Hennepin County Complete Streets Policy

Final Policy approved by Hennepin County Board of Commissioners
July 14, 2009

This Complete Streets policy was created under Hennepin County Board Resolution 09-0058R1. The resolution demonstrates the county's commitment to develop and maintain a safe, efficient, balanced and environmentally sound county transportation system and to support Active Living – integrating physical activity into daily routines through activities such as biking, walking, or taking transit. The county strives to be a leader in providing opportunities and choices for its residents, and believes that a well-planned transportation system that includes Complete Streets demonstrates this leadership.

Hennepin County will enhance safety, mobility, accessibility and convenience for all corridor users including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, commercial and emergency vehicles, and for people of all ages and abilities by planning, designing, operating, and maintaining a network of Complete Streets. This policy applies to all corridors under Hennepin County jurisdiction. The county will work with other transportation agencies to incorporate a Complete Streets philosophy and encourages the State of Minnesota, municipalities, other counties and regional organizations to adopt similar policies.

Given the diversity of the natural and built environment in Hennepin County, flexibility in accommodating different modes of travel is essential to balancing the needs of all corridor users. The county will implement Complete Streets in such a way that the character of the project area, the values of the community, and the needs of all users are fully considered. Therefore, Complete Streets will not look the same in all environments, communities, or development contexts, and will not necessarily include exclusive elements for all modes.

Developing Complete Streets will be a priority on all corridors, and every transportation and development project will be treated as an opportunity to make improvements. This will include corridors that provide connections or critical linkages between activity centers and major transit connections, and in areas used frequently by pedestrians and bicyclists today or with the potential for frequent use in the future.

Hennepin County will conduct an inventory and assessment of existing corridors, and develop Complete Streets implementation and evaluation procedures. The Complete Streets policy and implementation procedures will be referenced in the Transportation Systems Plan and other appropriate plans or documents.

Applicable design standards and best practices will be followed in conjunction with construction, reconstruction, changes in allocation of pavement space on an existing roadway, or other changes in a county corridor. The planning, design, and implementation processes for all transitway and roadway corridors will:

- Involve the local community and stakeholders,
- Consider the function of the road,
- Integrate innovative and non-traditional design options,
- Consider transitway corridor alignment and station areas,
- Assess the current and future needs of corridor users,
- Include documentation of efforts to accommodate all modes and all users,
- Incorporate a review of existing system plans to identify Complete Streets opportunities.

Hennepin County will implement Complete Streets unless one or more of the following conditions are documented:

- The cost of establishing Complete Street elements is excessive in relation to total project cost.
- The city council refuses municipal consent or there is a lack of community support.
- There are safety risks that cannot be overcome.
- The corridor has severe topographic, environmental, historic, or natural resource constraints.

The County Engineer will document all conditions that require an exception. The Assistant County Administrator for Public Works will provide the Hennepin County Board with annual reports detailing how this policy is being implemented into all types and phases of Hennepin County's Public Works projects.

Hennepin County will identify and apply measures to gauge the impact of Complete Streets on Active Living and the quality of life of its residents.