

# CITY OF FRESNO - PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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**POLICY NUMBER:** 240.3

**POLICY NAME:** COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

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**Responsible Division:** Traffic Operations and Planning

**Date Issued:** September 26, 2019

**Date Revised:**

**Approved by Assistant Director:** Andrew Benelli/Signature on File

**Approved by Director:** Scott Mozier/ Signature on File

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**Purpose:** This policy is drafted to solidify current City practices and ensure consistency in the application.

**Policy:** To aid in the planning, design, and construction of transportation facilities that balance safety, access, and mobility for users of all abilities and ages.

## **A. Vision and Intent**

The City of Fresno recognizes the need for complete streets and will accommodate elements that create a complete street wherever it is feasible. A complete street is a transportation facility that is planned, designed, operated, and maintained to provide safe mobility for all users - including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit vehicles, trucks, and motorists - appropriate to the function and context of the facility while connecting to a larger transportation network. Every complete street looks different, according to its context, community preferences, the types of road users, and their needs. All complete streets are designed to balance safety, access, and mobility for everyone using the street and are necessary to create connected networks citywide.

Some of the elements for consideration for inclusion on a complete street can include sidewalks, shared use paths, bike lanes, bike parking, fewer travel lanes, narrower width lanes, street lights, pedestrian scale lighting, improved street crossings, pedestrian signals, signs, street furniture, street trees, and transit shelters, access, and facilities. All designs should be context sensitive to meet the needs of the community while emphasizing safe and accessible travel for all people.

This complete streets policy shall be implemented in all neighborhoods, with particular attention to areas identified as priority areas in the Active Transportation Plan and corridors with high collision rates. This policy is intended to guide implementation of the complete street and multi-modal objectives and policies outlined in the City of Fresno's

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General Plan. Prioritization of projects will be determined using the adopted Active Transportation Project Prioritization Tool.

**B. Diverse Users**

A complete street allows people of all ages and abilities to safely move along and across streets, regardless of how they are traveling. Complete streets are essential for access by people who cannot drive. Streets without safe access for non-motorized transportation represent a barrier for people who use mobility devices, and for older adults and children.

Roadway projects shall be planned and designed, to the greatest extent possible, to accommodate all users of the transportation system, including but not limited to: pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, trucks, seniors, children, people with disabilities, and emergency responders while balancing the access needs of the adjacent land uses. The City shall provide transportation choices that are safe, reliable, convenient, affordable, accessible, and timely regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, income, gender identity, immigration status, age, ability, languages spoken, or level of access to a personal vehicle. Vulnerable users shall be prioritized.

**C. Commitment**

Every development and city transportation improvement shall be approached as an opportunity to create safer, more accessible streets for all users.

All development - public and private - and new construction projects within the public right-of-way such as reconstruction/retrofit, resurfacing, repaving, restriping, and rehabilitation transportation projects within the public right-of-way shall be planned, designed, constructed, operated, and maintained so that all modes of transportation allow all users to move safely, comfortably, conveniently, and independently.

The planning, design, and construction of transportation infrastructure shall improve conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, motorists, and other users currently using facilities. Plans and facilities should also accommodate the likely future demand for walking, bicycling, and transit facilities and not preclude the provision of future improvements.

The planning, design, and construction of facilities shall address the need for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross corridors as well as travel along them. The design of intersections shall accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists in a manner that is safe,

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accessible and convenient. Coordination with adjacent jurisdictions and any other relevant public agencies shall be part of the planning, design, and construction process to ensure, wherever feasible, the network of continuous pedestrian and bicycle facilities and routes extend into adjacent jurisdictions.

Facilities shall be planned and designed for the needs and comfort of all people, with due consideration of issues such as street design and width, lane width, desired motorist operating speed, hierarchy of streets, mode balance, and connectivity.

The City shall require accommodations for all modes of transportation to continue use the road safely and efficiently during any construction or repair activities that may infringe upon the right-of-way and/or sidewalk.

The planning and design of facilities should follow the plans, guidelines and standards that are commonly used, such as:

- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities;
- AASHTO A policy of Geometric Design of Highways and Streets;
- AASHTO Guide for the Planning, Design and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities;
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design;
- California Building Code;
- California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD);
- City of Fresno Active Transportation Plan;
- City of Fresno General Plan;
- City of Fresno Department of Public Works Standard Drawings;
- City of Fresno Trail Design Guidelines;
- Highway Design Manual
- Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Recommended Practice Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities;
- National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Bikeway Design Guide;
- NACTO Urban Street Design Guide; and
- Pedestrian Rights of Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG);

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**D. Land Use and Context Sensitivity**

The City shall require all new or revised plans, specifications, land use policies, zoning ordinances, or equivalent documents to support this Complete Streets Policy.

Roadway, trail, transit stop, and sidewalk design decisions shall include public outreach and input and be sensitive to the goal of developing and maintaining the City of Fresno as a walkable, vibrant, sustainable, and bike friendly community.

Design criteria shall be based on the thoughtful application of engineering, architectural, and urban design principles such that all projects shall make the City a more appealing, enjoyable, and sustainable place in which to live and work.

Projects in districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places shall be designed to enhance the district's historic character.

**E. Exceptions**

In certain situations, exceptions to providing for all modes in each completed project may be authorized by the Public Works Director if one or more of the following conditions are met:

1. An effected roadway prohibits, by law or adopted City plan, the use by specified users. In this instance, a greater effort may be necessary to accommodate all users (pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, motor vehicles, and trucks) elsewhere within the right-of-way, within the same transportation corridor or on adjacent roadways that provide similar access to a route or destination.
2. The activities are ordinary maintenance or emergency repair activities designed to keep assets in serviceable condition (i.e. mowing, cleaning, sweeping, spot repair, and surface treatments such as chip seal or interim measures).
3. The facility or amenity is proposed along a developable parcel.
4. If the project funds are restricted or constrained to specific purposes.
5. Funding sources have been identified and/or allocated for construction within five years.
6. Postponement of a project will not be contrary to the public health and safety and is not detrimental to the orderly development of property, as defined in Chapter 12 of the Fresno Municipal Code.

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An exception for the above conditions may be granted after consultation with the City Manager, Director of Public Works, Director of Transportation, and Director of Planning & Development concludes the application of the Complete Streets Policy is excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use. Exceptions shall be included as supporting documentation for a project. All exceptions shall be clearly explained and available on the City's website.

Exceptions for the following conditions shall require approval by the City Council through an agenda item at a regularly scheduled City Council meeting. The staff report shall clearly describe the proposed improvement project, the estimated cost and the justification for approving the exception to a particular complete streets component.

1. The cost of establishing walkways or bike facilities would be excessively disproportionate to the project costs (i.e. resurfacing). Excessively disproportionate is defined as exceeding twenty percent of the cost of the total transportation project. However, the twenty percent threshold is a guideline; in areas where high levels of pedestrian and bicycle traffic are anticipated or in areas where an immediate safety need is demonstrated through collision data, the threshold for "excessively disproportionate" could be much higher. In cases where additional cost is considered excessively disproportionate, the Public Works Director, or designee, may propose an alternative design or spend twenty percent of the project cost of the larger project to improve accommodations for all users.
2. An absence of both a current and future need to accommodate the category of user. The absence of future need may be shown via demographic, school, employment, and public transportation route data that demonstrate, for example, a low likelihood of pedestrian, bicycle or transit activity in an area over the next twenty years.

Development projects will be conditioned to plan, design, and construct facilities that allow all modes of transportation users to move safely, comfortably, conveniently, and independently per adopted City plans, standards, and this Complete Streets Policy. Appeal of conditions shall be made per the procedures outlined in Chapter 15, Sec. 15-5017 of the Fresno City Municipal Code. The Planning Commission has the authority to approve, modify, and/or delete conditions of approval, including those identified in this Complete Streets Policy.

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**F. Performance Measures**

Using performance measures to evaluate the progress of the Complete Streets Policy is a valuable and essential part of successfully implementing safer, more complete streets. For each complete streets project, the Public Works Department shall annually measure and publicly report the annual increase or decrease for each performance measure compared to the previous year(s). Data should be collected and maintained in a way that allows for presentation by geographic sub-units, mode types, etc. Performance measures will include:

- Rates of crashes, injuries and fatalities by mode;
- Percentage of transit stops accessible via sidewalks and curb ramps;
- Number of approved and denied exceptions;
- Total miles of on-street bicycle facilities constructed by class;
- Total miles of off-street pedestrian/bicycle facilities(trails) constructed;
- Linear feet of new, replaced and repaired sidewalks;
- Pedestrian, bicycle and transit ridership counts;
- Number of crosswalk and intersection improvements;
- Number of ADA compliant new curb ramps installed along city streets;
- Number of new street trees added;
- Number of new streetlights added;
- Total funds invested in complete streets improvements, by project;
- Modal share in specific locations, before and after improvements;

**G. Implementation**

The City of Fresno views complete streets as integral to everyday transportation options. The Department of Public Works will lead the implementation of this policy and coordination with other departments. To this end:

1. Following Council passage, all departments will incorporate complete streets principles into the plans, policies, guidelines, and other manuals, checklists, decision trees, rules, regulations, and programs as appropriate.
2. The Department of Public Works shall review, on an ongoing basis, all traffic control plans to ensure safe access is maintained for all users during special events and or construction activities per subsection 7-10.1, Traffic and Access, of

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the City of Fresno Standard Specifications and 210.01 Traffic Control Policies and Procedures.

3. The Department of Public Works will review, on an ongoing basis, current design standards that apply to new roadway construction to ensure they reflect the best available design guidelines, and effectively implement complete streets.
4. The Department of Public Works shall review, on an ongoing basis, all plans and policies when conducting routine maintenance projects (i.e. street resurfacing projects) to ensure the project reflects the designs and amenities of complete streets identified in the plans and policies to the extent possible considering exceptions outlined in this policy.
5. When available, the City Manager/Department Directors shall encourage staff professional development and training on non-motorized transportation issues through attending conferences, classes, webinars, and workshops. Complete streets training will also be provided during staff meetings on an annual basis.
6. All current and potential future sources of funding for street improvements shall be identified and improvements recommended to support complete streets projects.
7. The City Manager shall promote project coordination among departments and agencies with an interest in the activities that occur within the public right-of-way in order to better use fiscal resources.
8. An annual report shall be made to the City Council by the Public Works Department showing progress made implementing this policy as well as performance measures. Maps depicting current and planned complete streets projects shall be shown.
9. The Public Works Department shall create a community engagement policy and procedure with specific strategies for when and how public engagement will occur and with whom. This policy should provide best practices, strategies and methods to meaningfully engage all residents, including those from disadvantaged or underrepresented communities.
10. Each representative on the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) shall meet, at a minimum, annually with their respective City Councilmember or Mayor, to discuss the needs and goals of each district. The BPAC representative will report these goals to the committee and staff at monthly BPAC meetings.