

BLACK HAWK COUNTY MPO COMPLETE STREETS POLICY



Smart Growth America
Improving lives by improving communities



National Complete
Streets Coalition



Purpose and Vision

Purpose

The Black Hawk County MPO is committed to creating vibrant and sustainable communities where all residents and visitors can safely and conveniently access our streets and public spaces. Our purpose is to champion the concept of Complete Streets, ensuring that our roadways are designed, built, and maintained to accommodate all modes of transportation, enhance public health, promote economic vitality, and protect the environment.

Vision

“To create an inclusive and sustainable community within the Black Hawk County metropolitan area, we are committed to providing safe, convenient, and comfortable transportation options for residents and visitors of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities, regardless of transportation mode – walking, cycling, public transit, or automobile – ensuring that our roadways promote safety and accessibility while fostering a harmonious and eco-friendly environment.”

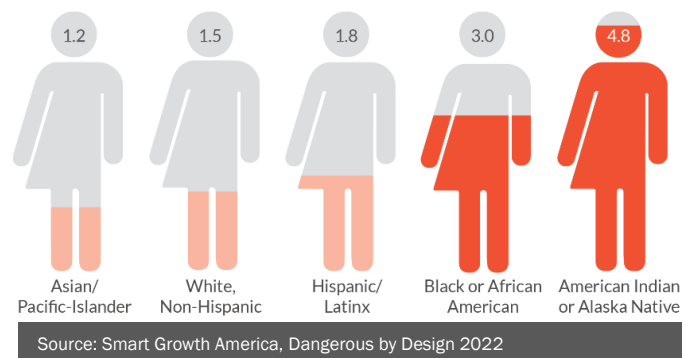
What are Complete Streets?

According to the National Complete Streets Coalition¹, Complete Streets is an approach to planning, designing, and building streets that enables safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. This approach also emphasizes the needs of those who have experienced systemic underinvestment, or those whose needs have not been met through a traditional transportation approach, such as older adults, people living with disabilities, people with no access to vehicles, and Black, Native, and Hispanic or Latino/a/x communities.

Incomplete streets are **the result of a flawed process** that fails to consider the diverse needs of all individuals and relies on outdated criteria for defining street success. The resulting streets span a spectrum from uncomfortable to downright deadly for those not using a car.

Complete Streets represent a **process** and **design philosophy**, characterized by their adaptability to the unique context of each community. Rather than adhering to a single, rigid blueprint, these streets are tailored to suit the specific needs of the community. A complete street may incorporate an array of features, such as sidewalks, bike lanes, wide paved shoulders, bus pull outs, comfortable and accessible public transit stops, frequent and safe crosswalks, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, roundabouts, and more. The appearance and composition of these streets naturally differ based on the neighborhood and user needs, even when guided by the principles of Complete Streets.

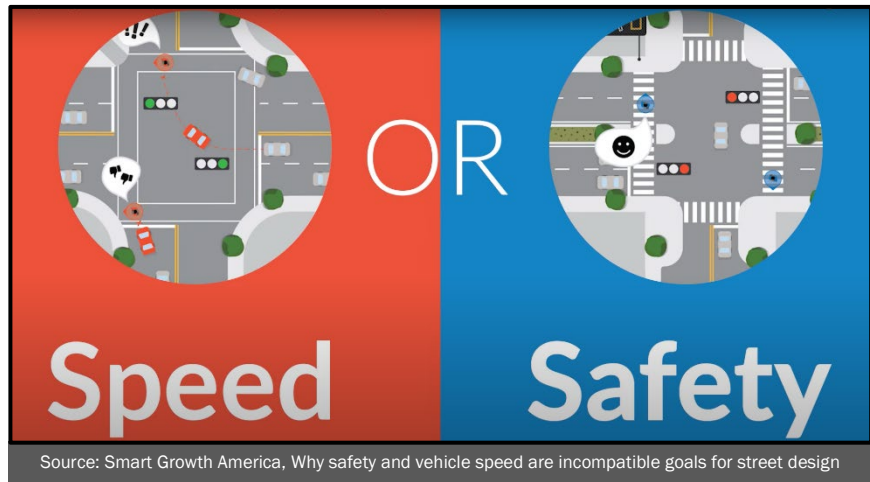
People of color, particularly Native and Black Americans, are more likely to die while walking than any other race or ethnic group
Pedestrian deaths per 100,000 by race & ethnicity (2016-2020)



¹ <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/what-are-complete-streets/>

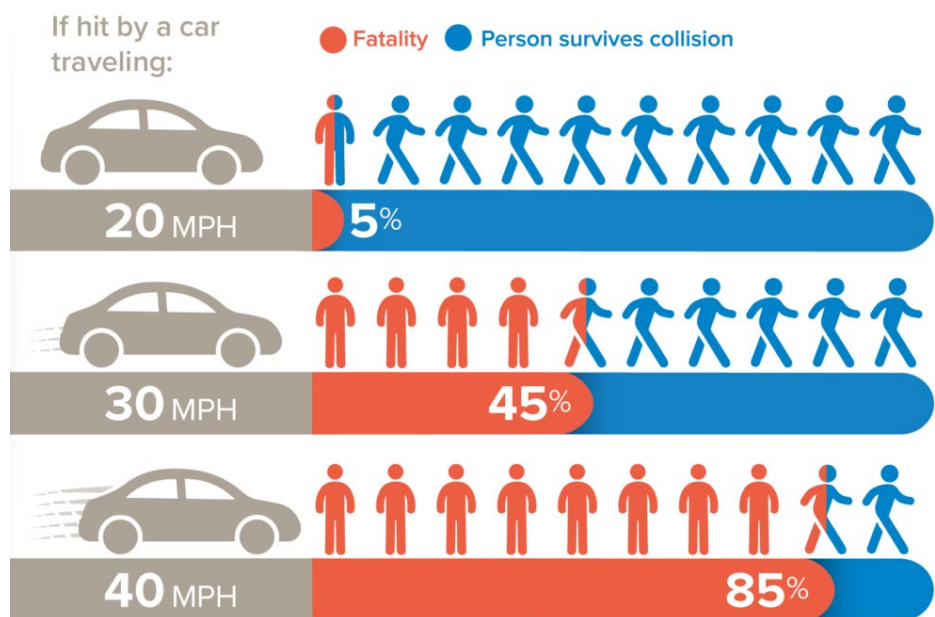
Why are Complete Streets Important?

Complete Streets are critical for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all road users, especially in the face of the alarming increase in pedestrian and bicycle fatalities across the nation. Speed is the number one factor in pedestrian fatalities. Complete Streets **prioritize safety over speed**, recognizing that streets should accommodate the needs of all users. By designing roads with safe crosswalks, well-maintained sidewalks, narrower road widths, and designated bike lanes, we create an environment where everyone can travel without fear for their lives. Prioritizing safety over speed on our roadways is not just a moral imperative but a practical one, as it ultimately leads to healthier, more sustainable, and more livable communities.



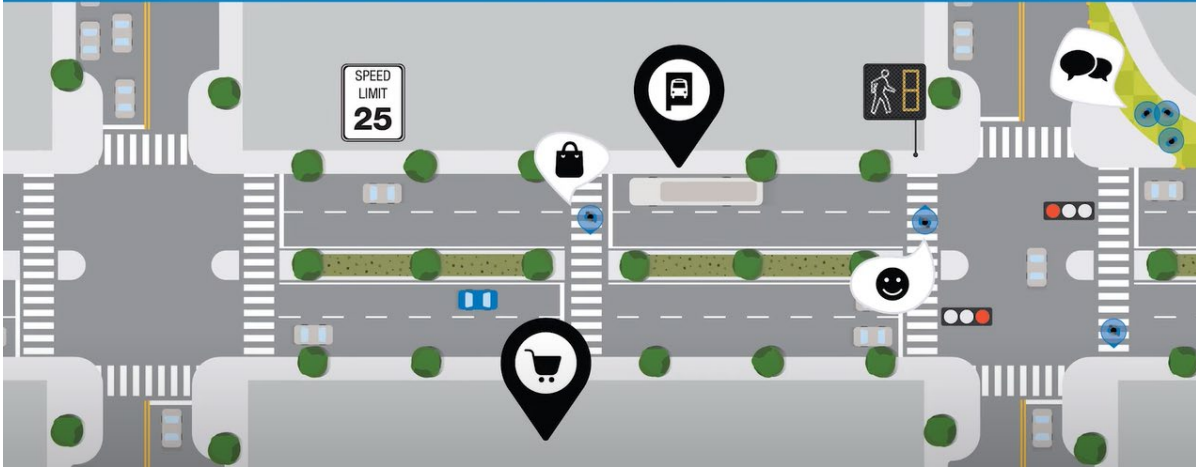
Balancing speed and safety in street design is challenging, as they are **incompatible goals**. Speed-enhancing features like wider lanes, rounded intersections, and fewer traffic controls can increase the risk of accidents. Often, the safest design involves sacrificing some speed. Safety-conscious design isn't just about reducing speed limits; it means creating roads that naturally encourage slower driving through visual cues and building infrastructure that benefits all road users, not just those in vehicles.

Speed and minimizing vehicle delay often take precedence in the decision-making processes of transportation agencies. This is largely a result of long-standing practices inherited from the era of interstate construction and political pressures to alleviate traffic congestion. While safety is undeniably significant, the prevailing approach to street design consistently prioritizes vehicle speed and traffic flow as the foremost considerations. To effectively curtail the rising number of pedestrian and bicycle fatalities, **we must shift our focus to prioritize safety** as the paramount concern in our transportation planning and infrastructure development.

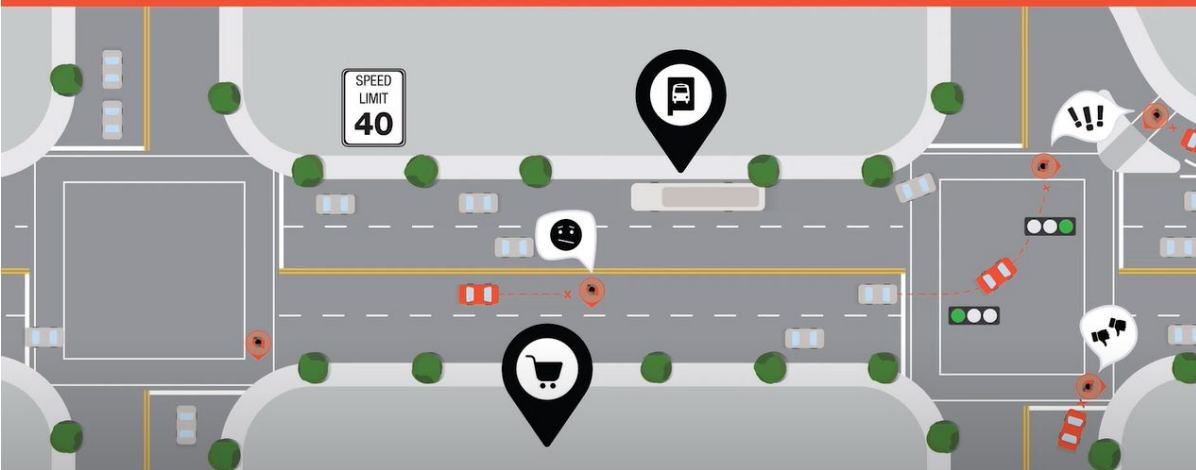


National Traffic Safety Board (2017) Reducing Speeding-Related Crashes Involving Passenger Vehicles. Available from: <https://www.nts.gov/safety/safety-studies/Documents/SS1701.pdf>

Safety



Speed



Core Principles

We envision a future where our streets are welcoming, inclusive, and well-connected for all modes. Our Complete Streets vision for the Black Hawk County metropolitan area is guided by the following core principles:

1. **Safety First:** Safety is paramount in our planning process. Our vision is for streets where pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transit users can coexist harmoniously, with a sharp focus on reducing accidents, injuries, and fatalities.
2. **Accessibility and Equity:** We strive to create streets that are accessible to everyone, regardless of age, ability, income, or mode of transportation. Equity is at the heart of our vision, ensuring that historically underserved communities have equitable access to safe, well-designed streets.
3. **Context Sensitivity:** Complete Streets should respect and reflect the unique character and requirements of each neighborhood.
4. **Active Transportation:** We encourage and prioritize active transportation options like walking and bicycling. We envision streets where people are encouraged to be physically active, leading to healthier lives and reducing our carbon footprint.
5. **Complete Networks:** Our vision is to ensure a seamless, connected street network that promotes easy movement for all modes throughout the metropolitan area. We encourage filling in gaps and creating logical connections for pedestrians and cyclists.
6. **Economic Prosperity:** We believe that well-designed streets are essential for economic vitality. Our streets will support local businesses, attract investment, and create jobs while ensuring that commerce thrives.
7. **Sustainability:** We envision streets that are environmentally sustainable, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, conserving resources, and promoting alternative transportation options that reduce our impact on the planet.
8. **Multimodal Connectivity:** We aspire to create streets that offer seamless connectivity for all modes of transportation, whether by foot, bicycle, public transit, or motor vehicle. Our vision is for a network that allows residents to choose how they travel.
9. **Beautiful and Livable Communities:** We aim to create streetscapes that are aesthetically pleasing, enhancing the overall livability and vibrancy of our communities.
10. **Community Engagement:** Our Complete Streets vision is created with the community in mind. We engage residents, businesses, and stakeholders in the planning process to address specific needs and concerns.



Scope of the Policy

The Black Hawk County Complete Streets Policy shall apply to all city and county transportation projects that are state and/or federally funded and included in the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This shall include the construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or planning of roadways, bridges, trails, and other transportation facilities. Locally funded projects are strongly encouraged to comply with this policy or a similar locally adopted Complete Streets Policy.



Exceptions

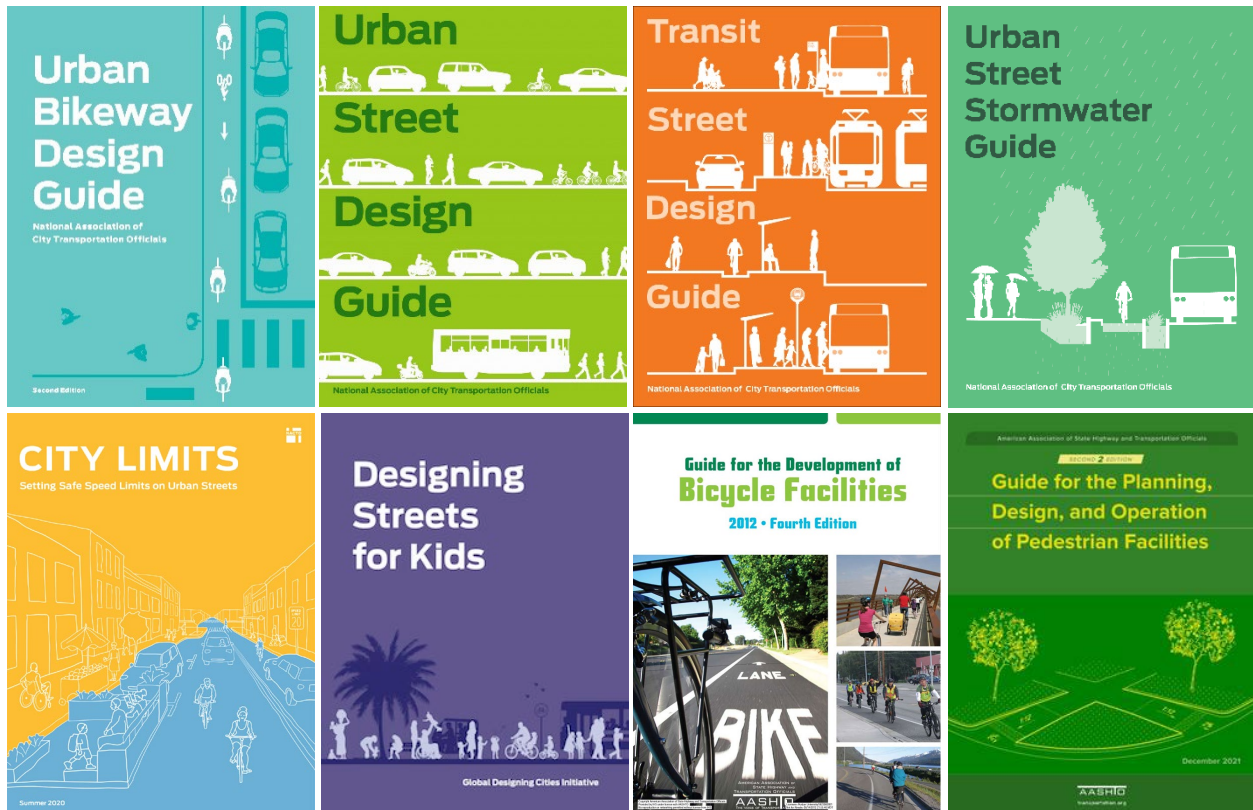
Approval of exceptions to this Policy necessitates the authorization of the MPO Policy Board. To request an exception, the project sponsor is required to furnish the Policy Board with comprehensive supporting data and information that forms the rationale behind the exception request. The MPO Policy Board may grant exceptions to this policy under the following conditions:

- Bicyclists and pedestrians are prohibited by law from using the roadway, such as interstate freeways.
- A scarcity of population or other factors indicate an absence of need for current and future conditions (minimum 20 years).
- The physical characteristics of a specific roadway or area make it technically infeasible to fully implement the Complete Streets Policy (i.e., adverse environmental impacts to waterways, significant street trees, wetlands, floodplains, or other critical areas).
- The cost of constructing bikeways or walkways would be excessively disproportionate to the cost of the project. Federal guidelines define “excessively disproportionate” as exceeding twenty percent of the cost of the total transportation project (including right-of-way acquisition costs).
- The project consists primarily of the installation of traffic control or safety devices
- The project involves routine maintenance that does not change the roadway geometry or operations.
- The project is in final design or construction as of the effective date of this policy.
- When implementing the policy would result in safety hazards for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists (i.e., a road with a combination of high traffic volumes and speeds). This exception is problematic because high traffic volume may be an indication that a road is the most direct connection between destinations, and pedestrians and cyclists should not be denied access to those destinations. For this exception to be granted, the Project Sponsor shall enhance an alternate route as part of the overall project (i.e., bike lanes, signed bike routes, etc.).

Design Guidelines

Projects shall be designed in accordance with the [Iowa Statewide Urban Design and Specifications \(SUDAS\)](#). Project sponsors are also encouraged to consider locally-adopted plans and current best practices and design recommendations from appropriate expert sources, including but not limited to the following:

- National Association of Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Bikeway Design Guide <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-bikeway-design-guide/>
- NACTO Urban Street Design Guide <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/>
- NACTO Transit Street Design Guide <https://nacto.org/publication/transit-street-design-guide/>
- NACTO Urban Street Stormwater Guide <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-stormwater-guide/>
- NACTO City Limits: Setting Safe Speed Limits on Urban Streets <https://nacto.org/safespeeds/>
- NACTO Designing Streets for Kids <https://nacto.org/publication/designing-streets-for-kids/>
- American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities <https://store.transportation.org/>
- AASHTO Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities <https://store.transportation.org/>



Implementation Plan

An implementation plan is the crucial roadmap that transforms a well-conceived policy into tangible positive change within a community. Having a well-defined set of steps and a clear implementation strategy is of paramount importance. Implementing this Complete Streets Policy will involve several key steps for both cities and MPO staff including the following:

1. **Policy Adoption:** Review and adopt the MPO Complete Streets Policy, ensuring alignment with local goals and objectives.
2. **Multi-Stakeholder Engagement:** Conduct outreach and engagement activities to gather input from diverse stakeholders and identify specific needs and priorities. Offer training opportunities to city and county staff at least once per year to boost staff capacity and understanding of Complete Streets.
3. **Prioritization and Planning:** Identify and prioritize streets or corridors for Complete Streets improvements based on public feedback as well as safety, equity, and mobility data.
4. **Project Conceptualization:** Collaborate with engineers and planners to conceptualize projects that meet Complete Streets objectives.
5. **Public Education and Outreach:** Develop Complete Streets educational campaigns for the public to increase awareness and improve community understanding for these types of projects.
6. **Adaptation and Feedback:** Gather feedback from the community and stakeholders to adjust the policy and projects as needed.
7. **Evaluation and Documentation:** Conduct comprehensive evaluations of the policy's impact on the community, safety, and mobility as needed.
8. **Policy Review and Updates:** Periodically review the Complete Streets Policy to ensure it remains aligned with evolving goals and changing transportation needs.

Public Engagement

The public engagement plan for this Policy aims to ensure the active involvement of the community and stakeholders in the development, implementation, and ongoing evaluation of this policy. This plan seeks to promote transparency, inclusivity, and collaborative decision-making in the transportation planning process. Recommended public engagement strategies include the following:

1. **Stakeholder Identification and Analysis**
 - a. Identify and engage key stakeholders, including community members, local businesses, advocacy groups, city complete streets committees, city officials, and transportation experts.
 - b. Analyze the interests, concerns, and specific needs of each stakeholder group.
2. **Outreach and Awareness Campaigns**
 - a. Develop a comprehensive outreach strategy to inform the public about the Complete Streets Policy and its potential benefits.
 - b. Utilize various communication channels, including social media, press releases, community meetings, and the MPO website.
 - c. Create educational materials, such as brochures, infographics, and videos, to explain the concept of Complete Streets.
3. **Public Meetings and Roundtables**
 - a. Host a series of Complete Streets Roundtables annually to gather input and identify specific needs and priorities.
 - b. Ensure meetings are accessible by providing options for remote participation and multilingual materials.
 - c. Facilitate constructive discussions and brainstorming sessions to solicit ideas and feedback.
4. **Online Engagement Platforms**

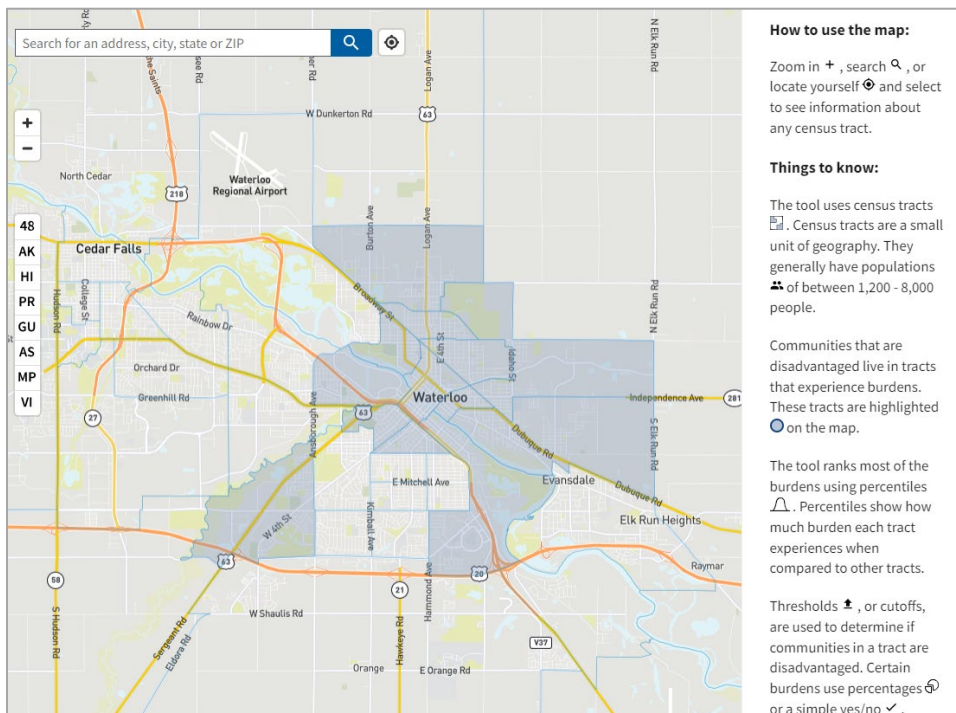
- a. Establish an online platform or interactive website where residents can provide input on needs and opportunities.
 - b. Use surveys and polls to collect quantitative data.
5. Partnerships and Collaborations
- a. Collaborate with local organizations, non-profits, and advocacy groups to broaden engagement efforts.
 - b. Promote safe walking, cycling, and transit habits through existing efforts, such as Safe Routes to School.

Monitoring and Evaluation



















The MPO is committed to fostering and implementing a safe, efficient, and multimodal transportation system. The effectiveness of the MPO Complete Streets Policy, along with planning and programming for complete streets, will be monitored and evaluated through the utilization of the following performance measures outlined in the MPO Long-Range Transportation Plan:

- Number of traffic fatalities
- Traffic fatality rate
- Number of traffic serious injuries
- Serious injury rate
- Number of non-motorized traffic fatalities and serious injuries
- Number of crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists
- Miles of on-road bicycle accommodations (bike lanes, paved shoulders, signed bike routes)
- Number of MET fixed route rides
- Number of bus shelters

As part of the MPO's efforts to improve transportation access for traditionally underserved populations, the MPO will also track the percentage of MPO-funded projects serving overburdened and underserved areas, as defined by the [US Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#).



2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures Linked to Complete Streets

Goal	Objective	Performance Measurement	2018 MPO Baseline Condition Data	2018-2022 Data	Desired Trend	Current Trend (2023)
Increase the safety of the transportation system	1.1) Reduce the number of traffic fatalities	¹ Number of fatalities	6.8 / year	6.6		
	1.2) Reduce the rate of traffic fatalities	¹ Fatality rate (per 100 million VMT)	0.831	0.833		
	1.3) Reduce the number of traffic serious injuries	¹ Number of serious injuries	39.6 / year	35.0		
	1.4) Reduce the rate of traffic serious injuries	¹ Serious injury rate (per 100 million VMT)	4.548	4.440		
	1.5) Reduce the number of non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries	¹ Non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries	6.8 / year	7.2		
	1.6) Reduce the number of traffic accidents involving pedestrians and bicyclists	Crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists	40.8 / year	36.8		
Provide a high degree of multimodal accessibility and mobility	4.1) Provide more on-road bicycle facilities	Miles of on-road bicycle accommodations	17.6	17.6		
	4.2) A greater number of trips are made using public transit	Number of MET fixed route rides	398,270	272,907		
	4.5) Increase the number of bus shelters in the metropolitan area	Bus shelters	6	13		

¹Federally required performance measurement

Environmental Justice Tracking for MPO-funded Projects (FY 2023-2027)

Project and Jurisdiction	Underserved Census Tract	STBG	TA SA/TAP	CRP	Total MPO Funds	Funds to Underserved Areas
Main St – 6 th St to N of University Ave, Cedar Falls	N	\$2,900,000			\$2,900,000	
Butterfield Rd – S of US 20, Hudson	N	\$104,000			\$104,000	
IA 58 – US 20 to Ridgeway Ave, Iowa DOT	N	\$500,000			\$500,000	
IA 58 – US 63 to Ranchero Rd, Iowa DOT	N	\$450,000			\$450,000	
La Porte Rd – Shaulis Rd to US 218 Slip Ramp, Waterloo	Y	\$9,928,827	\$151,328		\$10,080,155	\$10,080,155
Sergeant Rd Trail Bridge Replacements, Waterloo	Y	\$465,233			\$465,233	\$465,233
Union Rd – W 27 th St to University Ave, Cedar Falls	N	\$1,000,000			\$1,000,000	
Lafayette Rd – Evans Rd to ECL, Evansdale	N	\$1,707,000			\$1,707,000	
Lafayette Rd/Gilbertville Rd, WCL to Amber Ln, Elk Run Heights	N	\$1,430,000			\$1,430,000	
Lafayette Rd – Dubuque Rd to 2 nd St, Raymond	N	\$1,230,000			\$1,230,000	
Elk Run Creek Levee Trail, Evansdale	N		\$295,728		\$295,728	
US 63 – US 20 to University Ave	Y	\$700,000			\$700,000	\$700,000
Donald St (D16) – Sage Rd to Raymond Rd (V49), Black Hawk County	N	\$448,000			\$448,000	
Washington St – Wood St to 1 st St, Hudson	N	\$853,600			\$853,600	
Washburn Rd (D38) – US 218 to Gilbertville CL, Black Hawk County	N	\$1,328,711			\$1,328,711	
W Gilbert Dr – River Forest Rd to Grand Blvd, Evansdale	N	\$2,421,576			\$2,421,576	
US 218 (SB) – IA 57/27/58 Interchange to Exit 185, Iowa DOT	N	\$914,000			\$914,000	
	Totals	\$26,380,947	\$447,056	\$0	\$26,828,003	\$11,245,388

41.9%