



COMPLETE STREETS

POLICY OP004, EFFECTIVE 2016-05-20

POLICY STATEMENT

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) must follow a complete streets approach in all phases of planning, project development, operation, and maintenance activities.

REASON FOR POLICY

- Ensure compliance with [Minnesota Statutes §174.75](#) directing MnDOT to implement a complete streets policy.
- Support the goals of the transportation system in [Minnesota Statutes §174.01](#), specifically:
 - Minimize fatalities and injuries for transportation users throughout the state
 - Provide multimodal and intermodal transportation facilities and services to increase access for all persons and businesses
 - Increase use of transit as a percentage of all trips
 - Increase bicycling and walking as a percentage of all trips
- Ensure alignment with MnDOT’s mission, the [Minnesota GO Vision](#), and the [Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan](#).

WHO NEEDS TO KNOW THIS POLICY?

MnDOT staff, local agency representatives, consultants, and contractors responsible for:

- Planning, scoping, designing, constructing or maintaining projects along trunk highway right of way

DEFINITIONS

Complete Streets

The purpose of complete streets is to address the safety and accessibility needs of users of all ages and abilities. MnDOT assesses user needs at several stages of planning, project scoping and designing, construction, operation, and maintenance.

User Group

A category of transportation users or modes such as people walking, people bicycling, transit operators and transit riders, commercial trucks drivers, etc.

SENIOR OFFICER

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Deputy Commissioner/Chief Engineer

POLICY OWNERS

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POLICY HISTORY

2013-11-12, Established
2016-05-20, Revision 1

[MnDOT Policy Website](#)

Vulnerable Users

Road users who are most at risk for serious injury or death when involved in a motor-vehicle related collision, including but not limited to people bicycling and pedestrians of all ages, types and abilities.

PROCEDURES

Evaluate and balance the needs of all users (pedestrians, bicyclists, freight, transit, motor vehicles, etc.) during planning, scoping, design, construction, operations and maintenance of the trunk highway network. The analysis must include the access and mobility needs of user groups moving both along trunk highways and crossing trunk highways. The objective is not all modes on all roads, but rather interconnected and integrated networks for all users.

Capital Program Priorities

Districts must evaluate opportunities to address the needs of all users both at the individual project level and when developing Area Transportation Improvement Programs and 10-Year Capital Investment Highway Investment Plans. Within the Minnesota 20-Year State Highway Investment Plan direction and annual fiscal constraints, districts should give higher priority to opportunities to address identified user needs on projects that meet the following criteria:

- Affected population includes a high proportion of individuals covered by [Title VI](#) of the Civil Rights Act and [Environmental Justice](#)
- Have a higher probability of increasing the number of people biking, walking or taking transit, consistent with [Minnesota Statutes §174.01](#)
- Addresses a significant safety issue for vulnerable users
- Addresses a gap or barrier created by prior transportation investments
- Are identified in a local or regional plan

Preservation Projects

All construction projects on the trunk highway network must follow a complete streets approach, but the purpose and need of a project may constrain the available options. While the primary purpose of preservation projects is maintaining and extending the useful life of existing infrastructure, they still offer opportunities to make low-cost improvements. Project managers and designers must consider and evaluate options to address identified user needs within the scope and available budget of preservation projects. In particular, designers will evaluate options to reallocate existing space to increase safety, usability, and accessibility for all user groups.

Design

Designers will use MnDOT-adopted design criteria and guidance as the design basis for projects and should consult:

- [A Policy on Geometric Design on Highways and Streets](#) *American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)*
- [Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach](#) *Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE)*
- [Urban Street Design Guide](#) *National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)*
- [Highway Safety Manual](#) (AASHTO)

The design process must include attention to speed outcomes, especially in urban, suburban and recreational environments where vulnerable users are common. Operating speed is a key factor in the severity of crashes involving both motorized and non-motorized traffic. Consider design speed a target speed rather than a maximum safe speed.

Project documentation

All transportation construction projects within trunk highway right of way must have a documented complete streets project report identifying considerations for all users. Project managers must complete the reports at the end of project scoping and revise them at 30 percent final design.

Construction projects that meet all of the following criteria must follow a complete streets approach, but are exempt from the project documentation requirements of this policy:

- The project is completely outside an incorporated community or tribal land.
- No industrial parks, business parks, major freight generators, schools, places of worship, shopping centers, parks or recreational areas are directly adjacent to the highway within the project area.

- No segment of the project is part of a designated current or future bikeway or trail.
- No trails, shared use paths or sidewalks intersect or run parallel to the highway within the project area.
- No rail lines intersect the highway within the project area.

Reason for non-provision (situations where a complete streets approach is used, but provisions for a user group may not be feasible or prudent)

In project development, design, construction, operations and maintenance, MnDOT may not be able to address the needs of a user group when one or more of the following apply:

- The user group is legally prohibited from using the highway according to [Minnesota Statutes §169.305](#).
- There is no evidence of a current need to provide for the user group, no plans identify the project corridor for future use, and land use trends suggest an absence of future need over the life of the project.
- All identified options require excessive expenditure of time, money, or resources due to a variety of challenges, such as design, permits or right of way acquisition.
- A local unit of government with jurisdiction refuses municipal consent.
- MnDOT and a local unit of government with jurisdiction or other transportation partner (i.e. transit agency, trail authority, etc.) cannot reach an agreement on operation and maintenance responsibilities.
- Expanding the scope of a preservation project would significantly reduce or compromise the preservation of existing trunk highway assets.

Policy Exemption

The following activities are exempt from this policy:

- Emergency, routine or localized maintenance and repair work (debris removal, sweeping, pothole patching, sidewalk patching, joint and crack repair, pond cleaning, bridge painting, etc.).
- Projects such as storm water tunnels, storm sewers, landscaping, and slope stabilization that do not directly affect transportation system users.
- Roadside infrastructure projects on freeways that do not involve entrance/exit ramps, loops or overpasses such as high-tension cable guardrail, sign replacements, and overhead sign structure replacements.

RESPONSIBILITIES

State Design Engineer

- Develop, implement, and maintain an oversight process that adheres to the policy.
- Review complete streets projects reports (“Reasons for Non-Provision”) to substantiate and justify findings.
- Develop and offer training and technical assistance to support local governments, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), Regional Development Commissions (RDCs), and other agencies implementing complete streets.

Manager, Planning and Data Analysis

- Develop and track process indicators for implementation of complete streets.
- Track established performance indicators that contribute to complete streets goals and provide timely reports to the Senior Leadership Team.
- Provide Complete Streets Project Reports to the public, stakeholders, and advocates, as requested.

Senior Leadership Team

- Review performance measures and indicators for complete streets implementation annually.
- Modify process as needed based on implementation trends.

Modal Offices

- Identify system users, conditions, needs and priorities.
- Provide technical support to district staff.

Planners

- Solicit input from transportation stakeholders and the public to identify user group needs on the system.
- Record the current and future land use contexts and needs of transportation user groups in project documentation.
- Identify system conditions and needs in plans and corridor studies.

- Identify opportunities to address the needs of all user groups when developing 10-Year Highway Capital Investment Plans.

Assistant District Engineers

- Identify opportunities to address the needs of all transportation user groups when programming projects.
- Apply priorities identified in modal plans and this policy when developing 10-Year Highway Capital Investment Plans.
- Approve Complete Streets Project Reports at project scoping and reapprove at 30% final design.

Project Managers

- Solicit input from transportation stakeholders and the public to identify user group needs on the system.
- Assess the current and future needs of each user group in project scoping and design.
- Assess and quantify risks and opportunities related to complete streets when developing project budgets.
- Collaborate and consult with modal planning and technical staff.
- Submit Complete Streets Project Reports at project scoping and revise at 30% final design.
- When there is a question in determining a design threshold, consult the appropriate modal or technical office to inform decision-making.
- Where users are legally prohibited from using a roadway, look for opportunities to address or remove barriers to network connectivity and crossings.

Traffic Engineers and Designers

- Include all affected users in project safety reviews, road safety audits, traffic modeling, and intersection control evaluations.
- Address the safety needs and ease of use of vulnerable users, especially in lower-speed environments and at intersections.
- Include attention to speed outcomes, especially in urban, suburban, and recreational environments where vulnerable users are common. Consider design speed a target speed rather than a maximum safe speed.
- Look for low cost solutions on preservation projects to provide complete streets improvements.
- Where users are legally prohibited from using a roadway, look for opportunities to address or remove barriers to network connectivity and crossings.

Resident Construction Engineers and Project Engineers

- Provide alternative and accessible routes and detours to perpetuate previously existing modes of travel, including pedestrians and bicyclists, when closing roads, bridges, shared use paths or sidewalks for construction or maintenance work. Coordinate with the Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations to ensure oversize/overweight permitted loads are appropriately detoured.
- Clear any field changes having the potential of affecting modal functionality with the project manager and designer.

Maintenance Engineers and Maintenance Supervisors

- Provide alternative and accessible routes and detours to perpetuate previously existing modes of travel, including pedestrians and bicyclists, when closing roads, bridges or sidewalks for construction or maintenance work.
- Work with local jurisdictions and transit providers to identify responsibility for maintenance and snow removal on facilities such as sidewalks, shared use paths, crossings, bridges, underpasses, and transit stops and hubs.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: *What is a complete streets approach?*

A: A complete street approach to road planning and design considers and balances the needs of all transportation users.

- ***It is about the basics***—improving the safety and functionality of the transportation system for all users. The main premise is nothing more than for people to get around safely and efficiently from point A to point B, using whatever mode of travel they choose.
- There is ***no one prescription or template for complete streets***, which means that there are no easy answers to the question, “what is a complete street?”
- ***It is context sensitive***. The design selected through a complete streets approach will look different in a rural setting from that selected for a main street running through a small community, which may look different from a design selected in a large metropolitan area.

Q: *What are the core principles of a complete streets approach?*

A: Generally speaking, a complete streets approach includes the following four principles:

- ***Multi-modal perspective***
Address each mode of transportation within the context of the system and the connections that exist and necessary connections within that system.
- ***Network considerations***
Transportation is about an interconnected system or network that goes beyond the project or corridor in question to the community and network as a whole.
- ***Collaboration across disciplines***
Project planning is with multi-disciplinary teams of staff and stakeholders.
- ***Across and along the corridor***
Document how transportation users cross a corridor, not just move along or through a corridor.

Q: *Is complete streets a grant program?*

A: There is no specific funding set aside for complete streets, and there is no mandate to redistribute existing funds. MnDOT's policy emphasizes planning and designing the transportation system for all user groups.

Q: *Are local agencies required to adopt complete streets policies?*

A: No, local agencies are not required to develop a complete streets policy. However, [Minnesota Statutes §174.75](#) states, "Local road authorities are encouraged, but not required, to create and adopt complete streets policies for their roads that reflect local context and goals." Complete streets policies help communities plan for a balanced and integrated transportation system.

Q: *Is complete streets only for non-motorized transportation?*

A: No, a complete streets approach addresses the needs of all users of the transportation system, including freight and commercial vehicles and balances those needs.

Q: *Does complete streets mean all transportation modes on all roads?*

A: No, a complete streets approach is not "all modes on all roads." It is about considering people who want to use the transportation system today and in the future, and providing transportation choices that address those needs. The complete streets approach emphasizes a network and system approach, ensuring that the transportation system as a whole provides mobility and accessibility for all users.

FORMS/INSTRUCTIONS

[Complete Streets Project Report](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

[MnDOT Complete Streets website](#)

[MnDOT Cost Participation for Cooperative Construction Projects and Maintenance Responsibilities Policy](#)

[MnDOT Minnesota Tribal Nations Government-to-Government Relationship with MnDOT Policy](#)

[Highway Project Development Process](#)

[MnDOT Statewide Plans](#)

POLICY OWNERSHIP AND AUTHORIZATION

Policy Owners

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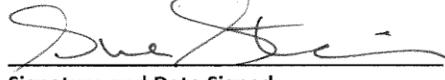
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 5/9/2016
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Governance Council

Sue Stein, Assistant Commissioner, Corporate Services Division

 5/9/2014
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 5/20/2014
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