**Palm Beach Transportation Planning Agency**

**Complete Street Policy Guidance**

# **DEFINITION**

The Policy should define “Complete Streets” and address all users and modes. It is recommended that the Policy specify at least four modes, two of which must be walking and bicycling. In addition, there may be other specific types of users or modes present in a community that should be highlighted. This could include golf carts, equestrian, scooters, and other modes. Consider your particular community and determining the users and modes to specify.

# **VISION & INTENT**

The Policy should include an equitable vision for how and why the community wants to complete its streets and specify the need to create a complete, connected network. The Policy should also consider equity and enabling safe access for vulnerable users (ex. children, elderly, disabled, pedestrians and bicyclists) as well as prioritizing Complete Streets improvements in the most underinvested and underserved communities.

### Questions to tailor vision:

* What is the municipality’s transportation vision? Might need to look in comprehensive plan or multimodal transportation plan.
* How will Complete Streets help your municipality implement its vision?

## GOALS

A Complete Streets Policy’s goals should be tied directly to the Complete Streets vision or municipality’s transportation vision. Consider the answer to the questions below and how they relate to the Palm Beach Transportation Planning Agency (TPA)’s goals. Modify the TPA’s goals to your municipality’s vision and assess how they can be tied to performance measures.

### Questions to tailor goals:

* Are there specific safety concerns that are being addressed?
* Has the community recently invested in, or do they have plans to invest in, trails, public transit or other transportation infrastructure whose efficiency and reach would benefit from a system of Complete Streets?
* Does the community have a designated transportation exception area or language in the comprehensive plan supporting multimodal travel?
* Is there an underrepresented community that tends to rely on alternative modes of transportation, such as the elderly, youth, households with income under the poverty line, or households without access to an automobile?
* Do the community’s economic development plans include high density mixed use development, investments in historic commercial centers, or other land use patterns that would be supportive by a multimodal transportation network?

#### Examples Goals

* Safety for all transportation system users
* Access to destinations
* Economic competitiveness
* Environmental Sustainability
* Public health
* Social equity
* Quality of life

# **APPLICABILITY**

Creating Complete Streets networks is difficult because many different agencies may control the streets. They are built and maintained by state, county, and local agencies, and private developers often build new roads. Individual jurisdictions do have an opportunity to influence the actions of others, through funding or development review. In the case of private developers, this may entail the developer submitting how they will address Complete Streets in their project through the jurisdiction’s permitting process, with approval of the permit being contingent upon meeting the Complete Streets requirements laid out by the jurisdiction. Creating a Complete Streets network can also be achieved through interagency coordination between government departments and partner agencies on Complete Streets. It is recommended that the Policy address all phases of transportation infrastructure as well as new private development and redevelopment projects. The Policy should specify which types of projects do not apply.

### Questions to tailor Applicability and Scope:

* How is the Policy language consistent with the rest of the municipality’s transportation policies and plans?
* Is the Policy language written in plain language?
* Consider “who” is the municipality is serving
* Would it be beneficial for the local government to give more specific direction about the required balance of safety and comfort on local roadways?
* Should the Policy specify that it applies to public and private roadways?

# **EXCEPTIONS**

The Policy should make any exceptions specific and set a clear procedure that requires high-level approval and public notice prior to exceptions being granted. Exceptions vary greatly by community.

### Questions to tailor exceptions:

* What individual or group should review the exception?
* Should public notice be provided of the request and/or provision of the exception?
* Should public discussion be held prior to granting an exception?
* If an exception is granted for a private roadway or a public facility not owned by the municipality, who will pay for the installation and maintenance of the parallel facility?

#### Examples of appropriate exceptions are listed below:

* Accommodation is not necessary on corridors where specific users are prohibited, such as freeways or pedestrian malls. Exclusion of certain users on particular corridors should not exempt projects from accommodating other permitted users.
* Emergency repairs such as a water main leak that requires immediate, rapid response; however, temporary accommodations for all modes should still be made. Depending on severity of the repairs, opportunities to improve multimodal access should still be considered where possible.
* Routine maintenance of the transportation network that does not change the roadway geometry or operations, such as mowing, sweeping, filling of potholes, and other spot repair.
* Where a reasonable and equivalent project along the same corridor is already programmed to provide facilities exempted from the project at hand.

# **LAND USE AND CONTEXT SENSITIVITY**

Each jurisdiction should carefully consider the surrounding community’s current and expected land use and transportation needs as well as which groups of people are typically underserved or underinvested in their community. To identify vulnerable populations, jurisdictions could consider measuring a variety of factors including poverty levels, access to transit service, car ownership, percentage of people of color, percentage of older adults, etc. The Policy should state some example communities of concern and corresponding example language on how jurisdictions could prioritize them throughout the transportation planning process.

The Policy should require new or revised land use policies, plans, or zoning ordinances to specify how transportation projects will support and be supported by the community’s Complete Streets vision and serve current and future land use needs. It should also include language that requires the consideration of the community context as a factor in decision-making, as well as specifying the need to understand mitigate unintended consequences of projects or plans, such as involuntary displacement.

# **DESIGN**

The Policy should direct the use of the latest and best design criteria and guidelines and sets a time frame for their implementation. The Policy may also direct the adoption of specific, best state-of-the-practice design guidance and/or requires the development or revision of internal design policies and guides.

# **PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA**

The Policy should develop or modify the jurisdiction’s project selection criteria for project scoring criteria to rank and prioritize funding of Complete Streets projects for implementation. Criteria for project ranking should assign weight for active transportation infrastructure, projects that serve underserved communities, alleviate disparities in geography, health, safety, and access.

# **IMPLEMENTATION STEPS**

The Policy should require that related procedures, plans, regulations and other processes be revised within a specific time timeframe and identify key steps to implementation.

### Questions to tailor implementation:

* Are there private development design standards that need to be reviewed to support the Complete Streets Policy?
* What local agencies/departments need to be included in developing the Complete Streets Policy? What policies/standards or procedures need to be addressed within each agency/department?

#### Example Implementation StePs

1. Restructure or revise related procedures, plans, regulations, and other processes to accommodate all users on every project. This could include incorporating Complete Streets checklists or other tools into decision-making processes.
2. Develop new design policies and guides or revise existing to reflect the current state of best practices in transportation design. Communities may also elect to adopt national or state level recognized design guidance.
3. Offer workshops and other training opportunities to transportation staff, community leaders, and the general public so that everyone understands the importance of the Complete Streets vision. Training could focus on Complete Streets design and implementation, community engagement, and/or equity.
4. Create a committee to oversee implementation. This is a critical accountability measure, ensuring the Policy becomes practice. The committee should include both external and internal stakeholders as well as representatives from advocacy groups, underinvested communities, and vulnerable populations such as people of color, older adults, children, low-income communities, non-native English speakers, those who do not own or cannot access a car, and those living with disabilities.
5. Create a community engagement plan that considers equity by targeting advocacy organizations and underrepresented communities which could include non-native English speakers, people with disabilities, etc. depending on the local context. This requires the use of outreach strategies such as holding public meetings at easily accessible times and places, collecting input at community gathering spaces, and hosting and attending community meetings and events. The best community engagement plans don’t require people to alter their daily routines to participate. Outreach strategies should make use of natural gathering spaces such as clinics, schools, parks, and community centers.

# PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The Policy should establish performance measures that are specific, equitable and available to the public. Performance measures should be established under multiple categories such as access, economy, environment, safety, and health and equitable measures (i.e. measures that address income, race, vehicle access, and/or language) should be embedded throughout. It should also establish specific performance measures for the implementation process. The Policy should set a time frame for recurring collection of the performance measures, publicly publish the measures, and assign responsibility for collection and publishing.

### Questions to tailor monitoring efforts:

* Timeline: How often should data be collected and reported?
* Data: What kind of data is available to staff?
* Targets: should the municipality consider setting targets for mode split; multimodal LOS standards, rate of children walking or bicycling to school, access to bicycle facilities or sidewalks from residential areas or in proximity to schools; transit ridership?
* Should you include outreach and awareness measures?

Consider how the municipality’s performance measures relate to the Palm Beach TPA’s LRTP goals and performance measures.

#### Example Goals and Performance Measures

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| **Complete Streets Goal** | **Performance measures to consider** |
| Safety for all transportation system users  | * Crashes, fatalities, and serious injuries by mode and type (counts and rates per capita or per Vehicle Mile Traveled)
* Traveler surveys with safety ratings for different modes
* Presence of adequate lighting
* Number of violent and non-violent crimes
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| Access to destinations | * Travel times and travel time reliability (reduced non-recurring delay), measured by mode
* Combined household expenditures on housing and transportation as a percentage of household income
* Emergency response times
* Transit access, measured by percent of persons living within a set distance from transit stops
* Walk Score, Bike Score, and Transit Score
* Sidewalk continuity
* Bicycle facility continuity
* Presence of pedestrian facilities in proximity to transit stops
* Percentage of bus stops that are ADA-compliant
* Percentage of children walking and bicycling to school
* Number of residents using carpool and vanpool services
* Number of residents with telecommuting options
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| Economic competitiveness  | Measures of market access: * Connections between residential areas and employment opportunities
* Access between major activity centers
* Changes in freight tonnage

Measures of community economic vitality: * Alignment of transportation projects with local and regional land use and economic development plans and visions
* Level of private investment in adjacent properties
* Changes in vacancy rates for adjacent properties
* Changes in retail vibrancy (retail and restaurant sales, numbers of customers, etc.)
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| Environmental Sustainability | Measures of transportation facility sustainability (outputs)* Impervious surface area
* Presence of vegetation
* Energy efficiency of transportation facilities

Measures of environmental degradation or preservation (outcomes)* Air quality and emissions
* Stormwater runoff
* Land and habitat preservation
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| Public health | * Rates of active transportation (ex. walking and biking trips as a portion of total trips in a community)
* Rates of chronic disease
* Exposure to contaminants
* Travel time and reliability from residential areas to health facilities
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| Social equity  | * Access to economic opportunities and other daily needs by gender, age, income, race, ethnicity, and disability status
* Combined household expenditures on housing and transportation as a percentage of household income by gender, age, income, race, ethnicity, and disability status
* Relative impact of other measures by gender, age, income, race, ethnicity, and disability status
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| Quality of life | Measures of travel experience quality:* Quality of automobile trips (pavement conditions, traveler survey results, etc.)
* Quality of the transit experience (transit LOS, frequency of service, quality of accommodations for passengers at stops, accessibility of information for passengers, etc.)
* Quality of the bicycle environment (bicycle LOS, width of facilities, pavement condition of bicycle facilities, presence of bicycle wayfinding, etc.)
* Quality of the pedestrian environment (pedestrian LOS, sidewalk widths, sidewalk continuity, crossing distances and times, wait times at intersections, widths of medians, etc.)

Measures of community vibrancy:* Alignment with local and regional visions and plans
* Support for local “place-making” efforts
* Presence of shade, scenic views, seating, etc.
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