

Email correspondence To: SCCRTC Bicycle Advisory Committee
From: Caltrans District 5 staff
Re: New Caltrans Complete Streets policy

February 7, 2022

As SCCRTC is aware, Caltrans has in recent years increasingly worked towards the integration of non-motorized infrastructure improvements into projects in the Santa Cruz region. DP-37 solidifies our continued commitment to creating a world class transportation system that includes walking, biking, transit, and passenger rail. Transforming the current statewide auto-centric transportation network towards a principally active transportation system is a monumental effort, but one that is necessary if we are to collectively achieve the State's Climate, Public Health, Environmental, and Equity goals.

Attached for your reference is a copy of the DP-37. SCCRTC, local partners, and committees can read the policy to better understand that all transportation projects funded or overseen by Caltrans will provide comfortable, convenient, and connected complete streets facilities where current and/or future needs are identified unless an exception is documented and approved. When Caltrans staff decisions are made not to include complete streets elements in capital and maintenance projects, the justification will be documented with final approval by the responsible District Director.

Some may question what constitutes "an exception." This policy will continue to be reviewed internally to help answer this question completely, but initial presumptions are that there could be locations where complete streets are simply infeasible. While Caltrans is committed to complete streets, we also have a duty to ensure that all improvements built are safe for non-motorized users and investments go towards the highest priority locations for communities throughout the region. Caltrans urges SCCRTC and other local partners to continue developing community supported active transportation plans to determine pedestrian and bicyclist needs, and partner to help fund complete streets improvements. Caltrans is planning to discuss this topic again at the March ITAC. Staff will also be discussing the final District AT plan at this month's ITAC. [RTC's Interagency Technical Advisory Committee meetings are scheduled for the third Thursday of every month at 1:30pm <https://sccrtc.org/meetings/inter-agency/--TT>]

Regards,

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Caltrans District 5
Planning Division

Director's Policy

Number: DP-37

Effective Date: December 7, 2021

Supersedes: DD-64-R2 (10/16/2014)

Responsible

Programs: Finance
 Maintenance & Operations
 Planning and Modal Programs
 Project Delivery
 Safety Programs
 Sustainability

Title Complete Streets

Policy

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) recognizes that walking, biking, transit, and passenger rail are integral to our vision of delivering a brighter future for all through a world-class transportation network. Additionally, Caltrans recognizes that streets are not only used for transportation but are also valuable community spaces.

Accordingly, in locations with current and/or future pedestrian, bicycle, or transit needs, **all transportation projects funded or overseen by Caltrans will provide comfortable, convenient, and connected complete streets facilities for people walking, biking, and taking transit or passenger rail unless an exception is documented and approved.**

When decisions are made not to include complete streets elements in capital and maintenance projects, the justification will be documented with final approval by the responsible District Director.

Opportunities for complete streets exist in all phases of project development from planning and design to construction, operations, and maintenance. Complete streets projects should prioritize underserved communities that have been historically harmed and segmented by the transportation network and should serve people of all ages and abilities. Furthermore, Caltrans commits to removing unnecessary policy and procedural barriers and partnering with communities and agencies to ensure projects on local and state transportation systems improve the connectivity to existing and planned pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities, and accessibility to existing and planned destinations, where possible.

Intended Results

This policy establishes Caltrans' organizational priority to encourage and maximize walking, biking, transit, and passenger rail as a strategy to not only meet state climate, health, equity, and environmental goals but also to foster socially and economically vibrant, thriving, and resilient communities. To achieve this vision, Caltrans will maximize the use of design flexibility to provide context-sensitive solutions and networks for travelers of all ages and abilities.

Definitions

Complete Street

A complete street is a transportation facility that is planned, designed, constructed, operated, and maintained to provide comfortable and convenient mobility, and improve accessibility and connectivity to essential community destinations for all users, regardless of whether they are travelling as pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation riders, or drivers. Complete streets are especially attuned to the needs of people walking, using assistive mobility devices, rolling, biking, and riding transit. Complete streets also maximize the use of the existing right-of-way by prioritizing space-efficient forms of mobility, such as walking and biking, while also facilitating goods movement in a manner with the least environmental and social impacts. Complete streets shift the focus of transportation planning and project development from vehicle movement as the primary goal to the movement of people and goods.

All Ages and Abilities

The "all ages and abilities" concept strives to serve all users—regardless of age, gender, race, or ability and inclusive of the mobility needs of children, older adults, and people with disabilities—by embodying national and international best practices related to traffic calming, speed reduction, universal design, and roadway design to increase user safety and comfort, as well as accessibility for people with disabilities. This approach also includes the use of traffic calming elements or facilities separated from motor vehicle traffic, both of which can offer a greater feeling of security and appeal to a wider spectrum of the public.

Design Flexibility

Caltrans policy supports designers in their application of guidance to achieve our goals of developing complete facilities to serve all members of the community.

Design flexibility refers to the ability to develop a design suited to its users and context, and to employ professional judgment and experience to interpret, apply, and adapt appropriate design standards and guidance. Flexibility in design is essential to achieving Caltrans' goals of putting safety first, enhancing and connecting the multimodal network, leading on climate action, and advancing equity and livability in all communities. Design flexibility includes consideration of diverse user needs, assessment of risk, review of applicable guidance, and documentation of design decisions.

Underserved Community

Underserved communities include low-income, frontline environmental justice, and vulnerable communities, including but not limited to Black and Indigenous peoples, communities of color, people experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, older adults, and youth. Refer to guidance from the Caltrans Office of Race and Equity for the most current definition.

Accessibility (Access to Destinations)

Accessibility is the ease by which travelers can reach – or access – desired destinations such as work, shopping and other retail, school, health care, and recreation. Accessibility reflects the number and proximity of destinations, as well as the directness and condition of walking, biking, and transit facilities. This is distinct from accessibility in the context of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); refer to Deputy Directive 42 for more information on ADA and State Disability Laws.

Connectivity

A connected multimodal network allows people to travel by whichever mode they choose and provides convenient, accessible connections between different modes.

State Transportation Network (STN)

Refers to the State Highway System (SHS) and all other multimodal facilities, including parallel and intersecting paths, frontage roads, and other facilities not directly on the SHS mainline.

Responsibilities

All employees in the following functional groups have specific responsibilities related to implementation of this policy in their program areas:

Director's Office – Headquarters Sustainability

- Lead, coordinate, and facilitate development of implementation plan for this policy in coordination with appropriate functional groups.
- Facilitate alignment of policy, guidance, and training to meet state's climate, health, equity, walking, biking, transit, and passenger rail goals.
- Facilitate coordination, information sharing, and collaboration among Divisions and Districts on topics related to complete streets.
- Track, monitor, report, and communicate Caltrans' progress toward meeting its policy and strategic goals related to walking, biking, transit, and passenger rail.
- Establish and facilitate internal/external advisory committees to provide technical input, strategic direction, and implementation guidance to Caltrans policies related to complete streets.

Planning and Modal Programs

Headquarters

- Develop, maintain, and update state plans, training, and resources to assist in the identification and prioritization of pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and passenger rail needs and recommended improvements on or across the SHS.
- Develop guidance for integrating pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and passenger rail needs from the corridor planning process into future complete streets projects.
- Identify best practices for increased and meaningful engagement with partners, stakeholders, and communities during the development of plans and projects that facilitate the inclusion of complete streets elements as appropriate.
- Work with local and regional transit and rail partners to identify and implement first mile/last mile solutions, both on and off the STN.
- Provide technical support and guidance to internal and external stakeholders on enhancing rail and transit reliability and operations related to complete streets within and adjacent to the STN.
- Promote Caltrans policies related to complete streets in rail and transit planning documents and grant program guidelines.

Districts

- Develop, maintain, and update plans, tools, and other planning documents to identify and prioritize pedestrian, bicycle, and transit needs and recommended improvements on or across the SHS.
- Verify that proposed projects are in alignment with local, regional, and state planning documents detailing pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and passenger rail needs on or across the SHS.
- Integrate pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and passenger rail improvements from the corridor planning process into projects.
- Include complete streets elements in projects during the pre-Project Initiation Document (pre-PID) and PID phases.
- Participate in Project Development Teams (PDTs) to assist in delivering complete streets elements identified in PID phase.
- Develop and implement strategy for meaningful engagement with partners, stakeholders, and communities during the development of plans and projects that facilitate the inclusion of complete streets elements as appropriate.
- Identify and pursue partnerships and funding opportunities with local, regional, and state agencies.
- Work with local and regional transit and rail partners to identify and implement first mile/last mile solutions, both on and off the STN.
- Promote pedestrian, bicycle, and transit improvements and land uses supportive of these modes in local projects through the Local Development-Intergovernmental Review process.

Project Delivery

Headquarters

- Develop, maintain, and update policy, procedures, guidance, and standards pertaining to the design and construction of complete streets facilities in alignment with Caltrans and state walking, biking, transit, and passenger rail goals, including but not limited to temporary access during construction.
- Provide training and guidance to promote the use of "world-class" design best practices related to complete streets throughout Caltrans, including the adoption of design flexibility guidance, contextual guidance, and others.
- Cultivate subject-matter expertise for design excellence of complete streets facilities in projects on or across the STN.
- Designate a complete streets asset manager to track and monitor progress of complete streets statewide as an asset in the State Highway System Management Plan (SHSMP) and develop funding and performance targets for complete streets in the State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP).
- Establish and oversee processes for documenting decisions related to complete streets elements.

Districts

- Implement project delivery strategies and best practices to further enhance the delivery of complete streets, including coordination of community engagement efforts.
- Implement "world-class" design best practices related to complete streets.
- Cultivate subject-matter expertise for design excellence of complete streets facilities in projects on or across the STN.
- Promote and exercise design flexibility throughout project development process.
- Document decisions related to complete streets elements.
- Implement and oversee use of standard plans and specifications, as well as best practices, for temporary pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access routes during construction.

Maintenance

Headquarters

- Develop, maintain, and update policy, procedures, guidance, manuals, training and standards pertaining to the maintenance of complete streets facilities.
- Work with Districts to determine equipment needs for maintenance of current and future complete streets facilities, including application-specific equipment such as sweepers for sidewalks and bikeways where standard maintenance equipment cannot be used.
- Coordinate with Division of Equipment to procure complete streets maintenance equipment.
- Develop and provide training to Maintenance staff on maintenance best practices for complete street facilities.
- Facilitate collection and maintenance of active transportation facility inventory and condition data to inform maintenance decisions.
- Develop, maintain, and update maintenance agreement templates for complete streets facilities.

Districts

- Maintain complete streets facilities on the SHS in accordance with maintenance policy, procedures, guidance, manuals, and standards.
- Develop, execute, and update, as needed, maintenance agreements with local agencies for complete street facilities that are mutually beneficial to both entities and protect the investments made in new infrastructure.
- Collaborate with Headquarters Divisions of Maintenance and Equipment to purchase or lease equipment necessary to maintain current and future complete streets facilities, including application-specific equipment such as sweepers for sidewalks and bikeways where standard maintenance equipment cannot be utilized.
- Maintain and use active transportation facility inventory and condition data to inform maintenance decisions.

- Collaborate with Planning, Safety, and Complete Streets Coordinators to identify opportunities for complete streets improvements in Highway Maintenance projects.

Traffic Operations

Headquarters

- Develop, maintain, and update policy, procedures, guidance, and standards pertaining to the operations of facilities to improve access to destinations by walking, biking, transit, and passenger rail, including but not limited to temporary access during construction.
- Develop policy and framework for collecting and maintaining current pedestrian and bicycle count data.
- Develop, maintain, and update training, guidance, and procedures to improve encroachment permit application process for local agency-sponsored complete streets projects that are on or cross the SHS.
- Identify and develop proposals to address policy and procedural barriers to implementing locally-sponsored complete streets projects on and across the SHS.

Districts

- Collect and maintain current pedestrian and bicycle count data.
- Identify opportunities to leverage traffic control devices, where needed, to better facilitate the throughput of people walking, biking, and taking transit.
- Implement standard plans and specifications for temporary pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access routes during construction.
- Support the delivery of complete streets improvements in capital projects.
- Identify strategies to streamline the approval process for complete streets projects seeking encroachment permits.

Safety Programs

Headquarters

- Develop, maintain, and update policy, procedures, guidance, plans, documents, and technical assistance to proactively or responsively identify pedestrian and bicycle safety needs on the SHS.
- Develop and administer programs to investigate locations and provide recommendations for improvements at locations with pedestrian and bicycle safety needs.
- Identify opportunities to leverage traffic control devices, where needed, to better facilitate the throughput of people walking, biking, and taking transit.

Districts

- Develop and implement innovative, context-sensitive solutions to address the safety of vulnerable roadway users.

- Investigate and implement countermeasures at locations with pedestrian and/or bicycle safety concerns/needs.
- Engage with internal functions and seek input from external stakeholders on pedestrian and bicycle safety needs during investigations.

Equipment

- Procure and provide training on equipment needed to maintain current and future complete streets facilities.
- Track and share with districts the national state of the practice for equipment used to maintain pedestrian, bicycle, and transit features.

Asset Management

Headquarters

- Track, monitor, and report on progress of complete streets as an asset in the SHSMP.
- Finalize funding and SHSMP performance targets for complete streets in the SHOPP.
- Support Districts in tracking and reporting on complete streets assets.

Districts

- Compile identified complete streets needs into SHOPP projects to support Districts in meeting performance targets.
- Regularly update Asset Management Tool with complete streets assets identified in all projects.
- Track and monitor progress of complete streets as an asset in the SHSMP and report progress to Headquarters Asset Management and Complete Streets Program Manager.

Local Assistance

Headquarters

- Provide support and technical assistance to local and regional agencies and Caltrans Districts applying for state or federal active transportation funding.
- Provide tools, training, and resources to support the successful delivery of local and regional active transportation projects on time, in scope, and within budget.

Districts

- Provide support and technical assistance to local and regional agencies and Caltrans Districts applying for state or federal active transportation funding.
- Provide tools, training, and resources to support the successful delivery of local and regional active transportation projects on time, in scope, and within budget.

Legal

- Provide counsel and support on legal issues pertaining to complete streets policies, procedures, and projects.

District-Designated Complete Streets Coordinator(s)

- District Directors will designate complete streets coordinator(s).
- Work with PDTs to maximize opportunities for inclusion of complete streets in all project phases by actively participating in the pre-scoping, project initiation, and project development phases.
- Support the asset manager in tracking and monitoring complete streets assets.
- Assist with identifying project-specific complete streets needs throughout project planning, development, and delivery.
- Review and provide concurrence to decision documents related to complete streets.
- Work with other functions to provide technical assistance to local agency sponsored projects that are on or cross the SHS to incorporate complete streets elements.
- Collaborate with local and regional partners, advocacy and community groups, and District engineers to identify pedestrian, bicycle, and transit gaps to incorporate into planning documents and projects.
- Provide recommendations for partnerships and funding opportunities with local, regional, and state agencies.

Applicability

This policy applies to all Caltrans employees.



Toks Omishakin
Director

12/07/2021

Date Signed