



## PUBLIC WORKS

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### Douglas County Complete Street Policy Statement

**Policy Statement:** In the County of Douglas, Nevada, Complete Streets are designed, operated, maintained and enforced to provide safety and accessibility for ALL users of our roadways, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit users of all ages and abilities. By adopting this Complete Street Policy, the Douglas County Regional Transportation Commission not only expects but recognizes:

1. All project proposals should strive to make the existing street network safer and better for all motorists, transit users, bicyclists and pedestrians.
2. The importance of routine planning, design, connectivity, operation, maintenance and enforcement of streets to be safe for travelers of all ages and abilities, regardless of mode.
3. All projects requiring approval from the County (public and private) including all new development proposals, infrastructure, and roadway maintenance projects should be designed as Complete Streets.
4. To provide context sensitive, aesthetic improvements for new and existing roadways that best meet the needs and desires of the community.
5. Site contextual design and engineering of complete streets solutions consistent with current best practices and from nationally recognized standards.

**Definition:** Complete Streets are streets intended for everyone's use. Complete Streets are designed and operated to enable safe access and comfortable accommodations for all users of all ages and abilities including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motorists. As an added benefit, Complete Streets support economic development and enhances the visual experience for users.

In addition to accommodating motorists on the roadway, Complete Streets focuses on the needs of travelers outside that group, those with disabilities, and those who travel by transit, bicycle, or on foot, and who have oftentimes been overlooked in the transportation planning process. Many neighborhoods lack safe places to walk or bicycle. Access to key community resources such as parks, shops grocery stores, and schools, is often limited to automobile traffic.

Complete Streets is about safety and efficiency as well. Many people are injured or killed each year while walking or bicycling and frequently the constructed environment is a contributing factor. Though the County has historically had relatively few accidents involving pedestrians and bicyclists, they have occurred and there is always room for improvement. In terms of efficiency, improvements can be made to the transit infrastructure to better accommodate the movement of buses and ease the transition between modes of travel. Complete Streets seeks to develop integrated, connected networks of streets that are safe and accessible for all people. Complete Streets makes active transportation such as

walking and bicycling more convenient; provides increased access to employment centers, commerce, and educational institutions; and allows more traveling options so that transportation is less of a financial burden. Complete Streets also improve the quality of life in the community by enhancing the aesthetic environment. The term "Complete Streets" means much more than the physical changes to a community's streets. Complete Streets means changing transportation planning, design, maintenance, and funding decisions. A Complete Streets policy ensures that, from the start, projects are planned and designed to meet the needs of every community member, regardless of their age, ability, or how they travel. Doing so allows a community to save money by getting the design right the first time and avoiding costly retrofits, accommodating more people by improving options for those that may be limited by existing mode choices, and creating an environment where every resident can travel safely and conveniently. Complete Streets provides a better quality of life, often through measurable environmental benefits, and can spur economic development.

**All Users/Modes:** The need for streets that are designed, built, and operated to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists as legitimate users of the transportation system, in addition to motorized users, cannot be understated. However, this policy must be applied to take into consideration not only various modes, but the needs of the individual and unique users across those modes. Infrastructure improvements must consider the needs of families, youth and the elderly, those with varying physical abilities, diversity of income levels, and cultural identity and values.

Improvements should also accommodate a variety of users within specific modes. For example, where appropriate, accommodations for motorized vehicles include motorcycles, freight, and buses to name a few. In addition to pedestrians and bicyclists, improvements should consider skateboards, strollers, wheelchairs and other means of active transportation. Consideration should be given not only to the types of individual modes, but the ease of transition between them. Oftentimes, people rely on multiple modes to reach their destination which, at a minimum, generally requires some amount of walking.

**All Projects/Phases:** This policy must apply to all phases of a project from the initial planning, through design, and during construction. Once a project is constructed, the planned maintenance and operations of facilities should be viewed in light of this policy. Whether the project is of new construction or retrofitted, large or small in scope, Complete Streets should be an aspect of the project at all stages. The entire right-of-way, and not just the roadway, should be included in the focus on any project.

Funding may be an obstacle to implementing projects and achieving the desired outcome. This policy recognizes that it may not always be feasible to construct an entire project at one point in time that is entirely inclusive of Complete Streets goals. However, it is intended that a continued effort and commitment will be demonstrated to achieve Complete Streets incrementally through a series of smaller improvements when this is the case.

**Exceptions:** There may be certain exceptions to implementing Complete Streets on a small number of projects. However, each project should be carefully evaluated and have documented justification as to why it is not feasible or practical to implement all Complete Streets measures. The following is a list of a

few possible exceptions or situations that may prevent the implementation of Complete Streets measures.

1. Accommodation is not necessary on corridors where specific users are prohibited, such as interstate freeways.
2. The cost of accommodation is excessively disproportionate to the need and potential benefit of the probable use. A cost-benefit analysis should be applied to reach this determination in situations where there is not a clear benefit.
3. A documented absence of current and future need. The existing and planned population, employment densities, traffic volumes, or level of transit service around a particular roadway is so low that future expected users of the roadway will not include pedestrians, public transportation, freight vehicles, or bicyclists.
4. The project involves only ordinary maintenance activities designed to keep assets in acceptable condition, such as cleaning, sealing, spot repairs, patching and surface treatments, such as micro-surfacing.

**Network:** Projects should be implemented so as to establish connectivity within the existing street network. Developing connections to existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities whenever possible is encouraged and will improve the overall safety and accessibility to those that are dependent on those modes. Complete Streets concepts should be applied to private developments where feasible to eliminate “islands” with no connection to the outside network. The private sector should be held to Douglas County standards and to the essence of Complete Streets concepts for proposed developments to ensure that the intent of this policy carries through approved site plans and the entire development process.

**Jurisdiction:** This policy applies to all Douglas County-funded projects as well as privately funded projects or developments within Douglas County. To the greatest extent possible, County staff will work with Towns, State and Tribal entities to encourage them to implement Complete Streets concepts on projects within their respective jurisdictions.

**Design Recommendations:** Douglas County will attempt to utilize 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:

- The National Complete Streets Coalition – <http://CompleteStreets.org>
- The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Bikeway Design Guide – <http://nacto.org/cities-for-cycling/design-guide/>
- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities – [https://bookstore.transportation.org/collection\\_detail.aspx?ID=116](https://bookstore.transportation.org/collection_detail.aspx?ID=116)
- Public ROW Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) – <http://www.accessboard.gov/guidelines-and-standards/streets-sidewalks/public-rightsofway/background/revised-draft-guidelines>
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov>

- Douglas County 2014 Bicycle Plan  
<http://www.douglascountynv.gov/documentcenter/view/3936>

**Context Sensitivity:** Above all, 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. A design that might be appropriate for one area of the community may not be acceptable in a different area. The underlying concept behind Complete Streets is to design for the needs of the users of the roadway.


**ADOPTED ON THIS 19 day of January, 2016, by the Douglas County Regional Transportation Commission.**

Carl Ruschmeyer, P.E. Director of Public Works



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Greg Lynn, Chairman, Douglas County Regional Transportation Commission



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Nancy McDermid, Douglas County Regional Transportation Commission



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Bobby Wartgow, Douglas County Regional Transportation Commission



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