

Chapter 7: Six-Step Implementation Process

The purpose of this chapter is to explain how the perspectives of all stakeholders interested in or affected by existing or future streets can be incorporated into the review for planning and designing streets. The recommended process is summarized in Appendix H, Complete Street Project Review Checklist. This process was modeled after the work completed in the Charlotte Department of Transportation Urban Streets Design Guidelines, and San Francisco Bay Area, Routine Accommodation Checklist.

PROCESS FOR PLANNING AND DESIGNING COMPLETE STREETS

The six step process outlined below emphasizes coordinating city planning, urban design, and transportation planning activities by establishing a sequence of fact finding and decision-making steps. Applying this process to planning and designing streets is intended to support the creation of more streets which meet the needs of more people.

Six-Step Process

The process described below provides a great deal of flexibility to those involved in the decision-making process. This flexibility is intended to foster creative solutions by ensuring that land use planners, engineers, transportation planners, transportation system users, and others work together to think through the implications of alternative street designs. The six-step process will play an important role in addressing the significant challenge of retrofitting streets with limited right-of-way by means of completing a tradeoff analysis.

The six step processes below was vetted and carefully refined through a process lead by the Charlotte Department of Transportation in North Carolina. Since its adoption, the process has been credited was accomplishing complete streets goals and avoiding the need for costly redesign and preventing missed opportunities.

The following three assumptions are built into the six-step process:

- The process will involve a variety of stakeholders. The number of stakeholders and discussions will vary, depending on the magnitude of the project(s).
- The resulting street will be as “complete” as needed and possible, given the context of the facility.
- The complete streets evaluation will clearly document the major tradeoffs made among competing design elements, how those were discussed and weighed against each other, and the preliminary and final outcomes. Thorough documentation will ensure that all stakeholders’ perspectives are adequately considered in the final design.

Figure 6-1 shows the review steps to be included in applying the Monterey Bay Area Complete Street Guidebook. Each of the six steps is defined in more detail later in this chapter. The steps described below can be applied either to a single street or to a collection of streets in an area, such as when an area plan is being developed.

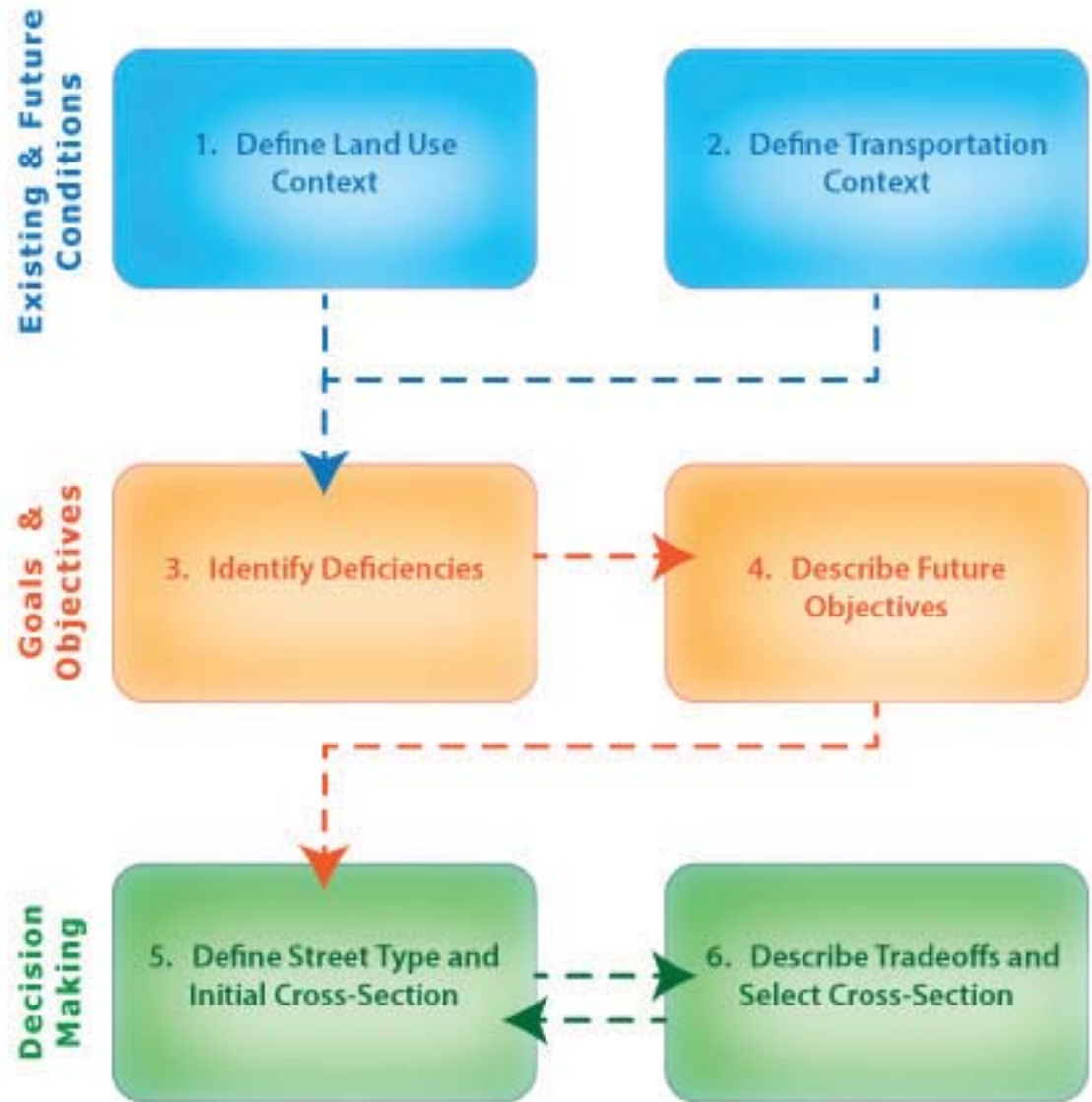


Figure 6-1 Six Step Process

Step 1: Define the Existing and Future Land Use and Urban Design Context

The classification and ultimate design of any street should reflect both the existing and expected future land use contexts. These contexts should be considered from the area wide level down to the immediately adjacent land uses. For example, a street is likely to be classified and/or designed differently if it is in an area slated for higher density development, such as a transit station area, versus in a neighborhood of single family houses, where very limited development changes are anticipated.

Step 2: Define the Existing and Future Transportation Context

The transportation assessment should consider the existing and expected future conditions of the transportation network adjacent to the street to be designed. The design should not be strictly related to capacity on a segment in isolation. Rather, the design should reflect the entire transportation context, including function, multimodal features, and form. The Complete Streets Project Review Checklist (Appendix H) should be used to assess and document existing and future conditions. Questions to facilitate dialogue and consideration of existing and future conditions are included in Appendix I.

Step 3: Identify Deficiencies

Once the existing and future land use and transportation contexts are clearly defined and understood at the area wide level, the design team should be able to identify and describe any potential deficiencies. This step should consider the relationship between different modes and the land use context. Use the Complete Streets Project Review Checklist (Appendix H) to identify and document deficiencies. Questions to facilitate dialogue and consideration of deficiencies are included in Appendix I.

Step 4: Describe Future Objectives

This step synthesizes the information from the previous steps into defined objectives for the street project. Objectives could be derived from the plans and/or policies for the area around the street, as well as from the list of deficiencies identified in step three. The objectives will form the basis for the future street classification and design. Sample questions that can be used to facilitate dialogue about potential issues can be found in Appendix I.

Step 5: Recommend Street Type and Initial Cross-Section and Constraints

The plan/design team recommends the appropriate complete street type(s), and cross-section design based on previous steps. The rationale behind the classification should be documented using the Complete Streets Project Review Checklist in Appendix H. Table 3 provides a reference for matching land use place types and street typologies and sample cross-sections. This step should also include a recommendation for any necessary adjustments to the land use plan/policy and/or transportation plan for that area. Since the street type and the design are influenced by the land use context, subsequent land use decisions should reflect and support the agreed-upon street type and design.

At this point, any constraints to the provision of the initial preferred cross-section should be clearly identified. These may include:

- Lack of right-of way,
- Existing structures,
- Existing trees or other environmental features,
- Topography, and
- Location and number of driveways.

Step 6: Describe Tradeoffs and Select Complete Street Type

Most likely the initial cross-section will need to be refined to better address the land use and transportation objectives, given the constraints identified in step five. If the technical team develops more than one alternative design, these multiple alternatives should be presented to the stakeholders, and made available to the public. Any refinements to the cross section should result from a through consideration of tradeoffs among competing uses of the existing or future public right-of way.

EXCEPTIONS

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) (2000) lists three exceptions to providing accommodations for bicycle and pedestrian travel on all streets. They follow the FHWA's guidance on accommodating bicycle and pedestrian travel and identified best practices frequently used in existing complete streets policies. Project sponsors may find it beneficial to consider these exceptions when evaluating trade-offs.

- Accommodation is not necessary on corridors where specific users are prohibited, such as interstate freeways or pedestrian malls.
- Cost of accommodation is excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use. It is unnecessary to attach a percentage to define "excessive" as the context for many projects will require different portions of the over all project budget to be spent on the modes and users expected. Additionally, costs may be difficult to quantify. A cap on amount spent for roadway improvements may be appropriate in unusual circumstances, such as where natural features (e.g. steep hillsides, shorelines) make it very costly or impossible to accommodate all modes. Any such cap should always be used in an advisory rather than absolute sense. A documented absence of current and future need. This exception can be problematic if the method for determining future need is not defined. Ensure that a qualified individual or committee is tasked with approving this exception. Many communities have included other exceptions that the National Complete Streets Coalition, in consultation with transportation planning and engineering experts, also feels are unlikely to create loopholes.
- Transit-specific facilities, such as bus shelters, are not required where there is no existing or planned transit service.
- Routine maintenance of the transportation network that does not change the roadway geometry or operations, such as mowing, sweeping, spot repair, or when interim measures are implemented in temporary detour or haul routes. Be sure to check your internal procedures and policies regarding these activities so that facilities such as bike lanes are swept in a timely manner".

MONTEREY BAY AREA COMPLETE STREETS ASSESSMENT

As part of the development of the 2014 Monterey Bay Area Sustainable Communities Strategy, staff from the regional transportation agencies in the tri-county area worked with key stakeholders from each jurisdiction to develop criteria for evaluating how well streets meet the needs of all users. The goal of this complete streets needs assessment was to identify deficiencies in the existing transportation networks and opportunities for improvements, which would provide safe mobility for all users including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders and motorists, particularly in areas identified for increased density and diversity of land use as part of the Sustainable Communities Strategy. Key components of the Monterey Bay Area Complete Streets Assessment are discussed further in this section and can serve as a model inventory for project sponsors and stakeholders.

Complete Streets Inventory

Compiling an inventory of complete street transportation attributes was the first step in conducting the Monterey Bay Area Complete Streets Assessment. This inventory identified the existing mobility context and documented complete streets facilities and considered gaps in the transportation network and services. It is recommended that project sponsors and stakeholders utilize the inventory provided in Appendix A in whole or in part when developing complete street projects for inclusion in local plans.

To support the complete streets needs assessment, RTPA staff worked with regional transit agencies to identify current and future “high quality transit routes” and “major transit stops” as defined by SB375. Identifying high quality transit routes and major transit stops, which serve 15 minute headways during peak periods, were important in order to identify potential priority areas for pedestrian investments, since the majority of transit trips begin with a roadway user walking to the transit stop.

Complete Streets Project List

The result of the Monterey Bay Area Complete Streets Assessment included a list of transportation projects that would support multi-modal facilities, improve connectivity and reduce vehicle miles traveled within each area. For each project, opportunities were identified to develop low stress routes which emphasize the quality, comfort, convenience and safety of bicycle, pedestrian and transit facilities. Each project list was considered by the respective regional transportation planning agencies for inclusion in the regional transportation plan.

Complete streets projects typically fell into one of the following categories:

- Bicycle/pedestrian enhancements (ex. bicycle lane treatments such as painted or buffered bike lanes and pedestrian buffers such as landscaping, bicycle actuation at traffic signals, pedestrian scale lighting, wider side walks)
- Pedestrian crossing improvement (ex. raised cross walks, enhanced striping contrast, cross walk beacon, bulbouts and pedestrian islands)
- Bike/pedestrian network filler (ex. new bicycle lane or sidewalks which eliminates gap in existing network)
- Bike intersection improvement (ex. bike boxes, bike signal priority)
- New bike/ped connection (ex. new bike/ped path not located on current transportation facility)
- Bike parking facilities (ex. bicycle racks)
- Neighborhood shared streets (ex. pavement markings, wayfinding, traffic control on local streets to give priority to bicycles and pedestrians and reduce vehicle speed and volume)
- Pedestrian place/universal street (ex. roadway or alley with restricted vehicle access which often serves as a plaza for assorted businesses)
- Crosswalk frequency (ex. new/additional cross walks to reduce spacing between cross walks)
- Commercial area bike/ped access (ex. pavement treatments, tactile strips and wayfinding)
- Traffic calming (ex. bulb outs, landscaping)
- High Occupancy Vehicle/transit priority (ex. signal priority for transit and carpool lanes)
- Bus pullouts
- Wayfinding (ex. pedestrian and bicycle scale signage providing information about surrounding amenities)
- Information and incentives for bicycling, walking and transit