

East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Complete Streets Policy

Adopted April 27, 2018

Background

East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (ECWRPC) has long been a proponent of creating a multimodal, safe and efficient transportation system that ensures accessibility to all roadway users. In 2009, ECWRPC started the state's first regional Safe Routes to School Program. This program works with over 150 schools in 33 districts to make it safer and more appealing for students in grades K-8 to walk and bicycle to school. In 2012, ECWRPC received funding from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to create a bicycle and pedestrian plan for the urbanized areas of Calumet, Outagamie, and Winnebago counties. The purpose of this plan was to identify gaps in the bicycle and pedestrian network and to create recommendations for creating connectivity throughout the study area. The plan was approved in 2014, and a steering committee oversees the implementation of the plan.

ECWRPC works with transit agencies within the region to provide cost-effective transit services to meet the needs of the users and to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). These planning activities include Transit Development Plans, transit rider surveys, County Human Services-Public Transportation Coordinated Planning, and overall planning support. In addition to bicycle/pedestrian planning and transit planning, ECWRPC conducts a wide array of transportation planning services, including developing long-range transportation plans, regional highway corridor planning, freight planning, and travel demand modeling. Combined, these planning services aim to enhance and improve the transportation infrastructure, services, and safety for all roadway users throughout the region.

ECWRPC acknowledges the role planning plays in public health and the overall health outcome of those in our communities. Planning impacts “how people make choices of where to live and how to get around, their ability to access healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity...and more.¹” In addition to the role planning plays in health, ECWRPC also recognizes the role planning plays on social equity and social determinants of health, including access to recreational opportunities, employment, health care, support systems, and education/vocational training. The increased emphasis on the role planning plays on health and equity has resulted in strong partnerships and collaborations between planners, health professionals, municipalities, and organizations.

¹ www.planning.org/research/publichealth

The Regional Complete Streets Policy expands on these efforts by ensuring a cohesive and inclusive transportation network that will alleviate inequities, promote physical activity, mitigate traffic congestion, and increase roadway safety.

Vision

The ECWRPC region will have an equitable, balanced, and effective transportation system where every roadway user can travel safely, efficiently, and comfortably while having many transportation options available for all users regardless of their modes of transportation.

Definition of Complete Streets

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.

Policy Statement

ECWRPC will promote the Complete Streets concept throughout the region; it recommends that all local jurisdictions adopt comprehensive Complete Streets policies that are consistent with this regional policy. ECWRPC will seek incorporation of the Complete Streets policy and concepts into the development of transportation infrastructures. Development may include planning and land use control, engineering, scoping, design approvals, implementation, and performance monitoring.

To ensure federal compliance, ECWRPC requires projects receiving federal funding adhere to this policy. ECWRPC shall give consideration to local Complete Streets policies; however, the regional policy will take precedence for ECWRPC-attributable federal funding criteria². Projects utilizing any other funding sources are also encouraged to adhere to this policy.

Context Sensitivity

While every street should be planned, designed, built, operated, and maintained for all users, there is no single design standard for Complete Streets and few streets will have separate accommodations for every mode. Each project must be considered both separately and as part of a cohesive network to determine the level and type of treatment necessary for all users. Each street and right-of-way design should be created to complement the neighborhood in which it exists. Identifying best practices is essential when implementing improvements intended to fulfill this Complete Streets Policy.

² Sources of federal funding may require bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

ECWRPC will take a flexible, innovative, and balanced approach to creating context-sensitive Complete Streets that meet or exceed national best-practice guidelines.

Network

A well-connected network provides more route choices that can disperse traffic across the network, provides alternatives when priority is given to a particular mode along one route, and provides route alternatives when a link in the network is obstructed or where barriers exist. A well-connected network also provides safe and convenient transitions from one mode of transportation to another, from one jurisdiction to another and from one type of infrastructure to another. Every effort should be made to provide a continuous, seamless network that is accessible to all users and modes of transportation.

Recognizing the regional connections throughout ECWRPC's jurisdiction and the uniqueness of each community, ECWRPC will work with contractors, local units of government, and state agencies to ensure Complete Streets principles are implemented in a context-sensitive manner.

Applicability of this Policy

This policy applies to projects that involve new construction, reconstruction, maintenance, repair, resurfacing, rehabilitation, or planning of roads, trails, transit, and other transportation facilities that will use federal funds allocated through ECWRPC.

Even small projects can be an opportunity to make meaningful and lasting improvements. For example, adding or moving an edge stripe to create room for cyclists or painting a crosswalk adjacent to a bus stop are both relatively low cost improvements. Furthermore, the design of new or reconstructed facilities should anticipate future demand for bicycling, walking, and transit facilities and should not impede the provision of future enhancements.

Complete Streets projects are generally accomplished through adding the following to the public right-of-way: sidewalks, bicycle facilities (e.g. bike lanes, sharrows, wayfinding signs), ADA-compliant curb ramps and bus stops, trails, and any other reasonably applicable facilities to assist in multimodal uses.

Design and Flexibility

The latest design guidance, standards, and recommendations available will be used in the implementation of Complete Streets, including the most up-to-date versions of:

- The National Association of Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Bikeway Design Guide

- The NACTO Urban Street Design Guide
- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)
 - A policy on Geometric Design of Highway and Streets
 - Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities
- The US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration's Manual on Uniform Traffic Design Controls (MUTCD)
- The Wisconsin Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (WMUTCD)
- The US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration's Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks Guide
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Bicycle Facility Design Handbook
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Facilities Design Manual (FDM)
- East Central Wisconsin Trail Wayfinding Guidebook
- Local and regional bicycle and pedestrian plans

The above resources shall be consulted when planning and designing new roadways; however, innovative design options that have a comparable level of safety for users when compared to more traditional design options shall not be precluded. ECWRPC strongly encourages communities to stay current on new guidance, standards, recommendations and resources regarding bicycle and pedestrian accommodations as well as ADA-accessible accommodations.

Exceptions

All federally-funded transportation projects will consider Complete Streets principles and possible options at the time of the initial application for funding. Communities utilizing state, county, or local funding are also encouraged to consider Complete Streets principles and all possible treatments in their projects. However, certain circumstances may exist where it is not possible to consider Complete Streets in roadway design. Such exceptions for federally-funded projects shall be limited to the following:

- Bicyclists and pedestrians are prohibited by law from using the roadway.
- The cost of establishing bikeways would be excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use. Excessively disproportionate is defined by FHWA and state statutes as bicycle and pedestrian facilities together exceeding 20 percent of the cost of the larger transportation project.
- Where sparsity of population or other factors indicate an absence of need.
- Detrimental environmental or social impacts outweigh the need for these accommodations.

ECWRPC encourages local communities to create clear and limited exceptions in their local projects such as are listed above.

Implementation

Upon approval and adoption of this Complete Streets policy, it will become part of ECWRPC's planning and project selection processes for ECWRPC-attributable funding. Projects will be evaluated with context-sensitivity taken into account. The principles of this policy will also guide ECWRPC staff in the preparation of transportation plans and other plans.

ECWRPC will assist other local units of government in creating and adopting their own Complete Streets policies through ECWRPC's technical assistance program.

Performance Measures

ECWRPC will measure the success of this Complete Streets policy by using the following measures:

- Miles of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure built
 - Facilities counted will include sidewalks, bike lanes, trails (on- and off-road), sharrows, and wide paved shoulders
- Number and location of bicycle and pedestrian wayfinding signage adequately placed
- Annual ridership of Fond du Lac Transit, GO Transit, and Valley Transit
- Number of bicyclists and pedestrians using facilities
- Number of local units of government that adopt their own Complete Streets policies
- Serious injury and fatal crash history for all modes
- Population impacted by Complete Streets facilities improvements
- Percentage of roadways with Complete Street facilities

Definitions

access way	One or more connections that provide pedestrian or bicycle passage either between streets or between a street and a building, school, park, transit stop, or other destination. (Beaverton, Oregon)
complete street	A street that accommodates convenient and safe use by everyone, regardless of age, ability, or mode of travel. (MPO of Johnson County)
context sensitive design solution	A design which balances safety, mobility and transportation needs, while preserving scenic, aesthetic, historical, environmental, neighborhood, and community values and characteristics. (MPO of Johnson County)
new street	A street constructed where one has not previously existed. (MPO of Johnson County)
reconstructed street	An existing street that has rehabilitation done to it, which is estimated at 50% or higher of the the cost of a new street (excluding utilities except storm sewer, and sub-drains), will also be considered a reconstructed street for the purpose of this policy. (MPO of Johnson County)
right-of-way	A right of way is a type of easement that allows a person to pass through another's land. (real-estate-law.com)
street	The street is considered to be the subgrade, base, pavement, grading, storm sewer, and sub-drains (i.e., all of the elements required to build, operate, and maintain the street). (MPO of Johnson County)
street network	A system of interconnecting lines and points that represent a system of roads for a given area. A street network provides the foundation for network analysis; for example, finding the best route or creating service areas.
street maintenance	Rehabilitation of a street, which generally restores the functionality of the existing street components (either primarily as a street project or in conjunction with underground public utility construction), without significantly altering or adding to those components, and which is estimated at less than 50% of

the cost of a new street with those components. Utility construction (except storm sewer and sub-drains) is excluded from this cost calculation.

**transportation
improvement
program (TIP)**

A list of upcoming transportation projects—covering a period of at least four years. The TIP must be developed in cooperation with the state and public transit providers. The TIP should include capital and non-capital surface transportation projects, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and other transportation enhancements, Federal Lands Highway projects, and safety projects included in the State’s Strategic Highway Safety Plan. (Federal Transit Administration)