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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

MEMORANDUM

Planning,
Zoning,
Building Safety,
Construction Inspection Services,
Public Health,
Housing Inspections,
Code Enforcement

Cc: Gregg Mandsager, City Administrator
From: Andrew Fangman, City Planner
Date: November 14, 2013
Re: Complete Street Policy

INTRODUCTION: A complete street policy which gives direction to how future street project will be designed has been prepared in fulfillment of a Comprehensive Plan Goal and as part City of Muscatine's participation in the Blue Zones Project.

BACKGROUND: A complete street is a safe, accessible, and convenient street for all users regardless of transportation mode, age, or physical ability. Complete streets adequately provide for bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, and motorists, by matching the needs of travelers to the uses surrounding a street. It provides safe travel for people using any legal mode of travel. Every complete street looks different with component features varying based on context, topography, road function, the speed of traffic, pedestrian and bicycle demand, and other factors. Based on context, common features of complete streets include: sidewalks, paved shoulders, bike lanes, safe crossing points, accessible curb ramps, pedestrian refuge medians, bus stop access, sidewalk "bump-outs" at intersections, and access to adjacent trails in a "corridor".

The principle behind complete streets policy is that multimodal corridors should become the default design mode for streets—and a formal exception process must be followed when they are not. Though a complete streets policy not yet been adopted by the City of Muscatine, complete streets principles have been applied to recent major street projects. When both Colorado Street and a major portion of Cedar Street are rebuilt in 2014, they will be rebuilt as complete streets that are safe, accessible, and convenient street for all users. The adoption of a complete streets policy by the City of Muscatine does not represent a major policy change; rather it is formalization and standardization of the way that the City has been design streets in recent years.

Implementation of the Complete Street Policy will guide the planning, funding, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of all new and modified streets in the City of Muscatine. The City shall approach every transportation improvement 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 streets and rights-of-way, including capital improvements, and major maintenance, should also be considered. When any of the conditions listed below exist in a specific project location, an exemption to the Complete Streets Policy may be granted. For an exemption to be granted a

"I remember Muscatine for its sunsets. I have never seen any on either side of the ocean that equaled them" — Mark Twain

determination that incorporating new bicycle, pedestrian, and or public transit facilities is impracticable and/or undesirable must be made. This determination may occur during the budget and capital improvements program approval process or when project plans and specifications are being prepared. Any granted exemptions will be explained in writing with supporting data that indicates the reason for granting the exemption.

- Non-motorized users are prohibited on the roadway.
- Severe topographic constraints exist.
- An absence of current and/or future need for a particular type of user.
- The cost of accommodations, including potential right-of-way acquisition, for a particular mode is excessively disproportionate to the need and potential benefit of a project.
- The project involves ordinary maintenance activities designed to keep assets in acceptable condition, such as cleaning, sealing, spot repairs, patching and surface treatments.
- Scarcity of population, travel, and attractors, both existing and future, indicate an absence of need for accommodation of non-motorized users.
- Where a reasonable and equivalent project along the same corridor already exists or is planned.

Adoption of a complete street policy will help implement Goal T.11 of the recently adopted City of Muscatine Comprehensive Plan. This goal is to “Improve both Muscatine’s image and its function by providing a safe and attractive environment for street users of all ages and abilities such as including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, mass transit, children, senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, freight carriers, emergency responders and adjacent land users.” The adoption of a complete streets policy is one of the steps that must be taken in order for Muscatine to be certified as a Blue Zones Community, in accordance with a resolution supporting the Blue Zones Project that was approved by City Council on May 16, 2013.

BACKUP INFORMATION:

1. **Draft Complete Street Policy**

DRAFT Complete Street Policy

Improve both Muscatine's quality of life and image by providing a safe and attractive environment for street users of all ages and abilities such as motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, mass transit, children, senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, freight carriers, emergency responders and adjacent land users.

- The design, operation and maintenance of the City of Muscatine's street network will create a connected grid of streets accommodating a safe, easily accessible, convenient, comfortable, and visually appealing manner for users of all ages and abilities, including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, mass transit, children, senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, freight carriers, emergency responders and adjacent land users.
- Implementation of the Complete Street Policy will guide the planning, funding, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of all new and modified streets in the City of Muscatine. The City shall approach every transportation improvement 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 streets and rights-of-way, including capital improvements, and major maintenance, should also be considered.
- When any of the conditions listed below exist in a specific project location, an exemption to the Complete Streets Policy may be granted. For an exemption to be granted a determination that incorporating new bicycle, pedestrian, and/or public transit facilities is impracticable and/or undesirable must be made. This determination may occur during the budget and capital improvements program approval process or when project plans and specifications are being prepared. Any granted exemptions will be explained in writing with supporting data that indicates the reason for granting the exemption.
 - Non-motorized users are prohibited on the roadway.
 - Severe topographic constraints exist.
 - An absence of current and/or future need for a particular type of user.
 - The cost of accommodations, including potential right-of-way acquisition, for a particular mode is excessively disproportionate to the need and potential benefit of a project.
 - The project involves ordinary maintenance activities designed to keep assets in acceptable condition, such as cleaning, sealing, spot repairs, patching and surface treatments.
 - Scarcity of population, travel, and attractors, both existing and future, indicate an absence of need for accommodation of non-motorized users.

- Where a reasonable and equivalent project along the same corridor already exists or is planned.
- Transportation infrastructure serving non-motorized user should be linked to form a comprehensive community-wide network of routes for non-motorized travel that allow for members of the community to travel safely from their home to their destination by foot, bike, or by other non-motorized means and for children to be able to walk or bike to school safely.
- The City of Muscatine will work with the Iowa Department of Transportation to upgrade state highways to complete standards, excluding all divided four lane, limited access highways such as, U.S. 61 and the U.S. 61 Bypass.
- For a privately constructed street to be accepted by the City of Muscatine it must be built in compliance with complete street standards.
- The City of Muscatine shall follow accepted or adopted design standards and use the best and latest design standards available in urban design and street design, construction, operations and maintenance. When implementing this complete streets goal the City will be not be precluded from considering innovative or nontraditional design options where a comparable level of safety for users is present or provided.
 - Design street pavement widths to the minimum necessary.
 - Maximize the number of transportation options available with the public right of way.
- Where physical conditions warrant, plant trees whenever a street is newly constructed, reconstructed, or relocated.
- To further the Complete Streets policy factors that should be given consideration during the development of a transportation project include the following:
 - Whether the corridor provides a primary access to a significant destination such as a park or recreational area, a school, a shopping / commercial area, or an employment center;
 - Whether the corridor provides access across a natural or man-made barrier such as a river, creek, divided highway, or railroad;
 - Whether the corridor is in an area where a relatively high number of users of non-motorized transportation modes can be anticipated;
 - Whether a road corridor provides important continuity or connectivity links for an existing trail or safe route for non-motorized travel network; or

- Whether nearby routes that provide a similar level of convenience and connectivity already exist.
- The City of Muscatine shall put into place performance standards with measurable benchmarks reflecting the ability of users to travel in safety and comfort. Performance standards may include: miles of new bicycle facilities or sidewalks, percentage of streets with tree canopy and low design speeds, public participation, street lighting, or others.
- Update all necessary and appropriate codes, standards and ordinances to ensure that design components for all new or modified streets further the Complete Streets Policy.
- The City of Muscatine will examine all planned capital improvements projects to determine if they can be leveraged to advance the Complete Streets Policy.
- The City of Muscatine, working with community members and stakeholders, will identify and map critical routes for non-motorized travel linking schools, parks, bus stops, most major employment and shopping centers, and residential areas.
- A detailed implementation plan will be developed to make the identified critical routes for non-motorized travel safe. The detailed implementation plan will include a list of capital improvement projects addressing the gaps and deficiencies. The implementation plan will also detail the sequence and location in which inspection and maintenance of existing sidewalks and capital improvement projects need to be completed in order to build a network of critical routes for non-motorized travel outward from each school and the ultimately link them together into a community-wide network of safe routes for non-motorized travel.
- The Complete Streets Policy will be supported by and integrated into the City's Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan.