

# STRONG COALITION ENABLED CITY OF PRYOR CREEK TO PASS FIRST COMPLETE STREETS ORDINANCE IN OKLAHOMA

CHANGE CAN HAPPEN



## PRYOR CREEK CASE STUDY

*This case study describes the successful adoption and implementation of a Complete Streets ordinance where a coalition of supporters had a strong influence.*

The City of Pryor Creek became the first city in Oklahoma to approve a Complete Streets ordinance with the unanimous approval of Ordinance No. 2016-01.

Pryor, where more than 16 percent of the population is Cherokee Indian, has worked closely with the Cherokee Nation to address childhood obesity, and had identified stronger Complete Streets policies as a promising strategy to increase physical activity for community members, making sure they could safely walk, bicycle, and be active on the streets. Recognizing that the community would be more successful in passing a strong Complete Streets policy with expert assistance, Pryor reached out to the Safe Routes to School National Partnership for technical assistance, and obtained assistance from the National Partnership in 2014 and 2015 to shape the Complete Streets ordinance and develop a robust campaign.

The National Partnership worked closely with Doug Moore of the Community Development Department for the City of Pryor Creek. Under the Cherokee Nation and Moore's leadership, the city was a strong advocate for bicycling and walking and had engaged in Safe Routes to School

programming and youth engagement activities such as walking school buses. City leaders felt that a Complete Streets ordinance would be an added component to a healthier community.



*Pryor celebrates a Complete Streets ordinance that will help kids safely walk to school.*

The overall goals for the campaign were as follows:

1. Improve walkability and bikeability throughout the community by enhancing or creating connections between neighborhoods, schools, parks, commercial areas and employment centers in hopes of creating an alternate "active" transportation system.
2. Improve safety and awareness of safety for people walking and bicycling.



3. Create enjoyable experiences.
4. Improve community health. The rates of childhood and adult obesity have grown to epidemic proportions.
5. Increase awareness about what effects their daily choices have on their lives and the lives of their children, not just today, but also in the future.

During monthly calls with the Pryor team, the National Partnership reviewed the existing Complete Streets policy, provided recommendations for strengthening it and moving to adoption by the City Council, and provided sample Complete Streets ordinances from across the country to help guide Pryor's efforts. National Partnership staff helped identify ways to incorporate business owners into the Complete Streets conversation, and provided recommendations for language and key points for a presentation that the Pryor Area Chamber of Commerce requested. Ultimately, the city used language based on ChangeLab Solution's *model Complete Streets* ordinance to draft a policy that would fit the needs of Pryor. Stakeholders also worked to ensure that the ordinance had support of the mayor, city officials, and local businesses, which led to the ordinance being unanimously adopted by the City Council in 2016.

"Pryor is really moving now!" said Doug Moore after the ordinance was passed.



*Complete Streets will benefit the walking school bus in Pryor.*

The following groups and organizations also played a key role in the passage of the Complete Streets ordinance:

- Cherokee Nation and Cherokee Nation Healthy Nation
- Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Trust
- Pryor Area Chamber of Commerce
- Safe Route to School National Partnership
- Pryor Public Schools

- Pryor High School Leadership Students
- Pryor Bicycle Pedestrian Task Force
- Dan Burden and WALC Institute
- Mayes County HOPE Coalition
- MidAmerica Industrial Park
- Grand River Dam Authority
- Mayes County Commissioners

Beyond the Complete Streets policy, the Cherokee Nation and City of Pryor Creek have passed multiple initiatives and ordinances to improve the health and well being of community members. Pryor has been recognized as the Most Innovative City for advancing initiatives such as a Leader in Me program in Pryor Public Schools to planned county bike trails. The Character Education Partnership has recognized Pryor Public Schools' Walking Wednesday program as a Promising Practice in Character Education.

When it comes to physical activity, the passage of the Complete Streets ordinance is just one of the ways Pryor has committed to supporting safe streets and healthy communities. The city had already adopted a bicycle and pedestrian master plan prior to adopting the Complete Streets Ordinance, and has since developed a master trails plan that was approved unanimously by county commissioners.

Using the bicycle and pedestrian plan and the master trails plan along with construction estimates for funding, the city applied for and received a \$480,000 Transportation Alternatives Program grant from the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) to begin the first phase of the trail system on streets within city limits, including the construction of sharrows, bike lanes, and other infrastructure improvements. Pryor is also providing a 20 percent match to the grant.

Moore believes that support from key community groups and organizations has been key to the active transportation and Complete Streets planning and policy successes. The bicycle and pedestrian task force was originally formed as a Safe Routes to School task force, and has since continued to provide a strong voice in support of the bicycle and pedestrian plan and the Complete Streets ordinance and implementation. The task force is evolving again, and is now forming a new nonprofit organization called County Trail Alliance. In addition, the Chamber of Commerce and Department of Education have been strong partners. "We couldn't accomplish what we have without the support of the Chamber of Commerce and Department of Education," said Moore.