

1. Background

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) has long encouraged the creation of a multimodal, safe, and efficient transportation system that is accessible by all roadway users.

The Mobility 2035: The Metropolitan Transportation Plan for North Central Texas (Mobility 2035) is the defining vision for the multimodal transportation system in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area. Mobility 2035 was adopted in March 2011 by the Regional Transportation Council, and received a conformity determination by the Federal Highway Administration in July 2011. The goals and planning elements included in Mobility 2035 support the development of a Complete Streets Policy Statement for the region in an effort to accommodate the multimodal mobility needs of a growing region. Specifically, the following goals identified in Mobility 2035 are directly addressed through a region-wide Complete Streets Policy Statement.

- Improve the availability of transportation options for people and goods.
- Support travel efficiency measures and system enhancements targeted at congestion reduction and management.
- Assure all communities are provided access to the regional transportation system and planning process
- Preserve and enhance the natural environment, improve air quality, and promote active lifestyles.
- Encourage livable communities which support sustainability and economic vitality.

The following Planning Elements included in Mobility 2035 are also addressed in this Complete Streets Policy Statement:

- *Operational Efficiency:* Building enough capacity to solve the region's congestion problems is not a viable option. Efforts must be made to manage the current system more effectively. Managing system demand and congestion through technology and other low-cost operational strategies can maximize the current system and substantially improve congestion and air quality in the region. Developing in a more sustainable way and emphasizing the land use/transportation relationship is an important strategy in improving operational efficiency.
- *Mobility Options:* Providing transportation choices is vital to maintaining and improving the quality of life for North Central Texas residents. Because the transportation needs of the region far outweigh the available funds, strategic investment in infrastructure is required. Mobility 2035 recommendations strike a balance between meeting the most critical mobility needs while making a variety of transportation options available.

To advance the Goals and Planning Elements of Mobility 2035, as adopted by the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) on March 10, 2011, the NCTCOG Complete Streets Policy Statement was created. This Policy Statement builds upon previous planning efforts and promotes a multimodal transportation system that is integrated with sustainable land use developments. The main objective is to plan, design, build and operate roadways so that they routinely and safely accommodate all modes of travel, be it by motor vehicle, foot, bicycle, transit, or other means, and includes people of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets are

essential for those who cannot or choose not to drive due to age, disability, income, or any other reason.

The benefits of Complete Streets are vast and can act both in the short and long-term. Complete Streets provide many benefits to residents, business owners, developers, and the community as a whole, including a balanced transportation system that provides accessible, safe, and efficient connections between destinations. Additionally, Complete Streets bolster economic growth and stability while increasing property values, and ensure job growth, reduce crashes through safety improvements, improve public health and fitness, reduce harmful emissions, and reduce the overall demand on our roadways by allowing people to replace motor vehicle trips with active transportation options.

- *Complete streets improve safety* by reducing crashes through safety improvements. Streets without safe places to walk, cross, catch a bus, or bicycle put people at risk. Pedestrian crashes are more than twice as likely to occur in places without sidewalks; streets with sidewalks on both sides have the fewest crashes.ⁱ
- *Complete streets encourage more walking and bicycling.* In June 2009, the Center of Disease Control released a report titled 'Recommended Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the United States,' which recommends the adoption of Complete Streets policies as a strategy for obesity prevention.
- *Complete streets can help ease transportation woes.* The potential to shift trips to less oil-dependent modes and to save money by doing so is confirmed by the following: Nearly fifty percent of all trips in metropolitan areas are three miles or less and 28 percent are one mile or less – distances easily covered by foot or bicycle.ⁱⁱ
- *Complete streets help children.* When streets are designed only for cars, they become barriers for children, who cannot safely walk or bicycle along or across them. Unfortunately these safety fears are well founded - pedestrian injury is a leading cause of unintentional, injury-related death among children, age 5 to 14.ⁱⁱⁱ
- *Complete streets improve mobility for older Americans.* The U.S. Census Bureau projects that by 2025, nearly one in five Americans will be over the age of 65, totaling 62 million Americans. Almost 40% of Americans over the age of 50 say their neighborhoods lack adequate sidewalks, 55% report inadequate bike lanes or paths, and 48% have no comfortable place to wait for the bus.^{iv} As a result, in 2008, older pedestrians were overrepresented in fatalities; while comprising 13% of the population, they accounted for 18% of the fatalities.^v
- *Complete streets spark economic revitalization.* Complete streets boost the economy by increasing property values, including residential properties, as generally homeowners are willing to pay more to live in walkable communities. Traffic lanes were narrowed on Valencia Street in San Francisco, which slowed down cars and allowed for the accommodation of other users, which resulted in nearly 40 percent of merchants reporting increased sales, and 60 percent reporting more area residents shopping locally due to reduced travel time and convenience.^{vi}
- *Complete streets are good for air quality.* Many trips are made by automobile because of incomplete streets that make it dangerous or unpleasant to walk, bicycle, or take transit. In fact, a national survey found that a lack of sidewalks and safe places to bike are a primary reason people give when asked why they don't walk or bicycle more.^{vii}

- *Complete streets make fiscal sense.* Integrating sidewalks, bike lanes, transit amenities, and safe crossings into the initial design of a project spares the expense of retrofits later.

The establishment of well-connected walking and bicycling networks is an important component for livable communities. The overall design of a community's transportation system will have a significant effect on its perceived livability. Walking and bicycling foster safer, more livable, more walkable communities; promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles; and reduce vehicle emissions and fuel use. Planning for Complete Streets is not only being recognized by local communities it is now recognized by the federal and state governments.

2. Consistency with Federal and State Guidance and Regulation

Congress has consistently and progressively encouraged the development of a transportation system that favors the movement of people and goods -- not just automobiles -- beginning with the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) in 1991, and continuing through the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) in 1998, and the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) in 2004 (See 23 CFR 450.200, 23 CFR 450.300, 23 U.S.C. 134(h), and 135(d)). The Department of Transportation's (USDOT) issuance of an updated bicycle and pedestrian accommodation policy statement in March of 2010 further solidifies the United State's commitment to recognizing the need to overtly plan for non-motorized transportation.

On March 15, 2010, the Secretary of Transportation, Ray LaHood, signed an updated and enhanced policy statement on bicycle and pedestrian accommodation, which states, in part:

The DOT policy is to incorporate safe and convenient walking and bicycling facilities into transportation projects. Every transportation agency, including DOT, has the responsibility to improve conditions and opportunities for walking and bicycling and to integrate walking and bicycling into their transportation systems. Because of the numerous individual and community benefits that walking and bicycling provide — including health, safety, environmental, transportation, and quality of life — transportation agencies are encouraged to go beyond minimum standards to provide safe and convenient facilities for these modes.

In response to the updated policy statement on bicycle and pedestrian accommodation by the USDOT in March 2010, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) issued a Memorandum on 'Guidelines Emphasizing Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations' that "emphasizes an increased commitment to, and investment in, bicycle facilities and walking networks" in March of 2011. The memorandum provides guidance direction for bicycle and pedestrian facilities to be included when a project is scoped and on the various types of facilities. The TxDOT memorandum provides further support for a Complete Streets Policy Statement.

The development of the NCTCOG Complete Streets Policy Statement demonstrates recognition of and a plan to address federal and state guidance regarding Complete Streets as well as local support for the planning and creation of Complete Streets.

3. Policy Statement

1. The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) seeks to plan for and program projects that fully integrate and balance the needs of all street users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit users, motor vehicles, commercial vehicles, and emergency responders. Users of all ages and abilities will be considered.
2. The Complete Streets implementation strategies (refer to Section 4 for more details) will apply to street projects, including construction, reconstruction, and maintenance.

This Policy Statement is meant to act as a guide. The guidance within this document is not a requirement set upon any of NCTCOG's member governments. The intent of the Policy is that NCTCOG's local governments will consider all modes of transportation during the planning, design, construction, and operation phases as provided in this Complete Streets Policy Statement. Complete Streets is not a prescriptive design or outcome; it is an on-going and comprehensive planning, design, construction, and operations process, with a long-range perspective, aimed at improving safety, usability, and quality of life.

Because Complete Streets are context sensitive, meaning streets that are sensitive to their land use and transportation context, not all Complete Streets look alike, but all are designed to balance the safety and reliability for all users. Successful achievement of this vision will result in a multimodal transportation network that serves all modes of travel, and has the potential to improve safety, accessibility, public health, and air quality, as well as lowering overall transportation costs. By approving this policy, NCTCOG and its local governments have dedicated themselves to planning, designing, constructing, and/or operating the transportation network to a higher/ more inclusive set of planning goals. NCTCOG strongly encourages its local governments to adopt and implement a Complete Streets Policy in accordance with the NCTCOG Policy Statement.

The NCTCOG Complete Streets Policy Statement will be in effect upon adoption of the 'Resolution Supporting Complete Streets in North Central Texas' (Attachment 1) by the Regional Transportation Council.

4. Implementation Strategies

So as to achieve the purpose and intent articulated in sections 1, 2 and 3; the following steps will be taken by NCTCOG:

- A. NCTCOG will integrate Complete Streets criteria in the development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), products of its Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), where applicable. These criteria will be designed to efficiently and accurately indicate a project's overall compatibility with the regional Complete Streets Policy Statement.

NCTCOG will promote the use of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) planning, which is a multi-disciplinary, collaborative approach that involves all stakeholders to develop a transportation facility that fits its physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic,

historic, and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility. CSS is an approach that considers the total context within which a transportation improvement project will exist, and employs early, continuous, and meaningful involvement of the public and all stakeholders throughout the project development process. CSS emphasizes six key principles:

1. Balance safety, mobility, community and environmental goals in all projects
2. Involve the public and affected agencies early and continuously
3. Use an interdisciplinary team approach for each project
4. Address all modes of travel
5. Apply flexibility inherent in design standards
6. Incorporate aesthetics as an integral part of good design

The reader is referred to <http://www.ite.org/css/> for more details and information on the CSS process.

As NCTCOG conducts planning studies, Context Sensitive Solutions will be given due consideration during the planning, programming and development of transportation projects. Not every strategy is right for all projects, and some strategies may be only partially effective. But it is important that each strategy be evaluated for effectiveness. The intent is not to dictate specific strategies, but to encourage evaluation and implementation of the most appropriate and cost effective measures.

- B. NCTCOG will support the development of a complete system of bikeways and pedestrian facilities, connected throughout the North Central Texas region, including the continued development of the NCTCOG Regional Veloweb. Further, NCTCOG will plan context-appropriate facilities to the best currently available standards and guidelines with the understanding that design exceptions may be necessary to achieve safe and efficient design strategies for bicyclists, pedestrians and other roadway users.

5. Local Implementation Guidance

When using federal funds, project sponsors are required during planning and design to consider bicycle and pedestrian transportation facilities where appropriate, in conjunction with all new construction and reconstruction of transportation facilities, except where bicycling and pedestrian use are not permitted (*23 USC Section 217 (g)*). NCTCOG encourages and will continue to encourage project sponsors to consider bicyclists and pedestrians in the planning and design of all proposed transportation projects, regardless of funding source, where bicycles and pedestrians are permitted by law.

Project sponsors are responsible for determining, for each project and within the context of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the most appropriate facility or combination of facilities for accommodating bicyclists and pedestrians of all ages and abilities, including but not limited to bicycle lanes, paved shoulders, signed bike routes, shared-use paths, sidewalks, end-of-trip facilities (i.e. bicycle parking, lockers, etc.), marked street crossings, and pedestrian signals and

signs. Design solutions should be context sensitive and should actively involve as many stakeholders as possible.

Providing access for people with disabilities is a civil rights mandate that is not subject to limitation by project costs, levels of use, or exceptional circumstances. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (*Public Law 101-336*) is a civil rights statute that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in all areas of public life. The ADA addresses state and local government services, activities and policy making under the Department of Justice's ADA Title II implementing regulations. The ADA, under Title II, Subpart A, covers public rights-of-way. The ADA requires that recipients of Federal aid and State and local entities that are responsible for roadways and pedestrian facilities do not discriminate on the basis of disability in any highway transportation program, activity, service or benefit they provide to the general public; and to ensure that people with disabilities have equitable opportunities to use the public rights-of-way system. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that responsibilities not detailed specifically in Title II of the ADA are: Rest areas on Interstate highways must be accessible; and pedestrian overpasses, underpasses, and ramps constructed with federal financial assistance must be accessible.

Complete Streets are easier to implement if all levels of government are concurrently applying the same Complete Streets principles, thus minimizing the difference between design standards being applied by the various agencies with jurisdiction over roadways (e.g., city, county, state). Project sponsors within the North Central Texas region are encouraged to consider adopting Complete Streets policies that are consistent with the Complete Streets Policy Statement.

Local Implementation Strategies

So as to achieve the purpose and intent articulated in sections 1, 2 and 3, possible strategies for use by implementing agencies are identified below. These implementation strategies are meant to be contextual in nature yet are standardized enough that it is likely most jurisdictions will implement these strategies in very similar ways. Thus, aesthetics will likely be unique to each jurisdiction but the methods of design will likely be similar. NCTCOG encourages all jurisdictions to utilize these key strategies for all transportation projects, as applicable.

Planning

- Review codes, ordinances and zoning regulations and make changes necessary to remove barriers and assist in the achievement of the Complete Streets vision
- When conducting corridor studies, give explicit consideration to all modes of travel as well as other measures to reduce single occupant automobile trip generation
- Utilize a public participation process that provides community members within the North Central Texas Metropolitan Area adequate notice of public input opportunities related to planning studies and street improvement projects (e.g. resurfacing, re-striping, reconstruction projects)
- Where appropriate, ask transit provider(s) to review planning studies

Design

- Consider when appropriate, roadway design that slows motor vehicles and/or limits access so as to provide greater safety for bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists (e.g. lane narrowing or the reduction of lanes; reduction of access, etc.)
- Evaluate existing and potential on-road bicycle use in all repaving and re-striping projects (i.e. striping of bicycle lanes, paving of roadway shoulders or widening of curb lanes) as well as new roadway construction and reconstruction projects
- Evaluate the effectiveness of narrowing pedestrian crossing distances at intersections where high motor vehicle counts and high pedestrian counts are expected. Narrowing can be accomplished with pedestrian refuge islands or curb bump-outs
- Reduce the number of travel lanes on roadways where appropriate to create more operating room for bicyclists and to improve vehicular flow for motorists
- The latest design standards and guidelines should be used but not to the exclusion of design exceptions as needed for the safety and efficiency of bicyclists and pedestrians. Recognized sources for design standards include:
 - AASHTO *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*
 - AASHTO's *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*
 - AASHTO's *Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities*
 - Federal Highway Administration's *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways*
 - ITE's Recommended Practice *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach Recommended Practice*
 - Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG)
 - NCTCOG Bicycle and Pedestrian Regional Design Guidelines and Best Practices (to be published in early 2012)
 - Respective State Guidelines for design standards
 - American Planning Association's *Complete Streets: Best Policy and Implementation Practices PAS 55, APA Planning Advisory Service, 2010*
- Provide appropriate bicycle accommodation on and along all arterial and collector streets
- Use colored and/or textured crosswalks in high-count pedestrian areas
- Use pedestrian-scale design adjacent to sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities (e.g. pedestrian scale lighting, application of buffers between roadways and sidewalks or shared use paths, application of street furniture, etc.)
- Evaluate the use of traffic calming features along all roadway corridors
- Provide pedestrian accommodation in the form of sidewalks or shared-use paths (if design guidelines are met) adjacent to all arterial and collector streets
- Consider using colored pavement for bicycle lanes in high traffic areas
- Where physical conditions will allow, consider planting trees along newly constructed or reconstructed roadways in residential neighborhoods
- Retrofit sidewalks and curbs with ADA compliant pedestrian ramps as expeditiously as possible so that all pedestrians are served at maximum levels of service

Construction

- Provide alternate routes for bicyclists and pedestrians during construction, reconstruction and repair of streets

Operations

- Time traffic signals to provide adequate pedestrian crossing time. Consider exclusive pedestrian timing or leading pedestrian intervals where pedestrian crossing volumes are high enough.
- Develop a traffic calming policy, or review existing policies or ordinances to ensure that consideration is given to various traffic calming techniques
- Develop a maintenance schedule or program to address roadway, sidewalk and shared use path maintenance needs
- Regularly inspect and fix pavement and/or surface defects before they become issues for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Develop a schedule of regular pavement marking maintenance for on-road bicycle facilities
- Develop a sweeping program that is sensitive to the needs of on-road and off-road bicyclists and pedestrians

6. Exceptions

Not every street can be ideal for every traveler. However, it is still important to provide basic, safe and direct access for users regardless of the design strategy used. Exceptions to this standard should be rare. NCTCOG encourages its local governments to adopt an official Complete Streets exception process that involves enhanced public input and to officially document exceptions when they occur. However, in general, exceptions should be made where:

- Non-motorized use is prohibited by law, such as access controlled freeways. A suitable or more desirable alternative is available within a reasonable distance based on public and staff input. (General acceptable total out of the way distances: pedestrians ¼ mile; bicyclists ½ mile.)
- The cost of accommodation would be excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use. (Note: Excessively disproportionate is sometimes defined as exceeding twenty percent of the cost of the larger transportation project. In this case, the project sponsor may propose an alternate design or spend twenty percent of the project cost of the larger project to improve accommodations for all users.)
- There is a documented absence of current or future need. Documentation should be in a standalone document and easy to access by the public.
- There is public consensus that the accommodation is unwanted. Evidence of this should be well documented and defensible.

7. Evaluation

NCTCOG shall, at a minimum, evaluate this policy and the documents associated with it on an annual basis, and during the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) re-write or update process. This evaluation may include recommendations for amendments to the Complete Streets Policy.

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- ⁱ B.J. Campbell, et al. (2004). *A Review of Pedestrian Safety Research in the United States and Abroad*, Federal Highway Administration Publication # FHWA-RD-03-042.
- ⁱⁱ US Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics. (2002). *National Household Travel Survey: Daily Travel Quick Facts*.
- ⁱⁱⁱ *Surface Transportation Policy Project (2004) Mean Streets*
- ^{iv} Lynott, Jana, et al. (2009). *Planning Complete Streets for an Aging America*. AARP Public Policy Institute.
- ^v National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's National Center for Statistics and Analysis. *Traffic Safety Facts: 2008 Overview*.
- ^{vi} Drennen, Emily. *Economic Effects of Traffic Calming on Urban Small Businesses*. 2003. http://www.emilydrennen.org/TrafficCalming_full.pdf.
- ^{vii} Wilbur Smith Associates Bellevue, Washington. *Public Attitude Survey of Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning May 2007*.

DRAFT

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING COMPLETE STREETS IN NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS

WHEREAS, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is designated as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area by the Governor of the State of Texas in accordance with federal law; and,

WHEREAS, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), comprised primarily of local elected officials, is the regional transportation policy body associated with the North Central Texas Council of Governments and has been and continues to be the regional forum for cooperative decisions on transportation; and,

WHEREAS, “Complete Streets” are defined as roadways that enable safe and convenient access for all users, including motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, transit users and operators, commercial vehicles, and emergency responders of all ages and abilities and are conducive to efficient movement of people; and,

WHEREAS, “Complete Streets” are achieved by incorporating a strategic focus into the transportation process to routinely plan for, design, build, and maintain the necessary infrastructure while integrating elements that encourage safe and convenient walking, bicycling, and transit use; and,

WHEREAS, “Complete Streets” have been shown to improve safety, lower transportation costs, improve air quality, provide alternatives to private automobiles, encourage health through walking/biking, and create a sense of place; and,

WHEREAS, “Complete Streets” policies and plans have been adopted by the USDOT, other Texas MPOs including Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization, and Houston-Galveston Area Council, and over 249 additional jurisdictions; and,

WHEREAS, the ‘NCTCOG Complete Streets Overview’ (Attachment 1) provides guidance and support for implementing “Complete Streets” in the North Central Texas region; and,

WHEREAS, the NCTCOG Regional Complete Streets Policy Statement supports the NCTCOG Metropolitan Transportation Plan goals and planning elements which specifically state “Providing transportation choices is vital to maintaining and improving the quality of life for North Central Texas residents”; and,

WHEREAS, the NCTCOG Complete Streets Policy Statement supports the goals and policies of NCTCOG’s Congestion Management Program Area including the Sustainable Development and Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs; and,

WHEREAS, the NCTCOG Complete Streets Policy Statement supports national and local efforts by recognizing the linkages between the built environment and calls on public officials to participate in local and regional land use and transportation support planning and policy making processes; and,

WHEREAS, the NCTCOG Complete Streets Policy Statement addresses federal and state guidance as established in (*23 USC Section 217 (g)*), the USDOT ‘Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Regulations and Recommendations’ issued on March 15, 2010, and

the TxDOT 'Guidelines Emphasizing Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations' Memorandum issued on March 23, 2011.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED THAT:

Section 1. The Regional Transportation Council endorses the NCTCOG Complete Streets Policy Statement.

Section 2. The Regional Transportation Council commits to applying the NCTCOG Complete Streets Policy Statement to both new and retrofit projects as identified in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

Section 3. The Regional Transportation Council commits to incorporating the NCTCOG Complete Streets Policy Statement except in unusual or extraordinary circumstances.

Section 4. The Regional Transportation Council encourages local governments to utilize and follow Section 5 of the 'NCTCOG | Complete Streets Overview' so as to achieve the purpose and intent articulated in it, and to adopt and implement a local Complete Streets Policy.

Section 5. The Regional Transportation Council commits to provide local governments assistance with the implementation of the NCTCOG Complete Streets Policy Statement.

Section 6. This resolution shall be transmitted to all 12 counties within the NCTCOG Metropolitan Planning Area.

Section 7. This resolution shall be effective upon adoption by the Regional Transportation Council.

Chairman, Regional Transportation Council
City of

I hereby certify that this resolution was adopted by the Regional Transportation Council of the North Central Texas Council of Governments for the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area on XX, XX, X, 2011.

Secretary
Regional Transportation Council
Councilmember,