



Item: Resolution 9968 Establishing a Complete Streets Policy
From: City Manager's Office
Initiated By: 2011 Downtown Master Plan
Presented By: Jennifer Reichelt, Deputy City Manager
Action Requested: Adopt Resolution 9968

Suggested Motion:

1. Commissioner moves:

“I move that the City Commission (adopt/deny) Resolution 9968.”

2. Mayor calls for a second, discussion, inquiries from the public, and calls the vote.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends that the City Commission adopt Resolution 9968.

Background: This complete streets policy is intended to create a streamlined framework for City staff to collaboratively plan, design, construct and maintain the City's streets and roadways in a safe, efficient and comprehensive manner. Complete streets is a relatively new term that generally refers to the process of developing a transportation system that meets the needs of the entire community, regardless of age, ability or mode of travel. While the concept of complete streets may be new, the City has a rich history of planning, designing and constructing streets and roadways that provide safe access for the whole community. This practice is evident in the City's gridded street network and the development pattern of the City's older and historic neighborhoods and commercial corridors.

The City has developed and adopted numerous plans and policies intended to ensure that our streets and roadways contribute to a safer, more livable, enjoyable and attractive community for current residents and future generations. Resolution 9968 simply directs staff to follow these plans and policies from the initial scoping of a street project through the final construction and maintenance of a completed City street, in an effort to align transportation and land use planning with the protection and enhancement of health, safety and welfare.

This policy will apply to new construction, resurfacing and rehabilitation, and striping projects in the City's existing Capital Improvements Program and street maintenance schedules. Public safety considerations, the context and characteristics of the roadway and adjacent and surrounding land use within the community will guide the implementation of the policy. A complete street in a residential area will look and feel much different than a complete street along a commercial corridor or district.

Certainly, not every street in the City will contain every element associated with complete streets. For example, a bike lane would not be added to a narrow residential street that also provides on-street parking. Furthermore, the policy contains a number of exceptions intended to protect public safety and ensure that the policy is implemented in an economically feasible and responsible manner and does not infringe upon or impact personal property or an individual's ability to own and operate a motor vehicle. The implementation of this policy will occur incrementally as streets and roadways come up for their regularly scheduled maintenance and repair.

A transportation network that provides safe, convenient and accessible travel for users of all ages and abilities provides multiple benefits for multiple individuals, groups and stakeholders throughout the community. It is no surprise, that cities across the country and throughout Montana have developed and adopted a complete streets policy. Benefits of a complete streets policy include:

- Public safety: Decrease in automobile collisions and pedestrian and bicycle accidents;
- Economic revitalization: Property values, including home prices and commercial rents, increase in walkable areas;
- Lower family transportation costs: The average family currently spends nearly 20 cents of every dollar on transportation, complete streets provide options for families to shift some of their trips to no-cost modes such as walking and biking;
- Municipal savings: Planning and designing for all users prevents costly delays and retrofits. Additionally, many jurisdictions have found complete street designs are more cost-effective than incomplete street designs;
- Quality of life: Complete streets allow seniors to age in place, children to walk or bike to school, and citizens to better enjoy community amenities such as the River's Edge Trail and our wonderful park system.

The development and adoption of a complete streets policy is a direct recommendation of the Downtown Master Plan adopted by the City Commission in October 2011. Additionally, other adopted community plans, including the City of Great Falls Growth Policy, Transportation Plan, Missouri River Urban Corridor Plan and Medical District Master Plan contain provisions supporting the concept of complete streets. Each of the above plans was developed through extensive public input and citizen participation.

This complete streets policy is truly reflective of many in the community who desire a safe, vibrant and attractive community. Extensive community outreach and citizen engagement contributed to the development of this policy. Since January, an overview of the complete streets concept has been presented to over 670 community members at 41 different community meetings.

Fiscal Impact: The complete streets policy will be implemented incrementally through the Capital Improvement Plan and Street Maintenance Schedule and their regularly scheduled budgets and funding sources.

Alternatives: The Commission could choose to not adopt Resolution 9968.

Attachments/Exhibits: Resolution 9968.

RESOLUTION NO. 9968

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

Whereas, the Great Falls City Commission adopted the Downtown Master Plan as an attachment to the 2005 City of Great Falls Growth Policy which recommends the development and adoption of a complete streets policy; and

Whereas, the purpose of this complete streets policy is to protect and enhance public health, safety and welfare through the planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance of the City's streets and roadways; and

Whereas, this complete streets policy is intended to create a streamlined framework for City staff to collaboratively plan, design, construct and maintain the City's streets and roadways in a safe, efficient and holistic manner; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS, MONTANA, THAT:

1. Complete Streets Community Vision:

Complete streets are intended to create a safe, efficient, affordable and balanced transportation system that makes Great Falls a more livable, enjoyable, and attractive community for current residents and future generations. This complete streets policy will be utilized by the City of Great Falls to align the City's transportation and land use planning and policy with the protection and enhancement of the health, safety and welfare of the City's residents.

2. Users and Modes:

Complete streets are intended to ensure that the City's transportation system accommodates users of all ages and abilities and all modes of transportation, including: motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders in a safe, balanced, equitable and responsible manner.

3. Projects and Phases:

The City of Great Falls will consider all users of the transportation network and all modes of transportation in the scoping, planning, and design phases and the construction, operation and maintenance of the streets and roadways under the City's jurisdiction.

This complete streets policy shall be applied to the following types of projects: new construction, resurfacing and rehabilitation, striping and other maintenance projects as well as privately built roads and easements intended for public use. Complete streets may be achieved through single projects or incrementally through a series of regularly scheduled improvements and operation activities.

4. Exceptions:

Complete streets principles and practices shall be applied to all new construction, reconstruction, resurfacing, rehabilitation, striping and other maintenance projects, including those constructed by private developers, except under one or more of the following conditions:

- A. Daily, routine or emergency maintenance designed to keep the street or roadway in serviceable condition, including but not limited to pothole repair, excavation patches, or other similar activities of a minor nature; or
- B. A project occurring on a roadway where insufficient space, extreme natural or topographical features and/or high safety risks make automobile transportation the only feasible option; or
- C. A documented absence of current and future need for the provision of complete streets elements; or
- D. The cost of accommodation of complete streets elements is excessive and disproportionate to the benefit of accommodation. Costs and benefits, including financial, quality of life and community benefits should be considered as part of this determination.

The exceptions described in B, C, and D above must be approved by the Director of Public Works, the Director of Planning and Community Development and the Chief of Police.

5. Network:

The City of Great Falls, in cooperation with other partners whenever possible, will design, operate and maintain a multi-modal network of transportation facilities that connect the City's neighborhoods, schools, employment centers, parks and other community amenities and destinations.

The City of Great Falls will capitalize on the success of the River's Edge Trail to connect existing and future non-motorized networks.

The City of Great Falls will utilize existing planning documents to help guide network-related decisions including but not limited to:

- A. Downtown Master Plan;
- B. Growth Policy;
- C. Medical District Master Plan;
- D. Missouri River Urban Corridor Plan;
- E. Park Master Plan
- F. Student Safety Plan; and
- G. Transportation Plan and related studies

6. All Agencies and Roads:

The City of Great Falls will develop partnerships with private developers, governmental and transportation agencies to encourage the incorporation of this complete streets policy into roadway projects under their jurisdiction within the City and/or connecting to City roadways to implement a connected and continuous complete transportation network.

7. Design Guidance and Flexibility:

The City of Great Falls will utilize accepted or adopted design standards and best practices when implementing this complete streets policy to ensure the provision of safe, consistent and predictable transportation facilities, and will also consider innovative approaches to ensure the needs of all users, ages and abilities.

8. Context:

This complete streets policy will be implemented using a context-sensitive approach to develop transportation facilities that fit the unique character of the City of Great Falls and consider the following factors:

- A. Public safety;
- B. Adjacent and surrounding land uses;

- C. Connectivity and location in relation to significant destinations such as schools, employment centers, park or recreational areas, commercial corridors, major shopping destinations or other community amenities; and
- D. Roadway characteristics.

9. Implementation:

The City of Great Falls will develop performance measures and will document progress in implementing complete streets features by reporting said performance measures to the City Commission on an annual basis.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Commission of the City of Great Falls, Montana, on this 5th day of June, 2012.

Michael J. Winters, Mayor

ATTEST:

Lisa Kunz, City Clerk

(Seal of the City)

APPROVED FOR LEGAL CONTENT:

James W. Santoro, City Attorney