

# Appendix U2

## Regional Complete Streets Policy

### Appendix U2 Contents

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# REGIONAL COMPLETE STREETS POLICY<sup>1</sup>

## Purpose

SANDAG guides regional planning via a policy framework based on smart growth and sustainability. Under this framework, much of the region's future development will occur within the existing urbanized area and in compact, mixed-use neighborhoods that provide a variety of housing and transportation choices and help create healthier communities. Complete Streets is an important planning concept in this policy framework because it is a process for ensuring the transportation system is safe, useful, and attractive for all users of the transportation network – motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and the movement of freight alike. Complete Streets provides valuable flexibility in street design so that the transportation system is appropriate for the current and planned built environment context.

## 1. Policy Statement

SANDAG seeks to fulfill the regional goal of a safe, balanced, multimodal transportation system that supports compact and sustainable development by adopting a Complete Streets approach in its project development and implementation processes, and by assisting and encouraging local jurisdictions to follow Complete Streets policies and practices. In this way, everyone will be able to safely travel along and across streets and railways to reach destinations within the region, regardless of age, ability, or mode of travel.

## 2. Applicability

Applicable principles in this Complete Streets Policy should be incorporated into the development of all SANDAG transportation infrastructure projects<sup>2</sup> across the region at all phases of development, including planning and land use decisions, scoping, design, implementation, and performance monitoring. SANDAG will incorporate Complete Streets principles into the development process for all projects in its Capital Improvement Program as appropriate for the project type.

In addition, SANDAG supports and encourages Complete Streets implementation by other entities throughout the region. Local jurisdictions, as required by the California Complete Streets Act of 2008, will incorporate Complete Streets into their general plans as they revise their circulation elements. SANDAG encourages local agencies to implement Complete Streets principles if a circulation element revision is not planned in the near future. Adopting a Complete Streets approach provides an opportunity to establish more detailed direction on Complete Streets implementation than would be provided in the context of a general plan. SANDAG also encourages and supports Complete Streets methodologies in the design and construction of all projects in the region developed by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) as appropriate consistent with Deputy Directive 64-R1, and in the maintenance and operation of all state highway and public transit facilities.

Section 4(E)(3) of the *TransNet* Extension Ordinance requires all projects constructed under the Ordinance to routinely accommodate pedestrian and bicyclists. Rule #21 of SANDAG Board Policy No. 031 provides guidance for the implementation of that requirement. SANDAG will periodically evaluate the effectiveness of Rule #21 to ensure compliance with this provision and to ensure that the rule reflects current best practices in Complete Streets implementation.

### **3. Design Practices and Context Sensitivity**

While every street should be planned, designed, built, operated, and maintained for all foreseeable users, there is no singular design standard for Complete Streets and few streets will have separate accommodations for every mode. Projects should be planned and designed to consider current and planned adjacent land uses and local transportation needs, and to incorporate the latest and best practice design guidance. Each project must be considered both separately and as part of a connected network to determine the level and type of treatment necessary for all foreseeable users.

In order to provide context-sensitive solutions that respond to public input and the need to serve a variety of users, a flexible, balanced approach to project design that utilizes innovative design solutions may be considered, provided that an adequate level of safety for all users is ensured. SANDAG will compile a library of best practice design guidance to facilitate this and make it available on its website.

SANDAG encourages local governments and Caltrans to coordinate Complete Streets implementation with broader livable communities planning and integration of land use with transportation. SANDAG will coordinate educational opportunities for jurisdictional technical staff on current design standards and will encourage and support the use of modern best practices in Complete Streets design.

### **4. Regional Network Principles**

A well-connected network provides safe and convenient transitions from one mode of transportation to another, from one jurisdiction to another, and from one type of infrastructure to another. A well-connected network also provides more route choices that can disperse traffic across the network, provides alternatives when priority is given to a particular mode along one route, and that provides route alternatives when a link in the network is obstructed. SANDAG will endeavor to provide a continuous, uninterrupted network accessible to all users and modes. A well-connected network considers connectivity throughout the lifespan of a transportation project and takes into account the needs of both current and projected users.

### **5. Exceptions**

All transportation projects constructed or reconstructed should be planned, designed, and constructed for all foreseeable users. For some projects, however, an exception to this standard may be warranted. For projects developed by SANDAG, project managers may propose an exception with supporting data to indicate the basis for the request. The request for an exception will be reviewed by the project manager's department director before inclusion and/or the next update of the project in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). Exceptions may be appropriate in the following cases:

1. *Where specific modes of travel are prohibited by law.* In such cases, efforts should be made to accommodate travel by prohibited modes elsewhere, as appropriate for each mode, to ensure network connectivity. Where a proposed project for a limited access facility would cross a major barrier (such as a river, railroad, or highway), consideration should be given to the opportunity to include access across the barrier for otherwise limited modes.
2. *Where the cost of providing facilities for all travelers, especially pedestrians and bicyclists, would be excessively disproportionate to the need or likely use.* Federal guidance defines this as exceeding 20 percent of the total project costs; however, this exception should also be context-sensitive. Where demand is high or a barrier is significant, a cost in excess of 20 percent may be warranted, but where demand is low, 20 percent may not. This exception must consider probable use through the life of the project, a minimum of 20 years.

3. Where approved or adopted plans or policies (such as local land use, zoning, or mobility planning) or present and anticipated market conditions indicate an absence of need for both current and future conditions of the anticipated project's life (a minimum of 20 years for roadways and 50 years for bridges).
4. *Where unmitigable detrimental environmental impacts outweigh the need for full accommodation of all travel modes.* In making this determination, the needs of all modes will be considered, with priorities determined based on the project context.

Exceptions that are recommended for approval will be reported to the Transportation Committee through the RTIP process where a member of the public may present opposition to that recommendation during public comment, or in writing in advance of the meeting at which the exception recommendation is included. Exceptions should not be common.

All state, regional, and local agency projects included in the SANDAG programming document known as the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) should be subject to applicable Complete Streets principles. SANDAG encourages each entity submitting projects to the RTIP to implement a process that allows for public participation and comment on whether those projects follow Complete Streets principles.

## **6. Performance measures**

SANDAG will evaluate the outcomes of this Complete Streets Policy in concert with regional performance measures, such as those developed for *the Regional Comprehensive Plan* and future long-range transportation plans. The policy will be subject to a biennial review of objective measures presented to the Transportation Committee for the committee to use in evaluating the effectiveness of the policy. These measures and their objectives include:

- 6.1 An increase in the number of projects that include multimodal connections to destinations by providing bicycle and pedestrian facilities, crossing improvements, traffic calming measures, wayfinding signs or other measures;
- 6.2 An increase in the miles of new and upgraded bikeways and walkways in the region, and other improvements that improve access for biking, walking, and transit or improve monitoring of those modes;
- 6.3 An increase in member jurisdictions that have adopted this Complete Streets Policy or their own separate policies incorporating Complete Streets principles, or that have revised the circulation element of their general plans in compliance with the California Complete Streets Act;
- 6.4 The number of staff members from SANDAG and local jurisdictions and other transportation agencies participating in training and events that reflect best practices in Complete Streets planning and design; and
- 6.5 Progress in accomplishing activities identified in the "Implementation" section below.

## 7. Implementation

In addition to the measures described above in this policy, SANDAG will take the following actions in collaboration with member agencies and other affected agencies:

- 7.1 All projects developed by SANDAG are opportunities to improve access and mobility for all modes. Toward that end, SANDAG will create a project development checklist to ensure all projects implemented by SANDAG consider local mobility plans and accommodate the needs of all travel modes and the movement of goods to the extent appropriate. Use of the checklist will include coordination between departments and consultation with staff for all modes through participation on the project development team. (Estimated time to complete: nine months from adoption of the policy.)
- 7.2 Develop a process for coordinating the development of regional projects with local agency Complete Streets initiatives and include in that process a protocol for evaluating cost-sharing opportunities. (Estimated time to complete: one year.)
- 7.3 Develop a project development checklist template that local agencies can use to ensure local projects result in Complete Streets. (Estimated time to complete: nine months.)
- 7.4 Collaborate with local jurisdiction, Caltrans, and transit operators to develop a regional database and mapping tool to facilitate coordinated development of local and regional Complete Streets plans. (Estimated time to complete: one year.)
- 7.5 Provide opportunities for SANDAG staff and staff from member agencies, Caltrans, and transit operators, to participate in trainings, workshops, and other educational events related to Complete Streets procedures and practices including, but not limited to, transportation safety, multimodal network planning, context-sensitive design, connecting transportation and land use decisions, and evaluating projects and the impact of transportation investments. This will be an ongoing activity to ensure practitioners are well informed about state-of-the-art practices.
- 7.6 Develop tools and reference materials as needed, such as guidance on best practices and innovation in street design, parking management strategies, storm water best practices, incorporating bicycle and pedestrian access to transit stops and stations, traffic impact studies, and public engagement tools. SANDAG will make these tools available to other entities on its website.
- 7.7 Continue work on related initiatives that support multimodal connections, including the Safe Routes to School and Safe Routes to Transit programs.
- 7.8 Develop a benchmarking process for SANDAG project managers to use as a tool for monitoring implementation of this Policy. (Estimated time to complete: nine months.)
- 7.9 Provide a report to the Board of Directors on the implementation of this policy within one year of its adoption.

## **Endnotes**

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<sup>1</sup> Adopted by the SANDAG Board of Directors on December 19, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> The policy will apply to all new projects and projects still in the planning phase at the time the policy is adopted.