



# AMATS Complete Streets Policy

## Table of Contents:

- Section 1. Definition of Complete Streets
- Section 2. Principles of Complete Streets
- Section 3. Complete Streets Policy
- Section 4. Consistency
- Section 5. Scope of Complete Streets Policy
- Section 6. Exceptions
- Section 7. Design Guidance
- Section 8. Context Sensitivity
- Section 9. Performance Measures
- Section 10. Implementation and Reporting
- Section 11. References

---

## Section 1. Definition of Complete Streets.

“Complete Streets” means streets that are designed, used and operated to enable safe, **equitable** access for all traffic (defined as **persons in wheelchairs**, pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and public transportation users of all ages and abilities) to safely move through the transportation network.

## Section 2. Principles of **the AMATS Complete Streets Policy**

The following are key principles of Complete Street policies:

- A. They are context-sensitive, considering **equity**, economic, social, and environmental objectives.
- B. Emphasize appropriate facility connectivity for all modes of travel based on approved planning documents.

- C. Take into account not only the presence of a facility, but also the level of comfort and safety (based on national data for **disabled persons**, bicycles and pedestrians) that the facility provides for all traffic that is intended to utilize that facility.
- D. Ensure that as the entire right of way is planned, designed, funded, and operated with consideration for safe access for all traffic of all ages and abilities and that all traffic and transportation modes are equally deserving of safe travel facilities.
- E. ~~Encourage~~ **Establish and promote** the use of national best practice design standards **as well as design standards that work well in northern climates.**
- F. Allow design flexibility in balancing traffic and stakeholder needs including maintenance needs and temporary snow storage.
- G. Encourage that the purchase of operations and maintenance vehicles are well suited for current and proposed infrastructure.
- H. ~~Encourage consistency of transportation projects with land use goals and policies of local land use plans.~~ **Integrate current and future land use needs, goals and policies into complete streets prioritization, design and maintenance.**
- I. Benefit all users equitably, particularly vulnerable users and the most underinvested and underserved communities.
- J. Actively work to consider how to preserve right of ways for all users during all seasons of the year.
- K. Encourage the prioritization of complete streets projects in areas that exhibit high concentrations of vulnerable users.
- L. Encourage collaboration and interagency coordination with all transportation planning agencies and partners including public health.
- M. Promote transportation solutions to improve equity and access to a diverse network of connectivity within the AMATS region.**

### **Section 3. Complete Streets Policy**

AMATS encourages the above principles be used for the purpose of planning, designing,

building, operating and maintaining an equitable, safe, reliable, efficient, integrated and connected multimodal transportation network that will provide access, mobility, safety, and connectivity for all users. This policy is a commitment that future transportation projects will take into account the needs of all users as early as practicable and throughout the transportation planning process.

#### **Section 4. Consistency**

1. This policy is consistent with FHWA findings on safety:

- Designing the street with pedestrians in mind – sidewalks, raised medians, turning access controls, better bus stop placement, better lighting, traffic calming measures, and treatments for travelers with disabilities– all improve pedestrian, bicyclist and motorist safety.[FHWA-RD-03-042]

2. This policy is consistent with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention findings on health:

- U.S. CDC recommends adoption of complete streets policies as a strategy to prevent obesity and promote public health.  
(<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5807a1.htm>)

3. This policy is consistent with U.S. Department of Transportation findings on health and safety:

- Complete Streets reduce motor vehicle-related crashes and pedestrian risk, as well as bicyclist risk when well-designed bicycle-specific infrastructure is included. They can promote walking and bicycling by providing safer places to achieve physical activity through transportation. (<https://www.transportation.gov/mission/health/completestreets>)

4. This policy is consistent with the FHWA Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program. CMAQ is a program that emphasizes the importance of the link between transportation and air quality. To that end, CMAQ program funding is

applied to transportation projects that reduce vehicle emissions and help improve air quality. Transit and traffic flow improvement projects are included, as are projects such as ride sharing, vehicle emissions inspection and maintenance programs, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and alternative fuels.

5. This policy is consistent with the goals and objectives of the [AMATS Draft 2050 MTP](#):

**Goal 1:** Maintain transportation infrastructure in a state of good repair.

- *Objective 1A.* Maintain and rehabilitate existing infrastructure to achieve a state of good repair with effective use for all modes of travel year-round.
- *Objective 1B.* Increase transportation infrastructure resiliency to natural hazards.

**Goal 2:** Provide safer and more secure places to live, walk, bike, ride the bus, and drive.

- *Objective 2A.* Reduce the number and severity of vehicle, pedestrian, bicycle, motorcycle and commercial vehicle crashes and fatalities.
- *Objective 2B.* Improve ability to achieve timely emergency response.
- *Objective 2C.* Minimize conflicts between different modes of travel, reduce unsafe behaviors, and increase attentiveness and awareness.

**Goal 3:** Support an efficient, reliable, and connected transportation system that equitably improves access and mobility to all activities.

- *Objective 3A.* Improve the existing transportation system efficiency, through the implementation of effective and innovative strategies and technologies, such as: Transportation System Management and Operations (TSMO), Transportation Demand Management (TDM), and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS).
- *Objective 3B.* Provide facilities to encourage transit use and improve pedestrian and bicycle travel.

- *Objective 3C.* Implement transportation facilities that are appropriate for intended adjacent land use.

**Goal 4:** Develop a transportation system that supports a thriving, sustainable, broad-based economy, while maintaining or enhancing the surrounding area’s land use character.

- *Objective 4A.* Enhance intermodal capabilities of the transportation system to meet the needs of freight generators, the military bases, and other employment centers and industrial and commercial areas, while maintaining compatibility with the current adopted Land Use Plans.
- *Objective 4B.* Attract community investment and tourism through improved transportation system accessibility, aesthetics, and wayfinding.
- *Objective 4C.* Promote an adaptable transportation system that supports the local and regional economy and job growth.
- *Objective 4D.* Plan and facilitate regional policy development for new technology.
- *Objective 4E.* Coordinate street design standards to match current land use as well as future land use goals and policies by applying Context Sensitive Solutions and Complete Streets policies, and street typologies.

**Goal 5:** Protect, preserve, and enhance the natural environment to promote sustainability and public health.

- *Objective 5A.* Improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- *Objective 5B.* Increase community resiliency to climate change.
- *Objective 5C.* Coordinate transportation and land use planning to support connections that reduce reliance on auto trips and encourage active transportation.
- *Objective 5D.* Minimize and mitigate negative impacts on the natural environment by implementing the Context Sensitive Solutions process during transportation project development.

- Objective 5E. Promote healthy lifestyles by connecting everyday destinations through increased active transportation.

**Goal 6:** Promote equitable transportation options, improvements, and maintenance activities for vulnerable populations.

- *Objective 6A.* Improve multimodal access to employment, education, recreation, and essential services for underserved neighborhoods.
- *Objective 6B.* Minimize adverse impacts on existing neighborhoods resulting from transportation projects; when impacts are unavoidable, equitably distribute them to avoid disproportionate impacts to vulnerable populations.
- *Objective 6C.* Improve the ability of underrepresented groups to participate in the transportation decision making process.

#### **Section 5. Scope of Complete Streets Policy –**

- The AMATS Complete Streets Policy will focus on developing an **equitable**, connected, integrated transportation network that serves all users.
- Transportation projects receiving money that passes through the local Anchorage MPO agency (AMATS) will be expected to follow a Complete Streets approach.
- AMATS shall approach each transportation project as an opportunity to create safer, more accessible facilities for all users.
- **AMATS will ensure that all transportation projects will strive to coordinate with adopted municipal and statewide planning documents including land use plans, safety plans, coordinated transportation plans, studies and reports.**
- AMATS does not subscribe to one singular design prescription for Complete Streets; each street is different in function and context. Roadways that are planned and designed using a Complete Streets approach may include a wide variety of transportation solutions.
- **AMATS will encourage and advocate for the prioritization of all-season maintenance in areas where there are high concentrations of vulnerable users, dependence on transit**

service and essential non-motorized facilities as defined by the AMATS Non-motorized Plan.

- This policy should inform all local and state transportation agency representatives, and consultants responsible for planning, designing, constructing or maintaining projects within the Anchorage Metropolitan Planning Area.
- Procurement for consulting services for the planning or design of an AMATS area project or plan will be assisted by this policy, where appropriate.
- Projects that clearly follow complete streets guide lines will receive full points in the TIP scoring category that pertains to complete streets.
- AMATS will work with local municipal, state and public agencies to educate the general public about the importance of complete streets, safe driving, bicycling and walking practices.
- A project's compliance with this policy shall be determined based on the filing of a Complete Streets Checklist Form.

## **Section 6. Exceptions**

Any exception to this policy must be approved by the AMATS Policy Committee 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:

1. Users are legally prohibited from using a roadway. Where access is legally prohibited, project managers should consider opportunities to address or remove barriers to network connectivity and crossings that are important for serving non-motorized and other modes;
2. Cost of accommodation is excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use;
3. There exists substantial funding limitations that cannot be overcome with flexible design solutions; and
4. Where a reasonable and equivalent project along the same corridor is already programmed to provide facilities exempted from the project at hand.

## **Section 7. Design Guidance**

Complete Streets implementation relies on using the best and latest design guidance to maximize design flexibility. Design solutions are needed to balance modal and user needs. AMATS promotes the adoption of national best practice design guidance for designing complete streets. These resources include but are not limited to: the MOA Design Criteria Manual, the latest editions of AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, Urban Street Design Guide, NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide, NACTO Transit Street Design Guide, ITE Recommended Design Guidelines to Accommodate Pedestrians and Bicycles at Interchanges, AASHTO Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities, FTA Manual on Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections to Transit, FHWA Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks, and FHWA Measuring Multimodal Network Connectivity.

## **Section 8. Context Sensitivity**

Complete Streets principles include the development and implementation of current and future projects in a context-sensitive manner in which project implementation is sensitive to the community's physical, economic, and social setting. This context-sensitive approach to process and design includes a range of goals that give significant consideration to stakeholder and community values. The overall goal of this approach is to preserve and enhance scenic, aesthetic, historical, neighborhood character, and environmental resources while improving or maintaining safety, mobility, and infrastructure conditions.

## **Section 9. Performance Measures**

AMATS promotes the establishment of performance indicators to evaluate the implementation of complete streets.

Performance indicators that contribute to complete streets goals include but are not limited to:

- Multimodal Level of Service (MMLOS)
- Decrease in rate of crashes, injuries and fatalities by mode
- Expansion of a comfortable, low-stress transportation network for non-motorized



traffic, as measured by an appropriate Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) analysis.

- Miles of new or reconstructed sidewalk
- Number of new or reconstructed curb ramps
- Number of new or repainted crosswalks
- Percentage completion of bicycle and pedestrian networks as envisioned in plans and programs.
- Miles of new non-motorized traffic facilities added to roads within ¼ mile of Core and
- Standard transit routes.
- Number of complete streets projects that demonstrate **how they are integrating with adjacent land use goals and policies.**
- Number of complete streets projects in underserved or underinvested communities.
- **General perceptions and feelings of safety and comfort on facilities within the AMATS region. These can be gauged using community surveys and other public involvement techniques.**

## **Section 10. Implementation and Reporting**

AMATS encourages implementation of the Complete Streets Policy to be carried out cooperatively among all Anchorage transportation related departments and agencies and to the greatest extent possible.

AMATS will incorporate Complete Streets principles into their plans and programs.

AMATS encourages incorporation of the Complete Streets Policy into the current design manuals including but not limited to the Context Sensitive Solutions policy, the Design Criteria Manual and the Preconstruction Manual. While the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) policy provides a suggested design and plan review framework for major roadway reconstruction projects, the Complete Streets policy provides network-level planning and design considerations intended to ensure that safe, comfortable, and connected transportation facilities are available to all traffic, regardless of age or ability.

AMATS will continue to offer workshops and other training opportunities to staff, community leaders, and the general public so that the broader Anchorage community understands the importance of the Complete Streets vision.

AMATS is committed to developing and instituting better ways to measure performance and collect data on how well streets are serving all users.

## **Section 11. References**

### **1. FHWA Bicycle and Pedestrian Legislation**

[http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle\\_pedestrian/legislation/sec217.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/legislation/sec217.cfm)

### **2. Context Sensitive Solutions**

<http://contextsensitivesolutions.org/>

### **3. Smart Growth America**

<http://smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets>

### **4. AASHTO's A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets**

<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/programadmin/standards.cfm>

### **5. Highway Preconstruction Manual**

<http://www.dot.state.ak.us/stwddes/dcsprecon/preconmanual.shtml>

### **6. AASHTO Materials Online**

[https://bookstore.transportation.org/collection\\_detail.aspx?id=110](https://bookstore.transportation.org/collection_detail.aspx?id=110)

### **7. Interim 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan**

[https://www.muni.org/Departments/health/Admin/environment/AirQ/Documents/AMATS%20materials/AAQAC%202015/Interim2035MTP\\_Public-Review-DRAFT\\_15y06m26d.pdf](https://www.muni.org/Departments/health/Admin/environment/AirQ/Documents/AMATS%20materials/AAQAC%202015/Interim2035MTP_Public-Review-DRAFT_15y06m26d.pdf)