



# 3. COMPLETE STREETS MODEL POLICIES

## 3.1 Introduction

Complete Streets policies have been adopted or proposed at the federal, state, regional, and local levels of government. Ideally, such a network of policies would be in place to ensure that the needs of all users are accounted for regardless of implementing agency or funding source. As of July 2011, the federal government and the State of Ohio have not yet adopted comprehensive Complete Streets policies.

In 2010, MORPC adopted a Complete Streets policy that applies to the use of federal funds within its transportation planning area, but while this policy covers many transportation funding scenarios and situations, there are many additional scenarios in central Ohio that fall outside of MORPC's policy scope. For example, projects using local funds are exempt from MORPC's Complete Streets policy. One of the goals of the Complete Streets toolkit is to facilitate the adoption of Complete Streets policies by local governments throughout the region.

This chapter of the toolkit provides model policies for urban, suburban, and rural communities. The goal of these model policies is to serve as a flexible template for communities in central Ohio. While the communities described here are fictitious, the models were derived through research of existing policies in the United States, and are designed to include all of the essential policy elements recommended by the National Complete Streets Coalition (see box below). In combination with MORPC's existing policy, the adoption of Complete Streets policies at a local level would greatly improve the transportation system for all residents of central Ohio.

### *An Ideal Complete Streets Policy:*

- *Includes a vision for how and why the community wants to complete its streets.*
- *Specifies that ‘all users’ includes pedestrians, bicyclists and transit passengers of all ages and abilities, as well as trucks, buses and automobiles.*
- *Encourages street connectivity and aims to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected network for all modes.*
- *Is adoptable by all agencies to cover all roads.*
- *Applies to both new and retrofit projects, including design, planning, maintenance, and operations, for the entire right-of-way.*
- *Makes any exceptions specific and sets a clear procedure that requires high-level approval of exceptions.*
- *Directs the use of the latest and best design criteria and guidelines while recognizing the need for flexibility in balancing user needs.*
- *Directs that complete streets solutions will complement the context of the community.*
- *Establishes performance standards with measurable outcomes.*
- *Includes specific next steps for implementation of the policy.*

*Source: National Complete Streets Coalition ([www.completestreets.org](http://www.completestreets.org)).*

The adoption of a Complete Streets policy by itself is not enough to ensure that Complete Streets will be implemented. Along with the policy, existing guidelines, standards, and procedures may need to be revised in order to ensure that the designs of new facilities and the maintenance and operation of new and existing facilities are compliant with the policy. This revision should include land use and zoning policies to provide for mixed land use developments and projects that provide direct non-vehicular connections within a given development.

Some helpful resources and examples for these guidelines and standards are provided in different sections of the toolkit. The MORPC Complete Streets checklist, used for MORPC's projects, may also be a helpful resource. It is included as Appendix 2.

## 3.2 Model Urban Complete Streets Policy

The following model policy would be suitable for an urban community; i.e., a medium-to-large city adjacent to other similar communities, with a relatively large proportion of residential land area and very little rural, agricultural, or preserved land area. For the purposes of this document, we generally consider a community to be urban (rather than suburban) when it is unable to annex new land.

### “Moon City” - Complete Streets Policy

**Background.** Some areas in Moon City were designed for automobile transportation and lack facilities, such as sidewalks, bus shelters, and bicycle lanes. As demand for walking, bicycling, and transit grows, safe and accessible transportation accommodations for all users become increasingly necessary. Reducing the sole reliance on the automobile can help in improving air quality and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

About 33 percent of workers residing in Moon City work outside the city boundaries, and a large proportion of the trips taken in Moon City begin or end in other communities. It is essential to provide safe and accessible transportation facilities for all users not only within Moon City, but also to connect to neighboring communities.

An estimated 20 percent of Moon City residents suffer from obesity. A lack of physical activity is one of the many factors that increase the risk of obesity and diseases associated with the condition. Active transportation is an efficient, convenient way for residents to get exercise.

According to Census data, 10 percent of households in Moon City have no access to a motor vehicle. The residents of these households should be accommodated by infrastructure that makes non-automobile transportation safe, convenient, and comfortable.

Moon City is served by 10 express bus routes and 20 local bus routes. Transit ridership is projected to increase in future decades, and transit service is expected to expand. However, some bus stops are in locations without sidewalks, safe street crossings, or facilities for the disabled.

Finally, from 2008 to 2010, there were 70,143 motor vehicle crashes in Moon City, including 140 crashes involving pedestrians, 68 involving bicyclists, and a total of 210 fatalities. Improving traffic safety is a priority for the city.

**Definition.** Complete Streets are roadways designed to safely and comfortably accommodate all users, including, but not limited to motorists, cyclists, pedestrians, transit and school bus riders, delivery and service personnel, freight haulers, and emergency responders. “All users” includes people of all ages and abilities.

**Vision.** To create an equitable, balanced, and effective transportation system throughout Moon City that allows every roadway user to travel safely and comfortably, makes sustainable transportation options available to everyone, and provides a comprehensive, integrated network for all modes both within Moon City and connecting to adjacent communities.

**Policy Statement.** The Complete Streets policy of Moon City is developed to provide guidance for decision makers, planners, and designers to ensure that multimodal elements are incorporated into all transportation improvement projects.

- All roadway projects, including new roadways, reconstruction of existing roadways, and new developments in Moon City shall accommodate users of all ages and abilities, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, motorists, persons with disabilities, and adjacent land users.
- Accommodation of all users should be consistent with the project context, including current or anticipated development density, roadway characteristics, transit plans, right-of-way dimensions and availability, and community plans. Since each roadway location is unique, flexibility in the appropriate type of facilities should be provided in order to allow designers to tailor the project to the unique circumstances.
- This policy shall apply to the new construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, repair, maintenance, or planning of roadways, trails and other transportation facilities, for the entire right-of-way.
- All plans, policies, standards, guidelines, and procedures shall be reviewed, and if necessary phased in gradually, to ensure compliance with Complete Streets principles. When revising those documents, it is critical to recognize the need for flexibility in balancing user needs.
- Once those documents are revised, all roadway projects shall adhere to the most recent city-approved documents, including the following:
  - Planning documents, such as the comprehensive master plan, area plan, strategic plan, bicycle master plan, mobility plan, thoroughfare plan, or Safe Routes to School plans.
  - Zoning and subdivision regulations.
  - Project development procedures, such as design standards.
  - Operations and maintenance plans.
  - Other applicable transportation policies.

- Roadway projects shall include a project description that provides information about the city right-of-way, public support for the improvement, the potential environmental impacts of improvements, and the benefits of the project, including improved access and connectivity.
- Project boundaries shall be chosen to include connections through “pinch points,” such as overpasses, railroad crossings, and bridges.
- Street furniture, such as bike racks or benches, should be considered as part of all projects as long as they do not impede any user. Landscaping and street trees should also be considered, with careful analysis of tree, site, and design considerations.

**Exemptions.** Exemptions from this policy should be avoided. However, in cases where partial or full exemptions are necessary, they should be documented during the project development process and presented during the public involvement process. All exemptions shall be kept on record and made publicly available. The exemption of any roadway project from this policy shall be approved by a senior level department head, such as the Public Service Director.

**Performance Standards.** The success of Complete Streets projects shall be measured through a number of ways, including but not limited to:

- Miles of on-street and off-street bicycle routes created.
- New linear feet of sidewalk.
- Changes in the number of people using public transportation, bicycling, or walking (mode shift).
- Percentage of children walking or bicycling to school (mode shift).
- Number of crashes including motorists and non-motorists.
- Number of new street trees.

**Implementation.** According to the National Complete Streets Coalition, there are four key steps for successful implementation:

1. Restructure procedures to accommodate all users on every project.
2. Develop new design policies and guides.
3. Offer workshops and other training opportunities to planners and engineers.
4. Institute better ways to measure performance and collect data on how well the streets are serving all users.

Moon City will carry out these key steps in the following ways:

1. Procedures for new projects will be restructured to follow a process in which Moon City staff reviews all projects for its accommodation of all users.
2. Resources will be allocated for the research and development of new or revised design standards and design policies for projects within the city. Detailed design guidelines on how to build Complete Streets will be developed. The city will also acquire a library of existing design guides that serve as good examples for the design of Complete Streets.
3. Moon City planners and engineers will attend a certain number of workshops and other educational sessions each year relating to the design and implementation of Complete Streets.
4. Moon City staff will conduct ongoing research to determine performance measures. Data on all modes of traffic will be collected regularly and analyzed in order to determine trends.

### **3.3 Model Suburban Complete Streets Policy**

The following model policy would be suitable for a suburban community; i.e., a small city or village adjacent to other similar communities or to a larger city, with a relatively large proportion of residential land area and a relatively low proportion of rural, agricultural, or preserved land area. Note that a community may have areas that are urban (“main street” downtown), but outlying areas may be more suburban in character.

#### **“City of Crest Ridge” - Complete Streets Policy**

**Background.** Like many suburbs, some areas in Crest Ridge were designed for automobile transportation and lack facilities, such as sidewalks, bus shelters, and bicycle lanes. As demand for walking, bicycling, and transit grows, safe and accessible transportation accommodations for all users become increasingly necessary. Reducing the sole reliance on the automobile can help in improving air quality and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

About 66 percent of workers residing in Crest Ridge work outside the city boundaries. Furthermore, a large proportion of the trips taken in Crest Ridge begin or end in other communities. It is essential to provide safe and accessible transportation facilities for all users not only within Crest Ridge, but also to connect to neighboring communities.

An estimated 15 percent of Crest Ridge residents suffer from obesity. A lack of physical activity is one of the many factors that increase the risk of obesity and diseases associated with the condition. Active transportation is an efficient, convenient way for residents to get exercise.

According to Census data, 5 percent of households in Crest Ridge have no access to a motor vehicle. The residents of these households should be accommodated by infrastructure that makes non-automobile transportation safe, convenient, and comfortable.

Crest Ridge is served by 2 express bus routes and 1 local bus route. Transit ridership is projected to increase in future decades, and transit service is expected to expand. However, some bus stops are in locations without sidewalks, safe street crossings, or facilities for the disabled.

Finally, from 2008 to 2010, there were 2,143 motor vehicle crashes in Crest Ridge, including 15 crashes involving pedestrians and 10 involving bicyclists, with a total of 6 fatalities. Improving traffic safety is a priority for the city.

**Definition.** Complete Streets are roadways designed to safely and comfortably accommodate all users, including, but not limited to motorists, cyclists, pedestrians, transit and school bus riders, delivery and service personnel, freight haulers, and emergency responders. “All users” includes people of all ages and abilities.

**Vision.** To create an equitable, balanced, and effective transportation system throughout the City of Crest Ridge that allows every roadway user to travel safely and comfortably, makes sustainable transportation options available to everyone, and provides a comprehensive, integrated network for all modes both within Crest Ridge and connecting to adjacent communities.

**Policy Statement.** The Complete Streets policy of the City of Crest Ridge is developed to provide guidance for decision makers, planners, and designers to ensure that multimodal elements are incorporated into all transportation improvement projects.

- All roadway projects, including new roadways, reconstruction of existing roadways, and new developments in Crest Ridge shall accommodate users of all ages and abilities, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, motorists, persons with disabilities, and adjacent land users.
- Accommodation of all users should be consistent with the project context, including current or anticipated development density, roadway characteristics, transit plans, right-of-way dimensions and availability, and community plans. Since each roadway location is unique, flexibility in the appropriate type of facilities should be provided in order to allow designers to tailor the project to the unique circumstances.
- This policy shall apply to the new construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, repair, maintenance, or planning of roadways, trails and other transportation facilities, for the entire right-of-way.
- All plans, policies, standards, guidelines, and procedures shall be reviewed, and if necessary phased in gradually, to ensure compliance with Complete Streets principles. When revising those documents, it is critical to recognize the need for flexibility in balancing user needs.
- Once those documents are revised, all roadway projects shall adhere to the most recent city-approved documents, including the following:
  - Planning documents, such as the comprehensive master plan, area plan, strategic plan, bicycle master plan, mobility plan, thoroughfare plan, or Safe Routes to School plans.
  - Zoning and subdivision regulations.
  - Project development procedures, such as design standards.
  - Operations and maintenance plans.
  - Other applicable transportation policies.

- Roadway projects shall include a project description that provides information about the city right-of-way, public support for the improvement, the potential environmental impacts of improvements, and the benefits of the project, including improved access and connectivity.
- Project boundaries shall be chosen to include connections through “pinch points,” such as overpasses, railroad crossings, and bridges.
- Roadway projects shall follow an open and transparent public engagement process during the entire process of complete street projects, from planning to opening.

**Exemptions.** Exemptions from this policy should be avoided. However, in cases where partial or full exemptions are necessary, they should be documented during the project development process and presented during the public involvement process. All exemptions shall be kept on record and made publicly available. The exemption of any roadway project from this policy shall be approved by a senior level department head, such as the Public Service Director.

**Performance Standards.** The success of Complete Streets projects shall be measured through a number of ways, including but not limited to:

- Miles of on-street and off-street bicycle routes created.
- New linear feet of sidewalk.
- Changes in the number of people using public transportation, bicycling, or walking (mode shift).
- Percentage of children walking or bicycling to school (mode shift).
- Number of crashes including motorists and non-motorists.
- Number of new street trees.

**Implementation.** According to the National Complete Streets Coalition, there are four key steps for successful implementation:

1. Restructure procedures to accommodate all users on every project.
2. Develop new design policies and guides.
3. Offer workshops and other training opportunities to planners and engineers.
4. Institute better ways to measure performance and collect data on how well the streets are serving all users.

The City of Crest Ridge will carry out these key steps in the following ways:

1. Procedures for new projects will be restructured to follow a process in which city staff reviews all projects for their accommodation of all users.

2. Resources will be allocated for the research and development of new or revised design standards and design policies for projects within the city. Detailed design guidelines on how to build Complete Streets will be developed. The city will also acquire a library of existing design guides that serve as good examples for the design of Complete Streets.
3. Crest Ridge planners and engineers will attend a certain number of workshops and other educational sessions each year relating to the design and implementation of Complete Streets.
4. City staff will conduct ongoing research to determine performance measures. Data on all modes of traffic will be collected regularly and analyzed in order to determine trends.

## 3.4 Model Rural Complete Streets Policy

The following model policy would be suitable for a rural community; i.e., a county or township with a large proportion of sparsely populated agricultural or preserved land.

### “Smith County” - Complete Streets Policy

**Background.** Like many rural areas, most parts of Smith County were designed for automobile transportation only and lack facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. As demand for walking, bicycling, and transit grows, safe and accessible transportation accommodations for all modes become increasingly necessary. Reducing the sole reliance on the automobile can help in improving air quality and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

About 70 percent of workers residing in Smith County work outside the city boundaries. It is essential to provide safe and accessible transportation facilities for all users not only within Smith County, but also to connect to neighboring communities.

An estimated 30 percent of Smith County residents suffer from obesity. A lack of physical activity is one of the many factors that increase the risk of obesity and diseases associated with the condition. Active transportation is an efficient, convenient way for residents to get exercise.

According to Census data, 7 percent of households in Smith County have no access to a motor vehicle. The residents of these households should be accommodated by infrastructure that makes non-automobile transportation safe, convenient, and comfortable.

Smith County is served by one local bus route. Transit ridership is projected to increase in future decades, and transit service is expected to expand. However, some bus stops are in locations without sidewalks, safe street crossings, or facilities for the disabled.

Finally, from 2008 to 2010, there were 1,493 motor vehicle crashes in Smith County, including 19 crashes involving pedestrians, 4 involving bicyclists, with a total of 12 fatalities. Improving traffic safety is a priority for the county.

**Definition.** Complete Streets are roadways designed to safely and comfortably accommodate all users, including, but not limited to motorists, cyclists, pedestrians, transit and school bus riders, delivery and service personnel, freight haulers, and emergency responders. “All users” includes people of all ages and abilities.

**Vision.** To create an equitable, balanced, and effective transportation system throughout Smith County that allows every roadway user to travel safely and

comfortably, makes sustainable transportation options available to everyone, and provides a comprehensive, integrated network for all modes both within Smith County and connecting to adjacent communities.

**Policy Statement.** The Complete Streets policy of Smith County is developed to provide guidance for decision makers, planners, and designers to ensure that multimodal elements are incorporated into all transportation improvement projects.

- All roadway projects, including new roadways, reconstruction of existing roadways, and new developments in Smith County shall accommodate users of all ages and abilities, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, motorists, persons with disabilities, and adjacent land users.
- Accommodation of all users should be consistent with the project context, including current or anticipated development density, roadway characteristics, transit plans, right-of-way dimensions and availability, and community plans. Since each roadway location is unique, flexibility in the appropriate type of facilities should be provided in order to allow designers to tailor the project to the unique circumstances.
- This policy shall apply to the new construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, repair, maintenance, or planning of roadways, trails and other transportation facilities, for the entire right-of-way.
- All plans, policies, standards, guidelines, and procedures shall be reviewed, and if necessary phased in gradually, to ensure compliance with Complete Streets principles. When revising those documents, it is critical to recognize the need for flexibility in balancing user needs.
- Once those documents are revised, all roadway projects shall adhere to the most recent county-approved documents, including the following:
  - Planning documents, such as the comprehensive master plan, area plan, strategic plan, bicycle master plan, mobility plan, thoroughfare plan, or Safe Routes to School plans.
  - Zoning and subdivision regulations.
  - Project development procedures, such as design standards.
  - Operations and maintenance plans.
  - Other applicable transportation policies.
- Roadway projects shall include a project description that provides information about the county right-of-way, public support for the improvement, the potential environmental impacts of improvements, and the benefits of the project, including improved access and connectivity.
- Project boundaries shall be chosen to include connections through “pinch points,” such as overpasses, railroad crossings, and bridges.
- Roadway projects shall follow an open and transparent public engagement process during the entire process of complete street projects, from planning to opening.

**Exemptions.** Exemptions from this policy should be avoided. However, in cases where partial or full exemptions are necessary, they should be documented during the project development process and presented during the public engagement process. All exemptions shall be kept on record and made publicly available. The exemption of any roadway project from this policy shall be approved by a senior level department head, such as the Public Service Director.

**Performance Standards.** The success of Complete Streets projects shall be measured through a number of ways, including but not limited to:

- Miles of on-street and off-street bicycle routes created.
- New linear feet of pedestrian accommodations.
- Changes in the number of people using public transportation, bicycling, or walking (mode shift).
- Percentage of children walking or bicycling to school (mode shift).
- Number of crashes involving people walking or bicycling.
- Number of new street trees.

**Implementation.** According to the National Complete Streets Coalition, there are four key steps for successful implementation:

1. Restructure procedures to accommodate all users on every project.
2. Develop new design policies and guides.
3. Offer workshops and other training opportunities to planners and engineers.
4. Institute better ways to measure performance and collect data on how well the streets are serving all users.

Smith County will carry out these key steps in the following ways:

1. Procedures for new projects will be restructured to follow a process in which county staff reviews all projects for their accommodation of all users.
2. Resources will be allocated for the research and development of new or revised design standards and design policies for projects within the city. Detailed design guidelines on how to build Complete Streets will be developed. The county will also acquire a library of existing design guides that serve as good examples for the design of Complete Streets.
3. Smith County planners and engineers will attend a certain number of workshops and other educational sessions each year relating to the design and implementation of Complete Streets.
4. County staff will conduct ongoing research to determine performance measures. Data on all modes of traffic will be collected regularly and analyzed in order to determine trends.

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