

EXCERPTS FROM:



**GUIDE TO
COMPLETE STREETS CAMPAIGNS**

**For Thunderhead Alliance
Member Organizations
March 2006**

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If we forgot anyone, please forgive us and let us know. Then watch for your name in our next update.

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CHAPTER 1 – Introduction

Thunderhead Alliance

The Thunderhead Alliance is the national coalition of state and local bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organizations. 119 strong in 47 states and one Canadian province, Thunderhead's member organizations employ more than 187 full-time staff and reach a combined dues-paying membership of more than 94,000 people. Thunderhead's mission is to unite these organizations, help strengthen them, and create new ones where they are most needed.

Complete streets policies that require safe accommodation of all users of a street can eliminate most of this nation's barriers to bicycling and walking. Thunderhead's National Complete the Streets Campaign has a goal of helping our organizations win at least one complete streets policy, local or state-level, in all 50 states by 2008 in order to influence a federal-level complete streets policy through the reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU, the U.S. federal transportation law. This tapestry of local, state and federal policies will ensure that no transportation project can move forward without being complete!

If you are a leader or potential leader of a Thunderhead organization, this [Guide to Complete Streets Campaigns](#) is written for you. If you are not a leader of such an organization, this Guide will be your window into the world of bringing positive change to communities through professional bicycle and pedestrian advocacy. Read as if you are a leader of a Thunderhead organization and bring these elements of this powerful transportation reform campaign to your own officials. Sometimes all it takes is one determined, professional voice. And make sure to connect with your Thunderhead organization on our Links page at: www.thunderheadalliance.org/links.htm .

This [Guide to Complete Streets Campaigns](#) is a roadmap to winning a complete streets policy in your jurisdiction. It is also a guide to effective community organizing, as it is our hope that in winning a complete streets policy our Thunderhead member organizations will also gain strength, increase partnerships, and in many ways make their communities better with improved conditions for bicycling and walking.

The Concepts of Complete Streets and Complete the Streets Campaigns

Complete streets are thoroughfares that serve all users, moving by car, truck, transit, bicycle, wheelchair, or foot. Complete streets allow all their users to travel in a safe and welcoming way. You, as a leader of a Thunderhead organization, as a champion of bicycling and walking issues, as a bicyclist and pedestrian, will acknowledge that the vast majority of the current North American transportation system is not comprised of complete streets. Many streets lack sidewalks, few accommodate bicyclists well, most encourage traffic to travel too close and fast, many don't have curb ramps at intersections or across

driveways, and so on. We all know that these types of streets are less safe, less functional, and a hindrance to healthy communities and people.

The Cost Misconception: A common misconception is that complete streets cost more to build than incomplete streets. In fact, complete streets most often cost no more and many times can cost less than incomplete streets. For instance, a common street cross section that serves only cars is a four lane speedway with no shoulders, sidewalks or intersection treatments for people. Using the same right-of-way width, this design can be reshaped into two narrower through lanes, one center turn lane, and bike lanes and sidewalks on both sides. By using less width for the most expensive elements, truck weight standard asphalt and subsurface, and adding less expensive sidewalks, this design, often referred to as a “road diet” when applied to existing roads, actually saves money. Not only that, this design has been proven to improve traffic flow and safety for motor vehicles by better controlling turning movements. Many other complete streets designs offer similar cost savings. You may even want to bring up the economic benefits of streets that attract visitors and offer access to more employees. Be sure to address this misconception early in your campaign so that you can focus your valuable time on instituting a policy for your communities.

Why Complete Streets Are Important

Bottom line: Bicyclists and pedestrians are dying! A full 13% of traffic deaths in the U.S. are bicyclists and pedestrians yet most roadways are still being built with only cars and trucks in mind.

CHAPTER 2 - Complete Streets Policies

Introduction

Complete streets policies represent a potentially powerful tool for you and your organization. They are the next step in transforming your streetscapes and your communities.

As the national coalition of state and local bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organizations, the Thunderhead Alliance invested in a national survey and analysis of complete streets policy statements, directives, legislation, resolutions, plans, ordinances, and design manuals that require routinely building and reconstructing streets to be safe and convenient for all users, including those on foot and bicycle. This chapter summarizes the results of the inventory of jurisdictions with some form of complete streets policy and adds information about policies we learned about or which were adopted since the survey was completed in December 2004. It makes specific recommendations for creating effective complete streets policies and campaigns.

Methodology

This analysis of complete streets policies was derived from a survey sent to leaders of Thunderhead organizations and state and local bicycle-pedestrian coordinators throughout the United States (see Appendix C for a copy of the survey form), as well as information informally collected on new and newly discovered policies. Respondents were self-selected, although an extra effort was made to get responses from jurisdictions where policies were known to be in place. The fact that the responses came from both agency staff and

Thunderhead leaders means that, in some cases, different perspectives are reflected for a single policy. The two-part survey concentrated on the characteristics of the policy and on the steps taken that led to its adoption.

The baseline criteria for inclusion of a policy discussed in this chapter included: 1. calling for routine accommodation of walking and bicycling as a requirement, not as an option, and 2. covering all roads under the jurisdictions' control (this excludes bike/ped plans that only call for accommodation on certain streets). There was no evaluation on the effectiveness of these policies on the ground. However, since the survey came out, the National Complete Streets Coalition, a collaborative effort of organizations working for complete streets including the Thunderhead Alliance, has developed a standard for effective complete streets policies posted at: www.completestreets.org. For a list of active Coalition organizations see Chapter 5. Also, the Thunderhead Alliance has developed a Complete Streets Policy Checklist based on these recommended elements (see Appendix F) to help with evaluation of future policies. We have also become more familiar with what really works to create complete streets.

It should also be recognized that there is no perfect complete streets policy. Jurisdictions have taken a variety of different approaches, so these policies defy easy characterization. In addition, a policy that looks good on paper may have been essentially ignored within an agency, while a seemingly weak policy may have been implemented with gusto by local planners. So we define a good complete streets policy as one that achieves a planning, design and project development process with a constellation of new training, new procedures and design manual changes that put bicycling, walking, and transit on a par with motor vehicles. This chapter is the beginning of a learning curve, not a definitive account.

The Complete Streets Policy Checklist (Appendix F) still does not measure which policies are resulting in good outcomes on our roadways and in our communities. This will be an essential step for the future including performance measures. In addition, the analysis stops short of delving into the many design issues concerning completing the streets.

What does the Federal Guidance policy say? Because a number of the state and local policies are based on statements in the USDOT Design Guidance, a review of that document is pertinent here (see Appendix F, Example 1 for the full Guidance text). While the language in TEA-21, where it originated, fell short of requiring states to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians, the subsequent Guidance recommends that each state make such accommodation routine. The policy states that:

...bicycle and pedestrian ways shall be established in new construction and reconstruction projects in all urbanized areas unless one or more of three conditions are met.

The USDOT Design Guidance also calls for paved shoulders on rural roads and designs that are accessible for disabled people. It recommends using the best currently available design standards and guidelines. In a more general discussion of the approach to implementation, it recommends re-writing design manuals to include safe bicycle and pedestrian facilities while applying engineering judgment to roadway design.

The USDOT Design Guidance lists additional steps that should be taken, including:

- planning for the long-term anticipating future bicycle or pedestrian use,
- addressing the need to cross roadways, and
- requiring that exceptions be approved at a senior level and documented with supporting data.

With regard to exceptions, the Guidance lists three. They are where:

- the costs are excessive (defined as more than 20% of project costs),
- there is an absence of need (including future need), and
- bicyclists or pedestrians are prohibited from traveling by law.

The Thunderhead Alliance has developed a list of ways to enhance this Guidance for use in developing new complete streets policies. See these recommendations later in this chapter.

We use the term ‘policies’ loosely, because they take many forms. At the state level, five states have passed legislation: Oregon, Florida, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Maryland. Two states have policies that were issued by their State Transportation Commissions (North and South Carolina). Most other states have DOTs that have issued internal policies or directives.

The policies at the city, MPO, and county level include city and MPO plans, local resolutions and ordinances, and local design manuals. Some of the newest policies are tax ordinances in San Diego and Sacramento, California (approved by voters in November 2004).

Another way to analyze the policies is to look at the split between those achieved primarily through public or inherently political processes (interaction with elected officials or other political bodies) and those achieved through internal agency processes. Of the 36 policies, 13 are laws, resolutions, or ordinances and 23 are internal policies, plans, or design manuals. In several cases the internal agency-driven processes were greatly influenced by outside agents, particularly bicycle and/or pedestrian advisory groups. These policies may have also had to go through a public approval process. In addition, a comprehensive complete streets policy may take shape at several levels: first as a general policy statement in a resolution passed by an elective body, then fleshed out with administrative policies set by the implementing agency.

It is encouraging to see that complete streets policies can be achieved in many different ways at different government levels. While the statewide policies would be expected to have the most widespread effect, they commonly affect only state-owned and state-maintained roads. Oregon’s state law is an exception as it affects all roads, no matter the jurisdiction. Other state policies may influence local communities and lead to the creation of more local policies. In California for example, Deputy Directive 64 seems to have spurred additional local action.

We have also discovered some complete streets policies that we call ‘paper policies’ because they look good on paper but are not being implemented. Bringing these policies to light is important in helping Thunderhead leaders and agency officials begin to work on their full implementation. See the implementation chapter for more details.

In the more detailed table below, you will find paper policies listed below model policies. The model policies are highlighted due to the fact that the leaders of the Thunderhead organizations serving those areas have found them to be helpful to their bicycle and pedestrian advocacy efforts. The paper policies have not yet been helpful to the Thunderhead leaders.

When were policies adopted? The move toward complete streets has been growing. Most have come about since 2001, and a significant portion were adopted in 2004 and 2005. This is in part a testament to the influence of the 2000 USDOT Design Guidance, “Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel,” which was issued in response to language included in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). This Guidance is an important base for many complete streets policies. A few of the inventoried policies precede

this era. For example, Oregon's was enacted in 1971 and offers an opportunity to evaluate longer-term impacts of these policies.

What do the state and local policies say? It is important to note that of all the policies included in the survey, only a few of the policies, laws, resolutions, ordinances, plans, or design manuals use the term 'complete streets.' Nonetheless most of these policies have great language setting out their vision. A few examples follow.

...bicycling and walking accommodations should be a routine part of the Department's planning, design, construction and operating activities.
(SC Department of Transportation Commission resolution)

Bicycle and pedestrian ways shall be established in new construction and reconstruction of road and bridge projects unless one or more of four conditions are met. (Cleveland, Ohio MPO)

Footpaths and bicycle trails {bikeways and walkways} including curb cuts or ramps as part of the project, shall be provided wherever a highway, road or street is being constructed, reconstructed or relocated.
(Oregon statute)

This document outlines an approach to designing streets that are more "complete" in the sense of accomplishing all of the goals associated with the dominant form of public space in urban societies – our streets. ... Complete streets are those that adequately provide for all roadway users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, and motorists, to the extent appropriate to the function and context of the street.
(Sacramento, CA Best Practices for Complete Streets)

Policy Issues

Does the policy really require accommodation? Many jurisdictions have plans and policies that express a *desire* to ensure the road serves all users. The most basic element of any complete streets policy is that it ensures that roads are built with everyone in mind. In some cases, policies use the word "consider." For example,

The Department fully considers the needs of non-motorized travelers (including pedestrians, bicyclists and persons with disabilities) in all programming, planning, maintenance, construction, operations and project development activities and products.
(CalTrans Deputy Directive 64)

This should raise a red flag for Thunderhead leaders, because 'consideration,' in the words of one Thunderhead leader, can give agencies "tons of wiggle room." That said, the California policy has been used effectively by Thunderhead leaders to press for localized complete streets initiatives. The way to turn 'consideration' into a more robust policy is to establish clear guidelines for what it means: filling out a checklist, getting approval of

exceptions, etc. Better yet, avoid the terms “consider” and “consideration” choosing instead stronger language such as “shall be included in every project.”

And always be sure to read beyond the initial lofty statement. Even with strong language in the initial statement, some policies may not function as complete streets policies. For example, while Arizona has a policy which states "It is Arizona DOT’s policy to include provisions for bicycle travel in all new major construction and major reconstruction projects on the state highway system,” the many exceptions and restrictions that are listed just after this statement set up hurdles that make it clear that providing complete streets will occur only in special circumstances, not as a matter of course.

Our RECOMMENDATION is that you use stronger “shall be established” or “shall be included” language instead of “consider.” These will, in effect, require accommodation to be a routine part of all road design and re-design.

Exceptions: A more precise way to get at whether policies truly require complete streets is by looking at any specific exceptions, and how those exceptions are handled. By setting a rigorous, formal process for approving exceptions, agencies create a process that helps ensure compliance. Some of the policies list specific exceptions, including:

- excessive cost,
- absence of need,
- lack of right of way, and
- no need during simple repaving projects.

Other exceptions specified in some policies are public safety, environmental considerations, project purpose and scope, low traffic volumes, and conflicts with local plans. These exceptions go far beyond the USDOT Design Guidance, which lists three limited exceptions. As discussed previously in this chapter , these are:

- excessive cost,
- absence of need, and
- where bicyclists and pedestrians are prohibited.

The USDOT Guidance defines excessive cost as more than 20% of project costs and specifies that need should be defined in terms of potential *future* pedestrian or bicycle travel (we all know about the potential for significant latent demand).

Remember the Cost Misconception: A common misconception is that complete streets cost more to build than incomplete streets. In fact, complete streets most often cost no more and many times can cost less than incomplete streets. For instance, a common street cross section that serves only cars is a four lane speedway with no shoulders, sidewalks or intersection treatments for people. Using the same right-of-way width, this design can be reshaped into two narrower through lanes, one center turn lane, and bike lanes and sidewalks on both sides. By using less width for the most expensive elements, truck weight standard asphalt and subsurface, and adding less expensive sidewalks, this design, often

referred to as a “road diet” when applied to existing roads, actually saves money. Not only that, this design has been proven to improve traffic flow and safety for motor vehicles by better controlling turning movements. Many other complete streets designs offer similar cost savings. You may even want to bring up the economic benefits of streets that attract visitors and offer access to more employees. Be sure to address this misconception early in your campaign so that you can focus your valuable time on instituting a policy for your communities.

When America Bikes, the coalition of eight national bicycle advocacy organizations working on the reauthorization of TEA-21, the federal transportation law, was seeking to place complete streets language in the new law, costs seemed to be a primary issue with members of Congress. America Bikes collected statements from DOT officials who said that integrating bicycle and pedestrian provisions from the beginning should not significantly increase costs. Of course one of the beauties of a complete streets policy should be that bicycle and pedestrian facilities are no longer fighting for the small pie of funds specifically designated for bicycling and walking (such as Enhancements or CMAQ), but are simply part of general transportation spending.

In line with these statements, cost did not seem to be a primary implementation issue for survey respondents. A few respondents did note that once initial budgets are set, including bicycle or pedestrian provisions can become almost impossible. Others noted that right-of-way acquisition can be the most expensive part of a road project, so wider roads with bike lanes may be a barrier. In such cases, reducing the number of travel lanes, otherwise known as a road diet as mentioned above, can complete the street actually at a cost savings.

It should be noted that the most common exception allowed is ‘excessive cost,’ often set at 20 percent of project cost. Michael Ronkin said it is important to be specific about what constitutes ‘total project cost’ since many projects are broken down into smaller parts. Sidewalks may be a significant cost if the project is defined as paving of a one-mile road subsection, but may make up a smaller portion when the project is defined more broadly to include all improvements in the whole corridor.

Our RECOMMENDATION to you is that if your policy includes an “excessive cost” exception, make sure that it clearly states the broadest scope of the project so that sub-section cost breakouts are not possible.

Exceptions Approval Process: The next question is whether the policies require any formal approval when exceptions are made and all modes are *not* accommodated. The USDOT Guidance recommends that such exceptions should include documentation and require approval from senior management. Just nine of the 36 policies require such formal justification. The survey form did not ask about the exact method for documenting justifications, but in some cases survey respondents mentioned that there are design exemption forms or required checklists. Thunderhead leaders noted that a formal exemption process was valuable. One leader put it this way:

At least now, the engineers have to file a formal ‘design exemption’ outlining the reasons for not including bike or ped accommodation instead of just not doing it.

Our RECOMMENDATION is that you should work for policies that have a limited set of exceptions, if any, and that require a formal approval process for each exception. Policies should reverse the current norm from having to justify accommodating all modes to having to justify NOT accommodating them.

While a reluctant agency can still find ways to use exemptions and other language to exclude accommodation, the process gives Thunderhead leaders both leverage and the opportunity to work with and change the attitudes of reluctant engineers and planners. At the end of this chapter, there are further recommendations for crafting policy language, as well as examples of good language already in use.

Design specifications: Another issue is how prescriptive the policies are with regards to actual street design. Few of the policies provide specific language on what types of accommodation should be undertaken (e.g. when and where to build bike lanes or add sidewalks with curb-and-gutter, etc) unless the policy is itself a design manual. Most of the documents are, instead, broad policy statements that refer to other guidelines or design manuals for design specifics. In some cases, jurisdictions have achieved complete streets by revising their standard street cross-sections to include other modes. The USDOT Guidance recommends that agencies should “design facilities to the best currently available standards and guidelines,” mentioning AASHTO and ITE standards.

Our RECOMMENDATION is that you steer away from specifying design standards in your policy, especially in an initial complete streets policy campaign. The discussion of the intent (a commitment to build streets for all users) should be separated from the design discussion. As Thunderhead leaders, your role is to push for the *vision* of complete streets. Getting bogged down in arguing about narrow specifications could be deadly to the overall effort.

What modes do the policies cover? The ideal complete streets policy makes clear that roads must be built and reconstructed to serve all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and travelers of all ages and abilities. Few of the existing 36 policies are that comprehensive. Several of the policies discuss accommodating transit and people with disabilities, but many do not. The USDOT Design Guidance makes specific reference to accommodating people with disabilities as follows:

The 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act, building on an earlier law requiring curb ramps in new, altered, and existing sidewalks, added impetus to improving conditions for sidewalk users. People with

disabilities rely on the pedestrian and transit infrastructure, and the links between them, for access and mobility. (USDOT guidance)

A few notable examples incorporate transit elements. For example, see San Francisco's Transit First policy. The Sacramento Transportation and Air Quality Collaborative's "Best Practices for Complete Streets," includes a section on designing the road for transit users, noting that, "*The key design issue in planning for transit is the out-of-vehicle time (time spent waiting and time spent walking to and from the transit stop) which often plays a more important role in the decision to use transit than time spent in the vehicle itself.*"

Our RECOMMENDATION is that you seek complete street policies that incorporate transit and active living. Why? This is one of the most significant differences between 'routine accommodation' and 'complete streets.' If complete streets by definition provide safe travel for all users, and if part of the intent of pursuing complete streets is to build alliances beyond bicycle and pedestrian concerns, advocacy leaders seeking to build alliances in a broad complete streets campaign will need to amend the language to discuss other issues.

Essentially, planning for transit is planning for pedestrians, and even for bicycle users, as bike-on-bus programs continue to expand.

The US DOT Design Guidance advocates this approach. In a section called "Rewrite the Manuals" Specific bicycle/pedestrian manuals are portrayed as an interim step toward a recommended total re-write of general street design manuals. At the same time, the Guidance also recommends allowing 'engineering judgment' to guide decisions on a case-by-case basis. All of the examples given show circumstances in which *more* bike/ped accommodations should be made than those identified by design standards.

Our RECOMMENDATION is that you follow Oregon's example, if possible, and keep your policy language non-specific to responsible agencies.

What roads are covered? Most of the 36 policies cover only those roads that are under the direct responsibility of the agency in question. For example, many of the state DOT policies only cover state-owned roads. In the case of MPOs, they tend to cover roadway projects funded through MPO-disbursed funds (which are usually federal transportation dollars). The new sales tax ordinances in Sacramento and San Diego counties apply to all the projects funded under the ordinances. A few of the local policies are directed at developers building new subdivisions. Michael Ronkin, Oregon DOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Manager, notes that the passive grammar of Oregon's state law has helped ensure that it applies to every road. Oregon's law says, "wherever a road is constructed" without referring to the agency responsible for building or maintaining it.

Funding: Most of the policies identified do not include specific funding provisions. The USDOT Design Guidance does not mention funding (except a suggested restriction on excessive cost). The notable exception is Oregon, which set aside one percent of its state transportation funds for bicycling and walking facilities. More often, the policies make bicycle and pedestrian accommodation a prerequisite for funding that already exists – the MPO policies and the tax ordinances specify that funded projects must accommodate travel by alternative modes, usually foot and bicycle. The other policies usually assume that funding will come from standard sources. But, again, remember the misconception that complete streets always cost more. See more about this misconception earlier in this chapter.

Our RECOMMENDATION is that you think through funding issues ahead of time and identify, if possible, a funding stream for the policy for those complete streets projects that will add costs. This, along with a strong message that complete streets often do not cost more than incomplete streets, will help you secure your policy.

One Thunderhead leader mentioned that their state's restriction on spending gas-tax money only on roads may get in the way of local jurisdictions' implementation on their new MPO policy. Thirty states have such a restriction on the books, but it is unclear whether they have actually prevented funding of bicycle and pedestrian projects.¹

So, what is a good policy?

All of this discussion makes complete streets policies seem pretty complex. To simplify things, we tried to distill the elements that do the most to contribute to that change in agency culture that leads to full integration of all modes. They include: inclusion of as many modes as possible; a process that requires any exceptions to be approved at a higher level, and a clear definition of those exceptions. We also checked on what implementation steps have been undertaken, and whether Thunderhead leaders deem the policy useful (even if it is not perfect). The table below gives the results of this scan highlighting those policies that have been helpful as models. You will find these model policies marked on the map for Thunderhead's National Complete the Streets Campaign at: <http://www.thunderheadalliance.org/completestreets.htm> . Our goal for this campaign is to help our organizations win at least one model complete streets policy, local or state-level, in all 50 states by 2008 in order to influence a model federal-level complete streets policy through the reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU.

¹ A list of state restrictions can be found in the Brookings Institution report, *Fueling Transportation Finance: A Primer on the Gas Tax* <http://www.brookings.edu/es/urban/publications/gastax.htm>.

Complete Streets Policies Table

Model policies followed by “paper” policies

State	Project title	Users?	Senior-level approval required for exceptions?	Extra Exceptions allowed (beyond cost, no need, prohibited)	Implementation steps undertaken	Thunderhead org leaders have found policy helpful
Model Policies						
CA	California Dept of Transportation Deputy Directive 64 internal policy	ped, bike, disabled	no	exceptions not specified	updated procedures; more?	yes
CA	Sacramento routine accommodation sales tax initiative	bike, ped	no	none specified	unknown	yes
CA	Sacramento	bike, ped				yes
CA	Bay Area MPO (MTC) Second Cycle Programming Policies, screening criteria	bike, ped	no	exceptions not specified	unknown	yes
CA	Santa Barbara Circulation Element, General Plan	all	no	insufficient ROW do not plan separate bike facilities on roads with 25 mph limits	unknown	yes
CA	San Diego City Street Design Manual		yes	Excessive cost Insufficient ROW	re-written manual	yes
CO	Colorado Springs Complete Streets Amendment to the Intermodal Transp. Plan	ped, bike, transit	not stated	unsafe impractical	rewriting manuals	yes
CO	Ft. Collins Colorado	ped, bike, transit	yes	none	restructured procedures - (LOS) rewritten design manuals	yes
CO	Boulder Multimodal Corridors & Transportation	ped, bike, transit	yes	none	restructured procedures re-written manuals	yes

State	Project title	Users?	Senior-level approval required for exceptions?	Extra Exceptions allowed (beyond cost, no need, prohibited)	Implementation steps undertaken	Thunderhead org leaders have found policy helpful
	Network Plans				training	
FL	West Palm Beach FL Transportation Element	ped, bike	not stated	exceptions not specified		yes
FL	Florida Bicycle & Pedestrian Ways statute	ped, bike	yes	excessive cost absence of need where contrary to public safety	unknown	yes
IL	DuPage County Healthy Roads Initiative	ped, bike	not stated	exceptions not specified	unknown	yes
MA	Bicycle-Pedestrian Access Law, Massachusetts state legislature (Chapter 90E)	ped, bike	Yes	discretion of commissioner, safety environmental quality ROW conflicts	unknown	yes
MO	St. Louis Legacy 2030 Long-Range Plan	ped, bike, transit	not stated	no exceptions specified	checklist	yes
MO	Columbia Missouri Model Street Standards	ped, bike	No			yes
MO	St. Joseph MO bike-ped plan	ped, bike	yes	shoulders on rural roads	unknown	yes
NC	North Carolina DOT Bicycle Policy	ped, bike	No		unknown	yes
OH	Columbus Ohio MPO (MORPC) Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Policy	ped, bike	yes		unknown	yes

State	Project title	Users?	Senior-level approval required for exceptions?	Extra Exceptions allowed (beyond cost, no need, prohibited)	Implementation steps undertaken	Thunderhead org leaders have found policy helpful
OH	Cleveland Ohio MPO (NOACA) Regional Transportation Investment Policy	ped, bike	yes	extreme topography/natural resource constraints low ADT - below 1,000 simple resurfacing projects	unknown	yes
OR	Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Statutes	ped, bike	yes	public safety	restructured procedures re-written manuals training	yes
SC	South Carolina DOT Commission Resolution	ped, bike	not stated	exceptions not specified	restructured procedures training	yes
TN	Tennessee DOT Bicycle and Pedestrian policy	ped, bike	yes	bridges insufficient ROW repaving	unknown	yes
VA	VDOT Policy for Integrating Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations	ped, bike	Yes	environmental impacts safety purpose & scope of Project	none	yes
VT	Vermont Bicycle Pedestrian Plan	ped, bike	not stated	not specified	training	yes
Paper Policies						
CA	SF Transit First policy city ordinance	ped, bike, transit	not stated	not specified	unknown	no
CA	San Diego County Transnet Tax Extension provision	ped, bike	not stated	exceptions not specified	unknown	too early to say
FL-AL	Florida-Alabama Transportation Planning Organization (TPO (bicycle plan))	ped, bike	not stated	no exceptions specified	updating procedures	too soon to tell
FL	St. Petersburg "citytrails" plan					no

State	Project title	Users?	Senior-level approval required for exceptions?	Extra Exceptions allowed (beyond cost, no need, prohibited)	Implementation steps undertaken	Thunderhead org leaders have found policy helpful
KY	Kentucky Pedestrian and Bicycle Travel Policy	ped, bike	not stated	exceptions not specified	none	no
MD	Maryland Transportation Code Ann. 2-602	ped, bike	not stated	exceptions not specified	none	unknown
MO	p. 24-25 of MoDOT's Practical Design Implementation Manual	ped, bike				Not yet
NC	Charlotte Urban Street Design Guidelines internal policy	ped, bike, transit	yes	None	restructured procedures	not yet
PA	Penn Bicycle & Ped Checklist Training (App. J to PennDOT Design Manual)	ped, bike	no	exceptions not specified	checklist	no
RI	Rhode Island state law and policy	ped, bike	no	public safety, environmental or scenic quality, ROW conflict at Director's discretion	unknown	no
TN	Knoxville MPO Bicycle Accomm. Policy		yes		unknown	not yet
TX	Capital Area MPO, Texas Mobility Plan 2030	ped, bike	not stated	demonstrated alternative plan	unknown	unknown

Overall Recommendations for Policy Development

First, here are some concluding policy observations:

1. Policies take many forms and have been adopted at all levels of government, with adoption accelerating in recent years.
2. Policies vary in how strict they are in requiring accommodation. Some have set specific exceptions. Most policies do not themselves give design specifications.

Despite imperfections, Thunderhead leaders see policies as providing important leverage for their efforts.

3. Most policies focus almost exclusively on bicycling and/or walking and do not significantly discuss transit users, people with disabilities, or other user groups.
4. Implementation issues are significant; the work does not end with policy adoption.
5. No policies include effective performance measures, and little data is being collected on how well they are working.

Also, we recommend including these elements specified in the “Elements of Complete Streets Policies” on the complete streets web site: www.completestreets.org :

ELEMENTS OF COMPLETE STREETS POLICIES

1. The Principle

- Complete streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities must be able to safely move along and across a complete street.
- Creating complete streets means changing the policies and practices of transportation agencies.
- A complete streets policy ensures that the entire right of way is routinely designed and operated to enable safe access for all users.
- Transportation agencies must ensure that all road projects result in a complete street appropriate to local context and needs.

2. Elements of a Good Complete Streets Policy

A good complete streets policy:

- Specifies that ‘all users’ includes pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicles and users, and motorists, of all ages and abilities.
- Aims to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected network.
- Recognizes the need for flexibility: that all streets are different and user needs will be balanced.
- Is adoptable by all agencies to cover all roads.
- Applies to both new and retrofit projects, including design, planning, maintenance, and operations, for the entire right of way.
- Makes any exceptions specific and sets a clear procedure that requires high-level approval of exceptions.
- Directs the use of the latest and best design standards.
- Directs that complete streets solutions fit in with context of the community.
- Establishes performance standards with measurable outcomes.

2.5 Implementation

An effective complete streets policy should prompt transportation agencies to:

- Restructure their procedures to accommodate all users on every project.
- Re-write their design manuals to encompass the safety of all users.
- Re-train planners and engineers in balancing the needs of diverse users.

- Create new data collection procedures to track how well the streets are serving all users.

Sample Policies

Many Thunderhead leaders and agencies have asked for sample complete streets policy language. Such samples are difficult to craft, as every jurisdiction has unique needs. A solid complete streets policy should:

- a. require accommodation as a routine part of all road design,
- b. set a clear procedure for specific exceptions that requires formal, high-level approval, and
- c. direct agencies to use the best available design standards and guidelines.

For more details, see “Elements of a Complete Streets Policy” (above and on the complete streets web site). Links to a variety of existing policies can be found in the appendices of this Guide and on the complete streets website; finding a policy close by can be an effective starting point. Also see the Complete Streets Policy Checklist (Appendix F).

Starting with the US DOT Design Guidance

Since 2000, most of the strong complete streets policies have been modeled after the USDOT Design Guidance: Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel (see Appendix E, Example 1) which includes a solid policy statement that can, and has been, adapted for a number of different formats and holds credibility with transportation agencies. Here are some ways it can be improved upon.

- Add a compelling case statement at the top. See Appendix E, Example 2, the introductory text to the MORPC Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Policy. We suggest using the phrase ‘complete streets’ instead of ‘routine accommodation.’
- Make sure you use stronger “shall be established” or “shall be included” language. Do not allow your agency, as some have done, to borrow the weaker points and very weak “consider” language from TEA-21.
- Look at eliminating a specific percentage for excessive cost, or specify that the percentage covers the entire project, as opposed to a single road segment. The 20 percent, oft-used figure for excessive cost has been disputed in some cases.
- Elevate two important points that are somewhat buried in item 4 of the USDOT Design Guidance:
 - that ‘scarcity of need’ should be considered in terms of future, rather than current use, and

- that exceptions should be approved at ‘a senior level’ and build on this by requiring the agency to justify not accommodating bicyclists and pedestrians through a detailed process.
- Add language to clarify the need to accommodate transit vehicles, transit users, as well as people with disabilities. To date, only a few policies include transit, and none follow the format of the Design Guidance.
- Consider adding language on measurement of progress toward creating complete streets.

Thunderhead leaders who are looking for a more general resolution on complete streets may want to consider the South Carolina Department of Transportation Commission’s resolution (Appendix E, Example 3).

Our RECOMMENDATION is that you strengthen your organization by using complete streets to build coalitions with natural allies: public health groups, smart growth groups, transit groups, children or senior advocacy groups. See Chapters 4 and 5.

Opposition: Seven respondents in the survey indicated public resistance, including landowner resistance to wider right-of-ways, worries about costs, and concerns about safety or appropriateness of accommodation. The most organized public resistance appears to be in Santa Barbara, where their circulation element, in place since 1995, has inspired a website called Cars are Basic: <http://www.silcom.com/~cab/cab.htm>.

Some respondents mentioned resistance from specific groups, including from within the DOT, from the local congestion management association (which saw the move as competing for funds), and from the development industry (in those cases where the developers are responsible for providing the roads).

A few sample comments from the survey:

People from our Board and Transportation Advisory Committee, in particular, county engineers, were leery. They insist we need a map with lines on it so they know where they really have to put facilities. At this time, NOACA doesn’t have such a map and the BAC met recently to consider the idea and rejected it as inconsistent with our policy. (Cleveland MPO)

Opponents have argued that Florida DOT implementation is wasteful (i.e., that bicycle lanes are underused, relative to cost) or is unsafe -- many members of the public feel that cyclists are more appropriately accommodated on separated paths. (Florida)

There is a fear that bike lanes would invite children and inappropriate users to particularly busy roads. (Illinois)

The good news is that in many cases the policies are not opposed, but may be resisted by planners or engineers mainly because they are not quite sure how to go about it. In South Carolina, initial resistance softened as the engineers applied themselves to the task of figuring out *how* to make accommodation. Thunderhead leaders can address this issue early by providing agency officials with options for training; contact the Association of Bicycle and Pedestrian Professionals for more information about consultants who can provide such assistance.

Our RECOMMENDATION is to be alert to the concerns of opponents in your early outreach efforts, and when possible find ways to directly address their concerns. See “Element 3 – Gauge Your Resources” in Chapter 4 for advice on opposition.

Keys to Policy adoption success: The survey asked Thunderhead leaders to summarize the roots of successful policy adoption in three key points. A few of their answers:

1. *Supportive, sympathetic staff at MPO.*
 2. *Adoption of routine accommodation at rival MPO in northeast Ohio in fall of 2003, challenging leadership position of our MPO.*
 3. *Threat to federal funding for local transportation projects if they do not adopt routine accommodation policy.*(Columbus Ohio MPO)
-
1. *Strong grass-roots support.*
 2. *Constantly positive image in the media (we never engaged in public criticism of anyone).*
 3. *Working the media.*(Columbia MO)
-
1. *Existence of DD64 [California statewide policy].*
 2. *Supportive MTC [MPO] chairman who is a friend.*
 3. *MTC prides itself on being progressive.* (CA Bay Area MPO)

In a broader sense, Thunderhead leaders should also see complete streets as just one part of making communities better for bicycling and walking. Much of what encourages people to walk, bicycle and use transit are the variety of destinations within a reasonable distance. Without land-use changes, sprawl will continue to erode the ability to walk and bicycle. Complete streets are a part of this mix because they are a way to make common cause with other organizations working for healthier communities that offer residents more choices and better access.

CHAPTER 3 - Implementation

Complete Streets Implementation Issues

Once a policy has been adopted, the hard work begins: effective implementation. A few of the policies identified in this Guide are no more than ‘paper polices.’ They hold promise, but little or nothing has been done to implement them and integrate new

practices into agency procedures. In some cases, few people even seem to know about them. See the detailed table in Chapter 2 for a list of these policies.

Your complete streets policy campaign will initially target a specific public policy decision by the legislature or the transportation agency. It is important however that throughout the campaign you keep your eye on your ultimate goal – major changes in the way all transportation decision-making is done to achieve a balanced multi-modal outcome.

For most transportation agencies, fully implementing complete streets will mean a fundamental shift in previous procedures and assumptions. Most agencies have focused on maximizing automobile throughput, and many engineers are trained primarily to achieve this goal. A shift that requires a broad assessment of the needs of all road users does not fit easily into this paradigm.

As with any bureaucracy, a transportation agency can have systemic inertia that is comprised of individual attitudes, long-standing habits and procedures, incomplete technical knowledge, and entrenched relationships. Any broad policy change at the top will travel a long road with many smaller policy and procedural changes along the way. The motivation of the leadership of the agency to implement this policy is going to make a big difference. The way the initial policy came about will also make a big difference. If a complete streets policy was forced on a recalcitrant agency, the battle for implementation will probably be long. If the legislative or policy campaign was used to get agency officials to see value in the policy, implementation will probably be easier.

In the survey, respondents identified a number of barriers to implementation. Some said agency implementers were not aware of the policies or could not agree on what they mean. Some said no steps were established to move toward implementation, including a failure to choose or create design standards. A couple of respondents noted the difficulty of increasing the width of a right-of-way, particularly in infill areas. Other implementation issues included a failure to include facilities in initial budgets, a lack of MPO input into design, and a resistance of the state DOT in working with a local jurisdiction. Some respondents in areas with a policy directed at new development noted that it is difficult to ensure that development agreements for specific projects include complete streets, since governments are often reluctant to make such requirements of developers (note that even when such requirements come in to existence, many developers will then work hard at seeking exceptions). Thunderhead leaders also mentioned a simple lack of resolve or a bias against bike lanes as implementation barriers, while some staff respondents cited resident resistance to the changes, particularly those that increased road width.

When creating your Complete the Streets campaign, consider implementation part of the campaign. Chapter 2 reviewed some of the barriers to implementing existing complete streets policies. They range from the avoidance of turning a policy document into effective procedures, to the misconceptions of costs, to standard agency resistance. Some agency implementers will claim that they are not aware of the policies or that there is no

agreement on what the policies mean. In this chapter, we will focus on working with your agency to set up an effective implementation procedure.

Keep in mind that even once the policy and procedures are in place, your organization will likely find itself fighting some familiar battles over transportation projects. It might help to think of a solid complete streets policy not as the complete solution, but as an important step in your advocacy. How can you make that tool most effective?

From Policy to Procedure

An effective, well-designed complete streets policy should prompt the following internal agency changes.

- Restructuring procedures to favor multi-modal planning.
- Re-writing design manuals.
- Retraining planners and engineers.
- Re-tooling measures to track outcomes (there is the possibility that they may not be tracking any outcomes now).

Our RECOMMENDATION is that you simply understand that there will be some barriers. You will need to stay involved, even help, in the initial implementation stages and then check back periodically.

Your influence over this internal process may be formal, through an advisory committee, or informal, through your relationships with agency staff. Respect the agency's process and try to position yourself as a resource. You may be able to increase the credibility of your suggestions by referring to experience at other agencies and the recommendations made in the USDOT Design Guidance.

Your ongoing relationship with the legislators and elected officials that led to the initial policy change is a key to your influence on the agency. You will build respect and influence if you are seen as the one who communicates progress, or lack of progress, back to the people that they are accountable to.

Your strong relationship with and handling of the media also impacts your influence on an agency and with legislators and elected officials.

Restructuring procedures: Some agencies will see an opportunity in a complete streets policy to take a whole new approach to transportation planning, moving away from the traditional focus on volume-to-capacity ratios and Level of Service determinations. For example, Charlotte, North Carolina, in an effort to turn their paper policy into a model is instituting a new six-step planning process that begins by establishing the land use and transportation context of the project, identifying gaps and deficiencies in the network for all users, and then engaging in a clear process to meet the challenge of balancing the needs of all users. Boulder, Colorado has also developed a planning process to conduct an

initial evaluation of the needs of *all* users. Thunderhead leaders can make agencies aware of these opportunities to create fundamental change.

Other agencies will prefer to look for ways to adjust their existing procedures to remind them to take other users into account when working on projects. They may create checklists or similar tools.

Agencies must also establish a formal procedure for handling any exceptions that may have been included in the policy. This procedure must include high-level sign-off on a compliance document (as stated in the USDOT Design Guidance).

Re-writing design manuals: Note that the USDOT Guidance encourages a re-write of the *primary* design manual, and it suggests that the creation of separate bicycle-pedestrian manuals is only an interim step. A number of jurisdictions have created new design manuals that your agency can use as a model. The Transportation and Air Quality Collaborative in Sacramento, California is notable for developing ‘best practices’ guides for bicycles, pedestrians, transit – and a separate ‘complete streets’ best practices guide for putting them all together.

Training: The USDOT Design Guidance recommends “intensive re-tooling and re-training of transportation planners and engineers with the new information required to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.” Training has already been a valuable outcome of existing policies. For example, California’s Deputy Directive 64 inspired a series of trainings for engineers and the Palmetto Cycling Coalition is working with the League of American Bicyclists to plan trainings for South Carolina DOT personnel. You can help your agency connect with a number of organizations and consultants that offer bicycle and pedestrian training courses. Thunderhead organizations can also offer assistance by helping organize trainings (make sure to charge market rate consulting fees) to educate agency employees on implementation issues.

You may also simply need to push the agency to publicize the new policy.

New outcome measures: The best way to test these policies would be to look at what is happening on the ground. However, the most common answers to questions about outcomes in the survey were that it is just too soon to tell if the policies have succeeded, or that no records were being kept. Disappointingly, few localities are collecting any information about outcomes, whether you define those outcomes in terms of roads ‘completed,’ increases in walking or bicycling, or decreases in crashes. Even in exemplary Oregon, statistics are few at the state level. Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Manager, Michael Ronkin, observed that the state experienced a slight decline in bike/ped commuting from 1990 to 2000, but less than the rest of country; and that crashes are lower than other Western states. He also observed that statistics are extraordinarily difficult to keep. Thunderhead’s Benchmarking Project that gathers and compares bicycling and walking data sets from across the country is designed to be a valuable tool in assessing the effectiveness of these policies. This is the only such measurement project that strictly adheres to government endorsed data sets that are uniform across all states.

For more information on Thunderhead's Benchmarking Project see:
www.thunderheadalliance.org/benchmarking.htm .

An evaluation of the actual effectiveness of the policies included in the survey has not yet occurred. More investigation is needed on the impact of these policies and how to make them work. Thunderhead leaders indicated that even if their policy was not well implemented, it provides additional leverage in advocacy efforts. For example:

*Internal [CalTrans] allies have seized momentum created by DD-64 to institute a series of bike/ped design trainings for DOT planners and designers.
(California)*

While few of the current complete streets policies have any sort of metrics, our RECOMMENDATION is that you try to get them included in yours. A very important element of future campaigns will be to include progress indicators or outcome measures, especially those that will easily plug into Thunderhead's Benchmarking Project.

Very few existing policies make any serious attempt to measure new outcomes from the transportation planning process. In fact, most don't even require measuring such conventional outcomes as crash statistics. However, we need these types of measures to document change and to create accountability. Here are a few brief suggestions:

- A new measurement system has been developed in Florida, where planners are using multi-modal level of service (LOS) to measure system quality. Details can be found at www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/systems/sm/los/default.htm.
- A National Highway Cooperative Research Program project on multi-modal LOS is due out March 2005. For details, please see www4.trb.org/trb/crp.nsf/All+Projects/NCHRP+3-70.
- However, don't think that a measurement has to be complex. The Thunderhead Benchmarking Project compares basic statistics about the bicycling, walking, and health environment and will serve as a national measuring tool for all complete streets policies. The League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle-Friendly Communities program also asks for basic statistics.
- Another approach is to create performance goals oriented to the end user, such as, "Can every child safely walk or bicycle from their home to the neighborhood school?"

Staying in close contact while the agency is setting up procedures could make the difference between a good policy, and one that does little to change the status quo. Be sure you have energy, time and resources ready for this stage.

Thunderhead leaders can influence the internal implementation process through a formal advisory committee, or through informal relationships with agency staff. Thunderhead leaders who respect the agency's process can position themselves as a resource, helping bring agency officials' attention to the growing number of documents available to help them implement complete streets.

Making Change on the Ground

Once procedures have been set, the next step is seeing the policy in practice. Continued challenges mentioned by survey respondents included budget issues in regards to projects already underway, right of way acquisition (or lack thereof, also regarding projects underway), public opposition, and tension between different agencies.

As a relatively new concept, we are still learning how to ensure that complete streets policies operate 100% effectively. And unfortunately at this point, little can be learned from the limited number of jurisdictions with policies as few of them are making any meaningful attempts to measure their success. As Complete the Streets campaigns mature, Thunderhead leaders will play a vital role providing important insight on what does work to move complete streets policies from paper to pavement, and what does not.

More implementation ideas can be found in some of the complete streets policies listed in Appendix D.

CHAPTER 4 - Campaigns (blueprint for success)

Introduction

While this Guide focuses on complete streets campaigns, this chapter provides a blueprint for crafting and winning any kind of bicycle and/or pedestrian advocacy campaign. In each of seven basic elements of successful campaigns, this chapter will provide some core principles of effective campaigning to help you make the right choices at the right time — the heart and art of strategic campaigning.

Thunderhead Alliance Campaign Planning Blueprint

Successful campaigns are well thought out in advance and organized around a clear message and specific goal. Thunderhead's Seven Elements of Successful Campaigns are the basis of our proven Thunderhead Training Curriculum and will help you "keep your eyes on the prize."

1. Issue Focus: Selection and Definition
2. Organizational and Campaign Goals (Short-, Medium-, and Long-term)
3. Resource Assessment
4. Strategic Targets
5. Communication

6. Tactics & Timelines
7. Budget and Fundraising Resources

(This Chapter includes in depth analysis of successful campaigns and step-by-step guidance on how you can develop your own successful campaign. Make sure to get the full Guide before starting. You can also contact Thunderhead for specific materials you need. Please also check our Trainings page: <http://www.thunderheadalliance.org/trainings.htm> and register for a Thunderhead Training where you will be guided through this process with our expert coaches as you work with leaders of Thunderhead organizations from across the country.)

CHAPTER 5 - Communications (a toolkit)

Introduction

Complete streets is more than just a new name for what was once referred to as routine accommodation. The phrase is useful not just as a description of a policy, but also as an independent communications tool. This phrase is active, flexible, and imbeds a fundamental message we want to send: that streets are not complete until they are safe and convenient for travel by foot or bicycle, as well as for transit users, people with disabilities, and people in automobiles. A street without such safe passage is by default ‘incomplete.’ This puts us a step ahead of opponents who would like to characterize complete streets policies as mandates that are an “expensive special” accommodation. Since most Americans walk, and many bicycle, use transit, or have disabilities, this is an important reframing of the way we view the road network.

Even if you are not actively pursuing a specific complete streets policy, using the term can advance bicycle and pedestrian advocacy. This chapter is designed to help you do that.

The Cost Misconception: A common misconception is that complete streets cost more to build than incomplete streets. In fact, complete streets most often cost no more and many times can cost less than incomplete streets. For instance, a common street cross section that serves only cars is a four lane speedway with no shoulders, sidewalks or intersection treatments for people. Using the same right-of-way width, this design can be reshaped into two narrower through lanes, one center turn lane, and bike lanes and sidewalks on both sides. By using less width for the most expensive elements, truck weight standard asphalt and subsurface, and adding less expensive sidewalks, this design, often referred to as a “road diet” when applied to existing roads, actually saves money. Not only that, this design has been proven to improve traffic flow and safety for motor vehicles by better controlling turning movements. Many other complete streets designs offer similar cost savings. You may even want to bring up the economic benefits of streets that attract visitors and offer access to more employees. Be sure to address this misconception early in your campaign so that you can focus your valuable time on instituting a policy for your communities.

When you are discussing bicycle and pedestrian friendly changes with decision makers, talk about remolding the same street materials into complete streets. Consider writing an article for your newsletter explaining the idea to your members, or updating your website. Use the term when speaking with reporters, in written testimony, and in meetings and conversations. In short, you will play a vital role in helping us propagate this term by using it whenever you can. We need this phrase to become the shorthand for our nation's transportation network that truly welcomes people on foot and bicycle.

This complete streets communications toolkit includes four components.

1. The basics for using complete streets.
2. Using complete streets in everyday communications.
3. The complete streets response to a cyclist or pedestrian death or injury.
4. Using complete streets to build coalitions.

The Basics for Using Complete Streets

The term complete streets is a description of streets that have been built for safe and convenient travel by all road users. It also describes policies that call for routinely providing for all modes when building and reconstructing streets. While the principle will most often be invoked for better walking and bicycling, complete streets should also provide safe and convenient transit access and provisions for people with disabilities. Making common cause with these users is an important element in promoting complete streets policies.

Note that complete streets is not capitalized in general use. The phrase is not proprietary and we wanted to discourage any trend toward a narrow definition of the ultimate 'Complete Street.'

A *campaign* to institute a complete streets policy can have a more formal name: Complete the Streets. Complete streets was initially coined by America Bikes in 2004 as part of the campaign to reauthorize the federal transportation law, and this campaign used the following two taglines:

- Complete the Streets - for safer bicycling and walkable communities.
- Complete the Streets - for safer bicycling and walking.

You can use these tags, but feel free to follow Complete the Streets with other secondary phrases. Already one organization has modified it for their campaign's name to include the health message: "Complete the Streets for Active Communities." You will want to choose one phrase and stick to it. Consistency is vital in good communications work.

The National Complete Streets Coalition, a collaborative of organizations working towards complete streets including the Thunderhead Alliance, has created some tools for those interested in advancing the complete streets cause. Many resources and a customizable PowerPoint presentation explaining the principle are available on the coalition's website www.completestreets.org

Using Complete Streets in Everyday Communications

You need to begin the complete streets transformation right away. Start by updating your existing communications. Then use it in new communications. Get your allies to start using complete streets; and have resources available for others to use.

Adjust your current communications: If you've been using the term 'routine accommodation' simply replace it with 'complete streets' in your communication materials. Look at:

- policy statements,
- brochures describing your organizational goals,
- newsletter articles, and
- website.

While you may have become comfortable using 'routine accommodation,' try your best to eliminate it in all of your communication materials. It does not resonate with decision makers or the general public like complete streets does.

Look for new places to use the phrase: Next, you need to seek out those materials and situations where you can promulgate complete streets. Think of things like:

- letters to the editor, and
- public hearing testimony.

Here is an example:

*"If there is inequity in the transportation system, it lies in the fact that we as Americans fail to complete our streets for safer bicycling and walking."
(letter to the editor, Asbury Park Press, by John Boyle, Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia 1/22/04)*

Ask your allies to use it: You have allies who want you, and our bicycle and pedestrian issues, to succeed. Asking them to use complete streets in their meetings, memos and discussions is a direct opportunity and easy way that they can help. Ask allies like:

- bicycle/pedestrian planners,
- MPO officials,
- elected officials,
- smart growth advocates, and
- safety advocates.

Disseminate complete streets resources: You can also put some of your organization's resources to work highlighting the principle. Consider:

- adding a link on your web site to Thunderhead's National Complete the Streets Campaign web page:
www.thunderheadalliance.org/completestreets.htm as well as one for the coalition: www.completestreets.org
- presenting or posting to your website the complete streets PowerPoint (with updated, local images and information),

- creating a brochure or webpage about complete streets for your communities, and
- collecting photos of complete streets and streets needing to be completed in your community.

Avoiding pitfalls: In your communications work, don't get bogged down trying to do the job of an engineer or planner. Stay focused on communicating the principle of complete streets. Complete streets policies are by necessity flexible and do not prescribe a single type of accommodation.

If reporters or officials try to pin you down about whether a complete streets policy will result in a specific type of facility, defer to the expertise of planners and engineers and focus on achieving the *outcome* of complete streets. Say to them, for example:

"I'm not sure what the best answer is for Smith Street, but I know the engineers and planners can come up with a solution that makes sure this important roadway is a complete street with safe provisions for people on foot and bicycle."

Be careful not to use complete streets to describe "poser" policies that leave so much wiggle room that they become meaningless, or that restrict accommodation only to roads in a bicycle or pedestrian plan. If you believe your complete streets policy is a strong policy, focus on how the policy will result in change on the ground.

APPENDIX E

Policy Examples

Example 1: United States Department of Transportation Design Guidance (Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel)

1. Bicycle and pedestrian ways shall be established in new construction and reconstruction projects in all urbanized areas unless one or more of three conditions are met:
 - Bicyclists and pedestrians are prohibited by law from using the roadway. In this instance, a greater effort may be necessary to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians elsewhere within the right of way or within the same transportation corridor.
 - The cost of establishing bikeways or walkways would be excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use. Excessively disproportionate is defined as exceeding twenty percent of the cost of the larger transportation project.
 - Where scarcity of population or other factors indicate an absence of need. For example, the Portland Pedestrian Guide requires “all construction of new public streets” to include sidewalk improvements on both sides, unless the street is a cul-de-sac with four or fewer dwellings or the street has severe topographic or natural resource constraints.

2. In rural areas, paved shoulders should be included in all new construction and reconstruction projects on roadways used by more than 1,000 vehicles per day, as in States such as Wisconsin. Paved shoulders have safety and operational advantages for all road users in addition to providing a place for bicyclists and pedestrians to operate.

Rumble strips are not recommended where shoulders are used by bicyclists unless there is a minimum clear path of four feet in which a bicycle may safely operate.

3. Sidewalks, shared use paths, street crossings (including over- and undercrossings), pedestrian signals, signs, street furniture, transit stops and facilities, and all connecting pathways shall be designed, constructed, operated and maintained so that all pedestrians, including people with disabilities, can travel safely and independently.

4. The design and development of the transportation infrastructure shall improve conditions for bicycling and walking through the following additional steps:
 - Planning projects for the long-term. Transportation facilities are long-term investments that remain in place for many years. The design and construction of new facilities that meet the criteria in item 1) above should anticipate likely future demand for bicycling and walking

facilities and not preclude the provision of future improvements. For example, a bridge that is likely to remain in place for 50 years, might be built with sufficient width for safe bicycle and pedestrian use in anticipation that facilities will be available at either end of the bridge even if that is not currently the case.

- Addressing the need for bicyclists and pedestrians to cross corridors as well as travel along them. Even where bicyclists and pedestrians may not commonly use a particular travel corridor that is being improved or constructed, they will likely need to be able to cross that corridor safely and conveniently. Therefore, the design of intersections and interchanges shall accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians in a manner that is safe, accessible and convenient.
- Getting exceptions approved at a senior level. Exceptions for the non-inclusion of bikeways and walkways shall be approved by a senior manager and be documented with supporting data that indicates the basis for the decision.
- Designing facilities to the best currently available standards and guidelines. The design of facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians should follow design guidelines and standards that are commonly used, such as the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, AASHTO's A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, and the ITE recommended practice Design and Safety of Pedestrian Facilities.

Example 2: Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission Policy (Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Policy, introductory section)

Many state, county and local jurisdictions are beginning to recognize the value and the need of routinely providing facilities for pedestrians or bicyclists. The inclusion of facilities in the early planning phases of new highway construction and residential and commercial development reduces the complexity and costs of attempting to retrofit years later. Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) encourages and supports those communities that have taken the step toward routinely accommodating pedestrians and bicyclists in the planning process. To others, MORPC encourages and supports the inclusion of routine accommodation by providing the following policy.

Project sponsors are required to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians in the planning and design of all proposed transportation projects using MORPC-attributable federal funds. Sponsors using local, state, or other federal funds are encouraged to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians in the planning and design of all proposed transportation projects. All transportation facilities on which bicyclists and pedestrians are permitted by law, including but not limited to streets, roads, highways, bridges, buses, trains, transit stops and facilities, and all connecting pathways shall be designed, constructed, operated and maintained so that all modes and pedestrians, including people with disabilities, can travel safely and independently.

*Example 3: South Carolina Department of Transportation, Transportation Commission
Resolution (on bicycling and walking)*

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, increasing walking and bicycling offers the potential for cleaner air, greater health of the population, reduced traffic congestion, more livable communities, less reliance on fossil fuels and their foreign supply sources and more efficient use of road space and resources; and

WHEREAS, in 2001 crashes involving bicyclists and pedestrians represented 13 percent of the traffic fatalities in S.C. and in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in its February 24, 1999 Policy statement "Guidance on the Bicycle and Pedestrian Provisions of the Federal-Aid Program" urges states to include bicycle and pedestrian accommodations routinely in their programmed highway projects; and

WHEREAS, bicycle and pedestrian projects and programs are eligible for funding from almost all of the major Federal-aid funding programs; and

WHEREAS, the South Carolina Department of Transportation Commission is strongly committed to improving conditions for walking and bicycling; and

WHEREAS, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) calls for the mainstreaming of bicycle and pedestrian projects into the planning, design and operation of our Nation's transportation system;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the South Carolina Department of Transportation Commission in meeting duly assembled this 14th day of January 2003, affirms that bicycling and walking accommodations should be a routine part of the department's planning, design, construction and operating activities, and will be included in the everyday operations of our transportation system; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the South Carolina Department of Transportation Commission requires South Carolina counties and municipalities to make bicycling and pedestrian improvements an integral part of their transportation planning and programming where State or Federal Highway funding is utilized.

L. Morgan Martin, Chairman

Robert W. Harrell, First Congressional District

John N. Hardee, Second Congressional District

Eugene C. Stoddard, Third Congressional District

H. Howell Clyborne, Jr., Fourth Congressional District

B. Bayles Mack, Fifth Congressional District

John M. "Moot" Truluck, Sixth Congressional District

APPENDIX F

Complete Streets Policy Checklist

Pre-screen: Does the policy *require* that road projects be designed to accommodate all users? *If not, it does not qualify as a complete streets policy.*

1. Policy intent:

Is the policy part of a broader goal of providing a complete transportation network for all modes such as through the current strategic plan, transportation system upgrades, new administration's goals, etc.?

2. Policy Coverage:

2a. Does the policy cover motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, transit users, and disabled users?

2b. Does the policy cover:

-all roads, regardless of responsible agency? (best)

OR:

-roads managed by single agency or roads seeking a specific funding source?

AND/OR:

-roads installed by private developers?

2c. Does the policy cover:

Construction? Reconstruction? Widening? Other improvements? Repaving? Bridges? Stand-alone retrofit projects?

3. Policy requirements (beyond pre-screen requirement above):

When projects do not meet this standard, is there a formal process for approval of clearly stated exceptions placing the burden of proof on not accommodating all users?

4. Does the policy direct the use of the latest and best design standards?

5. Does the policy set performance standards?

6. Does the policy including a funding mechanism?

7. Implementation

Has the policy resulted in:

-restructured procedures?

-re-written design manuals or cross-sections?

-sessions for training planners and engineers?

-new data collection procedures?

-the creation of complete streets?