



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, April 4, 2017

Study Session

Item -2

Discussion on Complete Streets

Staff Contact: Chad Nabity

Council Agenda Memo

From: Chad Nabity, AICP

Meeting: April 4, 2017

Subject: Complete Streets Policy

Presenter(s): Amy Roberts, Central District Health Department
Chad Nabity, Planning Department

Background

The Central District Health Department (CDHD) received a grant in 2015 related to the Walkable Communities Initiative sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. Amy Roberts with CDHD has been spearheading this effort locally. As part of the process they sponsored a walking and biking summit and several public meetings with citizens and interested parties in Grand Island. One of the goals from the summit was to create a complete streets policy for the City of Grand Island. A complete streets policy recognizes that all modes of transportation (motor vehicles, transit, walking, & biking) are important to a community.

Discussion

A subcommittee consisting of members of the public, representatives from CDHD and the City of Grand Island have worked to create a complete streets policy for the City of Grand Island. The policy is attached and the presentation will discuss the concepts embedded within the policy and how Grand Island has implemented portions of this policy in some places, where we have missed the mark and have issues, and how to frame questions for future development to minimize these conflicts.

Conclusion

This item is presented to the City Council in a Study Session to allow for any questions to be answered and to create a greater understanding of the issue at hand.

It is the intent of City Administration to bring this issue to a future council meeting for the adoption of the policy by resolution.

2017

Complete Streets Grand Island



Photo by Lauren Farris

“The City of Grand Island will plan for, design, and construct a multimodal transportation network that is safe, efficient, and accessible for people of all ages and abilities. This transportation system will enhance Grand Island’s quality of life by promoting interconnectivity, economic development, mobility, equity, safety, and public health.”

Grand Island Complete Streets Action Team
3/29/2017



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Acknowledgments

Grand Island's Complete Streets initiative is a collaborative process between policy makers, community leaders, residents, city agencies, transportation advocates, and professionals.

Complete Streets Action Team

- Allan Zafft, MPO Program Manager
City of Grand Island, Public Works Department
- Amy Roberts, Health Educator
Central District Health Department
- Benjamin Newton, Environmental Sustainability Director
Central Community College, Grand Island
- Chad Nabity, Director
Hall County Regional Planning Department
- Fred Graves, Service Coordinator
Division of Developmental Disabilities, NE DHHS
- Mitchell Nickerson,
City of Grand Island, City Council
- Ryan King, Assistant Health Director
Central District Health Department
- Terry Brown, Assistant Public Works Director
City of Grand Island, Public Works Department
- Buzz Douthit, Community Advocate

Stakeholders

These stakeholders reviewed the policy and provided feedback. They include, but are not limited to:

- John Collins, City of Grand Island, Public Works Department
- Jeremy Rogers, City of Grand Island, Public Works Department
- Todd McCoy, City of Grand Island, Parks & Recreation Department
- Fred Hotz, City of Grand Island, Fire Department
- Shannon Callahan, City of Grand Island, Public Works Department
- Craig Lewis, City of Grand Island, Building Department
- Dr. Greg Smith, Central Community College
- Dr. Deborah Brennan, Central Community College
- Dr. Robin Dexter, Grand Island Public Schools

A special thank you to Julie Harris with the Nebraska Bicycling Alliance and Jeremy Grandstaff with S & G Endeavors for their support in the policy development process.

This policy was adapted from the Omaha, NE Complete Streets Policy.

1.0 Vision

1.1 Vision Statement

The City of Grand Island will plan for, design, and construct a multimodal transportation network that is safe, efficient, and accessible for people of all ages and abilities. This transportation system will enhance Grand Island's quality of life by promoting interconnectivity, economic development, mobility, equity, safety, and public health.

1.2 Users

This transportation network will be planned and developed, with context in mind, to enable safe, efficient, and equitable access for pedestrians, cyclists, assistive mobility device users, transit users, motorists, commercial vehicles, and users of other common modes of transportation.

2.0 Complete Streets Principles

2.1 Complete Streets serve all users and modes.

The City will develop the community's streets and right-of-way so as to promote a safe, reliable, efficient, integrated and connected transportation system that will promote access, mobility and health for all users: people traveling as pedestrians and by bicycle, transit riders, motorists and others. City streets and/or street networks will accommodate emergency responders and freight needs as well, in a manner consistent with this policy and in compliance with the most currently adopted version of Appendix D of the International Fire Code.

2.2 Complete Streets require connected travel networks.

Complete Streets require connected travel networks. Routes will be connected to create complete transportation networks that provide travelers with multiple choices of travel routes within and between neighborhoods reducing congestion on major roadways.

2.3 Complete Streets require best-practice design criteria and context-sensitive approaches.

In recognition of context sensitivity, public input and the needs of many users, the City will align related goals, policies, and code provisions to create Complete Streets solutions that are appropriate to individual contexts; that best serve the transportation needs of all people using streets and the right-of-way; and that support the land-use policies of the most current City of Grand Island Comprehensive Plan and GIAMPO Long Range Transportation Plan.

The City will take a flexible, innovative, and balanced approach to creating context-sensitive Complete Streets that meet or exceed national best-practice design guidelines. Design criteria will not be purely prescriptive but will be based on the thoughtful application of engineering, architectural, and urban design principles.

2.4 Complete Streets are the work of all City departments.

Complete Streets are the work of all City departments and other partners. The City will foster partnerships internally and externally to develop facilities and accommodations that further the City's Complete Streets policy and continue such infrastructure beyond the City's borders.

2.5 Complete Streets include all roadways and all projects and phases.

The City and partners will approach every transportation improvement and project phase as an opportunity to create safer, more accessible streets for all users. The City will establish a procedure by which Complete Streets is incorporated into the routine planning, design, implementation, and operation of all transportation infrastructure upon adoption of this policy.

2.6 Complete Streets require appropriate performance measures.

City will measure, or reference, the success of this Complete Streets policy using the following, but not limited to, performance measures:

- Linear feet of new/ reconstructed sidewalks and trails
- Linear distance of new/ restriped on-street bicycle facilities
- Number of new/ reconstructed curb ramps
- Number of traffic calming projects approved and implemented
- Number and status of complete crosswalk and intersection improvements
- Number of new and reconstructed streets
- Number of newly connected routesⁱ and/or neighborhoods

Unless otherwise noted above, within 24 months of adoption, the City will create individual numeric benchmarks for the performance standards deemed appropriate. These performance standards will be tracked and compared annually with the annual report posted on-line.

3.0 Applicability and Jurisdiction

Prior to work, projects will be assessed based on the existing and future context of the affected transportation infrastructure within the overall multi-modal network, as identified by recognized plans including those with pedestrian, bicycle, and transit guidelines. The Complete Streets policy will apply to all public and private street design, construction, and retrofit projects managed and implemented by the City of Grand Island initiated after the Policy adoption, except in unusual or extraordinary circumstances contained in Exceptions below.

4.0 Exceptions

Not every street can be complete for each traveler, and exceptions may be requested for projects. Exceptions should not become common. However, no request for exception is needed when implementing:

1. Routine maintenanceⁱⁱ activities designed to keep transportation facilities in serviceable condition (e.g. mowing, cleaning, sweeping, spot repair, and surface treatments such as chip seal, or interim measures, on detour routes.) Or,
2. Reconstruction of the right-of-way is due to an emergency.

Requests will be considered by a committee consisting of the Public Works Department, Planning Department, Parks Department and other critical stakeholders when:

1. Bicycle, pedestrian, and or motorized vehicles are prohibited by law from using the facility.
2. Contrary to acceptable guidance on public safety ,
3. Cost is excessively disproportionate to the need for probable use.
4. Other factors indicate the absence of need, including future need (e.g. low density or rural area; existing parallel facilities that provide adequate accommodation for other users.) In determining future need, exemptions committee will consult relevant City and regional long range plans for land use and transportation.

Exclusive of Exceptions 1 and 2 above, the planning and public works directors will document and explicitly explain why a transportation project is exempt from this policy. This explanation will be issued in the form of an official memorandum and a complete streets process checklist. When projects or related contracts require City Council approval, this memorandum will also be submitted to City Council.

5.0 Next Steps

The City recognizes that "Complete Streets" may be achieved through single elements incorporated into a particular project or incrementally through a series of smaller improvements or maintenance activities over time. Additionally, the City recognizes the importance of approaching transportation projects within the context of the larger street network, and that all modes do not necessarily need to receive the same type of accommodation and space on every street.

To carry out this policy, the City of Grand Island will take the following next steps:

1. The Public Works and Planning Departments and other relevant departments, agencies, or committees will incorporate Complete Streets principles into all existing plans, manuals, checklists, decision-trees, rules, regulations, and programs as appropriate;
2. The Public Works and Planning Departments and other relevant departments, agencies and committees will review current design standards, including subdivision regulations which apply to new roadway construction, to ensure that they reflect the best available design standards and guidelines, and effectively implement Complete Streets in accordance with this policy;
3. When available, the City will encourage staff professional development and training on non-motorized transportation issues through attending conferences, classes, seminars, and workshops;
4. City staff will identify all current and potential future sources of funding for street improvements and recommend improvements to the project selection criteria to support Complete Streets projects;

5. City staff will develop a public and stakeholder engagement strategy/plan.

5.1 Code Amendments

The City of Grand Island Comprehensive Plan and applicable municipal codes will be revised to incorporate the principles and provisions of this Complete Streets Policy and be reviewed and updated from time to time. All City of Grand Island manuals referenced in the City Code and administrative policy that affect the design of roadways and facilities sited in the right-of-way, which affect the implementation of this policy, will be reviewed and updated to make them consistent with its goals and support its implementation. To facilitate near-term compliance with this policy, an interim advisory on the design of streets and subdivisions that references national guidelines and manuals will be issued as administrative policy and also will address the applicability of this policy to private development.

DRAFT

Guidance on Implementation

1.0 Application to City Projects

All City capital improvement and utility projects, including roadways, initiated subsequent to the adoption of this Policy, will fully integrate its Complete Streets goals and principles from the earliest project scoping and budgeting phases. All projects will be initially defined such that the overall project budget is sufficient to assure conformance with this policy.

2.0 Capital Improvement Projects

Consideration of this Complete Streets Policy and its long-range goals will be incorporated into the planning, scoping, budgeting, funding, design, approval, and implementation process for all City facilities, roadways, and right-of-way infrastructure. The Planning Department will provide coordination and support. Departments will consult the Comprehensive Plan, Capital Improvement Program, Long Range Transportation Plan, City utilities plans, and other relevant City master plans for guidance. Departments will also consult District 4 Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) plans for further coordination and guidance.

In planning and designing City projects within the city and growth boundary that include or impact roadways, City Departments will consult the Public Works Department and will consult City master plans and policies related to pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and vehicle transportation. All projects will strive to advance and integrate multiple goals, including a high-quality public realm, placemaking, and economic development. City projects will seek cost-saving opportunities through such integration.

Projects will anticipate opportunities to incrementally achieve fully complete streets and networks over time, and in future phases of work. Departments will take care that their work does not adversely affect the pedestrian realm and opportunities for multi-modal travel and facilities.

Projects should anticipate funding needs and seek resources to acquire necessary right-of-way and/or easements. Where the costs of acquiring right-of-way to provide separate accommodations for each mode of travel are cost-prohibitive, innovative or multi-use facilities within the existing right-of-way that accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists may be considered, if appropriate for the roadway and its context.

For City parks projects, park land may be used for bicycle/pedestrian trails and other elements of the transportation system that provide connectivity and support people's access to parks and recreational/outdoor activities. Storm water and flood control projects may also be used for such trails and transportation projects.

City utilities and utility partners will provide guidance on ensuring that Complete Streets Policy implementation does not create public safety hazards or reductions in levels of utility service unacceptable to utility customers. Utility projects will seek to support and advance implementation of this policy and related right-of-way conditions.

3.0 Project Budgets

It is the responsibility of each project to budget appropriately for implementation of this policy, in a context-sensitive manner. This includes budgeting for right-of-way and/or easement acquisition. Where primary funding sources for City projects are narrowly constrained (e.g. restricted to utility, affordable housing, or other purposes), the City will actively pursue additional funding sources to allow implementation of this policy to a high standard.

4.0 Private Projects

In reviewing zoning, site plans, subdivision plans, planned unit developments, and other projects that include streets or private drives or other internal circulation routes, City staff will seek full compliance with the intent of this Complete Streets Policy. To ensure that its goals and principles are fully incorporated into the City of Grand Island zoning and development review process, staff across departments will receive appropriate training. The Planning Department also will provide appropriate information and education to the development community and applicants.

A system will be developed to track approvals of compliance. To assess impacts on Complete Streets, a multi-disciplinary staff team including members of the public works, planning, parks & recreation, fire, utilities, and building departments, will review such approvals annually. If City staff recommends additional measures regarding private projects, that process will include public review and input.

5.0 Complete Streets Program

The City will implement this policy through a Complete Streets Program based in the public works, parks & recreation, and planning departments. The Program will be developed and implemented in consultation with other departments and partners. It will be appropriately staffed to provide multi-modal transportation planning; it will be coordinated with City programs and initiatives for bicycling, pedestrians, transit, and trails.

The Complete Streets Program will be structured as an element of the comprehensive plan and long range transportation plan implementation and be inclusive of all relevant City Departments. The Program will facilitate citywide staff training, public education, document development and/or updates, departmental Complete Streets efforts, and other actions as necessary to fully implement this Complete Streets policy.

An interim report on the development and progress of this program will be delivered to the Grand Island City Council within 12 months of policy adoption.

6.0 Modal Networks

The City will advance projects that are needed to close gaps and to complete priority transportation networks and routes for people using each individual travel mode.

7.0 Street Design Standards

The City will refer to the following national guidelines, recognized by the Grand Island City Council:

1. Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A context sensitive approach (Institute of Transportation Engineers/Congress for the New Urbanism)
2. Urban Street Design Guide, and Urban Bikeway Design Guide (National Association of City Transportation Officials)

Flexible and innovative context-sensitive design solutions that conform to these guidelines are encouraged for both public and private projects. Updated street design standards and criteria that reflect these national guides will be developed in the course of revising the Grand Island Street Design Guidelines.

The design of roadway water quality controls and storm drain infrastructure (as required by ordinance for new roadways and major roadway reconstructions) will be incorporated into this approach.

8.0 Storm Water Guidelines

Stormwater guidelines will reflect national best practices as well as compliance with current city Post-Construction standards referenced in City policies. They shall address roadway design related to stormwater infrastructure and management for both water quality and runoff volume; the linking of trails and greenbelts with roadway networks; and other relevant sustainability, environmental, and ecosystem goals.

The integration of streets principles and metrics shall be overseen by the Engineering Division of the Public Works Department. They shall be administered as an integral part of street design and project reviews.

9.0 Staff Training

The City will provide information and training on this Complete Streets policy and its principles, and best practices for implementation, to relevant City staff across departments within 150 days of policy adoption. Continuing education inclusive of all aspects of this policy will be provided on an annual basis. The training materials will be offered to regional and City partner agencies.

10.0 Outreach and Education

The City will meet at least annually with representatives of Hall County, GIAMPO, and NDOR to review best practices in Complete Streets implementation and evaluate cross-agency efforts. Such meetings can occur in conjunction with currently scheduled GIAMPO Technical Advisory Committee and/or Policy meetings. The City and partner organizations will then provide ongoing public information and education about Complete Streets to Grand Island residents; community groups and leaders; transportation, planning, design and engineering professionals; and the private development community.

11.0 Metrics for Evaluation

Complete Streets Policy metrics will be developed, tracked, and reported. For mobility goals, they include miles of new and improved sidewalks and bicycle facilities and other measures as referenced in Complete Streets Principles section 2.6. Additional metrics that reflect the comprehensive goals of the policy will be developed within 12 months of policy adoption.

12.0 Code Amendments

City staff, including the Subdivision Review Committee, will conduct a diagnosis to identify: 1) what, if any, provisions in current code or criteria are in conflict with implementation of this Complete Streets policy, or otherwise present impediments, and 2) what code and criteria amendments are needed, if any, to address impediments or to otherwise advance the implementation of the Complete Streets policy.

Upon adoption of a major revision to the City Code by the City Council, necessary updates on this policy will be issued to create consistency with all zoning and subdivision regulations and language related to roadways, right-of-way, street classifications, overlay districts, and other applicable elements.

13.0 Roles and Responsibilities

The Grand Island Public Works, Planning, and Parks & Recreation Departments, as the joint administratorsⁱⁱⁱ of the Complete Streets Program, will have lead responsibility for implementation of this policy.

Final authority for the construction of elements in the City right-of-way, as well as reporting responsibility for exceptions granted to this policy, resides with the joint administrators. As per City Code, the following functions and programs will be assigned to the Public Works Department: city engineering; traffic engineering; street construction, maintenance and street lighting. The joint administrators will collaboratively address these goals for the community's roadways, coordinating with other City departments and partner agencies as needed.

14.0 Annual Reporting

The joint administrators will report each exception granted through the mechanism established in this policy, including City projects, and will oversee the timely public posting of such reports on the City of Grand Island website.

An annual summary report on exceptions granted will be provided to a multi-disciplinary City staff team responsible for guiding Complete Streets implementation. An annual report will be provided to the City Council. This report will be provided no later than March of the year following the report activities. Lastly, a private projects compliance approval report will be developed and reviewed annually, as referenced in section 4.0 .

Appendix A: Complete Streets Policy Development Process

- ✓ **July 2015**- Grand Island Design Team Meeting
 - Summit planning and development.
- ✓ **November 2015**- Grand Island Walking & Biking Summit
 - Complete Streets identified as a community prioritized action item.
- ✓ **January 2016**- Complete Streets Action Team established
- ✓ **February -June 2016**- Complete Streets research and learning
- ✓ **July 2016- March 2017**- Policy Development
 - Researched peer cities and current examples of Complete Streets policies in Nebraska/
 - Developed a vision.
 - Drafted a Complete Streets Policy for Grand Island, using the Omaha Complete Streets policy as a template.
 - Stakeholder engagement.

Appendix B: Proposed Complete Streets Implementation Timeline

Next Steps

- ✓ **June 2017**- Policy review by the Planning Commission
- ✓ **July 2017**- Policy adoption by Grand Island City Council

By the End of 2017

- ✓ Provide information and training on the Grand Island Complete Streets policy, Complete Streets principles, and best practices for implementation to all relevant city staff.

2018/2019

- ✓ Incorporate Complete Streets principles into all existing plans, manuals, checklists, decision-trees, rules, regulations, and programs as appropriate;
- ✓ Review current design standards, including subdivision regulations which apply to new roadway construction, to ensure that they reflect the best available design standards and guidelines, and effectively implement Complete Streets in accordance with this policy;
- ✓ Seek out and encourage staff professional development and training on non- motorized transportation issues through attending conferences, classes, seminars, and workshops;
- ✓ (On-going) Identify all current and potential future sources of funding for street improvements and recommend improvements to the project selection criteria to support Complete Streets projects;
- ✓ Report on the development and progress of the Complete Streets Program.
- ✓ Develop additional Complete Streets evaluation metrics, as needed.

2019/2020

- ✓ Develop individual numeric benchmarks for Complete Streets performance measures.

Annually

- ✓ Provide Complete Streets Annual Benchmark Report, including exceptions granted, to City Council.
- ✓ Review of private project compliance approval report.
- ✓ Review and evaluate cross-agency Complete Streets efforts in conjunction with GIAMPO Technical Advisory Committee meetings or GIAMPO policy meetings.
- ✓ Provide continuing education related to the Grand Island Complete Streets policy and principles for:
 - City staff
 - Partner organizations
 - Private developers
 - Transportation, planning, design and engineering professionals
 - General public

Appendix C: Complete Streets Resources

Best Complete Streets polices of 2015 by Smart Growth America National Complete Street Coalition

- <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/resources/best-complete-streets-policies-of-2015/>

In 2015, communities passed a total of 82 Complete Streets policies. Nationwide, a total of 899 Complete Streets policies are now in place, in all 50 states, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia.

- Best Complete Street Policies: Cover all users
 - Cars and motorists
 - Transit vehicles and users
 - Travelers of all ages and abilities
- Best Complete Streets Policies
 - Specify any exceptions and require high level of approval of them
 - Allow flexibility in balancing user needs
- Best Complete Street Policies
 - Apply to new and retrofit projects
 - Direct use of latest and best design standards
 - Direct the Complete Streets solutions fit in with the context of a city
 - Establishes performance standard measures of success
- Implementation from policy to practice (prompt the following changes)
 - Develop procedures
 - Streamline design manuals
 - Train planners and engineers
 - Retool measures to track outcomes

Complete Streets from Policy to Project: The Planning and Implementation of Complete Streets and Multiple Scales.

<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets/a-to-z>

- Framing and positioning
- Institutionalization of Complete Streets
- Analysis and evaluations
- Project delivery and construction
- Promotion and education
- Funding
- AASHTO (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials)
 - Green Book
 - Ped Guide from 2004
 - Sidewalks
 - Crossing the street
 - Medians and islands
 - Intersection design
- Traffic signals
- Crosswalks
- Crosswalk marking
- Curb extensions - AASHTO sight lines
- Transit
- Bicycles

- USDOT Policy
www.fha.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/design.htm
 Bike-pedestrian ways will be established in new and reconstruction projects in all urbanized areas unless one or more of 3 conditions are met:
 - Cost
 - Absence of need for alternatives
 - Where bikes and pedestrians are prohibited

- NACTO – National Association of City Transportation Officials
 - Urban Street Design Guide
<http://nacto.org/usdg/>

- Urban Bicycling Guide
www.nacto.org/cities-for-cycling/design-guide/

- ITE - Institute of Traffic Engineers
<https://www.ite.org/>
 - Created Walkable Communities report with case studies
<http://www.ite.org/css/>

- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Office of Infrastructure and Office of Planning, Environment and Realty
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/guidance/design_guidance/design.cfm
- Transportation’s Changing Role in the Community
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/guidance/design_guidance/design_nonmotor/policy/
<http://www.rethinkingstreets.com/download.html>

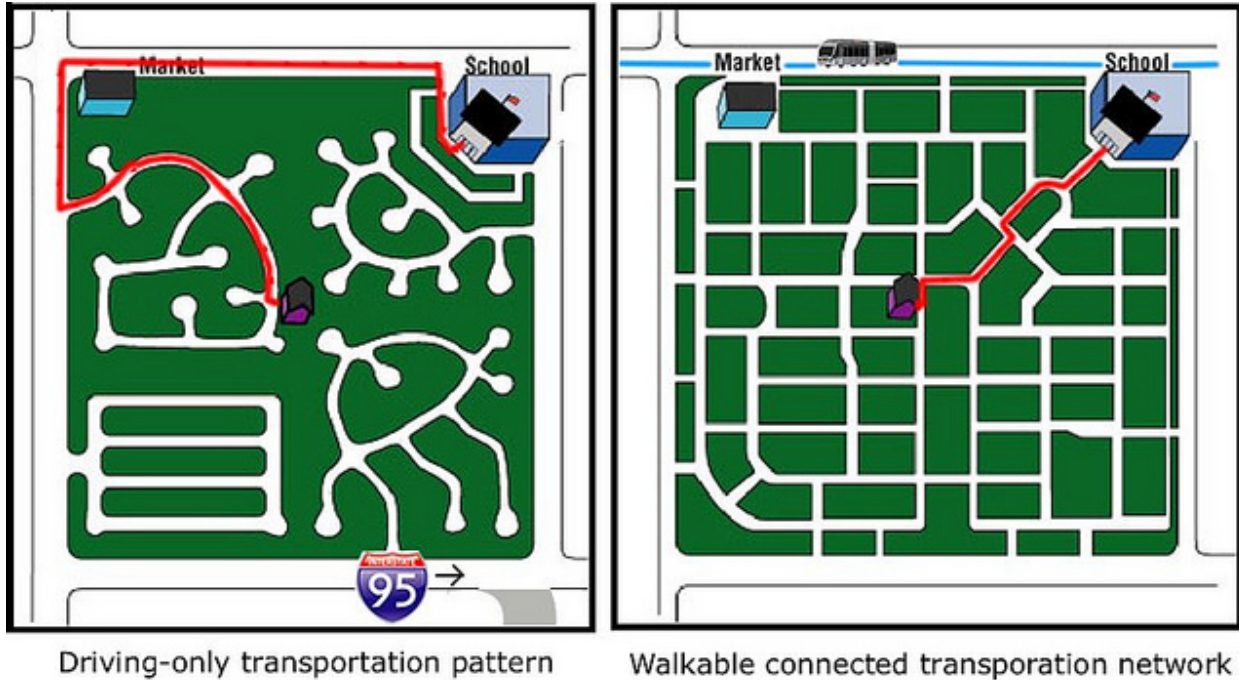
- Small Town and Rural Design Guide
<http://ruraldesignguide.com/>

- Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
<http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/>

- International Fire Code- Appendix D: Fire Apparatus Access Roads
http://codes.iccsafe.org/app/book/content/2015-I-Codes/2015_IFC_HTML/Appendix%20D.html

Appendix D: Complete Streets Definitions

ⁱ **Connected Routes:** Points were multiple modes of transportation interact within a transportation network.



ⁱⁱ **Routine Maintenance:** As stated in Title 428, Chapter 2, Section 003 of the Nebraska Administrative Code, routine maintenance is defined as the preservation and upkeep of a highway, road or street including all its elements, in a condition as near as is practical to the original or as constructed condition in order to provide the road user with a safe and convenient highway facility.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Joint Administrators:** Representatives from the Grand Island Public Works, Planning, and Parks & Recreation Departments responsible for the coordination and administration for the Grand Island Complete Streets Program.