



Complete Streets Report

**Analysis of a survey of Complete Streets Laws,
Policies, and Plans in the United States**

Prepared by Barbara McCann, McCann Consulting
March 2004



As part of Thunderhead's 50 States/50 Cities Project
with funding assistance from Planet Bike
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Introduction

Complete streets policies represent a potentially powerful tool for advocacy leaders ready to take the next step in transforming our streetscape and our communities. This paper summarizes results from a national inventory of jurisdictions with some form of complete streets policy – any policy, resolution, law, internal directive, or other document which requires routinely building and reconstructing streets to be safe and convenient for all users, including those on foot and bicycle. Advocacy leaders can use the recommendations found here as they contemplate their own complete streets campaigns.

As the national coalition of state and local bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organizations, the Thunderhead Alliance invested in a survey and analysis of complete streets laws, policies, and plans in the United States, usually referred to as ‘routine accommodation’ policies. This is part of Thunderhead’s comprehensive complete streets campaign, which will include a replicable complete streets campaign model. This paper aims to tap the organic success of existing routine accommodation policies to fuel new campaigns led by Thunderhead organizations to win and implement complete streets policies across the United States.

In this paper you will find references to “advocates” and to “advocacy leaders.” The former refers to all individuals who have put effort into winning these policies. If you are reading this paper, you are likely an advocate. The latter refers to the leaders of Thunderhead Alliance member organizations.

Methodology

This analysis of complete streets policies, expressed through policy statements, directives, legislation, resolutions, plans, ordinances, and design manuals was derived from a survey sent to bicycle advocacy leaders and state and local bicycle-pedestrian coordinators throughout the United States (Appendix A). 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 advocacy leaders means different perspectives are reflected. 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 white paper included: calling for routine accommodation as a requirement, not as an option, and covering all roads under the jurisdictions' control (this excludes bike/ped plans that only call for accommodation on certain streets). This paper does not evaluate the effectiveness of these policies and an important next step will be to determine which policies are resulting in good outcomes on our roadways and in our communities.

In addition, this report stops short of delving into the many design issues around completing the streets. Such issues are considered 'part two' of a complete streets campaign. Part one is the policy statement that roads will be safe and convenient for all users. Part two is the re-writing of design manuals to implement the policy. Additional discussion of this distinction can be found under the 'design specifications' heading. It should also be recognized that there is no 'perfect' complete streets policy. Many jurisdictions have taken different approaches, and in many cases the policies are new and untested. *This report is the beginning of a learning curve, not a definitive account.*

This organization of this paper closely follows that of the survey questionnaire, adding perspective and often finishing a section with recommendations. A more inclusive recommendation section is at the end of the paper.

Although a "best attempt" was made to assemble all existing complete streets policies, there are likely some that were missed. If your community or state has a policy in place fitting the description in this chapter, please email info@thunderheadalliance.org. Please also fill out the survey on complete streets found via a link in the right column at www.thunderheadalliance.org. We will include new findings in future updates. Thank you for your assistance.

The Policies

Where are policies being adopted, and what form do they take?

Most policies we've learned about apply at the state level (12 total). Five were adopted by cities, five by MPOs, and three by counties. A chart of these policies, their form, and where they were adopted is shown here.

POLICIES COLLECTED	State	County	MPO/RDC	City
Legislation	OR, FL, RI			
Ordinance				Columbia-MO
Resolution	NC, SC	DuPage-IL	Columbus-OH	Sacramento-CA
Tax Ordinance		Sacramento-CA San Diego-CA		
Internal Policy	TN, IL, CA, AZ, KY, VA, <i>ID*</i>		Cleveland-OH Bay Area-CA	
Plans			Knoxville-TN St. Joseph-MO, <i>St. Petersburg-FL*</i>	Boulder-CO Santa Barbara-CA
Design Manual	PA			San Diego-CA

*Those in *Italic* are policies with incomplete information to analyze.

We use the term 'policies' loosely, because they take many forms. At the state level, three states have passed legislation: Oregon, Florida, and Rhode Island. Two state Transportation Commissions have issued policies (North and South Carolina), and six state DOTs have issued internal policies or directives (TN, IL, CA, AZ, KY, VA). One state has changed its design manual (PA).

The policies at the city, MPO, and county level include city and MPO plans, local resolutions and ordinances, and local design manuals. Most interesting, two policies are new tax ordinances, in San Diego and Sacramento, California. Both require complete streets in the use of sales tax funds dedicated to transportation. They were both approved by voters in November 2004.

Another way to analyze this is to look at the split between policies achieved primarily through public and inherently political processes, (interaction with elected officials or other political bodies) or through internal agency processes. Looking at Appendix B, 11 of the policies are laws, resolutions, or ordinances, while 14 are internal policies, plans, or design manuals.

In several cases the internal agency-driven processes were greatly influenced by advocates, particularly through bicycle and/or pedestrian advisory groups. These policies may have also had to go through a public approval process.

It is encouraging to see that complete streets policies can be achieved in many different ways at different government levels. However, the statewide policies would be expected to have the most widespread effect. Oregon's state law affects all roads, no matter the jurisdiction; more commonly, the state policies affect only state-owned and maintained roads. However, the state policies may influence more local policies. For example, in California, Deputy Directive 64 seems to have spurred additional local action.

When were policies adopted?

The move toward complete streets has been growing: four of the 25 policies were enacted in the early months of 2004 alone, and most others have come about since 2001. This is in part a testament to the influence of the 2000 US DOT 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). A few policies precede this era – Oregon's was enacted in 1971 – and this offers an opportunity to evaluate longer-term changes on the ground.

What does the Federal Guidance policy say?

Because a number of the state and local policies are based on the policy statement in the USDOT Design Guidance, a review of that document is pertinent here. While the language in TEA-21 fell short of requiring states to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians, the subsequent Guidance recommends that states 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 exceptions are for roads where bicyclists or pedestrians are prohibited by law, where the costs are excessive (defined as more than 20 percent of project costs; and where there is an absence of need. The policy statement also calls for paved shoulders on rural roads and designs that are accessible for disabled people.

The policy statement 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. 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.

What do the surveyed state and local policies say?

It is important to note that of all the policies included in the survey, not one of the policies, laws, resolutions, ordinances, plans, or design manuals use the term 'complete streets.' Nonetheless most of the laws and policies in use across the United States have great language setting out their vision:

Bicycle and pedestrian ways shall be established in new construction and reconstruction projects throughout the metropolitan area, unless one or more of three conditions are met.
(St. Joseph, MO MPO)

...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)

Policy Issues

Does the policy really require accommodation?

In some cases policies use the word “consider”:

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 raises a red flag for advocacy leaders, because ‘consideration,’ in the words of one advocate, can give agencies “tons of wiggle room.” However, the California policy has been used effectively by local advocates to press for more localized complete streets initiatives.

Even without the word ‘consider,’ some policies may not function as complete streets policies. For example, while Arizona has a policy which states “It is ADOT’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 make 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 the issue of whether the policies truly require accommodation is by looking at whether they are specific about exceptions, and how exceptions are handled. Sixteen of the policies list specific exceptions, including:

- 15 specify excessive cost,
- 12 specify absence of need,
- 6 specify lack of right of way, and
- 3 specify 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. Many of these exceptions go far beyond the federal guidance which only mentions three exceptions: where bicyclists and pedestrians are prohibited,

excessive cost, and absence of need. The USDOT Guidance also specifies that need should be defined in terms of potential *future* pedestrian or bicycle travel.

The next question is whether the policies require formal approval when exceptions are made and bicyclists and pedestrians are **not** accommodated. The USDOT Guidance recommends that such exceptions should include documentation and require approval from senior management. About a dozen of the policies do require such formal justification. The survey did not ask the exact method for documenting justifications, but in some cases survey respondents mentioned design exemption forms or required checklists. This bears further investigation. A formal exemption process was seen as valuable by advocacy leaders. One advocate pointed out 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 and that require a formal approval process for each exception. Policies should reverse the current norm from having to justify accommodating bicyclists and pedestrians 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 advocacy 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 to be when it comes to actual street design. A few of the documents reviewed in the Inventory provide very specific language on what types of accommodation should be built (including road width, presence of curbs, when to built bike lanes and when to build curb lanes, etc), or are themselves design manuals. However, most of the documents are broad policy statements that refer to other guidelines or design manuals for design specifics.

The USDOT Guidance follows this two-part format. The policy statement simply says that agencies should “design facilities to the best currently available standards and guidelines,” mentioning AASHTO and ITE standards. The next section of the USDOT Guidance, lays out more specific design considerations, which it calls a “Rewrite the Manuals” approach. This approach considers specific

bicycle/pedestrian manuals as an interim step toward a recommended total re-write of general street design manuals. At the same time, the Guidance recommends allowing 'engineering judgment' to guide decisions on a case-by-case basis. All the examples it gives show circumstances in which *more* bike/ped accommodation should be made than strictly mandated by design 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 advocacy 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, people with disabilities, and transit users. However, few of the policies included in the survey are this comprehensive. Several of the policies discuss accommodating transit and people with disabilities, but many do not. The USDOT Design Guidance does not discuss transit users, but does make specific reference to accommodating people with disabilities:

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)

In addition, a few of the policies collected in the survey apply to only bicycles or only to pedestrians. An emphasis of some of the pedestrian-oriented policies is on reducing road width to slow traffic and decrease crossing time. Some of the bicycle policies in effect call for wider roads to include bike facilities. It is interesting to note that some of the pedestrian-oriented policies made the strongest link to the new emphasis on healthful physical activity.

Our RECOMMENDATION is that you seek complete street policies that incorporate other issues like 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.

What roads are covered?

Most of the 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 cover road projects funded through MPO-disbursed funds. The sales tax ordinances in Sacramento and San Diego counties will 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 (his title is), notes that the passive grammar of Oregon's state law helped ensure it applied to every road. The law says "wherever a road is constructed," without referring to the agency responsible for building or maintaining it.

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

Funding

As a rule, the policies do not include funding. The federal guidance does not mention funding except for the 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 on the ballot in California, specify that funded projects must accommodate travel via foot and bicycle. Others assume that funding will come from standard sources.

One advocate mentioned that their state's restriction on spending gas-tax money only on roads may get in the way of local jurisdictions' implementation on the 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

Our RECOMMENDATION is that you think through funding issues ahead of time and identify, if possible, a funding stream for the policy.

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>.

Implementation Issues

The rest of the survey responses dealt with issues surrounding the adoption and implementation of complete streets policies.

What are the barriers to implementation?

Response to the questions about barriers to implementation was a bit spotty, but patterns did develop. Several respondents 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 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. Advocacy leaders also mentioned a simple lack of resolve or a bias against bike lanes as implementation barriers, while some coordinators cited resident resistance to the changes, particularly those that increased road width.

The implementation issues mentioned point to the fact that the work is not done once a policy is in place. Thunderhead Alliance organizations must continue to take an active role in ensuring their implementation. The next step within an agency is often a re-write of design manuals, or adoption of appropriate existing manuals, and advocates should contribute to this process. Advocacy groups can also offer assistance by helping organize trainings to educate agency employees on implementation issues. For example, the League of American Bicyclists and the Palmetto Cycling Coalition are working with the state of South Carolina on implementation for their new policy, and the results of this process will be available for advocates elsewhere.

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

Costs

When America Bikes, the coalition of eight national bicycle advocacy organizations working on the federal transportation law, was seeking to place complete streets language in the federal transportation reauthorization, 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 policies 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 getting a piece of the much larger pie 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.

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.

Has implementation been successful? What are the outcomes?

In the questionnaire, some coordinators termed these policies successful, and not surprisingly most advocacy leaders were more cautious and a few of the polices got a clear 'thumbs down.'

The best way to test these policies would be to look at what is happening on the ground. However, the most common answers were that it is just too soon to tell if the policies have succeeded, or that no records were being kept. Disappointingly few 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; Michael Ronkin observed that the state experienced a slight decline in bike/ped commuting from 1990 to 2000, but less than rest of country; and that crashes are lower than other Western states, but also observed that statistics are extraordinarily difficult to keep. Thunderhead's final model will encourage such record-keeping. Also, Thunderhead's benchmarking project that gathers and compares bicycling and walking data sets from across the country will be a valuable tool in assessing the effectiveness of these policies. Find Thunderhead's latest benchmarking report at: www.biketraffic.org/benchmarking.

An evaluation of the actual effectiveness of the policies included in the survey is beyond the scope of this paper. Much more investigation is needed on the impact of these policies and how to make them work. Advocacy leaders indicated that even if they were not well implemented, these policies provide additional leverage in advocacy efforts:

*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.

The Policy Adoption Process

How were advocacy leaders involved in the adoption of the policies?

Advocates were involved in all but one of the policies for which full surveys were returned. The survey included a special section for advocacy leaders to provide extra information, but the discussion below melds the answers of the coordinators and advocacy leaders.

While the questions on the survey did not ask for a full history of the effort, in five cases, bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organizations were credited with making the original push for the policies, and in two instances a bicycle or pedestrian advisory committee is credited with originating the idea. In most cases, advocacy leaders and advisory groups have been active in the development and fine-tuning of the policy; only a few mentioned involvement in implementation issues.

Bicycle advocates and legislators urged the State DOT to adopt the USDOT Policy Statement on Integrating Bicycling and Walking into Transportation Infrastructure. The DOT preferred to develop its own policy.

(California)

In June, 2003 the Central Ohio Bicycle Advocacy Coalition objected to MORPC's TIP (Transportation Improvement Program) and objected to granting federal funding to projects due to failure to comply with federal law requiring "due consideration" as defined in FHWA 1999 program guidance and 2000 design guidance requiring that bicycling and walking facilities be included in all transportation projects unless exceptional circumstances exist. As a result of COBAC objections, MORPC agreed in resolution adopting TIP to adopt routine accommodation policy.

(Columbus, Ohio)

In many cases bicycle advocates worked on the policies through the bicycle/pedestrian committee or advisory board. For the most part, the advocacy approach has been pretty low-key, without a lot of broad public outreach. When asked about specific activities, the most common advocate activity has been to attend and arrange meetings with staff and officials, and to participate through advisory boards or other official bodies. Six groups mentioned working on writing or revising the actual language, with a few saying this was very valuable. Media-based public outreach tactics were mentioned by only two advocate groups reporting on policies: Virginia and Columbia, Missouri. Columbia developed an impressive set of materials as well as a broad list of allies in an effort that included media and public presentations.

The allies typically mentioned reflected an internal focus. Six advocacy leaders mentioned internal allies at the agency adopting the policy. Only a few mentioned groups other than basic bicycle-pedestrian allies.

Our RECOMMENDATION is that you take this opportunity to strengthen your bicycle-pedestrian advocacy 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 the Guide To Complete Streets Campaigns for more details.

Opposition

The opposition question was answered by both advocacy leaders and coordinators. Seven respondents 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 resistance appears to be in Santa Barbara, where their circulation element, in place since 1995, has inspired a group (or at least a website) called Cars are Basic: <http://www.silcom.com/~cab/cab.htm>.

Five respondents mentioned internal DOT resistance, and a few other opponents mentioned included the local congestion management association, (which saw the move as competing for funds), and the development industry, in those cases where the developers are responsible for providing the roads.

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 FDOT 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)

Our RECOMMENDATION is that you should be prepared to answer opposition. It is difficult to plan for it since you'll never know when, how, and where it will arise, but it has to be done. See the Guide To Complete Streets Campaigns for more advice on opposition.

Three keys to success

The survey asked advocacy leaders to summarize by listing three keys to their success in getting a policy adopted. Simply repeating a few of the answers is probably most useful.

1. *Former CalTrans Director Morales was a bicyclist.*
 2. *We asked.*
 3. *The DOT was willing to promise “full consideration,” not full accommodation.*
(California)
-
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].*
 2. *Supportive MTC [MPO] chairman who is a friend.*
 3. *MTC prides itself on being progressive.*
(CA Bay Area MPO)
-
1. *PennDOT initiative.*
 2. *Supportive governor (Tom Ridge).*
 3. *Supportive legislative transportation committees.*
(Pennsylvania)

Observations and Further Recommendations

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, advocacy leaders see policies as providing important leverage for advocacy 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. Almost no data is being collected on the successes or failures of these policies.
6. Bicycle and pedestrian advisory councils have played a significant role in adoption of these policies. Most campaigns to date have been from the 'inside' without massive public outreach or media, and have depended upon sympathetic staff or elected officials.

Recommendations for policy development

A basic complete streets policy should:

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

Since 2000, most of the strong complete streets policies have been modeled after the USDOT Design Guidance: Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel (See Appendix C, Example A) 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 C, Example B, the introductory text to the MORPC (Central Ohio) MPO 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. Unfortunately, we have not yet identified examples of such language.
- Consider adding language on measurement of progress toward creating complete streets.

Advocates 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 C, Example C).

Recommendations on an advocacy approach

The ultimate aim in pursuing a complete streets campaign is to create a culture in which every street is built, modified, and maintained to be safe, comfortable, and even inviting for users of all modes. A complete streets policy will not, by itself, achieve this goal; agencies will be resistant, individual projects will be controversial, other priorities will prevail. It won't end the road battles that motivate so much advocacy work. Instead, the policy is best viewed as a *vehicle* for change. The campaign for the policy is a way to educate decision-makers and the public about prioritizing our streetscapes differently. The policy itself will give advocates important new leverage in pursuing better accommodations, both across the jurisdiction and in individual road battles. Most importantly, the policy will provide a way to push transportation agencies toward culture change. The process of re-writing design manuals, or training transportation agency employees in implementation, should be seen as an integral part of reaching the ultimate goal.

- Advocacy leaders must assess their organizational strength and the political conditions in which they are working as they choose whether to immediately pursue a strong policy or to work toward complete streets in stages.

- Advocacy leaders looking for the most comprehensive policy may consider launching a campaign for a statewide law. There is little precedent for this type of campaign; the states with comprehensive policies achieved them as part of wider reforms.
- Advocacy leaders seeking 'lower-hanging fruit' may opt for a policy adopted through an administrative process at a friendly agency. Internal and local policies obtained through an administrative strategy have a clear record of adoption.
- Advocacy leaders may engage in more modest efforts to simply spread the concept of complete streets, laying the groundwork for a future policy campaign.

The Thunderhead Alliance is providing resources for all of these efforts. A full model campaign, as well as a set of resources called "Using Complete Streets as a Communications Tool" are under development.

In a broader sense, advocates 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.

If you are an individual advocate and would like to assist your Thunderhead organization in winning and implementing a complete streets policy in your state and/or community, please contact:

Thunderhead Alliance
P.O. Box 3309
Prescott, AZ 86302
928-541-9841
info@thunderheadalliance.org

Or find your Thunderhead organization on our Links page at:
www.thunderheadalliance.org.

Appendix A

Complete the Streets Survey

This survey was distributed to Thunderhead organization leaders and bicycle-pedestrian planners.

Thank you for taking the time to answer the Thunderhead Alliance survey on complete streets policies. We are using this information to create an inventory of policies now in place as well as of active campaigns to institute complete streets policies.

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability: We realize that you may not have the answers to every question. To answer the survey without disturbing its layout, hit the 'Insert' key on your keyboard or double-click the OVR button in the status bar at the bottom of the Word screen.

You may return the survey electronically by emailing it to Barbara@bmccann.net. Questions or comments? Contact Barbara McCann at 202-641-1163 or Barbara@bmccann.net.

Your Name:
Title:

Phone:
Email address:

What is a complete streets policy?	What is not a complete streets policy?
Complete street policies call for creating safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian accommodation on every road built or reconstructed (sometimes called 'routine accommodation'). These facilities can be quite varied, ranging from separate paths to sidewalks and bike lanes to wide shoulders or wide curb lanes, but a justification is required if no bicycling and/or walking improvements are made.	Policies that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• limit consideration of accommodation to roads in a bike or pedestrian plan,• ask for some justification of need before a bicycle or pedestrian accommodation facility is included,• simply encourage consideration without any requirement.

We do want to include policies which appear to require complete streets, but which have not succeeded in doing so because of implementation failures.

Questions:

What is the name of the policy?

What jurisdiction does the policy cover?

What is the origin of the policy?

- State legislation
- City/county council resolution/ordinance
- Internal DOT guidance or directive
- Integration with street design manual
- Other: _____

When was it adopted? (For advocates working toward new policies, see below)

Where can the complete original language be found on the web?

Was there a press release on its adoption/implementation and where can a copy be located/obtained?

If not available on the web, can you give a one-sentence summary of the policy?

What are the exceptions allowed in the policy?

- Excessive cost
- Absence of need
- Bridges
- Insufficient right of way
- Conflict with local plans
- At the discretion of a top official
- Other: _____

Must the exceptions be formally justified?

- Yes No

Is the policy being successfully implemented?

- Yes No

What issues are hampering implementation?

What are the financial considerations surrounding the policy? Does it include dedicated funding, either for facilities or for administration?

Are there any quantifiable outcomes being tracked at this point, such as number of streets 'completed'; an increase in biking/walking; or any other statistics?

- Yes No

Can you provide some of these statistics here?

Were advocates involved in getting the policy adopted?

- Yes No

If yes, which organizations and/or individuals were involved?

Have advocates been involved in moving toward implementation?

Has there been any opposition to the policy?

- Yes No

If yes, can you tell us what opponents have said and who the opponents represent?

Who else should be contacted for further information (please provide a phone number or e-mail address)?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Additional Questions for Advocates

If you are an advocate working toward or have a complete streets policy now, please answer these questions according to what has been done to date.

Is your policy in place, or in process?

In place In process

Did you originate the movement for a complete streets policy, or support an effort begun by other players (elected officials, transportation or planning department officials)?

Originated with advocates Originated by others

Who have been your biggest allies and supporters in seeking and implementing complete streets policy?

How much time have you or your organization spent in total advocating for adoption of the policy?

If policy is in place, how long did it take from the first introduction of the idea to implementation?

What activities have you engaged in while working to achieve the policy?

- Attended official meetings and submitted comments
- Arranged meetings with officials
- Circulated petitions
- Engaged in a public media campaign
- Encouraged testimony by members at public hearings
- Worked the political process
- Helped write and revise language
- Other:

How much has this work cost your organization?

What information helped with your advocacy?

- Local biking/walking statistics (use, crashes, etc)
- Rhetorical arguments for balanced transportation
- Fiscal arguments
- Public health information
- Technical information on feasibility
- Sample text and examples from other entities/jurisdictions
- Other:

What do you believe have been the top three keys to your complete streets success?

What three things would you do differently if you were starting from scratch on your complete streets effort?

Thanks again for completing this survey! Please email it back to Barbara@bmccann.net.

Appendix B

Policies Surveyed

Policy	Level	Type	Adopted	Description	Original source
FHWA policy		policy guidance	02/28/00	Original FHWA guidance based on language in TEA-21.	www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/design.htm#d4
Arizona DOT MGT 02-1 Bicycle Policy	state	internal directive	03/01/02	"It is ADOT's policy to include provisions for bicycle travel in all new major construction and major reconstruction projects on the state highway system."	www.azbikeped.org/images/final%20bike%20policy.pdf
California DDOT Deputy Directive 64	state	internal policy (Deputy Directive 64)	03/26/01	"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. Adopts best practices from US DOT policy statement.	www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/bike/DD64.pdf Note at: www.calbike.org/acr211.asp you can see the state legislature's August 2002 resolution urging local jurisdictions to adhere to DD-64 and the FHWA guidance document.
Sacramento County, California routine accommodation sales tax initiative	county & all cities in county	tax ordinance, 30-year sales tax	11/02/04	One sentence requires routine accommodation of bicyclists and pedestrians in all projects funded by half-cent sales tax.	www.sta.sacramento.ca.us/pdf/OrdSTA-04-01.pdf
San Diego, California City Street Design Manual	city	manual	11/25/02	Basically, every street is required to have bicycle and pedestrian accommodation.	www.sandiego.gov/planning/pdf/intro.pdf
Santa Barbara, California Circulation Element, General Plan	city	plan, general	09/01/98	Policies direct sidewalks, bike lanes, improve road conditions, consider all modes of travel when doing project; "achieve equality of convenience and choice among modes."	Please find the Circulation Element link at: www.santabarbaraca.gov/Government/Departments/PW/Transportation+Planning+and+Alternative+Transportation.htm

Sacramento, California Pedestrian Friendly Street Standards	city	resolution of city council amending general plan	02/24/04	Street design manual that integrates bike/ped: Eliminate rolled curb; Include separated sidewalk on all streets; Reduce widths of collector and arterial streets; Reduce travel lane widths on arterial streets; Add bike lanes to all new collector streets.	www.pwsacramento.com/traffic/streetrevisions.html
San Diego County, California tax reauthorization	county	tax ordinance, reauthorization of county transportation tax	11/2/04	"All new projects, or major reconstruction projects, funded by revenues provided under this Ordinance shall accommodate travel by pedestrians and bicyclists, except where pedestrians and bicyclists are prohibited by law from using a given facility or where the costs of including bikeways and walkways would be excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use. Such facilities for pedestrian and bicycle use shall be designed to the best currently available standards and guidelines."	www.sandag.org/index.asp?projectid=255&fuseaction=projects.detail See Section 4(D)(3). D
Boulder, Colorado Multimodal Corridors & Transportation Network Plans	city	Plan	01/01/96	Designated Multi-Modal Corridors are getting extra investments for auto, bike, ped & bus; Transportation Network Plans create multi-modal plans within specific geographic areas.	www3.ci.boulder.co.us/publicworks/depts/transportation/master_plan_new/multimodal/multimodal.htm
Florida Bicycle & Pedestrian Ways statute	state	legislation	1984	"Bicycle and pedestrian ways shall be given full consideration in the planning and development of transportation facilities, including the incorporation of such ways into state, regional, and local transportation plans and programs. Bicycle and pedestrian ways shall be established in conjunction with the construction, reconstruction, or other change of any state transportation facility, and special emphasis shall be given to projects in or within 1 mile of an urban area."	2003->Ch0335->Section%20065">www.flsenate.gov/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=Ch0335/SEC065.HTM&Title=->2003->Ch0335->Section%20065 For implementing FDOT policy, see section 8.1 of the Plans Preparation Manual, www.dot.state.fl.us/rddesign/PPM%20Manual/2004/Volume%201/V1Chap08.pdf

Illinois Bureau of Design & Environment, Bicycle & Ped Accommodations	state highways	internal policy; DOT directive	09/01/95	If specific needs "warrants" are met, then curbed urban roads should include (typically) 13' outside lanes or (rarely) bike lanes, and rural roads should have paved shoulders of width depending on the situation.	www.dot.state.il.us/desenv/BDE%20Manual/BDE/pdf/chap17.pdf
DuPage County, Illinois Healthy Roads Initiative	county	internal directive	03/24/04	Construct a sidewalk or bicycle path where right-of-way is available;Ensure that the new construction project is safe for both the user and the community;Ensure that the new construction project adds a lasting value to both motorized and non-motorized users;couple of aesthetic concerns.	www.dupageco.org/pressDetail.cfm?doc_id=1352
Kentucky Pedestrian and Bicycle Travel Policy	state	internal policy	07/16/02	<p>“The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) will consider the incorporation of pedestrian facilities on all new or reconstructed state-maintained roadways in existing and planned urban and suburban areas.”</p> <p>“The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) will consider the accommodation of bicycles on all new or reconstructed state-maintained roadways. KYTC will also consider accommodating bicycle transportation when planning the resurfacing of roadways, including shoulders.”</p>	www.kytc.state.ky.us/Multimodal/pdf/Task%20Force%20FINAL%20June%2018_02%20policy%20rec%20to%20Sec%20CodeII.PDF
St. Joseph, Missouri bike-ped plan	MPO	plan	07/01/01	“Bicycle and pedestrian ways shall be established in new construction and reconstruction projects throughout the metropolitan area, unless one or more of three conditions are met.”	www.ci-st-joseph.mo.us/publicworks/bpmasterplan.asp

Columbia, Missouri Model Street Standards	city	ordinance, city council	06/07/04	Subdivision ordinance: All new development will include: * Residential streets that are 28' wide (instead of 32') * Residential sidewalks that are 5' wide (instead of 4') * Major collectors and arterials with 8' or 10' multi-use "pedways" * Major collectors and arterials with 6' striped bike lanes or wide shared-use travel lanes. When existing streets undergo major maintenance, these standards will be applied when the street is rebuilt, whenever possible.	www.gocolumbiamo.com/Council/Bills/2004/apr5bills/B92-04.html
North Carolina DOT Bicycle Policy	state maintained roads; there no county roads in NC	resolution, State DOT	1978 and revised 1991	"...bicycling and walking accommodations shall be a routine part of the North Carolina Department of Transportation's planning, design, construction, and operations activities"	www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/law/laws_resolution.html
Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Policy: Routine Accommodations 2004	MPO	resolution of MPO with detailed policy	07/22/04	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.	www.morpc.org/web/departments/transportation/bikeped/T-15-04 Att 5-Rev Routine Accommodation v2.pdf
Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency Bicycle-Pedestrian Planning Policies	MPO	internal policy	09/01/03	"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."	www.noaca.org/RTIP%202003.pdf page 20 (or page 15 of document)
Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Program	state	legislation	01/01/71	Provide footpaths and bike trails as part of road projects; minimum spending of 1 percent of city/county highway funds.	www.odot.state.or.us/techserv/bike/walk/plan_app/366514.htm

Pennsylvania Bicycle & Ped Checklist Training (Appendix J to PennDOT Design Manual)	state	manual, appendix	07/01/01	Developed as part of the statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, the "bicycle and pedestrian checklist" includes a comprehensive listing of the needs of pedestrians and cyclists that should be considered in appropriate transportation projects.	www.mail-archive.com/bike@list.purple.com/msg00613.html
Rhode Island state policy	state	legislation	06/19/97	Law says "department of transportation is authorized and directed to provide for the accommodation of bicycle and pedestrian traffic "design memo says "accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians shall be considered."	www.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE31/31-18/31-18-21.HTM
South Carolina DOT Resolution	state	resolution, transportation commission	02/20/03	"...bicycling and walking accommodations should be a routine part of the Department's planning, design, construction and operating activities."	www.sccppa.org/advocacy/bike.html
Knoxville, Tennessee MPO Bicycle Accommodation Policy	MPO	plan	10/01/02	"Appropriate bicycle and pedestrian facilities shall be established in new construction and reconstruction projects in all urbanized areas unless one or more of three conditions are met."	www.knoxtrans.org/plans/bikeplan/index.htm
Tennessee DOT Bicycle and Pedestrian policy	state highways	internal policy; DOT directive	01/01/03	"The policy of TDOT is to routinely integrate bicycling and pedestrian facilities into the transportation system as a means to improve mobility and safety of non-motorized traffic."	www.tdot.state.tn.us/bikeroutes/policy.pdf
Virginia DOT Policy for Integrating Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations	state owned roads; jurisdiction over most county roads	internal policy	03/18/04	"The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will initiate all highway construction projects with the presumption that the projects shall accommodate bicycling and walking."	www.virginiadot.org/infoservice/news/newsrelease.asp?ID=CO-0414

Appendix C

Examples of Model Policies

Example A: USDOT Design Guidance: Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel

Policy Statement

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 sparsity 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 B: MORPC (Central Ohio MPO) 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. 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 C: South Carolina Department of Transportation Commission Resolution on Bicycling and Walking (see next page)

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