



Bicycle Best Practices: Implementation

Because Salt Lake County has jurisdiction over only unincorporated areas and bicyclists routinely cross jurisdictional boundaries, cooperative planning is necessary for improving bicycling conditions, not only within Salt Lake County's own boundaries, but between cities. Independent municipalities within Salt Lake County include:

Cities:

- Bluffdale
- Cottonwood Heights
- Draper
- Herriman
- Holladay
- Midvale
- Murray
- Millcreek
- Riverton
- Sandy
- Salt Lake City
- South Jordan
- South Salt Lake
- Taylorsville
- West Jordan
- West Valley City

Towns:

- Alta

Metro Townships:

- Copperton Metro Township
- Emigration Metro Township
- Kearns Metro Township
- Magna Metro Township
- White Metro Township

The following areas fall within the direct jurisdiction of Salt Lake County: Lake County:

- Big Cottonwood Canyon
- Granite
- Little Cottonwood Canyon
- Millcreek Canyon
- Parley's Canyon
- Sandy Hills
- Willow Canyon
- Willow Creek
- Southwest

In addition to the County's active transportation planning efforts, many cities are in the process of actively creating a comprehensive plan for improving bicycle activity. Coordination between these planning efforts is needed in order to create a seamless and consistent bicycle network that encourages people of all ages and abilities to bicycle for both transportation and recreation.

Current Practices: Inter-Jurisdictional Cooperation & Implementation

Establishing better inter-jurisdictional cooperation can be as simple as identifying processes that already work across multiple entities (whether bicycle related or not) and then building on that with best practices from the profession.

To that end, a detailed questionnaire was distributed to stakeholders from the Salt Lake County Bicycle Advisory Committee (SLCBAC), County, township and municipal staff, and County Planning Commissioners.

One goal of the questionnaire was to discover other projects or plans that have been implemented across jurisdictional boundaries. Successful models can be assessed to determine how their organization, reporting structure, policies, and communication practices foster coordinated planning efforts. The following sections are informed by the completed questionnaires.

Existing Inter-Jurisdictional Practices in Salt Lake County

The work done to build shared use paths is a good example of successful cooperation and coordination among the jurisdictions within the County. Shared use paths have been completed within both the County and city jurisdictions. It appears that regular communication by parks staff members with engineering and planning staff is integral to the success of these projects, as well as funding availability through the Open Space Trust Fund and other State and Federal sources.

Current Bicycle Coordination and Implementation Practices

The survey identified the importance of strong leadership and staff tasked specifically with the implementation of bicycle projects and programs. There is a general perception that much of Salt Lake City's bicycle implementation success stems from earmarking full-time employees and interns to bicycle-related efforts. A similar strategy would benefit Salt Lake County.

The survey also found a sense that a regional bikeway authority of some kind is needed to coordinate planning and funding amongst the many different jurisdictions and agencies involved in transportation planning and decision-making.

Communication Between Jurisdictions

Establishment of a staff position within the County government to focus specifically on bicycle issues has been identified as a key component for improving communication and implementing facilities, programs, and policies. A structure that fosters interagency communication can provide expertise and project support to cities and townships that do not have the time or resources required to advance bicycling in their communities. Coordination, collaboration, and

regular meetings are seen as a benefit, particularly if they provide an opportunity to:

- Learn about upcoming street projects.
- Brainstorm creative solutions to site-specific issues.
- Explore funding opportunities.
- Foster region-wide connectivity.

Promoting Voluntary Change Among Autonomous Municipalities

Some communities in Salt Lake County are heavily involved with bicycle planning, programming, and capital improvement activities, while others have historically not been very involved in these activities. The County has an opportunity to be a positive role model by implementing bicycle infrastructure in unincorporated areas, providing assistance to individual cities, and bringing cities together to coordinate regional efforts. Currently, SLCBAC advises County staff and the County Mayor on bicycling issues.

Coordination With UDOT

The Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) is an important partner in countywide bicycle connectivity efforts because they control many regional roads that provide access to important educational, commercial, and residential destinations. Other agencies and citizen advocates often lack understanding about the political structure and the processes necessary to work with UDOT. A strong relationship between County staff and both the UDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator and UDOT Region 2 office staff will be crucial to bikeway implementation efforts. The following actions would help to foster better coordination with UDOT:

- Have County staff (particularly the Active Transportation Program Manager if such a position is established) forge a strong relationship with the UDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator and UDOT Region 2 staff.
- Have County staff assist individual cities with communicating and advocating for bicycle network improvements, particularly those identified in the County's Active Transportation Implementation Plan.
- Work with the UDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator to identify the proper UDOT representative to sit on County steering committees or attend activities for individual projects (as well as sit on UDOT advisory bodies and committees, where appropriate).
- Also team with the UDOT Region 2 staff to identify a UDOT representative to serve as a liaison to SLCBAC.

Samples of Inter-Jurisdictional Implementation

The following existing plans and projects from within the County and communities nationwide were reviewed for the purpose of describing successful inter-jurisdictional implementation processes:

- 1) Active Transportation Implementation Plan
- 2) Utah Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Design Guide
 - a) Salt Lake County Complete Streets Policy
 - b) Park City Transportation Summit
 - c) Maintaining Public Interest
- 3) Mountainland Association of Governments
- 4) Carolina Thread Trail (NC)
- 5) South Bay Bicycle Master Plan (CA)
- 6) Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (VA)
- 7) Santa Clara County Valley Transit Authority (CA)

Active Transportation Implementation Plan

In 2016–2017 Salt Lake County spearheaded an effort to engage all municipalities within the County in the creation of a “high comfort” bikeway network. The process involved multiple opportunities for general public input as well as direct involvement from city planners and engineers. Initial route recommendations were developed and presented to each municipality for them to evaluate. Individual meetings were then held between County staff and each municipality to discuss feasibility of specific proposed bikeways and make adjustments accordingly. Several municipal participants commented afterward that they appreciated the multi-layered involvement process and the ability that it gave them to have their voice heard.

Utah Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Design Guide

While the Utah Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Design Guide does not provide much information about inter-jurisdictional cooperation, it does provide local agencies instruction on how to prepare planning documents within the context of adjacent jurisdictions. It provides resources to planners to help demystify the many layers of governance and their relationship to bicycling. For example, the Regional Transportation Plan for Wasatch Front Regional Council (Davis, Weber, and Salt Lake Counties) will show non-motorized facilities, including those which inform the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). However, many projects that are funded locally do not appear on the STIP and will most likely be located in county, city, or small area plans. The Guide points out that by obtaining relevant

plans from adjacent communities, an agency can better ensure complete pedestrian and bicycle systems between different jurisdictions. The guide also provides an overview of good practices in Utah including the Salt Lake County Complete Streets Policy, the Park City Transportation Summit, and tips for keeping the momentum going after a plan is adopted .

Salt Lake County Complete Streets Policy

Salt Lake County codified its Complete Streets Policy into Ordinance 14.12.30 in April 2010. The Ordinance required the Public Works Department to adopt a complete streets policy “for use by county departments, developers, and others in the overall layout and design of streets and adjacent developments.” The review and consideration of complete streets components for design, construction, and approving building or zoning applications includes:

- Lower speed limits.
- Traffic signal progression at a lower speed.
- Street construction and design with pedestrian and bicycle friendly features.
- Street connectivity.
- Context-sensitive construction and reconstruction.

Park City Transportation Summit

Park City developed a unique strategy for selecting and prioritizing projects for funding through its local Capital Improvement Programs (CIPs). Every two years, Park City and Summit County staff members and elected officials gather for a day-long Transportation Summit to discuss local transportation issues. Summit participants receive briefings on recent and planned transportation projects from City representatives as well as UDOT. Following the briefings, participants work in small groups to identify upcoming transportation needs and potential projects to be funded. Each small group presents its list to the other Summit participants. After the small group presentations, all participants have the opportunity to rank their highest-priority projects from all of the lists. Participants also indicate whether projects should be undertaken in a one-year, three-year, or five-year horizon. Following the Transportation Summit, Park City and Summit County staff members incorporate the high priority projects from the Summit into local Capital Improvement Plans for funding, and begin the process of implementation. This model could easily be applied to an inter- jurisdictional committee of stakeholders in Salt Lake County.

Maintaining Public Interest

Implementation tasks can benefit from the same excitement and enthusiasm generated by the public involvement component often associated with planning processes. Continued interest and involvement from the public is essential for creating support for projects in the event that they come up against political or practical barriers. Key methods for maintaining the public’s interest are:

- Establishing an ongoing role for the advisory committee if one was created to help develop the plan. Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Provo, Park City, and Ogden each have an established bicycle advisory committee that meets regularly.
- Showcasing progress on bicycle projects and continuing discussion on bicycle and pedestrian issues by using electronic media and local communication channels that are updated regularly.
- Partnering with public health, law enforcement, and schools to implement encouragement, education, and enforcement activities.
- Implementing pilot projects either as part of a temporary open streets event or a longer demonstration that is evaluated on its performance, impacts and public acceptance. Such demonstration projects provide residents with an opportunity to experience a new bike lane or roadway configuration changes. Most often these experiences are positive and generate excitement while dispelling concerns.

Mountainland Association of Governments

The Mountainland Association of Governments (MAG) was chosen as an example of a regional organization that has been supporting progress in bicycling in Summit, Wasatch and Utah Counties. MAG serves the following functions:

- A funding source.
- A forum for discussing funding priorities.
- A clearinghouse for project concepts and designs.
- A resource for project development and assistance in securing UDOT and FHWA approval.
- Staff support to represent local interests to regional, State, and Federal agencies on behalf of local elected officials.

MAG indicates that what makes their process work in terms of the relationships among and between partner agencies is the common source of funds and a forum for identifying funding priorities. Additionally, the development and upkeep of personal relationships, including an understanding that MAG is looking out for the needs of partner agencies, is essential. There is a perception that the building and

maintenance of trust among the partners works better with staff resources, such as exist at MAG where there is a full time coordinator in a dedicated Bicycle and Pedestrian Program, who is guided by the Unified Work Program and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Although MAG bylaws specify the voting status of associated agencies, there is nothing specific about bicycle implementation in the bylaws.

Carolina Thread Trail (NC)

The Carolina Thread Trail is a regional trail network that will reach 15 counties in North Carolina. It is identified as a best practice in implementation due to its success in weaving communities together. The Thread is one outcome of a 2005 leadership retreat held by the Foundation for the Carolinas for the purpose of determining the region's environmental needs and concerns. A concern for open space preservation launched the Thread two years later as a project focused on preserving natural corridors and connecting people to nature by providing a regional trail backbone. The Catawba Lands Conservancy, a nonprofit land conservation agency with regional purview, provides the leadership and funding for the project. Counties become eligible for funding of planning, implementation and land acquisition if they have adopted master plans that show corridors on the regional network. Fourteen counties have pursued letters of support to commence the planning process from each community within their jurisdiction. Although the planning efforts include on- and off-street planning, there is a trend revealing that counties have an easier time coming together over trails and green space than they do over traditional on-road connections. The success of the multi-county planning efforts for the Thread Trail is attributed to:

- Relatively easy to access funding.
- Consensus that local support is essential to move forward.
- Cooperation among nonprofit leaders, regional business leaders, and the North Carolina Department of Transportation.
- Board representation that includes local elected officials.
- County autonomy in applying for funding and deciding the pace of implementation based on interest and energy.

South Bay Bicycle Master Plan (CA)

Renew Environments for Nutrition, Exercise and Wellness in Los Angeles County (RENEW-LAC) received Federal funding through the Communities Putting Prevention to Work Program. One product of the grant was the South Bay Bicycle Master Plan, developed through a multi-city master planning process, with a goal of improved and increased

connectivity across the cities of El Segundo, Gardena, Hermosa Beach, Lawndale, Manhattan Beach, Redondo Beach, and Torrance. Design guidance and a regional wayfinding and signage plan ties the individual city facilities together. Each jurisdiction adopted the common plan in 2011 and will be individually responsible for implementation within its own boundaries.

With respect to implementation, the Plan recommends the following accountability mechanisms to ensure its success:

- Designation of Mobility Coordinators within each city (or assistance to the Regional Planning Organization to establish a regional position) to coordinate and oversee implementation, and provide regular updates to the city councils.
- Establishment of a regional bicycle advisory committee comprised of community members and council liaisons from each city that will meet regularly to monitor progress of bikeway implementation for each city.

Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (VA)

The Regional Roanoke Valley Area Bikeways Plan was adopted in 2005 and updated in 2012. Subsequently, jurisdictions within the study area were encouraged to recognize or adopt the plan as a guiding document in developing a regional bicycling network for the purpose of promoting and facilitating bicycle use. Local governments are primarily responsible for implementation of the bicycle projects. The plan includes recommendations for bikeways, signage, and non-infrastructure programs to facilitate cross-jurisdictional consistency. The plan recognizes that the local implementation of regional best practices can be more successful if other stakeholders encourage and facilitate their implementation.

Stakeholders included local departments, area schools, employers, bicycle advocates, economic development agency representatives, and others. The Bicycle Plan Advisory Committee meets to provide guidance and assist in implementing the plan recommendations. The Committee includes representatives from the State DOT, bicycle and trail advocacy organizations, city and county staff, and members from planning and transportation departments. The MPO also provides links to local, state, and regional planning resources.

Santa Clara County Valley Transit Authority (CA)

Santa Clara's Bicycle Program provides facilities, services, and programs to improve bicycle infrastructure and bicycling conditions throughout Santa Clara County, CA. Valley Transit Authority (VTA) is the countywide planning agency for bicycle projects. They plan and fund projects of regional or countywide significance. The policy document that provides the framework for the program is the Countywide Bicycle Plan, while their Bicycle Technical Guidelines offer facility design best practices. The County Plan identifies routes of countywide or intercity significance and complements member agencies' bicycle plans, which focus on improvements at a local level. Projects of regional countywide significance, as identified through the planning effort, are eligible for Bicycle Expenditure Program funding through the VTA, with the provision of a 20% minimum local match. Money for this program comes from local voter-approved sales tax, Congestion Management Program funds, federal grants, state planning grants, and other sources.

Incorporated cities provided input into the Plan through their Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committees (BPACs). Additionally, a separate VTA BPAC provided guidance. Still ongoing, the VTA BPAC has 16 members (one for each city and the county, plus a nonvoting member from the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition). The BPAC advises the Board on funding and planning issues, serves as the bicycle advisory committee for Santa Clara County review, and provides comments to Congestion Management Program staff regarding plans and designs for an effective countywide bikeway system. The VTA BPAC also updates the Countywide Bicycle Plan, Countywide Bicycle Map, Countywide Bicycle Expenditure Plan, and coordinates bicycle-related issues affecting the transit system. This VTA BPAC coordinates with BPACs from other agencies on multi-jurisdictional bicycle and pedestrian issues. It also coordinates work and meets as needed with the County's Trails Committee, makes recommendations to the VTA Board of Directors regarding the Countywide annual priority list of bicycle and pedestrian projects for funding, and serves as the countywide bicycle and pedestrian advisory committee for the County.

Recommended Roles and Responsibilities

The following sections present recommendations for the various County bodies involved in bicycle-related issues.

Active Transportation Program Manager

The County's Active Transportation Program Manager's roles and responsibilities include:

- Manage implementation and updates of the County's Active Transportation Implementation Plan.
- Provide technical support to cities during project planning, scoping and design phases.
- Manage countywide GIS bicycle database updates.
- Serve as the primary link between SLCBAC and the various governmental bodies that are working on bicycle-related projects and programs.
- Find out about upcoming road improvement, utility, and other projects that impact bikeway development and solicit feedback from SLCBAC to review plans, concept designs, and other materials related to those projects.
- Track city and county benefits of plan implementation and trends in bicycle commuting through the use of census data, travel surveys, and volunteer-led bicycle counts.
- Update design best practices for use throughout the county.
- Evaluate and prioritize potential projects for regional funding.
- Regularly monitor bicycle safety and seek a continuous reduction in bicycle-related collisions.
- Coordinate bicycle improvement funding applications among all involved cities to increase probability of receiving grant funding.
- Develop grant applications for bicycle projects.
- Coordinate with the Bicycle Ambassadors Program to implement bicycle encouragement and education programs.
- Disperse best practices knowledge to municipalities; for example, training them on low-cost ways of implementing bikeways, such as the "chasing the pavers" method of incorporating striping changes at the same time as resurfacing projects.
- Ensure that bikeway projects are implemented in an equitable manner, both geographically and socioeconomically.
- Develop an annual report to SLCBAC and the County Council that will include a summary of grant applications, awards, an overview of implementation progress, and possibly other performance measures.

As individual cities grow their own bicycle program capacities, they too should create similar active transportation positions. The County Active Transportation Program Manager can offer suggestions and assistance to cities that are contemplating hiring such a person.

SLCBAC

Representation

Until each municipality has its own Bicycle Advisory Committee (and perhaps even after), Salt Lake County should build on SLCBAC's successes and focus on increasing that body's effectiveness. Residents of each municipality and township should have the opportunity for representation on the committee, as well as technical staff, advocates, and policymakers. Representative membership will increase opportunities for communication and collaboration around bicycling issues. Furthermore, with different levels of government within the county looking at the same vision, the changes can be implemented collaboratively with the opportunity to learn from each other through better coordination.

SLCBAC should be composed of between 11 and 15 appointed people with representation from residents and agency staff, some of which would be voting members while others would serve in an ex-officio capacity. A committee smaller than 11 people may not be representative enough, while a number larger than 15 may prove unwieldy, especially at first. The following minimum composition is recommended, with other "at large" voting members appointed to fill the remaining seats.

- One resident from a county township or other non-incorporated, non-township location.
- Three residents from incorporated cities, including at least one who lives west of I-15 since those communities are traditionally under-represented on bicycling matters.
- Two members from city staff.
- Four ex-officio representatives – one each from the County Mayor's office, Wasatch Front Regional Council, UDOT (from either the Central or Region 2 offices), and the Utah Transit Authority.
- One to two members that represent the "interested but concerned" bicyclist constituency.

The existing structure (Chair, Co-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer) can be maintained in this new body. SLCBAC should continue to coordinate the process of soliciting candidates for committee appointments and provide recommendations, with the ultimate appointment coming from the County Mayor.

Advisory Roles

Optimal advisory roles for SLCBAC include the following:

- Submit formal recommendations for improving bicycling conditions on the County roadway and shared use paths systems to the County Active Transportation Program Manager. This should include coordination with the Parks and Recreation, Planning, and/or Engineering Departments.
- Make formal recommendations for improvements to existing inter-jurisdictional facilities to the County Active Transportation Program Manager so that the Coordinator can work with the appropriate municipalities and County townships to fund/implement those recommendations.
- Track progress of and opportunities for implementing the County's high comfort bicycle network (i.e., Active Transportation Implementation Plan).
- Review and comment on changes to the general plan, zoning ordinance, municipal code, and other policy documents relating to bicycling.
- Review public and private projects that impact bicycle facilities to ensure adequate consideration of bicyclist needs.
- Review and comment on the design of capital improvements to bicycle facilities (e.g. bikeways, bike parking facilities, intersection projects, traffic signals, street maintenance).
- Provide a liaison between the County and community groups on issues related to bicycling.
- Review and approve grant applications.
- Receive and review annual reports on bicycle project implementation.

Advisory Chain of Command

SLCBAC should report to the Active Transportation Program Manager on most matters, while also providing advice to the County Council and Mayor on matters of policy or document adoption. There are two distinct advantages to SLCBAC primarily reporting to the Active Transportation Program Manager:

- Communication and reporting is streamlined by having one main point of contact, who can then direct coordination items to the proper people in other locations such as the Mayor's Office, Office of Regional Development, or Engineering.
- Mayors and Councilmembers often rely on staff recommendations to make decisions, which means that filtering communications through the Active Transportation Program Manager (and, in turn, other staff) is crucial.

SLCBAC's budget should be limited to that which supports monthly or quarterly meetings.

County and Township Planning Commissions

It is not customary for a bicycle advisory committee to advise a planning commission on an ongoing basis because the day-to-day functions of those commissions are typically centered on very specific land use, policy, and ordinance concerns. However, the Planning Commissions also help to develop General Plans and Transportation Plans, which can be very important for future bicycling improvements. The County and Township Planning Commissions can play an integral role in effecting policy-level change under the recommendations of the County Active Transportation Program Manager, other staff, and SLCBAC without being directly advised by the SLCBAC. Rather than having SLCBAC advise the Planning Commissions directly, it is recommended that the County Active Transportation Program Manager serve as the primary link to the Commissions and solicit input from SLCBAC at the appropriate times.

Municipal Planning Commissions

Municipal Planning Commissions focus on land use, policy, and ordinance concerns specific to individual autonomous cities within the County. It is not practical or advisable for a regional advisory body like SLCBAC or for County staff to try coordinating with these bodies, at least for the foreseeable future. However, for communities in Salt Lake County that do not have a bicycle advisory committee, SLCBAC could be a resource upon request by the municipality.

Complete Streets Guidance

The Salt Lake County Council adopted a Complete Streets Ordinance and Policy in April 2010. The purpose of this section is to give guidance and resources for implementing the existing ordinance and policy. Much of the information in this section is taken from Complete Streets Policy Analysis 2011 (hereafter referred to as Policy Analysis), which was published by the National Complete Streets Coalition.

What Is a Complete Streets Policy?

According to Policy Analysis, Complete Streets policies:

“...formalize a community’s intent to plan, design, and maintain streets so they are safe for all users of all ages and abilities. Policies direct transportation planners and engineers to consistently design and construct the right-of-way to accommodate all anticipated users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users, motorists, and freight vehicles.”

“Complete streets can be achieved through a variety of policies: ordinances and resolutions; rewrites of design manuals; inclusion in

comprehensive plans; internal policies developed by transportation agencies; executive orders from elected officials, such as Mayors or Governors; and policies developed by stakeholders from the community and agency staff that are formally adopted by an elected board of officials.”

Implementation of Existing County Policy and Ordinance

Adopting a Complete Streets ordinance or policy is only the first step. The more difficult – but ultimately productive – task is converting the paper vision into actual practice. The following excerpt from Policy Analysis reinforces this concept and lists four key steps for Salt Lake County to take now in order to move from a visionary stage to an implementation stage:

“Taking a complete streets policy from paper into practice is not easy, but providing some momentum with specific implementation steps can help. The [following] four key steps [will aid] successful implementation of a policy:”

- Restructure or revise related procedures, plans, regulations, and other processes to accommodate all users on every project.
- Develop new design policies and guides or revise existing to reflect the current state of best practices in transportation design. Communities may also elect to adopt national or state-level recognized design guidance.
- Offer workshops and other training opportunities to planners and engineers so that everyone working on the transportation network understands the importance of the Complete Streets vision and how they can implement in their everyday work.
- Develop and institute better ways to measure performance and collect data on how well the streets are serving all users.

Other implementation guidance can be found in the following sources:

- Smart Growth America’s Complete Streets Implementation: A Resource Appendix. This document includes customizable ideas to help manage culture shift, educational resources to teach different stakeholders best practices, and ideas to continuously provide the best possible Complete Streets through key performance indicators.
- California Department of Transportation’s Complete Streets Implementation Action Plan. This document provides an example of how another agency has developed

a detailed action plan to integrate Complete Streets principles into its manuals, guidelines, staff training, policies, and project selection processes.

- American Planning Association’s Complete Streets: Best Policy and Implementation Practices. This report contains a wealth of real- world implementation examples in a variety of Complete Streets practice areas from cities across the US.

To summarize the importance of transitioning policy to implementation, Policy Analysis further says:

“...adoption of a policy with strong language is only the first step – the policies must lead to changes inside of transportation agencies that then lead to project-level changes as transportation projects are designed for the safe use of bicyclists, transit users, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities.”

“We know from our research and experience that full implementation requires agencies to undertake additional training of staff, as well as creation of new project development processes, design standards, and performance measures. Policies that look good on paper are of little value if they do not lead to change in practice and in projects on the ground.”

Exceptions to the Inclusion Rule

In order for Complete Streets policies to work, they must include a clear process for accommodating exceptions to the inclusion rule. Policy Analysis states the following regarding this principle:

“Making a policy work in the real world requires developing a process to handle exceptions to providing for all modes in each project. There must be a balance achieved when specifying these in policy language so that the needed flexibility for legitimate exceptions does not also create large loopholes. The strongest policies set out clear responsibility and a clear process for granting exceptions.”

“...the following exceptions are appropriate with limited potential to weaken the policy. They follow the Federal Highway Administration’s guidance on accommodating bicycle and pedestrian travel and identified best practices frequently used in existing Complete Streets policies.”

- 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. We do not recommend attaching

a percentage to define ‘excessive’ as the context for many projects will require different portions of the overall project budget to be spent on the modes and users expected; additionally, in many instances the costs may be difficult to quantify. A 20% cap 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. A 20% figure should always be used in an advisory rather than absolute sense.

- A documented absence of current and future need.

“Many communities have included other exceptions that the Coalition, in consultation with transportation planning and engineering experts, also feels are unlikely to create loopholes:

- Transit accommodations 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, and spot repair.
- Where a reasonable and equivalent project along the same corridor is already programmed to provide facilities exempted from the project at hand.

“We believe the primary objective of Complete Streets is to provide safe accommodation for all users of the transportation network. Additional exceptions begin to weaken this goal and may create loopholes too large to achieve the Complete Streets vision. Engineers and project managers are talented and creative problem solvers and should be able to address project-level barriers in ways that still achieve an environment supportive of all users.”

“In addition to defining exceptions through good policy language, there must be a clear process for granting them. We recommend a senior- level department head, publicly accountable committee, or a board of elected officials be charged with approving exceptions. Doing so ensures that as a policy moves into implementation, its intent is carried out and no exceptions are abused.”

Collaboration Versus Enforcement

Complete Streets policies are sometimes born from a sense that historically the so-called “alternative” modes have not been accommodated well in roadway planning and design. In these cases, champions of the Complete Streets concept often want to very strictly limit (if not eliminate entirely) potential loopholes to the inclusion of bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users. However, Policy Analysis cautions against this rigid approach:

“The desire to ‘force’ transportation engineers to behave differently has led some to advocate focusing on passing laws with binding, airtight language requiring accommodation. The palpable sense of frustration among some advocates is understandable; this seemingly simple concept has proven difficult to instill over several decades of advocacy.

“Yet, in the realm of street design, engineers are the licensed professionals charged with safe and efficient operation of the transportation system. It is extremely difficult, and perhaps inappropriate, for elected officials to tread into the territory of prescriptive street design. Engineers are inherently problem solvers, and the best way to change their focus is to work with them to change the definition of the problem.

“In our systems approach to Complete Streets, the redefinition of the problem is the purview of decision-makers, while the final approval of the designs to achieve the desired outcomes lies with the traffic engineers. We have found that a cooperative approach with street designers and traffic engineers is critical to effective policy implementation. Cultivating positive relationships and strategic partnerships inside the profession is a proven success...

“...Based on this experience, we believe that the most effective Complete Streets laws or policies primarily engage decision makers in an appropriate role of setting a new standard of intent and defining desired outcomes, rather than attempting to force specific changes through an enforcement mechanism.”

Project Prioritization

The desire for bikeway improvements seemingly always outweighs available funding, as is the case with transportation funding in general, thus making it important to prioritize investments. The high comfort network identified as part of the County’s Active Transportation Implementation Plan prioritizes recommended projects based on the following factors:

- Route Demand
- Transit Supportive
- Connections to Multi-use Path
- Barrier Removal

These factors were chosen to reflect an emphasis on short trip opportunities, using the bike network to extend the reach of transit (and vice versa), leveraging existing and planned multi-use paths as part of a regional high comfort bike network, and resolving major barriers such as highways, large arterial streets, and waterways to improve network connectivity.