

CASE STUDY: COMPLETE STREETS POLICIES

Policy Goal

A Complete Streets Policy will be adopted to ensure that road users of all ages and abilities can safely access and use our streets. The policy should set a strong vision, establish performance metrics with measurable outcomes, and identify steps for implementation.

What are Complete Streets Policies?

Complete Streets are streets that are designed for all road users including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motorists of all ages and abilities.

By adopting a Complete Streets Policy, a community's transportation planner and engineers are obliged to incorporate safe access for all road users into every roadway design project. Complete Streets provides a framework for planners, engineers and elected officials to design and build streets that enable community members to safely cross the street, walk to shops, bicycle to work, ride the bus, and operate personal vehicles.

Why are Complete Streets Policies important?

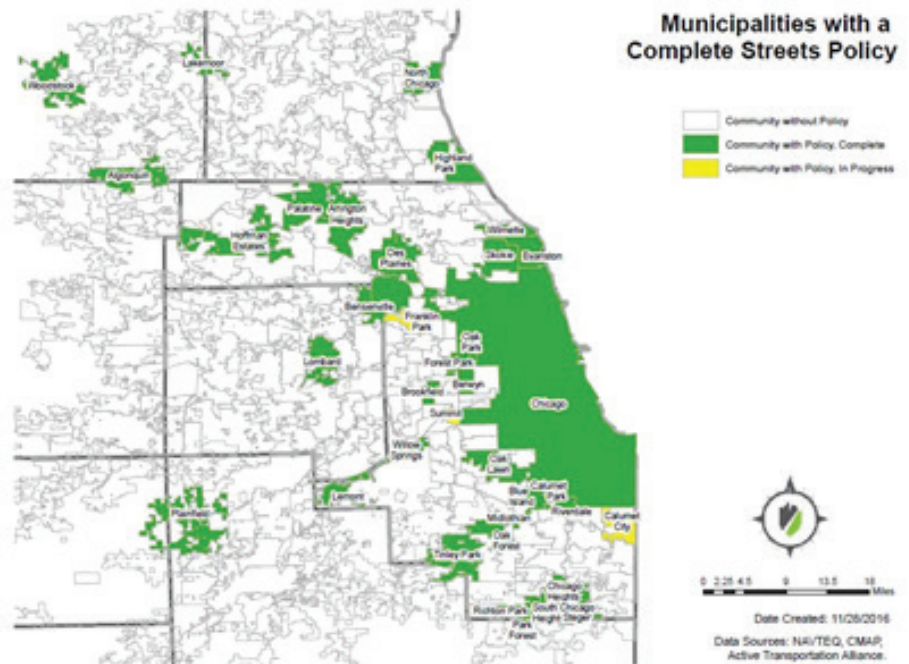
According to the National Complete Streets Coalition: "Complete Streets policies formalize a community's intent to plan, design, and maintain streets so they are safe for all users of all ages and abilities. Policies direct transportation planners and engineers to consistently design and construct the right-of-way to accommodate all anticipated users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users, motorists, and freight vehicles."

Complete Streets Resources

- Complete Streets Policies

<http://atpolicy.org/complete-streets-policies>

- See a list of Complete Streets policies from around the region, many that were developed by the Active Transportation Alliance's planning consultancy.



- **Complete Streets Factsheets**

<https://tinyurl.com/csfactsheets>

- Learn more about Complete Streets by reading through our factsheet series, which includes Illinois-specific data and provides details on the key benefits of Complete Streets approaches such as communities, the economy, safety, youth, older adults, and health and environment.

Case Study: Evanston

Background

With a robust bike plan, impressive infrastructure, and a strong culture around biking and walking, Evanston is a model city for active transportation. In fact, Evanston was named a “Bicycle Friendly Community” by the League of American Bicyclists in 2012; and in 2014, Evanston ranked among the top 25 cities in the nation for people who bike to work. Not only is Evanston a dream for suburban cyclists, but it also has impressive walkability and access to public transportation.



How is Evanston so successful? Obviously, a strong plan is important to drive improvements in the community. The City of Evanston’s 2003 Bike Plan resulted in 38 miles of new bicycle facilities. The plan was recently updated in 2014, offering even more guidance for infrastructure improvement and policy development. The new plan provides recommendations that reflect the demand for further biking improvements in Evanston.

Involvement and buy-in from the community has been key to Evanston’s success. Stakeholders and community members came together to help drive the Bike Plan update in 2014, which included public surveys and workshops.

The Evanston Bicycle Club, formed over 40 years ago, now boasts over 500 members from Evanston and the surrounding areas. The Bike Club hosts rides almost every day of the year and some of its members advocate to make the city even better for people who bike.

Evanston also holds countless events focused around active transportation like Bike the Ridge and Streets Alive! Evanston. These annual events encourage Evanston residents to enjoy riding and walking in safe, car-free spaces.

The importance of a Complete Streets Policy

Evanston’s progress is largely due to its innovative Complete Streets Policy, which was adopted in 2014. By taking a Complete and Green Network Approach, the policy is unique in that it incorporates environmental sustainability into the complete streets framework. Therefore, every city right-of-way project falls under the policy purview, including roads, parks and trails.

A strong policy and plan as well as great community engagement leads to the drive for infrastructure improvement. The Dodge Avenue protected bike lane, which opened earlier last summer, connects the southern city limits to Evanston Township High School and offers added safety for students and others commuting through the area. The upgrade from the Dodge Avenue bike lane to a protected lane adds much needed safety and comfort by physically separating vehicles and people who bike.

Evanston also boasts protected bike lanes on Church Street and Davis Street, as well as many buffered bike lanes and shared streets. In addition, the city recently welcomed Divvy bike-sharing to the community.

Lessons Learned

Evanston's commitment to a culture of active transportation is clear. Other communities should take note of Evanston's recipe for success, which includes an innovative Complete Streets Policy, a notable Bike Plan, and robust community involvement.