

Tacoma Complete Streets Design Guidelines Project

Environment and Public Works Committee – May 27, 2009

Project Objectives

Develop Complete Streets Guidelines for Tacoma and recommend potential implementation actions for the City Council's consideration.

At this meeting, staff will present a public review draft version of Residential Complete Streets Design Guidelines (to be handed out at the meeting), summarize ongoing and proposed implementation steps, summarize the public process to date, and solicit guidance from the Committee regarding next steps for the project.

Background

Since the project began with a focus on Mixed-use Centers, the scope has expanded due to a high level of City Council and community support for complete streets, including: City Council adoption of a Complete Streets Policy; the Green Ribbon Taskforce on Climate Change recommendations; streetscape typologies in the Downtown Plan, and more. As a result, the long-term objectives now include developing complete streets guidelines for all streets in the city. Toward that end, staff have now developed draft Residential Complete Streets Guidelines.

Complete Streets and related key policy actions

Green Ribbon Taskforce on Climate Change
Streetcar Planning
Make Tacoma Safe and Clean Initiative
Strategic Mobility Master Plan

Comprehensive Plan Policies:

Mixed-use Centers
Transportation
Environment—green infrastructure
Neighborhood & economic development
Open Space
Urban Design
Downtown

Project Contacts

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Implementation of Complete Streets Policies and Guidelines

Policies directing staff to incorporate Complete Streets principles are already in place, and City staff are currently working toward implementation (once finalized, the Guidelines will provide a much greater level of detail). The following provides an overview of both ongoing and potential future implementation steps, as well as key policy considerations:

Steps we are currently taking:

- Development of Complete Streets Design Guidelines for Mixed-use Centers and Residential areas
- Complete Streets principles considered during project review of off-site improvements
- Complete Streets principles considered in all City street designs (examples to date include Tyler Street, Stadium Way, Alaska Street, Martin Luther King Way, Ruston Way)
- Complete Streets principles incorporated in all projects included in the 6 Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Bicycle lanes and curb ramps will be added as part of street maintenance efforts (e.g., Arterial Restoration Project)
- Cross-Functional Complete Streets Team in place:
 - Leads the Guidelines effort
 - Works to coordinate and refine City processes
 - Reviews draft City street designs
- Strategic Mobility Master Plan under way

Recommended future implementation steps:

- Adoption of the Mixed-use Centers and Residential Complete Streets Guidelines
- Revise city street design standards to be consistent with the guidelines
- Develop guidelines for the remaining streets of the City
- Develop code changes as needed for implementation of guidelines and standards
- Develop budget strategies for both capital and maintenance costs
- Develop strategy to ensure that incremental street improvements are consistent with long-term design objectives
 - Develop conceptual streetscape plans for Mixed-use Centers Primary Pedestrian and other key streets identified in the Strategic Mobility Master Plan—they will be utilized to guide offsite improvement conditions on individual projects
 - Consider alternative funding strategies
- Develop a process for public input into City streets projects

Next Steps for the Project

Ongoing implementation of existing Complete Streets policies (as outlined above)

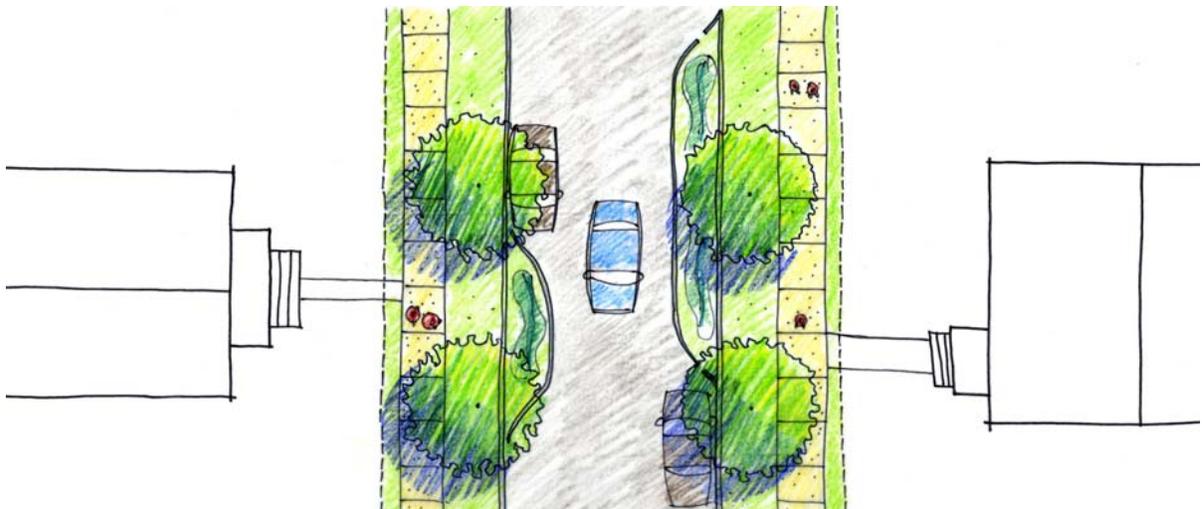
Public outreach for draft Residential Guidelines

Revisions to both sets of Guidelines

Fall 2009 – Environment and Public Works Committee for do pass recommendation

Winter 2009 – City Council consideration to adopt Guidelines (if forwarded by this Committee)

If adopted by the City Council, implementation steps and coordination with the Strategic Mobility Master Plan in 2010



Public Meetings And Workshops (to date)

September 10, 2008	City Council Environment and Public Works Committee
October 8 th	Mixed-use Centers Guidelines Community Focus Group workshop
October 16 th	West End Neighborhood Council
November 5 th	Planning Commission
December 10 th	Environment and Public Works Committee review of draft Mixed-use Centers Guidelines
January 13, 2009	Pierce Transit Senior Management Team
February 17 th	Tacoma Wheelmen's Bicycle Club
February 26 th	Tacoma Community Council
March 3 rd	Tacoma Cross District Association
March 23 rd	Edison Community Based Services (CBS) Area Board
April 23 rd	Residential Complete Streets Workshop and walking tour of Salishan
May 7 th	Downtown/Mixed-use Centers Complete Streets Workshop and walking tour of the Broadway Local Improvement District
May 12 th	Master Builders Association
May 12 th	West Tacoma Mall Business Neighborhood Coalition
May 20 th	South Tacoma Neighborhood Council
May 27 th	City Council Environment and Public Works Committee
May 30 th	Walking Tour of Martin Luther King Way lead by Dan Burden, Founder of Walkable Communities – Tacoma Pierce County Health Department event (8am to noon, meet at Evergreen State Community College). For more information, contact Leslie Carroll lcarroll@tpchd.org , 798-3811.
June 3 rd	Planning Commission (City Council Chambers, 4:00)

Additional events will be added as the project moves ahead.

Existing Complete Streets Policy Guidance

Transportation Element Policy adopted by the City Council in December 2008:

T-MS-10 Complete Streets

Apply the Complete Streets guiding principle⁽¹⁾, where appropriate, in the planning and design for new construction, reconstruction and major transportation improvement projects⁽²⁾, to appropriately accommodate all users, moving by car, truck, transit, bicycle, wheelchair, or foot to move along and across streets. The Complete Streets guiding principle shall also be used to evaluate potential transportation projects, and to amend and revise design manuals, regulations, standards and programs as appropriate to create over time an integrated and connected network of complete streets that meets user needs while recognizing the function and context of each street.

(1) The Complete Streets guiding principle is to design, operate and maintain streets to enable safe and convenient access and travel for all users – pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and people of all ages and abilities, as well as freight and motor vehicle drivers – and to foster a sense of place in the public realm.

(2) Major transportation improvement projects include but are not limited to street and sidewalk construction; street and sidewalk lighting; street trees and landscaping; street amenities; drainage, pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements; access improvements for freight; access improvements, including compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act; and public transit facilities accommodation including, but not limited to, pedestrian access improvements to transit stops and stations.

Six Year Comprehensive Transportation Program:

The City of Tacoma strives to create a transportation system that achieves the following goals:

- promote pedestrian, nonmotorized, and vehicle safety;
- work toward complete streets – enabling safe and convenient access and travel for all users (pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and people of all ages and abilities, as well as freight and motor vehicle drivers) and to foster a sense of place in the public realm;
- serve and support economic development; and
- be representative of all neighborhoods;

Comprehensive Plan Policies Supportive of Complete Streets:

Comprehensive Plan Policies		Topic Addressed
LU-MUCD-5	Public Transit Support	Transit
LU-MUCD-7	Circulation	Non-Motorized Transportation
LU-MUCD-11	Transit-Oriented Development	Transit-Oriented Development
LU-MUP-1	Parking	Transit-Oriented Development
LU-MUD-6	Pedestrian and Bicycle Design	Non-Motorized Transportation
LU-MUD-9	Green Infrastructure and Streetscape Improvements	Streetscapes
LU-MUD-15	Pedestrian Streets in Core Area	Transit-Oriented Development
LU-MUUC-0	Tacoma Mall Subarea Planning	Complete Streets
CF-EDNR-7	Facilities in Mixed-use Centers	Transit-Oriented Development
T-LUT-3	Centers and Corridors	Transit
T-LUT-5	Accessibility	Transit
T-MS-2	Roadway Capacity	Transit-Oriented Development
T-MS-10	Complete Streets	Complete Streets
T-NT-1	Identification of Projects	Non-Motorized Transportation
T-ES-4	Stormwater Management	Low-Impact Development
T-ES-5	Urban Design	Streetscapes
OS-GI-2	Green Streets	Low-Impact Development
OS-GI-5	Tree Planting and Maintenance	Planting
OS-GI-7	Sustainable Development Practices City-Wide	Low-Impact Development
OS-GI-8	Streetscape Improvements	Low-Impact Development
OS-HA-7	Sustainable Development Practices Within Corridors	Low-Impact Development
Recommended Climate Action Plan Strategies		
#6	Convert street lights to more efficient technologies	Low-Impact Development
#14	Comprehensive citywide bicycle & pedestrian system	Non-Motorized Transportation
#25	Implement Smart Growth Principles	Transit-Oriented Development
#26	Increase tree planting requirements or incentives	Planting
#27	Increase tree planting of City property	Planting
#60	Incorporate applicable Complete Streets principles	Complete Streets
#67	Establish and maintain trees on ROWs	Planting

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT (Mixed-Use Centers Guidelines):

- Strong support for the key ideas
 - Incorporate street trees and landscaping
 - Accommodate bicyclists
 - Accommodate pedestrians
 - Incorporate green stormwater approaches
 - Create attractive streetscapes (street furniture; public art; gathering spaces; trash receptacles; covered bus stops)
 - Take street construction as opportunity to upgrade existing utilities to accommodate full build-out and to underground overhead utilities.
- More emphasis needed on accommodating people with disabilities
 - Add guidance regarding curb ramps, barrier free surfaces, signals and other features
- Discourage use of front-in angled parking
 - Can impinge on travel lane, especially in conjunction with narrowed lanes
 - Can be problematic for cyclists and busses
- Discourage use of continuous center turn lanes
 - Creates wider roadway that is less safe for pedestrians and cyclists
- Bike lanes are the best option for on-street accommodation of cyclists
 - Sharrows appropriate on slower streets when there isn't room for bike lanes
 - Minimum bike lane width should be 5 feet
 - Strong interest in establishing bike routes, multiuse paths and Bike Boulevards adjacent to streets within the MUC
- Prevent conflicts with bulb-outs
 - If designed inappropriately, can conflict with busses and/or cyclists
- Bicyclists expressed concerns about at-grade curb ramps used in recent street designs (they may cause wheels to get caught)
- Need for education for drivers and cyclists – Share the Road Campaign

- Other Issues (Citywide)
 - Street and sidewalk pavement maintenance needed
 - Landscaping and green stormwater features require maintenance
 - Pavement markings (crosswalks, bike lanes, etc.) need to be maintained
 - Street sweeping of bike lanes/shoulders needed for bicycle safety

- Should every street be a Complete Street?
 - Newly designed and constructed street should provide a baseline
 - Not every street emphasizes all travel modes
 - Complete Street retrofits will occur as funding is available