



# COMPLETE STREETS FOR ALL



↓  
Space for  
people  
**walking**

↓  
Space for  
people  
**biking**

↓  
Space for people  
**driving cars,**  
trucks, and buses

↓  
Space for  
people **using**  
micromobility

↓  
Space for  
**rest**

## OVER 160 YEARS OF STREET EVOLUTION

BECAUSE STREETS ARE PUBLIC SPACE FOR EVERYONE

### Complete Streets Steering Committee

Jesse Blackburn – Village Administrator

Joseph W. Sehlhorst – Chair, Village Council Member

Ryan Shoemaker – Community Member

Travis Music – Community Member

Adam Haunhorst – Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission

Bri Buzard – Allen County Public Health, Creating Healthy Communities

Tobi Otulana – Toole Design

## 1. Vision and Intent

1.1. Complete Streets are streets designed and operated to enable safe use and to support comfortable, convenient, and independent mobility for all users. Complete Street elements examples may include but are not limited to:

- Pedestrian Improvements – sidewalks, crosswalks, median crossing islands
- Traffic Calming – center turning lanes, on-street parking
- Trees and Greenspace – tree lawns, neighborhood parks, landscaping
- Bike Improvements – bike lanes, trails and paths, bike parking
- Disability Facilities – reachable buttons, wheelchair friendly sidewalks, median crossings
- Public Transit Facilities – bus shelters, well-lit waiting areas, bus lanes

Complete Streets benefits may include:

- Health – Lowered risk of chronic disease, reduced daily stress from driving, less motor vehicle congestion, and improved air quality
- Environment – Reduced motor vehicle emissions and more compact development with less impermeable surface
- Economy – Lowered health care costs, increased productivity, increased retail sales in pedestrian-oriented environments, and reduced costs for roadway updates.
- Social – Increased interaction and community building; greater social safety; roads turned into people-oriented spaces, increased mobility options for all, and community wide solutions to address systemic inequalities
- Equity – Improved access to affordable, safe mobility for vulnerable populations in Bluffton including people with disabilities, older adults, people with low incomes, and people with limited access to a vehicle

This Complete Streets policy is one of many steps in Village of Bluffton (Bluffton) efforts to provide safe and accessible streets for everyone and every mode. This Complete Streets policy will standardize how new and reconstruction transportation projects will improve access and livability throughout the village, including all new, reconstruction, and scheduled maintenance projects within the limits of Bluffton. By implementing Complete Streets principles, the transportation network will contribute to improving the community's health, environment, economic vitality, and quality of life for those living and frequenting the Village of Bluffton.

1.2. Bluffton's vision for Complete Streets is the thoughtful creation of a connected street network which improves safety and facilitates movement for all users in the Village of Bluffton community including pedestrians, motorists, cyclists, transit and school bus riders, delivery and service personnel, freight haulers, and emergency responders.

## 2. Diverse Users

2.1. This policy acknowledges priority users, rather than neighborhoods, due to the small village context of Bluffton. Complete Streets priorities for the Village include, but are not limited to:

- Improving connectivity for people walking and biking.
- Prioritizing access for youth, older adults, and people with limited mobility to parks and trails.
- Prioritizing safe and equitable access to community resources and amenities.
- Improving safety and facilitating movement for all users regardless of age, disability status, race, ethnicity, religion, income, gender, identity, immigration status, language spoken, or access to a personal vehicle.

### **3. Commitment in all Projects and Phases**

- 3.1. The Village shall approach every street project (village, state, federal, and private development) and each project's phase as an opportunity for improvements 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. Complete Streets facilities shall be considered during capital improvements, street resurfacing, street repaving, street restriping, or other roadway rehabilitation.
- 3.2. Where possible, the Village shall provide safe and reasonable accommodations for all modes of transportation to continue to use the road safely and efficiently during construction or repair work that infringes on the right-of-way and/or sidewalk.
- 3.3. Privately constructed streets and parking lots shall adhere to this policy.
- 3.4. The Village shall coordinate with local businesses and local school districts to improve multimodal connections to key destinations and amenities.

### **4. Clear, Accountable Exceptions**

- 4.1. Exceptions to providing for all modes in each project include:
  - 4.1.a. Accommodation is unnecessary on corridors where specific users are prohibited, such as interstate freeways or pedestrian malls. Excluding certain users on particular corridors should not exempt projects from accommodating other permitted users.
  - 4.1.b. Cost of accommodation is excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use.
  - 4.1.c. A documented absence of current and future needs.
  - 4.1.d. Emergency repairs such as a water main leak require an immediate, rapid response; however, temporary accommodations for all modes should still be made. Depending on the severity of the repairs, opportunities to improve multimodal access should still be considered where possible.
  - 4.1.e. Engineering judgment determines that Complete Streets facilities are not feasible due to terrain, ownership/jurisdiction, and/or existing structures that cannot be accommodated through design.
- 4.2. Exceptions to the Complete Streets policy will be reviewed and documented by the Village Administrator or their designee and approved by the Village Council. The Village Administrator or their designee will add requested exceptions to the Village Council meeting agenda for discussion in open forum. Documentation of the proposed exception will be published in the Planning Commission and Village Council meeting minutes and accessible to the public via the Village website.
- 4.3. On an annual basis, the Village Administrator, or their designee, shall provide documentation of all exceptions to the Village Streets Committee, Village Council, and Village Pathways Board.

## 5. Jurisdiction

- 5.1. All public and private development projects which propose improvements within the public right-of-way shall comply with this Complete Streets policy. Approval of necessary permits is contingent upon meeting the Complete Streets requirements.
- 5.2. Private development projects proposing privately owned rights-of-ways shall be reviewed for consistency with this Complete Streets policy as part of the approval process. Owners of private parking lots, streets, and rights-of-ways shall adhere to this policy.
- 5.3. The State of Ohio controls several principal transportation corridors which traverse through Bluffton. The Village shall work cooperatively with the Ohio Department of Transportation to plan and implement Complete Streets improvements and major maintenance within these rights-of-ways.
- 5.4. To support connectivity between local political subdivisions, the Village shall coordinate with and foster project partnerships with surrounding jurisdictions and agencies including but not limited to Orange Township, Richland Township, Allen County, and Hancock County.

## 6. Design

- 6.1. The Village shall follow the best and latest versions of practices concerning design guidance, standards, and recommendations in the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) Multimodal Design Guide (MDG). Other best practice guidance, documents, and entities may include, but are not limited to:
  - Public Right of Ways Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG)
  - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
  - Technical expertise of the Village's engineering counsel and/or hired consultants
  - Any applicable Village of Bluffton design code including not limited to, Title XV Land Usage
- 6.2. The Village of Bluffton Streets, Alleys, Lights, and Sidewalks Committee (Streets Committee) shall use a Complete Streets Checklist to direct the design of the Village's roadways, bridges, pathways, and sidewalks.
  - 6.2.a. The Complete Streets Checklist will be developed within twelve (12) months of policy adoption. The checklist will align with design guidance in the ODOT MDG and support creation of a comprehensive, integrated transportation network that is safe, accessible, comfortable, accommodating, and welcoming to all modes.
- 6.3. The Village will revisit the list of best practice standards and guidance every two years.

## 7. Land Use and Context Sensitivity

- 7.1. Transportation networks do not exist independently of communities and neighborhoods. Plans and policies will consider the surrounding context of land uses, residents, and future development. Streets should serve the needs of all users, whether they live along the street or are passing through. Streets will be designed in a context-sensitive manner that responds to roadway characteristics (such as volume, speed, turning movements, and curbside uses), the character of the surrounding neighborhood, its current and planned building forms and uses, and its current and expected transportation needs.

- 7.2. To support cohesion between land use and transportation, the Village Administrator, or their designee, shall provide coordination with this Complete Streets policy for the Planning Commission and the Streets Committee by attending meetings and serving in an advisory role. The Village Administrator, or their designee, will ensure that Complete Streets principles are understood by the Planning Commission, Streets Committee, and all other entities related to transportation planning, land-use planning, and economic development activities.
- 7.3. The Village will adhere to Complete Streets principles when developing or revising land use tools. Village zoning, subdivision regulations, land-use plans, and other relevant policies will abide by the Complete Streets policy. When policies, regulations, ordinances, and plans are revised they will incorporate the Complete Streets principles and standards outlined in this document.
- 7.4. The Village will track performance measures and use community engagement (including but not limited to community surveys) to evaluate any negative unintended consequences for vulnerable populations, caused by the implementation of this policy.

## 8. Performance Measures

- 8.1. The Village shall track Complete Streets policy implementation with the short-term and long-term performance measures listed below.

### *Short-term performance measures:*

- Mileage of sidewalk added
- Mileage of bikeways added
- Number of Complete Streets projects constructed (i.e., crosswalks, ADA improvements, transit improvements, bicycle parking, traffic calming),
- Number of Complete Streets projects implemented within ¼ mile of schools, health care services, grocery stores, retail and service stores, banks, parks, or recreational facilities
- Net number of new street trees added
- Number of crashes (location and type)
- Number of non-infrastructure programs or events implemented (e.g., education or encouragement activities)
- Utilization – number of bicycle and pedestrian counts
- Number of maintenance activities completed
- Number of, and reasons for, Complete Streets policy exceptions approved
- Number of completed Complete Streets checklists

### *Long term performance measures:*

- Increase in sidewalk and path connectivity
- Increase in the amount of people who utilize active transportation for transportation and recreation
- Improvement in public health outcomes including but not limited to obesity and chronic disease rates for both youth and adults

- 8.2. The Village Administrator, or designee shall report annually on short-term performance measures at a Streets Committee meeting and develop an annual report to be shared publicly. The short- and long-term performance measures reflect the priorities and priority groups listed under Section 2 Diverse Users.
- 8.3. The Village shall collect data with assistance from agencies and organizations including but not limited to: Bluffton Public Works Department, Bluffton Administration, Bluffton Pathways Board, Bluffton Police Department, Allen County Public Health (ACPH), Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission (LACRPC), Activate Allen County, ODOT - Transportation Information Mapping System (TIMS), and Ohio Department of Health (ODH).

## **9. Project Selection Criteria**

- 9.1. The Village shall incorporate the following project selection criteria into the transportation decision-making process:
  - Safety for all roadway users, especially pedestrians. Areas with a high rate of traffic crashes or with higher populations of peoples with disabilities, older residents, and other vulnerable populations are to be prioritized.
  - Cost
  - Funding availability
  - Number of people impacted by the project
  - Connection to planned or existing pathways identified by the Bluffton Pathways Board
  - Impact on the Complete Streets priorities listed in Section 2 of this policy
  - Connectivity – Areas that fill a gap or lead to a more connected walking and bicycling network are to be prioritized.

## **10. Implementation Steps**

- 10.1. The Village Streets Committee shall dedicate one meeting per year to Complete Streets to discuss the annual report of performance measures, policy implementation progress, community engagement needs, and/or other topics relevant to the implementation of this policy. Representatives from the agencies, organizations, and groups listed below will be invited to attend and participate in this annual meeting for policy implementation oversight.
  - Schools
  - Police
  - Fire/Emergency Medical Services
  - Allen County Public Health (ACPH) Complete Streets Policy Task Force
  - Economic Development
  - Bluffton Entrepreneurs
  - Tree Commission
  - Planning Commission
  - Public Neighborhood Associations
  - Senior citizen groups
  - Daycare centers
  - Human services and/or social organizations
  - Bluffton University
  - Bluffton Hospital
  - Safe Communities Coalition

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

10.2.a. The Village Pathways Board, Village Streets Committee, and Village Council shall oversee implementation of this Complete Streets Policy. Accountability will be ensured through annual reporting requirements including exceptions and short-term/long-term performance measures.

10.2.b In accordance with Village led comprehensive planning efforts, Zoning Code reevaluation and updates shall align with this Complete Streets Policy. Within twelve (12) months of adopting this Complete Streets policy, the Village Administrator, or their designee shall make recommendations for updates to the Village Comprehensive Plan and Village Zoning Code.

10.2.c. In addition to local funds, the Village shall seek regional, state, federal, and private funding sources to implement Complete Streets including but not limited to: Lima Allen County Regional Planning Commission (LACRPC), Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), Bluffton Lions Foundation, Ohio Department of Health (ODH), and Hancock County Community Foundation.

10.2.d. The Village will support ongoing education for staff through trainings and educational offerings including but not limited to:

- LACRPC Crash and safety reviews
- ODOT Active Transportation Academy trainings
- Educational activities such as bicycle rodeos

10.3. Policy implementation will include community engagement through strategies including but not limited to:

- Public comment opportunities at the annual Complete Street focused Streets Committee meeting and at Village Council meetings where policy exceptions are being heard.
- Walk audits. The Village will make walk audit forms publicly available.
- Community surveys. The Village will survey the community about Complete Streets implementation, priorities, unintended consequences, and other relevant information as needed.
- Educational, encouragement, and engagement activities led by local and regional partners including bicycle rodeos, professional development bicycle rides, and youth traffic safety education events.