



What are “complete” streets?

“Complete” streets are designed and operated to be safe and accessible for pedestrians, transit riders, bicyclists, and drivers—all users, regardless of age or ability.

What do complete streets look like?

There is no prescription for a complete street. The features of complete streets vary based on context, topography, road function, the speed of traffic, pedestrian and bicycle demand, and other factors.

Based on context, common features of complete streets include:

- Sidewalks
- Paved shoulders
- Bike lanes
- Safe crossing points
- Accessible curb ramps
- Pedestrian refuge medians
- Bus stop access
- Sidewalk “bump-outs” at intersections
- Access to adjacent trails in a “corridor”



Commercial corridor in Grand Marais



Rural highway near Moorhead



Residential street in Minneapolis

What do Complete Streets policies do? How are they implemented?

Complete Streets policies direct transportation planners and engineers to consistently design with all road users in mind. Complete Streets is typically implemented as regular road construction, reconstruction, and repaving projects come forward—it is not about costly retrofits. As part of the implementation of Complete Streets, many communities include four common steps:

- restructure procedures, policies, and programs;
- rewrite design manuals or standards (if applicable);
- offer training opportunities to planners and engineers; and
- create new performance measures.

How does a community create a Complete Streets policy?

Every community approaches Complete Streets slightly differently, but the most common process in Minnesota has included five steps:

1. Work group of elected officials, engineers, planners, and public drafts a resolution of support;
2. Council/board approves resolution of support directing a work group to create a draft policy;
3. Work group creates a draft policy;
4. Council/board approves policy; and
5. Staff implements the policy and reports back on results.

What are the benefits of Complete Streets?

Transportation has many impacts on more than just mobility. Complete Streets helps maximize the total public benefit of our roads beyond simply capacity for cars, including:

- **Safety for all travelers.** More than 20,000 pedestrians and bicyclists have been injured or killed in Minnesota in the past decade. We can and must do better; Complete Streets can help.
- **Access and equity.** About 40 percent of Minnesotans do not drive, including children, seniors, people with disabilities, and people who cannot afford a car. Complete Streets helps to ensure that everyone has safe access to lead active and independent lives.
- **Public health.** More than 60 percent of Minnesotans are overweight or obese and at risk for serious illness. If left unchecked, obesity will add another \$3.7 billion in health care expenses for Minnesotans by 2020. Complete Streets helps support opportunities for people to be more physically active, while improving public health and reducing health care costs.
- **Affordable transportation choices.** Rising and erratic gas prices are taking a larger part of family budgets. Complete Streets support transportation options that help a community be more resilient to gas price spikes and keep more money in the local community.
- **Economic development and tourism.** Complete streets are built to fit a community's context—including making sure that our roads are places that people want to be to attract people and encourage business.
- **Environmental protection.** Transportation accounts for more than 70 percent of our oil consumption, 25 percent of global warming pollution, and a large portion of local air pollution that leads to "air quality alert" days, increased rates of asthma, and even cancer. Complete Streets supports transportation options that support oil independence and cleaner air.
- **Transportation capacity.** Nationally, 28 percent of all trips are 1 mile or less, while 72 percent of these short trips are driven. Complete Streets helps reduce congestion by supporting more walking and biking, especially for short trips.
- **Vibrant neighborhoods and quality of life.** Complete Streets can help calm traffic on residential streets, create walkable neighborhoods, and increase community interaction.
- **Reduced need for costly future retrofits.** Complete Streets helps to ensure that we take a long-term view when planning and designing roads, which reduces the potential for gaps that require costly future retrofits.

For more information: www.mncompletestreets.com

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