

September 2013

Hennepin County Complete Streets Task Force Final Report



Purpose of this report

The purpose of this document is to describe the process undertaken by the Complete Streets Task Force (CSTF) in pursuit of the goals below and to share the process taken and opportunities presented by this task force.

Complete streets defined

Roadways that are planned, designed, operated and maintained to enable safe, convenient and comfortable travel for users of all ages and abilities regardless of their mode of transportation—walking, bicycling, driving or riding public transportation.

Background

The Hennepin County Complete Streets Task Force (CSTF) was established through a County Board action (BAR 10-0532) in 2010. The CSTF has been led by three county commissioners: the chairs of the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (Gail Dorfman), Budget & Capital Investment Committee (Janis Callison), and Public Works, Energy and Environment Committee (Peter McLaughlin). The group was composed of elected and appointed officials from local governments, as well as individuals representing related interest groups such as environmental groups, bicycle advocates, seniors and persons with disabilities.

The role of the Complete Streets Task Force was to:

- Review and recommend the most effective use of funding streams available for complete streets.
- Help develop consistent implementation principles, practices and guidelines.
- Recommend connections between complete streets projects, complementary county programs and construction of county facilities.
- Review the county's Capital Improvement Program and other long-range investment plans to identify potential complete streets projects.
- Common understanding of the relationship between State Aid Standards and opportunities for local Complete Streets implementation.
- Development of consistent strategies for working among the transportation agencies whose corridors are located within the county.

Process

The CSTF held its first meeting in March of 2011. Two speakers, Barb Thoman, Executive Director of Transit for Livable Communities and Jack Broz, Transportation Group Leader at HR Green, presented background information on Complete Streets. Barb stressed that complete streets isn't a specific design; it's a process. She also described the state Complete Streets legislation adopted in May 2010. Jack explained that Complete Streets is an extensive change for the engineering community because most of our design standards are from the interstate era: wider, flatter, straighter roads. Complete Streets is a process that works to develop projects that have a better balance of transportation modes. He also provided examples of successful integration of Complete Streets into a Metropolitan Council Sewer project and a road diet project in Richfield.

Over the next few meetings, speakers working on Complete Streets research and design projects or with expertise in Complete Streets were invited to present on topics of importance to Complete Streets success in Minnesota and Hennepin County. Presentations included:

Minnesota GO

Carissa Schively-Slotterback, University of Minnesota

The goal of Minnesota GO is to develop a 50 year vision for transportation in Minnesota that forms the foundation for a statewide multimodal transportation plan. The University of Minnesota worked with MnDOT on an approach to gather public input that includes multiple forms of engagement throughout the State. www.dot.state.mn.us/minnesotago/

Research and Evaluation of Complete Streets in MN

Carissa Schively-Slotterback, University of Minnesota

This project is examining transportation systems at community and regional scales, focusing on:

- Approaches to analysis, evaluation and prioritization
- Process and decision making
- Coordination across jurisdictions, disciplines and departments
- Funding and maintenance

The result will be a guide to Complete Streets planning and implementation, and will include 10 national in-depth case studies and a review of local models. Hennepin County is one of the case studies. Completion is expected in the summer of 2013. www.cts.umn.edu/Publications/catalyst/2013/august/completestreets/

Integrating Complete Streets at MnDOT

Scott Bradley, MnDOT

Complete Streets and Context Sensitive Solutions were aligned at MnDOT following the state Complete Streets legislation that was passed in May 2010. MnDOT also formed an ongoing Complete Streets external advisory group that includes staff participation from Hennepin County. This committee is advising the implementation of Complete Streets at MnDOT and completed a draft MnDOT policy in November 2012 that will be adopted later in 2013. www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/completestreets/

Statewide System Plan Update

Peggy Reichert, MnDOT

MnDOT began working on its Highway Investment Plan in January 2012 that was informed by the long range vision from Minnesota GO. Estimated needs for state highways are \$65 billion, but forecast revenues are \$15 billion, meaning that there is a \$50 billion gap. MnDOT is committed to multimodal transportation and Complete Streets, along with other priorities.

MnDOT's big picture questions are:

- Who will pay for projects?
- Who will maintain projects?
- What is the right sized next step for MnDOT?

State Aid

Julie Skallman, MnDOT

Because State Aid has been perceived as a barrier to Complete Streets at times, Julie Skallman, State Aid Engineer, was invited to speak about this process. The goal of State Aid for Local Transportation (SALT) is to provide a safe network of secondary highways and streets. SALT funding supports more than 120,000 miles of roads and 14,700 bridges. The SALT Central Office administers funding, provides technical assistance, and manages the consistency of rules interpretation on SALT-funded projects. State Aid administers state and federal aid projects, and each MnDOT district has a State Aid Engineer. Minnesota Rule Chapter 8820 contains the State Aid standards, including revised and more flexible standards for bicycle circulation that were adopted on November 5, 2012.

If a county or city requests a variance from State Aid standards, the request must be presented to the variance committee, a committee of peers composed of elected officials and city and county engineers that meets four times per year. Julie approves variances based on recommendations from the committee. www.dot.state.mn.us/stateaid/

Status and outcomes on Complete Streets in Hennepin County

After the grounding in Complete Streets provided during the first few meetings, the CSTF began discussing the state of Complete Streets in Hennepin County, including strengths to build on and barriers to overcome. The group reviewed the county's Complete Streets Roadway Design Checklist over the summer of 2011 and provided practical input that is in the document now used by County roadway design engineers. The group also requested a project summary that was developed and is now available online for use as an overview.

The county's mill and overlay program was discussed at several meetings. CSTF members recommended the proactive consideration of Complete Streets on each project through 4 to 3 lane conversions, addition of bike lanes when possible, and other simple reconfigurations that would not interfere with the need to complete projects before winter. In response to the CSTF recommendations, the county distributed the draft mill and overlay map and plan in December 2011 to provide more time for these conversations. The same process was used in the winter of 2012-2013, with project dialogue already occurring through bicycle advisory committees and other venues.

The CSTF also had ongoing discussion in 2012 of the Hennepin County Capital Improvement Program, specifically around the line items directly related to complete streets: The Bikeway Development Program, Bikeway Discretionary Program/Bicycle Gap Program, the Roadside Enhancement Partnership Program and the new Sidewalk Participation Program. In prior years, these resources have been allocated as needs were identified by local communities, rather than through a competitive process. The justification and design for each project involved analysis of each individual case. However, the Complete Streets Task Force recommended that the process change to an open solicitation where all projects are considered at the same time. Complete Streets staff were asked to develop applications, which were drafted over the summer of 2012. These drafts were reviewed by Task Force members and approved by senior public works staff. The first applications for bikeways and sidewalks were recommended for funding in December 2012.

The following is a list and brief description of key outcomes and process changes resulting from the county's Complete Streets policy adopted in 2009 and the input of the CSTF from 2011-2012.

Complete Streets Inventory: The Hennepin County Transportation Department collected information on sidewalks, community destinations, speed limits, and functional classes on all Hennepin County roadways. (2009)

Complete Streets Checklist: Hennepin County Transportation Design project managers use this checklist to review existing roadway conditions and ensure inclusion of appropriate Complete Streets elements in the design of all new and reconstructed roadways. Members of our CSTF provided input and feedback into the final version of this document. (2011)

Complete Streets Summary: This is now available for city councils and other lay persons to use as an overview for a specific project if they do not need the details contained in the checklist itself. Members of our CSTF provided input and feedback into the final version of this document. (2011)

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan: The county is currently developing an ADA plan to remove barriers to accessibility on county roads and in county facilities such as libraries and service centers. The plan will outline how the county will bring its roads, sidewalks, buildings, policies and other plans into compliance with the ADA. As part of this work, an estimated \$600,000 is being spent each year from 2013 to 2017 to update pedestrian ramps at intersections.

4-to-3 lane conversions: The Transportation Department has completed eight 4-to-3 conversions over the past eight years in cities including Crystal, Golden Valley, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, New Hope, and Robbinsdale. Most have urban shoulders, and the department also has increased the use of dedicated bike lanes on 4-to-3 converted roadways. (ongoing)

Recent Complete Streets Projects: Examples of recent county projects where complete streets principles were applied:

- Medicine Lake Road
- Golden Valley Road
- Minnetonka Boulevard
- Franklin Avenue at East River Road
- Silver Lake Road
- County Road 19
- Lyndale Avenue
- University Avenue

New bicycle Development, Bicycle Gap and Pedestrian project solicitation process: The County's Bikeway Development Program and Bikeway Program Discretionary (Bicycle Gap Program) were established in 2002. These programs provide funding for planning and constructing bikeways on the Bicycle System Map or Bicycle Gap Study map. The Sidewalk Participation Program was established in 2012 and has an annual budget of \$200,000. The Bikeway Development Program and Bikeway Program Discretionary each have an annual budget of \$300,000. A new process was developed in the fall of 2012 to bring these programs together under a streamlined solicitation process. The first round of funding awarded through the solicitation process was approved by the County Board on January 29, 2013. (2012-ongoing)

First County Pedestrian Plan: Work on this plan began in early 2012 and the plan was adopted by the Hennepin County board in September 2013. Innovative community engagement has been important for gathering meaningful community input on existing conditions for pedestrians and ideas for improving the pedestrian environment. (2012-2013)

Revision of County Bicycle Plan: Staff began work on this plan in January 2013 and hired consultants to assist in its development and conduct extensive community engagement. (2013-2014)

Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning for municipalities: This work began in 2012 through an application made available to eligible cities that met the funding source criteria. So far, Hopkins (2012) and Brooklyn Center (2013) have been awarded funding to develop municipal bicycle and pedestrian plans. These plans are being developed to include connections to the county's pedestrian and bicycle plans to create a comprehensive multimodal system.

Pavement Preservation: Starting in 2012, Hennepin mill and overlay project plans for the upcoming construction season are being released earlier than in prior years so that cities and communities can provide input on design considerations such as 4-to-3 conversions.

Pavement Preservation Plus: The Board approved an additional \$500,000 for 2013 projects determined to be good candidates for additional Complete Streets measures such as medians and curb bump outs.

Opportunities for complete streets integration

Hennepin County influences the transportation system and built environment through numerous projects including transportation planning and design, transitway development, and programs such as Community Works. The Task Force discussed the following opportunities to increase effectiveness and potential cost-sharing of development and facility construction projects through Complete Streets:

- Include Complete Streets incentive criteria and scoring in county projects such as:
 - Facility location and site planning for libraries and other county buildings
 - Light Rail Transit projects including station areas and connections to surrounding communities
 - Transit Oriented Development
 - Community Works
 - Economic Development
 - Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant applications for multimodal infrastructure investments
- Use narrower lanes where appropriate—space savings in the roadway width can be used for a more complete street and connections to development that support placemaking
- Discuss lowering speed limits on county roads in relation to 4 to 3 lane conversions
- Collaborate with cities that both have a complete streets policy and are working on key development sites such as the Kmart site in New Hope on County Road 9
- Keep Complete Streets policy considerations in front of policymakers often to ensure ongoing application and implementation.
- Align Hennepin’s Complete Streets performance measures with MnDOT and other monitoring agencies

Communicating about Complete Streets

The CSTF discussed the importance of communicating about Complete Streets to different audiences in order to increase the success of Complete Streets. Audiences and venues identified include:

Regional Council of Mayors — understanding and support among local electeds

City councils — understanding and support among local electeds

City planners and engineers — connections between redevelopment projects and street projects

MnDOT — connections between funding and local projects

Complete Streets

Local Complete Streets Policy Status in Hennepin County



Hennepin County
Public Works

Wright

Policy Status

What are Complete Streets?

Complete Streets are roadways that are planned, designed, operated and maintained to enable safe, convenient and comfortable travel for users of all ages and abilities regardless of their mode of transportation – walking, bicycling, driving or riding public transportation.

Local Complete Streets Policy

Policy Status by City

-  Policy Adopted
-  Living Streets Policy Adopted
-  Policy Under Development
-  Resolution Adopted

-  Hennepin County Commissioner Districts
-  City Boundary
-  County Boundary

This map has been created for informational purposes only and is not considered a legally recorded map or document. Hennepin County makes no warranty, representation, or guarantee as to the content, accuracy, timeliness, or completeness of any of the information provided herein.

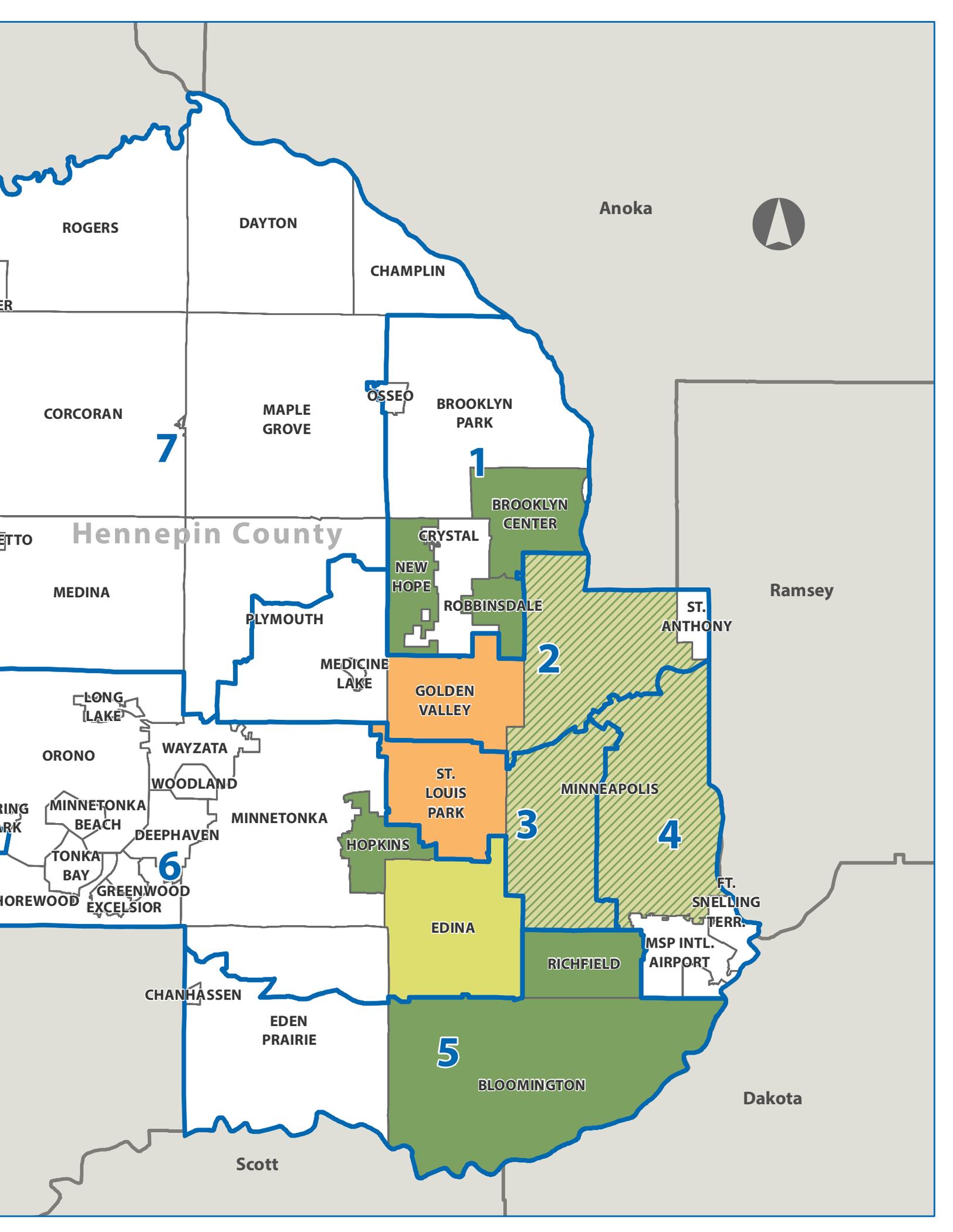
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Carver

McLeod



Anoka



ROGERS

DAYTON

CHAMPLIN

CORCORAN

7

MAPLE GROVE

OSSEO

BROOKLYN PARK

1

BROOKLYN CENTER

Hennepin County

CRYSTAL

NEW HOPE

ROBBINSDALE

Ramsey

MEDINA

PLYMOUTH

MEDICINE LAKE

GOLDEN VALLEY

2

ST. ANTHONY

ORONO

WAYZATA

WOODLAND

ST. LOUIS PARK

3

MINNEAPOLIS

4

MINNETONKA BEACH

MINNETONKA

DEEPHAVEN

HOPKINS

TONKA BAY

GREENWOOD EXCELSIOR

6

EDINA

RICHFIELD

MSP INTL. AIRPORT

FT. SNELLING TERR.

CHANHASSEN

EDEN PRAIRIE

5

BLOOMINGTON

Dakota

Scott

Franklin Avenue (County Road 5) at East River Parkway, intersection BEFORE/AFTER



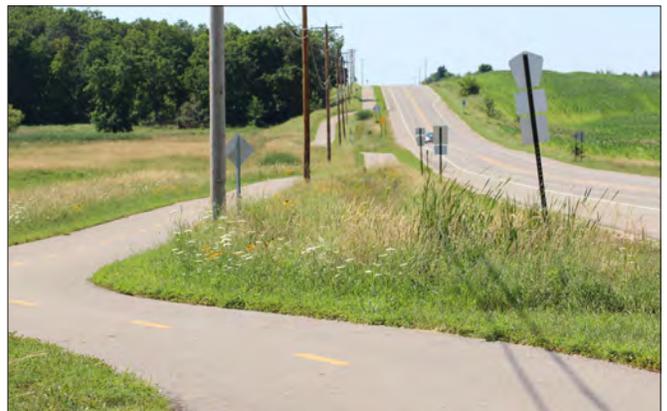
Lyndale Avenue (County Road 22) at 34th Street BEFORE/AFTER



Silver Lake Road (County Road 136) BEFORE/AFTER



County Road 19 at Lake Independence Regional Trail improvements



Challenges to Complete Streets

With input and advice from the Complete Streets Task Force, Hennepin County staff identified a number of challenges as it works to refine policies and practices that impact its Complete Streets Policy. The following challenges were discussed over multiple CSTF meetings as ongoing issues for consideration in Complete Streets projects:

- Need to increase the number of municipal Complete Streets policies within Hennepin County to develop more consistent practices across jurisdictions
- Coordination across jurisdictions is an opportunity to reach consensus on what a project can and should be
- Need to ensure that a range of constituents and community stakeholders are engaged as needs are identified and the project is defined
- Allocation of elements within the right of way or within the curb to curb depends in part on location and context
- How to facilitate mobility on the roadway versus accessibility and safety was discussed and how to balance vehicle mobility with safety and accessibility on the road
- Need consistent winter maintenance of sidewalks, bike lanes and trails
- Maintenance of Hennepin County infrastructure is administered by other entities (city, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, etc.). How does the county consider balancing the operations and maintenance needs with the need to include elements supporting Complete Streets?

Complete Streets Performance Measures

Hennepin County's Transportation Systems Plan identifies a variety of measures to evaluate the performance and effectiveness of the county transportation system. Some of these measures are closely related to how the transportation system works for the safety and comfort of pedestrians and bicyclists. The following performance measures have been discussed by the CSTF. All measures except the number of people walking and biking are being monitored by the county.

- Annual bike system mileage and gaps
- Numbers walking and biking
- Number and severity of bike crashes
- Number and severity of pedestrian crashes
- Miles of bikeways built
- Curb ramps constructed or brought into compliance each year
- Mill and overlays with Complete Streets elements

Next steps and role of the task force

This report formally concludes the work of the Complete Streets Task Force. However, Hennepin County wants to ensure that a wide range of stakeholders are engaged in the implementation of its Complete Streets Policy on an ongoing basis and may request input from the Complete Streets Task Force from time to time on plans and programs as we continue to implement this policy.

Links for more information

Hennepin County Complete Streets:
www.hennepin.us/completestreets

Minnesota Department of Transportation Complete Streets:
www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/completestreets/

State of Minnesota Complete Streets legislation, May 2010:
www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=174.75



Hennepin County
Public Works

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