

COMPLETE STREETS POLICY
And RECOMMENDED ACTION PLAN
Metropolitan Topeka Planning Organization

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MTPO **COMPLETE STREETS** POLICY and **RECOMMENDED ACTION PLAN**

INTRODUCTION

Elected officials, planning commissions, health organizations, transportation related entities and other decision makers, as well as the general public, are increasingly recognizing that designs for our community's streets must achieve an appropriate balance in service to all modes of transportation and the role transportation plays in increasing the livability of a community. An effective complete street design accommodates modes of all types, including passenger vehicles, trucks, pedestrians, bicycles, motorcycles/scooters, public transit, as well as users of all ages and abilities. Facilities for each mode and user must be provided in a comprehensive, yet safe manner. Additionally, adequate space must be provided for all the requirements of utilities and the other traditional uses of our street rights-of-way. Any street design that successfully meets all of these needs is typically referred to as a *complete street*.

It is recognized that achieving a complete streets retrofit for existing urban streets at times presents a challenge. To this end, the concept of complete "corridors" must be considered in the development of a complete streets policy for the region. This is not only a matter of necessity, but an innovative way to address the challenges of a city built for cars first and non-motorized modes second. In other words, a "travel shed" should be considered whereby parallel streets may need to accommodate specific modes of transportation, rather than converting every street into a complete street.

There is no uniform design for a complete street. The features of complete streets vary based on context, topography, road functions, the speed of traffic, pedestrian and bicycle demand, and another factors. Based on road specific context, common features of complete streets include:

- Sidewalks
- Paved Shoulders
- Bike Lanes
- Safe Crossing Points
- Accessible Curb Ramps
- Pedestrian Refuge Medians
- Bus Stop Access
- Sidewalk "bump-outs" at intersections
- Access to adjacent trails in a "Corridor"

This report is a result of collaboration among the Policy Board, TAC, and the planning partners. It is meant as a guide for each governmental agency to consider when developing its own complete streets policy and action steps.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

A complete streets policy is not a design manual. Rather, it is a policy stating that all modes of transportation should be considered in the construction and improvement of our street network. No one design fits all streets. Every complete street evolves from a process of evaluating a number of factors that influence its ultimate design. Specific design standards are found in various ordinances, policies, standards, and plans adopted by the governing bodies and transportation providers. Many of these are referenced below. Design standards and specifications vary among jurisdictions; and, they can even vary within a particular jurisdiction depending upon the particular need, limitations or opportunities of the existing street.

In any urban county across America, there are potentially thousands of miles of local streets, hundreds of miles of principal arterials, minor arterials, and collectors. It is, therefore, necessary to choose from a broad selection of available guidelines and criteria when implementing a Complete Streets policy. The following is a list of various documents and guidelines presently available for consideration for all elements of Complete Streets projects.

Primary Types of Mobility

- Pedestrian

Design Guidelines

- City of Topeka Design Criteria & Drafting Standards
- Publications and Design Standards from the Institute of Traffic Engineers
- Topeka-Shawnee County Regional Trails and Greenways Plan
- Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities
- Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

- Accessibility for the Disabled

- Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities
- Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
- City of Topeka Design Criteria & Drafting Standards

- Bicycle

- Topeka-Shawnee County Regional Trails and Greenways Plan
- Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
- City of Topeka Design Criteria & Drafting Standards
- Publications and Design Standards from the Institute of Traffic Engineers

- Mass Transit

- City of Topeka Design Criteria & Drafting Standards
- Publications and Design Standards from the Institute of Traffic Engineers
- Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities
- KDOT Standard Specifications
- American Association of State Highway and

Transportation Officials, A Policy on Geometric Design of Highway and Streets (AASHTO)

- Automobile
 - City of Topeka Design Criteria & Drafting Standards
 - Publications and Design Standards from the Institute of Traffic Engineers
 - Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
 - KDOT Standard Specifications
 - American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, A Policy on Geometric Design of Highway and Streets (AASHTO)

POLICY STATEMENT

The MTPO's complete streets policy has been adopted by the Policy Board and is attached to this report as a reference. The TAC will work with the Policy Board and the planning partners to work out a detailed process and possible standards for inclusion of projects in the TIP. Each governmental agency is encouraged to adopt its own policy statement.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The following strategies are provided as possible ideas for implementation of a complete streets policy by the region's governing bodies and transportation providers. These strategies are suggested as a guide only. Each entity should develop its own standards, as appropriate.

1. Develop a model complete streets project checklist for use by the consultants and staff when designing street projects.
2. Create a staff committee to review each major street project for compliance with the complete streets policy using a set of "health assessment criteria".
3. Incorporate recommendations into future TIP projects.
4. Consider amendments to applicable traffic regulations specific to bicycles, and pedestrians based on fulfillment of the Complete Streets policy.
5. Consider amendments to all applicable subdivision regulations that would implement the complete streets policy, such as:
 - a. Developing a "connectivity index" to ensure new subdivisions provide adequate connectivity to adjacent existing and future developments; and
 - b. Revising the subdivision application form to require new developments to indicate how conformance to the complete streets policy is being achieved.
6. Annually budget funds in the Capital Improvement Plan for implementation of complete streets, especially in support of existing or planned projects.
7. Apply for federal and state grants to help implement the complete streets policy, such as federal Transportation Enhancement Grant administered by KDOT.

PROJECT CHECKLIST

1. Project Location: _____
2. Project Classification: ___ Residential ___ Collector ___ Arterial ___ Freeway
 - 2a. Project Jurisdiction(s): ___ City ___ County ___ Township ___ State
3. Total Distance (ft.) _____
4. Major intersections: _____
5. What accommodations for transit, bicycles and pedestrians are now incorporated along the current facility and along the facilities it intersects or crosses?
 - 5a. Please provide specifics for any items listed above.
6. If there are no existing pedestrian, bicycle, or transit facilities, how far from the proposed project are the closest parallel walkways and bikeways, or transit stops?
7. Please indicate any particular non-motorized transit uses or needs along the project corridor that you have observed or of which have been informed.
8. What existing challenges could the proposed project improve for transit, bicycle, or pedestrian travel in the vicinity of the proposed project?
9. What trip generators (existing and future) are in the vicinity of the proposed project that might attract transit, walking or bicycling customers, employees, students, visitors or others?
10. In the project design, have you considered collisions, including those involving bicyclists and pedestrians, along the route of the facility?
 - 10a. If so, what resources have you consulted?
 - 10b. If so, what are your conclusions?
11. Does the adopted bicycle plan, or other neighborhood or transportation plans call for the development of transit, bicycle or pedestrian facilities on, crossing, or adjacent to the proposed facility/project?
 - 11a. Is the proposed project consistent with these plans?
12. Do any local, state, or federal policies call for incorporating transit, bicycle and/or pedestrian facilities into this project?

- 12a. If so, have the policies been followed?
13. If this project includes a transit, bicycle or pedestrian facility, have all applicable design standards or guidelines been followed?
14. Has the proposed project received any comments or suggestions from the public? If so, please specify.
15. What accommodations, if any, are included for transit patrons, bicycles and pedestrians in the proposed project design?
16. Will the proposed project remove an existing transit, bicycle or pedestrian facility, or block or hinder bicycle or pedestrian movement?
- 16a. If yes, please describe the situation in detail.
17. Will the proposed project temporarily block or reroute any existing modes of transportation during the duration of its construction?
- 17a. If yes, please describe the corrective accommodation to preserve the function of these facilities.
18. If the proposed project does not incorporate transit, bicycle or pedestrian facilities, or if the proposed project would hinder or these types of mobility options, list reasons why the project cannot be re-designed to accommodate these facilities.
- 18a. What would be the cost of incorporating each of these types of facilities?
- 18b. What is each facility's proportion of the total project cost?
19. What agency will be responsible for ongoing maintenance of the each type of facility?
20. How will ongoing maintenance be budgeted?

STAFF COMMITTEE

A Complete Streets Committee, if a governing body or planning partner decided to create one, could consist of staff members responsible for providing transportation services or with responsibilities for designing, planning, or reviewing transportation or neighborhood development related issues. An example of a standing staff committee would include staff similar to the following:

- Economic development staff
- Planner
- Architect
- Engineer
- Traffic Engineer
- Parks and Recreation Director
- Transit Planner (TMTA)

Duties of the Committee should be defined by the particular jurisdiction or governing body. Duties could include:

1. Define “major street project”.
2. Review major street projects for compliance with the complete streets policy. Other individuals and groups, such as neighborhood organizations should be consulted when appropriate.
3. Make recommendations to the City Manager for changes to city codes, policies and regulations in support of the complete streets policy.
4. Identify potential street corridors for priority complete streets treatment.

POSSIBLE “HEALTH” ASSESSMENT CRITERIA WHEN CONSIDERING PROJECTS

Primary Types of Mobility

- Pedestrian
- Accessibility for the Disabled
- Bicycle
- Mass Transit
- Complete System

Goal: % Policy Compliance

- 100%
- 100%
- 100%
- 100%
- 100%

Criteria – Pedestrian

- Sidewalks

- Crosswalks

- Lighting

Measurement

- Percentage of provision
- Width
- Shade and shelter
- Separation from adjacent street
- Separation from bicycle traffic
- Provision of shade and structures
- Connectivity in all directions
- Percentage of provision
- Location and frequency of provision
- Functional for motorized traffic
- Percent of coverage
- Lighting at crosswalks
- Perception of adequate safety
- Intensity specific for surrounding uses

Criteria – Disabled

- Ramped curb cuts
- Texture differentiations for blind
- Mass Transit Accommodations
- Crossing signals

Measurement

- Percentage of provision
- Percentage of provision
- Frequency of accommodations
- Hand or camera activated

Criteria – Bicycle

- Direct routes to destinations
- Clearly marked bicycle lanes
- Separation from sidewalks
- Destination specific routes
- Crossing signals

Measurement

- Mileage required to reach destination
- Mileage of arterial and collector streets
- Mileage of bicycle unique provisions
- Least distance to reach destination
- Hand or camera activated

Criteria – Mass Transit

- Designated transit stops
- Shelter from rain and sun
- Accessibility to shelter from sidewalk
- Posted schedules of service

Measurement

- Specific to origin and destination
- Percentage of provision
- Percentage of provision
- Percentage of provision