Chapter 1: Purpose and Applicability

Complete Streets Policy

Louisville Metro's transportation system shall accommodate and balance a broad range of factors within all transportation and development projects, both new and retrofit, including design, planning, maintenance, and operations, for the entire right of way. The goal of this policy is to develop a multi-modal network that manages the demand for travel and improves the efficiency of the community's transportation system as envisioned in Cornerstone 2020. This policy ensures that the following objectives are achieved in future transportation projects:

1. Bicycle and pedestrian ways shall be established in new construction and reconstruction projects unless one or more of three conditions are met:
   - bicyclists and pedestrians are prohibited by law from using the roadway. In this instance, a greater effort may be necessary to accomodate bicyclists and pedestrians elsewhere within the right of way or within the same transportation corridor.
   - the cost of establishing bikeways or walkways would be excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use. Excessively disproportionate is defined as exceeding twenty percent of the cost of the larger transportation project. This twenty percent figure should be used in an advisory rather than an absolute sense.
   - where the street has severe topographic or natural resource constraints.
2. In rural areas, shoulders should be included in all new construction and reconstruction roadway projects unless the addition of shoulders is constrained by existing topographic and/or natural features. Shoulders have safety and operational advantages for all road users in addition to the potential future use as facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians as rural roads develop.
3. Sidewalks, shared-use paths, street crossings (including over- and undercrossings), pedestrian signals, signs, street furniture, transit stops and facilities, and all connecting pathways shall be designed, constructed, operated, and maintainted so that all pedestrians, including people with disabilities, can travel safely and independently.
4. The design and development of the transportation infrastructure shall be designed to be sensitive to its context and character of the built or natural environment.
5. The design and construction of new facilities that meet the criteria in item 1 above should anticipate likely future demand for bicycling and walking facilities and not preclude the provision of future improvements. For example, a bridge that is likely to remain in place for 50 years might be built with sufficient width for safe bicycle and pedestrian use in anticipation that facilities will be available at either end of the bridge even if that is not currently the case.
6. The design and construction of new transportation infrastructure shall address the need for bicyclists and pedestrians to cross corridors as well as travel along them. Even where bicyclists and pedestrians may not commonly use a particular travel corridor that is being improved or constructed, they will likely need to be able

A Complete Street serves all transportation users

This Manual furthers Cornerstone 2020 Community Form Objectives C2.5, D2.4, E2.4, F2.4, G2.4, H2.1, H2.4, H2.5, J2.1, and J4.1, and H2.5; Mobility Objectives A3.1, D1.2, D1.3, E1.1, E1.2, H1.5, H2.2, H2.5, H2.6, H3.1, I2.1, and I3.1, and; Plan Element Policies 3.1, 3.12, 6.2, 8.4, 8.12, 9.1, and 9.2

Improved streets originally included all forms of transportation
Source: Photographic Archives, Ekstrom Library, University of Louisville

to cross that corridor safely and conveniently. Therefore, the design of intersections and interchanges shall accomodate bicyclists and pedestrians in a manner that is safe, accessible, and convenient.
7. New transportation and reconstruction projects shall adhere to design criteria identified within the Complete Streets Manual.

Purpose

Streets are an integral component of the Louisville Metro landscape. They play a vital role in both the social and economic health of this community by linking people, goods and services. The purpose of the Louisville Metro Complete Streets Manual (referred to as the Manual in the rest of the document) is to establish procedural and technical guidelines for developing a thoroughfare system that provides for safe and effective access to all users in a context-appropriate manner.

Louisville Metro first made a commitment toward a "complete streets" policy with the adoption of Cornerstone 2020, the community's comprehensive plan for growth and development. This Manual advances objectives and policies of both the Mobility and Community Form goals by addressing streetscape design in context with the existing character of the community. Furthermore, chapter 6 of this document serves as the Streetscape Design Manual referenced in Chapter 10, Part 6 of the Louisville Metro Land Development Code (LDC).

Louisville Metro's commitment to a "complete streets" policy is intended to promote the design of transportation corridors that are safe and convenient for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and bus riders of all ages and abilities. The Manual will serve as a guide for Louisville Metro residents, interest groups, policy-makers, developers, designers, and agency staff to improve the function and character of our roads and roadway corridors.

Background

It was the growing popularity of the bicycle, not the automobile, that initially heightened interest in road development in this country. The Office of Road Inquiry was established in the early 1890's to promote the development of rural roads to serve wagons, coaches, and bicycles. (About.com, "How the Wheels Got Turning, a Historical Perspective on American Roads.")

With the introduction of the Model-T in 1908, the automobile quickly claimed supremacy of the road, changing the form and function of the street and its surrounding landscape or 'streetscape'. The desire to move vehicular traffic as efficiently and effectively as possible has dominated the design of streets and streetscapes for nearly a century.

For many Louisvillians, transit is their primary means of travel

A new trend in design of transportation corridors has emerged in response to a changing culture that is demanding more transportation choices. The emphasis on active lifestyles, energy conservation, and the importance of accommodating users of all ages and abilities illustrates that a streetscape will no longer be designed just for the automobile. Many communities, including Louisville Metro, are implementing variations of a "complete streets" policy.

Local Perspective

There is a demonstrated need for more modal choices and accessible roadways within this community. In 2005, 30.5% of Jefferson County's residents did not have a motor vehicle license (KY State Data Center). One can assume that these residents are using some other form of transportation to get to their destinations. According to Transit Authority of River City (TARC) statistics, 60% of Louisville Metro's transit riders are fully dependent on public transit. Demand for a system, accessible to all users that gives Louisville Metro residents more options to meet their travel needs, is evident.

Well designed streetscapes also contribute to an increased quality of life, which includes a more active lifestyle. In 2005, Metro Louisville Mayor, Jerry Abramson launched the Healthy Hometown Initiative. This initiative called for new strategies to increase access to and availability of opportunities for active living and to eliminate design and policy barriers that reduce choices for active living.

Applicability

The guidelines contained in this Manual shall apply to every development site adjacent to an existing or proposed public or private roadway. For the purpose of this Manual, a public roadway is defined as a road, thoroughfare, alley, highway, or bridge under the jurisdiction of a public agency. Private roadways would include a road, thoroughfare, alley, or bridge within an access easement that is privately owned and maintained.

All design guidelines should be implemented in accordance with the regulatory requirements contained in the Louisville Metro LDC and any neighborhood or small area plan, corridor study, or similar planning study adopted by the Planning Commission and/or the applicable legislative body.

The complete street design guidelines shall be applied to both new and retrofit transportation projects, including design, planning, maintenance, and operations, for the entire right of way. Complete street design guidelines shall include:

- adequate Right-of-Way for future bike lanes on road corridors where vehicular design speed and average daily trip (ADT) volumes warrant
- adequate Right-Of-Way or easements for multi-use trails and/or sidewalks
- easements for shared access and/or crossover access between lots for future or current connections
- easements for transit facilities, street lighting, benches, or similar facilities
- landscape areas

In addition to land area requirements, site specific

Bike racks are being designed by artists to reinvigorate downtown while supplying on-street bike parking

complete street design guidelines may include the installation and maintenance of the following streetscape features:

- Streetscape plantings
- Streetscape furnishings (e.g., benches)
- Bike racks/lockers
- Sidewalks and shared-use trails
- Transit stops/shelters
- Street lights

Review and Approval

New and retrofit street projects shall be reviewed for compliance with the Louisville Metro Complete Streets policy under the perview of the Department of Public Works and Assets. For retrofit projects, design flexibility shall be permitted based on existing constraints such as limited right-of-way, existing development patterns, context, topography, etc.