

**CITY OF EL PASO, TEXAS
AGENDA ITEM
DEPARTMENT HEAD'S SUMMARY FORM**

AGENDA DATE: July 6, 2022
PUBLIC HEARING DATE: July 19, 2022

CONTACT PERSON(S) NAME AND PHONE NUMBER: Joaquin Rodriguez, 915-328-8731

DISTRICT(S) AFFECTED: Citywide

STRATEGIC GOAL: Goal 3 – Promote the Visual Image of El Paso

SUBGOAL: 3.2 - Set one standard for infrastructure across the city

SUBJECT:

DISCUSSION and ACTION on an ordinance adopting the "El Paso Complete Streets Policy – July 2022" as an addendum to the City of El Paso's Comprehensive Plan, "Plan El Paso".

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION:

The proposed "El Paso Complete Streets Policy" seeks to implement the principles of complete streets design throughout the city of El Paso. In 2021, El Paso was ranked the 20th most dangerous city for pedestrians with 215 pedestrians killed in El Paso between 2010 and 2019. The proposed policy prioritizes safety by design for all users. The policy includes the formation of two committees comprised of internal and external stakeholders to guide the inclusion and implementation of complete streets principles within the city's design process for public works and transportation related projects. Additionally, the policy sets forth clear guidelines for implementation, recommendations for regulatory and administrative change in support of complete street principles, and requirements for tracking and reporting progress on implementation of the policy.

The policy has been developed over a two-year process and close coordination with the complete streets coalition, a large group of internal and external stakeholders with interest in the varied impact of street design on the health safety and welfare of the community. The policy, as presented, is supported by the coalition and its members. Staff recommends adoption of the policy as presented.

PRIOR COUNCIL ACTION:

City Plan Commission – Approval Pending (June 16, 2022)

AMOUNT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

N/A

HAVE ALL AFFECTED DEPARTMENTS BEEN NOTIFIED? XXX YES ___ NO

PRIMARY DEPARTMENT: Capital Improvement Department

SECONDARY DEPARTMENT: Streets and Maintenance

*****REQUIRED AUTHORIZATION*****

DEPARTMENT HEAD:


(Yvette Hernandez, P.E., City Engineer)

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE EL PASO COMPLETE STREETS POLICY – JULY 2022 AS AN ADDENDUM TO THE CITY OF EL PASO’S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, PLAN EL PASO.

WHEREAS, the City’s Comprehensive Plan, *Plan El Paso*, was formally adopted by the City Council on March 8, 2012 and included the goal of becoming the least car-dependent city in the Southwest; and

WHEREAS, while *Plan El Paso* introduces the concept of “Complete Streets”, this updated 2022 Complete Streets Policy adds additional elements to strengthen implementation, community engagement, and internal departmental collaboration; and

WHEREAS, the *2014 Parks and Recreation Master Plan* set a target level of one mile of in-town trail for every 10,000 residents, and development of trails to reach that level are a high priority for the community; and

WHEREAS, the City Council passed a resolution adopting the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) *Urban Street Design Guide* and *Urban Bikeway Design Guide* in 2014 as the official design guidelines for capital improvement projects and other city funded street and roadway improvement;

WHEREAS, NACTO has released guidelines in recent years that address various components of a Complete Streets Policy, including *City Limits: Setting Safe Speed Limits on Urban Streets* and *Designing Streets for Kids*; and

WHEREAS, the *City of El Paso Bike Plan* was adopted on August 9, 2016 and incorporated as an addendum to *Plan El Paso*; and

WHEREAS, the *City of El Paso Bike Plan* included a full interconnected bike network map, showing current and proposed trails, called the *Bike Plan Atlas*; and

WHEREAS, the *25 by 2025 City of El Paso Strategic Plan* visionary goals align with Complete Streets Policy goals, such as stimulate economic growth through transit and to enhance the mobility experience (1.5), improve motorist safety and traffic management (2.4), improve the visual impression of the community (3.1), set one standard for infrastructure across the City (3.2), improve competitiveness through infrastructure improvements impacting the quality of life (7.2), implement improvements and activate programming that support and promote multimodal transportation (7.3), design and implement infrastructure project that maximize co-benefits (7.5), and to improve air quality (8.5); and

WHEREAS, the strategic vision for the City of El Paso includes providing exceptional recreational, cultural, and educational opportunities; and

WHEREAS, streets are the largest form of public space in the City with vast potential for our streets to become healthy, vibrant, and inviting places to be with pedestrian-scale lighting, shade trees, landscaping, green infrastructure, public art, walkable destinations, and other amenities; and

WHEREAS, an interconnected street network that safely accommodates all anticipated users and transportation modes, creates an important connection between amenities (i.e. parks, schools, businesses), which can lead to economic development, and improve overall quality of life; and

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Complete Streets

WHEREAS, bicycling is a key component of a multi-modal transportation system by improving the quality of life, providing transportation options, transforming and enhancing a community, and is an effective means to promote healthy activities for all ages and abilities; and

WHEREAS, the City continues to deal with public health challenges, and more importantly to provide equitable access to multimodal transportation alternatives that accommodate social distancing guidelines and ensure user safety; and

WHEREAS, a Complete Streets approach provides additional co-benefits through improvements in public health and air quality, increased access to outdoor recreation opportunities, reduced maintenance costs, increased property values, enhanced neighborhood safety, and aesthetics; and

WHEREAS, a Complete Streets Policy serves to create a connected, resilient, and equitable transportation network through a shift in street and road design that ensures equitable access to community resources for all people, including those who walk, bike, use a wheelchair, use public transportation, or drive; and

WHEREAS, the development of the July 2022 Complete Streets Policy has been guided by a diverse community coalition, to garner widespread community support for the policy; and

WHEREAS, the Complete Streets Policy supports the City of El Paso's vision of economic development, safe travel for all mobility users, active transportation; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL FOR THE CITY OF EL PASO, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The City of El Paso adopts and approves the City of El Paso Complete Streets Policy - July 2022 as an addendum to Plan El Paso, attached as Exhibit A.

Section 2. In furtherance of the adopted policy, City officers and staff are authorized and directed to prepare a Complete Streets Implementation Plan based on the task outlined therein.

Section 3. City officers and employees are authorized and directed to perform all acts necessary or desirable to give effect to this Ordinance.

(Signatures on the following page)

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Complete Streets

ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2022.

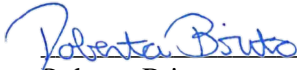
THE CITY OF EL PASO:

Oscar Leeser
Mayor

ATTEST:

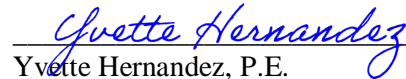
Laura D. Prine
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Roberta Brito
Assistant City Attorney

APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:



Yvette Hernandez, P.E.
City Engineer

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Complete Streets



Acknowledgements

Mayor Oscar Leeser

City Council

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Alexsandra Annello, *District 2*

Cassandra Hernandez, *District 3*

Joe Molinar, *District 4*

Isabel Salcido, *District 5*

Claudia Lizette Rodriguez, *District 6*

Henry Rivera, *District 7*

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Dionne Mack, *Public Safety*

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Yvette Hernandez, *Director of C.I.D. Grant Funded Programs*

Community and Human Development

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Fernando Berjano, *Sustainability Coordinator*

El Paso Complete Streets Coalition

AARP

Action for Healthy Kids

American Heart Association

Center for Community Health Impact

Centro San Vicente

CityHealth

El Paso Diabetes Association

El Paso Independent School District

Frontera Land Alliance

Green Hope Project

LiveActive EP

Medical Center of the Americas

Paso del Norte Health Foundation

Podium Finish

Quantum Engineering Consultants

Race El Paso

Rio Grande Area Agency on Aging

Smart Growth America

Texas Tech University Health Science Center

Velo Paso

Volar Center for Independent Living

YMCA



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Vision, Intent, and Guiding Principles



Wide sidewalks, buffered bike lanes, shade trees, and pedestrian-scale lighting are important components of complete streets

Vision and Intent

Quality of life is a top priority for the residents and leaders of El Paso, with recent investments made to improve parks and expand trails, increase access to public transportation, and address public health concerns. City streets are public spaces that can be used to address these priorities.

A Complete Streets policy serves to create a connected, resilient, and equitable transportation network through a shift in street and road design that ensures equitable access to community resources for all people, including those who walk, bike, use a wheelchair, use public transportation, or drive. In addition to establishing a safe and equitable transportation network, a complete streets approach provides additional co-benefits through improvements in public health and air quality, increased access to outdoor recreation opportunities, reduced maintenance costs, increased property values, and enhanced neighborhood safety and aesthetics.

Through this policy, the City of El Paso confirms its commitment to integrating and prioritizing multimodal transportation options in all street and road projects. **This Complete Streets Policy directly supports the transportation goals outlined in Plan El Paso and the Livable City Sustainability Plan “to become the least car-dependent city in the Southwest through meaningful travel options and land-use patterns that support walkability, livability, and sustainability.”** This policy will also directly support the goals outlined in the 25 by 2025 City of El Paso Strategic Plan, such as:

- 1.5** - Stimulate economic growth through transit and bridges
- 2.4** - Improve motorist safety and traffic management solutions
- 3.1** - Improve the visual impression of the community (gateways, corridors, intersections, and parkland)
- 3.2** - Set one standard for infrastructure across the City
- 7.2** - Improve competitiveness through infrastructure improvements impacting the quality of life
- 7.3** - Implement improvements and activate programming that support and promote multimodal transportation
- 7.5** - Design and implement infrastructure projects that maximize co-benefits, simultaneously addressing climatic and social stressors such as flooding, heat and energy, and citizen mobility update
- 8.5** - Improve air quality throughout El Paso

The City shall consistently support, plan, design, construct, and operate an interconnected street network that safely accommodates all anticipated users and transportation modes. Attention shall be given to the safety and comfort needs of the most vulnerable individuals on our streets—people walking, biking, taking transit, exercising and using wheelchairs or other mobility devices as well as other individuals with visual or hearing disabilities—while still balancing the needs of those driving private, commercial, freight, and emergency vehicles. This policy recognizes that all modes cannot receive the same type of accommodation on every street; the overarching goal is that everyone has the ability to access the transportation system and travel throughout the network in a safe and comfortable manner. **To accomplish this goal, the City is committed to prioritize transportation investments which make walking, biking, public transit, and shared mobility safe, attractive, and viable travel options in El Paso.**

In addition to their transportation function, streets are the largest form of public space in the City.

Therefore, by implementing this policy, the City intends to enhance the potential of our streets to become healthy, vibrant, and inviting “places to be” with pedestrian-scale lighting, shade trees, landscaping, green infrastructure, public art, walkable destinations, and other amenities. As the City continues to deal with public health challenges it is more important than ever to provide equitable access to multimodal transportation alternatives that accommodate social distancing guidelines and ensure user safety.



Stanton Street accommodates the needs of all road users, including transit riders of the street car, cyclists within the protected cycle track with dedicated bike signals, leading-pedestrian interval signal phases, and automotive travel lanes.

Guiding Principles

This Policy is built upon the following six guiding principles and provides a framework for integrating a Complete Streets approach into the plans, policies, decision-making processes, funding priorities, and other everyday practices of the Capital Improvement Department (CID), Streets and Maintenance Department (SAM), Planning and Inspections Department (P&I), as well as other relevant city departments.

Safety - Complete Streets provide a safe travel experience to all users, including drivers, and are an effective strategy to eliminating preventable traffic fatalities.



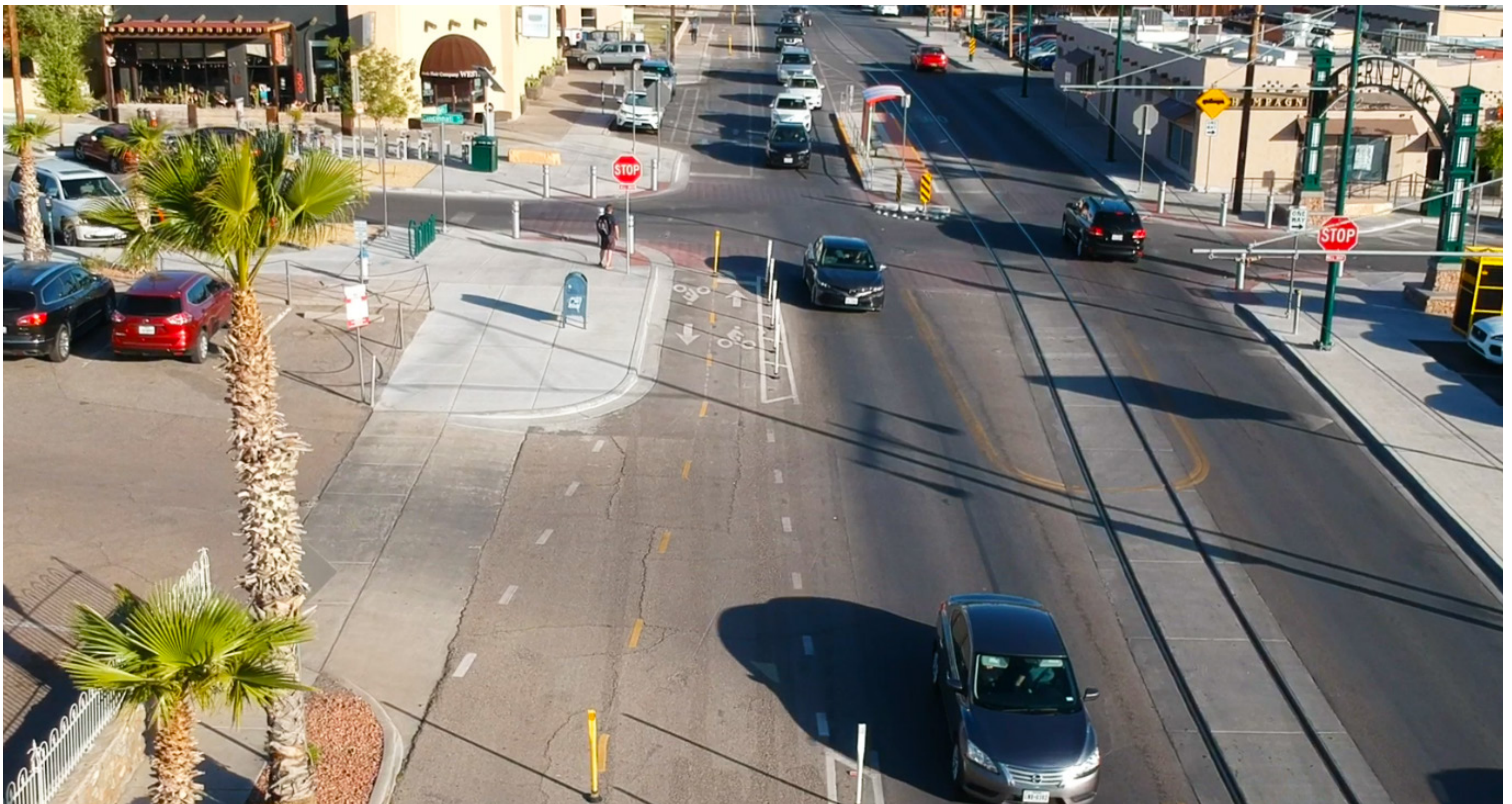
Accessibility - Complete Streets serve people of all ages and abilities by including design elements such as curb ramps to accommodate users with mobility issues. Regular maintenance is critical to ensuring that sidewalks and bike lanes stay clear of sediment, debris, or ponding water.



Equity, Diversity, And Inclusivity - Complete Streets elements are implemented equitably and inclusively throughout the city, with targeted outreach and implementation programs to address the most vulnerable and under-invested neighborhoods.



Land Use - Complete Streets incorporate context sensitive, flexible design approaches that consider the surrounding community's current and expected land use and transportation needs when designing and implementing pedestrian, cyclist, and transit facilities.



Environment - Complete Streets preserve and protect El Paso's environment and improve health by providing opportunities for active transportation, reducing vehicle miles traveled, decreasing pollution caused by motor vehicles, and managing stormwater through the implementation of green infrastructure.



Economic Vitality - Complete Streets help spur economic development by supporting business and job creation, promoting resiliency in the workforce through access to multiple mobility options, and through increased property values for homeowners and increased property tax revenue for the City.



Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity



The City of El Paso is committed to advancing transportation equity through the Complete Streets approach by investing in the most underserved communities, involving the people who have historically been excluded from the transportation planning process, and prioritizing projects and roadway designs that serve the most vulnerable users of the transportation network. The City's unique geographic location, binational culture, and close economic relationship with Ciudad Juarez should be considered when identifying and developing multimodal corridors in order to serve the millions of international tourists that cross into El Paso's ports of entry as pedestrians or cyclists.

There are populations and communities within our City that face higher transportation burdens and experience greater barriers to accessing resources and opportunities, as well as disenfranchised populations and communities that have traditionally been underrepresented in city planning and decision-making processes. These populations include low-income individuals, people of color, senior residents, children, youth, people with disabilities, and people living in households without access to a private automobile.

Each of these groups are either at higher risk of injury or death while walking or biking and/or more likely to walk, bike or use public transit than the population as a whole and, therefore, need to be considered specifically when improving the transportation environment. **To begin to address these inequities, the City shall incorporate equity criteria into the project prioritizing process and develop an inclusive community engagement plan to reach our most vulnerable users and underrepresented populations** (as outlined in *Project Selection Criteria*). It is important to incorporate equity criteria when evaluating maintenance as well in order to maintain accessibility for everybody, including the most vulnerable users.



Proper design and regular maintenance are critical to preventing accessibility issues caused by erosion and flooding.

Commitment in All Projects and Phases



All transportation projects are potential opportunities to make the transportation network safer, as well as more accessible, convenient, affordable, resilient, and reliable. Therefore, this Complete Streets Policy shall inform decision making throughout all phases of all transportation projects, from planning through design and construction, in order to ensure safe and equitable access to the transportation network. These procedures and core principles shall apply to all transportation projects including new construction, reconstruction, resurfacing, restoration and rehabilitation.

Construction and repair work can create a burden especially for people walking, biking, or using wheelchairs or other mobility devices. Therefore, the City shall require that all public departments and private contractors provide accommodations for people using all modes of transportation to continue to use the street safely during any construction or repair work that infringes upon the right-of-way, sidewalk, bicycle lanes, transit stops, or accessibility infrastructure such as curb ramps in accordance with this policy and the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).



Out of service Brio station due to Mesa Street reconstruction. Close coordination between the City and other project sponsors, such as TxDOT, could lead to expedited construction immediately near transit stops to reduce out of service time.

Implementation Steps



Coordination, Implementation, and Oversight

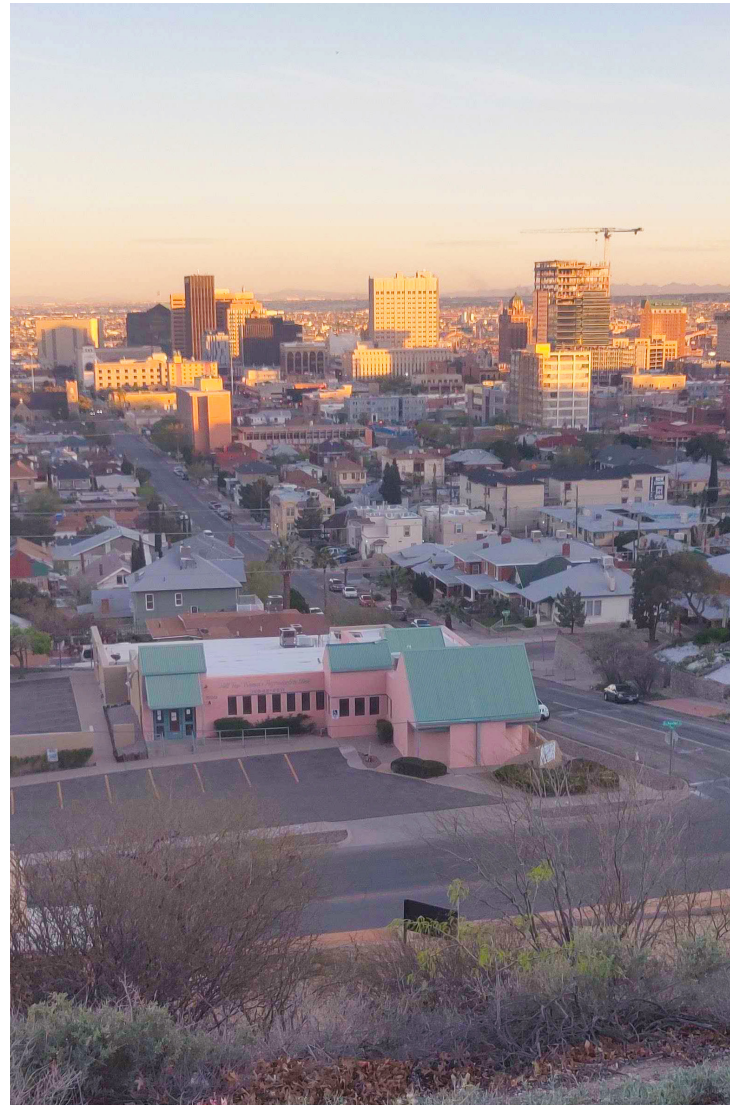
In implementing this policy, the City shall make the Complete Streets approach a routine and integral part of its everyday practices and shall approach every transportation project as an opportunity to enhance mobility for people using all modes of transportation. The City shall establish two committees, the Technical Review Committee and the Mobility Advisory Committee, to ensure successful implementation of this policy and facilitate internal City coordination, public oversight, and community engagement.

Technical Review Committee (TRC)

The Technical Review Committee will be responsible for overseeing internal implementation and ensuring the interdepartmental coordination of projects with Complete Streets design elements. The TRC shall also invite external issue area experts, such as representatives from academic institutions, advocacy groups, community organizations, or local and national planning and transportation organizations, as needed to provide technical support to the committee. The TRC will meet at the request of the Chair as frequently as required to perform its duties and at least once per quarter, in-line with Capital Improvement Department project status quarterly updates.

The TRC shall comprise the following representatives:

- Capital Improvement (Chair of the Committee)
- Streets and Maintenance (Co-chair)
- Planning and Inspections (Co-chair)
- Parks and Recreation
- Community and Human Development
- El Paso Fire Department
- El Paso Police Department
- El Paso Water Utilities/Public Service Board
- Environmental Services
- Sun Metro/Mass Transit Department
- Office of Accessibility & ADA
- Public Health
- LiveActive EP
- At least one representative from the Mobility Advisory Committee



Mobility Advisory Committee (MAC)

The Mobility Advisory Committee (MAC) will help provide oversight and accountability for the Complete Streets Policy. The MAC will work in tandem with the TRC to provide input on the implementation steps described below, as well as on the review of exceptions, project prioritization and selection, funding allocation, and advocacy and engagement around Complete Streets projects. This committee provides an opportunity for direct public involvement in the Complete Streets process, both through volunteer opportunities to serve on the committee as well as the opportunity to review and comment on the publicly available agenda items and any relevant projects.

This committee shall consist of diverse stakeholders, including representatives from the general public as well as different sectors, industries, and issue areas such as transportation, health, education, environment, environmental justice, social equity, public art, economic development, business, and construction. The committee shall also include representatives from advocacy groups and organizations working with communities prioritized within the *Project Selection Criteria*. To the extent possible, the MAC shall provide a holistic representation of El Paso's diversity and include members reflective of regional demographics. Senior level staff from CIP, SAM, P&I, and other appropriate City departments will participate in MAC meetings to ensure accountability, communication, and action. This can be accomplished by including non-voting advisors to ensure that all desired roles and perspectives are represented.

Within 90 days of policy adoption, CID, SAM, and P&I, in consultation with the Technical Review Committee, shall draft enabling policy that creates the new Mobility Advisory Committee and clearly defines the roles, responsibilities, and makeup of the committee. This document will also describe how the TRC will interface with the MAC.

The structure of the Mobility Advisory Committee shall be guided by the following principles:

- Follows best practices in **collaborative decision-making and community empowerment**
- Includes **diverse representation from key stakeholder groups** mentioned above
- Brings **accountability** to the implementation of this Complete Streets Policy
- **Fostering collaboration** between City staff and external stakeholders
- Facilitated by a neutral, professional facilitator

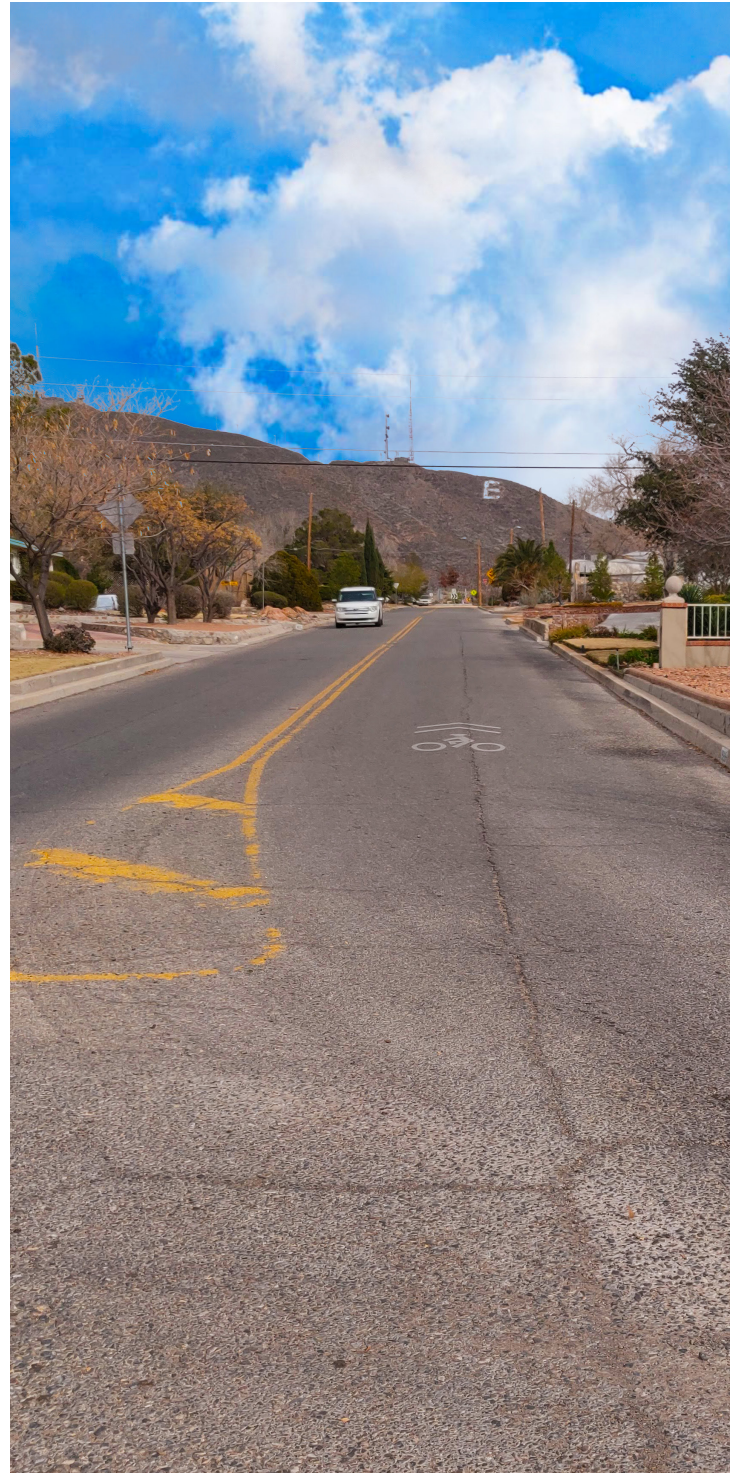


Implementation Strategy

The Technical Review Committee (TRC) and the Mobility Advisory Committee (MAC) shall take the lead on implementation of this Complete Streets Policy. Within six months of policy adoption, the Technical Review Committee and the Mobility Advisory Committee shall start developing a Complete Streets Implementation Plan addressing all items listed below and shall identify a deadline for the completion of the implementation plan.

The progress on implementation shall be documented in annual reports, and timelines for completing identified tasks, such as reviews and revisions of existing documents and development of new plans, tools, or performance measures shall be established.

1. **Designate a Complete Streets Program Manager** to oversee all aspects of the Complete Streets Policy including its implementation.
2. **Offer training opportunities** at least once per fiscal year to boost staff capacity in Complete Streets Policy implementation. Trainings can focus on Complete Streets design and implementation, community engagement, equity, smart technology, or other relevant topics. The City shall also encourage and facilitate professional development in the Complete Streets approach by providing opportunities to attend national conferences, virtual web trainings, and other training opportunities. Complete Streets MAC members shall be included in these trainings, as appropriate. **The City shall provide opportunities for the general public to participate in Complete Street training in order to increase awareness and improve community understanding for these types of projects.**
3. Identify, review, and revise existing relevant procedures, plans, regulations, and other processes for consistency with the Complete Streets Policy.
4. **Review and revise street design standards currently used in the planning, designing, and implementation phases of transportation projects to ensure that they reflect the best available design guidelines for effectively implementing Complete Streets facilities.** The City is currently updating standards to reflect Complete Streets. This manual may also be incorporated into current comprehensive design standard updates and will be made publicly available online.



5. **Develop a project prioritization tool** as outlined in *Project Selection Criteria*.
6. **Identify performance targets and select performance measures** as outlined in *Performance Measurement, Reporting, and Accountability*.
7. **Develop and adopt other tools, such as a Complete Streets Checklist**, as necessary to help guide project implementation.
8. **Identify ways to improve other City practices** to better align with the goals of the Complete Streets Policy and changing trends in the industry, **including multimodal level of service analysis** and multimodal trip generation methods for transportation impact studies.
9. **Proactively implement automobile speed-management strategies**—such as right-sizing, striping narrower lanes, narrowing turn radii, and adding traffic-calming/green infrastructure features like speed tables, neighborhood traffic circles, curb extensions, and chicanes—**during planned maintenance and operations as well as retrofitting projects**.
10. **Experiment with the use of “lighter-quicker-cheaper” techniques and temporary materials**—like paint, planters, and portable street furnishings—for a variety of Complete Streets enhancements (such as protected bike lanes, traffic calming and management features, plazas, parklets, and intersection safety improvements), **to test out ideas, implement pilot projects, and gather community input more quickly**.



Concrete splitter islands are a complete street design element that reduce the width of a travel lane to promote reduced vehicle speeds; This design also provides a pedestrian refuge within the concrete curb. Textured crosswalk elements promote slower vehicle speeds and colored concrete or painted asphalt alerts drivers to increased pedestrian activity.

11. **Develop a plan for accommodating each mode of transportation at a network or system level**, in addition to such considerations at the project level. This process may include the completion of a Mobility Master Plan, a Pedestrian Master Plan, a Bicycle Master Plan, a Transit Master Plan, and/or a Freight Master Plan. It may also include the adoption of an Expanded Functional Classification System and/or a street typology system to provide a multi-modal emphasis and a context-sensitive approach in the way streets are classified and designed.
12. **Facilitate coordinated implementation of both the Complete Streets Policy and existing plans and policies that support the creation of Complete Streets**, including but not limited to Plan El Paso, the City of El Paso Bike Plan, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan, the Vision Zero Safety Action Plan, and Green Infrastructure/Green Street principles such as those in the Onward Alameda Corridor Plan.
13. **Create a plan to ensure robust, meaningful, and inclusive community engagement, with a particular emphasis on engagement of communities that have traditionally been underrepresented in city planning and decision-making processes.** The plan shall include specific strategies for overcoming barriers to engagement associated with race/ethnicity, income, age, disability, English language proficiency, vehicle access, non-traditional schedules, and other factors linked to historic disenfranchisement. **The plan shall include an evaluation of these outreach efforts to include in the annual report**, as detailed in *Performance Measurement, Reporting, and Accountability*.
14. **Actively seek sources of public and private funding** to assist in the implementation of this Policy.



A “lighter-quicker-cheaper” (as mentioned in Implementation Strategy item 10) splitter island design utilizes paint to visually narrow the travel lanes and promote reduced vehicle speeds at significantly reduced costs compared to a concrete splitter island.

Jurisdiction



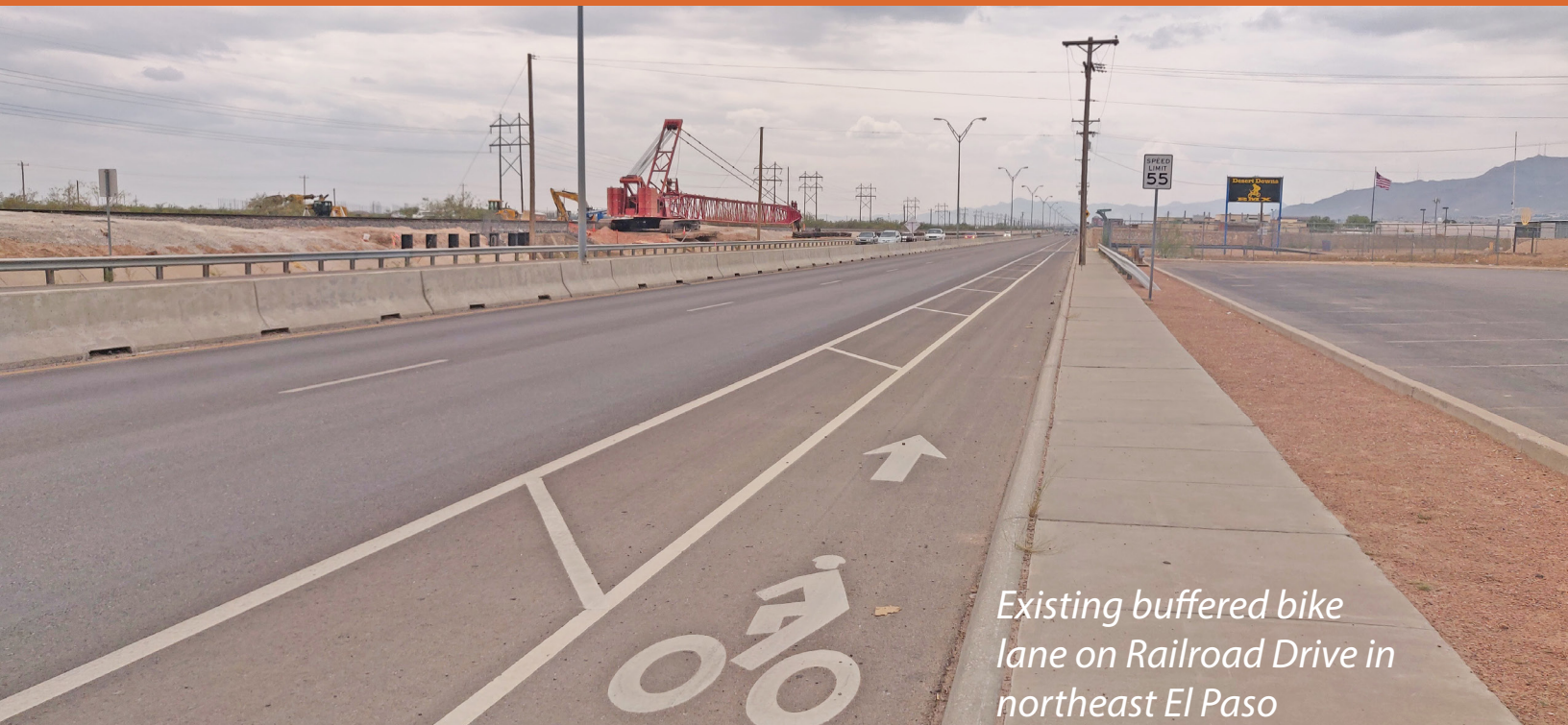
In 2012, the City adopted a Complete Streets Policy that established the ambitious goal “to become the least car-dependent City in the Southwest through meaningful travel options and land-use patterns that support walkability, livability, and sustainability. Over time, El Paso will join the ranks of the most walkable and transit-rich metropolitan areas in the country.” This policy resulted in new street design cross-sections and multi-modal considerations that have placed a larger emphasis on transit and cycling opportunities.

This updated Complete Streets Policy incorporates a more robust, equitable, and accountable framework for expanding El Paso’s complete street network. Successful and effective implementation of this policy will require collaboration between multiple city departments and other entities (both private and public). Clear and effective communication between all parties and awareness of the policy will be necessary to identify opportunities to incorporate Complete Streets elements and to implement them. **The City shall ensure internal coordination among its departments to effectively and strategically implement the Complete Streets Policy while making the best use of fiscal resources.** The City should also seek to identify opportunities to work with surrounding municipalities in order to identify potential complete street corridors throughout the region to complement investments within City limits.

The City shall make every effort to work with other entities such as the County of El Paso, Rio Grande Council of Governments (RGCOG), the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Camino Real Regional Mobility Authority (CRRMA), Fort Bliss, school districts, surrounding municipalities, and other public and private utilities **to develop facilities and accommodations that further the City’s vision of a connected, integrated transportation network.** In addition, to the extent possible, the City shall work closely with relevant entities to incorporate Complete Streets elements into transportation projects that are located within the City boundaries but are not under the direct control of the city, such as state-owned roadways.

In some cases, projects that impact the right-of-way are managed and funded by private partners, such as traditional suburban residential neighborhoods. Thus, to ensure consistency in new construction or reconstruction of public streets, **the City shall ensure that private development will comply with this Policy through design and development standards that will be incorporated into applicable standards and codes,** such as the Design Standards for Construction (DSC), Unified Development Code, Street Design Manual, and Technical Standards Manual.

Design



Existing buffered bike lane on Railroad Drive in northeast El Paso



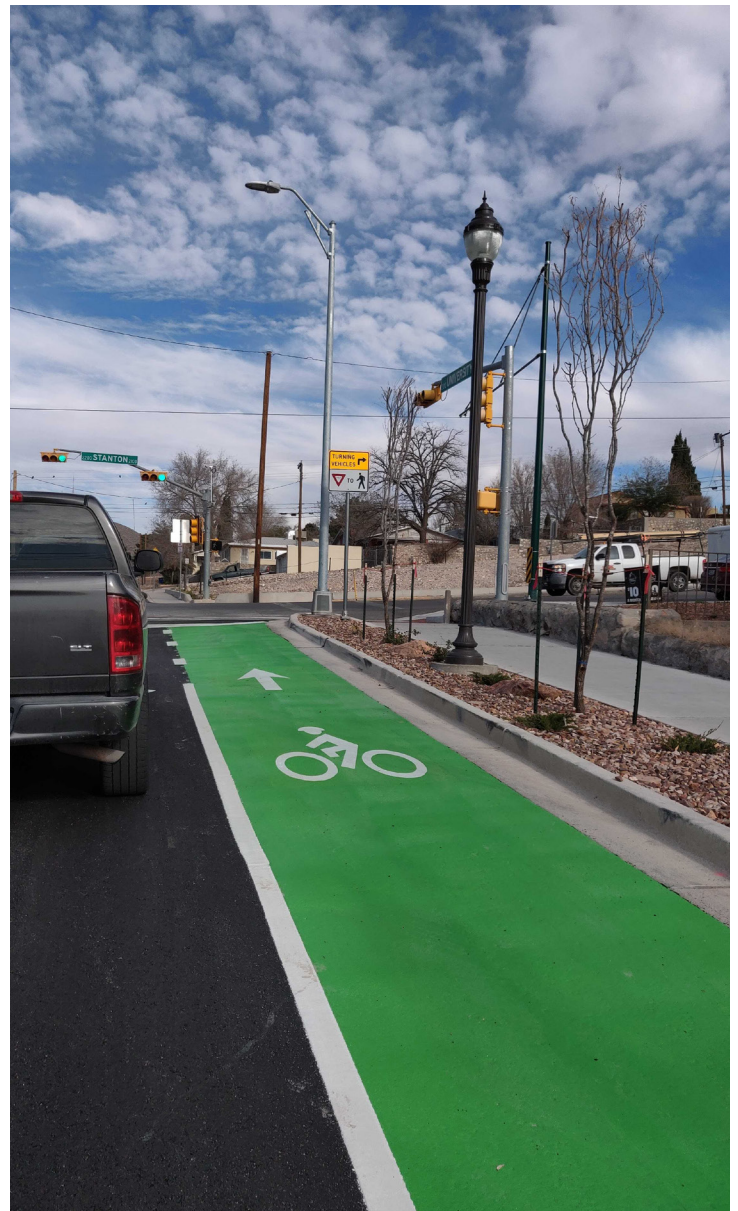
Conceptual rendering of complete streets design elements along Railroad Drive in northeast El Paso

The City of El Paso has taken major steps in recent years to confirm their commitment to using industry best practices, innovative design trends, and design standards and guidelines to maximize design flexibility, implementation, and to ensure that streets are safe and comfortable for all people. In 2014, City Council passed a resolution adopting the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) “Urban Street Design Guide” and “Urban Bikeway Design Guide” as the official design guidelines for capital improvement projects and other city funded street and roadway improvement projects within the City of El Paso. These important steps have led to the implementation of new street cross-sections and an increased focus on improving multimodal transportation alternatives.

NACTO has released guidelines in recent years that address various components of this Complete Streets Policy, including “City Limits: Setting Safe Speed Limits on Urban Streets” and “Designing Streets for Kids.” The City shall follow established design standards that provide guidance on multimodal street design and support Complete Streets. These may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- NACTO, Urban Street Design Guide (City of El Paso resolution, May 2014)
- NACTO, Urban Bikeway Design Guide (City of El Paso resolution, May 2014)
- NACTO, Transit Street Design Guide
- NACTO, Urban Street Stormwater Guide
- NACTO, City Limits: Setting Safe Speeds Limits on Urban Streets
- NACTO, Designing Streets for Kids
- The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), Implementing Context Sensitive Design on Multimodal Corridors: A Practitioner’s Handbook
- The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach
- AASHTO, Guide for Planning, Designing, and Operating Pedestrian Facilities
- AASHTO, Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities

NACTO offers high-level best practices for cities and this policy helps apply these standards locally to ensure safe streets, building on the NACTO framework and calibrating it for El Paso’s specific needs and challenges. When fulfilling this Complete Streets policy, the City will follow the design manuals, standards, and guidelines above, as applicable. This does not preclude the consideration of innovative or non-traditional design options where a comparable level of safety for users is present or provided.



A high-visibility bike lane along University Avenue.

Land Use and Context Sensitivity



The Complete Streets approach is a flexible, context-sensitive solution that requires a thorough examination of a street's intended function and purpose. Not all streets will include the exact same elements to accommodate all modes of transportation in the same manner. **Implementation of Complete Streets design elements must be done with respect to the surrounding community, its natural and built environments, demographics, current and future land uses, and transportation needs.** In addition to improving safety and mobility, this approach to process and design aims to support a range of goals—such as enhancing scenic, historic, and environmental resources, ensuring access to businesses, and allowing for roadway designs to be flexible and sensitive to community needs and values—to better balance transportation, economic, social, and environmental objectives.

There is an inextricable connection between land use and transportation. Transportation facilities and investments influence development and neighborhood character. In turn, land use and development patterns affect travel patterns and help determine whether walking, biking, and public transportation are appealing and convenient transportation options. Therefore, **complementary land use policies and zoning ordinances are needed for effective Complete Streets Policy implementation to occur**, for example, by facilitating the creation of walkable neighborhood destinations as well as higher density, mixed-use, transit-oriented development in appropriate locations such as along high capacity transit corridors.

Per this policy:

1. **The City shall continue to support coordination between relevant departments**, including Capital Improvement Department (CID), Streets and Maintenance Department (SAM), and Planning & Inspections Department (P&I), **to identify opportunities to integrate land use and transportation in plans, policies, and practices.**
2. In certain instances, significant public investment in transportation infrastructure can trigger an increase in land values and housing costs. **In the planning phases of largescale transportation projects, the City shall ensure collaboration between its CID, SAM, P&I, and Community and Human Development departments to thoroughly consider measures to preserve housing affordability and increase new affordable housing options in order to help meet community needs and mitigate unintended consequences such as involuntary displacement.**
3. **The City shall review and, in coordination with our development community, revise land use policies, plans, zoning ordinances, and/or other relevant documents and procedures to incorporate the vision of the Complete Streets Policy.** This could include Resilient El Paso, the International Building Code, and Major Thoroughfare Plan. After a comprehensive review of existing documents, a timeline shall be established for the revisions to be completed.
4. In revising existing, or developing new, transportation plans and/or design guidelines, **the City shall specify how transportation projects will serve current and future land uses and shall consider developing new street typologies** that take into account the densities, context, and local character of the surrounding neighborhoods and natural environments, as well as adjacent land uses.

Performance Measurement, Reporting, and Accountability



Intersection bulb-outs reduce crossing times for pedestrians and encourage slower vehicle speeds; Bulb-outs provide excellent opportunities to incorporate green infrastructure into the expanded parkway

Performance Measurement and Reporting

The City is committed to tracking and evaluating the progress of its Complete Streets Policy implementation. The Technical Review Committee shall establish performance targets and identify performance measures, informed by the policy's guiding principles and the City's Strategic Goals, under the following categories in consultation with the Mobility Advisory Committee and any additional experts, as needed.

Near-term Performance Indicators

Related to changes to the transportation planning process to make the Complete Streets approach a routine part of day-to-day decision making. The performance measures in this category will include, but are not limited to:

- Progress on updating existing documents and procedures
- Progress on training staff
- Progress on facilitating robust and inclusive community engagement
- Progress on engaging under-resourced and under-invested communities



Mid-term Performance Indicators

Related to new Complete Streets investments. The performance measures in this category will include, but are not limited to:

- Progress on funding and implementing infrastructure projects that improve multimodal mobility, enhance network connectivity, improve accessibility, and increase shade
- Progress on funding and implementing street trees, rain harvesting, and green infrastructure
- Progress on retrofitting streets in established neighborhoods to meet current accessibility standards

Long-term Performance Indicators

Related to community-wide benefits and will require close collaboration with regional institutions and organizations. The performance measures in this category will include, but are not limited to:

- Reduced traffic fatalities
- Increase in outdoor recreation
- Jobs created
- Increased job accessibility
- Increased physical activity
- Improved cardiovascular public health metrics
- Reduced vehicle miles traveled
- Biodiversity
- Changes in travel mode
- Specific evaluation of complete streets investments in under-resourced and under-invested communities

The performance measure development process will involve considerations such as data availability and strategies for systematic collection of data over time. The process will include entities responsible for collecting it as well as possible partnerships with entities outside of the City, such as the El Paso County Health Department, the Medical Center of the Americas, Texas Tech University, The University of Texas at El Paso, hospital systems, economic development organizations, local advocacy organizations, and other educational institutions.

Performance measure tracking and reporting may start with utilizing existing data, and the collection of additional important data may be phased in.

These performance measures include both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods (such as intercept surveys, focus groups, and interviews) that highlight the perspectives and experiences of individuals, thereby painting a more holistic picture of how Complete Streets Policy implementation impacts the lives of community members. Measures of equity shall be integrated into the performance measures to track progress on inclusive community engagement and the relative share of projects implemented in low-income communities, communities of color, and low-vehicle-ownership neighborhoods, in accordance with the project prioritization tool referenced in *Project Selection Criteria*.

In partnership with the Mobility Advisory Committee, **the Technical Review Committee shall produce an annual report documenting the progress of Complete Streets Policy implementation**—including performance targets, performance measures to be collected every two years, exceptions granted to this Policy along with documented reasons, and an update on the items outlined in the implementation guidelines under *Clear, Accountable Exceptions*. **This annual report shall be presented to the Mayor and City Council and be made publicly available online.**



Recommended Performance Measures

Changes to the Transportation Planning Process

Engaging the Public

- Quality and quantity of community engagement throughout all phases of transportation projects, to **facilitate inclusive participation that is representative of populations affected by Complete Streets projects** and/or related policy decisions, in accordance with the community engagement plan; incorporation of “non-traditional” or creative public engagement opportunities such as “pop-up” demonstrations of proposed street redesigns, block parties, working with paid community liaisons to facilitate outreach, and other ways of “going to the people” and meeting community members where they naturally convene rather than solely

holding meetings and expecting them to come; community input expressly integrated into projects and policies

Updating Documents

- Review/revision of plans, policies, design standards, and other relevant documents and procedures to support a Complete Streets approach

Training and Hiring Staff

- Percentage of staff trained, hours and content of trainings; incorporation of “Complete Streets expertise” in CID, SAM, Planning and Inspections hiring criteria



New Complete Streets Investments

Projects

- Mileage, type, and location of new or improved walking, biking, and transit facilities that increases pedestrian, bicycle, and/or transit level of service (for example, Multimodal Transportation Impact Analysis)
- Relative share of projects implemented in low-income communities, communities of color, and low vehicle-ownership neighborhoods (in accordance with project prioritization tool referenced in *Project Selection Criteria*) to track equitable implementation

Public Perception

- Changes in people's perceptions of safety and comfort levels, reported through intercept surveys or similar methods

Funding

- Total and percentage of transportation funding allocated to projects that improve pedestrian, bicycle, and/or transit level of service (for example, Multimodal Transportation Impact Analysis)
- Distribution of funding with respect to equity criteria (in accordance with project prioritization tool referenced in *Project Selection Criteria*)

Green Infrastructure and Shade

- Amount of green infrastructure and street trees incorporated in transportation projects
- Increase in stormwater harvesting capacity and tree canopy coverage within the right-of-way

Accessibility and Connectivity

- Progress on construction or installation of accessibility features in compliance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Rehabilitation Act (may be through implementation of the ADA Transition Plan)
- Progress on implementation of the City of El Paso Bike Plan
- Gaps filled in walking, biking, and public transit networks (as referenced in Item 11 of the Implementation Chart in *Clear, Accountable Exceptions*)
- First mile/last mile transit access connections
- Improved access to jobs and community destinations
- Increased street lighting



Community Benefits - Project Based

Travel Behavior

- Changes in pedestrian and cyclist volumes and/or transit ridership and average daily traffic (ADT) as appropriate

Safety

- Changes in the number and rate of crashes by mode and severity
- Changes in motor vehicle speed and travel times
- Number and types of citations issued and/or traffic violations observed
- People's perceptions of safety, measured through intercept surveys or similar methods
- Changes in violent crime rates as a measure non-traffic safety, as appropriate

Equity

- Changes in combined costs of housing and transportation where major Complete Streets improvements are implemented (in addition to the equity criteria associated with project selection, funding allocation, and community engagement, as outlined in previous sections)

Quality of Life

- Changes in the perceived quality of life of residents in neighborhoods adjacent to implemented projects

Economic Vitality

- Changes in property values, vacancy rates, retail sales, number of overall business establishments and local businesses, and associated jobs attracted to the project area
- Business owner and customer perceptions and travel mode choices measured through surveys
- Temporary construction jobs created
- Permanent maintenance jobs created

Job Creation

- Number of jobs created by facility type (complete streets/multimodal vs traditional infrastructure projects)

Community Benefits - Long-Term/ Benchmarking

Travel Behavior

- City-wide changes in mode split and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and/or single occupancy auto commute trips over time

Safety

- Number, rate, and location of crashes by mode and severity
- Injury and fatality rates by population characteristics such as race, income, gender, and age

Equity

- Percent of populations identified in the project prioritization tool (referenced in *Project Selection Criteria*) that are served by and have direct access to Complete Streets facilities
- Changes in housing and transportation costs over time for these populations

Health

- Rates of hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, depression, and other chronic illnesses by race and income over time
- Rates of meeting physical activity recommendations by race and income over time

Air Quality

- Changes in the annual number of "Good" and "Moderate" days according to the Air Quality Index
- Changes in El Paso's nonattainment status for PM10

International Travel

- Changes in the annual percentage of cross-border trips made by pedestrians and cyclists

Project Selection Criteria



Many streets in El Paso's central core do need meet current accessibility standards

Allocating funding for projects with Complete Streets design elements is critical to developing a safe, accessible, and interconnected transportation network. These projects should be prioritized for planning, funding, and development in order to quickly and efficiently build-out Complete Street corridors.

To facilitate that prioritization, the Technical Review Committee in consultation with the Mobility Advisory Committee shall develop a project evaluation tool, based on metrics and points, to evaluate capital projects and expedite those that improve safety and improve multimodal level of service.

This tool will incorporate criteria to reward projects that incorporate elements such as:

- Connectivity to Sun Metro, Brio, or Streetcar service
- Connectivity to existing and planned bike lanes, walking paths, or trails
- Traffic calming elements
- Low-impact design elements, green infrastructure, water harvesting
- Increased shade canopy, edible landscaping elements
- Pedestrian-scale lighting
- Bicycle amenities (bike racks, bike repair stations, bike parking)

The tool shall further prioritize projects with Complete Streets elements in neighborhoods where residents disproportionately rely on low-cost mobility options and shall, at a minimum, include criteria to direct investment to neighborhoods with higher concentrations of low-income individuals, people of color, and households without access to a private automobile.

These criteria should also reward projects being proposed in the following areas:

- Communities with previous under-investment
- Neighborhoods with historically marginalized populations
- Areas with environmental justice concerns
- Neighborhoods with high concentrations of low-income individuals
- Areas with low private automobile ownership
- Streets near schools, parks, and libraries
- Streets near international ports of entry
- Along targeted transit corridors

Any regional or local projects already prioritized for funding in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) prior to developing the project prioritization tool will automatically be included in the priority list, though projects shall include as many Complete Streets elements as possible within the criteria set by the funding source. The tool shall also include other equity-focused criteria to prioritize projects that directly benefit other vulnerable users of the transportation system such as children, older adults, and people with disabilities. Health impact assessments may also be utilized during the project decision-making processes in order to evaluate the health effects of proposed projects and to promote health equity.



Clear, Accountable Exceptions



This policy applies to all projects conducted by, or for which funds are awarded by, TxDOT, the El Paso MPO, or the City of El Paso. The policy includes phased timelines and flexible implementation guidelines and is expected to be incorporated into all projects, whenever and wherever feasible. Streets and transportation infrastructure are designed with long service lives, usually at least 30 years, and should always be built to provide the highest level of service to all users and travel modes. Recognizing that transportation networks are complex and street design should be context sensitive, the policy has identified a limited number of circumstances in which exceptions may be granted, upon review by the Mobility Advisory Committee.

The exception process places an emphasis on transparency by providing public notice with the opportunity for comment and requiring clear, supportive documentation justifying the exception for each mode. The Mobility Advisory Committee is discouraged from “grandfathering” exceptions related to supporting policies, such as the Street Tree Ordinance. All new projects must comply with the Complete Street Policy and all projects currently in-progress shall comply to the Complete Streets Policy unless they qualify for an exception.

Exceptions to this policy may be granted upon review and approval under the following circumstances:

1. Accommodation is not necessary on roadways where specific users are prohibited, such as bicycles on interstate freeways.
2. The cost of accommodating the needs of a particular user group for the transportation project would be disproportionately high relative to the current or future need or probable use of the facilities by the particular user group. This determination should be made with due consideration to future users, latent demand, and the social and economic value of providing a safer and more convenient transportation system for all users.
3. There is a documented absence of current and future need based on factors such as pedestrian and cyclist counts, land use, or connectivity.
4. Funding source is restricted in terms of how funds can be used or which transportation modes can be supported.
5. Project is in final design or construction as of the effective date of this policy.
6. Project involves emergency repairs that require immediate, rapid response (such as a water main leak). Temporary accommodations for all transportation modalities shall still be made whenever feasible. Depending upon the severity and/or length of time required to complete the repairs, opportunities to improve multimodal access shall still be considered where possible as funding allows.
7. Project involves routine maintenance that does not change the roadway geometry or operations, such as mowing, sweeping, or spot repair.

Any request for exceptions within the categories above shall be reviewed by the Mobility Advisory Committee in consultation with relevant planning entities, City departments, and stakeholders. City staff, private developers, or other municipal implementing agencies shall submit exception requests through writing, email, or online submission detailing how the project fits within categories 1-5. All requests will be made publicly available online.

The City Engineer shall provide the final ruling on whether to grant the exception after receiving comments from the Mobility Advisory Committee. The decision shall be documented with supporting information that indicates the basis for the decision and all documents shall be made publicly available. Categories 6 and 7 do not require the exception review process as detailed above.

