcoming to pedestrians.

Streetlight on raised median makes intersection safer for walkers. Raised median creates a pedestrian refuge.

Raised median at right turn lane slows traffic and protects pedestrians.

Clear bike lane allows room for cyclists.



Street allows for multiple modes of transit: light rail, bus, cars and bicycles.

Well-marked crosswalk creates a space for pedestrians.

Narrow lanes slow traffic.

On-street parking slows traffic.



What are the impacts of Complete Streets for rural areas?

Local context is a key consideration with Complete Streets. Complete Streets will help us provide safe access where it is needed and in ways that are reasonable and cost effective. The new statewide legislation specifically recognizes that needs may vary in urban, suburban, and rural contexts.

In many rural areas, there is not as much need for pedestrian or bicycle facilities, or there is so little traffic that people feel safe walking or bicycling. In these cases, the existing

road is a “complete” street already. Other rural roads serve as key connecting points for regional centers or pedestrian and bicycle trails, and people want to be able to walk or bike on those roads. In these cases, a paved shoulder may be warranted to provide safe access, depending on the context.

Complete Streets is very important for small towns, which are often bisected by a state highway. A Complete Streets policy will help ensure that the state highway can still serve as the vital main street that helps a small town thrive. It will also help ensure that children have the opportunity to safely walk or bike to their small-town school.

Sample Complete Streets resolution (Hennepin County)

WHEREAS, Complete Streets are designed and operated to assure safety and accessibility for all the users of our roads, trails and transit systems, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, commercial and emergency vehicles and for people of all ages and of all abilities; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets reduce congestion by providing safe travel choices that encourage non-motorized transportation options, increasing the overall capacity of the transportation network as well as decreasing consumer transportation costs; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets will help Hennepin County achieve our Cool Counties goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as more people choose an alternative to the single occupant vehicle, thereby improving air quality and alleviating public health concerns such as asthma; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets support economic growth and community stability by providing accessible and efficient connections between home, school, work, recreation and retail destinations by improving the pedestrian and vehicular environments throughout communities; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets enhance safe walking and bicycling options for school-age children, in recognition of the objectives of the national Safe Routes to School program and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Physical Activity Guidelines; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets can help reduce crashes and injuries and their costs; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets is consistent with the Board-approved principles of Active Living Hennepin County, to promote the integration of physical activity into the daily lives of Hennepin County residents; and

WHEREAS, Active Living Hennepin County, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota , and the Hennepin County Transportation Department sponsored a Complete Streets workshop on December 5, 2008, where national experts met with key county, city and state leaders and our Active Living partners; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that in order to develop and maintain a safe, efficient, balanced and environmentally sound County transportation system for people of all ages and abilities, transportation and development projects shall incorporate a Complete Streets philosophy that expands transportation choices; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in keeping with the County’s Active Living principles, the Board directs the Active Living Interdepartmental Workgroup, along with other key staff as selected by the county administrator, to develop a County Complete Streets policy and report back annually to the County Board on how the policy will be implemented into all types and phases of Hennepin County’s transportation and development projects; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners encourages cities, counties, and the state to work together to make Complete Streets a reality throughout Minnesota.

Sample letters to the editor

Dear editor:

One of the more positive accomplishments of the 2010 Minnesota Legislature was the passage of Complete Streets legislation. This new law, which took effect August 1, requires the Minnesota Department of Transportation to consider the needs of all transportation users when they design and build roads and highways.

What that means is that instead of just building roads to move cars as quickly as possible, they should be built with the safety of walkers, bicyclists and others in mind. That will give our community more flexibility to integrate the needs of all road users — especially children and seniors — in the future planning and building of our roads and highways. It will put safety first.

I applaud the legislature's passage and the governor's signing of this important law. I now hope we will take advantage of it in our community.

Sincerely,

Editor:

This year, the Minnesota Legislature joined other states and cities by passing what is known as Complete Streets legislation. The legislation requires that the needs of all transportation users be considered in the future designing of streets, roads and highways. What that means is that our roads can now be made safer for walkers and bicyclists — especially seniors and children. Are we going to take advantage of this new law in our community? I hope so.

Sincerely,

To the editor:

Little noticed this legislative session amid the controversy surrounding the state's budget was the bipartisan passage of a law designed to make our roadways and streets safer for all users, including walkers and bicyclists. The law took effect on August 1.

For years, state and roads and highways were designed with a one-size-fits-all approach. Lost in that process were the safety needs of those who walk and bicycle — especially seniors and children. It was very difficult, if not nearly impossible, for a local community like ours to change that process to make it about something more than just moving cars through town as quickly as possible.

Now, with the new law, that will change. The one-size-fits-all, top-down approach will be replaced with a process that gives local communities more say in integrating the needs of all road users in the planning and building of roads and highways. Let's hope we take advantage of it for all of our residents.

Sincerely,

Sample opinion piece/editorial

One of the more significant laws to go into effect this year is a change to how the State of Minnesota approaches road building and reconstruction. Specifically, the law, which was approved by a bipartisan majority of the Minnesota Legislature, requires that the safety needs of pedestrians, bicyclists and others be considered when roads are built or rebuilt.

Known as Complete Streets, the law is a significant departure from how Minnesota historically did road building. In the past, roads were designed with a one-size-fits-all mentality and the primary outcome of the design was to move cars and trucks as quickly as possible. Lost in the process were the needs of walkers and bicyclists, many of them kids and senior citizens, and the desire of towns and cities to have roads that suited the needs of community members.

The result of this past way of building roads was a staggering automobile/pedestrian fatality and injury rate. In the last decade, more than 500 pedestrians and bicyclists were killed, and another 20,000 injured on Minnesota's roads. So too, many communities became less livable as they were bisected by four lanes of traffic. Everyone is impacted by unsafe roads, which result in disincentives for walking, bicycling, and transit use – key components of attractive and livable communities that help support vibrant and profitable businesses and attract tourism and investment.

Thanks to the new law, opportunities to change the old way of road building now exist, including many right here in [name of town.]. Now, the Minnesota Department

of Transportation is required to consider local community needs and all likely users of the road when designing roadways, and to work with engineers and planners across the state to implement this process. It applies to new construction, reconstruction, and repaving projects for Mn/DOT. And while the new law addresses state highways and roads, it encourages local communities to adopt their own Complete Streets policies, such as Rochester, Duluth and St. Paul have already done.

One of the more significant aspects of the new law is cost. It isn't necessarily a new transportation spending program. Rather, it is a new way of doing business within an existing transportation program. In fact, examples exist where complete streets actually saved taxpayers money by preventing future costly retrofits when roads weren't built safe the first time.

Thanks to the new Complete Streets law, Minnesota and its communities will become safer, more vibrant and more active. We should look for opportunities in our community to implement the law as fully as possible and thereby share in these benefits.

Sample opinion piece/editorial for elected officials

Creation of Complete Streets law will bring broad benefits to Minnesota communities

As an [elected official — include specific title], one of my key priorities, in addition to managing the day-to-day workings of local government, is to help assure the health and welfare of our citizens. When it comes to the safety of those citizens who walk and bike, unfortunately, that has been a challenge in the past. The fatality statistics from the last decade point out the problem clearer than words can describe — a staggering 500 pedestrians and bicyclists were killed and another 20,000 were injured on Minnesota's roads.

That's why our city has taken steps to create more pedestrian and bicyclist friendly roads. We have done so not only because we want to make our community safer for those modes of transportation, but also because we recognize that making walking and biking easier choices helps to improve the health and fitness of residents, along with increasing the vitality of the community. Fortunately for other cities and towns throughout Minnesota, the legislature's passage of Complete Streets legislation this year will help them do the same.

Complete Streets, which had broad bipartisan support in the legislature, and the vocal support of the Minnesota Department of Transportation, will create greater flexibility for Minnesota communities to incorporate the transportation and safety needs of their citizens in the development of state road projects. It ends the top-down, one-size-fits-all approach to state road building by simplifying and removing the existing barriers to safe, community-based road design.

The policy is an essential first step for elected officials because state standards and requirements sometimes limit the ability of cities and towns to assure that roads are built safely for all users. And from the standpoint of

public safety at the local level, that's critical. Too often Minnesota roads have been built primarily for driving as quickly as possible, and the needs of children, seniors, and others have not been seriously considered whether for travel along a roadway or to cross it. This can result in roads that simply aren't safe for pedestrians, people with disabilities, bicyclists, transit riders, and drivers themselves.

The old way of road building has created other problems as well. It has resulted in roads that hurt the economic vitality of main streets and harm the quality of life that draws individuals, families and businesses to Minnesota. Everyone is impacted by unsafe roads, which not only lead to more injuries and fatalities, but also create disincentives for walking, bicycling, and transit use — elements that are critical to vibrant, living communities and a healthy citizenry.

Fortunately, the legislature's passage of complete streets legislation spells a new day for Minnesota. Whether you are an elected official, a parent, a senior citizen, a student or a main street business owner, you can know that, in the future, when highways and roadways through your community are built or reconstructed, they'll be done with an eye toward helping to assure your safety.

We are very proud that by implementing Complete Streets policies on our own, our community will be better for it. Thanks to the new law that took effect on August 1st, other community leaders will have the opportunity to share in that pride by being able to implement their own policies.

Resources

1 Resources from the Public Health Law Center

- Minnesota's Complete Streets Policy
<http://publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/ship-fs-cstreetpolicy-2010.pdf>
 A summary of Minnesota's statewide Complete Streets policy
- Understanding Road Design in Minnesota
<http://publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/ship-fs-rddesign-2010.pdf>
 A guide to the classification system for roads in Minnesota, how road classification affects what government entity controls the project, and process for approvals organized by type of road
- Bike/Pedestrian Fact Sheet
<http://publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/ship-fs-bikeped-2010.pdf>
 Traffic rules for bicycles and pedestrians

2 Introduction to Complete Streets

<http://mncompletestreets.org/gfx/MNCompleteStreetsIntro.pptx>
 Overview of Complete Streets frame principles and practices developed by the Minnesota Complete Streets Coalition

3 American Heart Association (AHA) Fact Sheet

<http://www.mncompletestreets.org/gfx/AHA%20-%20Complete%20Streets%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%20%28MN%29.pdf>

Supports Complete Streets policies as having great potential to increase the overall activity level of Americans and in turn reduce the risk of overweight and obesity. The AHA advocates for passage of Complete Streets policies that will in turn increase physical activity and improve the health status of all Americans.

- 4 Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Fact Sheet
<http://www.mncompletestreets.org/gfx/Blue%20Cross%20Complete%20Streets%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>
 Outlines current attitudes of Minnesotans around the built environment and its influence on physical activity. It also illustrates the number of rural and urban Minnesotans engaged in physical activity for transportation and their level of support for policies that support biking and walking, such as Complete Streets

- 5 National Complete Streets Coalition
www.completestreets.org

- 6 Minnesota Complete Streets Coalition
www.mncompletestreets.org

- 7 Complete Streets: Best Policy and Implementation Practices. 2010. American Planning Association. Available for purchase: <http://www.planning.org/apastore/Search/Default.aspx?p=4060>

- 8 Minnesota Department of Transportation's Complete Streets page <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/completestreets/>

- 9 Minnesota Case Studies
 From the Minnesota Complete Streets Coalition
<http://www.mncompletestreets.org/gfx/Complete%20Streets%20Case%20Studies.pdf>

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Coalition Members

The following organizations and local elected officials have joined the Minnesota Complete Streets Coalition:

AARP

Alliance for Metropolitan Stability

Alliance for Sustainability

American Cancer Society Midwest Division

American Council of the Blind of Minnesota

American Heart Association

Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota

BLEND: Better Living Exercise & Nutrition Daily

Bloomington Councilmember Steve Elkins

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota

Blue Zones — Dan Buettner

Catalyst

Cedar Ave United

City of Rochester

City of Saint Paul

Conservation Minnesota

Dero Bike Rack Company

Driftless Region Bicycle Coalition

First Witness Child Abuse Resource Center

Fit City Duluth

Fresh Energy

Friends of Washington County

Get Fit Itasca

Growth and Justice

Havefunbiking.com

HealthPartners

Hennepin County Commissioner Gail Dorfman

Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin

Howard R. Green Company

Joe Urban, Inc.

Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.

Laura Baker Services Association

Local Initiatives Support Corporation

Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota

Minnesota Association of Small Cities

Minneapolis Electric Bicycle Company

Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities

Minnesota Council of Nonprofits

Minnesota Environmental Partnership

Minnesota Public Interest Research Group

Minnesota Public Health Association

Minnesota Public Transit Association

Minnesotans for Healthy Kids Coalition

National Multiple Sclerosis Society Minnesota Chapter

Northfield Nonmotorized Transportation Task Force

Now Bikes and Fitness

Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota

Pates Planning and Design

Preservation Alliance of Minnesota

Red Wing Housing and Redevelopment Authority

Saint Paul Councilmember Russ Stark

Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation

Shifting Gears Bicycles

Sierra Club North Star Chapter

St. Paul Smart Trips

The Arc of Minnesota

The Corduroy Studio, Inc.

The Cornerstone Group

Transit for Livable Communities

Transportation for America's Minnesota Coalition

Twin Cities Bicycling Club

Twin Cities Streets for People

Urban Land Institute Minnesota

1000 Friends of Minnesota

Local governments with a local Complete Streets resolution or policy

City of Albert Lea

City of Bloomington

City of Duluth

City of Independence

City of Rochester

City of St. Paul

Hennepin County

Local governments with resolutions in support of state Complete Streets policy

City of Bloomington

City of Brooklyn Park

City of Eagan

City of Edina

City of Falcon Heights

City of Lake Elmo

City of Richfield

City of Rochester

City of Rosemount

City of St. Louis Park

City of St. Paul

City of Savage

City of Woodbury

Ramsey County



**BlueCross BlueShield
of Minnesota**

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