

1. Vision and Intent

- 1.1. Residents and businesses thrive when neighborhoods are connected, job growth is preserved and encouraged, economic vitality is promoted, and quality of life is valued and enhanced. Therefore, the City of Vancouver (City) strives to provide a safe, accessible street system that benefits all users, ages, and abilities, regardless of how they choose to travel, through the development of this Complete Streets Policy. Through this effort, the City helps protect and benefit all who use the public right-of-way by reducing serious injuries, decreasing negative environmental impacts, promoting healthy living, and advancing the well-being of Vancouver citizens.

- 1.2. A safe, accessible street system that benefits all users will be achieved through the provision of a citywide, convenient, interconnected transportation network for pedestrian, bicycle, public-transportation, vehicular, and freight travel that improves accessibility to adjacent land uses (see Figure 1). The City's Complete Streets Policy approach will benefit Vancouver's neighborhoods over the long term with a well-balanced, multi-modal transportation network that fits the dynamics and character of each neighborhood. In addition to the benefits to public accessibility, health, and safety, the Complete Street network will improve development opportunities, create connected development patterns, enhance equity and affordability, and promote excellence in urban design and community character.

- 1.3. This Complete Streets Policy will help manage the City's street network and guide all transportation investments. The City enthusiastically supports commitments by the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and State of Washington Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) to implement Complete Streets. The City intends to leverage local funding for complete streets projects with WSDOT, TIB and federal grant funding programs to become a leader in implementing Complete Streets in Washington State.

Complete Streets and Neighborhood Context

1.

One Size Doesn't Fit All

Vancouver neighborhoods offer something for everyone, and that's what makes the city great. Each neighborhood is different, therefore the application of Complete Streets will be unique to the neighborhood.



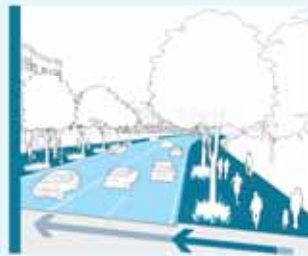
2.

Built from the Outside In

Complete Streets work best with an outside-in approach. Starting with the neighborhood land use context and network, then narrowing focus towards the street.



Building Access



Pedestrian Realm



Between the Curbs

3.

Focus on Safety, Accessibility, & Aesthetics

It's the three-legged stool of Complete Streets, you can't have one without the others.

Starting at the building, is there a **direct** and **comfortable** route to the sidewalk?

Is the pedestrian environment **comfortable** and **accessible**, with a buffer for **safety**?

Are the street and intersections designed to accommodate all modes **safely**, while maintaining **aesthetics**?

Figure 1: Complete Streets relate to neighborhood context through an outside-in approach. The approach starts by understanding the big picture of how the street fits into the overall network and how it serves the adjacent neighborhood.

2. Complete Streets Principles

2.1. Serve All Users and Modes

Complete Streets serve all users and modes. The City shall develop the community's streets and right-of-way to promote a safe, reliable, efficient, integrated, aesthetically pleasing, and connected transportation system that will promote access, mobility and health for all users, including people traveling with different levels of ability or with a mobility device, by bicycle, vehicle, transit, or other means. City streets and/or street networks shall accommodate emergency responders and freight mobility needs as well, in a manner consistent with this policy.

2.2. Provide Interconnected Networks

Complete Streets require connected travel networks. All roadways and routes need not be optimized for all modes; however, people using each mode require a network of safe, convenient travel routes and crossings throughout the city. The City shall prioritize opportunities to create a complete and intuitive transportation network with clear wayfinding that provides connected facilities to serve each mode of travel; it shall advance projects that are needed to close gaps and to complete priority transportation networks and routes. The network may include off-street hard-surface trails for biking and walking. Special consideration will be given to underserved areas where multiple transportation options are needed.

2.3. Implement Flexible Design

The City shall align related goals, policies, and code provisions to create Complete Streets solutions that will best serve the transportation needs of all people using the streets and the right-of-way, and that support the land-use policies of the Vancouver Comprehensive Plan. Street design shall be flexible and innovative rather than purely prescriptive, and shall be based on the thoughtful application of engineering, architectural and urban design principles. Designs shall meet or exceed national best-practice design guidelines. The priority shall be on the needs and comfort of all people and travelers, considering issues such as street design and width, desired operating speed, mode balance, street lighting, and connectivity. This includes a shift toward designing to integrate low-impact development stormwater management (LID) facilities and separated pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

2.4. Incorporate Environmental Design

The City shall foster livable, walkable, bicycle-friendly, aesthetically-pleasing, green neighborhoods by including landscaping, street trees and design features

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that help define the character of a street while providing added benefits of shade, summer cooling, reduced energy consumption, and improved air and water quality.

2.5. Use Best Practices

The City shall maintain Complete Streets design criteria, standards and guidelines based upon recognized best practices in street design, construction and operation, including standards found in the most recent versions of the following:

- 2.5.1. National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Bikeway Design Guide, Urban Streets Design Guide, and Transit Street Design Guide
- 2.5.2. The most recent American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities
- 2.5.3. The most recent AASHTO Guide for the Planning Design and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities
- 2.5.4. Washington State Department of Transportation Design Manual
- 2.5.5. United States Access Board Proposed Guidelines for Accessible Rights-of-Way (PROWAC)
- 2.5.6. Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)
- 2.5.7. The Highway Capacity Manual (HCM)
- 2.5.8. AASHTO Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets
- 2.5.9. Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks (FHWA)
- 2.5.10. Lighting Handbook (FHWA)

2.6. Coordinate Internally and among Jurisdictions

Complete Streets are the work of all City departments. In addition, the City shall foster partnerships internally and with all regional agencies including but not limited to WSDOT, C-TRAN, Evergreen and Vancouver Public School Districts, neighboring jurisdictions, businesses, developers and neighboring communities and counties to develop seamless facilities and accommodations that further the City's Complete Streets policy and continue such infrastructure beyond the City's borders. The City shall approach every public or private project, program, and practice that affects the transportation network or occurs in the right-of-way as an opportunity to improve street conditions and travel routes for everyone. City departments, inclusive of utilities, shall work in coordination and collaborate with other entities to maximize current and future opportunities for Complete Streets and network connectivity.

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2.7. Include All Projects and Phases

Complete Streets include all roadways and all projects and phases. The City shall apply this policy in a context-sensitive manner to all private and public routes and roadways. It applies to both new streets and retrofit projects, including the construction, reconstruction, retrofit, resurfacing, restriping, alteration and major repair of streets. It shall provide guidance to all City capital improvement projects. It includes parking facilities, alleys, bridges, frontage roads, private drives or streets and internal circulation routes, temporary traffic zones, off-street bicycle and pedestrian paths, park roads, and other elements of the transportation system. The City will incorporate these Complete Streets principles into the routine planning, design, implementation, operation, and maintenance of all transportation infrastructure upon adoption of this policy.

2.8. Measure Performance

Complete Streets require appropriate performance measures. The City shall track and report performance measures for the transportation system that measure how well the City is conforming to this policy. Indicators shall reflect safe and efficient mobility for all users – pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, and freight. The City shall measure the success of this Complete Streets Policy using, but not limited to, the following performance measures:

- 2.8.1. Cumulative miles of improved/new Complete Streets
- 2.8.2. Linear feet of new/ reconstructed sidewalks
- 2.8.3. Percentage of sidewalks that are separated
- 2.8.4. Linear feet of new/ restriped on-street bicycle facilities
- 2.8.5. Percentage of bicycle facilities that are separated
- 2.8.6. Surface area treated by on-street low-impact development stormwater management facilities in the right-of-way
- 2.8.7. Number of new/ reconstructed curb ramps
- 2.8.8. Number of traffic calming projects approved and implemented
- 2.8.9. Number of crosswalk and intersection improvements
- 2.8.10. Number of additional accessible transit stops
- 2.8.11. Number of new street trees (as per Urban Forestry Tree Canopy Data)
- 2.8.12. Annual Complete Streets network evaluation
 - 2.8.12.1. Annual evaluation of transportation safety data for all modes
 - 2.8.12.2. Annual Complete Street gap analysis to identify prioritized locations for improvement
 - 2.8.12.3. Annual report on bike/pedestrian/transit -user counts
 - 2.8.12.4. Satisfaction of improvements within the community

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Within one year of adoption of this Complete Streets Policy, the City shall create individual numeric benchmarks for the performance standards deemed appropriate. These performance standards shall be tracked and measured annually with the annual report posted on-line.

3. Applicability

The Complete Streets policy shall apply to all public and private street design, construction, and retrofit projects initiated after the Policy adoption, except in unusual or extraordinary circumstances (see the Considerations of Exceptions section below).

The City requires all agencies over which it has permitting authority to comply with this policy. At a minimum, these agencies should not take actions that will adversely affect multimodal travel conditions and future opportunities. The agencies include, but are not limited to, water utilities, electric utilities, gas and petroleum utilities, communications utilities, and service contractors. To the extent possible, provisions that support this Complete Streets policy shall be added to new franchise agreements affecting the City right-of-way.

For all transportation projects designed by other agencies or entities that require funding or approval by the City, the Vancouver Department of Public Works (PW) and Community and Economic Development (CED) shall, in advance of finalizing such funding or approval:

- 3.1. Evaluate the proposed project for compliance with this Complete Streets Policy
- 3.2. Where needed, recommend measures and require appropriate changes to bring it into compliance.

The City encourages entities not under its jurisdiction to satisfy this policy, including school districts, counties, and State of Washington agencies with facilities in the City of Vancouver. Partner agencies are encouraged to adopt this Complete Streets Policy or an equivalent.

For regional transportation projects, the City will promote compliance with this Complete Streets Policy by its partners, including Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC), C-TRAN, WSDOT, and neighboring cities, counties, and other agencies as applicable.

4. Consideration of Exceptions

Not every street can be complete for each traveler, and consideration of an exception may be requested for projects. These exceptions should not become common. Requests for exceptions will be evaluated by the joint review of the PW Director and the CED Director (or their designees) and a decision whether

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to grant an exception is within their discretion. An exception for a specific project may be requested and granted when/where:

- 4.1. Maintenance activities designed to keep transportation facilities in serviceable condition (e.g. mowing, cleaning, sweeping, spot repair, and surface treatments or interim measures on detour routes).
- 4.2. Reconstruction of the right-of-way is due to an emergency.
- 4.3. Facilities where bicycle, pedestrian, and or motorized vehicle users are prohibited by law.
- 4.4. Constructing a complete street would be contrary to acceptable guidance on public safety.
- 4.5. Where the cost of constructing a complete street is excessively disproportionate to the probable use.
- 4.6. Other factors indicating the absence of need, including future need (e.g. low-density area or existing parallel facilities that provide adequate accommodation for other users). In determining future need, PW Director and CED Director (or their designees) shall review relevant City and regional long range plans concerning land use and transportation.

Exclusive of Considerations 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 above, the PW and CED Directors mentioned above (or their designees) shall document and explain why a transportation project is exempt from this Complete Streets Policy. This explanation shall be issued in the form of an official memorandum and completion of a complete streets process checklist.

5. Implementation

The City shall make Complete Streets practices a routine part of everyday operations and procedures:

- 5.1. The Complete Streets principles of this policy shall inform all transportation planning, design, maintenance, and funding decisions. In addition, they shall inform the early scoping phase of all City capital improvement projects that include or affect roadway elements and the right-of-way.
- 5.2. Prior to work, projects shall be assessed based on the existing and future context of the affected transportation infrastructure within the overall multi-modal network, as identified by recognized plans including those with pedestrian, bicycle and transit guidelines.
- 5.3. The City shall develop a Complete Streets checklist and implement a collaborative CED/PW review process that uses the checklist at the initiation of all new project plans, design and construction improvements within one year of adoption.
- 5.4. The City shall develop or update City design policies, guides, and manuals across disciplines within two years of adoption:

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- 5.4.1.1. Develop Complete Street Network Map
- 5.4.1.2. Update City Transportation Standard Plans and Details, emphasizing separated pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- 5.4.1.3. Update Vancouver Municipal Code Titles 11 and 20 (and others if necessary)
- 5.5. The City shall support flexibility for staff to be innovative within the Federal Highway Administration's approved design applications.
- 5.6. The City shall continue to inform the development community on updates to the City's standards or guidelines to ensure an efficient, predictable, and transparent development process.
- 5.7. The City shall actively seek sources of funding to leverage all allowable local funding to implement this policy.
- 5.8. The City shall keep the public informed of progress on performance measures with an annual City Council Complete Streets work session, updates to the City Complete Streets webpage, and regular coordination with the City's Bike and Pedestrian Stakeholder Group.

Guidance on Implementation is provided in "Attachment A," attached to this policy.

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ATTACHMENT A: GUIDANCE ON IMPLEMENTATION

1. Relationship to City Policy: This Complete Streets Policy establishes higher and more comprehensive goals and criteria than the 2004 Transportation System Plan (“TSP”) (Ordinance M-3652). To the extent a conflict exists between this policy and the 2004 TSP, this policy shall supersede. Future Transportation System Plans will be consistent with this policy.

2. Transportation and Capital Improvement Projects. Consideration of this Complete Streets Policy and its long-range goals shall be incorporated into the planning, scoping, budgeting, funding, design, approval and implementation process for all City facilities, roadways, and right-of-way infrastructure. The CED and PW Directors (or their designees) shall provide coordination and support. Departments shall consult the City of Vancouver Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, Capital Improvement Program, and other relevant City plans for guidance. All projects shall strive to advance and integrate multiple goals, including a high-quality public realm, placemaking, low-impact development stormwater facilities, and economic development. City projects shall seek cost-saving opportunities through such integration.

Projects shall anticipate opportunities to incrementally achieve fully complete streets and networks over time, and in future phases of work. Departments shall take care that their work does not adversely affect the pedestrian realm and opportunities for multimodal travel and facilities.

Where the costs of acquiring right-of-way to provide separate accommodations for each mode of travel are cost-prohibitive, innovative or multi-use facilities within the existing right-of-way that accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists may be considered, if appropriate for the roadway and its context.

For City parks projects, park land may be used for bicycle/pedestrian trails and other elements of the transportation system that provide connectivity and support people’s access to parks and recreational/outdoor activities.

Projects shall coordinate with the City Urban Forestry Coordinator to review street plans for street tree species selections and locations to maximize planting of site appropriate street trees for the benefits trees provide and minimize potential future hardscape infrastructure damage.

City utilities shall provide guidance on ensuring that Complete Streets Policy implementation does not create public safety hazards or reductions in levels of utility

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service unacceptable to utility customers. Utility projects shall seek to support and advance implementation of this policy and related right-of-way conditions.

3. **Project Budgets.** All projects shall be initially defined such that the overall project budget is sufficient to assure conformance with this policy. It is the responsibility of each project to budget appropriately for implementation of this policy, in a context-sensitive manner. This includes budgeting for right-of-way and/or easement acquisition. Where primary funding sources for City projects are narrowly constrained (e.g. restricted to utility, affordable housing, or other purposes), the City shall actively pursue additional funding sources to allow implementation of this policy to a high standard.
4. **Private Projects.** In reviewing zoning, site plans, subdivision plans, planned unit developments, and other projects that include streets, private drives, or other internal circulation routes, City staff shall seek full compliance with the intent of this Complete Streets Policy. Development Review staff shall provide appropriate information and education to the development community and applicants.

In reviewing projects subject to specific City of Vancouver Subarea Plan requirements and Development Agreements, the City shall approve compliance only as it conforms to the goals and intent of this Complete Streets Policy. A system shall be developed to track approvals of compliance; such approvals shall be reviewed annually by a multidisciplinary staff team to assess impacts on Complete Streets.

If City staff recommends additional measures regarding private projects, that process shall include public review and input.

5. **Complete Streets Program.** The City shall implement this policy through a “Complete Streets Program” shared by PW and CED. The Complete Streets Program shall be developed and implemented in consultation with other departments and partners. It shall be appropriately staffed to provide multi-modal transportation planning; it shall be coordinated with City modal programs and include initiatives for bicycling, pedestrians, transit, and trails.

The Complete Streets Program shall be structured as an element of Vancouver Comprehensive Plan implementation and be inclusive of all relevant City Departments. The Program shall facilitate citywide staff training, public education, document development and/or updates, departmental Complete Street efforts, and other actions as necessary to fully implement this Complete Streets policy.

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An interim report on the development and progress of this Complete Streets program, including use of the Complete Streets checklist, shall be delivered to City Council within one year of policy adoption.

6. **Staff Training.** The City shall provide information and training on this Complete Streets Policy and its principles, and best practices for implementation, to relevant City staff across departments including but not limited to transportation staff, land-use and transportation development review staff, within 18 months of policy adoption. Continuing education inclusive of all aspects of this policy shall be provided on an annual basis. The training materials shall be offered to the City's local and regional partner agencies.
7. **Outreach and Education.** Complete Streets policies typically cover the physical infrastructure; however, the City also recognizes the importance of outreach, education, and enforcement. The City and partner organizations shall provide ongoing public information and education about Complete Streets to Vancouver residents, community groups and leaders; transportation, planning, design, engineering, and law enforcement professionals; and the private development community. The City shall meet at least annually with representatives of RTC, Clark County, C-TRAN and WSDOT to review best practices in Complete Streets implementation and evaluate cross-agency efforts. Further, future updates to the City's Bicycle Plan shall continue to include outreach, education, and enforcement initiatives.

The City shall partner with the local region program manager of the Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) National Partnership and WSDOT SRTS program to connect all schools to the Complete Street network. The City shall work with Evergreen and Vancouver Public School Districts to seek funding sources to perform a walk/bike audit and assess active transportation conditions around school facilities.

8. **Code Amendments.** As part of the 2017-18 Transportation System Plan (TSP) update process, City staff shall conduct a diagnosis to identify: 1) what, if any, provisions in current code present obstacles to implementation of this Complete Streets Policy, and 2) what code and criteria amendments are needed, if any, to address impediments or to otherwise advance the implementation of the Complete Streets Policy.

Upon adoption of a major revision to the Municipal Code by City Council, necessary updates on this policy shall be issued to create consistency with all Land Development Code provisions and language related to roadways, right-of-way, street classifications, character districts, and other applicable elements.

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9. Roles and Responsibilities. PW and CED shall jointly administer the Complete Streets Program and shall have lead responsibility for implementation of this policy.

Final authority for the construction of elements in the City right-of-way, as well as reporting responsibility for considerations granted to this policy, resides with the Directors (or their designees) of these departments.

Per City Code, the PW Director is responsible for the functionality of streets as defined by their utility, durability, condition and serviceability and has final authority over related decisions. The City Streets and Transportation Manager is responsible for the design and functionality of streets and the roadway network as it relates to providing safe, efficient, and comfortable travel for roadway users. The Public Works Department shall jointly and collaboratively address these goals for the community's roadways, coordinating with other City departments and partner agencies as needed.