

CITY OF AURORA COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

Adopted December 2020



Definitions

For the purpose of this section, the following definitions shall apply unless the context clearly indicates or requires a different meaning.

Complete Street – a street that is designed and operated to enable safe access and mobility for all Users, such that pedestrians, bicyclists, individuals with disabilities, motorists and public transportation users of all ages’ ability, income, race or ethnicity are able to safely and conveniently move upon, along and across a street. A complete street is a street for everyone that enables all modes of transportation.

Complete Street Infrastructure – design features that contribute to a safe, convenient, or comfortable travel experience for Users, including but not limited to features such as: sidewalks; shared use paths; bicycle lanes (and/or bike routes); automobile lanes; paved shoulders; street trees and landscaping; planting strips; curbs; accessible curb ramps; curb extensions; crosswalks; median/refuge islands; pedestrian and traffic signals, including countdown and accessible signals; signage; street furniture; bicycle parking facilities; public transportation stops and facilities; transit priority signal; traffic calming devices such as rotary circles, traffic bumps, and surface treatments such as paving blocks, textured asphalt and concrete; roundabouts; narrow travel lanes; raised medians; and dedicated transit lanes, special bus lanes, accessible pedestrian signals, 20 mph zones, Autonomous Vehicles (AVs) supporting facilities (such as staging areas, curb modifications, mobility hubs)

Street – any right-of-way, public or private, including arterials, connectors, alleys, ways, lanes and roadways by any other designation, as well as bridges, tunnels and any other portions of the transportation network.

Project – 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 include minor routine upkeep such as cleaning, sweeping, mowing, spot repair, patching, resurfacing or interim measures on detour routes.

Users – 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 disabilities.

Public Way – any transportation improvement accessible by the public; including but not limited to parks and public lands under the City’s jurisdiction and maintenance.

Vision

This Complete Streets Policy shall direct the City of Aurora to help create a safe, reliable and livable community that focuses on developing and providing a safe and accessible, well-connected and visually attractive surface transportation network, that balances the needs of all users, including: motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation riders and drivers, emergency vehicles, freight carriers, agricultural vehicles and land uses and promote a more livable community for people of all ages and abilities, including children, youth, families, older adults and individuals with disabilities.

Purpose

This policy is intended to ensure that all planning, scoping, programming, design, right-of-way acquisition, construction, construction engineering, reconstruction, operation and maintenance activities produce safe and accessible surface transportation network improvements that allow all users of the public right of way to safely and conveniently reach their destination regardless of their chosen mode of transportation. This policy is also intended to encourage walking and biking, producing the health benefits that result from these types of activities, help reduce the demand for fossil fuels, ease traffic congestion, reduce wear on roadways, improve air quality and make streets and public and private spaces more attractive for businesses and customers and increase economic activity.

Planning

The policy shall direct decision-makers to consistently plan, design, construct and maintain streets to accommodate all anticipated users including but not limited to pedestrians, bicyclists, individuals with disabilities, motorists, emergency vehicles, freight and commercial vehicles.

Thus, City shall incorporate Complete Streets principles into the City's Comprehensive Plan, Sustainability Plan, Downtown Master Plan, Aurora Zoning Ordinances, area plans, transportation plans, standards and specifications, documents and other plans, manuals, rules, regulations and programs as appropriate.

Equity

The policy shall consider catering to all, especially low-income residents. Careful consideration shall be given to ensure that the transportation system provides for the needs of all users regardless of their income, age, race or disability.

Projects and Phases

The City of Aurora shall approach every transportation and transportation-related improvement and project phase (s) as an opportunity to create safer, more accessible streets for all users. These phases include, but are not limited to: planning, scoping, programming, design, right-of-way acquisition, construction, construction engineering, reconstruction, operation and maintenance.

Other changes to transportation facilities on streets and rights-of-way, including capital improvement projects and major rehabilitation must also be included. Complete Streets principles will be applied on all new City projects, privately funded development and incrementally on existing streets through a series of small improvements and activities over time.

Maximum financial flexibility is important to implement Complete Streets principles. All sources of transportation funding, public and private, should be drawn upon to implement Complete Streets within the City of Aurora.

It is understood that maintenance activities do not necessarily trigger requirements for major street improvements and should not be expected to do so. However, maintenance activities do present some opportunities that can improve the environment for other roadway users.

Exceptions

Any exception to this policy must be approved by City Staff and be documented to indicate the basis for the decision. Such documentation shall be publicly available. Exceptions for private projects must be considered on a case by case basis by the City Staff. The following are exceptions that may be considered:

- An affected roadway prohibits by law the use by pedestrians and bicyclists (such as state & federal limited-access highways) in which case a greater effort shall be made to accommodate those specified users elsewhere, including on roadways that cross or otherwise intersect with the affected roadway.
- 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 unreasonable adverse impacts on the environment or on neighboring land uses including impact from right-of-way acquisition.
- Where routine maintenance of the transportation network does not change the roadway geometry or operations, such as mowing, sweeping, patching, resurfacing and spot repair.
- 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.

Jurisdiction and Network Connectivity

The Complete Streets Policy shall apply to all City-owned transportation facilities in the public right-of-way including, but not limited to streets, sidewalks, alleys, bridges and all other connecting pathways. Privately constructed and owned streets, sidewalks, alleys and parking lots will be encouraged where possible, to also adhere to this policy through funding requirements and development review.

The policy will focus on developing a connected, integrated network system that serves all road users.

Design

The City of Aurora shall follow accepted or adopted design standards and use the best and latest design guidance and standards available, including but not limited to, existing design guidance/standards from: Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG), and the Active Transportation Alliance.

In recognition of various contexts and public input, a flexible, innovative and balanced approach that follows other appropriate design standards may be considered, provided that a comparable level of safety for all users is present.

Context Sensitivity

City of Aurora shall implement Complete Streets solutions in a manner that is sensitive to the local context and character, aligns transportation and land use goals and recognizes that the needs of users may vary by case, community or corridor. The overall goal of this approach is to preserve and enhance scenic, aesthetic, historical and environmental resources while improving or maintaining safety, mobility and infrastructure conditions.

Performance Measures

City of Aurora shall measure the success of this Complete Streets policy using, but not limited to, the following criteria:

- Linear feet of pedestrian accommodations built
- Number of ADA accommodations built
- Miles of bike lanes/trails built or striped
- Number of transit accessibility accommodations built
- Number of approved exemptions from this policy

Implementation

The City views Complete Streets as integral to everyday transportation decision-making practices and processes. To this end:

- The City shall adopt the Complete Streets Policy early spring of 2020 and to that effect:
- The Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Planning and Zoning, the Department of Public Works, and other relevant departments, agencies or committees shall incorporate Complete Streets principles into all appropriate plans, manuals, checklists, decision trees, rules, regulations and programs as appropriate.
- Review all new roadway projects, public and private developments and other Complete Streets-related improvements, early in the planning process, to ensure consistency with this policy.
- Ensure that the Ten Year Capital Plan incorporates implementation of the Complete Streets Policy and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (Adopted July 2009) with any proposed roadway and parks projects.
- Continue to keep up the Bicycle Friendly Community Status.
- City Staff through City's Bicycle Pedestrian and Transit Committee members and/or other advocates/organizations help assist with bicycle and pedestrian safety education programs or quizzes (the program may include electric bicycles/scooters) amongst public/private schools and/or other entities, and as needed, work with school district (s) to assist with infrastructure related projects within the public right of way.

- City Staff shall identify current and potential future sources of funding for street improvements and recommend improvements to the project selection criteria to support Complete Streets projects.
- When available, the City shall encourage Staff professional development and training on non-motorized transportation issues through attending conferences, classes, seminars and workshops.
- Review any requests for exceptions to the Complete Streets Policy and related documentation.
- Carry out and monitor the implementation and impact of this policy based on the goals set out within this section.

That if any section, paragraph, or provision of this policy shall be held to be invalid or unenforceable for any reason, the invalidity or unenforceability of such section, paragraph, or provision shall not affect any of the remaining provisions of this policy.

The City is fully committed in reaping the benefits of implementing the Complete Streets Policy for its residents and commuters equitably, safely and sustainably.

This Policy shall be in full force and effect upon its passage, approval and publication as provided by law.