



City of University Heights
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City of University Heights
Complete Streets Policy
June 2017

The Vision

The City of University Heights expects to realize long-term cost savings in improved public health, reduced fuel consumption, better environmental stewardship, and reduced demand for motor vehicle infrastructure through the implementation of this Complete Streets policy. The vision of this Complete Streets Policy includes achieving the following goals:

1. To create a comprehensive, integrated, and connected transportation network that supports compact, sustainable development and creates livable communities.
2. To provide a connected network of facilities accommodating all modes of travel.
3. To look for opportunities to repurpose rights-of-way to enhance connectivity for all modes to commercial, recreation, education, public services, and residential destinations.

Users and Modes

This policy defines Complete Streets by this outcome: all current and projected users of the public right-of-way are intended to conveniently and safely reach their destinations via public rights-of-way, regardless of their chosen mode of transportation, for that project to be considered “complete.” The design of the City of University Heights street network will create a connected grid of streets, sidewalks, and trails accommodating a safe, easily accessible, convenient, comfortable, and visually appealing manner for all users of all ages and abilities, including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, children, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, freight carriers, emergency responders, and adjacent land users.

Connectivity and All Agencies

The City of University Heights will design, operate, and maintain a transportation network that provides a connected network of facilities accommodating all modes of travel. To achieve this goal the City of University Heights will foster partnerships with the State of Iowa, The University of Iowa, Metropolitan Planning Organization of Johnson County, school districts, Johnson County, neighboring cities, citizens, businesses, interest groups, and neighborhoods to implement the Complete Streets policy throughout University Heights.

Design Criteria and Context Sensitive Design

Each street and right-of-way design should be practically undertaken to complement the neighborhood in which it exists, while complying with accepted or adopted design standards and other guidelines

based upon resources identifying best practices in urban design and street design, construction, operations and maintenance when implementing improvements intended to fulfill this Complete Streets Policy. Project designers will consider all available design options that comply with state and federal requirements in the following manuals, as well as others when feasible, to ensure access for all modes:

- *AASHTO Green Book: A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*, by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
- *AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*, by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
- *Urban Street Design Guide*, by the National Association of City Transportation Officials
- *Urban Bikeway Design Guide*, by the National Association of City Transportation Officials
- *Iowa Statewide Urban Design Standards*, by the Institute for Transportation at Iowa State University

Implementation

Complete Streets projects are generally accomplished through adding the following to the public right-of-way: sidewalks, ADA-compliant curb ramps, bicycle facilities (e.g. bike lanes, shared lane arrows, way-finding signs), ADA-compliant bus stops, trails, and any other reasonably applicable facilities. In particular, projects will incorporate complete street facilities found in MPOJC-adopted plans, including (but not limited to) the *Long Range Transportation Plan*, bicycle and pedestrian plans, the University Heights Comprehensive Plan and Community Visioning Plan, and local ADA accessibility transition plans.

This Complete Streets Policy and associated project documentation applies to any NEW STREET, RECONSTRUCTED STREET, or STREET MAINTENANCE within the public right-of-way (see Definitions section for CAPITALIZED items) with the following clarifications:

- A. NEW STREETS and RECONSTRUCTED STREETS either built by the City of University Heights or by a developer for City of University Heights ownership will implement complete streets. Applies in all zoning designations and land uses.
- B. STREET MAINTENANCE Projects: Whereas all NEW STREET and RECONSTRUCTED STREETS will implement multi-modal transportation elements, it is not expected for maintenance and rehabilitation projects to change geometric features and functional elements to upgrade to multi-modal transportation elements, although items that fit within the existing geometrics (e.g. re-striping, signage upgrades, sidewalks, etc.) should be implemented.
- C. Sidewalks and curb ramps within a project corridor will be ADA-compliant.
- D. PRIVATE STREETS: Sidewalks and ADA-compliant curb ramps are required; otherwise PRIVATE STREETS are exempt from this policy.
- E. Existing and new bus stops within a project corridor will be ADA-compliant.

This policy will be periodically reviewed and revised as deemed appropriate.

Exceptions

Exceptions to the Complete Street policy must be documented in writing by the City Engineer with supporting data that indicates the reason for the decision. The documented decisions will be reviewed by City Council or their designee. Exceptions are limited to the following:

- **Where there are relatively high safety risks.** There are times bicycle and pedestrian facility standards cannot be met due to roadway topographic constraints or it is impractical to make the street safe for shared use. Roads with a combination of traffic volumes exceeding 18,000 vehicles per day, constrained and fixed rights-of-way, or posted speeds of 45+ mph may need special consideration. This type of exception is highly problematic because high traffic volume is often an indication that a road is the most direct connection between multiple origins and destinations, and pedestrians, cyclists and transit users should not be denied access to those destinations. For this exception to be granted, the City or developer **will** enhance alternate routes (e.g. signage, bike boulevard treatments, shared-use trail spurs, bike lanes, shared-lane markings, etc.), unless available alternate routes also meet an exception(s) to this policy.
- **Where bicyclists and pedestrians are prohibited by law from using the roadway.**
- **Where a main road has multi-modal facilities for all users of the right-of-way, the PUBLIC FRONTAGE ROAD may be exempt from this policy.**
- **Where the project consists primarily of the installation of traffic control, including pretimed traffic signals, or safety devices and little or no additional right-of-way is to be acquired.** However whenever new traffic control detection devices are installed they must be capable of detecting bicycles. All new pedestrian crossing devices must also meet the most current accessibility standards for controls, signals, and placement.
- **Where a project involves emergency maintenance activities designed to keep assets in serviceable condition or when interim measures are implemented on temporary detour routes.**
- **Where the City Engineer determines the construction is not practically feasible due to significant or adverse environmental impacts to waterways, floodplains, significant street trees, remnants of native vegetation, wetlands, or other critical areas.**
- **Where the cost of establishing bikeways or walkways would be excessively disproportionate to the cost of project.** In accordance with federal guidelines, excessively disproportionate is defined as exceeding twenty percent of the cost of the total transportation project (including right of way acquisition costs). This exception must consider probable use through the life of the project, a minimum of 20 years.
- **Where scarcity of population or other factors indicate an absence of need for current and future conditions.** This exception must take the long view and consider probable use through the life of the project, a minimum of 20 years.
- **Where the Average Daily Traffic count (ADT) is projected to be less than 1,000 vehicles per day over the life of the project.**

Performance Measures

The City will measure the success of Complete Streets policy by using the following measures:

- Miles of bike lanes, trails, shared lane arrows striped or built
- Linear feet of pedestrian accommodations built
- Number of ADA accessibility accommodations built
- Number of exemptions from this policy approved
- Annual ridership of Iowa City Transit, Cambus and Coralville Transit
- Number of projects in which street trees were planted

Definitions

- A. COMPLETE STREET: a street that accommodates convenient and safe use by everyone, regardless of age, ability, or mode of travel.
- B. 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.
- C. 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).
- D. NEW STREET: a street constructed where one has not previously existed.
- E. RECONSTRUCTED STREET: an existing street that has rehabilitation done to it, which is estimated at 50% or higher of the cost of NEW STREET (excluding utilities except storm sewer or sub-drains), will also be considered a RECONSTRUCTED STREET for the purposes of this policy.
- F. PUBLIC STREET: a roadway owned and maintained by the City of University Heights, providing frontage for (a) parcel(s) of property as set forth in the City of University Heights Zoning Code.
- G. PRIVATE STREET: a privately owned and maintained roadway established by final platting or otherwise established as approved by the City of University Heights, providing frontage for (a) parcel(s) of property as set forth in the City of University Heights Zoning Code.
- H. PUBLIC FRONTAGE ROAD: a roadway located with portions of PUBLIC STREET right-of-way, frontage road reservation easement or adjoining other streets, which have access control.
- I. 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 same components. Utility construction (except storm sewer or sub-drains) is excluded from this cost calculation.
- J. PARKWAY: the non-driveway area of public right-of-way between the back of curb or edge of roadway and the right-of-way line.