

Livable Streets Policy Example: Crystal City, MO

Adopted by the City Council of Crystal City in 2010, Crystal City's policy remains one of the most effectively written policies. It is inclusive, ensuring ADA-compliant designs will be used for the elderly and those with disabilities. Additionally, it assigns implementation roles and outlines a long-term plan for incorporating Complete Street designs.

Complete Streets ordinance

(a) Purpose. The purpose of this policy is to set forth guiding principles and practices for use in all transportation projects, where practicable, economically feasible, and otherwise in accordance with applicable law, so as to encourage walking, bicycling, and other non-motorized forms of transit, in addition to normal motorized transit, including personal, freight, and public transit vehicles. All uses must be designed to allow safe operations for all users regardless of age or ability. The ultimate goal of this policy is the creation of an interconnected network of Complete Streets that balances the needs of all users in pleasant and appealing ways in order to achieve maximum functionality and use.

(b) Application and scope.

(1) This policy requires the city administrator to include complete street elements in the design, construction and maintenance of public transportation projects, improvements and facilities. The city administrator or city council may exempt a project from this policy provided one or more of the following conditions are met:

(i) Non-motorized use of the roadway under consideration is prohibited by law. In this case a greater effort may be necessary to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians elsewhere within the right of way or within the same transportation corridor.

(ii) The cost of inclusion would be excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use. Excessively disproportionate is defined as exceeding twenty percent of the cost of the larger transportation project. This twenty percent figure should be used in an advisory rather than an absolute sense.

(iii) The street has severe topographic or natural resource constraints.

In all cases where an exemption has been granted, the city administrator or other appropriate official shall document the decision and the invoked exemption condition(s) in the project plan.

(2) This policy requires consideration of Complete Streets elements by the Planning and Zoning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals, in appropriate circumstances. Accordingly, the city strongly encourages all developers and builders to obtain and comply with, as appropriate, these standards.

(3) This policy is intended to cover all development and redevelopment in the public domain within Crystal City. This includes all public transportation projects such as, but not limited to, new road construction, reconstruction retrofits, upgrades, resurfacing, and rehabilitation. This also includes privately built roads intended for public use. As such, compliance with these principles may be factored into decisions related to the city's participation in private projects and whether the city will accept possession of privately built roads constructed after the passage of this ordinance. The city administrator, on a case-by-case basis, may exclude routine maintenance from these requirements.

(4) The city understands that special considerations and designs are necessary to accommodate older adults and disabled citizens. Accordingly, the city will ensure that those needs are met in all Complete Streets designs. All public transportation projects involving Complete Streets elements, where practicable, shall be ADA compliant to help meet those special considerations.

(c) Guiding principles and practices.

(1) "Complete street" defined. A complete street is designed to be a transportation corridor for all users: pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and motorists. Complete Streets are designed and operated to enable safe continuous travel networks for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and bus riders of all ages and abilities are able to safely move from destination to destination along and across a network of Complete Streets. Transportation improvements, facilities and amenities that may contribute to Complete Streets and that are considered as elements of a "complete street" include: street and sidewalk lighting; pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements; access improvements, including compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act; public transit facilities accommodation including, but not limited, to pedestrian access improvement to transit stops and stations; street trees and landscaping; drainage; and street amenities.

(2) The city will strive, where practicable and economically feasible, to incorporate "Complete Streets" elements into all public transportation projects in order to provide appropriate accommodation for bicyclists, pedestrians, transit users and persons of all abilities, while promoting safe operation for all users, in comprehensive and connected networks in a manner consistent with, and supportive of, the surrounding community.

(3) The city will incorporate Complete Streets principles into all public strategic plans, upon subsequent updates. The principles, where practicable, shall be incorporated into other public works plans, manuals, rules, regulations, operational standards, and programs as appropriate and directed by the city administrator. The principles shall be incorporated into appropriate materials and resources no later than two years after the adoption of this ordinance.

(4) It shall be a goal of the city to foster partnerships with the State of Missouri, Jefferson County, neighboring communities, and Crystal City Business Districts in consideration of functional facilities and accommodations in furtherance of the city's Complete Streets policy and the continuation of such facilities and accommodations beyond the city's borders.

(5) The city recognizes that Complete Streets may be achieved through single elements incorporated into a particular project or incrementally through a series of smaller improvements or maintenance activities over time. The city will attempt to draw upon all possible funding sources to plan and implement this policy and shall investigate grants that may be available to make Complete Streets elements more economically feasible.

(6) The city recognizes that the elements comprising a complete street are only effective when appealing and pleasant to use and will ensure improvements meet those standards.

(d) Study/analysis to be undertaken as part of public transportation project. During the planning phase of any public transportation improvement project, a designee of the city administrator (which may be the street superintendent, the city's design engineer, or other person or firm deemed appropriate by the city administrator) shall conduct a study and analysis relating to the addition and incorporation of Complete Streets elements into the project.

The study and analysis shall include cost estimates, whether the elements could be incorporated in a safe and legal manner, the degree that such improvements or facilities may be utilized, the benefit of such improvements or facilities to other public transportation improvements, whether additional property is required, physical or area requirements or limitations and any other factors deemed relevant.

Such study and analysis shall be submitted to the city administrator for consideration in the design and planning of the public transportation project. The city administrator shall incorporate Complete Streets elements in each public transportation project to the extent that such is economically and physically feasible.

(e) Administration.

(1) The city administrator shall be responsible for the overall implementation and execution of the Complete Streets principles and practices.

(2) The city administrator shall collaborate with appropriate staff to adopt a Complete Streets checklist for use on all public transportation projects. The city encourages all developers and builders to obtain and use this checklist.

(3) When available, appropriate, and monetarily feasible, the city shall support staff professional development and training on non-motorized transportation issues through attending conferences, classes, seminars, and workshops.



Livable Streets Policy Case Study: Caruthersville, MO

Adopted by the City Council of Caruthersville April 2017

After nearly one year of public meetings, persistence, and a lot of hard work, a Livable Streets ordinance was passed in Caruthersville in April 2017. Dawn Jordan, Caruthersville Healthy Communities Coordinator for Pemiscot County Initiative Network, led the effort to bring Livable Streets to Caruthersville. “The motivation was to make sure the streets are livable, useable, and resident-friendly,” Jordan said.

It took hitting the streets and a community-wide effort to make the passage of the ordinance a reality.

“We had meetings. We went to several businesses. We went to residents as a whole. I went to some of my committee members that are on the Caruthersville Healthy Communities Board, so they were able to voice their opinions as well,” Jordan said. “Abby from PedNet came in and met with residents, business owners, the mayor and some council men and women as well.”

As one of the leaders for the Walking School Bus, Dawn Jordan has seen first-hand, the need for safer sidewalks, especially for children walking to school, “Some of the sidewalks have trees that are uprooted and moving the sidewalk. There are so many kids that are tripping on uneven sidewalks and some streets don’t have sidewalks, so we have to walk into the streets to get to school.”

Creating opportunity for the community

One of the main concerns about the ordinance was what it would cost the community. Inserting language into the ordinance that specified that it would apply only to new development was key to sealing the deal. “We’re not a big town. And the council was concerned about the financial aspects of it,” said Jordan.

Another selling point for Livable Streets in Caruthersville was the opportunity to attract new funding streams to improve older streets and sidewalks.

“We want to be able to redo the sidewalks and streets, but like a lot of rural communities, we do not have a budget for that. If you want grants to help with redevelopment, you have to have something in place to say that it is an important issue to your community— ‘our streets are important and the sidewalks are important.’ Now that [Livable] Streets has passed, we can say we have a [Livable] Streets Ordinance and we need help.”

Jordan had encouraging words of advice for advocates who want to make their communities safer with Livable Streets policy:

“One of the council members said that it was because of my persistence that the ordinance was passed. I did not let a meeting go by that I wasn’t there bringing up the issue. So even when it looks like it may not be approved, just go to the meetings and keep going. It may take awhile for it to be approved, but never give up.”
