Local Complete Streets Sample Policy

The term complete street means designing, building and operating the streets to routinely accommodate safe travel by all modes and all people. A complete street serves everyone who travels, be it by driving, walking, bicycling, riding transit or other means while connecting to a larger transportation network. People of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across streets, regardless of how they are traveling. Complete streets are essential for access by people who cannot drive. Streets without safe access for non-motorized transportation represent a barrier for people who use wheelchairs, and for older adults and children. A complete street may look quite different on different sides of the same city, but are designed to balance safety, access and mobility for everyone using the street.

The [City/County name] recognizes the need for complete streets and will accommodate elements that create a complete street where possible. Some of the elements under consideration for inclusion on a complete street can be sidewalks, shared use paths, bike lanes, fewer travel lanes, narrower lane widths, improved street crossings, bump outs, pedestrian signals, signs, street furniture, street trees, and transit shelters, access and facilities. All designs should be context-sensitive to meet the needs of the community and surrounding area while emphasizing safe and accessible travel for all people.

Every city, state and federally funded transportation improvement and project phase should be approached as an opportunity to create safer, more accessible streets for all users. Project phases include planning, programming, design, right-of-way acquisition, construction, construction engineering, reconstruction, and operations as well as any change to transportation facilities within street rights-of-way such as capital improvements, re-channelization projects, and major maintenance.

To this end, [City/County name] will:

* Create a committee to evaluate and review the complete streets process and implementation undertaken by [City/County name], as well as review formal exception requests. Members on this committee could be representatives from the [City/County name] departments representing engineering, transportation, parks and recreation, emergency services, and planning, as well as relevant stakeholders such as AARP, DART, HIRTA, school districts, public health officials, business leaders and transportation advocates.
* Work with the [City/County name] departments, DART, the Metropolitan Planning Organization, and other transportation supporters to identify bicycle, pedestrian, and transit planning and design opportunities appropriate to the project.
* Review and revise related procedures, plans, regulations, design guides and other processes to align goals with the Complete Streets Policy and ensure accommodation of all users in all projects.

1. The design and development of the transportation infrastructure shall improve conditions for transit users, motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians and other users through the subsequent steps:

1.1 Plan projects for the long-term. Transportation improvements are long-term investments that remain in place for many years. The design and construction of new facilities should anticipate likely future demand for transit, bicycling, and walking facilities and not preclude the provision of future improvements.

1.2 Address the need for bicyclists and pedestrians to cross corridors as well as travel along them. Even where bicyclists and pedestrians may not commonly use a particular corridor that is being improved or constructed, they will likely need to be able to cross that corridor safely and conveniently. Therefore the design of intersections and interchanges shall accommodate bicyclist and pedestrians in a manner that is safe, accessible, and convenient.

1.3 Design facilities to the best currently available standards and guidelines. The design of facilities for should follow design guidelines and standards that are commonly used, such as:

* AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities;
* AASHTO’s A policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets;
* AASHTO’s Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities;
* SUDAS: State Urban Design and Specifications Manual;
* Federal Highway Administration’s Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways;
* ITE Recommended Practice Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities; and,
* National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Street Design Guide.

2. Pedestrian and bicycle ways and transit considerations shall be established in new construction and reconstruction of street and bridge projects within [City/County name] unless one or more of three conditions are met:

2.1 Bicyclists and pedestrians are prohibited by law from using the roadway. In this instance, a greater effort may be necessary to accommodate all users (bicyclists, motorists, transit vehicles and users, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities) elsewhere within the right of way or within the same transportation corridor.

2.2 The cost of establishing bikeways and walkways would be excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use or exceed budget costs (ex. resurfacing). Excessively disproportionate is defined as exceeding twenty percent of the cost of the larger transportation project. However, the twenty percent threshold is a guideline; in areas where high levels of bicycle and pedestrian traffic are anticipated, the threshold for “excessively disproportionate” could be much higher. In cases where the additional cost is considered excessively disproportionate, the project sponsor may propose an alternate design or spend twenty percent of the project cost of the larger project to improve accommodations for all users.

2.3 Where sparsity of population or other factors indicate an absence of future need. This is defined as streets developed as a cul-de-sac with four or fewer dwellings or if the street has severe topographic or natural resource restraints. Also an indication of absence of need is when the annual average daily traffic (AADT) is projected to be less than 500 vehicles per day over the life of this project.

Exception requests shall be reviewed by the Complete Streets Committee and granted by [City Council/Department Head]. Documentation of any granted exceptions shall be made publicly available.

3. Using performance measures to evaluate the progress of the Complete Streets Policy is a valuable and essential part of successfully implementing safer, more complete streets. The MPO is available and able to assist in identifying performance measures and providing data.

The [City/County] will publicly report on the annual increase or decrease for each performance measure compared to the previous year(s). These measures can include:

* Rate of crashes, injuries and fatalities by mode;
* Percentage of transit stops accessible via sidewalks and curb ramps;
* Number of approved and denied exceptions;
* Completion of Safe Routes to School projects;
* Total miles of on-street bicycle facilities;
* Total miles of off-street bicycle facilities;
* Bicycle and pedestrian counts; and,
* Other relevant measures.

4. The [City/County] views complete streets as integral to everyday transportation options. To this end:

1. The [relevant departments, agencies and committees] will incorporate complete streets principles into the [Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Master Plan, Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, and other appropriate plans] and other manuals, checklists, decision trees, rules, regulations, and programs as appropriate.
2. The [Departments of Traffic and Engineering, Public Works, Planning and/or other relevant departments] will review current design standards, including subdivision regulations that apply to new roadway construction, to ensure that they reflect the best available design guidelines, and effectively implement complete streets.
3. When available, the [City/County] shall encourage staff professional development and training on non-motorized transportation issues through attending conferences, classes, webinars, and workshops.
4. [City/County] staff shall identify all current and potential future sources of funding for street improvements and recommend improvements to the project selection critiera to support complete streets projects.
5. The [City/County] shall promote project coordination among [City/County] departments and agencies with an interest in the activities that occur within the public right-of-way in order to better use fiscal resources.
6. An annual report will be made to the [City Council/County Board of Supervisors] by the [lead department or City Manager] showing progress made implementing this policy.
7. A Complete Streets Advisory Council is hereby created to serve as a resource and a collaborative partner for the [City/County] elected officials, municipal staff, and other appropriate agencies.
   1. The Council is to be composed of [odd number] voting members appointed by the Mayor with approval by the City Council who are interested in achieving Complete Streets and who want to explore opportunities for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and all other transportation users. Representatives shall be from [name specific organizations and stakeholder constituencies, including transportation professionals, public health, parks, schools, groups representing older adults, people with disabilities, bicyclists, pedestrians, or transit users].
   2. [Establish membership terms – usually two to four years, alternating term limits so that all members are not renewed on the same date.]
   3. The duties of the Council shall include, but not be limited to, examining the needs for bicyclists, transit users, motorists, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities; conducting a baseline study of current practices and accommodations; developing appropriate inter-departmental performance measures including [reference performance measures section]; promoting programs and facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users; and advising appropriate agencies on best practices in Complete Streets implementation.
   4. The Council will meet quarterly, provide a yearly written report to [City Council/County Board of Supervisors] evaluating the [City/County]’s progress, and advise on implementation.