SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

City Hall—Shared Vision Room, 3989 Central Ave NE
Tuesday, October 10, 2023
6:00 PM

AGENDA

ATTENDANCE INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC
Members of the public who wish to attend may do so in-person or via Microsoft Teams
www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-teams/join-a-meeting, Meeting ID 220 710 057 646 and passcode 9SW2ZH. For questions please call the Public Works Department at 763-706-3700.

CALL TO ORDER

1. **Roll Call**

2. **Review of Minutes**

COMMUNITY FORUM: At this time, individuals may address the Sustainability Commission about any item not included on the regular agenda. All speakers need to state their name and connection to Columbia Heights, and limit their comments to five (5) minutes. Those in attendance virtually should send this information in the chat function to the moderator. The Commission will listen to brief remarks, ask clarifying questions, and if needed, request staff to follow up or direct the matter to be added to an upcoming agenda.

OLD BUSINESS

3. **GreenStep Cities Profile Follow Up**

4. **Follow Up On Shared Email for Commission**

5. **Adopt a Tree Update**

NEW BUSINESS

6. **Review of Complete Streets Proposal**

   MOTION: Move to recommend that the City Council review the attached Complete Street policy at an upcoming work session to consider adoption and implementation of Complete Streets policies and design standards.

ADJOURNMENT

Auxiliary aids or other accommodations for individuals with disabilities are available upon request when the request is made at least 72 hours in advance. Please contact Administration at 763-706-3610 to make arrangements.

SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION
City Hall—Council Chambers, 3989 Central Ave NE
Tuesday, September 12, 2023
6:00 PM

DRAFT/UNAPPROVED MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL
The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Ahmadvand at 6:00 p.m.

Members present: Commissioners Ahmadvand, Evenson, Finkelson, Groseth, Jensen Christen, Johnson, Kurek, LaPlante, Leoni-Helbacka

Staff present: Sulmaan Khan, Interim City Engineer
                        Andrew Boucher, City Planner
                        Liam Genter, Urban Forestry Specialist
                        Sue Chapman, Administrative Assistant

Council Liaison: Connie Buesgens

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Johnson seconded by Groseth, to approve the minutes of August 8, 2023 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Further Introductions and Background Information of Commissioners

2. GreenStep Cities Profile Follow-up
Khan asked commissioners if there is any interest in taking this to the next step and/or if there are any other ideas that they would like to include in the profile. Staff feels the GreenStep Cities Profile would be a good start for the Sustainability Commission. Boucher advised that currently the City of Columbia Heights is on Step 2 of the program and there are some specific actions that we must take to get to Step 3. One requirement for Step 3 is a sustainable purchasing policy. This sets standards for energy star compliant technology for appliances, paper with a certain percentage of recycled contents, WaterSense which is an EPA program; there's other things that can also be added such as local purchasing preferences. The best practices portion of the profile has examples of what other cities have done to achieve the 1, 2 and 3 start levels.

Evenson advised she went through and highlighted the items that she thought would be the best fit. She will blind copy the list to everyone for review. There may already be items that qualify for Step 3 that the City has achieved, especially with the new energy efficient buildings. Boucher is reviewing what we've done in the last five years to provide a status update. The yearly assessment is one of the items that we put into the bylaws and the commissioners need to review this on a year-by-year basis.

The Alatus development was brought up as an opportunity for the Sustainability Committee to bring recommendations and ideas to the table, especially since the plans are still in the development stage.

Ahmadvand asked if the City has any information about EV charging and how effective it would be in the community. Boucher advised he had a meeting with Xcel Energy and one of their partners, Energy Group, and this is one of the things they do. They will provide EV ready toolkits to local governments to get them going. The Partners in Energy Group is very valuable because they take on a lot of the work and can administer a wide range of actions.

NEW BUSINESS
3. Draft Bylaws
Boucher stated the Youth Commission completed their bylaws last year so he's looking at those for a comparison. He's going through the GreenStep actions to see what requires us to provide an update with how things are functioning, identifying trends and giving recommendations on those trends. He should have the draft bylaws available by the next meeting.

4. Introduction/Overview of Partners in Energy with Xcel Energy
This item was touched upon during the GreenStep Cities Profile discussion. Ahmadvand asked what the target date is for them to come in. Boucher advised they accept rolling applications from communities quarterly. He is thinking November or December is most likely for them to come in. They are very easy to work with and willing to attend meetings, it depends on what we would like from them. He will obtain contact information for the commissioners. There is also a lot of information on their website.

Xcel Energy provides a lot of funding for this program for costs that cities otherwise would have to incur. Finkelson stated it doesn't seem right that the industry group that built all the coal plants should create the Sustainability Commission framework. Boucher advised Xcel Energy does work with several environmental nonprofits, including the Center for Energy and the Environment and is supported by a lot of environmental and nonprofit groups as well. This program would cover much of the leg work that the commission would have to do or hiring a consultant to create these plans. Having seen them work in the past, the community feedback they receive is very important to them. He will collect more information so the commission can see what resources they provide and then have a further conversation. There is no commitment to use this program.

Solar energy on city buildings was briefly discussed.

5. Sustainable Purchasing Policy
This item was also discussed during the GreenStep Cities Profile discussion. Boucher will get the commissioners a draft copy of the sustainable purchasing policy.

6. Adopt a Boulevard Tree Program
Genter updated the commission on urban forestry activities, which are an important part of the sustainability goals. One impact item is local action to deal with the effects of climate change, improve air quality, etc. with trees. He explained how we plant trees in the city and that we plant bare root trees which are very good for sustainability. Urban Forestry plants park and boulevard trees every year. Genter started the Adopt a Tree boulevard tree program in 2021, where every boulevard tree is paired with a volunteer. This has improved watering compliance and produced very good survival rates and growth

for the boulevard trees. There were 100 volunteers in the first two years, which was our target number. He will be planting 200 trees in October and currently has 60 volunteers. Urban Forestry can only plant trees on city-owned property.

LaPlante stated there are no bus shelters at a lot of the stops on Central Avenue and no trees for shade which makes it very hot while waiting for the bus in the summer.

Khan advised MnDOT is supposed to wrap up the study that's being done for Central and University Avenues by the end of this year. Metro Transit has just begun design of the F Line (BRT) that will run along Central Avenue. To ensure the design of the F Line lines up with the vision for Central Avenue, MnDOT and Metro Transit have been working to include some pre-design work as part of the F Line Design contract that is in place right now. The design of that project will most likely be extending through the end of next year. There are plans to provide more public engagements in the future to share the results of the study, next steps, and gather feedback. Staff will definitely share via social media, etc. once there are opportunities for public engagement. Once we get into the details for the reconstruction of Central Avenue there will be a lot of opportunities for the Sustainability Commission to bring forward and make recommendations to MnDOT. MnDOT is the owner of Central Avenue, but they have included the local government agencies such as Columbia Heights, as well as other cities that Central Avenue runs through. There is no timeline yet for the reconstruction. The City Council has agreed to hire a lobbyist to help us gather monies for this once the plans are set up. We received a grant from MnDOT for 43rd and 47th Avenues for sidewalks and lighting but this is on hold because of the F Line and MnDOT's planning, so we need to wait on that too.

Evenson asked if staff has talked to any of the business owners about trees on Central Avenue. Khan advised the study that's been done so far has been more of a high-level study regarding impacts to businesses such as taking away parking, widening the road for bike traffic, etc. There has not been any dedicated one-on-one contact or meetings with business owners. Finkelson asked what the commission could do to communicate with MnDOT. Can we submit letters regarding trees and greenspace and if so, when should we start? It was also brought up that we may need to get funding for greenspace, MnDOT may not cover the cost. Kurek asked if Columbia Heights could adopt specific language for storm water stating that a certain amount of stormwater needs to be diverted into rain gardens on our side streets. Boucher thinks there is language in the Comp Plan stating we would like to aspire to a complete streets policy that addresses landscaping and stormwater. He feels this incorporates a lot of items that have been discussed.

Commissioner Buesgens stated that Anoka County is planning to redo 40th Avenue and we may have more control over that project. They are planning to come to the community next year to begin discussions. Khan advised Anoka County is currently leading a study and has hired a consultant to look at improving safety along 40th Avenue. Once the study is completed, in March or April, they will bring a more formal proposal as far as the turnback to the City. There are improvements that need to be made on 40th Avenue and the study should really help us understand which ones will benefit 40th Avenue. As far as the turnback, Anoka County could reconstruct 40th Avenue and say Columbia Heights this is now your roadway, or they could say this is the study that was done, this is an estimate of the work, and then provide a check for that amount. There are plans for public engagement, but the study just started so they're currently in the process of looking at the crash data and collecting statistics.

As there seems to be a lot of interest in the complete streets policy, Boucher suggested everyone look at Best Practice 11 in the GreenStep Best Practices Profile.

7.   HeightsNEXT Central Avenue Cleanup

HeightsNext is organizing the Central Avenue cleanup on October 7. It begins at 9 a.m. and they're looking for volunteers for sign-in tables, a welcome speaker, someone to pick up bulky items at the end of the cleanup and take them to the dumpster behind the Public Works building, and a photographer. If anyone is interested please get in touch with Councilmember Buesgens. LaPlante volunteered to set up a table for the Sustainability Commission and the trees at the cleanup.

Also, Councilmember Buesgens stated the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization has a citizen advisory committee. Currently we do not have anyone from Columbia Heights on that committee. The committee meets two or three times a year. They advise on small projects that people have applied for such as feasibility studies for water drainage for business, habitat, etc. If anyone is interested, please see her after the meeting. We really should have someone from Columbia Heights on that committee.

8.   Other

Posting a general email on the website was brought up and if there is a way for an email to come in so the entire commission can see it. Khan will check into this. Currently only his contact info is on the website.

Johnson asked for an update on the comp plan for the next meeting. Khan and Boucher will get that information.

Commissioners agreed to draft a letter to MnDOT regarding the plans for Central Avenue for review at the next meeting. Boucher advised that Best Practice 11 would help with writing this letter. Khan suggested commission members email him with their priorities as bullet points and he will compile them into one document.

Khan advised members that they can email him with any agenda items for the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Evenson, seconded by Ahmadvand to adjourn the meeting at 7:34 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Chapman
Administrative Assistant

SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION MEETING

AGENDA SECTION	NEW BUSINESS
MEETING DATE	OCTOBER 10, 2023

ITEM:	Review of Complete Streets Proposal

DEPARTMENT: Community Development	BY/DATE: Andrew Boucher, City Planner 10/5/2023

CORE CITY STRATEGIES: *(please indicate areas that apply by adding an "X" in front of the selected text below)*

X Healthy and Safe Community   _Thriving and Vibrant Destination Community

X Equitable, Diverse, Inclusive, and Friendly   X Strong Infrastructure and Public Services

_Trusted and Engaged Leadership   X Sustainable

BACKGROUND

In the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the City of Columbia Heights defines Complete Streets as roadways that accommodate all users (pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles, and transit) regardless of age and ability. The City has not established design guidelines related to Complete Streets; however the Transportation Plan's goals and policies embrace several elements of Complete Streets (safety for pedestrians and bicyclists) and MnDOT's has adopted a Complete Streets Policy committing to assessing opportunities for incorporating complete street design principles in all MnDOT's Complete Streets Policy can serve as a resource to the City for incorporating complete street design standards into City projects. An explicit Complete Streets Policy is also a requirement for Step 3 progression in the MN GreenStep Cities program.

GreenStep Cities provides implementation tools and resources for Complete Streets, Living Streets, and Street Design such as Local Government Complete Streets Toolkit from MN Complete Streets Coalition and a Complete Streets Policy Framework created by Smart Growth America and the National Complete Streets Coalition to assist in developing ordinances and policies. There are also examples of cities in Minnesota who have met the highest star rating for their Complete Streets Policies and served as examples to follow when crafting Columbia Heights' Complete Streets policies. The cities examined including Arlington, Edina, Lakeville, and Maplewood, but also reviewed the policies of Fridley, Northfield, and South St. Paul as other three-star examples.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Sustainability Commission give a positive recommendation to the City Council to review the proposed Complete Streets policy and design standards at the next available work session and consider implementation and adoption should the policy serve the public interest and satisfy the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

RECOMMENDED MOTION(S):

MOTION: Move to recommend that the City Council review the attached Complete Street policy at an upcoming work session to consider adoption and implementation of Complete Streets policies and design standards.

ATTACHMENT(S):
- [Complete Streets Ordinance](#)
- [Comprehensive Plan Chapter 6 – Transportation Maps](#)
- [Comprehensive Plan Chapter 7 – Parks and Trails](#)
- [Complete Streets Policy Framework](#)
- [Best Practice Action 11.1 – Arlington](#)
- [Best Practice Action 11.1 – Edina](#)
- [Best Practice Action 11.1 – Lakeville](#)

Complete Streets

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A COMPLETE STREETS POLICY DEFINING A PROCESS TO ENSURE FUTURE STREET AND TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS, GIVE AMPLE CONSIDERATION TO ALL FUTURE USERS AND INCORPORATE FEATURES AS NECESSARY TO FULFILL THE CITY'S VISION OF COMPLETE STREETS

WHEREAS, Complete Streets as defined in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan means roadways planned, designed, and constructed to provide appropriate access to all users and promotes safe and efficient movement of people and goods, whether by car, truck, transit, assistive device, foot, or bicycle; 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 pedestrian and vehicular environments; and,

WHEREAS, increasing walking and bicycling offers improved health benefits for community members and makes Columbia Heights a more livable community; and,

WHEREAS, Complete Streets enhance safe walking and bicycling options for school-age children, in recognition of the Safe Routes to Schools program; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Columbia Heights recognizes the importance of street infrastructure and modifications such as sidewalks, crosswalks, shared-use paths, bicycle lanes, signage, and accessible curb ramps that enable safe, convenient, and comfortable travel for all users.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION I. PURPOSE
This policy defines a process to ensure future street and transportation projects, give ample consideration to all future users and incorporate features as necessary to fulfill the City's vision of Complete Streets. The City views each street and transportation project as unique. This means design features will likely differ from street to street, yet each street may still be considered "complete'.

SECTION II. COMPLETE STREET POLICY
This policy consists of narrative standards and a map illustrating focus corridors. The following guidelines should be followed to ensure that complete streets elements are incorporated into all transportation improvement projects (except as exempted herein):

1. Complete Streets elements should be incorporated into all public transportation projects, Capital Improvement Plan, or any other existing and future supporting plans.
2. At the start of any transportation project, the following factors shall be considered:
    - Current and anticipated land uses along the corridor as well as nearby designations (parks, library, post office, shopping centers, etc.)
    - Anticipated uses and their abilities anticipated to frequent the corridor based on the identified land uses, nearby destinations, and surrounding development.
    - Existing and anticipated transportation infrastructure that will interact with the subject corridor.

Complete Streets

- Stated public desires for specific transportation infrastructure in specified areas; such as public facilities, transit, regional transportation network, and commercial areas.
- General and specific guidance for the corridor in the City's Comprehensive Plan.
- Identifying the presence of gaps or barriers to active transportation and connectivity with existing street networks and seek out opportunities to enhance connectivity for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit.

3. Complete Streets elements that potentially address the agreed upon factors should be identified at the start of a project.
- Require new developments to provide interconnected street and sidewalk networks that connect to existing or planned streets or sidewalks on the perimeter of the development.
- Include consideration of the logical termini by mode when designing a bike lane or sidewalk.

4. Within the City of Columbia Heights, there is no singular design prescription for Complete Streets; each design is unique and responds to its neighborhood area or overall community context. A complete street may include but is not limited to one or more of the following elements:
- Designated walking facilities, including sidewalks, trails, and adequate roadway shoulders if other facilities are not feasible;
- Safe crossing facilities, including marked crosswalks and curb ramps;
- Signs, signals, and pavement markings that improve pedestrian visibility, safety and convenience;
- American with Disabilities Act compliant accessibility improvements, including curb ramps, detectable warnings and audible signals;
- Improvements to the quality of the pedestrian environment, including street trees, boulevard landscaping, plater stirps, street and sidewalk lighting, street furniture and other pedestrian amenities;
- On-street bicycle facilities
- Off-street bicycle facilities, including shared-use paths and bicycle trails;
- Bicycle parking/storage facilities
- Preservation of on-street parking
- Safe and effective lighting
- Adequate drainage facilities.

5. All identified elements may not be warranted based on the importance and limitations of the corridor but will include the following guidelines to direct the planning, funding, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of new and modified streets, sidewalks, paths, and trails while allowing for context-sensitive designs.
- Keep street pavements widths to the minimum necessary.
- Provide well-designed pedestrian accommodation in the form of sidewalks or shared-use pathways on all arterial and collector streets and on local connector streets as determined by context. Sidewalks shall also be required where streets abut a public school, public building, community playfield or neighborhood park. Termini will be determined by context.

- Provide frequent, convenient and safe street crossing. These may be at intersections designed to be pedestrian friendly, or at mid-block locations where needed and appropriate.
- Provide bicycle accommodation on all primary bike routes.
- Allocate right-of-way for boulevards.
- Allocate right-of-way for parking only when necessary and not in conflict with Living Streets principles.
- Consider streets as part of our natural ecosystem and incorporate landscaping, trees, rain gardens, and other features to improve air and water quality.

6. The ideal roadway design may not always be feasible due to either a physical constraint such as lack of right-of-way or an economic constraint such as unsustainable cost of improvement. Factors to consider in making this judgment may include but are not limited to:
   - Whether or not the corridor is within an identified area for complete streets as illustrated on the attached map;
   - Community desires;
   - Available and planned right-of-way;
   - Existing and future use context;
   - Existing improvements;
   - The number and types of users;
   - Existing and proposed utilities;
   - Parking needs
   - Available budget

7. When balancing competing interests, design decisions should favor the following:
   - Transportation infrastructure that provides safe access for as many appropriate modes of transportation as possible;
   - Transportation design that fits within the corridor's environmental context in that it preserves the scenic, historic, aesthetic, community, and environmental conditions of the location.

SECTION III. COMPLETE STREETS FOCUS CORRIDORS

The maps accompanying this narrative is intended to illustrate Complete Street focus areas. The following suggestions are provided for consideration as the Columbia Heights Complete Streets policy is administered:

- Downtown: Consider all ages and abilities. Design to accommodate delivery trucks and passenger autos at low speeds. Favor the pedestrian experience. Sidewalks should be maintained throughout the Downtown adjacent to streets. Pedestrian enhancements are desired for boulevard areas. Greenspace, pocket parks, and decorative lighting will enhance the pedestrian experience. Bike racks are necessary to allow bicyclists to park and walk through Downtown.
- Future expansion: Implement Complete Streets policy as development occurs. Consider all ages and abilities. Consider truck routes, passenger auto routes, sidewalks/trails, overhead street lighting, and boulevard trees when reviewing street designs.

Complete Streets

- Industrial: Consider all ages and abilities. Design to accommodate heavy trucks and delivery traffic. Provide for employees arriving/departing by various means including on foot, by bicycle, and other modes. Favor lighting for safety and security purposes.
- Residential: Consider all ages and abilities. Implement Complete Streets policy as street/utility reconstruction and/or sidewalk maintenance/construction plan is implemented. Truck traffic should be accommodated in designated truck routes. Vehicular traffic at slower speeds should be anticipated. Pedestrian accommodation should be considered on sidewalks adjacent to one or both sides of the street. Bikes may be accommodated in on-street lanes adjacent to collector streets. Lighting is anticipated overhead, typical street style. Boulevard trees incrementally spaced are recommended.

SECTION IV. BENCHMARKS AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The City will monitor and measure its performance relative to this policy, demonstrating success will include:

- Every street and neighborhood is a place where children, seniors, and disabled people can cross all streets safely and comfortably.
- No unfiltered street water flows into local waterways and storm water volume is reduced;
- Number of crashes or transportation-related injuries reported to the Police Department.
- Number and type of traffic safety complaints or requests.
- Resident responses to transportation related questions in resident surveys and post-project surveys.
- Number of trips by walking, bicycling and transit (if applicable) as measured before and after the project.
- Speed statistics of vehicles on local streets.
- Improving stormwater quality through encouragement and establishment of a rain garden program, reducing the impervious footprint, and meeting the 1" infiltration standard.
- Creating boulevard tree standards that provide benefits such as uptake and filtration of runoff, providing shade to reduce heating and cooling costs, filtering air pollutants.

SECTION V. EXEMPTIONS

Complete Street elements shall be considered and included in street construction, reconstruction, repaving and rehabilitation projects unless:

- 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;
- It is determined there is insufficient space to safely accommodate new facilities or such improvements create or do not address relatively high safety risks;
- Excessive and disproportionate cost of establishing a specific enhancement as part of a project; and/or
- Construction is not practically feasible or cost effective because of significant or adverse environmental impacts to streams, flood plains, remnants of native vegetation, wetlands,
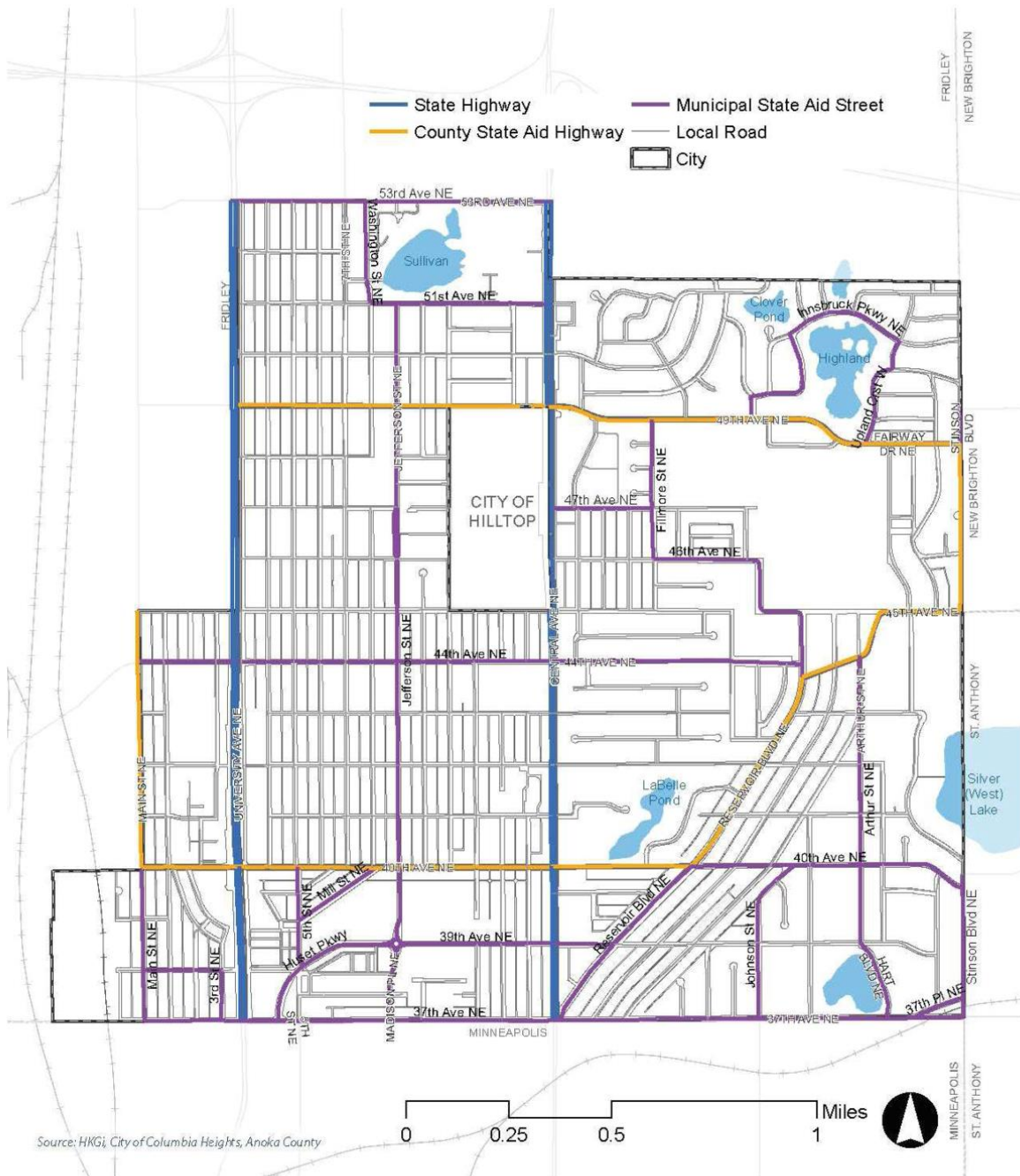
Complete Streets

steep slopes or other critical areas, or due to impacts on neighboring land uses (including impact from right-of-way acquisition).

Whereas exemptions occur, the City will seek alternative options as a means to accommodate users with whom the City was unable to initially accommodate.

FIGURE 6-1. JURISDICTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

Source: HKGi, City of Columbia Heights, Anoka County

Complete Streets

FIGURE 6-3. EXISTING ROADWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

University Avenue and Central Avenue are functionally classified as A-Minor Augmentors

Source: SRF Consulting Group, Inc., City of Columbia Heights, Anoka County

Complete Streets

FIGURE 6-6. EXISTING ROADWAY GEOMETRY

Legend:
— Two-Lane Roadway
— Four-Lane Roadway
☐ City

Source: HKGi, City of Columbia Heights, Anoka County
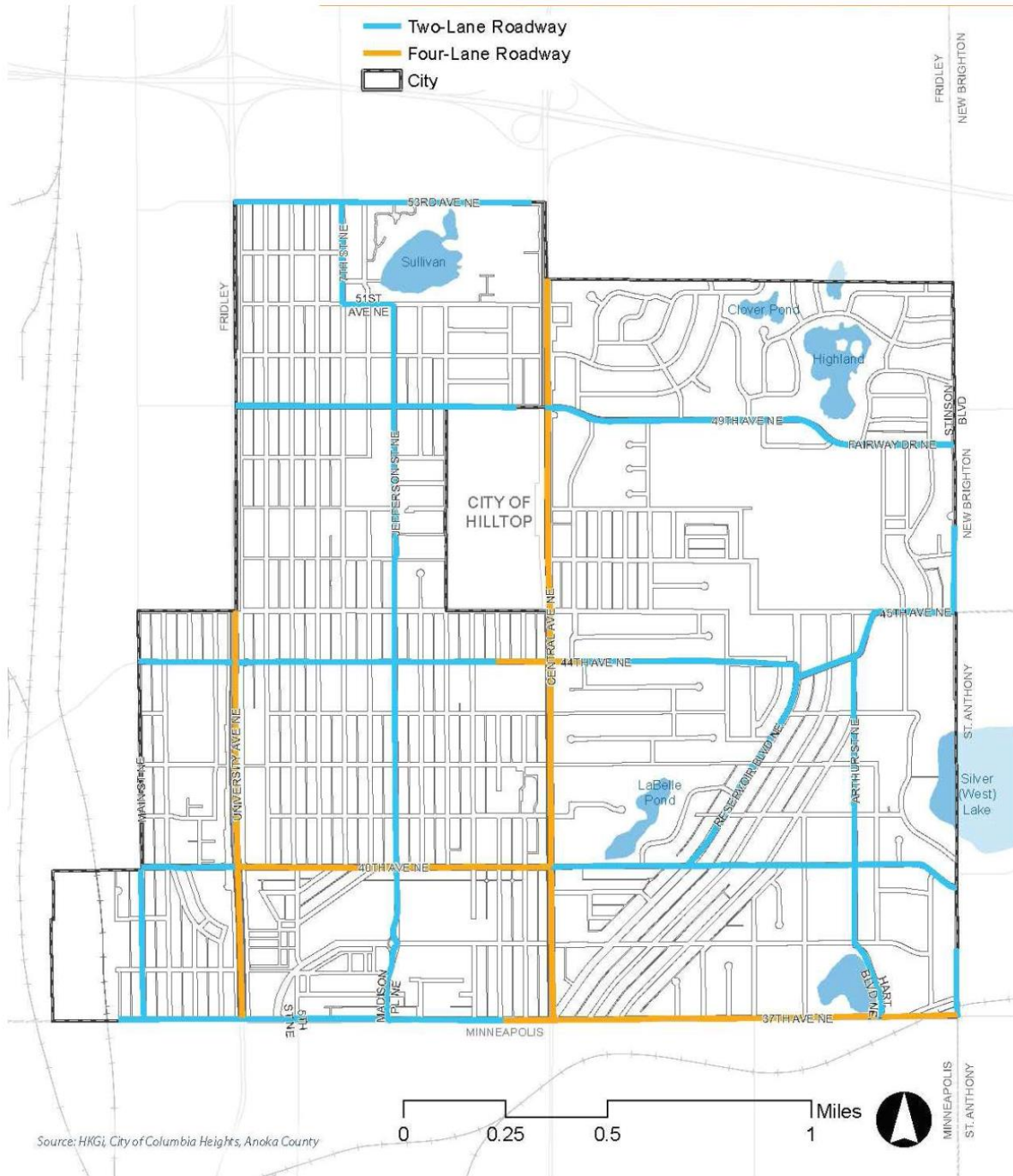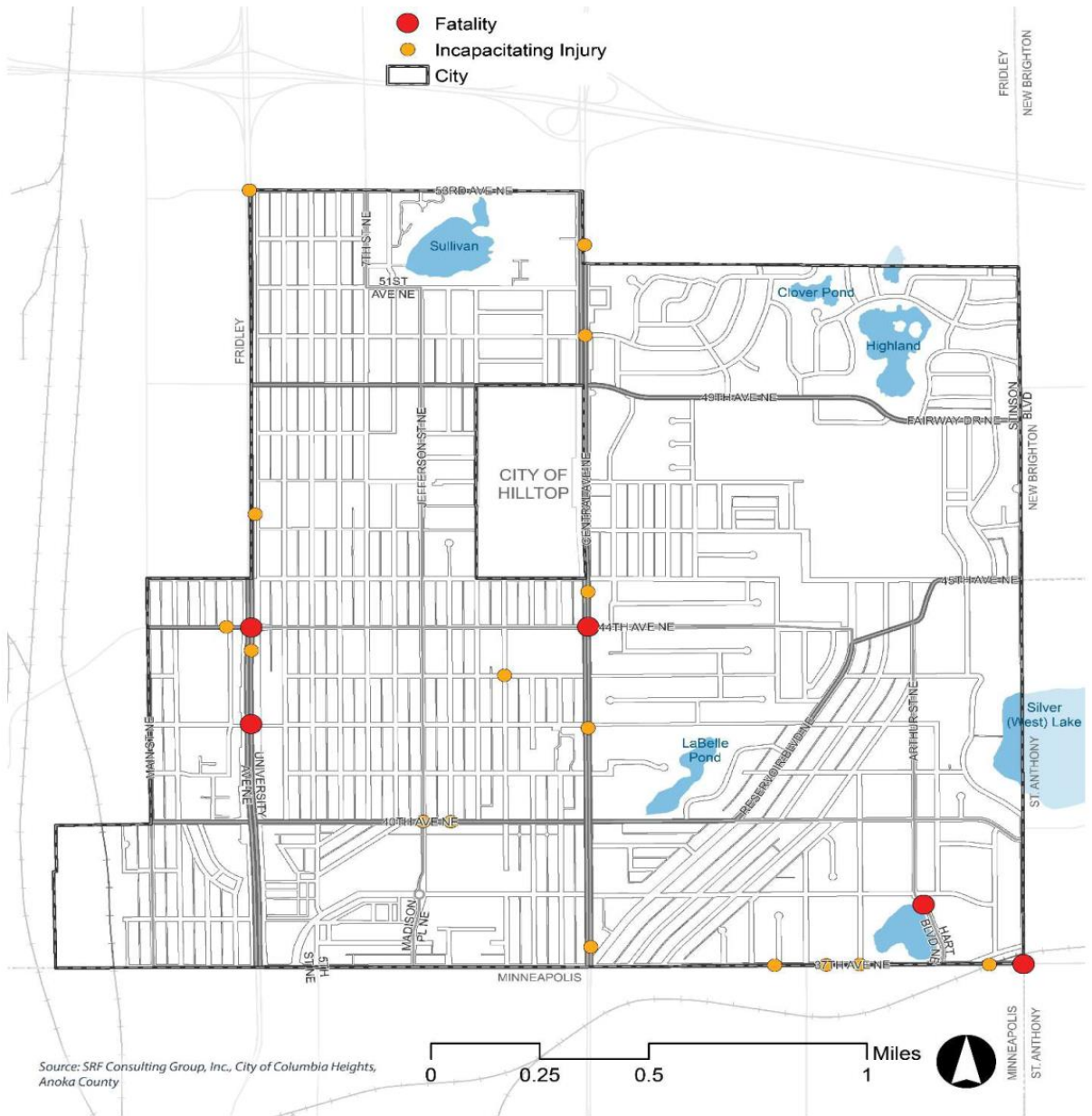
Complete Streets

FIGURE 6-9. HIGH SEVERITY CRASH LOCATIONS
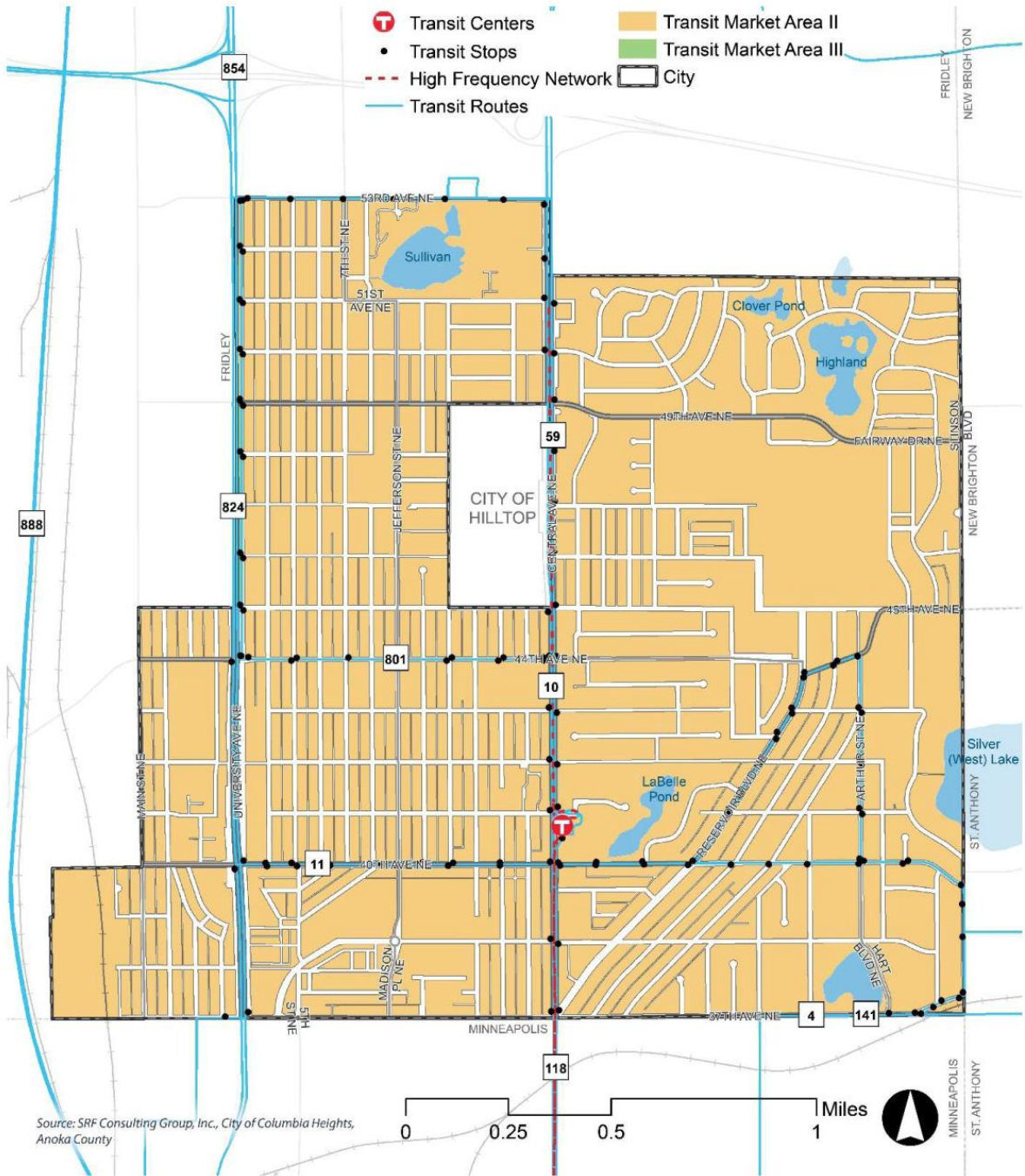

Source: SRF Consulting Group, Inc., City of Columbia Heights, Anoka County

TRANSPORTATION

Complete Streets

Another transit option in Columbia Heights inclues Transit Link. Transit Link is

Source: SRF Consulting Group, Inc., City of Columbia Heights, Anoka County

Complete Streets

FIGURE 6-11. BUS RAPID TRANSIT BUS CONCEPT
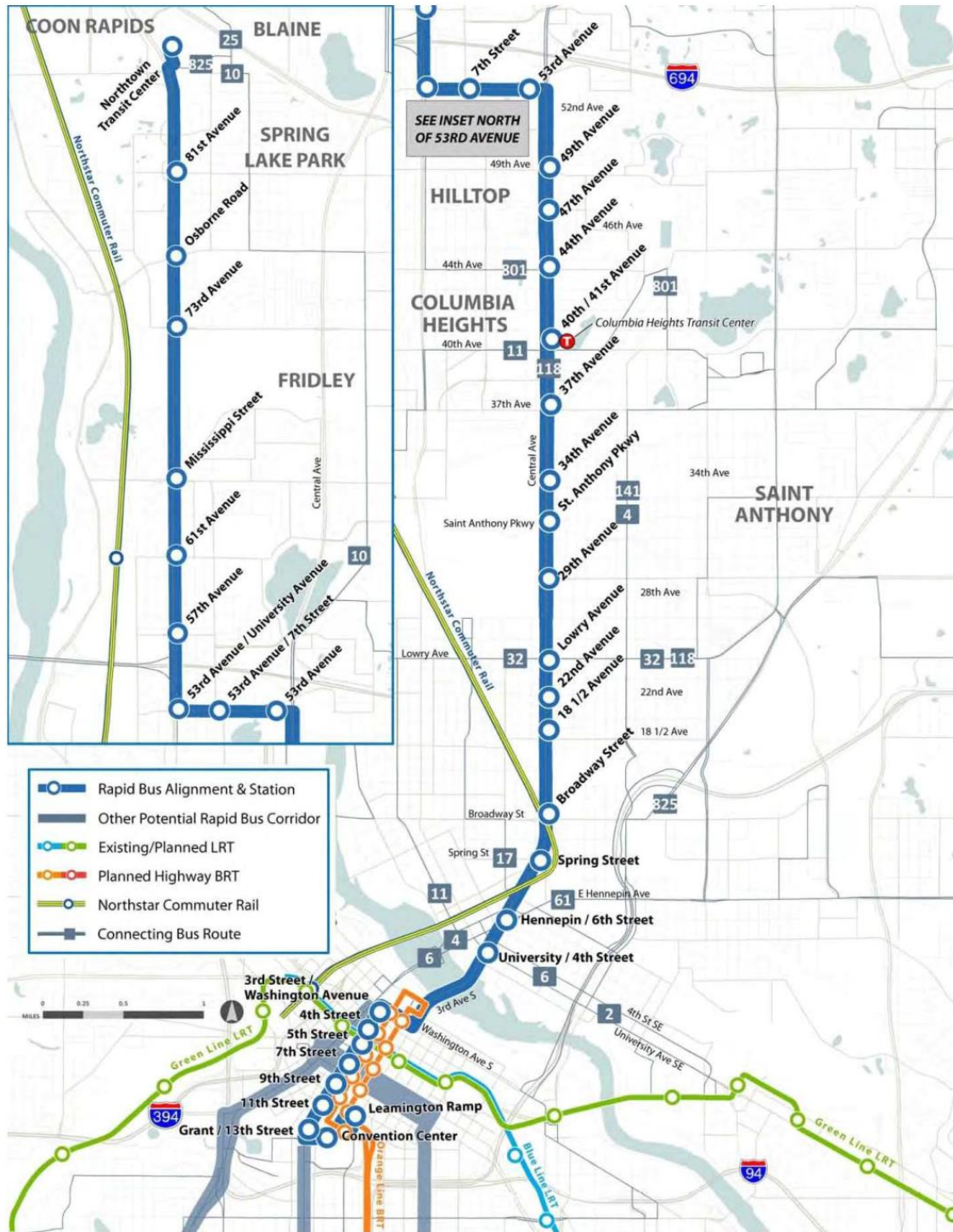
Source: Arterial Transitway Corridors Study

Complete Streets

FIGURE 6-12. BICYCLE AND TRAIL FACILITIES

Legend:
— County Trail
— Existing On-Road Bike Facility
Tier I RBTN Corridor
Tier II RBTN Corridor
City Parks
City

Source: SRF Consulting Group, Inc., City of Columbia Heights, Anoka County
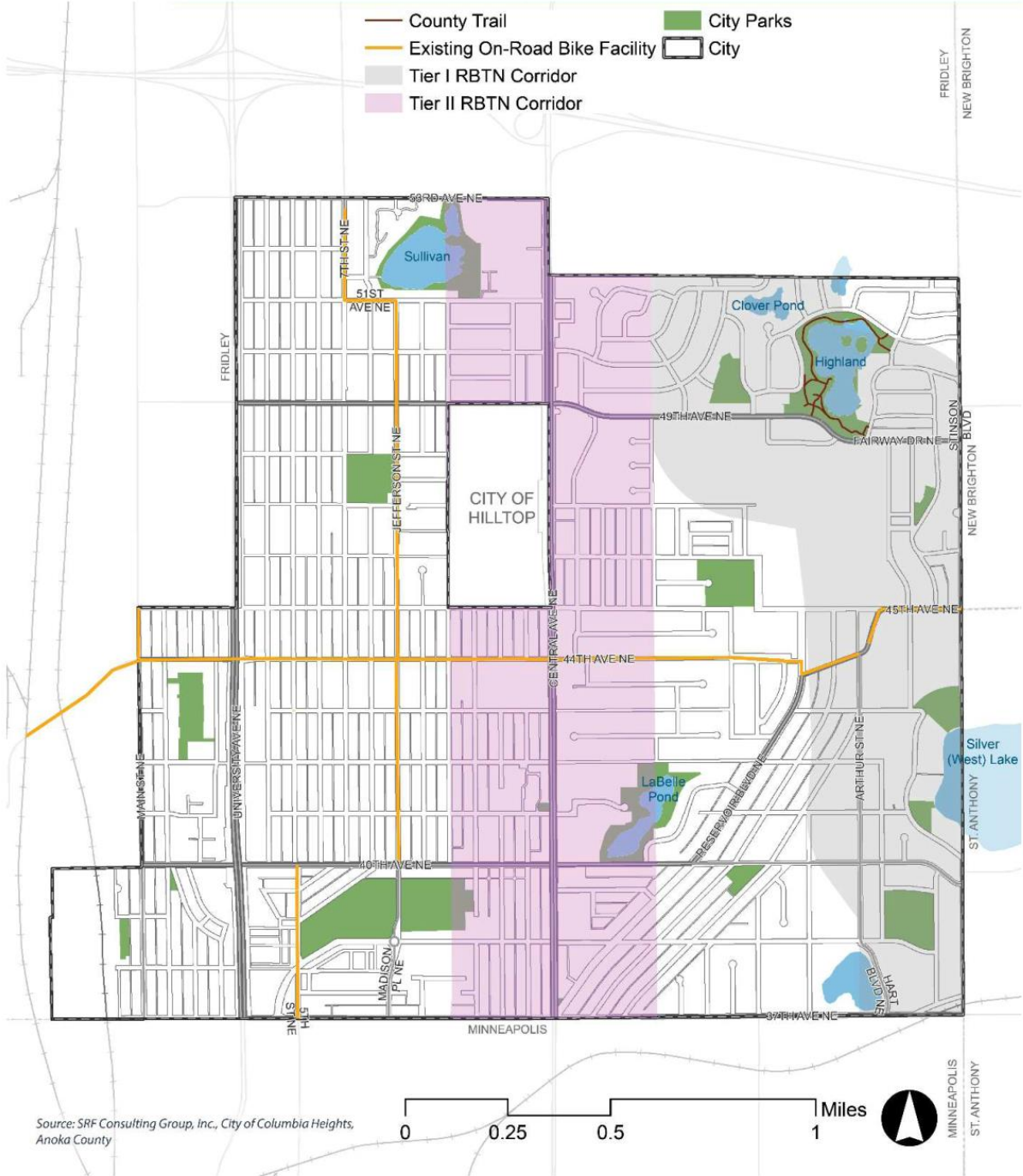
Complete Streets

FIGURE 7-1. CITY PARKS
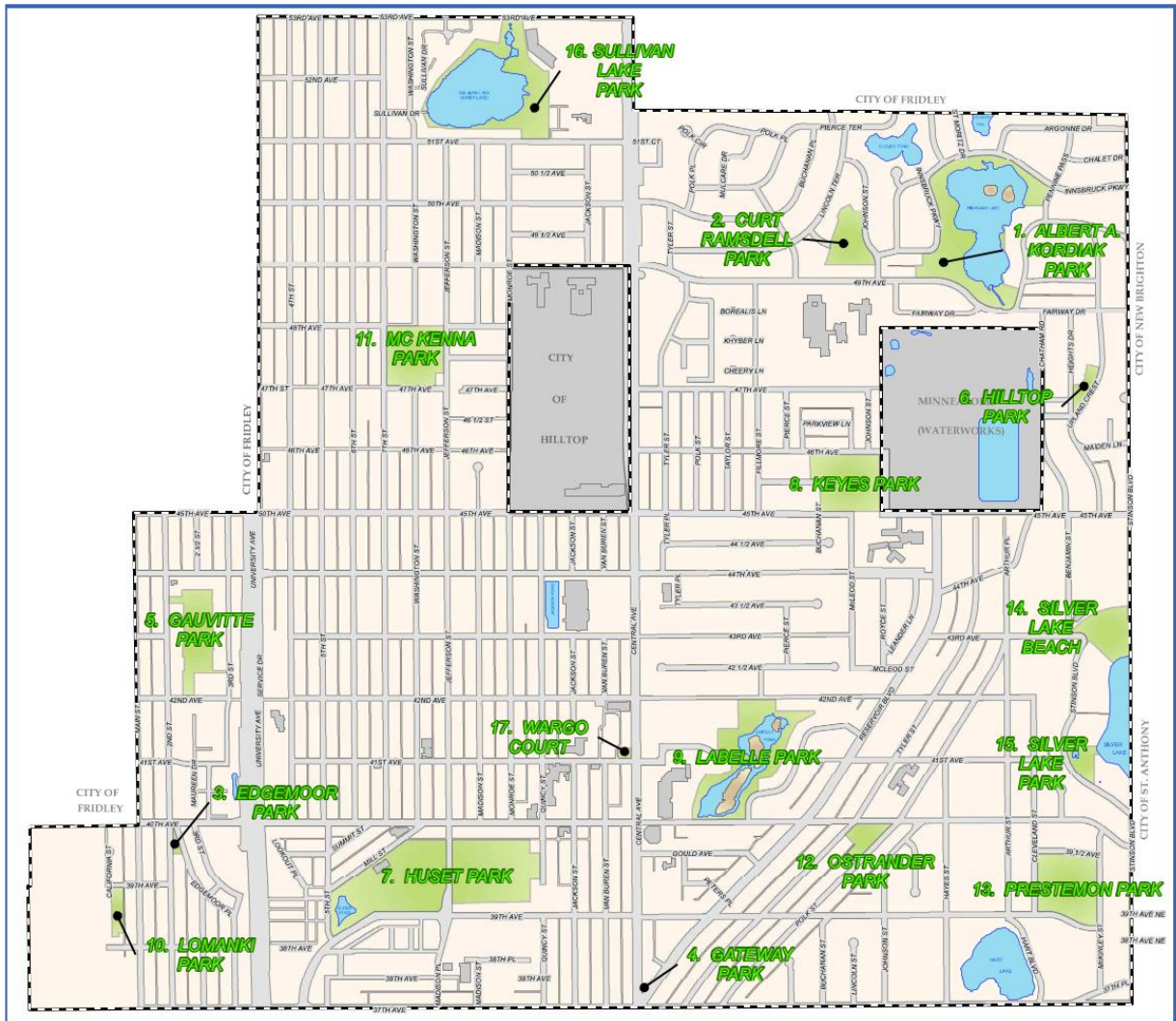
Source: City of Columbia Heights

Complete Streets

FIGURE 7-2. RECOMMENDED BIKE ROUTE NETWORK
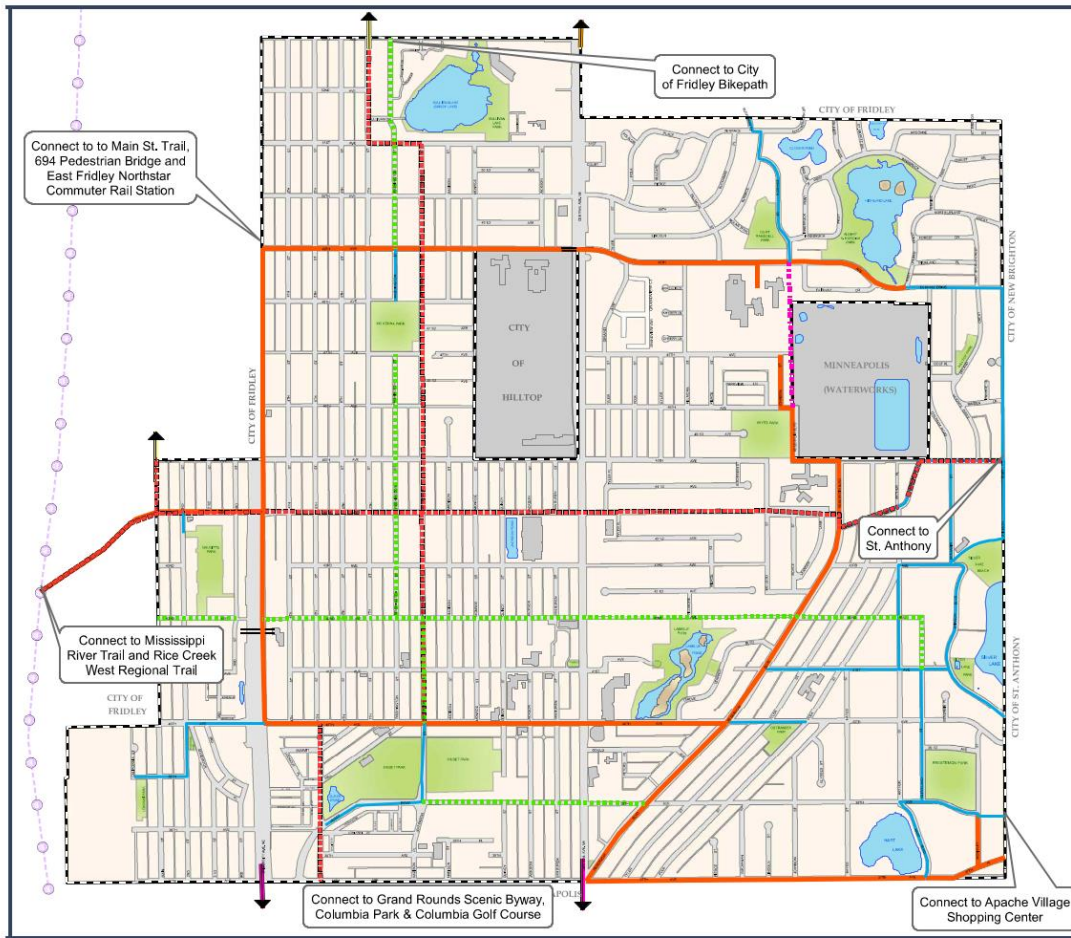
Source: City of Columbia Heights

Type

▬▬ Ped and Bike Overpass
➡ Connection Over/Under I-694
➡ Connection Over/Under I-694 - Heavy Traffic
➡ Connection to Grand Rounds Scenic Byway
▬▬ Primary City Trail Loop
▬▬ Secondary Trail Connections
▪▪▪ Primary City Trail Loop System Gap
▪▪▪ Existing Bike Route on Road
▪▪▪ Secondary Route to Consider
○─○ Commuter Rail

Future connections into adjacent communities are subject to change based on future coordination and planning efforts.

The **Complete Streets**
Policy Framework

Writing a strong Complete Streets policy

Once someone gets familiar with the basic concept of Complete Streets—streets designed and maintained to serve the needs of everyone—the next step is understanding the role that a policy plays in getting there. So what exactly goes into an effective and strong Complete Streets policy? There are 10 discrete elements identified by the National Complete Streets Coalition.

1. **Establishes commitment and vision**
2. **Prioritizes underinvested and underserved communities**
3. **Applies to all projects and phases**
4. **Allows only clear exceptions**
5. **Mandates coordination**
6. **Adopts excellent design guidance**
7. **Requires proactive land-use planning**
8. **Measures progress**
9. **Sets criteria for choosing projects**
10. **Creates a plan for implementation**

If you or your community is aiming to begin the hard but vital work of passing a policy, this short guide is the best place to start. Each of the 10 elements are covered in detail on the following pages, including the scoring details used to evaluate the potential effectiveness of a Complete Streets policy. (New to Complete Streets? For more of the basics on the concept and the Coalition, please visit completestreets.org)

A brief history of the Complete Streets policy framework

Having coined the term "Complete Streets" in the early 2000s, the nascent **National Complete Streets Coalition** succeeded in popularizing a fresh approach to street design that prioritizes making streets safe for people of all ages and abilities, however they get around. But by the mid-2010s, as pedestrian fatalities increased to historic levels, the Coalition realized that many of the policies being passed were failing to have the desired effect of making streets safer. Most alarmingly, the crisis of people being struck and injured or killed while walking or biking was not felt evenly—people of color and people in lower-income areas were being killed disproportionately.

There were two primary reasons that the policies weren't having the fullest effect: **First**, the early versions of these policies lacked accountability measures to ensure that the Complete Streets policies were fully put into practice. **Second**, most policies failed to specify and require the incredibly difficult work of institutionalizing the approach, such as training agency staff, traffic engineers, and project managers.

It's worth noting that Complete Streets represents a massive paradigm shift from a status quo that prioritizes moving vehicles quickly at almost any cost. And these limitations in the early policies also came against a backdrop of the federal approach to street design that continued to prioritize speed above safety. This is why, in addition to our primary role encouraging strong local, state, or federal Complete Streets policies, as part of a broader team within Smart Growth America, we work

more expansively on improving safety by pressing for changes to the transportation design guides, models, and measures that contribute to producing streets that are dangerous by design.

While the Coalition succeeded in putting this vital, brand new concept on the map, fostering a powerful movement from coast to coast, and encouraging local and state governments to reconsider their approaches to street design, it was also time to re-evaluate what should go into a strong Complete Streets policy.

So in 2018, the Coalition produced an improved framework for Complete Streets policies that requires binding language and more accountability to ensure that any policy produces tangible changes and prioritizes the needs of underinvested and underserved communities.

The Complete Streets Policy Framework you read here, produced in 2023, represents the current best practices for creating a strong policy that can be implemented at any level of governance. It's the go-to policy framework to guide any community who wants to develop their own policies.

The full content of this document is also available in a series of sharable, individual posts online: https://smartgrowthamerica.org/10-elements-of-complete-streets/

The Best Complete Streets Policies
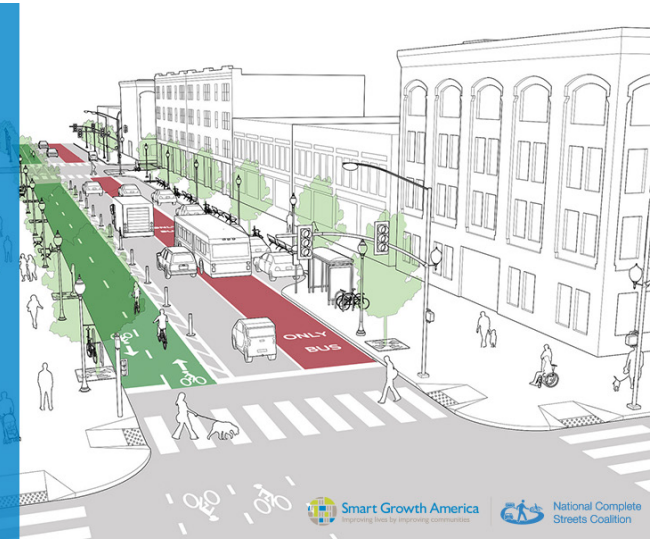
The Best Complete Streets Policies, issued regularly by the National Complete Streets Coalition, scores all policies using this 10-element framework to evaluate and uplift the best Complete Streets policies from across the country which can serve as a model for other communities.

https://smartgrowthamerica.org/best-complete-streets

ELEMENT **1.**

Establishes commitment and vision

How and why does the community want to complete its streets? This specifies a clear statement of intent to create a complete, connected network and consider the needs of all users.

Element #1: A strong Complete Streets policy establishes commitment and a vision

How and why does a community want to complete its streets? Clear answers to that question—an unmistakable and binding statement of intent—are the vital first element for creating a complete, connected network of streets that considers the needs of all users.

Every policy is an opportunity for a jurisdiction to make its intentions and motivations clear to the public as they craft, develop, and prioritize their rationale for adopting a Complete Streets policy. No two communities are identical, and no two Complete Streets policies should be exactly the same either.

Why is this element integral to a strong Complete Streets policy?

Every successful effort to do something markedly different—whether that's a new approach to street design or designing a longer-lasting light bulb—starts with the "why" and the "how." Starting a policy with a clear statement of intent and commitment to Complete Streets accomplishes several vital purposes: It makes the intentions crystal clear to a public who can provide accountability. It shapes or directs the community's approach to its transportation practices, policies, and decision-making processes. And it provides a necessary foundation for the rest of the policy.

What does this element look like in practice?

In practical terms, a commitment and vision means that the policy uses clear, binding, and enforceable language like "shall" or "must" in the legislative text itself, rather than words like "may" or "considers."

In the earliest years of this movement, a large share of the Complete Streets policies adopted across the country were non-binding resolutions. This was not good enough for a community that truly wanted to build Complete Streets. Policies that are binding and not just "optional" are proven to make a tangible difference in what gets built, how, and where.

The policy must clearly acknowledge the need for building a complete, connected, comprehensive transportation network and explicitly state the tangible benefits of ensuring all people can comfortably travel to and from their destinations safely, in a reasonable amount of time, without breaking the bank.

Most notably, and improving upon the standards that policies were held to a decade ago, equity—which includes the consideration of race, income, and physical ability—should be a core motivation for pursuing a Complete Streets policy.

The policies that receive the maximum point value from this area also mention several transportation modes and specifically call out biking and walking. Why those modes specifically? Because a Complete Streets policy is both about prioritizing the most vulnerable users of the transportation system (people walking, rolling, and biking), and fostering

a paradigm shift away from prioritizing speedy car travel, the status quo of transportation planning for the last 60-plus years.

Complete Streets policies also work best when the policy reflects a community's own unique vision and needs. While each policy calls for a commitment to diverse users and abilities, communities should also articulate their own particular visions of economic, equitable, sustainable, healthy, safe, and livable futures. The process of writing and adopting a Complete Streets policy provides a valuable opportunity for the community to come together and articulate their deeply held values and a shared vision, building a foundation of support to advocate for the longer-term changes that a strong policy requires. By setting out a clear vision and committing to realizing it, communities can create better policies that reach their most pressing, unique needs—and their most vulnerable populations.

Policy scoring details

In our framework for evaluating and scoring Complete Streets policies, this element is worth a total of **12 out of 100** possible points. This element is the third most valuable of the 10 in part because it provides a foundation for the other elements and establishes the clear and binding commitment by the jurisdiction to institutionalize a Complete Streets approach. Without binding language, the other elements lose their potential value.

- **3 points:** The policy is clear in intent, stating firmly the jurisdiction's commitment to a Complete Streets approach, using "shall" or "must" language. This needs to be in the body of the legislation, not the "whereas" statement.
  - (1 point) – The policy states the jurisdiction "may" or "considers" Complete Streets in their transportation planning and decision-making processes.
  - (0 points) – The policy language is indirect with regard to their intent to apply a Complete Streets approach, using language such as "consider Complete Streets principles or elements."
- **2 points:** mentions the need to create a complete, connected, network.
  - (0 points) No mention.
- **2 points:** specifies at least one motivation or benefit of pursuing Complete Streets.
  - (0 points) No mention.
- **1 point:** specifies equity as an additional motivation or benefit of pursuing Complete Streets.
  - (0 points) No mention.
- **4 points:** specifies modes, with a base of four modes, two of which must be biking and walking.
  - (0 points) Policy mentions fewer than four modes and/or omits biking or walking.

ELEMENT 2.

Prioritizes underinvested and underserved communities

Requires jurisdictions to define who are their most underinvested and underserved communities and prioritize them throughout.

Element #2: A strong Complete Streets policy prioritizes underinvested and underserved communities

Building a complete and connected transportation network requires investing in places and people that have not received investment. The strongest Complete Streets policies will specifically prioritize underinvested and underserved communities based on the jurisdiction's composition and objectives.
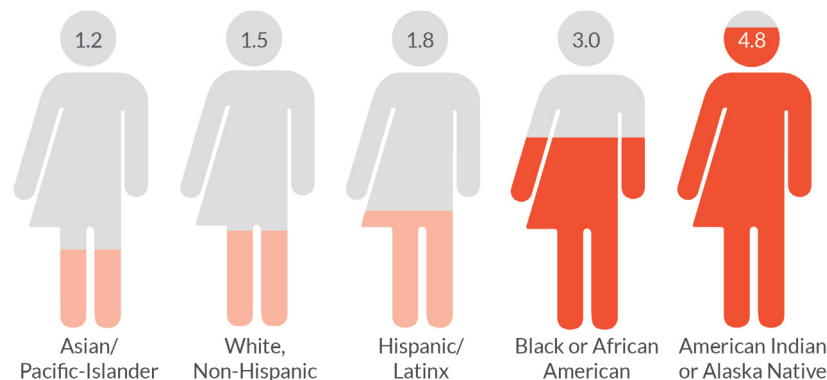
Why is this element integral to a strong Complete Streets policy?

A core goal of the Complete Streets approach is to create a complete and connected transportation network. And a network is only as strong as its weakest points—its gaps. In order to achieve a connected network, a jurisdiction needs to allocate its often-limited resources most efficiently and equitably: by first focusing on these gaps. The gaps are likely to be places that have been systematically under-invested in because the people living there were discriminated against, ignored, or deprioritized. The strongest Complete Streets policies will therefore first fund and address gaps in their network.

The U.S.'s history of systemic discrimination, oppression, and exclusion, especially based on race, income, and ability, is part of the transportation context and cannot be ignored. For example, inadequate transportation safety investments in predominantly Black communities stem from government-sanctioned segregation and redlining practices. This has resulted in white neighborhoods receiving disproportionately larger benefits of safe, convenient, reliable, affordable infrastructure,

while Black communities continue to suffer from underinvestment. At the national level, we see certain populations disproportionately represented in traffic fatalities—people of color, particularly Black and Native Americans; older adults; and people walking in low-income neighborhoods are struck and killed at much higher rates than other populations.

Pedestrian deaths per 100,000 by race & ethnicity (2016-2020)

1.2	1.5	1.8	3.0	4.8
Asian/Pacific-Islander	White, Non-Hispanic	Hispanic/Latinx	Black or African American	American Indian or Alaska Native

From Dangerous by Design. https://smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-by-design/

All people should have options for getting around that are safe, convenient, reliable, affordable, accessible, and timely regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, income, gender identity, immigration status, age, ability, languages spoken, or level of access to a personal vehicle. This requires focusing attention on the communities and places that have not been appropriately or adequately invested in.

Pedestrian fatalities per 100,000 people by census tract income
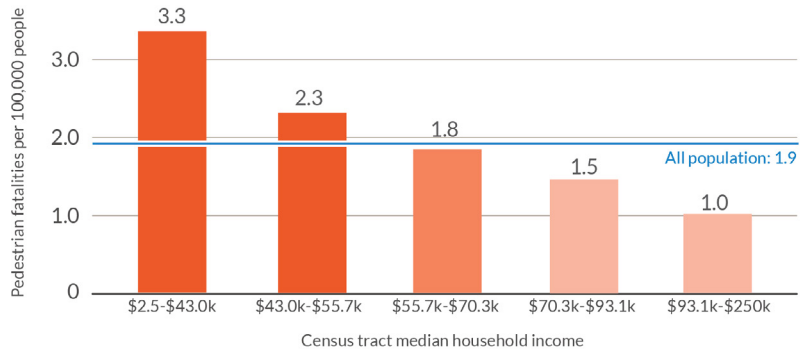
From Dangerous by Design. https://smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-by-design/

This policy element holds jurisdictions accountable for including equity in their plans based on the composition and objectives of the community. The communities that are disproportionately impacted by transportation policies and practices will vary depending on the context of the jurisdiction.

What does this element look like in practical terms?

The jurisdictions with the strongest Complete Streets policies will do two things: 1) define their priority groups (the communities or areas that have been underinvested and underserved), and 2) prioritize those communities.

Defining who you consider your underinvested and underserved communities is crucial to a strong policy. For example, It's one thing to say that you are going to prioritize certain areas or communities, but

if you aren't clear on who those communities are, those reading your policies will come to their own conclusion on who they think should be included within that group. It's important to be specific and qualitatively or quantitatively define which groups are included in the definition of underinvested and underserved communities. Below are some examples of qualitative and quantitative definitions.

- **Qualitative:** older adults, people with disabilities, specific neighborhoods with historic disinvestment, low-income neighborhoods
- **Quantitative:** census tract(s) with X% of people below the poverty line, X% of individuals with a disability, X% of households without access to a vehicle

In order to remedy inequities, this policy element requires the jurisdiction to equitably invest in its transportation network by ensuring underinvested and underserved communities are considered above and beyond others.

Policy scoring details

In our framework for evaluating and scoring Complete Streets policies, this element is worth a total of **9 out of 100** possible points.

- **4 points:** The policy establishes an accountable, measurable definition for priority groups or places. This definition may be quantitative (e.g. neighborhoods with X% of the population without access to a vehicle or where the median income is below a certain threshold) or qualitative (e.g. naming specific neighborhoods).
  - (0 points) No mention.

- **5 points:** The policy language requires the jurisdiction to "prioritize" underinvested and underserved communities. This could include neighborhoods with insufficient infrastructure or neighborhoods with a concentration of people who are disproportionately represented in traffic fatalities.
  - (3 points) Policy states its intent to "benefit" people in the underinvested and underserved communities, as relevant to the jurisdiction.
  - (1 point) Policy mentions or considers any of the neighborhoods or users above.
  - (0 points) No mention.

ELEMENT 3.

Applies to all projects and phases

Instead of a limited set of projects, the policy applies to all new projects, retrofit or reconstruction projects, maintenance projects, and ongoing operations.

Element #3: A strong Complete Streets policy applies to all transportation projects, in every phase

To which projects or streets should a Complete Streets policy apply? If the policy is a strong one, then it dictates a holistic approach to every transportation project, in every place, in every phase of work. This means the application of a policy will also look different based on context.

Why is this element integral to a strong Complete Streets policy?

There are two big reasons that our policy framework includes this third element requiring that any policy applies to all projects and phases.

First, Complete Streets is not just a set of projects, it's a holistic approach and process to the transportation system, which by definition, applies to all kinds of projects. Getting to Complete Streets requires more than just isolated projects here and there. It requires building a complete network of streets that are safe for all users. Doing this demands a new paradigm to the entire transportation system, so a strong policy will be applied to every project, not just the "convenient" ones, for example. (Exceptions may sometimes exist, but they are limited. Read more in element #4.)

Second, Complete Streets are never just an add-on component or a design feature tacked on at the end of the same old conventional road-building project. The strongest, most effective policies apply to every phase of any project's development, including planning, design,

construction, operation, and maintenance. Instead of, for example, applying Complete Streets elements after a project's purpose has already been scoped or defined, such as tacking on some features late in the design process.

What does this element look like in practical terms?

The policy element is very clear that every transportation project—including every maintenance operation—accounts for the needs of all modes of transportation and users of the road network.

Instead of applying only to certain projects or a narrowly defined set of projects, the strongest Complete Streets policy *requires* the consideration of all users for all new, retrofit/reconstruction, maintenance, and ongoing projects. (A weaker policy merely *considers* these projects as *opportunities* for applying these principles.) This might mean integrating a Complete Streets approach into existing maintenance schedules and using basic repaving work to improve the overall network, rather than just waiting on large, expensive, capital projects. While the requirement to consider all users does not mean all modes will be equally accommodated in the final project, it does mean that motor vehicles are not presumed as the primary mode and it will demonstrate a foundational culture shift in the department or agency.

Whether a repaving or more expansive construction project, this work can also be disruptive to people using the street. Under the typical status quo, the needs of people outside of cars are generally not carefully considered or accounted for when the right-of-way gets ripped up or temporarily blocked. That's why this element also specifies the need

to provide safe and routine accommodations during any construction or repair work that infringes on the right of way and/or sidewalk. E.g, a city's Complete Streets policy would codify a requirement that when a sidewalk is closed for adjacent construction, the property owner/developer must provide a sidewalk that's comparable to the one being temporarily removed. In an urban area that might mean a sheltered sidewalk to protect people from nearby construction. In a less dense suburban or rural area, that might just mean an adjacent sidewalk of the same width and quality.

Policy scoring details

In our framework for evaluating and scoring Complete Streets policies, this element is worth **10 out of 100** possible points.

For municipality/county policies:
- **4 points:** Policy requires all new construction and reconstruction/retrofit projects to account for the needs of all modes of transportation and all users of the road network.
  - (1 point) Policy considers or mentions these projects as opportunities to apply this policy.
  - (0 points) No mention.
- **4 points:** Policy requires all maintenance projects and ongoing operations, such as resurfacing, repaving, restriping, rehabilitation, or other types of changes to the transportation system to account for the needs of all modes of transportation and all users of the road network.
  - (1 point) Policy considers or mentions these projects as opportunities to apply this policy.
  - (0 points) No mention.

For state/MPO policies:
- **4 points:** Policy requires all new construction and reconstruction/retrofit projects receiving state or federal funding to account for the needs of all modes of transportation and all users of the road network.
  - (1 point) Policy considers or mentions these projects as opportunities to apply this policy.
  - (0 points) No mention.
- **4 points:** Policy requires all maintenance projects and ongoing operations, such as resurfacing, repaving, restriping, rehabilitation, or other types of changes to the transportation system receiving state or federal funding, to account for the needs of all modes of transportation and all users of the road network.
  - (1 point) Policy considers or mentions these projects as opportunities to apply this policy.
  - (0 points) No mention.

For all policies:
- **2 points:** Policy specifies the need to provide accommodations for all modes of transportation to continue to use the road safely and efficiently during any construction or repair work that infringes on the right of way and/or sidewalk.

ELEMENT 4.

Allows only clear exceptions

Any exceptions must be specific, with a clear procedure that requires high-level approval and public notice prior to exceptions being granted.

Element #4: A strong Complete Streets policy allows only clear exceptions

Complete Streets policies are comprehensive and apply to all streets and in all phases of all projects, but there are certain circumstances where exceptions can—and should—be made. But those exceptions must be narrowly and clearly defined, as well as require public notice prior to approval by a high-level official.

Why is this element integral to a strong Complete Streets policy?

Complete Streets policies should be comprehensive and apply to all transportation projects in a community, but in certain circumstances, exceptions can—and should—be made. This might seem counterintuitive, especially considering that the strongest Complete Streets policies apply to all projects and all phases (element #3.) But including specific, clear, and limited exceptions actually increases the strength of your policy because it **prevents discretionary exceptions in the future, helping to ensure equitable implementation.**

By having a clear and specific list of exceptions in the policy, everyone—transportation staff, policymakers, powerful community members—is limited to that list only. This means no backroom dealings. It means that no one has the discretionary power to exclude certain projects from the applicability of the Complete Streets policy. And residents can hold agency staff and policymakers accountable for adhering to the clearly defined exceptions. In other words, the Complete Streets policy will apply except in the very specific situations listed in the policy.

> **"The only way exceptions do not turn into a big black hole is by bringing a lot of sunlight to it. So exceptions are used when necessary—not just to bypass the policy. But if you don't make it clear what you're trying to do and involve the public in the decision then the exception can be a process by which the intent of your policy is completely undermined."**
>
> – Beth Osborne, Vice President of Transportation at Smart Growth America.

What does this element look like in practical terms?

The jurisdictions with the strongest Complete Streets policies 1) clearly specify a list of exceptions (ones that don't stray from the National Complete Streets Coalition's approved list of exceptions,) 2) require that any proposed exceptions are made publicly available *prior to* approval, and 3) designate someone responsible for reviewing and approving exceptions.

Below is the list of the Coalition's approved exceptions. The Coalition considers these "approved exceptions" because they have limited potential to weaken the intention of the policy. These exceptions follow the Federal Highway Administration's guidance on accommodating bicycle and pedestrian travel and/or identified best practices frequently used in existing Complete Streets policies:

- Accommodation is not necessary on corridors where specific users are prohibited, such as interstate freeways or pedestrian malls. Exclusion of certain users on particular corridors should not exempt projects from accommodating other permitted users.
- Cost of accommodation is excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use.
- A documented absence of current and future need.
- Emergency repairs such as a water main leak that require an immediate, rapid response; however, temporary accommodations for all modes should still be made. Depending on the severity of the repairs, opportunities to improve multimodal access should still be considered where possible.
- Transit accommodations are not required where there is no existing or planned transit service.
- Routine maintenance of the transportation network that does not change the roadway geometry or operations, such as mowing, sweeping, and spot repair.
- Where a reasonable and equivalent project along the same corridor is already programmed to provide facilities exempted from the project at hand.

In addition to clearly defining appropriate exceptions, the policy must outline a clear process for reviewing and approving them, providing clarity to the staff charged with implementing the policy.

- This includes making the proposed exceptions publicly available *prior to* their review and potential approval. This could mean posting proposed exceptions to a public website that allows comments or including space for discussion on proposed exceptions during public meetings.

- It also includes specifying who will be responsible for granting approved exceptions. Ideally, this individual is a part of senior management.

In the strongest policies, everyone knows what the exceptions are, how they are reviewed and approved, who is responsible for reviewing and approving them, and a clear path for the public or other agencies to offer comments—improving transparency and accountability.

Policy scoring details

In our framework for evaluating and scoring Complete Streets policies, this element is worth a total of **8 out of 100** possible.

- **4 points:** Policy includes one or more of the above exceptions—and no others.
    - (2 points) Policy includes any other exceptions, including those that weaken the intent of the Complete Streets policy.
    - (0 points) No mention.
- **2 points:** Policy states who is responsible for approving exceptions.
- **2 points:** Policy requires public notice prior to granting an exception in some form. This could entail a public meeting or an online posting with opportunity for comment.

ELEMENT 5.

Mandates coordination
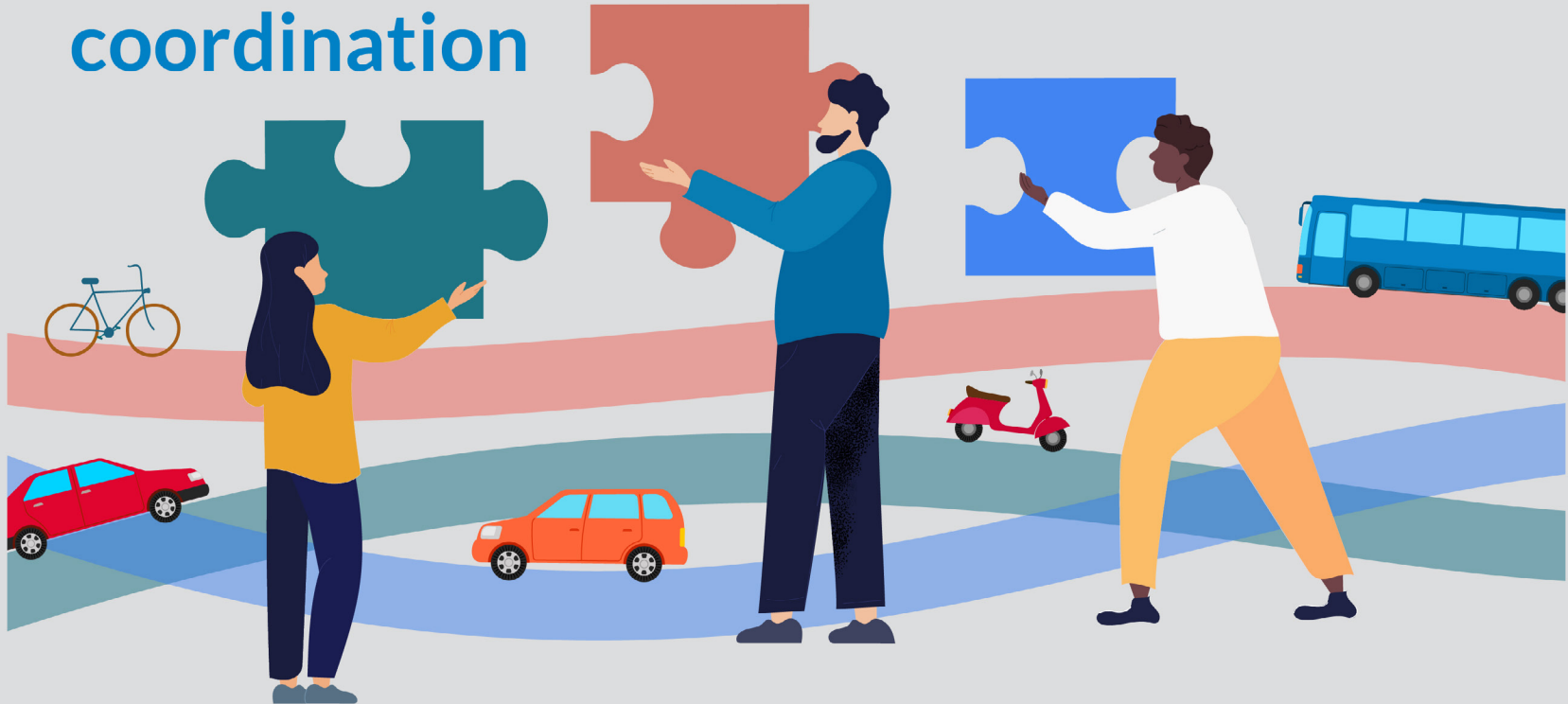
Requires private developers to comply, and interagency coordination between government departments and partner agencies.

Element #5: A strong Complete Streets policy requires coordination between jurisdictions, agencies, and departments

Any number of agencies—city, county, metro region, or state—may be responsible for the streets and sidewalks, often with overlapping authority. This is why the strongest Complete Streets policies clearly define who is responsible, what level of coordination is required, and even when or how outside parties must comply.

Why is this element integral to a strong Complete Streets policy?

While some streets have clear ownership by a single agency, it's rarely that straightforward. For example, the state manages a street that's intersected by city streets. What happens when new crosswalks are planned? Or you have a metro planning organization that doles out federal money to the city that actually owns and maintains the streets. Or a private developer who controls a portion of the sidewalk (or even a street) through a new development surrounded by other city-owned streets.

These overlapping authorities can make it difficult to create a true network of Complete Streets rather than just a patchwork. But a strong policy will clearly define and regulate coordination and cooperation to ensure a Complete Streets approach is used on every project, especially when those projects cross or implicate multiple jurisdictions or agencies. As an example, San Jose's (CA) policy says they will "work in coordination with other departments, agencies, and jurisdictions to maximize opportunities for Complete Streets, connectivity, and cooperation."

What does this element look like in practical terms?

There are really just two main components in the scoring for this element, depending on whether or not the policy is intensely local (city, county) or less so (state, metro), since a city has limited ability to dictate terms to their state DOT, though they can still establish their own commitment to coordination. At the local level, the focus is requiring private developers to comply with the Complete Streets policy to prevent gaps in the broader network of Complete Streets. For instance, in order for private developers to move forward with a zoning or building permit, they should also be required to address how they will incorporate Complete Streets into the project being reviewed, if applicable.

At the state and metro level, it's largely about incentives within the policy to steer a greater share of that funding to projects that account for the needs of all modes and users. States (and metro areas to a lesser degree) control the lion's share of all federal transportation funding. And so a state- or metro-level policy gets all five points if the policy makes it clear that projects that account for the needs of all modes and users will be prioritized for funding. (Often this happens by receiving extra weight in the scoring process to decide which projects are included in the state- or metro-level transportation plan. At the metro level, this is the Transportation Improvement Plan, which is a list of projects that are actually in the pipeline to receive funds and get built.)

The second component for all policies is a requirement for agencies *within* a jurisdiction to coordinate and bring their other plans into alignment with the vision for building Complete Streets, like requiring a city's zoning or housing department to coordinate with the transportation department. Every transportation problem is also a land-use issue, and vice versa, so requiring this coordination is vital for ensuring that the benefits of having safe streets for walking or biking are maximized by the land-use decisions on or near those streets.

Policy scoring details

The best Complete Streets policies clearly define the role and responsibility of each particular agency and require, rather than just encourage, cooperation and coordination. Using the right tool at the right scale ensures that agencies and jurisdictions use their resources effectively, minimizes opportunities for variances from the policy, and creates a framework for better decision-making amongst everybody involved. Doing this well also builds trust and the kinds of relationships that are essential to building a complete network.

In our framework for evaluating and scoring Complete Streets policies, this element is worth a total of **8 out of 100** possible points.

For municipality/county policies:
- **5 points:** The policy requires private development projects to comply.
  - (2 points) The policy mentions or encourages private development projects to follow a Complete Streets approach.
  - (0 points) No mention.

For state/MPO policies:
- **5 points:** The policy clearly notes that projects that address how they will account for the needs of all modes and users are prioritized or awarded extra weight for funding and/or inclusion in Transportation Improvement Plans (TIPs).
  - (2 points) A state's or MPO's policy mentions or encourages projects receiving money passing through the agency to account for the needs of all modes and users.
  - (0 points) No mention.

For all policies:
- **3 points:** The policy specifies a requirement for interagency coordination between various agencies such as public health, housing, planning, engineering, transportation, public works, city council, and/or mayor or executive office.
  - (1 point) Policy mentions or encourages interagency coordination.
  - (0 points) No mention.

ELEMENT 6.

Adopts excellent design guidance

Directs agencies to use the latest and best design criteria and guidelines, and sets a time frame for implementing this guidance.

Element #6: A strong Complete Streets policy adopts excellent design guidance

What facilitates the transition from a policy into tangible street designs? To bring a Complete Streets policy to life, engineers need to know how to design these streets in very clear, concrete terms. The best Complete Streets policies will adopt excellent street design guidance that directs and supports practitioners to create an accessible and complete network of streets.

Why is this element integral to a strong Complete Streets policy?

Adopting excellent design guidance equips your jurisdiction's engineers with the practical information they need to design streets that reflect the vision of your Complete Streets policy. Design guidance bridges Complete Streets from **policy to pavement.**

But first, what is a design guide? Design guides are resources that help engineers determine the appropriate dimensions and characteristics of roadways. For example, they help engineers navigate questions around lane widths, speed limits, turning radii, crossing locations and markings, signal timings, traffic controls, and much more. Design guides are used in all phases of transportation projects from new construction and reconstruction to operations and maintenance. Typically, design guides are issued by national organizations and agencies like the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), and the National Association of City

Transportation Officials (NACTO). State and local agencies may also choose to create their own guidance, and in those instances they often will adapt existing guidance.

But not all guides are created equally, and some jurisdictions still rely on design guides that use highway engineering principles and prioritize vehicle throughput over all other uses of the street. For example, encouraging wider lanes and fewer crossings, in order to move vehicles more efficiently, is often done at the expense of safety and mobility for anyone not in a vehicle. This kind of guidance is at odds with the Complete Streets approach.

The National Complete Streets Coalition believes that the strongest Complete Streets policies need to adopt specific, best state-of-the-practice design guidance and/or require the update of internal design policies and guides. In order to effectively design a Complete Streets street network, engineers need design guidance that includes both specific standards and explicit flexibility to accommodate all users and modes, and prioritize safety for vulnerable roadway users.

What does this element look like in practical terms?

When it comes to design guidance, the jurisdictions with the strongest Complete Streets policy will do two things: 1) direct the adoption of specific, best state-of-the-practice design guidance and/or outline which internal design guidance it plans to revise or develop and 2) set a timeline for implementing the guidance.

"A common barrier to implementation of Complete Streets policies are outdated design protocols with both state and local governments. Even when design engineers want to advance Complete Streets design solutions, they are often limited by design standards, guidelines, forms, and manuals that haven't been updated to support their Complete Streets policy and align with the needs of their communities. This element rewards governments that are able to align their design doctrine with their Complete Streets policies."

– Mike Jelen, PE – Principal Director, WSP

There are a number of existing design guidance documents that can help your jurisdiction build out a complete network of streets. Moreover, since design procedures and protocols continue to evolve, organizations like NACTO, ITE, and AASHTO are constantly releasing new, updated editions. While some jurisdictions adopt existing design guidance outright, others use said guidance to revise or develop their own internal design guidance documents. Regardless of whether you choose to adopt something existing or develop your own, it is crucial to set a timeline for implementation. At what date are engineers required to use the newly adopted guidance? When will you plan to have a draft and final version of your internal guidance ready? When do you plan to revisit and review your guidance to ensure it is still the best state-of-the-practice?

For the most part, jurisdictions have the ability to select appropriate design guidance for their community. In the past sometimes cities ran into issues with their state prohibiting certain design guidelines. However, thanks to a rule change in the 2021 infrastructure law, for federally funded projects, localities can use safer street design guidelines approved by the FHWA (such as those from NACTO), even if their state has prohibited them from doing so.

Some examples of what the Coalition considers best, state-of-the-practice design guidance are below. *Note: This is not a comprehensive list of all the state-of-the-practice design guides, and also reflect what was available in April 2023. Refer to the online version of the policy framework for any available up-to-date information: https://smartgrowthamerica.org/10-elements-of-complete-streets/*

- Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks (FHWA)
- Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide (FHWA)
- Achieving Multimodal Networks: Applying Design Flexibility and Reducing Conflicts (FHWA)
- Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities (AASHTO)
- Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities (AASHTO)
- A Guide for Achieving Flexibility in Highway Design (AASHTO)
- Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach: An ITE Recommended Practice (ITE)
- Urban Street Design Guide (NACTO)
- Transit Street Design Guide (NACTO)
- Urban Bikeway Design Guide (NACTO)
- Urban Street Stormwater Design Guide (NACTO)
- Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) (United States Access Board)

Policy scoring details

In our framework for evaluating and scoring Complete Streets policies, this element is worth a total of **7 out of 100** possible points.

- **5 points:** Policy directs the adoption of specific, best state-of-the-practice design guidance and/or requires the development/revision of internal design policies and guides.
  - (1 point) Policy references but does not formally adopt specific, best state-of-the-practice design guidance.
  - (0 points) No mention.
- **2 points:** Policy sets a specific time frame for implementation.
  - (0 points) No mention.

▌ELEMENT **7.**

Requires proactive land-use planning

Considers every project's greater context, as well as the surrounding community's current and expected land-use and transportation needs.

Element #7: A strong Complete Streets policy requires proactive and supportive land-use planning

Streets don't exist in a vacuum. They are inextricably connected to the buildings, sidewalks, spaces, homes, businesses, and everything else around them that they serve. The strongest Complete Streets policies require the integration of land-use planning to best sync up with a community's desires for using and living on their land today and in the future.

Why is this element integral to a strong Complete Streets policy?

Streets are tools that we use to connect us to destinations. They provide spaces for us to gather and move around, and create a framework for creating and capturing economic value so we can build productive places with opportunity for everyone. They are a means to an end, serving the places and spaces between all the streets. This element recognizes this fundamental truth by requiring coordination with land-use planning and clearly defining how a Complete Streets effort will serve current and future land uses.

What does this element look like in practical terms?

In the simplest terms, this element requires a jurisdiction's land-use policies (including but not limited to plans, zoning ordinances, or similar documents) to specify how these other non-transportation plans will both *support and be supported by* the community's Complete Streets vision. For example: A community has a Complete Streets policy and it

"People don't care what the underlying transportation function of a street is. What we care about is whether we can safely and reliably use our streets to access the places we want to go, on foot, by bike or transit, or by car. This element supports integrative decision-making by matching street designs with the planned land use context and adopting a diverse mix of land uses that encourage shorter trips. This makes the places we want to go safer and easier to get to."

– Drusilla van Hengel – Principal, Nelson\Nygaard

comes to bear on a project to retrofit an existing street that runs through an area **zoned or earmarked in the city's comprehensive land-use plan** for greater density and a mix of uses, perhaps neighborhood-serving retail with multi-family housing like apartments or rowhomes. But those buildings haven't been built out yet or are in progress.

In this specific example, a Complete Streets policy receiving maximum points would require the transportation agency to incorporate a Complete Streets approach in future land-use plans for this area and consider the needs not just of today's users of that street, but those who will be using it in the coming years as new buildings are built next to the sidewalk and more residents and businesses come to the area. This contrasts with the approach of the old paradigm, which would just look at a street running through an area without any mix of uses, people, or activity and make decisions that ignore zoning maps and comprehensive land-use plans. There may not be an opportunity to rebuild the street for

a decade or more, so build the street to serve the place that's envisioned in the land-use plans, rather than the place it once was.

This is the kind of tight integration between land-use and transportation that is required by the strongest Complete Streets policies. Land-use considerations should be deeply embedded into the processes and plans of the transportation planners and their departments.

Complete Streets are also reflective of the needs of the surrounding community and are designed to serve them, so strong policies always consider that context throughout the process. It's also an unfortunate reality in most places that transforming certain streets to be less dangerous and better serve everyone in those communities can also make those areas more attractive for future development, so a forward-looking policy will specify a need to address potential unintended consequences—like the displacement of residents due to rising costs of living—while still prioritizing streets that serve everyone.

Policy scoring details

In our framework for evaluating and scoring Complete Streets policies, this element is worth a total of **10 out of 100** possible points.

For municipality/county policies:
- **5 points**: Policy requires new or revised land-use policies, plans, zoning ordinances, or equivalent documents to specify how they will support and be supported by the community's Complete Streets vision.
    - (4 points) Policy requires new or revised transportation plans and/or design guidance to specify how transportation projects will serve current and future land use, such as by defining streets based not just on transportation function but on the surrounding land use.
    - (2 points) Policy discusses the connection between land use and transportation or includes non-binding recommendations to integrate land use and transportation planning.
    - (1 point) Policy acknowledges land use as a factor related to transportation planning.
    - (0 points) No mention.

For state/MPO policies:
- **5 points:** Policy requires new or revised long-range transportation plans and/or design guidance to specify how transportation projects will serve current and future land use such as by directing the adoption of place-based street typologies.
    - (2 points) Policy discusses the connection between land use and transportation or includes non-binding recommendations to integrate land use and transportation

planning.
- (1 point) Policy acknowledges land use as a factor related to transportation planning.
- (0 points) No mention.

For all policies:
- **3 points:** Policy requires the consideration of the community context as a factor in decision-making.
  - (1 point) Policy mentions community context as a potential factor in decision-making.
  - (0 points) No mention.
- **2 points:** Policy specifies the need to mitigate unintended consequences such as involuntary displacement.
  - (1 point) Policy acknowledges the possibility of unintended consequences.
  - (0 points) No mention

▌ ELEMENT 8.

Measure progress

Establishes specific performance measures that match the goals of the broader vision, incorporate equity considerations, and are regularly reported to the public.

Element #8: A strong Complete Streets policy measures progress

How do you know if your Complete Streets policy is working? You measure it. And then you share the results publicly. A strong Complete Streets policy requires tracking performance measures across a range of categories—including implementation and equity— and making someone responsible for doing it.

Why is this element integral to a strong Complete Streets policy?

As the old saying goes, "what gets measured, gets done." That rings true for Complete Streets policies too—if you want to make sure your Complete Streets policy is fully realized, you need to measure your progress. Measuring performance in transportation is not new. But historically, transportation metrics have focused on motor vehicles with metrics like pavement quality and congestion. But adopting a strong Complete Streets policy represents a *different approach* to transportation which means committing to *new* performance measures that reflect the policy's vision and motivation.

Performance measures provide a quantitative or qualitative indicator of the performance of a specific street, corridor, or of the whole transportation network. This information helps stakeholders better understand the impact of their Complete Streets policy and take corrective actions. For example, when progress is tracked:

- **Staff and committees tasked with implementing the policy are able to do their jobs better.** With more information on the current performance of the transportation network, staff are able to make more informed decisions on project design, planning, maintenance, and operations.
- **The general public and advocates are able to hold city agencies and elected officials accountable.** When performance measures are publicized, transparency and government accountability is improved since individuals, community organizations, and advocates are equipped with information they can use to hold their government accountable to the vision and priorities set out in the Complete Streets policy.
- **Elected officials can better communicate to the public, and build broader support for Complete Streets**. By tracking progress on the Complete Streets policy, elected officials and other policymakers have information that helps them better communicate the status of transportation improvements in their community. Information on the impact of transportation investments can also help elected officials build broader support for Complete Streets.

What does this element look like in practical terms?

The jurisdictions with the strongest Complete Streets policies take four clear, concrete steps:

1. Establish specific performance measures across a range of categories, including implementation and equity
2. Set a timeline for the recurring collection of performance measures
3. Require performance measures to be publicly shared
4. Assign responsibility for collecting and publicizing performance measures

As far as the specific measures are concerned, a community should adopt performance measures that reflect the community's priorities, and more specifically reflect the overall vision and motivations stated in the Complete Streets policy itself. For example, if your community's priority is improving health equity, one metric you might track is serious injuries by race, ethnicity, age, gender, income, disability status, and/or neighborhood. Measures should be tailored to a community's priorities but they should also cover a wide range of categories to ensure a holistic evaluation of the transportation network. Some examples of categories your community might measure are safety, access, economy, public health, and environment.

Beyond these, it's crucial to track two specific areas: policy implementation and equity. For the former, this could include tracking which internal policies and documents have been updated, how many staff members have been trained, how many exceptions have been approved, and how well the public engagement process is working. Equity is less of a specific *single measure*, and should instead be embedded within *all performance measures*; jurisdictions can do this by disaggregating the data by race, ethnicity, age, gender, income, disability status, and/or neighborhood. Measuring this information can help jurisdictions evaluate whether disparities are being exacerbated or mitigated.

Below is a list of examples that can be used:
- Number of crashes and severity of injuries
- Injuries and fatalities for all modes
- Presence of adequate lighting
- Travel time in key corridors (point A to point B) by mode

- Number of trips by walking/rolling, biking, transit, and driving
- Presence of transit facilities, biking facilities, and walking/rolling facilities
- Sidewalk condition ratings
- Number of curb ramps
- Building vacancy rates
- Access to jobs by mode
- Temporary and permanent jobs created by project
- Emergency vehicle response times
- Number of students who walk or bike to school
- Number of mode users: walk, bike, transit
- Bike route connections to off-road trails
- Number of bike share users
- Air quality
- Number of street trees
- Number of temporary and permanent art installations
- Internal policies and documents updated
- Number of staff trained
- Effectiveness of community engagement process

Additional examples can be found in Evaluating Complete Streets Projects: A Guide for Practitioners.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this information is only valuable if it is made publicly available on a consistent basis. To do that means committing to a timeline of how often the data will be collected and published publicly and it means putting someone in charge of that process.

Policy scoring details

In our framework for evaluating and scoring Complete Streets policies, this element is worth a total of **13 out of 100** possible points.

- **3 points:** Policy establishes specific performance measures under multiple categories such as access, economy, environment, safety, and health.
    - (1 point) Policy mentions measuring performance under multiple categories but does not establish specific measures.
    - (0 points) No mention.
- **2 points**: Policy establishes specific performance measures for the implementation process such as tracking how well the public engagement process reaches underrepresented populations or updates to policies and documents.
    - (1 point) Policy mentions measuring the implementation process but does not establish specific measures.
    - (0 points) No mention.
- **3 points:** Policy embeds equity in performance measures by measuring disparities by income/race/vehicle access/language/etc. as relevant to the jurisdiction.
    - (1 point) Policy mentions embedding equity in performance measures but is not specific about how data will be disaggregated.
    - (0 points) No mention.
- **2 points:** Policy specifies a time frame for recurring collection of performance measures.
    - (0 points) No mention.
- **2 points:** Policy requires performance measures to be released publicly.
    - (0 points) No mention.

- **1 point:** Policy assigns responsibility for collecting and publicizing performance measures to a specific individual/agency/committee.
    - (0 points) No mention.

ELEMENT 9.

Sets criteria for choosing projects

Creates or updates the criteria for choosing transportation projects so that Complete Streets projects are prioritized.

Element #9: A strong Complete Streets policy sets criteria for choosing projects that prioritizes Complete Streets projects

Every local community, region, and state has a process by which they choose which transportation projects to fund and build. A strong Complete Streets policy changes that process by adding new or updated criteria that give extra weight to projects that advance Complete Streets and improve the network.

Why is this element integral to a strong Complete Streets policy?

A Complete Streets policy that results in the same old road projects being built is just a paper tiger. A strong and effective Complete Streets policy starts to reshape the process by which projects are chosen for funding and advancement.

At every level of government—state, metro, and local—there is some sort of prescribed process in place for selecting transportation projects for funding and construction. The strongest policies clearly define new or updated criteria for that process to ensure that Complete Streets projects get prioritized to advance.

It's also often true that the existing, conventional process for choosing projects prioritizes the needs of people who are driving rather than all people within a community. There's a heavy focus on criteria that prioritize vehicle level of service (how many cars can be moved through a corridor), or account for potential impacts to vehicle travel time, while ignoring the more holistic impacts of improving access to jobs and services.

What does this element look like in practical terms?

This is often the part of the transportation planning process that is the most opaque for the public: How projects are selected.

In some places, such as with the Virginia's Smart Scale program, projects are measured quantitatively against a range of predetermined criteria and the highest-scoring projects receive funding.[a] This is far more transparent than Virginia's previous process. In other states or cities, this process is much more of a black box, and residents may have far less confidence that anything other than politics or influence is shaping which projects move forward. A strong Complete Streets policy both opens up this black box and institutes criteria that prioritize projects that will advance the community's goals (see element #1) within their Complete Streets policy, such as improving active transportation options, completing a network of Complete Streets, targeting underserved communities, and reducing health, safety, and economic disparities.

If the process for choosing transportation projects is unchanged by the Complete Streets policy, then that policy will fail to be fully implemented.

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a   Read more about Virginia's Smart Scale program here: https://smartscale.org/how_it_works/default.asp

Policy scoring details

Three clear changes are the goal for this element. First, modifying the jurisdiction's project selection criteria. Second, establishing clear and specific criteria that will prioritize Complete Streets projects and create better multimodal network connectivity for all users. And third, embedding equity considerations in those criteria by targeting underserved communities and/or alleviating disparities in health, safety, economic benefit, and access to destinations.

In our framework for evaluating and scoring Complete Streets policies, this element is worth a total of **8 out of 100** possible points.

- **5 points:** Policy establishes specific criteria to encourage funding prioritization for Complete Streets implementation.
    - (1 point) Policy mentions revising project selection criteria to encourage Complete Streets implementation.
    - (0 points) No mention.
- **3 points:** Policy specifically addresses how equity will be embedded in project selection criteria.
    - (0 points) No mention.

ELEMENT 10.

Creates a plan for implementation
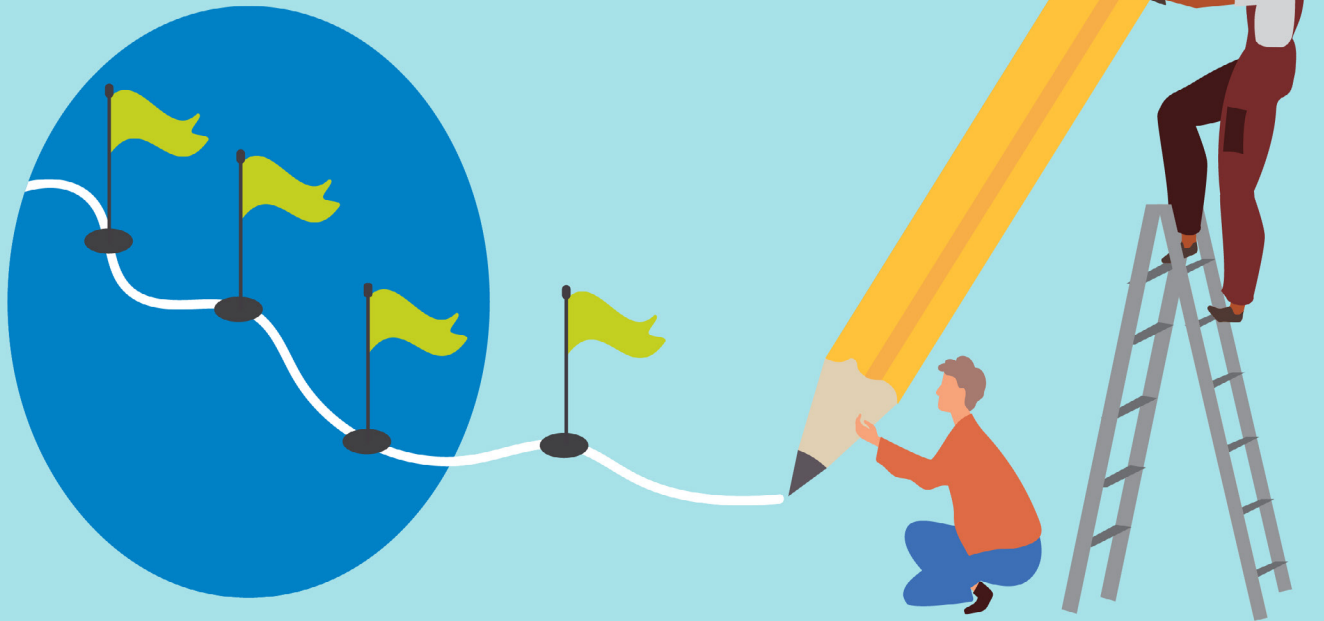
A formal commitment to the Complete Streets approach is only the beginning.
It must include specific steps for implementing the policy in ways that will make a measurable impact on what gets built and where.

Element #10: A strong Complete Streets policy requires a plan for implementation

A formal commitment to a Complete Streets approach is just the beginning. A strong policy also spells out specific steps for implementing the policy in ways that will make a measurable impact on what gets built and where.

Why is this element integral to a strong Complete Streets policy?

Over the last decade, we've come to understand that a Complete Streets policy is only the first step to making streets safer and more accessible to everyone. The strongest policies often represent a massive paradigm shift from the current practices, agency processes, and standards that have been producing unsafe, incomplete, inaccessible, and unproductive streets. And so they must also include a clear plan for how an agency will go about putting the policy into practice.

We have seen policies in the past that are clear and strong in nearly every area, yet fail to produce the desired impact because there was no plan, checklist, or entity in charge of institutionalizing the policy and putting it into practice. (If everyone is responsible, then no one is responsible.) These missing components make it difficult (or impossible) to ensure professional staff is trained, stakeholders are held accountable, processes are updated, and the public is equitably engaged.

And so achieving a Complete Streets policy's ambitious goals requires this tenth and final element: A clear, measurable, accountable plan for

thorough and thoughtful implementation.[a]

What does this element look like in practical terms?

To produce different outcomes when it comes to designing and building streets, departments of transportation must change the way they operate, including changes to their project development process, design guidelines, and performance measures. This is most successfully done through training, education, and strong leadership. Jurisdictions should include language and actionable steps for implementation in their Complete Streets policy. Implementation steps are worth the most points out of all of the policy elements, as they lay out specific next steps for putting the policy into practice.

Unlike the other nine elements, based on our long experience and hard-won knowledge borne of real-world experience in scores of communities, this element is a little more prescriptive. These five short steps—to be embedded in the policy itself—provide an actionable checklist for implementing a new, strong Complete Streets policy:

- **Restructure or revise related procedures, plans, regulations, and other processes to accommodate all users on every project.** This could include incorporating Complete Streets checklists or other tools into decision-making processes.

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a   While "implementation" was included in the National Complete Streets Coalition's pre-2018 policy framework, it was revised to set the bar far higher and provide clearer guidelines, including increased accountability from jurisdictions and requirements to include equity and community engagement.

- **Develop new design policies and guides or revise existing policies to reflect the current state of best practices in transportation design.** Communities may also elect to adopt national or state-level recognized design guidance.
- **Offer workshops and other training opportunities** to transportation staff, community leaders, and the general public.
- **Create a committee to oversee implementation.** The committee should include both external and internal stakeholders as well as representatives from advocacy groups, underinvested communities, and vulnerable populations such as people of color, older adults, children, low-income communities, non-native English speakers, those who do not own or cannot access a car, and those living with disabilities.
- **Create a community engagement plan that considers equity** by targeting advocacy organizations and underrepresented communities which could include non-native English speakers, people with disabilities, etc. depending on the local context.

Policy scoring details

In our framework for evaluating and scoring Complete Streets policies, this element is worth a total of **15 out of 100** possible points.

- **3 points:** The policy requires that related procedures, plans, regulations, and other processes be revised within a specified time frame.
  - (1 point) The policy mentions revising procedures, plans, regulations, and other processes.
  - (0 points) No mention.
- **3 points:** The policy requires workshops or other training opportunities for transportation staff. The policy is specific about the timing and/or staff members for the training and workshops.
  - (1 point) Policy mentions workshops or other training opportunities for transportation staff.
  - (0 points) No mention.
- **3 points:** The policy assigns responsibility for implementation to a new or existing committee that includes both internal and external stakeholders that are representative of underinvested and vulnerable communities. The policy is specific about which internal and external stakeholders are/will be represented on the committee.
  - (1 point) Policy assigns oversight of implementation to a specific body that may not include both internal and external stakeholders.
  - (0 points) No mention.
- **6 points:** The policy creates a community engagement plan with specific strategies for who, when, and how they will approach public engagement in the project selection, design, and implementation process. The policy specifically addresses how the jurisdiction will overcome barriers to engagement for underrepresented communities.
  - (3 points) Policy creates a community engagement plan with specific strategies for who, when, and how they will approach public engagement but does not address underrepresented communities.
  - (1 point) Policy mentions community engagement but does not go into detail about specific strategies.
  - (0 points) No mention.

Smart Growth America advocates for people who want to live and work in great neighborhoods. We envision a country where no matter where you live, or who you are, you can enjoy living in a place that is healthy, prosperous, and resilient. Learn more at www.smartgrowthamerica.org.

The National Complete Streets Coalition, a program of Smart Growth America, is a non-profit, non-partisan alliance of public interest organizations and transportation professionals committed to the development and implementation of Complete Streets policies and practices. A nationwide movement launched by the Coalition in 2004, Complete Streets is the integration of people and place in the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of transportation networks. www.completestreets.org

Smart Growth America project team: Based on language produced in in 2018, the primary authors of this revised version were Mae Hanzlik and Steve Davis. Released in April 2023.

This report can be found online at https://smartgrowthamerica.org/10-elements-of-complete-streets/

Thank you to Stantec

The cover and 10 element graphics were produced by Stantec and their Urban Places department. The National Complete Streets Coalition extends our deepest thanks to Stantec for their contributions to this document and to our work.

Smart Growth America
Improving lives by improving communities

National Complete
Streets Coalition

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ORDINANCE 305

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A COMPLETE STREETS POLICY DEFINING A PROCESS TO ENSURE FUTURE STREET AND TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS, GIVE AMPLE CONSIDERATION TO ALL FUTURE USERS AND INCORPORATE FEATURES AS NECESSARY TO FULFILL THE CITY'S VISION OF COMPLETE STREETS

WHEREAS, Complete Streets mean roadways planned, designed, and constructed to provide appropriate access to all users and promotes safe and efficient movement of people and goods, whether by car, truck, transit, assistive device, foot, or bicycle; 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 pedestrian and vehicular environments; and,

WHEREAS, increasing walking and bicycling offers improved health benefits for community members and makes Arlington a more livable community; and,

WHEREAS, Complete Streets enhance safe walking and bicycling options for school-age children, in recognition of the Safe Routes to Schools program; and

WHEREAS, the City of Arlington recognizes the importance of street infrastructure and modifications such as sidewalks, crosswalks, shared-use paths, bicycle lanes, signage, and accessible curb ramps that enable safe, convenient, and comfortable travel for all users.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ARLINGTON DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION I. PURPOSE
This policy defines a process to ensure future street and transportation projects, give ample consideration to all future users and incorporate features as necessary to fulfill the City's vision of Complete Streets. The City views each street and transportation project as unique. This means design features will likely differ from street to street, yet each street may still be considered "complete".

SECTION II. COMPLETE STREETS POLICY
This policy consists of narrative standards and a map illustrating focus corridors. The following guidelines should be followed to ensure that complete street elements are incorporated into all transportation improvement projects (except as exempted herein):

1. Complete Streets elements should be incorporated into all public transportation projects.

2. At the start of any transportation project, the following factors shall be considered:

   - the current and anticipated land uses along the subject corridor;
   - location of nearby destinations (i.e. parks, library, post office, shopping centers, etc.);

- anticipated users and their abilities anticipated to frequent the corridor based on the identified land uses, nearby destinations, and surrounding development;
- existing and anticipated transportation infrastructure that will interact with the subject corridor;
- stated public desires for specific transportation infrastructure in specified areas; and,
- general and specific guidance for the corridor in the City's Comprehensive Plan.

3. Complete Street elements that potentially address the agreed upon factors should be identified at the start of a project.

4. Within the City of Arlington there is no singular design prescription for Complete Streets; each design is unique and responds to its neighborhood area or overall community context. A complete street may include but is not limited to one or more of the following elements:

- designated walking facilities, including sidewalks, trails, and adequate roadway shoulders if other facilities are not feasible;
- safe crossing facilities, including marked crosswalks and curb ramps;
- signs, signals and pavement markings that improve pedestrian visibility, safety and convenience;
- American with Disabilities Act compliant accessibility improvements, including curb ramps, detectable warnings and audible signals;
- improvements to the quality of the pedestrian environment, including street trees, boulevard landscaping, planter strips, street and sidewalk lighting, street furniture and other pedestrian amenities;
- on-street bicycle facilities;
- off-street bicycle facilities, including shared-use paths and bicycle trails;
- bicycle parking/storage facilities;
- preservation of on-street parking;
- safe and effective lighting; and
- adequate drainage facilities.

5. All identified elements may not be warranted based on the importance and limitations of the corridor.

6. The ideal roadway design may not always be feasible due to either a physical constraint such as lack of right-of-way or an economic constraint such as unsustainable cost of improvement. Factors to consider in making this judgment may include but are not limited to:

- whether or not the corridor is within an identified area for complete streets as illustrated on the attached map;
- community desires;
- available and planned right-of-way;
- existing and future use context;
- existing improvements;
- the number and types of users;
- existing and proposed utilities;

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- parking needs; and,
- available budget.

7. When balancing competing interests, design decisions should favor the following:

- transportation infrastructure that provides safe access for as many appropriate modes of transportation as possible; and,
- transportation design that fits within the corridor's environmental context in that it preserves the scenic, historic, aesthetic, community, and environmental conditions of the location.

SECTION III. COMPLETE STREETS FOCUS CORRIDORS

The map (Exhibit A) accompanying this narrative is intended to illustrate Complete Street focus areas. The following suggestions are provided for consideration as the Arlington Complete Street policy is administered:

- Downtown: Consider all ages and abilities. Design to accommodate delivery trucks and passenger autos at low speeds. Favor the pedestrian experience. Sidewalks should be maintained throughout the Downtown adjacent to streets. Pedestrian enhancements are desired for boulevard areas. Greenspace, pocket parks, and decorative lighting will enhance the pedestrian experience. Bike racks are necessary to allow bicyclists to park and walk throughout Downtown.
- Future expansion: Implement Complete Streets policy as development occurs. Consider all ages and abilities. Consider truck routes, passenger auto routes, sidewalks/trails, overhead street lighting, and boulevard trees when reviewing street designs.
- Industrial: Consider all ages and abilities. Design to accommodate heavy trucks and delivery traffic. Provide for employees arriving/departing by various means including on foot, by bicycle, and other modes. Favor lighting for safety and security purposes.
- Residential: Consider all ages and abilities. Implement Complete Streets policy as street/utility reconstruction and/or sidewalk maintenance/construction plan is implemented. Truck traffic should be accommodated in designated truck routes. Vehicular traffic at slower speeds should be anticipated. Pedestrian accommodation should be considered on sidewalks adjacent to one or both sides of the street. Bikes may be accommodated in on-street lanes adjacent to collector streets. Lighting is anticipated overhead, typical street style. Boulevard trees incrementally spaced are recommended.
- Transportation Gateway Rural: Consider all ages and abilities. Design truck/passenger vehicle facility to favor through traffic mobility. Pedestrian and bicycle trail facility independent of roadway and combined for non-motorized use, perhaps on either side of the road should be considered. Lighting is anticipated to be conventional overhead street type. Boulevard treatments should include incrementally spaced boulevard trees. Truck parking may be restricted.
- Transportation Gateway Urban: Consider all ages and abilities. Design truck/passenger vehicle facility to emphasize mobility. Consider pedestrian sidewalks independent of roadway on both sides of the Highway. Lighting is anticipated to be conventional overhead street type but ornamental lighting such as that found in New Prague or St. Peter may be considered as a means of enhancing

the streetscape. Boulevard trees incrementally spaced are desired. Truck parking may be restricted.

SECTION IV. EXEMPTIONS

Complete Street elements shall be considered and included in street construction, reconstruction, repaving and rehabilitation projects unless:

- 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;
- it is determined there is insufficient space to safely accommodate new facilities or such improvements create or do not address relatively high safety risks;
- excessive and disproportionate cost of establishing a specific enhancement as part of a project; and/or
- construction is not practically feasible or cost effective because of significant or adverse environmental impacts to streams, flood plains, remnants of native vegetation, wetlands, steep slopes or other critical areas, or due to impacts on neighboring land uses (including impact from right-of-way acquisition).

Whereas exemptions occur, the City will seek alternative options as a means to accommodate users with whom the City was unable to initially accommodate.

SECTION V. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Ordinance shall become effective upon approval by the City Council and summary publication.

For City of Arlington:

_____
By Rich Nagel
It's Mayor

_____
By Liza M. Donabauer
It's Administrator

First Reading:
Second Reading:
Adopted:
Published:

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EXHIBIT A
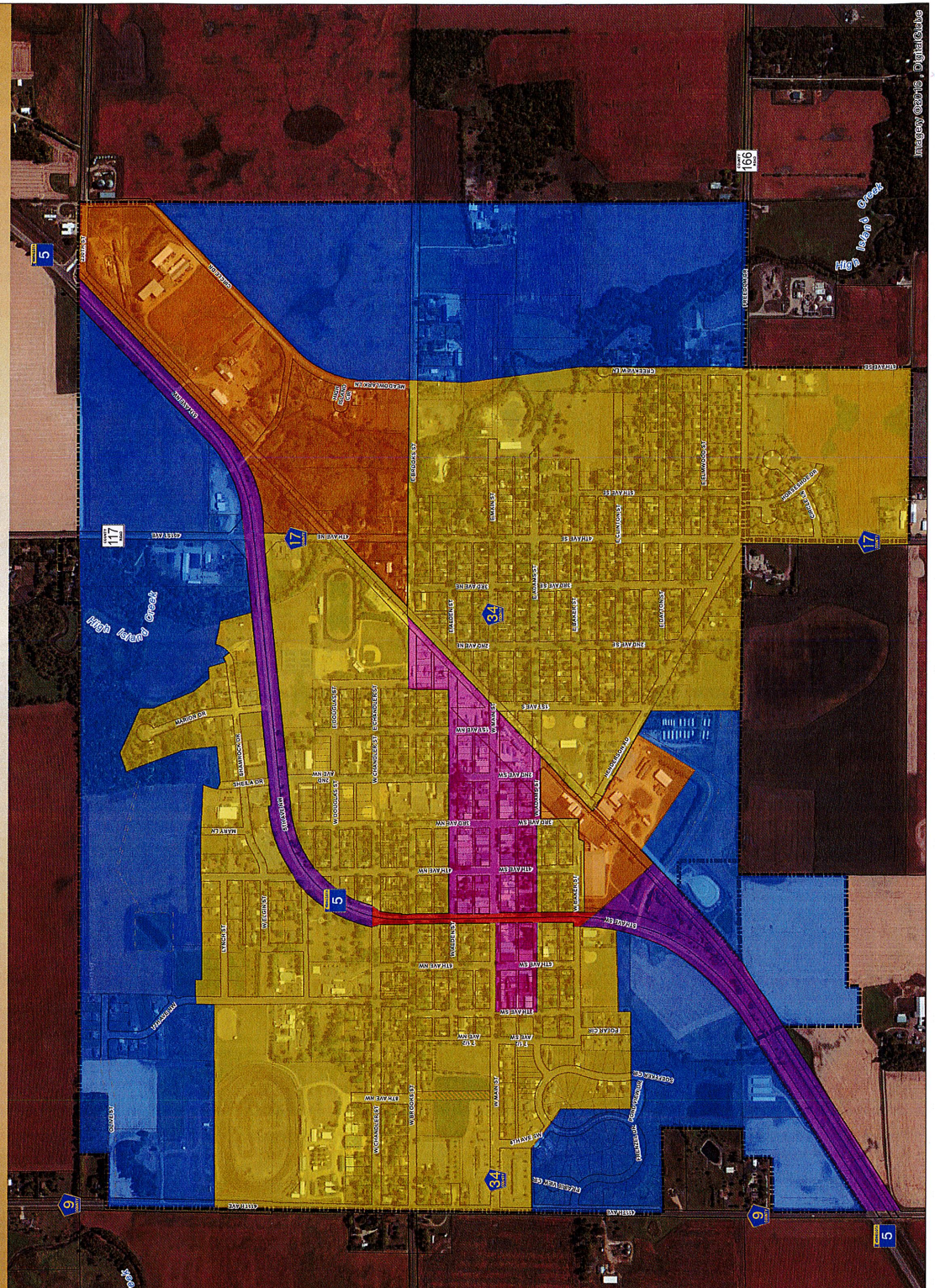ORDINANCE ___

Complete Streets Map
City of Arlington

March, 2016

Legend

Land Use

Downtown

Future Expansion

Industrial

Residential

Transportation Gateway Rural

Transportation Gateway Urban

Parcels

Railroad

City Limits

0   800
         Feet

Source: Imagery @2016, DigitalGlobe, MnDOT

Living Streets Policy

Introduction

Living streets balance the needs of motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians and transit riders in ways that promote safety and convenience, enhance community identity, create economic vitality, improve environmental sustainability, and provide meaningful opportunities for active living and better health. The Living Streets Policy defines Edina's vision for Living Streets and the principles and plans that will guide implementation.

The Living Street Policy ties directly to key community goals outlined in the City's 2008 Comprehensive Plan. Those goals include safe walking, bicycling and driving, reduced storm water runoff, reduced energy consumption, and promoting health. The Living Streets Policy also compliments voluntary City initiatives such the "do.town" effort related to community health, and the Tree City USA and the Green Step Cities programs related to sustainability. In other cases, the Living Street Policy will assist the City in meeting mandatory requirements set by other agencies. For example, the Living Streets Policy will support the City's Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan which addresses mandates established under the Clean Water Act.

The Living Streets Policy provides the framework for a Living Streets Plan. The Living Streets Plan will address how the Policy will be implemented by providing more detailed information on street design, traffic calming, bike facilities, landscaping and lighting, as well as best practices for community engagement during the design process. Lastly, existing and future supporting plans such as the Bicycle Plan, Active Routes to Schools, Sidewalk Priority Plan and the Capital Improvement Plan will help to identify which projects are priorities with respect to this Policy.

Living Streets Vision

Edina is a place where...
- Transportation utilizing all modes is equally safe and accessible;
- Residents and families regularly choose to walk or bike;
- Streets enhance neighborhood character and community identity;
- Streets are safe, inviting places that encourage human interaction and physical activity;
- Public policy strives to promote sustainability through balanced infrastructure investments;
- Environmental stewardship and reduced energy consumption are pursued in public and private sectors alike; and
- Streets support vibrant commerce and add to the value of adjacent land uses.

Living Streets Principles

The following principles will guide implementation of the Living Streets Policy. The City will incorporate these principles when planning for and designing the local transportation network and when making public and private land use decisions.

1

<u>All Users and All Modes</u>

The City will plan, design, and build high quality transportation facilities that meet the needs of the most vulnerable users (pedestrians, cyclists, children, elderly, and disabled) while enhancing safety and convenience for all users, and providing access and mobility for all modes.

<u>Connectivity</u>

- The City will design, operate, and maintain a transportation system that provides a highly connected network of streets that accommodate all modes of travel.
- The City will seek opportunities to overcome barriers to active transportation. This includes preserving and repurposing existing rights-of-way, and adding new rights-of-way to enhance connectivity for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit.
- The City will prioritize non-motorized improvements to key destinations such as public facilities, public transit, the regional transportation network and commercial areas.
- The City will require new developments to provide interconnected street and sidewalk networks that connect to existing or planned streets or sidewalks on the perimeter of the development.
- Projects will include consideration of the logical termini by mode. For example, the logical termini for a bike lane or sidewalk may extend beyond the traditional limits of a street construction or reconstruction project, in order to ensure multimodal connectivity and continuity.

<u>Application</u>

- The City will apply this Living Streets Policy to all street projects including those involving operations, maintenance, new construction, reconstruction, retrofits, repaving, rehabilitation, or changes in the allocation of pavement space on an existing roadway. This also includes privately built roads, sidewalks, paths and trails.
- The City will act as an advocate for Living Street principles when a local transportation or land use decision is under the jurisdiction of another agency.
- Living Streets may be achieved through single projects or incrementally through a series of smaller improvements or maintenance activities over time.
- The City will draw on all sources of transportation funding to implement this Policy and actively pursue grants, cost sharing opportunities and other new or special funding sources as applicable.
- All City departments will support the vision and principles outlined in the Policy in their work.

<u>Exceptions</u>

Living Streets principles will be included in all street construction, reconstruction, repaving, and rehabilitation projects, except under one or more of the conditions listed below. City staff will document proposed exceptions as part of the project proposal.

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Exceptions:
- 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 a temporary detour. Such maintenance activities, however, shall consider and meet the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians.
- The City exempts a project due to an excessively disproportionate cost of establishing a bikeway, walkway, or transit enhancement as part of a project.
- The City determines that the construction is not practically feasible or cost effective because of significant or adverse environmental impacts to waterways, flood plains, remnants or native vegetation, wetlands, or other critical areas.

Design

The City will develop and adopt guidelines as part of the Living Streets Plan to direct the planning, funding, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of new and modified streets, sidewalks, paths and trails. The guidelines will allow for context-sensitive designs.

The City's design guidelines will:
- Keep street pavement widths to the minimum necessary.
- Provide well-designed pedestrian accommodation in the form of sidewalks or shared-use pathways on all arterial and collector streets and on local connector streets as determined by context. Sidewalks shall also be required where streets abut a public school, public building, community playfield or neighborhood park. Termini will be determined by context.
- Provide frequent, convenient and safe street crossings. These may be at intersections designed to be pedestrian friendly, or at mid-block locations where needed and appropriate.
- Provide bicycle accommodation on all primary bike routes.
- Allocate right-of-way for boulevards.
- Allocate right-of-way for parking only when necessary and not in conflict with Living Streets principles.
- Consider streets as part of our natural ecosystem and incorporate landscaping, trees, rain gardens and other features to improve air and water quality.

The design guidelines in the Living Streets Plan will be incorporated into other City plans, manuals, rules, regulations, and programs as appropriate. As new and better practices evolve, the City will update the Living Streets Plan.

Context Sensitivity

Although many streets look more or less the same, every street is a unique combination of its neighborhood, adjacent land uses, natural features, street design, users, and modes. To accommodate these differences, the City will:
- Seek input from stakeholders;
- Design streets with a strong sense of place;
- Be mindful of preserving and protecting natural features, such as waterways, trees, slopes, and ravines;
- Be mindful of existing land uses and neighborhood character; and

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- Coordinate with business and property owners along commercial corridors to develop vibrant commercial districts.

Benchmarks and Performance Measures

The City will monitor and measure its performance relative to this Policy. Benchmarks demonstrating success include:

- Every street and neighborhood is a comfortable place for walking and bicycling;
- Every child can walk or bike to school or a park safely;
- Seniors, children, and disabled people can cross all streets safely and comfortably;
- An active way of life is available to all;
- There are zero traffic fatalities or serious injuries;
- No unfiltered street water flows into local waterways; storm water volume is reduced; and
- Retail streets stay or become popular regional destinations.

The City will draw on the following data to measure performance. Additional performance measures may be identified as this Policy is implemented.

- Number of crashes or transportation-related injuries reported to the Police Department.
- Number and type of traffic safety complaints or requests.
- Resident responses to transportation related questions in resident surveys.
- Resident responses to post-project surveys.
- The number of trips by walking, bicycling and transit (if applicable) as measured before and after the project.
- Envision ratings from the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure.
- Speed statistics of vehicles on local streets.

Implementation

The goal of this Policy is to define and guide the implementation of Living Streets principles. Several steps still need to be taken to reach this goal. The first step will be to develop a Living Streets Plan to guide the implementation of the Policy. The Plan will:

- Identify and implement standards or guidelines for street and intersection design, universal pedestrian access, transit accommodations, and pedestrian crossings;
- Identify and implement standards or guidelines for streetscape ecosystems, including street water management, urban forestry, street furniture, and utilities;
- Identify regulatory demands and their relationship to this Policy (ADA/PROWAG, MPCA, MNMUTCD, MnDOT state aid, watershed districts);
- Define the process by which residents participate in street design and request Living Streets improvements; and
- Define standards for bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to ensure access to key public, private and regional destinations.

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Additional implementation steps include:

- Communicate this Policy to residents and other stakeholders; educate and engage on an ongoing basis;
- Update City ordinances, engineering standards, policies and guidelines to agree with this Policy;
- Inventory building and zoning codes to bring these into agreement with Living Streets principles as established by this Policy;
- Update and document maintenance policies and practices to support Policy goals;
- Update and document enforcement policies and practices to ensure safe streets for all modes;
- Incorporate Living Streets concepts in the next circulation of the City's general plans (Comprehensive Plan, Bicycle Plan, Active Routes to School Plan, etc.);
- Incorporate Living Streets as a criteria when evaluating transportation priorities in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP);
- Review and update funding policies to ensure funding sources for Living Streets projects; and
- Coordinate with partner jurisdictions to achieve goals in this Policy.

CITY OF LAKEVILLE
RESOLUTION NO. 20-67

RESOLUTION STATING ONGOING SUPPORT AND INTENT TO UTILIZE SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE PROCESS WITH PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DESIGN

WHEREAS the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) defines Complete Streets as streets for everyone that are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and bus riders of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a complete street; and

WHEREAS Green Streets typically refers to street design that reduces environmental impacts by reducing impervious surface, managing stormwater, and providing shade. Living Streets combines the concepts of complete streets and green streets, and puts additional focus on quality of life aspects for City residents; and

WHEREAS a required best practice of the Minnesota Green Step Cities program is the adoption of a Complete or Living Streets policy (or documented practices) that addresses street standards, street trees, and storm water management; and

WHEREAS the City of Lakeville has followed Living Streets principles in its planning and community design, and has demonstrated said commitment by adopting a transportation goal within the 2040 Lakeville Comprehensive Plan to develop a multi-modal transportation system in which autos, trucks, rail, transit, bicycles and pedestrians are adequately served and can safely co-exist; and

WHEREAS, the City of Lakeville incorporates Living Streets practices including, but not limited to:
- Evaluating Living Street standards on subdivision and major roadway projects Installation of traffic calming measures, including roundabouts, flashing yellow left turn signals and synchronized traffic signals on major corridors, in partnership with Dakota County, to reduce vehicle idling
- Approved Spirit of Brandtjen Farm Development, a 450-acre residential and commercial subdivision with many Living Street components.
- Implementation of watershed best management practices, including raingardens, creek and shoreline restoration, and native plantings within public right-of-way, in partnership with the Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program (SWPPP) in response to the City's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit;

- Maintenance of established boulevard tree placement and trimming practices that address safe access to City streets for all users.

WHEREAS, the City of Lakeville encourages pedestrian and bicyclist use through the planning, construction and maintenance of a well-developed local trail system, including:

- Implementation of a Bicycle and Trail System Plan that enhances the City's transportation system/network
- Inclusion of pedestrian and bicyclist facilities into major roadway projects
- Subdivision standards that include trails and sidewalks, providing connecting and access to neighborhoods, parks, schools and employment centers
- 118 miles of developed, publicly accessible trails
- The identification and remediation of connectivity breaks (gaps) in the City's trail system and the adoption of a Trail Connection Policy;
- Trail maps and markers posted along City trails, and all transportation maps (trails, streets, etc.) available via the City's website;
- Establishment of a Winter Snow Removal Policy for city trails, including partnerships with three independent school districts within the City to ensure safe pedestrian mobility to schools

WHEREAS, the City of Lakeville encourages the use of transit and ridesharing through several advantages available to residents and commuters, including:
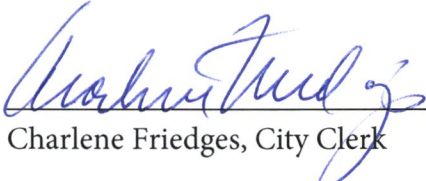
- Express bus route service to two Park & Ride facilities, including a dedicated bus-only exit to Kenrick Avenue Park & Ride and dedicated bus-only shoulders along Cedar Avenue to/from Lakeville Cedar Park & Ride
- Two Park & Pool facilities along Interstate 35
- Lakeville LOOP Circulator Bus service for people age 62 and older
- Dial-A-Ride bus service

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Lakeville supports the principles of Living & Green Streets and will work with MnDOT, Dakota County, and appropriate agencies so that Living Street elements are evaluated where possible for City transportation projects by providing appropriate accommodations for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, transit riders, and disabled persons through the ongoing creation of a multi-modal transportation network and to ensure design that reduces environmental impacts by reducing impervious surface, managing stormwater, and providing shade.

ADOPTED by the Lakeville City Council this 6th day of July 2020

Douglas P. Anderson, Mayor

Charlene Friedges, City Clerk