



Council Communication

Office of the City Manager

Date

March 10, 2008

Agenda Item No. 68

Roll Call No. 08-

Communication No. 08-111

Submitted by: Donald M. Tripp, Park &
Recreation Director

AGENDA HEADING:

Receive and file proposed “Complete Streets” policy regarding the consideration and addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities on street projects within the City of Des Moines.

SYNOPSIS:

Receive and file the proposed “Complete Streets” policy and request the City Manager seek input on the policy from the Plan and Zoning Commission, Park and Recreation Board, the Traffic Safety Committee and impacted City departments.

FISCAL IMPACT:

While there is no direct fiscal impact as a result of this action, costs for the addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities may be included in some City street projects where they would not be considered before adoption of this policy.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

On December 17, 2007, the Des Moines City Council by Roll Call 07-735 adopted goals to make Des Moines a more bicycle-friendly community and to achieve the designation of Bicycle Friendly Community from the League of American Bicyclists. Adopting a “Complete Streets” policy was one of the goals in this document.

The term “complete street” means designing and building streets so they routinely accommodate travel by all modes. Providing a complete street will expand the capacity to serve everyone who travels, be it by motor vehicle, foot, bicycle, or other means. A complete street design may include different elements on one street compared to another street with different conditions, but both are designed to balance safety and convenience for everyone using the road. Complete streets are essential for access by people who cannot drive. Roads without safe access for non-motorized transportation represent a barrier for people who use wheelchairs, and for older people and children.

Often states, cities, counties and towns have built many miles of streets and roads that are safe and comfortable only for travel in one way, in a motor vehicle. These roadways often lack sidewalks, have lanes too narrow to share with bicyclists, and feature few, poorly marked, or dangerous pedestrian crossings. Being a complete street means providing choices to the people who live, work and travel on the streets. Pedestrians and bicyclists are comfortable using complete streets. A network of complete streets improves the safety, convenience, efficiency and accessibility of the transportation system for all

users. The goal of the proposed policy is that every road project should create complete streets. Some of the principles involved with complete streets include:

- Creating complete streets means changing the policies and practices of transportation agencies.
- Adopting a “Complete Streets” policy that ensures that the entire right-of-way is routinely designed and operated to enable safe access for all users.
- Communities must ensure that all road projects result in a complete street appropriate to local context and needs.
- Understanding that all complete streets are not the same. On some facilities bicycle lanes make sense to facilitate bicycle traffic, on others bicycles can be safely accommodated in the street with automobiles.

Even without a “Complete Streets” policy the City of Des Moines has gone to great lengths to begin implementing elements in many upcoming street projects. Two projects that are planned to be complete streets, when constructed, will be Indianola Avenue and the new SE Connector. Despite already using complete streets principles on these two corridors, it is important to adopt a policy that creates a standard for all future road projects.

Staff recommends that the proposed Complete Streets Policy be received and filed and that the City Council request the City Manager seek input from the Plan and Zoning Commission, Park and Recreation Board, Traffic Safety Committee and city departments for comment on the proposed policy. The policy would then come back to the City Council for adoption.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: December 17, 2007

Roll Call Number: [07-2344](#)

Action: [Adoption](#) of “Goals To Make Des Moines A Bicycle Friendly Community”. ([Council Communication No. 07-735](#)) Moved by Hensley to approve. Motion Carried 6-1.

Date: October 8, 2007

Roll Call Number: [07-1993](#)

Action: [Receipt](#) of “Goals to Make Des Moines Bicycle Friendly Community” from Des Moines Park and Recreation Board’s Trails and Greenways Advisory Committee. ([Council Communication No. 07-614](#)) Moved by Kiernan to receive and file the “Goals to Make Des Moines Bicycle Friendly Community” and refer to the City Manager for review and recommendation. Upon receipt of review and recommendation, the goals will be submitted to the City Council for adoption. Motion Carried 7-0.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S):

Date: June 26, 2007

Roll Call Number: 07-076

Action: Park and Recreation Board approved Bicycle Friendly Community Goals.

Date: April 24, 2007

Roll Call Number: 07-052

Action: Park and Recreation Board received and filed Bicycle Friendly Community Goals.

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:

Adoption of “Complete Streets” policy by Council at a later meeting date.

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