



NDOT Complete Streets Policy

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NDOT COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

Prepared for:



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AASHTO	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
DOJ	Department of Justice
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
ICE	Intersection Control Evaluation
ITE	Institute of Transportation Engineers
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MUTCD	Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
NACTO	National Association of City Transportation Officials
NDOT	The Nevada Department of Transportation
NRS	Nevada Revised Statutes
PROWAG	Public Rights of Way Accessibility Guidelines
RTC	Regional Transportation Commission
STIP	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
TPs	Transportation Policies

1. INTRODUCTION

Complete Streets design is an approach or policy used within the transportation industry to promote street networks for all users, not just the accommodation of vehicles. Smart Growth America defines Complete Streets as¹:

“Complete Streets are streets for everyone. They are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work.”

A Complete Streets Program is defined as follows in the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS 277A.285)² as it relates to county governments:

“Complete Streets Program means a program for the retrofitting of streets or highways that are under the jurisdiction of the commission for the primary purpose of adding or significantly repairing facilities which provide street or highway access considering all users, including, without limitation, pedestrians, bicycle riders, persons with a disability, persons who use public transportation and motorists. The term includes the operation of a public transit system as part of a Complete Streets Program...”

Complete Streets include enhanced accommodation for people riding bicycles, walking, using transit, and other users, in addition to the traditional accommodation for vehicles. Over the past 50 years, the movement for planning and designing streets that serve more than automotive travel has grown from local policies to a national effort that is backed by groups such as the National Complete Streets Coalition, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the U.S. Department of Transportation, and the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO).

The purpose of implementing Complete Streets policies and design is to provide access to safe, comfortable, and convenient travel for all users, regardless of age, ability, income, race, or ethnicity. This access could include walking, driving, bicycling, skateboarding, and/or using public transportation.

Complete Streets are not one-size-fits-all, rather they tend to be designed to the intent of the corridor and community they serve. Depending upon the context and needs of users, the “complete” street could include sidewalks, enhanced pedestrian crossings, shared use paths, bikeways, wide outside travel lanes, median islands, narrower travel lanes, special transit amenities, and more. The context of the street is typically realized through deliberate analysis of land use, travel conditions, including all users, as well as stakeholder outreach throughout the community.

2. VISION STATEMENT

The Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) provides for the needs of travelers of all ages and abilities in all planning, programming, design, construction, operations and maintenance

¹<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets/complete-streets-fundamentals/complete-streets-faq>

²<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/nrs/NRS-277A.html#NRS277ASec285>

activities on the State highway system. NDOT views each transportation improvement project as an opportunity to improve safety, access, and mobility for all users in Nevada and recognizes bicycle, pedestrian, and transit modes as integral elements of the transportation system.

NDOT develops integrated multimodal projects in balance with community goals, plans, and values. Addressing the safety and mobility needs of bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users in all projects, regardless of funding, is implicit in these objectives. Bicycle, pedestrian, and transit travel is facilitated by creating Complete Streets, beginning early in system planning and continuing through project delivery, maintenance and operations. Developing a network of Complete Streets requires collaboration among all NDOT departments and local stakeholders to establish effective partnerships.

3. DESCRIPTION OF ROAD USERS

All users/modes include pedestrians, bicyclists and transit passengers of all ages and abilities, as well as trucks, buses, emergency vehicles, and automobiles.

4. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

Provisions for all users will be integrated into the planning, design, construction, maintenance and operation of new and retrofit transportation facilities through the development of appropriate design features. NDOT will implement the Complete Street elements as appropriate. This will enable safe access and mobility of all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users of all ages and abilities.

On all new and reconstruction roadway projects (including resurfacing or restriping projects) that serve adjacent areas with existing or reasonably foreseeable future development or transit service, NDOT shall consider the design of and funding for complete streets facilities. The appropriate design type will be determined by the context of the roadway (i.e., adjacent land use, right-of-way, nearby facilities, etc.). In urban and suburban areas, dedicated bicycle facilities are the preferred bicycle facility type on arterials, as opposed to shared outside travel lanes.

All appropriate projects shall evaluate and document the impact that improvements will have on safety for all users and make all reasonable efforts to mitigate negative impacts on non-motorized modes. Restricting non-motorized access cannot be considered as an appropriate strategy with the exception of those controlled-access highways where pedestrians and bicyclists are prohibited under NRS 484B.593. NDOT will strive to ensure projects do not become barriers to pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users by providing appropriate safe crossings, providing corridor continuity, and ensuring transportation projects comply with the current accessibility guidelines.

5. PROCESS TO HANDLE EXCEPTIONS TO PROVIDING FOR ALL MODES OF TRAVEL

It is NDOT's expectation that accommodation for pedestrians, bicycles, and transit will be incorporated in all appropriate infrastructure projects. However, exceptions to this policy will be considered where exceptional circumstances that prohibit adherence to this policy exist. Such exceptions include, but are not limited to:

- Segments of controlled-access highways where bicyclists and pedestrians are prohibited by law from using the roadway under NRS 484B.593. In these instances, it will be necessary to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians elsewhere along or within the same transportation corridor.
- Areas in which the population and employment densities or level of transit service around the facility does not justify the incorporation of accommodating pedestrians, bicycles, and transit.
- Routine maintenance projects as defined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Department of Justice (DOJ) in the July 8, 2013 DOJ/FHWA Joint Technical Assistance Memorandum and as reiterated in the NDOT ADA Transition Plan may be excluded from this requirement.

As exceptions to policy requests are unique in nature, each will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Decisions for not accommodating bicyclists, pedestrians and transit users in accordance with this policy will require documentation as to why Complete Streets elements cannot be designed and the approval of the Complete Streets Planning Committee. On all Complete Streets proposals both the FHWA and Local Jurisdictions shall be consulted and involved in the process. In an urbanized area, concurrence from the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) or local jurisdiction should be consulted if it is decided that Complete Streets elements cannot be designed.

NDOT will present the preliminary design to the MPO or local jurisdiction during the Conceptual Design Phase. Concurrence from the MPO or local jurisdiction shall be received prior to proceeding with the final design. When an MPO or local jurisdiction is not in agreement with NDOT's design for accommodation of bicyclists, pedestrians, or transit, they can introduce an appeal. The resolution must be submitted to the Complete Streets Planning Committee for review and consideration prior to the final design approval.

6. DEVELOPMENT OF A NETWORK TO HANDLE ALL MODES OF TRAVEL

Complete Streets projects should be implemented so as to establish connectivity within the existing and planned street network. Developing connections to existing and planned pedestrian and bicycle facilities is essential to providing for the overall safety and accessibility of those modes of travel as well as motor vehicles. NDOT should reference the current Nevada Statewide Bicycle Plan, NDOT Local County Bicycle Plans, regional Pedestrian Safety Action Plans, ADA Transition Plan, NDOT Access Management Policy, and other MPO and local agency plans to incorporate safety and mobility of all modes within the existing and planned street network.

7. JURISDICTION

This NDOT Complete Streets Policy applies to all projects funded through NDOT. NDOT strongly encourages the adoption of similar policies by regional and local jurisdictions, where they do not already exist.

8. DESIGN GUIDANCE

In accordance with the FHWA Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Design Flexibility Memorandum (dated August 20, 2013), NDOT will use the best and latest design standards available and will refer to those nationally accepted standards when implementing projects. The following is a list of sources that provide nationally recognized standards:

- AASHTO – Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities
- AASHTO – Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities
- NACTO – Urban Bikeway Design Guide
- Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) – Designing Urban Walkable Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach
- FHWA – Bicycle and Pedestrian Guidance

In addition, NDOT can utilize the following standards and guidance when implementing projects:

- Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), latest edition
- FHWA Performance-Based Practical Design
- FHWA – Guide for Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design
- Public Rights of Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG)
- MPO or local agency standards, if available
- The National Complete Streets Coalition
- Utilize Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) principles to determine proper control at intersections

9. CONTEXT SENSITIVE

Solutions should be developed to fit within the context(s) of the community and those solutions should be flexible so that the needs of the existing and anticipated corridor users can be met. Flexibility must be retained when choosing design standards for various elements of a project, realizing that not all standards lend themselves to a “one-size-fits-all” approach. Innovative practices should be researched and considered where appropriate. Public input should be sought from residents and non-residents alike that will be directly affected by a proposed project through NDOT’s public outreach process. A design that might be appropriate for one part of the state may not be acceptable in a different part of the state, as the underlying concept behind Complete Streets is to design for the needs of the existing and anticipated users of the roadway corridor.

10. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

NDOT will measure the success of this Complete Streets policy using the following performance measures:

- Percent of the ADA Transition Plan completed; and
- Percent of projects in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) that involve Complete Streets elements.

11. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

NDOT views Complete Streets as integral to everyday transportation decision-making practices and processes. To this end:

- A Complete Streets Committee will be formed with representation from Traffic Safety Engineering, Traffic Operations, ADA, Bike/Ped, Maintenance, Engineering Design, and the Districts. The Complete Streets Committee shall be designated as the lead in implementing the Complete Streets Policy. The Complete Streets Committee will be responsible for handling exceptions to providing accommodations for all modes of travel.
- NDOT will incorporate Complete Streets principles into the Comprehensive Plan, Statewide Transportation Plan, the Bicycle Master Plans, and other appropriate plans, manuals, checklists, decision trees, rules, regulations, Transportation Policies (TPs) and programs as appropriate.
- NDOT will review current standards and guidelines to ensure that they reflect the best available standards and guidelines, and effectively implement Complete Streets.
- When available, NDOT shall encourage professional development and training for staff on non-motorized transportation issues through attending conferences, classes, seminars, and workshops.
- NDOT staff shall identify all current and potential future sources of funding for street improvements and recommend improvements to the project selection criteria to support Complete Streets projects.
- NDOT shall promote project coordination among departments with an interest in the activities that occur within the public right-of-way in order to better use fiscal resources.