

I: Purpose

This Complete Streets Policy is written to empower and guide citizens, elected officials, and government agencies in adopting effective and efficient approaches to incorporating the needs of all users in the design and construction of roadway projects funded through the Twin Cities Area Transportation Study.

The Complete Streets concept is an initiative aimed at designing and building roads that meet the needs of all road users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, users of mass transit, people with disabilities, older adults and young children, motorists, freight providers, emergency responders, and adjacent land users. In addressing the travel needs of all community members, a Complete Streets policy should fit local community contexts and guide the development of future transportation facilities. Such a policy should reflect local values and should bolster environmental, scenic, aesthetic, historic, and economic qualities of the community, all while addressing the primary concern of improving safety and mobility. To fully meet these aspirations, a Complete Streets approach requires careful multi-modal evaluation for all transportation corridors, combined with general planning principles that prioritize the well-being of all road users.

A) Specific Complete Streets Goals

The aim of the Complete Streets Policy is to

1. 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. 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. 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. Create a comprehensive, integrated, and connected transportation network that promotes integrated, sustainable development and attractive and economically vibrant communities;
5. Ensure the use of the latest and best design standards, policies, and guidelines, encouraging the appropriate use of a range of facility types, going beyond sidewalks and bicycle lanes to include such measures as accessible intersection and mid-block crossings, improved signals and signs, bicyclist and pedestrian way-finding, improved lighting, traffic calming measures, and a host of other mechanisms to improve the ease of mobility for non-motorized users;
6. Ensure that Complete Streets design solutions are flexible enough to meet the needs of all users while fitting within their local contexts.

II: Policy

A) Applicability

The Complete Streets Policy applies to all of the following projects:

1. New construction and reconstruction (excluding resurfacing activities that do not alter the current/existing geometric designs of a roadway) of local roadways that will use federal funds through the SWMPC for any phase of project implementation, including planning, design, right-of-way acquisition, construction, or construction engineering;
2. Local roadway projects included in the TIP after the adoption of the Complete Streets policy AND are not past the Preliminary Field Check Phase or more than 30% complete with design at the time this policy is adopted;
3. Local roadway projects where the SWMPC has the programming authority to allocate federal funding.

B) Requirements

1. Roadway projects shall accommodate all users of the transportation system, 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. Roadway projects shall make use of the latest and best design standards, policies, and guidelines. The Local Agency (LA) shall also retain the justification and design decision authority over its projects.
3. Complete Streets solutions shall be developed to fit within the context of the community, and those solutions shall be flexible so that the needs of the corridor can be met.

III: Process

A) Call for Projects

At the beginning of each Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) cycle, the SWMPC shall issue a call for projects for any roadway project that seeks to use federal funding and to be programmed in the TIP. The LA, in addition to the existing requirements for project applications, shall submit a form indicating the intent for the project to be Complete Streets Compliant or to seek a Complete Streets Exemption (see Section IV: Exemption).

B) Project Review and Approval

Project descriptions will be reviewed by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) prior to being submitted to the Policy Committee for their consideration to adopt into the TIP. The Policy Committee shall certify by resolution that relevant projects identified in the TIP are Complete Streets Compliant unless a project receives an exemption under certain circumstances. Roadway projects listed in the TIP shall clearly be identified as Complete Streets Compliant or Complete Streets Exempt.

C) Project Reporting

Once a project is programmed into the adopted TIP, the Local Agency shall fulfill the scope of work as detailed in the approved project description. The LA shall update the TAC and Policy Committee on project status and accomplishments, noting in particular the preferred design solutions as they pertain to Complete Streets Compliance. If a significant change to the roadway project is warranted, the Policy Committee will review the proposed change and determine if it changes the project's status as Complete Streets Compliant or Complete Streets Exempt. If the Policy Committee finds the project to be neither Compliant nor Exempt, the Policy Committee shall consider removing the project from the TIP until such time that the project can be brought back into compliance with the Complete Streets Policy.

IV: Exemption

A) Complete Streets Exemption

The SWMPC Policy Committee may certify through resolution that a roadway project is exempt from the requirements listed in II.B above if any of the following conditions are met:

1. The project consists of ordinary maintenance activities designed to keep assets in serviceable condition (e.g. moving, cleaning, sweeping, spot repair, and regular or seasonal maintenance);
2. The project involves a roadway that bicyclists and pedestrians are prohibited by law from using. In such case, efforts should be made to accommodate bicyclists elsewhere;
3. There are extreme topographic or natural feature constraints;
4. The Long Range Transportation Plan's 20-or-more year Average Daily Traffic projection is less than 1000 vehicles per day;
5. When other available means or factors indicate an absence of need presently and in the 20-or-more year horizon;
6. A reasonable and equivalent alternative already exists for certain users or is programmed in the TIP as a separate project;
7. The costs of including accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians can be demonstrated by the applicant agency to be greatly disproportional to the projected benefits from their inclusion or to result in disproportional harm from foregone infrastructure projects;
8. The project is not a roadway improvement project and/or the SWMPC has no programming authority.