

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.

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- 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, 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
 - 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.

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- 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.

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- 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,

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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.