Improving walking and bicycling in your community: Ideas for cities and counties

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This document is online—with live links to all resources mentioned—at: MoBikeFed.org/biking-walking-vision-cities-counties

One of the most common questions we get at the Missouri Bicycle and Pedestrian Federation is, "What can I do to make my city safer and more inviting for biking and walking?"

Here is the list of our top recommendations—ideas that have been tried, tested, and found to be effective in cities and counties across Missouri, the U.S., and the world.

Remember that there are many good ideas, but you don't have to implement all of them right now. Pick one—the easiest for you to achieve right now—and then build on that success to implement another good idea, and so on.

- **Create a city bicycle, pedestrian, and trails plan.** In smaller cities, this might be one integrated plan—but you might start with one element, the one with the most momentum and support, and then build on that success to add the other elements. In larger cities, you might create three (or even more) separate plans. Visit our Planning page for more resources.

- **Start with low-hanging fruit—a citywide bicycle route system, marked with signs and/or pavement markings, on your already existing network of bicycle-friendly streets.** Every city already has a system of roads and routes used by area bicyclists. Find out where these routes are and mark them with bicycle signs—an instant bicycle route system for the cost of a few signs. Re-stripe roads to better accommodate bicycling whenever you repave—the added cost is close to zero. You can re-stripe four lane roads to three lanes plus bike lanes—a road diet. Or you can reconfigure lane widths to create wider lanes (lanes greater than fourteen feet allow a bicyclist and motorist to comfortably share the lane) or to create shoulders or bike lanes. This is the single easiest and most cost-effect step every city can take to make the community dramatically more appealing for bicycling at a very low cost.

Generally you can create a very good, very usable, very connected citywide network of on-road bicycle routes, perhaps 30-40 miles of interconnected routes covering the whole city, for about the same price as building one mile of trail.
• **Create a city bicycle, pedestrian and/or trails advisory committee.** In some cities this is created by the mayor, in others by the city council. In some cases it is a permanent committee with ongoing responsibilities for creating guidance and giving feedback to the city council and staff and creating or reviewing policy and implementation. In other cities it is a temporary committee created for a specific purpose, like creating the city's bicycle plan or trails plan. *Resources.*

• **Apply for Bicycle Friendly Community and Walk Friendly Community status.** "But we're not ready to apply for recognition yet—we haven't even gotten started!" you say. That may be true—but by starting to work through the application process, you will assess what you already have (almost certainly more than you think) and start to catalog what your city is missing and needs to change.

  The [Bicycle Friendly America Resource Page](http://MoBikeFed.org/CompleteStreets) is one of the most comprehensive sets of resources that outlines exactly what communities across America are doing to become more bicycle friendly. The [Walk Friendly Communities Resources Page](http://MoBikeFed.org/WalkFriendlyCommunities) is similarly helpful. As you see what other communities are doing, your community can start to develop a plan: What makes the most sense in your community? What will be easiest and hardest to do?

Working toward Bicycle Friendly Community and Walk Friendly Community recognition is the best single comprehensive way to make your community a better, safer place to walk and bicycle over the long term.

• **Adopt a Complete Streets policy.** A Complete Streets Policy means that every time you are looking at roads or streets in your community, you are also helping build connections for walking, bicycling, transit, and users of all ages and abilities levels.

  In the past 15 years, 25 Complete Streets policies have been passed by Missouri cities, counties, and transportation agencies. More than 2.6 Missourians currently live in a municipality with a Complete Streets policy.

  Find out more at [http://MoBikeFed.org/CompleteStreets](http://MoBikeFed.org/CompleteStreets)

• **Adopt a law banning harassment of pedestrians and bicyclists.** Harassment, including verbal harassment, physical harassment, and thrown objects, are one of the top documented issues among our members and bicyclists across the U.S.

  Anti-harassment laws are simple, inexpensive, and effective. They empower law enforcement officers to address issues of harassment against bicyclists and pedestrians when they occur. They also empower law enforcement officers to give clear, unambiguous messages about the legality of harassing bicyclists and pedestrians in their public outreach.

• **Participate in statewide and national celebrations** of bicycling and walking, like [Bike Month, Bike to Work Week, Walk to School Month, and Walk to School Day](http://MoBikeFed.org).

• **Create--and encourage creation of--biking, walking, running, and trails events in your community.** Weekly bike rides or walks, a Mayor's Bike Ride, a 5K trail run—all these events help encourage your
citizens to enjoy biking, walking, and trails in your community, and help build public support for your bicycle, pedestrian, and trails plans.

- **Create a Safe Routes to School program** in your community.
  
  A walking school bus could be part of your city's Safe Routes to School program

- **Sponsor or coordinate bike ed classes.**

- **Educate your law enforcement officers about bicycling and walking.** Law enforcement officers are interested in promoting public safety and enforcing traffic laws. But they may not know the best ways to use their enforcement power to improve safety. They may inadvertently discourage bicycling and walking through ineffective or counterproductive enforcement. Educating your law enforcement officers can make a big difference in keeping the streets safe for everyone and encourage more bicycling and walking. [Resources](#).

- **Experiment and innovate.** Interesting and innovative street design treatments can often be inexpensively, easily, and temporarily blocked in with barrels, planters, and a bit of paint. The result is that you can try out innovations like road diets and traffic calming on a temporary basis. Citizens are often worried about change. By trying it temporarily, most are willing to give it a chance. Keep your successes and remove or fix the failures.

- **Do regular bicycle and pedestrian counts.** Documenting the number of people biking and walking in your community helps establish the interest in your community--and many times, also, the need for better facilities. Counting before, during, and after the implementation of your plans and projects helps demonstrate their effectiveness.

- **Create ongoing, regular funding to implement your bicycle, pedestrian, and/or trails plan.** Some Missouri communities have a dedicated tax or funding source for trails and bicycle facilities; others specify bicycle and pedestrian projects in any relevant capital improvements tax or (for instance) trails within the project listing for the city's parks and recreation tax. A Complete Streets approach means that you are considering appropriate bicycle and pedestrian facilities as an integral part of associated road and bridge projects--meaning that the bicycle and pedestrian elements are built right into the city's transportation budget.

**More resources:**

- [NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide](#)
- [Missouri Livable Streets Design Guide](#)
- [AASHTO Guide to the Development of Bicycle Facilities](#)
- [AASHTO Guide to the Development of Pedestrian Facilities](#)

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RESOLUTION 10-17

A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE LIVABLE STREETS POLICY FOR THE CITY OF LEE'S SUMMIT, MISSOURI.

WHEREAS, the Lee's Summit 360° Strategic Plan was received by the City of Lee's Summit to serve as a guideline and list of ideal goals that the City and its partners would like to accomplish over the next 10 - 15 years to create the ideal community where all Lee's Summit residents, visitors, and businesses can live, work, and play; and,

WHEREAS, Lee's Summit strives to be a sustainable and vibrant city with a dynamic spirit of cooperation among its diverse citizens, businesses, organizations, educational systems and governments; and,

WHEREAS, through comprehensive community planning and regional collaboration, Lee's Summit desires economic independence and a high quality of life as a recognized destination city; and,

WHEREAS, the City desires to promote public health by encouraging walking and bicycling as a part of active living; and,

WHEREAS, older citizens and citizens with disabilities often rely on transit, mobility aids, and walking to meet basic transportation needs and benefit greatly from complete and well-designed Livable Streets; and,

WHEREAS, the usual and customary users of the City’s roads, streets and bridges include pedestrians, bicyclists and transit passengers of all ages and abilities, as well as drivers and passengers of automobiles, motorcycles, buses and trucks; and,

WHEREAS, the Lee’s Summit 360° Stakeholders envisioned transportation in Lee’s Summit as a planned, regionally integrated, multi-modal, accessible, and well-maintained system that facilitates movement about the city and encourages growth and economic development. This system includes vehicular, bicycle, pedestrian, aeronautical, rail and mass transit components. The system provides safe, efficient, and sustainable transportation of people, goods, and services to and from places where people live, work, worship, shop, play, learn, and seek medical care; and,

WHEREAS, the Lee's Summit 360° Strategic Plan Transportation Key Performance Area, Goal 2, provides for the development, implementation and incorporation of a Livable Streets approach to transportation; and,

WHEREAS, this goal implements the Livable Streets system in conjunction with other policies, regulations and plans, such as the Greenway Master Plan adopted as part of the City’s Comprehensive Plan; and,

WHEREAS, the Lee's Summit 360° Strategic Plan recommends the adoption of a Complete Streets Ordinance that includes a “policy focus” to accommodate pedestrians, motorists, bicyclist and mass transit riders of all ages and abilities, and the Lee's Summit 360° Stakeholders as part of plan implementation recommend a Resolution for Livable Streets to support modification and adoption of applicable ordinances, standards, plans and codes to meet this goal; and,

WHEREAS, the terms “Complete Streets” and “Comprehensive Street Design” are also used to identify the same concepts as Livable Streets.
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LEE’S SUMMIT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION ONE. TITLE.
This policy shall be known as the “Livable Streets Policy.”

SECTION TWO. PURPOSE.
The Livable Streets Policy sets forth guiding principles and practices to be considered in transportation projects, so as to encourage walking, bicycling and transit use while promoting safe use and operation for all users.

SECTION THREE. DEFINITIONS.
“Livable Street” means a transportation corridor for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, cars, trucks, motorcycles and buses. “Livable Streets” are designed and operated to safely facilitate movement of people of all ages and abilities from destination to destination along and across a continuous travel network.

“Livable Street Elements” means transportation improvements, facilities and amenities that accommodate and or promote multiple modes of travel, including pedestrian, bicycle and transit in addition to cars, trucks, motorcycles and buses. These elements are defined and recognized by the Institute of Transportation Engineers and the American Planning Association.

“Public Improvement Project” means new roads, trails, sidewalks and facilities or reconstruction thereof, as well as private improvement projects constructed and/or maintained in whole or part with City funds, owned or leased by the City, and/or intended to be dedicated to the City.

SECTION FOUR. APPLICABILITY.

1. This Policy applies to the design, construction and maintenance (e.g. resurfacing and striping modification) of Public Improvement Projects.

2. The City shall consider public plans, standards, regulations and ordinances that further this Policy. For example, the City shall consider an ordinance that requires safe access for pedestrians, bicyclist and other forms of travel, in addition to motorists, in any new development or redeveloped areas. This ordinance should establish design standards for future development that incorporate Livable Streets Elements.

SECTION FIVE. GUIDING PRINCIPLES.
Guiding principles and practices of the “Livable Streets Policy” are as follows:

1. “Livable Streets” are designed to serve everyone - pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motorists - including persons of all ages and abilities.

2. The design and construction of all Public Improvement Projects should include Livable Streets Elements identified in and required by:
   a. public plans adopted by the Planning Commission, such as the Greenway Master Plan, Thoroughfare Master Plan, and Capital Improvement Plan, all which may be independent or a part of the City’s Comprehensive Plan; and
   b. development related ordinances, such as the Unified Development Ordinance, Access Management Code, and the Design and Construction Manual.
3. Livable Streets Elements should be considered within the balance of mode and context of the community, including, but not limited to, environmental sensitivity, cost, budget, demand, probable use, space and area requirements and limitations, and legal requirements and limitations.

4. The City intends to incorporate Livable Streets principles into all public strategic plans, standards and regulations, including the Unified Development Ordinance, the Design and Construction Manual, the Access Management Code, the City’s Comprehensive Plan, the Traffic Code, and other relevant ordinances, practices and policies, upon subsequent updates. The Livable Streets principles, where applicable and appropriate, should be incorporated into other City plans, manuals, rules, practices, policies, training, procedures, regulations and programs as directed by the City Manager.

5. It is a goal of the City to foster partnerships with the State of Missouri, Jackson County, Cass County, school districts, citizens, businesses, Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), neighboring communities, and neighborhoods in consideration of functional facilities and accommodations in furtherance of the City’s Livable Streets Policy and the continuation of such facilities and accommodations beyond the City’s borders or maintenance.

6. The City recognizes that Livable Streets may be achieved through elements incorporated into a single project or incrementally through a series of improvements or maintenance activities over time.

7. The City will consider all possible funding sources to plan and implement this policy and shall investigate grants that may be available to make Livable Streets Elements more economically feasible.

SECTION SIX. LIVABLE STREETS SUMMARY.

1. A summary or description of the Livable Streets Elements of all Public Improvement Projects shall be included in:

   - the Capital Improvements Plan; and
   - the development review report of any private development plan that requires City Council approval.

2. If a Livable Streets Element identified in and required by adopted public plans or development related ordinance is not incorporated in the project, such omission shall be documented in the Livable Streets Summary that demonstrates:

   - that the accommodation is not necessary because non-motorized use is prohibited, such as interstate freeways; or
   - that the cost of accommodation is excessively disproportionate to the need or probable future use; or
   - a documented absence of current or future need.

   a. The documentation shall be conducted by appropriate staff; or for private projects, the owner shall conduct the documentation.

   b. The documentation shall be submitted to the City Manager and/or the City Council, as appropriate, for consideration prior to approval of project design.
RESOLUTION 10-17

SECTION SEVEN. LIVABLE STREETS ADVISORY BOARD.
The City plans to adopt an ordinance which would create a Livable Streets Advisory Board (LSAB).

SECTION EIGHT.
This resolution shall be in full force and effect from the date of its passage, adoption, and approval by the Mayor.

PASSED by the City Council and APPROVED by the Mayor for the City of Lee's Summit, Missouri, this 9th day of November, 2010.

[Signature]
Mayor Randall L. Rhoads

ATTEST:
[Signature]
City Clerk Denise R. Chisum

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
[Signature]
Assistant City Attorney Trevor L. Stiles