



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Date: November 29, 2023

In Control: Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

DEPARTMENT: Transportation Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Catherine Hernandez

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Complete Streets Policy Update

SUMMARY:

Briefing on updating the 2011 Complete Streets Policy

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In September 2011, City Council adopted a Complete Streets Policy to encourage an approach to street design that supports pedestrian and bicycle-oriented neighborhoods, promotes healthy living, fitness, and activity, enhances the economic vitality of commercial corridors and districts, and maximizes the benefits of investment in public infrastructure. This policy guided the review of street improvements by shifting the perspective to consider opportunities that consider all modes of travel and all user types.

Over the years, the policy has been integrated into various City policies and guidelines including

the 2016 Multimodal Transportation Plan (MMTP). The MMTP is a long-range plan that provides overarching policy guidance creating a roadmap to transform our current transportation system into one that is sustainable, safe, convenient, and inclusive of all modes. The plan provides direction for Complete Streets, Vision Zero, the Bike Network Plan, capital projects and includes twelve priority corridors for investment. Complete Streets is specifically referenced in the downtown design guide in the Unified Development Code (UDC) and many of the current UDC design standards meet Complete Streets design goals. In addition to the UDC, a Complete Streets checklist was also incorporated into the Public Works 2017 Design Guidance manual.

After the policy was adopted, CityHealth, a foundation that reviews city policies and their impact on quality of life, awarded San Antonio's 2011 Complete Street Policy a Gold Medal as recently as 2021. In 2022, CityHealth updated its policy package to align with the latest national standards. Currently, the 2011 Policy does not meet all of the policy expectations set forth by CityHealth such as the inclusion of a list of project exceptions or explicitly stating that vulnerable users will be prioritized. With the update in national standards, the City's 2011 Policy should be updated to reflect the new criteria.

Earlier this year, the Transportation Department compared the 2011 Policy against the new criteria from CityHealth and Smart Growth America. Smart Growth America is a national nonprofit that provides technical assistance for Complete Streets policies and scores city policies on a scale of 0 to 100. In addition to comparing the previous policy to the latest standards, Transportation also reviewed policies from eight peer cities and spoke to multiple cities regarding their lessons learned. Research found that the 2011 policy was missing the following key factors: performance measures, interdepartmental and external coordination, design updates, project selection criteria, and prioritizing equity. Throughout the research phase, 10 key policy elements that lead to successful implementation across the nation were identified. These key elements provided the outline for a proposed draft policy update.

Recently, the draft policy was positively reviewed by the San Antonio Complete Streets Coalition and CityHealth. We have also shared our progress with other supportive organizations such as American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). A list of potential stakeholders for an ad hoc policy committee has also been developed with the first meeting tentatively scheduled for January 2024. The Transportation Department anticipates taking the proposed Complete Streets Policy Update to the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee in June 2024. If adopted, the policy update will move into a second phase where a consultant will assist the City in identifying potential updates to the Design Guidelines and the UDC. The second phase will be overseen by an ad hoc stakeholder group tasked with reviewing recommended changes to the Design Guidelines and UDC.

ISSUE:

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FISCAL IMPACT:

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ALTERNATIVES:

This briefing is for informational purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

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