



Item #7

Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee

October 15, 2014

National Association of City Transportation Officials Presentation

Issue: What is the National Association of City Transportation Officials Urban Bikeway Design Guide?

Recommendation: None, this item is for information and discussion.

Discussion: The Caltrans Program Review and the State Smart Transportation Initiative report from January 2014 identified a need to provide more flexibility in Caltrans' highway design standards and procedures, especially in the context of urban environments and multimodal design. In a memo dated April 10, 2014 (attached), Caltrans stated they were consulting the NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guidelines, among other resources, in their effort to identify areas of improvement in their standards and guidance. With the passage of AB 1193 (please refer to item #6 for more detail), Caltrans is now required by January 1, 2016 to establish minimum safety design criteria for Class IV bikeways, better known as protected bikeways or "cycle tracks," with consideration for the safety of vulnerable populations.

First created in 2011, the NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide is a resource for designing safer protected bikeways in cities across the United States, responding to and accelerating innovative street design and practice around the nation. The guide is currently in its second edition, with updated graphic profiles for all of its bicycle facilities, a new subsection on bicycle boulevard planning and design, and a survey of materials used for green color in bikeways.

Christopher Kidd from Alta Planning + Design's Oakland office will provide an introduction to and overview of treatments from the NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide with a specific focus on applications in California, including smaller cities and Central Valley communities. Mr. Kidd's experience ranges from active transportation planning and transportation demand management to community outreach, coupled with a strong base in the use of social media and online community facilitation.

VSC:pm

Attachment: Caltrans' "Design Flexibility in Multimodal Design" Memo

Key Staff: Sharon Sprowls, Senior Program Specialist, (916) 340-6235
Lacey Symons-Holtzen, Active Transportation Team Manager, (916) 340-6212
Victoria S. Cacciatore, Active Transportation Team Project Coordinator, (916) 340-6214

Memorandum

*Serious drought.
Help Save Water!*

To: HIGHWAY DESIGN MANUAL HOLDERS

Date: April 10, 2014



File:

From: TIMOTHY CRAGGS
Chief
Division of Design

Subject: DESIGN FLEXIBILITY IN MULTIMODAL DESIGN

The Caltrans Program Review, and more recently the SSTI report, identified a need to provide more flexibility in Caltrans' highway design standards and procedures, especially in the context of urban environments and multimodal design.

Caltrans is continually improving its standards and processes to provide flexibility while maintaining the safety and integrity of the state's transportation system. This commitment is evident in the recent update to the Highway Design Manual (HDM) to facilitate the design of Complete Streets, recognizing that the State highway system needs to be multimodal, not just for cars and trucks.

Caltrans' philosophy and flexible approach toward designing multimodal transportation projects on the State highway system is reflected in the HDM, Chapter 80, which states in part:

"The Project Development process seeks to provide a degree of mobility to users of the transportation system that is in balance with other values."

"A 'one-size-fits-all' design philosophy is not Departmental policy."

"The highway design criteria and policies in this manual provide a guide for the engineer to exercise sound judgment in applying standards, consistent with the above Project Development philosophy, in the design of projects. This guidance allows for flexibility in applying design standards and approving design exceptions that take the context of the project location into consideration; which enables the designer to tailor the design, as appropriate, for the specific circumstances while maintaining safety."

For improvements on local systems, the responsible local entities have long been delegated authority to exercise their engineering judgment when utilizing applicable standards, including those for bicycle facilities established by Caltrans pursuant to Streets and Highways Code sections 890.6 and 890.8. This delegation and delegation process is outlined in the Caltrans Local Assistance Procedures Manual, Chapter 11, page 11-26. See http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/lam/prog_p/ch11-2012-10-05.pdf.

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To support the philosophy of flexibility in design, Caltrans recently published “Main Street, California, a Guide for Improving Community and Transportation Vitality.” This guide emphasizes investments on California highways that function as a local main street and can improve multimodal travel and contribute to livable and sustainable communities. The guide is available at http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/mainstreet/main_street_3rd_edition.pdf.

In addition, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) provides a wealth of knowledge in the guides that it develops at the national level. For example, AASHTO’s “Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities” a.k.a. AASHTO Bike Guide, provides information on how to accommodate bicycle travel and operations in most riding environments. The publication presents sound guidelines that result in facilities that meet the needs of bicyclists and other highway users. The guide provides flexibility to encourage designs that are sensitive to local context and incorporate the needs of bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists.

Other references relative to urban street and bicycle facility design can also be valuable resources. Publications such as the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) “Urban Street Design Guide” and “Urban Bikeway Design Guide,” and the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) “Designing Urban Walkable Thoroughfares,” are resources that Caltrans and local entities can reference when making planning and design decisions on the State highway system and local streets and roads. Caltrans believes that such guidance, coupled with thorough documentation of engineering judgments made in the process, can be of assistance to communities, particularly in urban areas, to support the planning and design of safe and convenient facilities that they own and operate. Caltrans is currently analyzing these guides to identify areas of improvement in our own standards and guidance. This will be a focus of the Department over the next year.

Given the flexibility provided to owners by existing standards and guidance, it remains of the utmost importance, as noted above, for the responsible entity (Caltrans or local authority) to document appropriately their engineering decisions for design-immunity purposes. Adequate documentation will ensure the full protection of design immunity provided under law to the responsible entity.

Caltrans and local entities are encouraged to work proactively with their communities to provide convenient, safe, and context-sensitive facilities that promote increased use by bicyclists and pedestrians of all ages and abilities, and utilize universal design characteristics as appropriate. This approach has resulted in successful flexible design solutions in the past and the Department endorses its use as a fundamental principle of planning and design.

For further information, please contact me at (916) 654-3858 or tim.craggs@dot.ca.gov, or Ray Zhang, Chief, Division of Local Assistance at (916) 653-1776 or rihui.zhang@dot.ca.gov.

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- Chief Deputy Director
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- District Directors
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