

Complete Streets Policy

Rockford, Illinois

Vision

Through this Complete Streets Policy and the adopted Comprehensive Plan the City recognizes the need to develop a safe, efficient, accessible and integrated multimodal transportation network that balances the need and desire for access, mobility, economic development and aesthetics while providing for the health and well-being for people of all ages and abilities.

Benefits of a Complete Streets System

The Complete Streets system serves all users and modes. People of all ages and abilities receive the benefit of a complete streets system that provides safe access for people traveling as pedestrians and by bicycle, transit riders, motorists, emergency responders, freight carriers and others. Many benefits include:

- Providing safe walking and bicycling options for children that is consistent with the national Safe Routes to School program.
- Encouraging walking and bicycling that improves health and fitness.
- Improving pedestrian safety and cyclist safety by reducing the number of accidents between motorized and non-motorized users.
- Encouraging economic growth, positively impacting property values.
- Providing driving alternatives that positively impact the environment, conserves fuel and saves money.

The City of Rockford has already begun working on connectivity improvements throughout its jurisdiction and with neighboring entities and partners. Partners have been private developers, Rockford Park District, Winnebago County, Illinois Department of Transportation, Rockford School District, Rockford Mass Transit and Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning. Benefits to these improvements and partnerships include:

- Identifying and filling gaps to our pedestrian system.
- Identifying and filling the maintenance needs for the transportation systems.
- Identifying and implementing an ADA Transition Plan.
- Consistent enforcement of sidewalk clearing during the winter.
- Creation of a street (and sidewalk/multi-use path) occupancy program, including coordination with utilities.

Definitions

City shall mean the City of Rockford

Complete Streets shall mean streets that are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, in that motorists, freight providers, pedestrians, bicyclists, users of public transportation, users of all ages

and abilities (including children, the elderly and the disabled), emergency responders and adjacent land users are accommodated and are able to safely move along and across a street.

Street shall mean any right-of-way, public or private, including arterials, collectors, residential, alleys, lanes and roadways by any other designation, as well as bridges and any other portions of the transportation network.

Project shall mean the construction, reconstruction, retrofit, maintenance, alteration, repair of any Street or Public Way, and includes the planning, design, approval and implementation processes. Project does not mean any routine maintenance such as sweeping, mowing, and pothole patching.

Public Way shall mean any transportation improvement accessible by the public; including but not limited to parks and public land.

Users shall mean individuals that use Streets, including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation riders and drivers, emergency vehicles, freight carriers, agricultural vehicles and people of all ages and abilities, including children, youth, families, older adults and individuals with abilities.

Projects and Phases

The City of Rockford shall approach every transportation and transportation-related improvement as an opportunity to create safer, more accessible streets for all users. Complete Streets may be achieved through single projects or incrementally through a series of smaller improvements or maintenance activities over time. This includes approaching private development and re-development projects with a Complete Streets focus in mind. Projects may be phased to include planning, scoping, programming, design, right-of-way acquisition, construction/reconstruction, operation and maintenance.

Transportation improvement projects will include facilities and other amenities that are recognized as contributing to Complete Streets, which may include but not limited to, one or more of the following:

1. Multi-use paths and sidewalk (new construction/development, gap construction, repair or replacement, ADA improvements)
2. Crosswalk improvements, bump-outs or pedestrian refuge islands
3. Accessible improvements consistent with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA)
4. Traffic calming measures
5. Street and multi-use path/sidewalk lighting
6. Underground utility installation for both new development (a requirement under the City's Subdivision Ordinance)
7. As often as possible remove existing overhead utilities from arterial and collector streets (pursue alternate funding sources such as ComEd Rider LGC)
8. Bicycle accommodations following RMAP's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
9. Connecting sidewalks and multi-use paths along public streets to private development or commercial sidewalks and paths
10. Landscaped boulevards and parkways improving the look of the streets while providing a water quality benefit

Exceptions

Any exception to this policy shall be approved by City staff and be documented to indicate the basis of the decisions. Additional review by the City Council will be done when necessary. Exceptions of the policy that are requirements of the Subdivision Ordinance or Zoning Ordinance shall be approved by City Council as noted in those ordinances. In some cases for private development the developer may have the opportunity for cash in lieu of the Complete Streets element. The following exceptions to this policy may be considered:

- The costs of providing accommodation for some travel modes are excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use by those modes.
- Where the construction is not practically feasible or cost effective because of severe topography constraints, or unreasonable adverse impacts on the environment or on neighboring land uses including impact from right-of-way acquisition.
- Activities that are ordinary maintenance activities designed to keep assets in serviceable condition and do not change the street's geometry or operations. Such activities may include pothole patching, mowing, sweeping/cleaning, joint repair or other regular or seasonal maintenance.
- A documented absence of current and future need exists.
- There is a reasonable and equivalent project along the same corridor, effectively serving the same destinations and providing the same access and mobility, which is already programmed to provide facilities, therefore exempting the project at hand.
- The type of project does not have a significant impact on the roadway, such as signal upgrades or additional turn lanes.

Design Guidelines

The City of Rockford shall follow the latest accepted or adopted design standards available from, including but not limited to:

- City of Rockford Engineering Design Criteria Manual
- Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)
- Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- American Association of State Highways and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)
- National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)
- American Planning Association (APA)
- American with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG)
- Active Transportation Alliance

The design solutions shall be flexible and innovative while balancing public input on the user and modal needs. The City of Rockford recognizes that all streets are not the same: Streets may vary by type and intensity of the adjacent land use, number of travel lanes, width of existing right-of-way, posted speed limits, traffic volumes and characteristics such as topography and soil types. As a result Complete Streets may have a different look throughout the City but fosters an inviting place to live, work and visit.

Performance Measures

The City shall measure the success of the Complete Streets policy and report annually on the following:

- Lineal feet of new or reconstructed sidewalk (publicly or privately built)
- Lineal feet of new or reconstructed multi-use paths (publicly or privately built)
- Miles of new or restriped bike routes
- Number of new or reconstructed curb ramps
- Number of new or restriped crosswalks
- Number of new or replaced pedestrian signals
- Number of new street trees planted
- Number of Walk to School Programs initiated
- Rate of children walking or bicycling to school

Implementation

The City views Complete Streets as integral to everyday transportation decision-making practices and processes. Primary implementation of this policy will be through the Public Works Department in conjunction with the Community and Economic Development Department. The City will take the following actions to implement this Complete Streets policy:

- Ensure that the Complete Streets is incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan and Capital Improvement Plan.
- The Subdivision Ordinance and Engineering Design Criteria Manual shall be reviewed annually and revised as needed to reflect changes in best practices and design standards.
- Through the private development project plan review process, installation of Complete Street elements will be incorporated during the construction phase of the private development project when appropriate.
- Maintain a comprehensive inventory of the pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure within the City's GIS program.
- Each year, the City will evaluate applicable transportation related projects for inclusion of the Complete Streets elements and if none are incorporated provide an explanation as to the reasons why.
- When appropriate, the City shall review existing plans and policies related to transportation planning/improvements to ensure consistency with the Complete Streets policy.
- When available, the City shall provide training and professional development opportunities on non-motorized transportation issues.