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

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<th>Project Objectives</th>
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<td>Develop Complete Streets Guidelines</td>
<td>Mixed-use Centers</td>
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<td>Urban Design</td>
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<td>Downtown</td>
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Project Contacts

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Staff Contacts: Elliott Barnett, Urban Planner, elliott.barnett@cityoftacoma.org, 591-5389
Jennifer Kammerzell, Engineer, jkammerzell@cityoftacoma.org, 591-5511
Website: www.cityoftacoma.org/planning; Complete Streets Design Guidelines Project
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 8th          Mixed-use Centers Guidelines Community Focus Group workshop
October 16th         West End Neighborhood Council
November 5th         Planning Commission
December 10th        Environment and Public Works Committee review of draft Mixed-use Centers Guidelines
January 13, 2009    Pierce Transit Senior Management Team
February 17th       Tacoma Wheelmen’s Bicycle Club
February 26th       Tacoma Community Council
March 3rd           Tacoma Cross District Association
March 23rd          Edison Community Based Services (CBS) Area Board
April 23rd          Residential Complete Streets Workshop and walking tour of Salishan
May 7th             Downtown/Mixed-use Centers Complete Streets Workshop and walking tour of the Broadway Local Improvement District
May 12th            Master Builders Association
May 12th            West Tacoma Mall Business Neighborhood Coalition
May 20th            South Tacoma Neighborhood Council
May 27th            City Council Environment and Public Works Committee
May 30th            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 3rd            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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comprehensive Plan Policies</th>
<th>Topic Addressed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LU-MUCD-5 Public Transit Support</td>
<td>Transit</td>
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<td>LU-MUCD-7 Circulation</td>
<td>Non-Motorized Transportation</td>
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<td>LU-MUCD-11 Transit-Oriented Development</td>
<td>Transit-Oriented Development</td>
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<td>LU-MUP-1 Parking</td>
<td>Transit-Oriented Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>LU-MUD-6 Pedestrian and Bicycle Design</td>
<td>Non-Motorized Transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>LU-MUD-9 Green Infrastructure and Streetscape Improvements</td>
<td>Streetscapes</td>
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<tr>
<td>LU-MUD-15 Pedestrian Streets in Core Area</td>
<td>Transit-Oriented Development</td>
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<td>LU-MUUC-0 Tacoma Mall Subarea Planning</td>
<td>Complete Streets</td>
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<tr>
<td>CF-EDNR-7 Facilities in Mixed-use Centers</td>
<td>Transit-Oriented Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>T-LUT-3 Centers and Corridors</td>
<td>Transit</td>
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<tr>
<td>T-LUT-5 Accessibility</td>
<td>Transit</td>
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<tr>
<td>T-MS-2 Roadway Capacity</td>
<td>Transit-Oriented Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>T-MS-10 Complete Streets</td>
<td>Complete Streets</td>
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<td>T-NT-1 Identification of Projects</td>
<td>Non-Motorized Transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>T-ES-4 Stormwater Management</td>
<td>Low-Impact Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>T-ES-5 Urban Design</td>
<td>Streetscapes</td>
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<td>OS-GI-2 Green Streets</td>
<td>Low-Impact Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>OS-GI-5 Tree Planting and Maintenance</td>
<td>Planting</td>
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<td>OS-GI-7 Sustainable Development Practices City-Wide</td>
<td>Low-Impact Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>OS-GI-8 Streetscape Improvements</td>
<td>Low-Impact Development</td>
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<td>OS-HA-7 Sustainable Development Practices Within Corridors</td>
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### Recommended Climate Action Plan Strategies

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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#6</td>
<td>Convert street lights to more efficient technologies</td>
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<tr>
<td>#14</td>
<td>Comprehensive citywide bicycle &amp; pedestrian system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#25</td>
<td>Implement Smart Growth Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#26</td>
<td>Increase tree planting requirements or incentives</td>
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<tr>
<td>#27</td>
<td>Increase tree planting of City property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#60</td>
<td>Incorporate applicable Complete Streets principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#67</td>
<td>Establish and maintain trees on ROWs</td>
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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