

Forest Park Passes Complete Streets Resolution

Municipal Leaders Improve Roadway Safety for all Users

Forest Park, Ill – August XX, 2011 -- The Village Council of Forest Park unanimously passed a Complete Streets resolution to ensure that transportation planners and engineers design and operate roadways to accommodate the safety of everyone who uses the roads: walkers, cyclists, drivers and public transit riders.

A nationwide initiative, Complete Streets are designed and operated so they work for all users – pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. It provides a plan for a safe infrastructure for people to get around actively, making healthy transportation choices easier for individuals and families. With Complete Streets, people can more readily and safely across streets, walk to shops and bicycle to work, while ensuring public transit access. Improvements may include the addition of bike paths, special bus lanes, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions and traffic roundabouts. As an Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) corridor municipality, Village leadership will work to ensure future IDOT projects incorporate these guidelines.

Forest Park has been committed to a complete streets initiative for a few years now as evidenced by Franklin Street, Jackson Blvd., and Harvard Street which have all undergone renovations and include improved lighting, stamped concrete pedestrian crossings, and bump outs to slow vehicular traffic and close the distance for pedestrians crossing the roadway. “Complete Streets will provide a safe, convenient network for all modes of travel within our community,” said Forest Park Mayor Anthony T. Calderone. “This resolution underscores our commitment to encourage residents to be physically active and to improve air quality.”

Forest Park began this work as a part of its Model Communities grant from the suburban Cook County Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) Program. CPPW is a joint project of the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) and the Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago and is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. A 2009 study in *Social Science and Medicine* found that people in walkable neighborhoods were substantially less likely to be overweight.

“Congratulations to the Village of Forest Park for its commitment to providing residents with a healthier place to live, work and play,” said Stephen A. Martin, Jr., Ph.D., MPH, chief operating officer, CCDPH. “With this resolution, passed on August 23, Forest Park becomes the second suburban Cook County community to support Complete Streets policies. CCDPH is committed to working with its partners to promote the Complete Streets initiative and to encourage residents to get involved in improving opportunities to be more physically active.”

“When streets are designed just for cars or other motor vehicle traffic, they decrease opportunities for biking and walking while increasing pedestrian accidents,” said Ron Burke, executive director, Active Transportation Alliance. “The Alliance, as a CPPW partner, is working with municipalities to understand the Complete Streets principles and adopt a policy for implementation.”

For more information, visit www.cookcountypublichealth.org/healthy-initiatives.

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About the CPPW Model Communities Program

The Model Communities Program is an initiative of the Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) project in suburban Cook County. CPPW is a part of a nationwide effort aimed at curbing the obesity epidemic by focusing on community-level change. In addition to Forest Park, 37 other Model Communities grantees in suburban Cook County are working to create policy, systems and environmental changes to help increase access to healthy food and beverage choices and safe places to be physically active.

About Active Transportation Alliance (www.activetrans.org)

The Active Transportation Alliance is a non-profit, member-based advocacy organization that works to make bicycling, walking and public transit safe, convenient and inviting.