

**CITY OF HUTCHINSON
COMPLETE STREETS POLICY
DECEMBER 22, 2015**

A. DEFINITION

“Complete Streets” are streets and transportation corridors that are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and public transportation users of various ages and abilities. Safe access includes user ability to move along or across designated transportation corridors.

B. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

A Complete Streets Policy seeks to provide user accessible streets while taking into account appropriate land use and context of the street. Users accounted for may include pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motorists. This Policy is written for City of Hutchinson elected officials and staff to use in an interdisciplinary approach to designing and constructing appropriate transportation projects, incorporating the needs of all users into the project. McLeod County and the Minnesota Department of Transportation will have access to the Policy to reference and utilize when designing road projects under their jurisdiction within in the City of Hutchinson.

The Complete Streets concept is an initiative to design, build, and reconstruct roads that adequately accommodate intended users of the corridor. “Intended users” may include not only motorists, but also pedestrians, bicyclists, users of mass transit, people with disabilities, the elderly and the young, freight providers, emergency responders, and adjacent property owners. This concept provides guidance for appropriate accommodation(s) to be made so that all modes of transportation may function safely and independently in current and future conditions.

This Complete Streets Policy aims to fit local community needs and be used to direct future transportation planning. Such a policy should incorporate community values regarding historic and natural resources, environmental, aesthetic, and scenic concerns, as well as safety and mobility concerns. The Policy seeks to integrate a multi-modal evaluation into best management strategies for land use and transportation for the City’s transportation corridors.

Because much of the City of Hutchinson’s street infrastructure was developed during a time in which the personal automobile dominated transportation planning practices and policies, the City is highly auto-orientated and some areas lack adequate connections to existing amenities and multi-modal transportation corridors. As a response to trends showing greater community

support of and desire for multi-modal transportation access, the City has made an effort to provide a network of multi-use trails, sidewalks, and bicycle friendly routes throughout the community. This includes provisions for pedestrians and bicyclists in Hutchinson's recent Transportation Plan update (2012). The City plans to continue this trend of increasing community access to multi-modal forms of transportation.

C. POLICY BENEFITS

There are many benefits to the City adopting and implementing a Complete Streets Policy. Some of the key benefits are as follows:

1. Safety. A Complete Streets Policy recognizes the safety risks posed to road users of multi-modal transportation corridors and seeks to address these issues by providing adequate travelways for intended users to lessen opportunities for accidents and increase users' sense to safety.
2. Providing options. A Complete Streets Policy seeks to accommodate the approximately 40% of Minnesotans, many of whom live in this community, who do not drive either because they are too young, too old, cannot afford a car, have a disability, or choose not to.
3. Health. Increasing access to alternative means of travel, especially biking and walking, will help to encourage greater use of these forms of travel. Increased levels of walking and biking may help reduce obesity rates and improve overall health of individuals. With more community members becoming more physically active through walking and biking there is the possibility of improving overall community health including lower obesity rates while reducing health care costs.
4. Community and economic development. Studies have shown that homes in neighborhoods with increased access to walkable corridors are valued higher and are more desirable than similar homes in more motor-centric neighborhoods. This can be seen in "walkability scores" that are popular measures of home value with some major real estate agencies. Making infrastructure improvements will boost these scores and perceptions of neighborhoods and may help to attract highly trained professional workers to the community and local industries. Additionally, businesses in areas with more forms of accessible transportation attract more customers.
5. Cost effectiveness. Complete Streets aims to design improvement projects with all users in mind from the beginning. This ensures that projects are built with pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders in mind the first time, rather than retrofitted after a tragedy has occurred and when costs will most likely be much greater. Also, including amenities for non-motorists from the beginning of a design project, rather than mid-way or near the end of a project, may reduce the time and costs related to engineering design.

6. Environment. If building better alternative transportation infrastructure means more community members choose travel by those alternatives rather than by auto, the City may see reductions in air pollution as a result. Also, reducing the size of paved areas and providing additional green space amenities that often accompany walking and biking corridors reduces impervious areas and lessens their negative affect on storm water quantity and quality.
7. Green Steps Cities program. An integral part of the Green Steps Cities Program that the City of Hutchinson has implemented is the adoption of a Complete Streets Policy.

D. POLICY

The Complete Streets Policy of the City of Hutchinson is developed to provide guidance for its residents, decision makers, planners, and designers. The Policy ensures the examination of new reconstruction and major rehabilitation projects to look at ways of cost effectively improving upon facility and amenity usability and safety for all modes of transportation. These considerations shall take place from the very start of planning and design work of appropriate projects.

I. VISION

The City of Hutchinson seeks to promote the basic concept that transportation corridors will be designed and operated to be safe, reliable, efficient, integrated, connected, and accessible to all intended transportation users, whether they are pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, or vehicular motorists. Hutchinson’s transportation projects will be designed and enhanced to provide safe mobility and support livability and economic development goals in a cost effective and balanced manner.

II. ALL MODES, PURPOSES AND USERS

The City of Hutchinson’s transportation system will work to meet the needs of the users of various modes of transportation. The Policy shall also account for the needs of adjacent land owners. This policy recognizes that different users of the transportation system have different needs. Differences include age, socio-economic status, physical ability, employment, and skill level.

While it is likely impossible to consider and implement procedures to address the specific needs of all users, this policy recognizes the importance of planning and designing transportation systems for a range of modes, purposes, and users.

III. CONNECTIVITY

The City's Complete Streets Policy aim is to balance the needs of different users in an equitable manner by creating a network of interconnected transportation systems to allow for easy and safe access to many potential destinations within the City.

IV. JURISDICTION

The State of Minnesota Department of Transportation and Department of Natural Resources, as well as McLeod County have jurisdiction over a number of roadways and corridors within the City of Hutchinson. The City will continue to work closely and foster strong relationships with these jurisdictions while remembering that this policy applies only to the transportation systems under its jurisdiction. The City of Hutchinson will promote and encourage the state and county to also follow this Complete Streets Policy when working on projects within the City.

V. PHASES

Because the City is fully developed with transportation and land use systems already in place, the existing framework may limit the extent to which Complete Streets can be implemented. Constructing a Complete Streets network will focus on new construction, reconstruction, and major rehabilitation projects. In the beginning stages of such major transportation projects, the City shall take into consideration the Complete Streets Policy in examining a wide variety of improvements and amenities that may serve different users and include many modes.

While smaller scale projects do not afford as many possibilities to inject improvements into their plans and execution, such projects will likely provide ample opportunity to make small changes to infrastructure that may increase user access and safety. Minor rehabilitation work, repairs, and major maintenance projects as well as operations work will be strongly encouraged to consider implementation of Complete Streets policies. Such improvements could reduce costs and tragedy down the line if such repairs are mandated after an accident

VI. SCOPE OF APPLICABILITY

The Complete Streets Policy will be examined as part of all city owned transportation projects. We will also encourage the owners and operators of private transportation projects to consult the Complete Streets Policy when constructing, reconstructing, or otherwise servicing those projects. This is in a hope to create safer, more accessible streets throughout the entire City.

For a visual guide to the scope of applicability of the Policy, please reference Figure 1: "Complete Streets Priority Corridors" map. This map identifies roadways where Complete Streets implementation will be a focus. It also contains information about which streets within Hutchinson's borders are outside of the City's jurisdiction. This map is designed to be adaptable to circumstances as they occur. It is intended to be periodically updated by the City Engineer.

VII. EXCEPTIONS AND FLEXIBILITY

While Complete Streets intends to make accommodations for all modes and users of the transportation network, it is acknowledged that it is not always possible to make such accommodations. While the City will follow this policy, it is important to allow for exceptions and flexibility. Exceptions are allowed in the following situations:

1. 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.
2. The project involves a roadway that bicyclists and/or pedestrians are prohibited by law, or it is determined that a project will create relatively high safety risks. When such a case occurs, greater effort shall be made to accommodate those specified users elsewhere, including on roadways that parallel or otherwise intersect with the affected roadway.
3. It is determined that there is insufficient space to safely accommodate new facilities and a parallel or nearby facility provides a reasonable level of similar accessibility to destinations.
4. The City Engineer issues a documented exception concluding a project due to the excessive and disproportionate cost of establishing a Complete Streets enhancement as part of a project in relation to the anticipated number of users. There is documented absence of current or future need.
5. The City Engineer determines that the construction is not practically feasible or cost effective because of unforeseen circumstances or significant or adverse environmental impacts to streams, floodplains, remnants of native vegetation, wetlands, steep slopes, historic resources or other critical areas, or due to impacts on neighboring land uses, including impact from right of way acquisition.

The City seeks to address project-level barriers to Complete Streets implementation in ways that still achieve an environment that is supportive to all intended users.

E. DESIGN

When designing transportation projects in Hutchinson, the City will utilize the wide variety of design resources available, including the following:

- American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHTO)
- Minnesota Department of Transportation

- Municipal State Aid Rules—Chapter 8820
- Institute of Transportation Engineers
- American with Disabilities Act
- National Complete Streets Coalition
- Safe Routes to School
- Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines.

The City will generally follow accepted or adopted design standards from the sources listed above, but will also consider innovative or non-traditional design options to fulfill this policy as long as a comparable level of safety for users is achieved.

In implementing Complete Streets, current related city planning documents will be reviewed for consistency. The City will either adhere to its Comprehensive Plan, including the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, or produce written documentation of why, in particular cases, the plan cannot be followed. Additionally, the City's policies regarding best practices for stormwater and forestry management will be adhered to regarding planning for transportation corridors.

There are many design options and tools available for the City to utilize when implementing Complete Streets. Each has their own unique set of benefits and disadvantages. A Complete Streets design may include, but is not limited to the following examples:

- Sidewalks
- Multi-use trails
- Bike lanes, wide paved shoulders, or separated bicycle paths
- Comfortable and accessible public transportation stops
- Frequent and safe crossing opportunities
- Median islands
- Curb extensions/bump outs
- Narrower travel lanes/road diets
- Roundabouts
- Traffic calming improvements
- Roadways crossing improvements and systems
- Improvements to create safer and more comfortable pedestrian spaces including buffer space, pedestrian-scaled lighting, street furniture, refuge islands, landscaping and public art
- Bicycle parking facilities at public places
- Wayfinding signage
- Environmental improvements such as stormwater management, planting trees, and adding pervious and green space.

This policy agrees with Minnesota Complete Streets legislation that states, “Complete Streets should be designated in a manner that is sensitive to the local context and recognizes that the needs vary in urban, suburban, and rural settings.” This is true in Hutchinson’s neighborhoods. The City may choose to administer Complete Streets Policy differently in residential, industrial, commercial, and mixed-use neighborhoods. Context sensitivity needs to be considered alongside network connectivity, flexibility, innovation, and unique needs of various users.

F. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

This Policy encourages the regular gauging and reporting of implementing Complete Streets through regular monitoring by the City Engineer.

On a more occasional basis, policy performance may be measured by determining if there is an increased number of persons walking, bicycling, or using transit.

G. FINANCING

The City faces a tough job of maintaining and replacing its aging infrastructure at a level that is affordable to the citizens of Hutchinson. This challenge does not mean the City cannot take a unique opportunity to effectively and efficiently alter the City’s landscape and system of networks that Complete Streets represents. Improving the City’s transportation system for all users must be balanced with the responsible use of taxpayer’s dollars.

While the inclusion of pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and other improvements adds to the expense of capital improvement projects, the benefits of these additional improvements must be also taken into consideration when planning projects. Some Complete Streets implementation steps can show financial savings over the long term in addition to other benefits that are more difficult to monetize. Community benefits include increased environmental and personal health and safety, as well as community and economic development. The benefits are explored in depth in section C. POLICY BENEFITS.

H. IMPLEMENTATION

Complete Streets may be achieved through single projects or incrementally through a series of smaller improvements or maintenance activities over time. This policy must work together with the City’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, Downtown Plans, and Capital Improvements Plan. Care must be given that implementation steps fit under the City’s overall Comprehensive Plan concept. The City of Hutchinson may 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.

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

1. City street construction, reconstruction projects, and major rehabilitation projects shall be reviewed by the City Engineer to determine appropriate level of Complete Streets implementation. Appropriate changes will be made to the City's Project Development Process, which ensures Complete Streets improvements are considered at the very beginning of the infrastructure planning process.
2. Developing new design policies and guides for Complete Streets implementation. The City Code may be amended to provide guidance for proper planning and implementation of the Complete Streets Policy.
3. Seeking out and apply for grants that can be used to implement this Policy.
4. Implementing a review of feasible funding sources and adopt revisions to the Capital Improvement Program as necessary and appropriate.
5. Working with McLeod County and the State of Minnesota to encourage incorporation of the City's Complete Streets Policy into transportation projects under their jurisdiction.
6. Updating the City's Comprehensive Plan to include the Complete Streets Policy.
7. Educating involved staff as well as appropriate Committee members and the City Council about best practices and cost-effective measures to design and construct Complete Streets. The City will consider offering workshops and other training opportunities for their engineering and planning staff.
8. Instituting a means to measure performance and success of the Complete Streets Policy.

I. ADOPTION

This Complete Streets Policy was adopted by City Council Resolution on the _____ of _____, 2015.