



Tigard Complete Streets Best Practices Report

Executive Summary

Many cities across the US are working to move from transportation systems heavily reliant on a single mode – the automobile – to multi-modal systems that better support walking, bicycling and transit. One of the common methods of organizing around these efforts is the adoption of a policy or set of policies to formalize a city’s commitment to this movement; these are often called “Complete Streets Policies.” This report serves as foundational information for the City of Tigard as it embarks on the development of its own Complete Streets Policy.

The first section of the Best Practices Report provides introductory and background information on complete streets policies generally. It’s followed by a list of recommended best practice complete streets policy elements that should be used as a framework for policy development. Finally, using a case study format, the report shares experiences from six jurisdictions across the US who have successfully created and adopted complete streets policies.

Based on research conducted for this report, a list of preliminary recommendations for Tigard’s policy development process follow:

Unique Context

Ensure Tigard’s Complete Streets Policy takes into account the City of Tigard’s unique community attributes. The city already identifies strongly with being a pedestrian-friendly community as expressed in its 2014 Strategic Plan. Tigard’s policy should be aligned with long-term plans supporting denser, mixed-use development in specific areas of the city and with the potential introduction of high capacity light rail transit.

Structure of Complete Streets Policy

Tigard’s policy should follow the National Complete Streets Coalition’s recommendations for policy structure and required elements. Of particular importance is the inclusion of a specific implementation plan or action plan that outlines how the policy will be implemented.

Leverage Existing Plans and Policies

Tigard already has strong land use and transportation plans and policies in the form of its Comprehensive Plan, Transportation System Plan (TSP), and Municipal Code. However, in order to implement a comprehensive Complete Streets Policy, these plans, or portions of these plans will require updating. Specifically, the TSP will require policies that prioritize different modes of travel

and it will need an updated pedestrian and bicycle network plan. Likewise, network plans and policies to support transit including first and last mile connectivity are needed.

Street Design Standards

To provide the quality of facilities required to support active travel modes and transit use, Tigard should update their street design standards to provide a full complement of tools that facilitate comfortable and safe travel for pedestrians, bicyclists, users of mobility aids, and transit users. Design standards should draw upon a range of readily available current best practices similar to those documented in the case studies in this report.

Tigard Transportation Advisory Committee (TTAC)

Consider ways of integrating TTAC into the development and implementation of Tigard's complete streets policy. In addition to providing valuable feedback and representing the community's viewpoints, TTAC can also help implement Tigard's Complete Streets Policy and measure policy performance.

Clear Exception Criteria

Equally important to the complete streets policy elements supporting all road users is the specific language and guidance around when routine accommodation of pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorized road users is not provided. Exceptions to Tigard's policy should only be granted in limited, clearly defined instances with high-level staff or elected official approval.

Project Prioritization

Tigard's methodology for prioritizing the implementation of capital and programmatic transportation and traffic-related projects should be reviewed to ensure those supporting the accommodation and safety of non-auto users receive equal attention.

Policy Adoption

To maximize effectiveness of Tigard's complete streets policy objectives, the policy should be adopted by ordinance to the city's municipal code. Logically, Tigard's complete streets ordinance would fit into "Title 15: Streets and Sidewalks" of the city's municipal code.

Introduction

What are Complete Streets? Quite simply, complete streets are ones that function well for people of all ages and abilities regardless of what transportation mode they use. Be it on foot, on a bicycle, using a mobility aid, accessing and riding transit, or driving in a car or a large truck – when considering if a street (or greater transportation system) is complete, people are put first.

A city's transportation system and related infrastructure don't just happen. Rather, they are the cumulative result of hundreds upon hundreds of decisions at a variety of levels over time. Each decision creates benefits and costs borne by road users. To name a few, impacts of these decisions may include improved or worsened roadway safety; exposure to risk; access to commerce, education or recreation; financial burden; travel time reliability or delay; and barriers to community cohesion. As such, investments and decisions prioritizing private automobiles at the expense of other modes of travel have resulted in benefits and costs skewed unequally today.

In recognition of the need to better balance and bring equity to their transportation systems, many cities are creating policy-level guidance calling for complete streets. With growing concern over traffic safety, increasing congestion, competition for limited transportation dollars, and geometrically limited rights-of-way, there is even more reason to plan and build transportation systems that serve all users of all ages and abilities.

Tigard & Complete Streets

The City of Tigard is embarking on a project to develop its own Complete Streets Policy to inform transportation decision making for the foreseeable future. Setting the stage for this process, the staff Project Team, Tigard's citizen Transportation Advisory Committee (TTAC), and Tigard's staff leadership and elected official Transportation Strategy Team (TST) drafted the Tigard Complete Streets Vision Statement. It responds to the question, "Thinking ahead ten to twenty years, what does Tigard's ideal transportation system look like?"

"Tigard is a vibrant and healthy community where people of all ages and abilities can travel safely, efficiently and comfortably on a well-connected and optimized multi-modal network of roads, trails, and paths."

There is no doubt a disparity exists between the current reality of Tigard's transportation system and the bold future offered by the Tigard Complete Streets Vision Statement. However, this aspirational goal serves to align stakeholders, staff, and elected officials in setting policy and supporting strategic decision-making that begins to move the needle towards Tigard's ideal transportation system.

Complete Streets Policy Best Practices

As of 2018, more than 1,400 jurisdictions across the country have adopted Complete Streets policies. Although each policy is unique to a particular location and context, they all share common themes around moving towards more equitable transportation investments in the public rights-of-

way. According to the [National Complete Streets Coalition](#), an ideal Complete Streets Policy has the following key elements:

1. A clear intent and equitable vision for how and why a community wants to complete its streets.
2. Specifics about how the policy benefits all road users equitably with a particular focus on vulnerable road users. [In Oregon](#), state law defines vulnerable road users as pedestrians, highway workers, persons riding animals, and those operating skateboards, roller/inline skates, scooters, or bicycles.
3. Commitment to all projects and phases including new, retrofit/reconstruction, maintenance, and ongoing projects.
4. Clear procedure with high-level approval and public notice for any exceptions to the policy.
5. Demonstration of interagency coordination between government departments and partner agencies.
6. Use of current best practices in street and transportation facility design criteria and guidelines and sets timeline for implementation.
7. Consideration of current and expected surrounding land use and transportation needs.
8. Establishment of performance measures that are specific, equitable, and publicly available.
9. Provision of project selection criteria to encourage Complete Streets implementation.
10. Inclusion of implementation plan specifying next steps for the policy.

In combination, these individual elements provide a robust framework for the development of a Complete Streets Policy. The case studies that follow provide an overview and key takeaways of what six other jurisdictions across the US have done to create their own unique policies. Whether adopted by resolution or signed into law through an ordinance, each of these cities' policies serve as a commitment to prioritize transportation investments to equitably serve people using shared public rights-of-way.

The six policy examples included in this report are from Kirkland, WA; Brookline, MA; Vancouver, WA; Baltimore, MD; Missoula, MT; and the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), CA. These particular examples were selected either due to their similarity in size or geography to Tigard or because their policies are inclusive of key elements and address issues that may be relevant for Tigard to consider. Each case study provides background information and a list of key take-aways specific or unique to that city's policy.

Case Study 1: Kirkland, Washington

A suburb of Seattle, Kirkland has a population of 48,787, which is close in range to Tigard's 2016 population of 51,902. Kirkland's experience is a prime example of how a smaller city in a large metro region can successfully develop and implement a complete streets policy. The stated intent of their policy (Ordinance No. 4061) is to ensure the safety of all users on public rights-of-way. Originally created in 2006 and later [updated and expanded in 2016](#), Kirkland's Complete Streets Policy is significant because it was the first of its kind in the State of Washington.

According to city staff, a primary focus of Kirkland's policy was to document and formalize their unwritten practices of providing transportation facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists. Kirkland's policy spells out how all users and each mode of travel are accommodated across the board from project planning through construction as shown here in an excerpt:

The safe, convenient and comfortable travel of people of all ages and abilities traveling by any combination of foot, bicycle, transit, or motor vehicle shall be accommodated to the maximum extent practical in the scoping, planning, development, construction, operation and maintenance of all transportation facilities, including the creation of new transportation linkages in order to create a more connected communitywide transportation network.

Kirkland's complete streets policy was codified through an ordinance within Chapter 19.08 "Arterial Streets," of their municipal code. The ordinance provides the legal requirement to implement and follow their policy. As with most complete streets policies, theirs includes a list of exception criteria for when bicycle and pedestrian improvements would not be required. If met, the following exception criteria would preclude requirements to add specific complete streets infrastructure:

- Complete Streets project is contrary to public safety
- Work is limited to routine maintenance
- Project cost is excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use as approved by the City Engineer

As described in their complete streets policy, Kirkland utilizes best practices in design standards for the accommodation of pedestrians and cyclists. As such, Kirkland is currently updating their Street Design Standards using best practices from the Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), Institute of Engineers (ITE), and National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) to name a few. Similarly, their policy calls for updating existing city plans and programs such as their comprehensive plan and transportation master plan to incorporate complete streets policy elements.

Key Take-Aways

- Policy Adopted by Ordinance
 - The City of Kirkland chose to make their Complete Streets Policy part of the Municipal Code through a new ordinance. As of the publication of this report, the [City of Kirkland Municipal Code](#) section 19.08.055 focuses solely on Complete Streets.
- Best Practices in Design
 - While not unique to Kirkland, their policy provides clear support for incorporating innovative and proven infrastructure and facility design options that best support non-auto travel modes such as walking, bicycling, and transit.
- Jurisdictional Control
 - The City of Kirkland’s policy does not address how they will manage decisions on roads that are not under their jurisdiction (example: Washington State Department of Transportation). This is an important area to address to ensure the entire network meets local Complete Streets Policy requirements.
- Performance Measures
 - Kirkland does not include specific performance measures or metrics to track the implementation of their policy. To ensure effective implementation, Complete Streets policies should include requirements to track performance over time. Tracking could be accomplished with a range of metrics including multi-modal network buildout (percent complete) or even regular review and updates with input from a citizen advisory committee.
- Complete Streets Funding
 - The State of Washington’s [Transportation Improvement Board \(TIB\)](#), offers flexible funding to build complete streets projects to cities in Washington that have adopted Complete Streets ordinances and have demonstrated an “ethic of planning and building streets that use context sensitive solutions to accommodate all users...”

Case Study 2: Brookline, Massachusetts

The Town of Brookline is a suburb of Boston similar in population size to Tigard. Adopted in May of 2016, their comprehensive complete streets policy is notable for the level of detail it provides. Language used throughout their policy makes it clear the Town of Brookline is concerned with the safety, comfort, and convenience of all road users:

The Town of Brookline shall plan, construct, and maintain its public ways to enhance safety, access, inclusion, convenience, and comfort for all users, thereby creating “complete streets.” The Town will create a comprehensive transportation network that sufficiently accommodates people of all ages and abilities, whether traveling by foot, bicycle, wheelchair, mass transit, or motor vehicle.

Their focus on social equity is one of the highlights of Brookline’s complete streets policy. Prominently noted on the first page of their policy, a footnote defines social equity as follows: *“In the context of this policy, social equity is maintained and enhanced by incorporating positive measures and interventions to encourage fair outcomes for all groups potentially affected, with particular attention to income, age, gender, minority status, modes used, and locations.”*

Brookline’s complete streets policy includes guidance outlining project phases, design standards, and exception criteria. The “Projects and Phases” section requires that all projects need to reflect the complete streets fundamental of providing safety for all transportation modes. The design section of the policy requires that every aspect of a project plan should be designed for the safety, comfort, and convenience of the user.

In addressing jurisdictional issues, Brookline’s policy states that when a street segment is located within the Town of Brookline but is owned and maintained by another jurisdiction, Brookline will actively encourage the owner to comply with the Brookline complete streets policy. The Town of Brookline’s policy prioritizes safety and user comfort on any road within town, no matter who owns and maintains the segment.

Select portions of the Brookline complete streets policy are required to be updated on a regular basis so the document remains current. For example, their Project Prioritization Plan is required to be updated on a regular basis to identify streets or specific areas that need improvement. An annual report must be sent to MassDOT for the town to access state complete streets project funding. All of the report data is made public, and citizens are able to use an [online map](#) to review and provide feedback on project proposals.

Key Take-Aways

- Term Definitions
 - Roadway users specifically mentioned in their policy include pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchair users, mass transit passengers, and motorists. Unique to Brookline's policy, footnotes are used to define and explain mobility aids and other types of motor vehicles. Providing term definitions where needed should be common in practice so that all audiences are familiar with potentially unfamiliar terms.

- Traffic Calming
 - When right of way space is constrained and specific pedestrian and bicycle facilities cannot be built through an exception to their policy, Brookline will identify and implement methods or tools to slow down cars to improve safety for pedestrians.

- Staff Training and Education
 - All Town of Brookline employees are trained to be familiar with the Complete Streets Policy. This allows employees to be proficient enough to answer basic questions from community members about the Complete Streets Policy.

- Application of Policy
 - One critique of Brookline's policy is that nowhere in the supplemental documents or in the policy itself does it state whether Municipal or Development Codes will be updated to reflect the Complete Streets Policy.

- Complete Streets Funding
 - Similar to the State of Washington's Transportation Improvement Board, the State of Massachusetts offers dedicated Complete Streets funding for cities and towns. In an effort to encourage more active and sustainable trips, the [MassDOT Complete Streets Funding Program](#) provides technical assistance and construction funding to cities and towns that have adopted Complete Streets policies and prioritized project lists.

Case Study 3: Vancouver, WA

While the City of Vancouver's population and land area dwarf Tigard's by comparison, Vancouver's complete streets policy is relevant due to the city's proximity to the Portland metropolitan area. Being a nearby Pacific Northwest city, Vancouver's geography, topography, population, demographics, and politics share similarities with Tigard.

Their policy explicitly states the intent to draw people out to the streets so that "residents and business thrive." It presents a clear and concise message of how the City promotes previously neglected modes of transportation:

"The City of Vancouver will plan for, design and construct City transportation improvement projects to provide appropriate accommodation for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and people of all abilities, while promoting operation for all users, as provided in the Complete Streets Policy"

Although the primary focus of their policy is safely accommodating active modes and transit riders, it provides a holistic approach with provisions for all road users, including motor vehicles. Vancouver recognizes that freight and emergency vehicle needs must be met in order to continue providing services. To accommodate freight, the City has mapped a network to clearly identify priority routes throughout the City.

In the case where another agency has jurisdiction over a road within city limits, the City of Vancouver encourages compliance with their complete streets policy. Vancouver is encouraging all of their agency partners to either adopt the City of Vancouver's policy language or to create their own complete streets policy.

Street design standards are included in a "Best Practices" section of their policy document. Vancouver's design standards draw from the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), and the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) to name a few. Having a defined and current list of design best practices enables city staff to select from a broad range of design options that would fit with the unique context of a particular project.

Vancouver's Complete Streets Policy supersedes other transportation documents in the event of a conflict. Their policy includes an implementation plan; it lists actions that need to be taken in order to best support the policy. These actions include updating the city's Transportation System Plan and Capital Improvement Plan to include Complete Streets elements in project planning and design.

Key Take-Aways

- Living Document
 - As with other case study policy examples, the City of Vancouver's Complete Streets Policy is intended to be a living document. City Staff are required to create an annual "Complete Streets Gap Analysis" that helps guide transportation investments. The City is also uses a series of twelve performance measures to track implementation progress.

- Staff Training and Education
 - Vancouver City staff are provided regular Complete Streets trainings to ensure broad understanding and to ensure adherence to the policy. Their trainings generally occur at an all-staff meeting to maximize staff time.

- Design Guidelines
 - To best meet the needs of a multi-modal transportation system serving users of all ages and abilities, street and infrastructure design guidelines should include the most up to date best practices. Vancouver's Complete Streets Design Guidelines utilize material from a variety of current sources including NACTO and AASHTO.

Case Study 4: Baltimore, MD

In Baltimore, decades of traffic crash data showed a clear pattern of increased risk and impact to minority populations and to specific geographic areas within the city. Their complete streets policy was adopted by ordinance (17-0102) with the intent of correcting this problem by fundamentally changing how transportation project investments and decisions are made.

Through his research while drafting their policy, Baltimore Councilman Ryan Dorsey found that “Latino pedestrians were 43% more likely to be killed than white pedestrians”, and that “black pedestrians were 30% more likely to be killed than white cyclists.” Baltimore’s complete street policy addresses past policy deficiencies by mandating safe streets across the city and by making social equity a cornerstone for decision making and street design.

In order to ensure effective implementation of their new complete streets policy, Baltimore’s ordinance requires the formation of a “Complete Streets Coordinating Council” with members at the director level across the city. Additionally, the ordinance requires the Baltimore Director of Transportation to adopt and maintain a comprehensive “Complete Streets Manual” that guides roadway user prioritization, project selection criteria, street design standards, project delivery, and community engagement, to name a few.

At the network level, Baltimore’s policy suggests:

“The Department [of Transportation] shall construct and operate a comprehensive Complete Streets Transportation System that enables access, mobility, economic development, attractive public spaces, health, and well-being for all people”

As such, the city’s road network is expected to promote equity by “eliminating health, economic, and access disparities.” The ordinance acknowledges that driving is a privilege not afforded to everyone due to financial burden of car ownership, lack of physical ability to drive a vehicle, and/or the inability to acquire and maintain a license. Baltimore’s new approach to social equity in their transportation system starts with transforming underperforming streets into places where the entire population feels safe.

If met, the following exception criteria would preclude requirements to add specific complete streets infrastructure in Baltimore:

- Work is part of routine maintenance
- Project is in final design or already under construction as of the adoption of their policy
- Project is located on a street segment where cars and pedestrians are prohibited

The Baltimore complete streets policy includes a list of the “latest and best” street design standards, including those from the following five organizations: National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), Federal Highway Association (FHA), and American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).

Key Take-Aways

- Social Equity Focus
 - Social equity is the foundation for Baltimore's Complete Streets Policy. Baltimore's policy goes above and beyond in targeting transportation improvements that address imbalances in the distribution of benefits and costs.
- Context Sensitivity
 - Baltimore provides guidance on project prioritization and street design that involves a holistic, context-sensitive approach to the needs and outcomes for each specific location.
- Term Definitions
 - The first part of Baltimore's Ordinance includes a glossary of terms that may be new to the general audience. The glossary includes a section on working groups, so that the public is aware on who helped make large decisions.
- Data-Driven Decisions
 - Baltimore incorporates rigorous data gathering and analysis requirements as part of their transportation decision making process. This is designed to support equitable and effective investments in transportation facilities with a particular focus on projects that support people who don't have access to a private vehicle.
- Cross Departmental Coordination
 - A new director-level committee was formed at the city to oversee the implementation of Baltimore's Complete Streets Policy. This level of commitment and oversight helps to ensure that the new policy is adhered to across departments.

Case Study 5: Missoula, MT

While some cities have adopted complete streets policies as a method of fundamentally changing the way in which streets are designed, the City of Missoula's complete streets policy (Resolution 7473) is intended to formalize their existing practices. Missoula's experience demonstrates that not every city needs to reinvent the wheel; sometimes formalizing unwritten practices of designing and building streets for people of all ages and abilities is enough to improve safety for all road users.

Missoula's complete streets policy purpose statement is noticeably clear in its desired outcomes:

"The City of Missoula wishes to ensure that all users of our transportation system are able to travel safely and conveniently on all streets and roadways within the public right-of-way in Missoula"

Unique to Missoula's policy is the stated need for transportation facilities to safely accommodate children. Their perspective is that any city safe for children to navigate will be safe for most users. It specifically focuses on children as they are more likely to travel as pedestrians and bicyclists. The City of Missoula acknowledges that roads should be built with the safety of children in mind, and therefore the policy prioritizes Safe Routes to School programming.

To effectively implement their policy, Missoula reviewed existing street design standards and identified those requiring updates or changes to comply with the requirements of the policy. In application of their street design standards, Missoula city staff look for opportunities to make context-sensitive complete streets upgrades during scheduled repair or repaving projects.

Exception criteria are also handled differently in Missoula than in the other cities in this report. Setting a high bar, only two exceptions are provided and any exception must be approved by City Council:

- When certain modes of transportation are prohibited from using transportation facilities
- When there is a documented "absence of use" by non-motorized modes of transportation that will not exist in the future even with a Complete Streets treatment

Key Take-Aways

- Safety for Children
 - Missoula is unique in their specific language and focus on children in consideration of whether or not a street is complete. Designing streets with the safety of children front and center will generally equate to safer streets for users of all ages and abilities.

- Support of Existing Practices and Policies
 - If a city or jurisdiction is already making efforts to provide complete streets infrastructure, those practices, policies and standards should be recognized and considered as part of the Complete Streets Policy.

- Council Approval for Policy Exceptions
 - As noted, requiring council approval to grant policy exceptions sets a high bar and could potentially bog down the process of creating complete streets. Exception criteria should be limited yet allow staff the appropriate level of discretion in prioritizing and executing project work.

Case Study 6: Monterey Bay Area, CA

The [Monterey Bay Area Complete Streets Guidebook](#) suggests how local jurisdictions within the Monterey Bay Area¹ can create streets that are safer for all users using infrastructure design. Because of their position as a regional government agency, the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) focused on a set of broad complete streets design guidelines as opposed to a specific complete streets policy.

In their discussion on potential benefits of complete streets design on page 19, Monterey Bay's Guidebook provides insight into social equity impacts of transportation investments:

“People experiencing poverty or language barriers, people of color, older adults, youth, people with disabilities and other groups with limited or no access to a vehicle tend to experience a disproportionately small share of benefits from transportation investments focused on motorists.”

Providing further discussion on the benefits of complete streets, the guidebook includes an appendix with information about positive impacts. Shifting car trips to walking, biking, and public transit trips reduces the wear and tear on local roads, which reduces frequency of required road repairs. Likewise, reducing auto speeds on dense commercial corridors has the mutual benefit of making more desirable pedestrian environments through increased safety or perception of increased safety. These changes also may promote a sense of community and increase the number of customers in commercial zones.

The guidebook includes an implementation decision-making framework developed by the Charlotte Department of Transportation Urban Streets Design Guidelines. This sort of guidance may help cities or local jurisdictions as they begin considerations on how to prioritize, plan, design and implement complete streets projects:

1. Define land use context
2. Define transportation context
3. Identify deficiencies
4. Describe future objectives
5. Define street type and cross section
6. Describe tradeoffs and select cross-section

¹ Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito Counties in California

Key Take-Aways

- Design Guidelines Vs Policy
 - A Street Design Guidebook in the absence of a larger Complete Streets Policy could be limited in impact. For example, the Monterey Bay design guidelines do not include project prioritization, and don't deal with jurisdictional control or project phasing, all of which are cornerstones for a successful complete streets policy.
- Focus on Benefits of Complete Streets
 - Community benefits of complete streets are sometimes overlooked in conversations around trade-offs in prioritizing limited right of way space. Supplemental information to Complete Streets Policies should be considered, whether it's the latest in safety measures and street design, or other related data around impacts to neighborhoods, commercial areas or communities as a whole.
- Decision-Making Approach
 - It is important to consider how decisions are made throughout project phasing. From the network level down to the striping configuration of a roadway, the thought process should always include specific measures to ensure the desired outcome will be met based on decisions made along the way.

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