

Regional Complete Streets Program Concept

Program Concept

A Regional Complete Streets program presents an opportunity to support the Fix-it-First policy priority while also improving roadway utilization and expanding transportation choices in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS). The concept matches complete streets in opportunity areas across the region to funding that would be captured through the competitive Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program (AHSC) of the larger statewide Cap & Trade program. Based on an estimate that the Sacramento region captures its pro-rata share of funding, up to \$400 million of funding could be captured through the AHSC for transportation projects by 2036 if the program is extended to that horizon year. The regional program could be a cost-effective means to rehabilitate roadways in need at the same time complete streets features are added to support the growth forecasted over the MTP/SCS planning period.

A Regional Complete Streets Program has the greatest promise for success if it focuses on projects that will score well against the AHSC criteria and is developed in a way that is consistent with established funding policies and strategies at SACOG, the El Dorado County Transportation Commission (EDCTC), and the Placer County Transportation Planning Agency (PCTPA). While complete streets are funded through various regional programs, the most direct precedent for the new Program is a SACOG policy in place since 2009 that requires complete streets features in projects receiving road rehabilitation funds. While this policy is limited to federal funds in the four-county SACOG region (Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba), EDCTC and PCTPA also have supportive policies in place for complete streets and examples of funds going towards road rehabilitation projects with prominent complete streets features.

The Case for Complete Streets

Complete streets focus on optimizing accessibility for factors including non-motorized access, transit access, and network connectivity. There is a large and growing body of research that demonstrates the potential of complete streets projects to improve accessibility and roadway utilization, while also supporting notable greenhouse gas emission reductions. For example, the Victoria Transport Policy Institute Director, Todd Litman, recently published a report that includes a summary table (Table 1), on how complete streets support accessibility. Improving accessibility is a key concept underpinning the MTP/SCS and supports land use changes that result in greenhouse gas emission reductions.

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Table 1: How Complete Streets Support Accessibility, from *Evaluating Complete Streets: the Value of Designing Roads for Diverse Modes, Users and Activities*. Victoria Transport Policy Institute, 2014.

| Accessibility Factors | Automobile-Oriented Streets | Complete Streets |
|---|---|---|
| Maximum traffic speeds | Higher maximum (peak) traffic speeds | Optimal (often reduced) traffic speeds |
| Traffic capacity | Higher design speeds and lack of left turn lanes can reduce peak traffic capacity | Center turn and bike lanes, and lower design speeds increase peak capacity |
| Vehicle travel efficiency (directness to destinations) | Hierarchy road systems reduce connectivity, increasing travel distances | More connected roadway networks reduce travel distances |
| Parking convenience | High priority. On-street parking and driveways wherever possible | Moderate priority. On-street parking provided after sidewalks, bike and bus lanes |
| Non-motorized access | Wider roads and increased traffic tend to create barriers to non-motorized access | Significantly improves walking and cycling access |
| Public transport access | Since most transit trips include non-motorized links, auto-oriented streets can reduce transit access | Improves walking and cycling access, and may include bus lanes and other transit support features |
| Transport affordability (quality of affordable modes) | May reduce vehicle operating costs but reduces access by affordable modes | Significantly improves walking and cycling access, and may improve transit access |
| Land use accessibility (distances between activities) | Tends to stimulate more dispersed, urban-fringe development (sprawl) | Encourages more compact, accessible land use development |

Developing the Concept into a Draft Program

The idea of a Regional Complete Streets Program was first introduced to the Board in January. Based on the interest received, staff came back through the February Board committees with a set of initial criteria to identify opportunity areas for complete streets investments. Table 2 lists the opportunity areas criteria. The one update from the committee briefings is a new criterion related to VMT change over time. This new criterion reflects Board interest in a performance-based program that also expands opportunities for complete streets investments across the region. Figure 1 illustrates the roadways that meet the opportunity areas criteria listed in Table 2. It is important to note that complete street

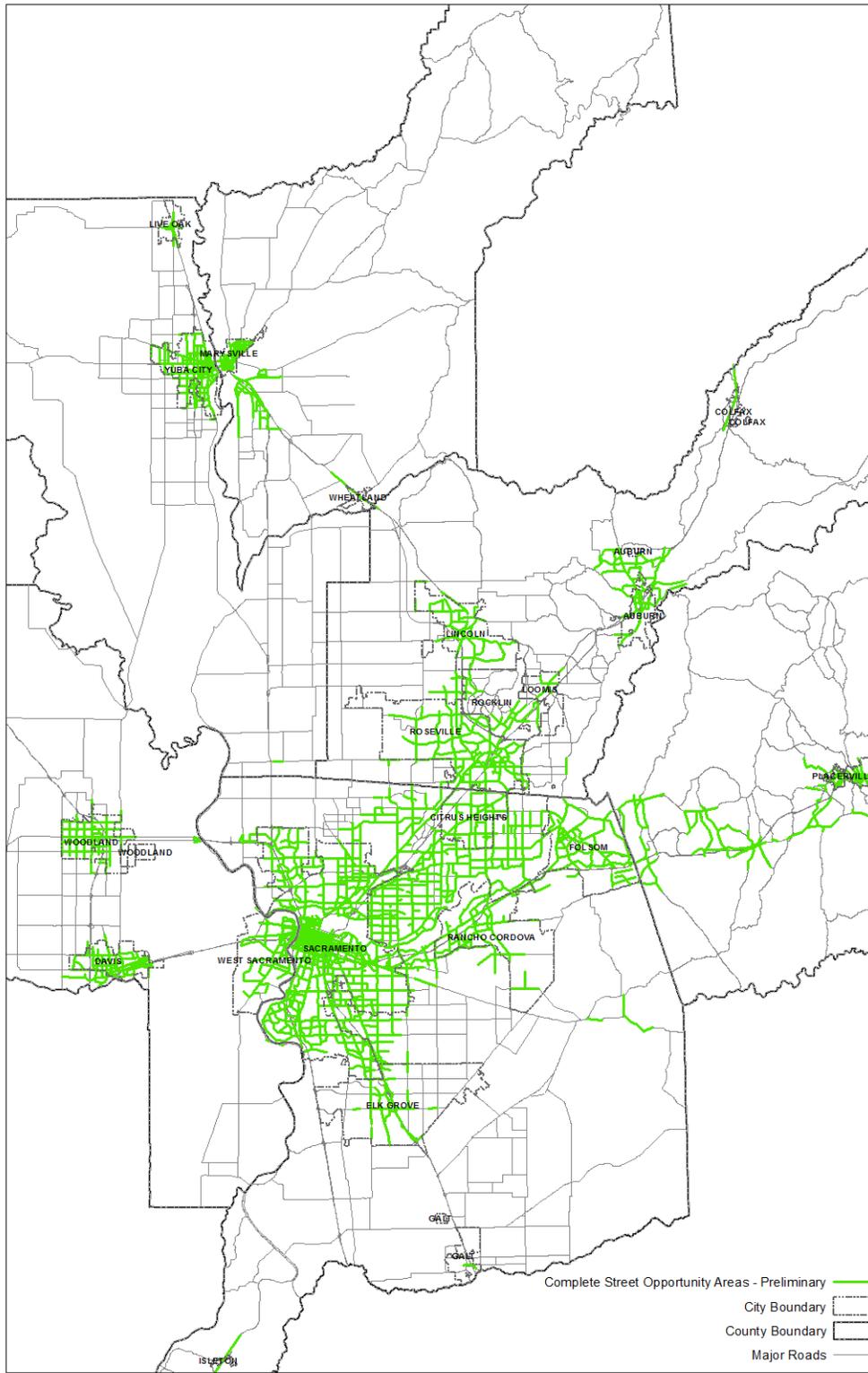
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treatments can vary widely. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Treatments vary in urban, suburban, and rural/small town settings. Even within a common geography, there is variation in the approach taken for arterials, collectors, local streets and rural county roads.

Table 2: Criteria for Identifying Complete Streets Opportunity Areas along Roadways with Maintenance Needs

- Areas with increased land use density projected by 2036
- Areas within 1 mile of a transit station or stop with frequent transit service
- Areas where transit service significantly increases in plan by 2036
- Areas where bicycle or pedestrian facilities are planned or programmed
- Areas where VMT per capita reduces by 2036

Figure 1: Draft Complete Streets Opportunity Areas & Corridors



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Appendices A through C offer background references to prior SACOG Board actions in support of complete streets investments across the region. The key point here is that the Board continues to evolve over time towards supporting the implementation of complete streets through planning and programming activities. A notable example referenced previously is the SACOG Board policy that requires complete streets features in projects receiving road rehabilitation funds from SACOG.

In the February Board committee meetings, the Board expressed general support for further developing the concept for a Regional Complete Streets Program. In addition to the feedback on the criteria for identifying opportunity areas, Board members also identified policy considerations to include as the draft program concept is further developed. A March briefing to the Board on a draft program concept will take into account these policy considerations. These considerations include: prioritizing projects with strong performance outcomes (e.g. clear evidence of greenhouse gas emission reductions); selection criteria that consider the importance of safety in the implementation of a successful complete streets project (e.g. project design that address the conflict between autos, trucks and neighborhood electric vehicles along some roadways).

Further developing the Regional Complete Streets Program concept will require considerable analysis and coordination with partner agencies and stakeholders. Important efforts include refining the opportunity areas, developing selection criteria to ensure the program is competitive for AHSC funds, and making sure the new program can complement existing funding programs at SACOG, EDCTC, and PCTPA.

Appendix A: Complete Streets & Corridor Features from the 2014 SACOG Regional/Local Funding Program Policy Framework

The road rehabilitation project application should demonstrate that the roadway rehabilitation will include key scope features that clearly improve the facility to accommodate more users of the right-of-way. New roadway users that would benefit from the project may include pedestrians, bicyclists, movers of commercial goods, and users of public transportation in a manner that is suitable to the urban, small community, or rural context of the proposed project.

Eligible Complete Streets & Corridor Features May Include:

- Added or improved sidewalks or parallel multi-use paths
- Intersection improvements
- Added or improved shoulders
- Added or improved signage and pavement markings
- Added or improved striping or buffers to delineate between auto traffic and other modes (e.g., bike lanes, protected bike lanes)
- Added or improved transit stops along the roadway
- Removal of obstacles for bicycle/pedestrian movement
- Added or improved pedestrian crossings
- Added or improved bicycle/pedestrian pathways parallel to the roadway
- Vehicle turn-outs on rural roads with significant farm equipment traffic

Examples by Context: Urban, Suburban, and Small Town Areas (Complete Streets):

- Added or improved sidewalks or parallel multi-use paths
- Intersection improvements (e.g. bicycle detection, reduction of pedestrian crossing distance)
- Added or improved signage and pavement markings
- Added or improved striping or buffers to delineate between auto traffic and other modes (e.g., bike lanes, protected bike lanes)
- Added or improved transit stops along the roadway (e.g. lighting improvement)
- Removal of obstacles for bicycle/pedestrian movement
- Added or improved pedestrian crossings, including midblock crossings

Examples by Context: Rural Areas (Complete Corridors):

- Intersection improvements
- Added or improved shoulders
- Added or improved signage and pavement markings
- Added or improved rumble strips and lane markings
- Added or improved bicycle/pedestrian pathways parallel to the roadway
- Vehicle turn-outs on rural roads with significant farm equipment traffic
- Added or improved transit stops along the roadway

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Appendix B: Key SACOG Regional Funding Program Performance Outcomes Supported by Complete Streets Implementation

| Regional/Local Funding Program | Community Design Funding Program | Regional Active Transportation Program (ATP) |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The project supports a regional reduction in VMT per household/per capita. ▪ The project supports a regional reduction in congested VMT per household/per capita. ▪ The project supports an increase in multi-modal/alternative travel/choice of transportation options. ▪ The project provides long-term economic benefit within the region, recognizing the importance of sustaining both the urban and rural economies. ▪ The project improves goods movement, including farm-to-market travel, in and through the region. ▪ The project significantly improves safety and security. ▪ The project demonstrates “state of good repair” benefits that improve the efficiency of the existing transportation system. | <p>The overall purpose of the Community Design Program is to provide financial support for federal aid eligible capital projects that promote implementation of the Blueprint Project Principles. Projects must also conform to some of the seven Blueprint Principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transportation choices • housing diversity • compact development • mixed land uses • use of existing assets • natural resource protection • quality design | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project has potential to increase walking and bicycling through targeted strategies: increasing access to transit services, increasing access to schools, eliminating gaps or removing barriers in the bicycle/pedestrian network, and completing facilities. • Project has the potential to reduce the number and/or rate of pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities and injuries. • Project improves public health through the targeting of populations with high risk factors for obesity, physical inactivity, asthma or other health issues. • Project demonstrates cost effectiveness, which is achieved by minimizing projected capital and operating expenditures while offering strong performance benefits. • Project provides benefit to a disadvantaged community and includes project features that provide benefit for members of this community. • Project advances active transportation efforts to achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals through reducing or shortening vehicle trips today and over time, as established pursuant to SB 375 and SB 391. |

Appendix C: 2012 MTP/SCS Principles and Policies in Support of Complete Streets

3. Policy: SACOG will encourage local jurisdictions in developing community activity centers well-suited for high quality transit service and complete streets.

3.2. **Strategy:** Continue to identify best practices for complete streets, continue to add to the Complete Streets Toolkit, and initiate a technical assistance program to help local agencies develop street designs that are sensitive to their surroundings and context.

3.6. **Strategy:** Encourage development patterns that provide safe and efficient pedestrian and bicycle access to transit stops and trunk commuter transit lines.

17. Policy: Acknowledge and support preservation of the existing road and highway system as the top priority for local public works agencies and Caltrans, and expect to help them secure adequate funding sources for necessary work.

17.5 **Strategy:** Support local agencies in developing multi-year maintenance and rehabilitation programs that enable early identification of cost-effective enhancements to improve pedestrian and bicycle access and safety.

29. Policy: SACOG encourages locally determined developments consistent with Blueprint principles and local circulation plans to be designed with walking, bicycling and transit use as primary transportation considerations.

29.1. **Strategy:** Invest in safe bicycle and pedestrian routes that improve connectivity and access to common destinations, such as connections between residential areas and schools, work sites, neighborhood shopping, and transit stops and stations. Also invest in safe routes to and around schools so trips can be made by bicycling or walking.

29.2. **Strategy:** Invest toward the creation of a regional bicycle and pedestrian network, connecting first those communities that already have good local circulation networks in place, but also supporting efforts throughout the region to improve connectivity and realize public health benefits from these investments.

29.3. **Strategy:** Utilize the Planners Committee, Regional Planning Partnership and Transit Coordinating Committee to better coordinate information-sharing between jurisdictions on transit, bicycle and pedestrian improvements to ensure connected routes, sharing of effective ideas, and more complete public information.

29.4. **Strategy:** Continue to support improved bicycle and pedestrian connectivity through SACOG's Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian and Community Design Grant funding programs and maintaining program criteria that regional road rehabilitation projects include complete streets or complete corridor features.