

Appendix C. Complete Streets Program

Complete Streets Program

In September 2013, Mayor Beutler signed Executive Order 086476 which approved Administrative Regulation No. 35 establishing a policy for the development of Complete Streets. The purpose for this Executive Order/Administrative Regulation was to encourage the design and operation of a transportation system that is safe and convenient for all users, regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation through the development of Complete Streets. The Complete Streets policy sets out to coordinate projects relating to the design, planning, construction, reconstruction, or rehabilitation of public and private streets, or development projects which would substantially impact or cause construction of public or private streets between City of Lincoln departments.

The Executive Order established a Complete Streets Committee to discuss how to implement Complete Streets within the community. The committee is an interdepartmental group comprised of representatives from Planning, Public Works & Utilities, StarTran, Urban Development, Building and Safety, Parks and Recreation, and the Health Department. This committee reviews street design plans and provide input as needed to balance the needs of all street users. This is the extent of the City's Complete Streets program, which does not provide guidance on how the committee should provide input or how to make decisions and weigh tradeoffs.

Branding/Image

The City's website makes the Complete Streets program appear to be bicycle-specific and part of the bicycle program (the Complete Streets page is under the Bike Lincoln heading). While some may see Complete Streets as primarily a bicycle-focused concept, but the national perspective is that Complete Streets is **not** solely bicycle focused. It entails pedestrian enhancements, safety concepts for motorists, placemaking and context-sensitivity objectives, transit improvements, etc. As such, the City should reframe how Complete Streets is displayed online and how it is thought about internally.

Direct links to the Complete Streets page from the Transportation Planning webpage (rather than only through the Bike Lincoln webpage) and the Public Works Department's "Our Streets" webpage should be provided to reinforce this change in perspective.

The multimodal nature of Complete Streets can be further publicized by adding content to the Complete Streets webpage that emphasize the broad benefits (e.g., Safety, Economy, Neighborhood Preservation, Efficiency, Cost-Savings, etc.) as a way to curtail potential confusion about Complete Streets and bike projects.

Complete Streets Manual

The Mayor's Complete Streets Executive Order calls for developing an inter-departmental process for Complete Streets implementation. Currently, Complete Streets decisions are made via informal inter-departmental communications and by the Complete Streets Committee. Several challenges exist within this approach, including lack of guidance/priorities for making decisions when tradeoffs are necessary and a public that is uninformed and potentially has incorrect expectations for street projects.

Improvements to the implementation of Complete Streets can be made without modifying the existing policy/executive order or adopting a new one. Rather, the development of a Complete Streets Manual or Plan that includes procedures, guidelines, and augmentations to departmental policy statements regarding various design elements can achieve this outcome. This should include:

- Considerations for context-sensitivity (based on land use density, character, and development patterns), such as through the development of "street types" that augment functional classification. These street types can then serve as starting points for individual design projects and give the designer, project team, and the public a clear image of the intended character and function of the street.

- Design criteria parameters for each street type (e.g., number of lanes, lane width, target speed, default bikeway type, sidewalk width, etc.).
- Guidance, priorities, and a process for making decisions and judging tradeoffs in street design based on context (e.g., whether on-street parking or bike lanes have priority on a certain type of street in a certain context).
- Consideration for proposed bike routes (or bus routes) in prioritization of street resurfacing. The City could add a Multimodal factor to the resurfacing priorities moving up bus routes (since buses cause bad streets to deteriorate faster) and bike routes (since potholes are more likely to cause injuries to bicyclists).
- A formalized and potentially modified street project development process that incorporates specific points for stakeholder involvement and decision-making.
- Process for documenting, reporting, and evaluating decisions and exceptions to the Complete Streets Executive Order.

Some of these elements may simply be formally recording what staff already do. However, this effort will increase consistency and transparency and can save staff time.

Increased and Streamlined Public Participation

Outreach on past street projects has primarily been toward adjacent residents and business-owners. Bicycle advocates have also sometimes been specifically targeted for outreach. The PBAC is sometimes involved in projects that are explicitly bicycle-oriented, but not every general street project. There is room to increase consistency in public outreach for Complete Street in terms of the messaging, nature, and intensity of outreach.

By developing a Complete Streets Manual and street typologies that communicate intent and manage expectations, public involvement can be streamlined, reduce misinformation, and build support. Furthermore, providing information about individual projects online and establishing a consistent public outreach process for street projects can improve the community's understanding of the Complete Streets program.