

Adopted March 17, 2014

Section 1: DEFINITION OF COMPLETE STREETS

Complete Streets are roadways designed to safely and comfortably accommodate all users, of all ages and abilities, including but not limited to motorists, cyclists, pedestrians, transit users, school bus riders, delivery and service personnel, freight haulers, and emergency responders. Complete Streets solutions are sensitive to the surrounding context and balance local needs. Publicly owned rights of way should safely accommodate destination-based and recreational users, as well as provide opportunities for rest and directional information as appropriate.

Section 2: JUSTIFICATION

Building complete streets provides many benefits to residents, business owners, developers, and the community as a whole. Embracing the complete streets concept will help create balanced transportation systems by providing accessible, safe, and efficient connections between destinations. Communities throughout the United States have used Complete Streets as a part of local strategies to bolster economic growth and community stability. Just a few of the benefits of Complete Streets that communities have observed in practice include:

- Improving safety of pedestrians, cyclists, transit users and other groups, including motorists
- Improving quality of life for vulnerable populations including but not limited to individuals with low incomes, people with disabilities, and older adults.
- Attracting new residents
- Allowing older adults to age and thrive in place
- Increasing property values
- Improving public health and fitness
- Reducing harmful air pollution
- Reducing demand on roadways by allowing people to replace motor vehicle trips with active transportation options

Integrating dedicated pedestrian facilities, bicycle facilities, transit amenities, and safe crossings into the initial design of a project spares the expense and complications of retrofits and patchy fixes implemented at a later date. Proactively planning for a multimodal transportation system can promote integration of transportation options with local land use policies.

Since 2010, the Twin Cities Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (TwinCATS MPO) has received consistent and impassioned public comment from throughout the MPO planning area emphasizing the need to fully consider all modes of transportation when making planning decisions. These comments along with guidance and encouragement from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) spurred the TwinCATS MPO to develop this Complete Streets Policy. A Complete Streets Policy was initially passed by the TwinCATS MPO Policy Committee in 2012.

Demand from the local public for consideration of all modes and all people in transportation planning informed the development of the Walk and Roll non-motorized plan that was adopted by the TwinCATS MPO in 2011, the 2014-2017 TwinCATS Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and “What Moves You, TwinCATS?”, which is the approved long range transportation plan for 2013-2040 for the TwinCATS MPO.

The TwinCATS Complete Streets policy supports compliance with federal and state policy. United States Code, Title 23, Chapter 2, Section 217 (23 USC 217) requires consideration of bicycling and walking within transportation infrastructure planning efforts. The State of Michigan’s Complete Streets Policy, adopted in 2012, stipulates that projects meet the needs of all users.

Section 3: VISION AND INTENT

This Complete Streets Policy shall direct the TwinCATS MPO to create a safe, reliable, efficient, integrated and connected multimodal transportation system that promotes access, mobility and health for all users.

The goals of this Complete Streets Policy are:

1. To ensure that the safety and convenience of all users of the transportation system are accommodated, including pedestrians, bicyclists, users of mass transit, people with disabilities, older adults and young children, motorists, freight providers, emergency responders, and adjacent land users;
2. To ensure that all area residents have access to vital destinations regardless of their ability to drive, and to recognize the diverse needs of different transportation users;
3. To incorporate Complete Streets principles into all aspects of the transportation project development process, from project identification and selection to design, implementation, and follow-up evaluation;
4. To create a comprehensive and connected transportation network that promotes sound development and vibrant communities;
5. To ensure the use of the latest and best design standards, policies, and guidelines in transportation planning efforts;
6. To ensure that Complete Streets design solutions are flexible enough to meet the needs of all users while fitting within their local contexts.

Section 4: PROJECT APPLICABILITY

Intent: To clarify the types of projects and project phases covered by this policy. Ideally, all transportation improvements are viewed as opportunities to create safer, more accessible streets for all users.

The requirements outlined in Section 5 of the TwinCATS Complete Streets Policy apply to all transportation projects that intend to use federal funds with the TwinCATS MPO urbanized area (i.e. projects that would be noted in the fiscally-constrained portion or the illustrative list of the TwinCATS TIP).

Clarifications

The requirements in Section 5 apply to roadway, bridge and dedicated non-motorized facility projects using federal funds for which either a local TwinCATS member agency or MDOT is the project applicant.

The requirements in Section 5, where pertinent, apply to transit projects that use federal funds, and include transit facilities and operations.

Section 5: REQUIREMENTS

1. All projects must show that, in their scope, they plan for the safe accommodation of the needs of all users of the transportation system, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, motorists, people with disabilities, older adults, school students and young children, freight haulers and emergency responders.
2. Projects that cannot provide for the safe accommodation of the needs of all users must show that (1) they qualify for one of the stated exemptions in section 6 or (2) request a special exemption from the TwinCATS Policy Committee.
3. If the planned facility is on a current fixed route, or is proposed to have fixed route transit in the Long Range Transportation Plan or a transit development plan (forthcoming), then the project applicant shall request comments from the local transit agency (Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority, Berrien Bus) during the project development process to ensure that collaboration occurs with these agencies and that accommodation of transit vehicles and opportunities to access transit facilities are provided.

- **5.1: DESIGN STANDARDS**

Intent: to specify how Complete Streets design will be approached and what standards will be used. Strong policies clearly name current design guidance or reference using the best available, and also address the need for a balanced or flexible design approach.

TwinCATS member agencies shall follow accepted or adopted design standards and use the best and latest design standards available, including, but not limited to, existing design guidance from the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHTO), Michigan Department of Transportation, the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG).

- **5.2: CONTEXT SENSITIVE DESIGN**

Intent: To acknowledge that effective Complete Streets solutions are not “one-size-fits-all”, and that all Complete Streets can be designed in a way that respects historical considerations, neighborhood characteristics, water management issues and different travel volumes. This policy is concerned with improved safety and accessibility results, and not as much on the method of achieving those results.

In order to be sensitive to varying neighborhood characteristics, development footprint restrictions, environmental concerns, and differing travel patterns, TwinCATS member agencies can design facilities in a manner other than those found in design guidance, provided that the project achieves a similar level of safe accommodation of all users.

- **Section 5.3: PLANNING FOR THE LIFETIME OF THE PROJECT**

Intent: To ensure that for any project, maintenance of facilities will be conducted in an equitable manner for all modes of transportation and all users.

TwinCATS member agencies must show that they commit to maintenance of facilities at a similar quality for all modes over the design life of the project, including during snow removal. Consideration(s) should be given to any installed streetscape elements such as benches, bicycle racks, sidewalks and transit shelters that enhance the comfort and safety of transportation system users.

Section 6: EXEMPTIONS

The following is a list of conditions in which a project may be exempt from the Complete Streets Policy. There may be other conditions in which a project is exempt, which the applicant may specify when requesting the exemption.

1. An affected roadway prohibits, by law, use by specified users (such as an interstate highway or pedestrian malls), in which case a greater effort shall be made to accommodate those specified users elsewhere, including on roadways that cross or otherwise intersect with the affected roadway;

2. The costs of providing accommodation are excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use over the life cycle of the TwinCATS Long Range Transportation Plan.
3. The existing and planned population, employment densities, traffic volumes, or level of transit service around a particular roadway, as documented by the TwinCATS Long Range Plan and the Berrien County Coordinated Public Transit Plan are so low as to demonstrate an absence of current and future need for separate or designated facilities for various users.
4. Maintenance of the transportation network does not change the roadway geometry or operations, such as mowing, sweeping and spot repair. "Mill and fill" projects may not necessarily be Complete Streets exempt; depending on the project, there may be opportunities for complete streets elements. Existing bicycle and pedestrian traffic must be safely accommodated during any maintenance activities.
5. There is a reasonable and equivalent accommodation along a parallel or connected route that is already programmed to provide facilities exempted from the project at hand (Note: this might be the case on evacuation routes).
6. The project replaces or upgrades existing traffic signals.
7. Project is in a location or along a route that already possesses facilities that accommodate all users, and such facilities are in good condition.
8. The project involves only the purchase of equipment, such as new transit vehicles or replacements, engine replacements, dispatching systems or local fleet upgrades.
9. No solutions to better accommodate all users are possible without adding to the development footprint, AND adding to the development footprint is impossible due to federal, state or local environmental protections or requirements put in place by the Berrien County Drain Commissioner.

Section 7: PROCESS FOR DEMONSTRATING COMPLIANCE OR EXEMPTION

Intent: To ensure that all projects are reviewed uniformly for compliance with the Policy

1. Local agencies are encouraged to contact TwinCATS MPO staff as they are developing the project concept to discuss anticipated issues with meeting the policy.
2. When submitting a new project for consideration for addition to the TIP, applicants will answer a question on the electronic application regarding whether their project meets the TwinCATS Complete Streets Policy.

3. If the project applicant is seeking designation as Complete Streets compliant, they must explain how the project helps meet the needs of all users (i.e. “project adds 5 foot wide paved shoulders”).
4. If the project applicant is seeking designation as Complete Streets exempt, they must explain in their answer why the project should be exempt, based on the exemptions outlined above (i.e. “only replacing an engine”).
5. During any new project selection process, the TwinCATS Project Selection subcommittee shall review projects for Complete Streets compliance and make a recommendation to the Policy Committee as to whether projects are compliant or eligible for an exemption. The TwinCATS Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) shall also make a formal recommendation to the Policy Committee as to whether projects are compliant or exempt.
6. The TwinCATS Policy Committee shall have the final authority to decide whether a project is Complete Streets compliant, non-compliant, or exempt.
7. If at any point during the design, engineering or construction, a project that was deemed Complete Streets compliant changes to the point where the quality and safety of facilities for all users can be impacted, the TwinCATS Policy Committee shall have the authority to review the project for compliance again.

Section 8: MEASURING SUCCESS OF THE POLICY

Intent: to establish meaningful measures of success that can provide clarity on how transportation projects are meeting citizens’ needs, TwinCATS member community goals and the TwinCATS MPO Long Range Plan. There is no required set of measures; the number and kind will depend on what is most applicable in each jurisdiction.

The TwinCATS MPO can measure the success of this Complete Streets policy and associated projects using the following performance measures, among others:

- Satisfaction of users of the transportation network, as reported by MPO Committee members
- Linear feet of new pedestrian accommodation
- Total miles of bike lanes/trails built or striped
- Number of ADA accommodations built
- Number of transit accessibility accommodations built
- Number of new curb ramps installed along city streets
- Number of new street trees planted
- Compliments and complaints
- Bicycle, Pedestrian and Multimodal Levels of Service (LOS)
- Transportation mode shift, provided by the Household Travel Survey
- Crosswalk and intersection improvements

- Percentage of transit stops accessible via sidewalks and curb ramps
- Rate of crashes, injuries, and fatalities by mode
- Rate of children walking or bicycling to school
- Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) or Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) trip reduction
- Number of approved exemptions from this policy

Section 9: POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Note: This is not intended to be a list of Complete Streets requirements, nor is it an exhaustive list of strategies for breaking down barriers to achieving Complete Streets. These are simply meant to be suggestions of actions that project applicants can take to ensure that they maximize the benefits their communities gain from Complete Streets.

- Wherever possible, TwinCATS member agencies can foster partnerships with State of Michigan agencies, utility companies, business and school districts to develop a network of facilities and accommodations that further the TwinCATS Complete Streets policy on both the federal-aid and non-federal aid road system.
- All users should be considered during the entire life cycle of a project, including planning, design, construction, operations, and maintenance.
- Street furniture, such as bike racks or benches, should be considered as part of the project in a manner that does not impede any user.
- When designing a facility that includes or crosses an existing or future fixed transit route, ensure that the appropriate pedestrian and wheelchair access is provided to and from the transit stops.
- Traffic-calming elements including, but not limited to, landscaping, street trees, and narrowing of lanes, should be considered where safe and appropriate.
- Special consideration should be given to future planned facilities or services, using future land use maps from the community.
- Each project design should be coordinated with appropriate access management strategies. Access management strategies should consider the placement of sidewalks and ramps to eliminate sight distance issues.
- Although this policy focuses on engineering projects, the project sponsor should provide education, encouragement, and enforcement strategies during or after the project. The education component should include government officials, developers, and the public.

- TwinCATS member agencies can review their individual land use and zoning policies to ensure that they provide for and promote complete streets and connectivity within new developments. In addition, member agencies may choose to adopt their own Complete Streets Policies to ensure that local roads connected to the federal-aid network also accommodate all users.

APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS

(a) Complete Streets means a comprehensive and integrated transportation network that permits safe and convenient travel along and across all Streets for all Users.

(b) Complete Streets Elements mean design features that contribute to a safe, convenient, and comfortable travel experience for all users, including but not limited to such features as: sidewalks; shared use paths; bicycle lanes; automobile lanes; paved shoulders; street trees and landscaping; planting strips; curbs; accessible curb ramps; bulb-outs; crosswalks; refuge islands; pedestrian and traffic signals, including countdown and accessible signals; signage; street furniture; bicycle parking facilities; public transportation stops and facilities; traffic calming devices; narrow vehicle lanes; raised medians; roadway diets; and dedicated transit lanes.

(c) Streets mean any rights of ways, public or private, including arterials, collectors, local streets, and roadways by any other designation, as well as bridges, tunnels, and any other portions of the transportation network.

(d) Street Project means the construction, reconstruction, retrofit, or major alteration of any Street and includes the planning, design, approval, and implementation processes.

(e) Street Maintenance means the minor routine upkeep and maintenance of streets such as mill & overlay, micro abrasion, micro-surfacing, crack seal, concrete rehab, curb repair, spot repair, restriping, signal operations, snow removal, and interim measures on detour routes.

(f) Users means all persons that use Streets, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motor vehicle drivers, mobility device users, utility tricyclists, and public transportation drivers and riders, of all ages and abilities, including children, youths, families, older adults, and persons with disabilities.

(g) Context Sensitive Design means the art of creating public works projects that meet the needs of the users, the neighboring communities, and the environment. It integrates projects into the context or setting in a sensitive manner through careful planning, consideration of different perspectives, and tailoring designs to particular project circumstances.

(h) Fiscally-constrained portion refers to projects towards which the TwinCATS MPO Policy Committee has approved the allocation of current or expected federal funding.

(i) Illustrative List refers to projects that the TwinCATS MPO Policy Committee has approved for consideration should further federal funding become available.

(j) Roadway refers to any the portion of the owned right-of-way that is eligible for transportation projects.

APPENDIX B: DESIGN GUIDELINE REFERENCES

The Active Living Research Program's Costs for Pedestrian and Bicyclist Infrastructure Improvements: A Resource for Researchers, Engineers, Planners, and the General Public (2013)

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<http://activelivingresearch.org/costs-pedestrian-and-bicyclist-infrastructure-improvements-resourceresearchers-engineers-planners>

The National Complete Streets Coalition –www.CompleteStreets.org

FHA's The Pedestrian Safety Guide and Countermeasure Selection System –
<http://www.pedbikesafe.org/PEDSAFE/>

Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE)–Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities: An ITE Proposed Recommended Practice(2006) –

www.ite.org/bookstore/RP036.pdf

The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)Urban Bikeway Design Guide(2012) –

<http://nacto.org/cities-for-cycling/design-guide/>

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities (2012) –

https://bookstore.transportation.org/collection_detail.aspx?ID=116

Costs for Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure Improvements–
<http://pedbikeinfo.org/costpaper>

Public ROW Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) 2005) –

<http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/streets-sidewalks/public-rights-of-way/background/revised-draft-guidelines>

The Michigan Department of Transportation recently released a glossary of [Bicycle and Pedestrian Terminology](#), a must-have resource for transportation advocates, citizens, and planners. Many non-motorized terms are similar, and some tend to be confused or misused.

For example, could you state the difference between a bike lane, bike boulevard, and bike route? This glossary brings clarity to non-motorized discussions and when used, will help improve the conversation around pedestrian and bicycling issues.

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdot/MDOT_BicycleandPedestrianTerminologyBooklet_445994_7.pdf

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) –

<http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/intersection/roundabouts/fhwasa10006/#s3>

Bike/Ped Level of Service Measures and Calculators+ various other technical and educational information – <http://www.bikelib.org/bike-planning/bicycle-level-of-service/>