


COMPLETE STREETS

building and paying for a complete streets network



Complete Streets help people get where they want to go. Whether it's to work, school, the bank, or the grocery store, Complete Streets afford a variety of safe options for people of all ages and abilities and for every mode of travel. The specifics of designing Complete Streets are different for every community. Decisions about design and construction should be based on the context of the roadway, surrounding land uses, impact on safety, and cost.

The core goal of Complete Streets should be to provide a network of safe roadways for all modes of transportation. The roadway network should help people get from point A to point B within their community, obviously, but should also help them reach destinations beyond by connecting to transit stations, regional trail systems, and bicycle, pedestrian, and transit networks in neighboring communities.

PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

Factors to consider when designing a network of Complete Streets include:

- **VARIOUS MODES OF TRAVEL:** People use more than cars to get from place to place. Many take transit, walk, or bike. These active transportation modes should not only be accommodated, but should actually be encouraged as the healthiest ways for residents to get around and experience their community. Roadway planners and engineers can use a variety of design tools for improving and encouraging active transportation for everyone.
- **SURROUNDING LAND USES:** Commercial districts, transit stations, schools, and parks will have higher pedestrian traffic volumes than an industrial park, for instance. Roads surrounding these land uses, then, should include sidewalks, crosswalks, safe crossings at intersections, and transit shelters on service routes. Including bicycle facilities and bike racks along roads can help to increase rates of cycling to these locations.
- **CRASHES:** A high rate of vehicle crashes in certain locations often indicates a flaw in the design of the roadway. Areas with high crash rates should be prioritized for improvement, not only to prevent injuries, but also because crashes can deter people from choosing to walk or bike.
- **AUTOMOBILE TRAFFIC VOLUME:** Roads with higher average daily traffic (ADT) counts and high vehicle speeds may require separated facilities for bicyclists, whereas residential roads with low traffic volumes may not require a dedicated bicycle facility. Higher vehicle speeds contribute to the severity of injury and the risk for dying from a vehicle crash. High speeds may indicate a need for traffic-calming measures to improve safety for all road users.
- **NUMBER OF LANES & ROADWAY WIDTH:** Some roads may be designed to accommodate a higher number of vehicles at a higher speed than necessary. In these cases, roads may be eligible for reconfiguration to reduce the number or width of traffic lanes to accommodate additional modes of travel.

(Continued on reverse.)

EFFECTIVE BUDGETING

Through long-range planning and mindful scoping of individual projects, communities can design and build Complete Streets with minimal impact on their budgets. Using the principles of Complete Streets is a cost-effective way to produce safer, healthier, more livable communities everywhere.

Communities can save money on Complete Streets by implementing the following recommendations:

1) MAXIMIZE OPPORTUNITIES BY LOOKING AT A VARIETY OF PROJECTS.

There are Complete Streets solutions for many types of projects. For example, a resurfacing project may present an opportunity to add low-cost facilities, such as painted crosswalks, bicycle lanes, or bike route signage. For larger road reconstruction projects, facilities for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users should be included in the project from the outset.

2) MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO A PROJECT AREA SIMULTANEOUSLY, RATHER THAN PIECEMEAL.

The best way to keep construction costs low is to avoid retrofits and ensure that all appropriate modes are considered at the outset of a construction project, rather than adding new accommodations later. Communities should strive to plan ahead and do it right the first time.

3) ADOPT A COMPLETE STREETS POLICY THAT DEFINES A PROCESS FOR PROJECT REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION.

Complete Streets policies can help communities set goals, streamline project review, and ensure that the needs of all people are being met. Complete Streets policies also define exceptions and determine how communities will measure the impact of completed projects over time.

4) ASSESS ALL PLANNED CONDITIONS.

It is equally important to look at any existing plans, such as regional and local comprehensive, development, and transportation plans. The achievement of goals in those plans may impact any projects currently under consideration. By researching planned conditions and designing new projects with these conditions in mind, communities can avoid costly retrofits in the future.

5) SHARE COSTS WITH OTHER AGENCIES.

Under The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Complete Streets policy, communities can have bicycle and pedestrian facilities included in road reconstruction projects on state highways by paying just 20 percent of the cost and taking on maintenance. Communities can plan for the cost share by reviewing IDOT's capital plan, noting roads that are scheduled for reconstruction, determining which roads should include bicycle or pedestrian facilities, and budgeting for those costs as they arise. While fewer roads in Illinois are under the jurisdiction of the Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways (CCDOH), the agency has a strong Complete Streets policy.

6) SHARE COSTS WITH SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES.

Communities can create a more cost-effective network by partnering with neighboring communities or Councils of Governments to get bulk rates on materials. For example, multiple communities can partner to purchase bike route signage or thermoplastic for striping crosswalks at a reduced cost.

7) DEVELOP AND USE AN ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN.

An active transportation plan can help guide the facilities that are placed on any road, prevent costly retrofits, and help communities to win federal funds for projects. In communities with no plan, guides such as AASHTO's Green Book and the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) can guide the types of facilities that serve various modes of transportation.