

Complete Streets

Indianapolis, IN

By Neha Bhatt and Michael Ryan

Providing street networks that not only move cars and trucks, but also accommodate all other users such as pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicles, disabled people and seniors, is a core tenet of smart growth. “Complete streets” increase safety and enliven streets with commuters, consumers and neighbors. Joining the ranks of over 500 municipalities, Indianapolis, IN has passed its own award-winning policy that states:

“Complete Streets’ means streets that are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, in that pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and public transportation users of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a street.”



Indianapolis Cultural Trail, a \$47.5 million dollar 8-mile, grade-separated walking and bicycling path throughout downtown that connects 6 cultural districts, provides 86 new bike racks and features 25,400 square feet of stormwater planters and 7 public art projects. Image from doingindy.org

City leaders recognized the time was ripe for creating safer, more dynamic streets. Nearly two-thirds of the adult population and 40% of children in Marion County, where Indianapolis is located, are overweight, and Census projections indicate growth of the senior population from 11% to 16% by 2025. A 2009 report by CEOs for Cities titled “Walking the Walk” found that housing demand was higher in neighborhoods that were considered “walkable” compared to those that were not. There was a clear need and desire for better, safer, active transportation choices for public health reasons, to increase mobility and access for those who drive less and for economic development.

Leaders believe complete streets will encourage more active lifestyles and increase mobility by making walking, biking and public transit safer and more convenient. Indianapolis’ Complete Streets Ordinance passed in 2012 with unanimous support from the City Council.

The new policy applies to all capital infrastructure projects and all major repairs projects. The Department of Public Works, Department of Metropolitan Planning, and Office of Sustainability will play central roles in implementing the new street design standards, which include bus lanes, curb extensions and roundabouts. The policy also establishes new performance metrics including target

number of bike lane-miles, linear feet of sidewalks, accessible transit stops, traffic crashes performance targets, and accessibility features for disabled users. Adding performance metrics is a critical feature that many other communities with complete streets policies have missed. The policy also recognizes the importance of fostering relationships with neighboring municipalities, in an effort to create an expanded network of streets for all users. The Indianapolis ordinance was named the “Best Complete Streets policy of 2012” by the National Complete Streets Coalition.

Indianapolis City Complete Streets Ordinance:

<http://www.indy.gov/eGov/Council/Proposals/Documents/2012/PROP12-208.pdf>

Ordinance summary:

http://www.healthbydesignonline.org/documents/CS_Indy_1pg.pdf

Template based on Indianapolis Ordinance:

<http://www.healthbydesignonline.org/documents/ModelCompleteStreetsOrdinance.pdf>

Indianapolis regional (MPO) complete streets policy:

<http://www.indympo.org/Plans/MultiModalPlanning/Pages/Complete-Streets.aspx>

CITY COUNTY COUNCIL

PROPOSAL NO. 208, 2012

CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS-MARION COUNTY, INDIANA

INTRODUCED: 06/04/2012

REFERRED TO: Public Works Committee

SPONSOR: Councillors Lewis and Barth

DIGEST: amends the Code to add new Secs. 431-801 through 431-807 regarding complete streets

SOURCE:

Initiated by: Councillor Lewis

Drafted by: Fred Biesecker, General Counsel

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ADOPTION:

Subject to approval or veto by Mayor

PROPOSED EFFECTIVE DATE:

Adoption and approvals

GENERAL COUNSEL APPROVAL: _____

Date: May 31, 2012

CITY-COUNTY GENERAL ORDINANCE NO. , 2012

A GENERAL ORDINANCE amending the Revised Code of the Consolidated City and County by adding new Secs. 431-801 et. seq., regarding complete streets.

WHEREAS, Indianapolis strives to be a “liveable community” and a well-balanced and connected transportation system that allows for safe walking and biking and efficient, robust public transit is a vital component of a “livable community;” and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets are a sound financial investment in our community that provides long-term savings, in that a transportation budget can incorporate Complete Streets projects without requiring additional funding; and

WHEREAS, CEOs for Cities released a report called “Walking the Walk” which measured the dollars-and-cents value that homes in walkable areas — all other things being equal — command over homes with “average walkability,” and found that in 13 of the 15 housing markets they studied, increased neighborhood walkability was positively correlated with highly significant price increases; and

WHEREAS, creating Complete Streets also reduces infrastructure costs by requiring far less pavement per user compared to increasing road capacity for vehicles alone; this saves money at the onset of the project and reduces maintenance costs over the long-term; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Census Bureau projects that by 2025, the portion of Marion County residents over 65 will increase from 11% to 16%, totaling nearly 150,000 people, and they need the public right-of-way to better serve them by safe places to walk, bicycle, or board the bus, and by designing the streets to better accommodate older drivers; and

WHEREAS, more than one third of Americans do not drive due to age, disability, or poverty and need transportation alternatives; and

WHEREAS, in Marion County, 40% of our children are overweight or at-risk for becoming overweight and nearly two thirds of adults are overweight or obese, and incomplete streets mean many people lack opportunities to be active as part of daily life; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Development Commission adopted Multimodal Design Guidelines which address inclusion of biking and walking infrastructure on city roads, and Indianapolis was recently

awarded a bronze designation as a "Bicycle Friendly Community" by the League of American Bicyclists; now, therefore:

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY-COUNTY COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS AND OF MARION COUNTY, INDIANA:

SECTION 1. Chapter 431, Article VIII, of the Revised Code of the Consolidated City and County is hereby amended by adding new Sec. 431-801 et. seq., to read as follows:

Sec. 431-801. Definition of Complete Streets.

"Complete Streets" means streets that are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, in that pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and public transportation users of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a street.

Sec. 431-802. Complete Streets Policy.

The City shall develop a safe, reliable, efficient, integrated and connected multimodal transportation system that will promote access, mobility and health for all users, and will ensure that the safety and convenience of all users of the transportation system are accommodated, including pedestrians, bicyclists, users of mass transit, people of all ages and abilities, motorists, emergency responders, freight providers and adjacent land users.

Sec. 431-803. Scope of Complete Streets Applicability.

(a) All city-owned transportation facilities in the public right of way including, but not limited to, streets, bridges and all other connecting pathways shall be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained so that users of all ages and abilities can travel safely and independently.

(b) Privately constructed streets and parking lots shall adhere to this policy.

(c) The City shall foster partnerships with the State of Indiana, neighboring communities and counties, and business and school districts to develop facilities and accommodations that further the City's complete streets policy and continue such infrastructure beyond the City's borders.

(d) The City shall approach every transportation improvement and project phase as an opportunity to create safer, more accessible streets for all users. These phases include, but are not limited to: planning, programming, design, right-of-way acquisition, construction, construction engineering, reconstruction, operation and maintenance. Other changes to transportation facilities on streets and rights-of-way, including capital improvements, re-channelization projects and major maintenance, must also be included.

Sec. 431-804. Exceptions

Any exception to this policy, including for private projects, must be approved by the Director of Public Works and be documented with supporting data that indicates the basis for the decision. Such documentation shall be publicly available.

Exceptions may be considered for approval when:

(a) An affected roadway prohibits, by law, use by specified users (such as an interstate freeways or pedestrian malls), in which case a greater effort shall be made to accommodate those specified users elsewhere, including on roadways that cross or otherwise intersect with the affected roadway;

(b) The activities are ordinary maintenance activities designed to keep assets in serviceable condition (e.g. mowing, cleaning, sweeping, spot repair, and surface treatments such as chip seal or interim measures;

- (c) The Director of Public Works issues a documented exception concluding that the application of Complete Streets principles is unnecessary, unduly cost prohibitive, or inappropriate because it would be contrary to public safety; or
- (d) Other available means or factors indicate an absence of need, including future need.

The Director of Public Works shall submit quarterly reports to the Board of Public Works summarizing all exceptions granted in the preceding quarter. These reports shall be submitted at the first Board of Public Works meeting after the end of the quarter, and shall be posted on-line.

Sec. 431-805. Design Standards.

The City shall follow accepted or adopted design standards and use the best and latest design standards available.

In recognition of context sensitivity, public input and the needs of many users, a flexible, innovative and balanced approach that follows other appropriate design standards may be considered, provided that a comparable level of safety for all users is present.

Sec. 431-806. Performance Measures.

The City shall measure the success of this Complete Streets policy using, but not limited to, the following performance measures:

- Total miles of bike lanes
- Linear feet of new pedestrian accommodation
- Number of new curb ramps installed along city streets
- Crosswalk and intersection improvements
- Percentage of transit stops accessible via sidewalks and curb ramps (beginning in June 2014)
- Rate of crashes, injuries, and fatalities by mode
- Rate of children walking or bicycling to school (beginning in June 2014)

Unless otherwise noted above, within six months of ordinance adoption, the City shall create individual numeric benchmarks for each of the performance measures included, as a means of tracking and measuring the annual performance of the ordinance. Quarterly reports shall be posted on-line for each of the above measures

Sec. 431-807. Implementation and Reporting.

The City of Indianapolis shall view Complete Streets as integral to everyday transportation decision-making practices and processes. To this end:

(a) The Department of Public Works, the Department of Metropolitan Development, the Office of Sustainability and other relevant departments, agencies, or committees will incorporate Complete Streets principles into all existing plans, manuals, checklists, decision-trees, rules, regulations, and programs as appropriate (including, but not limited to, ReZone Indy, ReBuild Indy, the Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Capital Program, the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plans, Transit Plan and other appropriate plans);

(b) The Department of Public Works, the Department of Metropolitan Development, the Office of Sustainability and other relevant departments, agencies, or committees will review current design standards, including subdivision regulations which apply to new roadway construction, to ensure that they reflect the best available design standards and guidelines, and effectively implement Complete Streets, where feasible;

(c) When available, the City shall encourage staff professional development and training on non-motorized transportation issues through attending conferences, classes, seminars, and workshops;

(d) City 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;

(e) The City shall promote inter-departmental project coordination among city departments with an interest in the activities that occur within the public right-of-way in order to better use fiscal resources;

(f) An annual report will be made to the City-County Council showing progress made in implementing this policy. The Department of Public Works, the Department of Metropolitan Development, the Office of Sustainability and other relevant departments, agencies, or committees shall report on the annual increase or decrease for each performance measure contained in this ordinance compared to the previous year(s); and

(g) Every Complete Streets project shall include an educational component to ensure that all users of the transportation system understand and can safely utilize Complete Streets project elements.

SECTION 2. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect upon adoption and compliance with IC 36-3-4-14.

The foregoing was passed by the City-County Council this _____ day of _____, 2012, at _____ p.m.

ATTEST:

Maggie A. Lewis
President, City-County Council

NaTrina DeBow
Clerk, City-County Council

Presented by me to the Mayor this _____ day of _____, 2012, at 10:00 a.m.

NaTrina DeBow
Clerk, City-County Council

Approved and signed by me this _____ day of _____, 2012.

Gregory A. Ballard, Mayor