

MINUTES
FARMINGTON METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
SPECIAL TECHNICAL COMMITTEE WORKSHOP - COMPLETE STREETS
February 24, 2016

Technical Members Present: Bill Watson, City of Aztec
Teresa Brevik, City of Bloomfield
Cindy Lopez, City of Farmington
David Sypher, City of Farmington
Andrew Montoya, Red Apple Transit
Fran Fillerup, San Juan County

Technical Members Absent: NMDOT District 5 Representative

Staff Present: Duane Wakan, MPO Planner
June Markle, MPO Administrative Aide

Staff Absent: Mary Holton, MPO Officer

Others Present: Cheri Floyd, BC/BS of New Mexico
Mary Gardocki, City of Farmington, PRCA
Larry Hathaway, San Juan County
Terri Kennedy, Citizen (Place Matters member)
Dr. John McNeill, City of Farmington MRA
Commission
Christina Morris, State of New Mexico
Cory Styron, City of Farmington, PRCA
Pam Valencia, San Juan County Partnership-Place
Matters
Anngela Wakan, Safe Routes to School & San Juan
Safe Communities Initiative (SJSCI)

Mr. Sypher called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance. Mr. Sypher asked that input from the Floor be limited due to the fact that this was a Technical Committee workshop to complete their review of the draft Complete Streets Design Guidelines document. Once the review is completed, the Technical Committee will make a recommendation to the entire consolidated group and, at that time, the Complete Streets Advisory Group members will be given an opportunity for further comments.

Changes or recommended edits to actual content of the document should be presented and discussed today during the Workshop with all the Technical Committee. Any spelling, word-smithing, and/or grammatical errors should be e-mailed separately to Mr. Wakan. These types of changes are to ensure the context is accurately stating the intent of the Complete Streets Advisory Group.

Mr. Wakan stated that all the red-lined sections in the draft document were changes and recommendations made by Technical Committee members, Complete Streets Advisory Group members, and MPO staff.

1. COMPLETE STREETS DESIGN GUIDELINES

Subject:	Complete Streets
Prepared by:	Duane Wakan, MPO Planner
Date:	February 17, 2016

BACKGROUND or PREVIOUS WORK

- Complete Streets are a means of designing a roadway so that it accommodates all modes of travel, including driving, walking, biking, and transit.
- Staff has worked with the Complete Streets Advisory Group (CSAG) on content, and design guidelines for the FMPO planning area.
- The Advisory Group held its last meeting on September 3, 2015 and reviewed the draft Complete Streets Design Guidelines document.
- Staff made editorial revisions based on input from CSAG members. Works cited and minor grammatical errors will be corrected or updated on an ongoing basis.
- Staff will report to the Policy committee on February 25, and seek final approval at their April 28th meeting.

CURRENT WORK

- Finalize the design guidelines document with the Technical Committee.
- Seek recommended approval by the Technical Committee on February 24, 2016.

ANTICIPATED WORK

- Provide editorial updates per recommendations from the Technical Committee.
- Seek approval by the Policy Committee on April 28, 2016
- Publish final document and distribute to entities
- Create a regional Complete Streets resolution for regional consideration and adoption.

ACTION ITEM

- Consider recommending approval of the draft Complete Streets Design Guidelines document to the Policy Committee.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Sypher asked the Technical Committee members if they wanted to review the document line by line or section by section. Mr. Watson said he would like to go through the document page by page. Mr. Montoya agreed that a more thorough review. The other members said this was acceptable to them.

The following is a summary of edits, revisions, and corrections to the draft Complete Streets Design Guidelines recommended by the Technical Committee:

- Some of the background colors used in the document make the text difficult to read;

Front Cover

- Is the word “context” that is used throughout the document understood by all readers? Is there a different word to use?
 - Related to land use and road type
 - With given traffic volumes in different settings, the design is sensitive to the context of the area and an entity can utilize the designs to suit their particular need and situation;
 - The FHWA definition of “context sensitive” is on the 2nd page of the document;
 - Change the word “our” to “or”.

Page 1 - Preface: Why Complete Streets

- Add aesthetics examples on right hand side of page such as underground utilities/electric and landscaping opportunities (trees, bulb-outs) that help add to the entity’s visual presentation;
- Well-balanced overall.

Executive Summary

- Last sentence of 2nd paragraph: “...but it places a costly burden on...” This is not always true as evidenced by the City of Farmington being able to add bike lanes on NM 516 heading east out of Farmington because of the earlier roadway design. Change this sentence to read, “...it can place a costly burden on...”
- First sentence of next paragraph, change the word “appealing” to “full-spectrum” to set a tone of what is trying to be achieved;
- 2nd paragraph, 2nd sentence: “...have focused too heavily on its importance”. The words “too heavily” are too strong especially for the western United States where the principal mode of transportation is vehicles. It was suggested to add: “without also providing for other modes of transportation”, or “without building facilities for peds/bikes” or “without considering other modes of travel”.

Mr. Sypher said that Complete Streets has always been a priority of his, but when the pencil is put to paper, Complete Streets is always more expensive than the traditional street. The political backing to have Complete Streets designed and paid for is especially hard to attain in tight economic times. Mr. Sypher said that starting with educating the public on Complete Streets is a great beginning, but there has to be the funding to actually build a complete street.

- Acknowledge in the Executive Summary the desire to build complete streets, but the challenge in doing so created by fiscal constraints;
- Provide policy page on what other communities in the west are doing to overcome the economic challenges (best practices such as funding mechanisms, tax incentives, special improvement districts);
- Level of service briefly addressed in 3rd paragraph, 2nd sentence. Add clarifier at the end of the 3rd sentence that says “some solutions will reduce capacity as a trade-off to safety, aesthetics, and economic vitality”;
- 2nd column, first sentence, “Led by their charismatic leader...” Delete this from the document and say something more general like, “a walkability expert”;

- Mention measures of pedestrian level of service; use a parallel framework and reference the trade-off with vehicle level of service; carry this forward in the document; Mr. Watson will draft up something for this section;
- 2nd column, 1st paragraph, “A Complete Streets Advisory Group...goals and design guidelines.” Add the words, “for use by local government staffs and developers. Mr. Fillerup will draft up this addition.
- Speak to the synergy that was desired; the unity between the cities in their general approaches to alleviate developers pitting one town against another with their codes;
- Consider the return on investment - may not be immediate, but health benefits can especially be seen in the long-term; economic vitality impact because people want to be in the area; broad scope of how health is involved;
- Consider expanding on rate of return - how all aspects are improved or can benefit (tax base, aesthetics, etc.) from complete streets; consider adding this to the Executive Summary to bring all the concepts together;
- Return on investment can be detailed in the specific sections, but just have a short statement in the Executive Summary to identify all the concepts; add this to the last paragraph where it speaks to the six core values; Mr. Sypher will assist in developing this statement to help better illuminate the rate of return (ROI);
- Last sentence before Vision Statement; “...complete streets guidelines will require...”, some liked the word “require” and others disagreed since this document will not have any authority as such since any requirements will be up to the individual entity; this will be a regional policy adopted by the MPO Policy Committee; replace the word “require” with “direct”.

Page 1

- Enlarge the heading “Why Public Health”;
- 1st paragraph, last sentence - incomplete sentence “...design of bus stops would simultaneously...”; delete Safety and Welfare in this sentence since they are not the focus in this section;

Mr. Sypher said that the issue of public health and public safety need to be separated or lumped together - they are described on Pages 1 and 2 as separate issues and also as being synonymously grouped together. Mr. Wakan said he could stress the first statement on Page 1 under “Why Public Health”.

- 2nd column: government officials have protected the public over the years with zoning and engineering practices for water and sewer; restructure this sentence to reflect this;

Page 2

- 1st column, 1st column, last sentence in red: change verb tense on the word “educated”;
- 2nd column - under Health Impact Assessment (HIA); “Healthy lifestyles are possible...”change the work “possible” to “enhanced”;
- 2nd column, 2nd sentence; “...shifted focus to...engineers on packaged design solutions...”; this may be true for DOT engineers, but on the local level

(municipal) this was not done; consider changing this to add “federal and state engineering guidelines”;

- Consider changing the word “packaged” to “standard” or “common”;
- 2nd column, 2nd paragraph...”referencing public health has been synonymously grouped with public safety” is a good comment;
- 2nd column, 1st sentence; “all but eliminated infectious outbreaks”. Add the word “most” infectious outbreaks;
- 2nd column, 2nd paragraph; add sentence to end: “A budding transportation system which promotes active living supports public health” to emphasize the connection being made;
- 2nd column, last paragraph, last sentence; “...reached out to local businesses...” add “local governments”;
- 1st column; half-way down 1st paragraph; consider changing the word “Despite...”
- 2nd column, last paragraph, the Safe Passage Initiative was not an HIA, need to change the wording here.

Page 3

- 1st column, section under Health in All Policies (HiAP); “...the National Association of County & City Health Officials (HiAP)”...the acronym HiAP does not correspond to the National Association of County & City Health Officials.

Page 4

- 2nd column, end of 1st sentence; “...whether on bike or foot”; Add sentence (Mr. Watson to provide to Duane) “Although this treatment significantly reduces roadway capacity and increases vehicle density in the remaining lane.”
- Same sentence, “Road diets or the re-channelization of traffic...” add the words “changes access”.

Mr. Sypher commented that maintaining the same capacity can be done with a road diet, but access is eliminated. For example, if you add a median strip and do not allow left or right-hand turns, the newly formed narrower roadway to keep the same capacity. Access is part of a road diet that allows it to work or not work.

Mr. Watson said that if you reduce a four-lane road to a two-lane road, capacity will be reduced. Mr. Sypher reiterated that the same capacity can be kept if you eliminate turn movements. Mr. Watson agreed, but added that it would be conditional on the number of lanes of the roadway. Mr. Watson wanted to clarify that capacity is cut in half as written in the 2nd sentence in the 2nd column. Mr. Sypher offered that “potential capacity” could be impacted. Mr. Wakan agreed that access management controls help with capacity, but that in addition to access management, the design of intersections can also help maintain capacity an example being the use of roundabouts or intelligent transportation systems (ITS) vs. conventional signalized intersections. Mr. Sypher compared the capacity issue to the impact of flow from a 24” pipe versus a 2” wide pipe.

- Qualify or explain further this 2nd sentence in the 2nd column per the discussion noted above;
- 4th sentence in the 2nd column, “These added features tend to calm...”; add the word “may tend to calm traffic”;

The members discussed the paragraph below the photos in the 2nd column. Mr. Watson noted that the street was re-done, a left-turn lane added, which gave the extra 12' for a bike lane. The redesign did allow for better traffic flow, but the text in the paragraph is misleading or too generalized as to what was actually changed. The roadway was reduced from four lanes to three, one of which is a left-turn lane, which leaves an extra lane for bikes. Mr. Sypher added that with this given layout, the road diet worked well, but it might not work this well in all conditions.

Mr. Sypher added that this page is addressing safety, but the focus seems to be on cyclist safety. This section should also address the safety of motorists. He noted that the past focus has been on motorists and cyclists have largely been ignored, but we need to find a balance between the two going forward and not over-correct on the side of the cyclist.

- Add graphic showing 4-5 years of crash data - number of fatalities, injuries, property damage - a general picture of all modes;
- Also include the impact of speed on the kind of crashes, injuries, and deaths.

Page 5

- 2nd column references a middle picture, but there are only two pictures depicted; update text;
- 1st column, 2nd paragraph; "...when making decisions on whether to grant children to walk to school, most parents cited traffic danger..."; later in the document (Connectivity section?), the number one concern is said to be the distance from the school; need to correct this contradiction and maybe choose several factors and keep that consistent throughout the document;

Mr. Sypher commented that his biggest deterrent for not letting a child walk to school would be the dangers presented by the world we live in. Mrs. Wakan said that according to Safe Routes to School data, traffic is the biggest concern of parents. Other factors are children's ages, distance to school, and whether neighborhood children walk as a group.

Mr. Sypher spoke about the Design Speed vs. Posted Speed section. He stated that most communities comply with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). When conducting speed zoning, best engineering practices say to use the 85% percentile of the speed study. When moving traffic along a major corridor and in consideration of the residential areas, the use of traffic calming measures may need to be implemented or the higher speed (85% percentile) designated. The use of the 85% percentile and/or the use of traffic calming measures should be discussed.

- 2nd column, sentence beginning "Motorists are compelled to navigate..."; change to "a motorist might feel compelled to..."

Page 6

- 1st sentence, "...average motorist might navigate this street at or above 45 mph"; change to "a higher speed" or "an excessive speed" and delete the words 45 mph;
- Add labels to chart depicting population numbers;
- What is the picture of the road segment meant to depict;

- Main paragraph; “Residents of small towns are more likely to be hurt...”; is this misleading? Was this quoted from somewhere? Document the statement, substantiate and/or qualify it;

Mr. Sypher thought this paragraph was about expectations. Growing up in the country, the expectation is that there are few cars on the road and the road depicted in the picture is accurate. Growing up in the city the expectation is that there are cars everywhere. Mr. Watson noted that the paragraph implies that a resident in the country is more at risk because they live in a rural area. He gave several examples of living along a rural road as a child and the accidents he experienced. Ms. Lopez said that if this is true, than document and/or qualify the statement.

Page 7

- 2nd column under Prioritizing Street Aesthetics; could not follow math; if this came out of a study need to quote it more fully, paraphrase it, or explain it more clearly;
- Historical interests and preservation concerns need to be considered; changes cannot conflict with existing buildings or alter historic nature of downtown; SHIPPO requires community to retain cultural character; changes must respect and retain the historical preservation area;
- Consider adding clarification on the historical preservation impact or possibly another heading for Historical Preservation under Aesthetics (Page 9).

Page 8

- The conceptual sketch shown in the 1st column is not now being considered by the City of Aztec; sketch would be fine without the reference to the City of Aztec; consider including the name of the architect.

Page 9

- Expand the aesthetics to include more rural areas and show the difference between urban and rural aesthetics;
- Add picture of a rural setting;
- Include a paragraph on enhancing medians.

The Technical Committee discussed how to better depict the rural settings and the differences from urban. Addressing aesthetics desired on the street, the surrounding land uses must also be considered. Need to acknowledge rural land uses and how streets need to be built to reflect those land uses.

Mr. Sypher asked if the Technical Committee members had any specific ideas to address these concerns. Some ideas were the planting of trees and the use of shoulder dressings. Ms. Lopez commented that the Foothills design could provide a good option because it shows a more pastoral/residential setting. A rural setting could show multi-use paths, maybe some storm water features to retain water and enhance vegetation, or the use of a roundabout. It was suggested to have Mr. Keck weigh in on some recommendations since this would provide a broader scope of rural aesthetics.

Page 10

- In the 4th sentence of the 1st column where it says, “While a strong quality of life, talent pool and...” what does that mean? Mr. Wakan explained that many cities have traditionally tried to incentivize economic development by lowering taxes in an attempt to entice business to their area. This type of approach is no longer working and businesses are looking at overall quality of life. Re-word this sentence or, if a cited work, note this.

Page 11

No comments.

Page 12

No comments.

Page 13

- Delete the reference to “gas easement corridors” to “existing easements”; big campaign by PNM to keep people and buildings off of gas easements due to the safety issues;
- Show greater color contrast between arterial road and local street in the pictured graph;
- 2nd column, 2nd paragraph; “Master street planning as a puzzle...”; sentence is not complete; needs re-written.

Page 14

- 2nd paragraph; “We cannot pave our way out of congestion”. Change this to recommend moving to a grid system that would provide for direct and efficient network routes (the issue explained by Mr. Wakan is addressed in the next sentence in the 2nd column);

Mr. Wakan explained that the map of Albuquerque shows two different systems. One is a branch system (grid) and the other is the dendritic system. The dendritic system is a series of loops and lollipops that are not inter-connected and which then forces all neighborhood traffic to turn onto a wide arterial. This type of system is failing and building an inter-connected grid system provides better connectivity and efficiency for the roadway system. The benefits of the grid system are further emphasized in the 2nd column, 2nd paragraph, “...growing traffic congestion and delays in the transportation system...”

Page 15

- Add “Farmington” to the 2nd paragraph, 1st sentence under the section Other Modes;

Mr. Montoya added that park and ride destinations have been considered for American Plaza. Although this would be a perfect location, the property owner will not allow Red Apple Transit to do any advertising or post and signage. Mr. Montoya is considering something on the east side, possible in the Lowe’s area.

- 1st sentence; what does “one of the America’s twenty most resilient cities” mean and how does it fit into the paragraph;

- Resilient speaks to its economic resiliency; sentence will be re-worded and better tied to overall paragraph.

Mr. Sypher called for a short break at 11:15 a.m.

The meeting was reconvened at 11:25 a.m.

Page 16

Mr. Wakan reported that there was a section entitled designed for all modes and abilities in the previous draft. That separate section has now been combined with the Multi-Modal core value. It has made the section very transit heavy and needs to be refined to consider other modes.

- Transit in this section relates to transit in larger cities; focus on what we have and what we can see for the future;
- Density of area is not great in this area and the driving boom although “in” nationally, will not be here for quite a while;
- Include chart focusing on the Red Apple; show Red Apple ridership and increase in ridership (Mr. Montoya will provide the details); illustrate community moving toward more multi-modal options;

Mr. Montoya explained that the Red Apple is tying transit to walking and biking. Some stops between Farmington and Aztec dropped riders off in the middle of nowhere. Those stops have now been relocated nearer to intersections. Additionally, bike ridership has grown helping tie transit into the bike trails.

- 2nd paragraph, 2nd sentence; run-on sentence; needs to be re-written;
- 2nd paragraph, part of the same sentence below the three pictures; “...that are ADA compliant and accessible by walking and biking facilities, support...”; need to add the word “gather” or “garner” before the word support;
- Since maybe as much as 95% of local travel is by vehicle, a commensurate amount of energy and information in the Multi-Modal section needs to address vehicles; need to add some balance;
- Small top left photo is too small.

Page 17

- Focus on millennials/seniors; add sentence that says something like, “Transit riders are comprised of all types of riders (daily worker, commuter, environmentalist, choice rider, tourist, disabled senior, and low income ...”;
- this is accurate when looking at the national trend, but the local trend is different;

Mr. Montoya reported that he has spoken with Red Apple riders and the majority is workers going to work (not necessarily young - middle age - in their 40’s), college students, and seniors. It is maybe a split of 40-40-20%.

- Important to parallel the national data to the local data and demonstrate how the local approach compares to the national;

- Add information on motorized vehicle to provide a better balance in this section; emphasize connectivity, percentage of federal dollars coming into MPO; what are we doing locally (new roads or repairs?); what are we lacking locally; how can the process be improved;
- Identify the local projects and their impact;
- Do not do wrap-up in Multi-Modal; needs to be done elsewhere - maybe add more detail in the Executive Summary; acknowledge the mode split and the trade-offs; tie all together;
- Break down the four basic mode splits; paint the national picture; need to know what is going on nationally to know how to complete; the national aspect is important but need to compare that to what is happening here;
- Highlight areas of disparity in all aspects - disconnected communities, opportunities, safety, families - everything needs to be connected.
- 1st paragraph; "This study shows..."; what study is this referring to; consider taking out entire paragraph;
- 2nd paragraph, last sentence: "...are well designed buffered sidewalks, benches"; need to add "and benches";
- 3rd paragraph; "A good transit stop will..."; this does not tie into the rest of this section; consider removing;
- Include a quote from a community champion, political figure, or someone from the Complete Streets Advisory Group (possibly Gayla McCulloch or Dr. John McNeill); would this person be recognized 20 years from now?; as long as they were identified or qualified.

Page 18

- Eliminate generalized statements regarding Baby Boomers; language offensive to some;
- Discuss the size of the Baby Boomer population; many may elect to live in a walkable community;
- Provide a graphic of what San Juan County would look like with the growth of Baby Boomers and Millennials; the rural/suburban nature of our county will present a problem to providing walkable, urban areas;
- Even if stay capable, how many who retire and continue to be active will stay here and age in place; will people stay if this is a walkable community.

Page 19

No comments.

Mr. Sypher said the Technical Committee would need to reconvene to finish Pages 20-28. The actual design guidelines have not changed and do not need to be re-visited. Mr. Sypher asked Mr. Wakan to update the document with the changes discussed today and then set a second date to review the remaining pages and make a recommendation to the Policy Committee. Mr. Watson moved to approve this recommendation; Ms. Brevik seconded the motion.

Mr. Sypher added that once the changes to Pages 1-19 are incorporated into the document, the Technical Committee could swiftly approve those changes and then

proceed to review the remaining pages. This could be done at an upcoming Technical Committee meeting.

The members then agreed that at their regular scheduled meeting on March 9, they would begin their review of the remaining pages 20-28. The remaining pages contain the design guidelines and minimum standards that have already been thoroughly vetted. (The minimum standards were approved by the Policy Committee on May 28, 2015).

Mr. Wakan added that he thought the Technical Committee might want to consider adding a minimum standard for shoulders in a rural area. The federal minimum is 2 feet. It was recommended that a desired minimum be stated like the other minimum standards had been. Mr. Wakan said this would apply to any road without curb and gutter infrastructure. Mr. Sypher suggested it be added to the guidelines as a proposed standard and then send it out for all to review prior to the next meeting.

2. BUSINESS FROM THE CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS AND STAFF


There was no business from the Chairman, Members and Staff.

3. BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR


There was no business from the Floor.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Lopez moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Brevik seconded the motion. Mr. Sypher adjourned the meeting at 12:10 p.m.



David Sypher, Vice Chair



June Markle, Administrative Aide