

RESOLUTION 18,703

A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A COMPLETE STREETS POLICY FOR THE CITY OF CEDAR FALLS, IOWA

WHEREAS, the mobility of freight and passengers and the safety, convenience, and comfort of motorists, cyclists, pedestrians – including people requiring mobility aids, transit riders, and neighborhood residents of all ages and abilities should all be considered when planning, designing, and improving Cedar Falls' streets; and

WHEREAS, integrating sidewalks, bike facilities, transit amenities, and safe crossings into the initial design of street projects avoids the expense of retrofits later; and

WHEREAS, streets are a critical component of public space and play a major role in establishing the image and identity of a city, providing a key framework for current and future development; and

WHEREAS, streets are a critical component of the success and vitality of adjoining private uses and neighborhoods; and

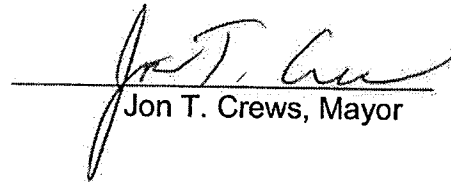
WHEREAS, a goal of Complete Streets is to improve the access and mobility for all users of streets in the community by improving safety through reducing conflict and encouraging non-motorized transportation and transit; and


WHEREAS, it is recognized that there are some streets or corridors in the City which would not fully satisfy a complete streets environment – where it would not be advisable to have non-motorized travel; and

WHEREAS, the National Complete Streets Coalition recognizes ten (10) elements of a successful complete streets policy; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Cedar Falls hereby adopts the following Complete Streets policy, which is consistent with the National Complete Streets Coalition guidance.

ADOPTED this 8th day of July 2013.


Jon T. Crews, Mayor

ATTEST:

Jennifer Rodenbeck, CPA, CPFO
Finance Manager/City Clerk

**Cedar Falls, Iowa
Complete Streets Policy**

The following elements shall constitute the Cedar Falls, Iowa Complete Streets Policy:

1. Sets a Vision

This Complete Streets Policy incorporates the simple and basic concept that streets and roadways should be designed, constructed, and operated to be safe and accessible for all transportation users whether they are pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, vehicular motorists or trucks.

Further, Complete Streets are designed to improve mobility and connectivity, improve health, increase safety, enhance neighborhoods, businesses, and institutions, and advance the quality of life for all Cedar Falls citizens and visitors.

2. Specifies all Users

The City of Cedar Falls will ensure that the safety, access, and convenience of all users of the transportation system are accommodated in all future roadway projects, as defined in the Exceptions element of this Policy (#4 below), including: pedestrians (including persons with mobility aids), bicyclists, transit users, persons with disabilities, youth, seniors, scooter riders, motorcyclists, private motorists, commercial vehicle drivers, freight providers, emergency responders, and adjacent land uses.

3. All Projects (All New and Reconstruction Projects)

Develop as many transportation improvement projects as possible in an affordable, balanced, responsible, and equitable way that accommodates and encourages travel by motorists, bicyclists, public transit vehicles and their passengers, and pedestrians.

For the City of Cedar Falls, Complete Streets may be achieved through single projects or incrementally through a series of smaller improvements activities over time.

Transportation improvements will include facilities and amenities that are recognized as contributing to Complete Streets, which may include street and sidewalk lighting; sidewalks and pedestrian safety improvements such as median refuges or crosswalk improvements; improvements that provide Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant accessibility; transit accommodations including improved pedestrian access to transit stops and bus shelters; bicycle accommodations including bicycle storage, bicycle parking, bicycle routes, shared-use lanes, wide travel lanes or bike lanes as appropriate; and street trees, boulevard landscaping, and street furniture.

4. Exceptions

Exemptions to this Policy shall only be granted when the Department of Developmental Services recommends and City Council determines that any of the following are evident:

- a. The project is occurring on a roadway where non-motorized use is prohibited by law; or

- b. A cost and/or health impact assessment demonstrates that the cost for a particular Complete Streets project would be excessive compared to the need, public health benefit, safety improvement and probable use of that particular street; or
- c. There is absence of use by all, except motorized road-users, that would continue in the future even if the street were a Complete Street; or
- d. An alternate facility has been previously programmed at that location; or
- e. A legal and/or regulatory impediment or constraint exists.

Bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities shall be included in new street construction, re-construction, and other transportation improvement projects, except under one or more of the following conditions. Any condition approval shall follow the implementation process outlined in the corresponding element in this Policy (#10 below).

- a. A project involves only ordinary maintenance activities designed to keep assets in serviceable condition, such as mowing, cleaning, sweeping, patching, joint repair, crack-filling, or pothole filling, or when interim measures are implemented on temporary detour or haul routes;
- b. There is insufficient space to safely accommodate new facilities, as determined by the Department of Developmental Services and City Council;
- c. Where determined by the Department of Developmental Services and City Council to have relatively high safety risks;
- d. Where the City Council exempts a project due to the excessive and disproportionate cost of establishing a bikeway, walkway or transit enhancement as part of a project;
- e. Where jointly determined by the Department of Developmental Services and City Council that the construction is not practically feasible or cost effective because of significant or adverse environmental impacts to streams, floodplains, remnants of native vegetation, wetlands, steep slopes or other critical areas, or due to impacts on neighboring land uses, including impact from right-of-way acquisition.

5. Creates a Network

The City of Cedar Falls recognizes the absolute necessity of promoting pedestrian, bicycle and public transportation network connectivity as an alternative to the automobile in order to provide transportation options and to protect all road users, reduce negative environmental impacts, promote healthy living, and advance the well-being of commuters. Furthermore, the City acknowledges that as public spaces, roads must be designed to afford safety and accessibility to all users. Finally, the City recognizes that the full integration of all modes of travel in the design of streets and highways will help increase the capacity and efficiency of the road network, hopefully reduce traffic congestion by improving mobility options, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and therefore improve the general quality of life.

6. Jurisdictional (Project) Application

This Policy shall apply to all local and/or private development transportation improvement projects whether proposed and/or constructed by the City or private developer, unless specifically excluded through the Exceptions element of this Policy (#4 above). Federal and state transportation improvement projects shall be encouraged to consider inclusion of Complete Streets elements.

7. Design Criteria

The design of new or reconstructed facilities should anticipate likely future demand for bicycling, walking and transit facilities and should not preclude the provision of future improvements. Said design criteria must be guided by national or state recognized standards (i.e. AASHTO, SUDAS, etc.) for the City of Cedar Falls. For example, under most circumstances bridges (which last for 75 years or more) should be built with sufficient width for safe bicycle and pedestrian use in anticipation of a future need for such facilities.

The City will generally follow accepted or adopted design standards when implementing improvements intended to fulfill this Complete Streets policy but will consider innovative or non-traditional design options where a comparable level of safety for users is present.

8. Context Sensitivity

It will be important to the success of the Complete Streets policy to ensure that the project development process includes early consideration of the land use and transportation context of the project, the identification of gaps or deficiencies in the network for various user groups that could be addressed by the project, and an assessment of the tradeoffs to balance the needs of all users. The context factors that should be given high priority include the following:

- a. Whether the corridor provides a primary access to a significant destination such as a community or regional park or recreational area, a school, a shopping/commercial area, or an employment center;
- b. Whether the corridor provides access across a natural or man-made barrier such as a river or freeway;
- c. Whether the corridor is in an area where a relatively high number of users of non-motorized transportation modes can be anticipated;
- d. Whether a road corridor provides important continuity or connectivity links for an existing trail network; or
- e. Whether nearby routes that provide a similar level of convenience and connectivity already exist.

9. Performance Measures

The City of Cedar Falls shall develop, apply, and report on walking and bicycling transportation performance measures in order to evaluate the functioning of the non-motorized transportation system; to ensure consistency with current industry standards; to identify strengths, deficiencies and potential improvements; and to support development of new and innovative facilities and programs. Several factors shall be measured or used by the Department of Developmental Services to evaluate the effectiveness of this Policy on an annual basis. However, the City recognizes that assessing the effectiveness of this Policy is a long-term process and that the community may not experience large scale improvements or be able to collect sufficient data during the initial two (2) years of the implementation of a Complete Streets project. The measures may include:

- a. Changes in traffic counts;
- b. Changes in transit system ridership;
- c. Change in school transportation survey information (transportation to-and-from school);

- d. Changes in bicycle and pedestrian count data; and/or
- e. Other measures, which may include: miles of on-street bicycle routes; miles of off-road trails; new linear feet of pedestrian sidewalks; number of new or reconstructed curb ramp; number of new or repainted crosswalks; number of new street trees planted; percentage of transit stops with shelters; change in Level of Service (LOS) measurement; customer satisfaction surveys; etc.

10. Implementation

In order to ensure Implementation of this Policy, the City of Cedar Falls will have the Department of Developmental Services provide annual recommendations regarding implementation of this Policy to the Mayor and City Council for consideration.

Within six (6) months of the passage of this Policy, the Department of Developmental Services will develop administrative guidelines and implementation of strategies related to this Policy.

July 2, 2013

Mayor Jon Crews, Council Members Darrah, DeBuhr, Hagarty, Madsen-Schmitt,
Runchey, Taiber, Wieland
City of Cedar Falls
City Hall – 220 Clay St
Cedar Falls, IA 50613

Mayor Crews and Council Members,

Thank you for your continued support of the Cedar Falls Blue Zones Project. The citizens of our community have embraced the project with broad-based support from our major employers, food purveyors, the school system, and the general public. The public's overwhelming response to the project is a clear acknowledgment of our community's desire to improve our well-being, personally and collectively.

The following memo discusses:

**PART 1 - The Cedar Falls Blue Zones Project in general,
PART 2 - The Proposed Replacement Complete Streets Policy, and
PART 3 - Detail of Proposed Measurements and Methods**

PART 1 – The Blue Zones Project (in general)

What's in the Blue Zones Project for Cedar Falls?

The City of Cedar Falls stands to gain from becoming a certified Blue Zones Community in several ways: (1) reduced healthcare costs, (2) a reputation for being a well-rounded city, (3) an even more lucrative site for employers to stay, (4) an enticement for businesses to move to the area, (5) greater connectivity and well-being among citizens, and (6) a leadership role in the state regarding well-being, and more.

Why Should Cedar Falls Lead?

With City Council support at several steps along the way, Cedar Falls has been fortunate to receive generous outside funding and dedicated resources for pursuing a broad-based approach toward a healthier community this past year. Not only are we one of the first four communities to have this opportunity, we have within our grasp the ability to become the first certified Blue Zones Community – a national public relations prize with both short-term and long-term value. This designation is a “large feather in our cap” for economic development wins, and the acquisition of healthcare-directed grants in the future. We further enhance our reputation as a “can-do” city worthy of attention and greater investment.

Need to Reduce Expenses

Challenges to our city's fiscal health loom in the future. We applaud the council's leadership in addressing this issue now. One large city expense is the healthcare benefits provided for its employees. Strategies of cost shifting, contract redefinitions, or changes to the insurer will have limited impact in comparison to the double-digit increases realized in recent years and for the foreseeable future.

Fiscally speaking, improved health and well-being is the only proven method for reducing out-of-control healthcare expenses. As noted in our conversation of June 10th, the Blue Zones Project is a prime tool for reducing health care expenses in the long term. Employers and taxpayers -- the healthcare bill payers -- are realistically seeking answers and results for the bottom line. This is why so many employers and individuals have become involved in the Blue Zones Project. Their involvement extends beyond "a nice public relations move," they are interested in supporting healthier, more productive employees, and meaningful healthcare cost reductions on their financial statements.

An excellent example of bottom line impact from establishing a culture of health and well-being exists locally. The Cedar Falls Utilities is marking the 6th year of its comprehensive wellness program. Healthcare costs have been managed within +/- 1% annually as a result -- that's a real and meaningful result that translates to each of our bottom lines as ratepayers in the community.

The City Council's role in setting the tone toward a healthier community is pivotal in reducing healthcare expenses for key employers including the City, taxpayers, and all of Cedar Falls' citizens.

Making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice

Establishing a healthy community comprises a series of changes that together shift the direction and culture of its people. Unique to the Blue Zones Project is its broad-based approach to incorporating simple, yet meaningful changes to places in the community where we live, work, shop, and play.

No single change for any of the community focus areas (employers, schools, organizations, restaurants, grocers, etc.) is out of the norm; most changes comprise "common sense." In each case, the goal is to "make the healthy choice the easy choice." No "freedoms" are being removed from anyone; rather, greater "freedoms" are being extended by putting healthier choices that have been taken away over time back into the equation, back into the community. Individuals interested in making the healthy choice, whatever the topic, are able to do so and are supported in their efforts.

PART 2 – The Proposed Replacement Complete Streets Policy

Blue Zones Methodology for Complete Streets

The Blue Zones Project utilizes well-established science and industry-acknowledged best practices to support individual items that, in turn, support a community's shift towards health. Regarding the topic at hand, Complete Streets, the Blue Zones Project relies on best practices from the transportation and city planners industry, The National Complete Streets Coalition. This well-recognized program was the basis for Cedar Falls Complete Streets Policy adopted in 2009. It has also been the basis for the Cedar Falls Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2012, and is consistent with the Cedar Falls Vision 2020 Plan adopted in 2011.

Complete Streets Replacement Policy Adoption --

We are particularly proud that the City of Cedar Falls has recognized the value of best practices in street and transportation design for some time since the passage of the original Complete Streets in 2009. The passage of that resolution demonstrated openness to best practices, to thinking of things differently, and a willingness to envision a safe, hospitable approach to streets and transportation for all.

Why Replace the Existing Policy?

As we noted in our discussion on June 24, 2013, the current Cedar Falls Complete Streets policy requires modest changes in order to qualify Cedar Falls as a Blue Zones Certified Community. The 2009 policy while more explicit in some areas, does not include all ten tenets of the National Complete Streets Coalition (see below). The proposed replacement policy is consistent in spirit and specifics with the existing policy. It was the recommendation of City Staff to propose the attached policy instead of amending the existing policy for a variety of reasons including the consistency it provides across the Cedar Valley with Waterloo and for transportation coordination provided by INRCOG.

In particular, the proposed policy more directly addresses Items #9 and #10 of the National Complete Streets Coalition, Performance Measures and Implementation. Item #9 articulates performance measurements – a wise strategy no matter the topic. The community identifies meaningful measurements for their situation. Specifics measurements are not identified or mandatory, though several examples of what might be included are offered. As a result of measuring, Item #10 notes that a review of measurements and progress in the area of Complete Streets will be done annually.

Remaining Outstanding Question --#9 Costs

During our discussion of June 24th, several questions were answered. The only outstanding question as we left the Committee Meeting was with regards to **Item #9 – Establishment of performance standards with measurable outcomes**. More specifically, concerns were expressed regarding costs associated with measuring and reporting on such standards.

Kevin Blanshan, INRCOG Director, indicated in his response to the measurements and cost question that many measurements are currently in existence and are part of “daily life.” To answer the council’s question and further expand upon Mr. Blanshan’s answer, the following chart is provided. As noted in the resolution, measurements and progress in this area are a long-term endeavor. By using existing measurements and methods, a continuity and efficiency is achieved in early stages of the policy’s existence and forms a baseline for the future.

Responding to Other Cost Concerns

As noted above, fiscal responsibility is a key component of a community’s fiscal health. All citizens continue to support the Council in the fiduciary responsibilities that we have charged them with. The proposed Complete Streets replacement policy **does not** require or imply any requirement for our city to spend beyond its means. Rather, the policy is a continuation of an existing philosophy of how we go about planning our city’s streets. While implementation of some Complete Streets aspects may increase the cost of a specific road project, in other cases, it may decrease the cost of a road.

It was noted in our June 24th discussion that the term “excessive” is used in the proposed policy similarly to how it was used in the existing policy. It was noted that “excessive” is not specifically defined at the policy level, but rather, it’s use is contextual depending on the specifics of the project under review, determination of value of various aspects, fiscal feasibility, and the council’s assessment at the time of the project. The policy phrasing (Item #4) continues to offer maximum discretion to decision-makers based on the circumstances at hand.

In Summary --

In summary, the proposed Complete Streets replacement policy simply restates Cedar Falls' existing commitment while articulating measurement and assessment aspects. The inclusion of performance measurements and assessment is sensible for any business endeavor and helps to answer the long-run question, "is what we're doing working?" You'll note in the chart below that the proposed measurements are based on existing measurements and routine planning and analysis processes within INRCOG and Cedar Falls' Developmental Services. As such, no additional staff costs are anticipated in order to set performance standards or to accomplish their measurement.

Thank you for your continued consideration, your support of a healthier community through the Blue Zones Project, and the adoption of the proposed Complete Streets policy.

Sincerely,

On behalf of the Blue Zones Community Policy Committee:

MaraBeth Soneson, Co-Chair, Cedar Falls Blue Zones Project
Lauri Young, Co-Chair, Cedar Falls Blue Zones Project

PART 3 – Proposed Measurements and Methods

#9 - Complete Streets Performance Measures Proposed Measurements and Methods

Purpose: As defined by best practices in the Fundamentals of Complete Streets by the National Complete Streets Coalition, measurements of key transportation features assist in identifying progress toward designing transportation that “balances safety and convenience for everyone using the road.”

Approach: Many metrics regarding transportation and street development are currently present as a result of existing programs, planning processes, and other reporting requirements. By using existing metrics, staff time and related costs will be minimized. Metrics may be deleted or added locally based on perceived need and value of such metrics.

Metric	Methodology	Responsible Entity	New or Existing Metric	Incremental Cost For Data Collection
Traffic Counts “x” projects/year	As needed for planning any road work via automatic counters	CF Dev Services	Existing	None
MET Transit Ridership	Fares/route; annual trends	INRCOG Met Transit	Existing	None
School Transportation	Avg riders per route; annual trends	CF Schools	Existing	None
Miles of Off-Road Multi-Use Trails	New miles added to existing miles during planning and implementation	INRCOG, CF Dev Services	Existing	None
Miles of Bike Lanes	New miles added to existing miles during planning and implementation	INRCOG, CF Dev Services	Existing	None
Miles of Share the Road	New miles added to existing miles	INRCOG, CF Dev	Existing	None

	during planning and implementation	Services		
New Linear Feet of Sidewalk	New feet added to existing feet during planning and implementation	CF Dev Services	Existing	None
Number of reconstructed curb ramps	New ramps added to existing ramps during planning and implementation	CF Dev Services	Existing	None
Number of New or Repainted Crosswalks	New crosswalks added to existing crosswalks during planning and implementation	CF Dev Services	Existing	None
Number of New Street Trees Planted	New trees added to existing trees during planning and implementation	CF Dev Services	Existing	None
% of Transit Stops with Shelters	New transit shelters added to existing transit shelter numbers	INRCOG	Existing	None
# of Trail Users ("trail census")	Visual or automatic traffic counters	INRCOG CV Trail Partnership Volunteers	Existing	None