

COMPLETE STREETS SAN DIEGO



COMPLETE STREETS AND CEQA: OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

FRIDAY, JUNE 22, 2012

WORKSHOP RESULTS

On Friday, June 22, the local organizations of APA, AEP, ITE and WalkSanDiego co-hosted a half-day workshop on Complete Streets and CEQA. The event was attended by approximately 140 professionals from both the private and public sectors. Four speakers were featured to discuss Complete Streets policies, legal questions, environmental documentation, and implementation.

After speaker presentations, attendees were asked to work in 20 small groups to answer three key questions:

- What lingering doubts about Complete Streets and CEQA do you have?
- What are key barriers to advancing Complete Streets in San Diego?
- What should next steps be to advance Complete Streets in San Diego?

In general, four themes emerged in the answers provided to these three questions. These themes are outlined below. Detailed answers to the questions continue on the following pages.

Education	Funding
Design Standards	Consistency & Coordination

1. **Education.** Need for education at all levels – general public, elected officials, professionals.

Sample Answers:

- Educate public and policy makers on benefits of complete streets. More demonstration projects
- Learn from other cities & exchange program information
- Need for political support to fund necessary changes

2. **Funding.** Need for funding for infrastructure, maintenance, transit, community plans.

Sample Answers:

- Funding for infrastructure and updating general plans and community plans
- Funding timing and phasing of streets and sidewalks - connectivity

3. **Design Standards:** Generally, lack of flexibility and need for change. Includes LOS thresholds.

Sample Answers:

- Public safety (fire access) will be a constraint to change guidelines/ standards
- Flexibility in thresholds to address other modes of transport. Balance between auto/bike/ped LOS
- Raise thresholds that trigger EIR in order for developers to implement ped/bike improvements

4. **Consistency & Coordination.** Consistency of policies and design standards. Coordination of decision-making among city departments. Coordination of regional vs. local networks.

Sample Answers:

- Inconsistency between policy documents and implementing ordinances
- Decision making disbursed, too many agencies making different decisions
- Gaps between regional and local networks

1. WHAT LINGERING DOUBTS ABOUT COMPLETE STREETS AND CEQA DO YOU HAVE?

EDUCATION

- Fear of change in CEQA because CEQA is a public process
- How to keep up momentum (public engagement). What is role of community? Need to spend more time up front in the community. How do you challenge?
- How are agencies going to change fast enough?
- Who benefits?
- Public resistance to implementation – education before project goes to a vote
- Public resistance, their priority is still car movement, “nobody walks”
- Public vote
- Anti-agenda 21/ socialist policy
- Public participation low for demographic that uses transit
- People too busy to participate (child care)
- Ability to get community buy-in / alternative mode prioritization
- Need better understanding and metrics and context for value and benefits of Complete Streets

FUNDING

- Proper allocation of funds (# of bikes vs. cars)
- Funding
- Funding – infrastructure and updating GPs and community plans

DESIGN STANDARDS (MMLOS)

- No metric to consistently apply multi-modal. Local jurisdictions should develop guidelines that augment CEQA.
- CEQA perception/threshold raised
- Development standards not consistent
- Evaluation of Complete Streets for future demand. Link between present and future analysis. Address cumulative Multi-Modal Impacts.
- Flexibility in threshold to cater other modes of transportation. Balance between Auto LOS and bike/ped/transit LOS
- Interpreting and comparing LOS for multi modal is vague, methodology for comparing not developed
- Public safety (i.e. fire access) will be a constraint to change to guidelines/standards
- LOS tools for Bike/Ped. aren't available
- Acceptance of multi modal LOS at the policy level
- Safety – not creating conflicts between different modes
- How do things like street trees become incorporated in environmental documentation and measuring levels of service
- Disconnect between mitigation for traffic using ped/bike/transit and implementation. Development happens, then a time may pass before users can benefit.
- Too complex of a process – traffic review more cost and money. Get decision makers to understand what you are doing. How do you pay for it? Does multi modal LOS (just one tool) really benefit? Is it too complicated?
- How to quantify how transit/ped oriented will reduce number cars to satisfy lead agency. Policy level – agency's need to implement - CEQA analysis at GP level – measure numbers through MMRP

DESIGN STANDARDS (THRESHOLDS)

- Sidewalk improvements only roadway projects
- Caltrans involvement
- Engineering standards do not meet current planning concepts. Need inter-jurisdiction coordination on thresholds. How to measure impacts.
- Flexibility, no standard
- Raise threshold for EIR
- Thresholds should be higher
- Need to raise the thresholds/ CEQA so that the trigger EIR etc. is higher in order for developers to be more willing to implement ped/bike improvements
- Thresholds are a problem – depends on organizational will

- Will the “borrowing” of threshold stand up in court?
- Thresholds of significance for GHG – can same be done?
- Thresholds are double-edged sword. Reduce jurisdiction flexibility. But also reduce exposure.
- Conflict between updated goals and policies and old metrics/ CEQA significance thresholds. Need to update thresholds with policies.

CONSISTENCY & COORDINATION

- Gaps between regional and local networks
- Links between land use and complete streets concept
- Cities plans still using LOS, still transitioning. People still expect LOS, understand LOS. Differing standards among cities. Gaining acceptance at all levels – public, engineer, planners, politicians. How to get consistency – multi model LOS introduces complexity. Business owners want bike lanes/ complete streets, but do not want to give up parking.
- Look at regional level? Compatibility
- Lack of consistency between agency engineers, consulting engineers, the public, and policy makers
- Reconcile policy and environmental mitigation. Standards and policy, policy departments
- Conflict between updated goals and policies and old metrics/ CEQA significance thresholds. Need to update thresholds with policies.

RISK AND LIABILITY

- Need attorneys, engineers, planners, community to discuss and determine value analysis
- CEQA focus is Impact –Mitigation
- Insuring City liability is covered
- CEQA compliance for specific projects – projects are being watered down to allow MND processing.
- How do you balance multiple modes when you have impacts?
- Lack of awareness and fear of risk.

OTHER

- Users will respond to whatever is built
- Local Implementation of State Initiatives
- More state guidance
- Visions loop. Changing direction.
- Complete Streets focus is Vision/Goals-Implementing
- CEQA still too vague, and may still be used to obstruct or delay projects with complete streets components
- Concerns about CEQA tiering not working
- CEQA isn't very user friendly harder to understand. Agreed it's a key tool for evaluating trade-offs.
- City of SD programmatic EIR for bikes

2. WHAT ARE KEY BARRIERS TO ADVANCING COMPLETE STREETS IN SAN DIEGO?

EDUCATION

- Need to convince public to spend money (bike lanes with median) – will be more productive in long run
- Need to convince shift towards bike/ transit
- Education about complete streets
- Roadway projects, funding group and complete streets education
- Public Acceptance
- Political Initiative and leadership
- Education, Enforcement, Awareness
- Support at higher levels – inside advocate
- Strong outreach
- Public ignorant of complete streets concepts and the value to community
- Public opinion – traffic is the problem in many people's minds. Inadequate public transit to make alternatives. Topography and urban form. Public perception about the need for participating. Designing to forecast travel rather than to a preferred community design.
- Educating on where Complete Streets are appropriate. Land use patterns are still very suburban.

- Community values – educate public
- Developer fees capacity enhancements. Show real successful examples.
- Getting business owners on board with parking
- Marketing to make it a goal of the community to make policy change
- Perception of fairness, equity of benefits
- Determining an appropriate process to lessen resistance and create cohesiveness..To problems before buying into potential solutions, etc
- Leadership is required – start with Mayor
- Need successful examples
- Educating public on benefits, enjoying experiences and amenities around you
- Getting a balance between different modes of transportation
- Time it takes to educate and explain options/ trade-offs
- Developer resistance
- Lack of political support to fund necessary changes, such as developer impact fees.
- Getting the message - pulling together the supportive base.
- Opportunities: Aging people – need to engage, economy
- Community Support: public perception + education
- Want transit for other people
- Getting key decision makers, department heads aware and involved.
- Engage citizens, residents to support and demand for Complete Streets improvements
- Report and measure benefits and costs – develop databases. Include health data.
- Match & collaborate champions (Bike Coalition, Boy Scouts)

FUNDING

- Funding that is only available to specific projects.
- Private development is on different time frame in construction than public transit.
- How can timing of transit be tied to private development?
- Funding timing and phasing of streets and sidewalks – connectivity
- Funding gaps
- Where is funding coming from
- Funding esp. for maintenance and resulting risk
- Funding for developing the guidelines let alone the construction of complete streets (retrofit through CIP) is not there
- Increasing transit services and making more efficient.
- Need money mechanism – not able to phase (one developer can't fix all the problems)
- How to spread cost/collect. Older established neighborhoods want parks vs. transit improvements. Older established neighborhoods vs. new development
- Prioritization at the CIP level; other funding programs (e.g. CDBG)
- Resources: takes resources to incorporate new codes
- Funding – Return on Investment on freeways vs. sidewalks vs. buffered bike lanes
- Financing – how do you finance when many places already built/ recently built? Need to have land use plans updated.

STANDARDS

- Local guidelines
- Policies/implementation
- Implement Complete Street guidelines and enforce them in GP language and city by city
- Current design standards address small window of peak demand rather than averages throughout day
- Planning for a complete community vs. worst case scenario
- Increase flexibility in standards while increasing specifics on general policies. (Finding a middle ground).
- Private development should be more CS friendly
- Old-school engineering/ standards, lack of willingness to try new solutions
- Emphasis on vehicles. Need transfer of emphasis to other modes.
- change in long range planning/development considering ped/bike
- Guidelines vs. standards; standards that allow for deviation
- Cultural Default: CALTRANS – mandate is cars
- Getting standards adopted
- Planning vs. Implementation (internal: entrapped by web of historical standards)

CONSISTENCY & COORDINATION

- Lack of coordination/ communication
- Coordination /Time frame
- Decision making is too disbursed, too many agencies making different decisions
- Potential inconsistencies between regional and local agencies pertaining to road classifications (e.g. San Marcos Blvd as a regional arterial as city of San Marcos desire for complete street “less auto oriented”)
- Cooperation/Consistency between jurisdictions
- Policy Docs don’t have complete streets policies or inconsistent policies
- Agency regulation vs. CEQA vs. Policy Docs
- Trip generation rates
- Inconsistency between policy documents and implementing ordinances.

LIABILITY

- Agency Risk vs. Public Safety vs. Liability – Need to understand the difference
- Complacency
- Attorneys/litigation
- Fear of change – standards, procedures, outcomes

OTHER

- Lowest usage of transit/ stops are ‘almost there’
- Space to implement in SD/ Retrofit/ balance usages and figuring out projects
- Safe Routes to School
- Not Roadway projects & community projects
- Diverted vehicular traffic on parallel streets.
- Complete Streets as “late hit ”; hard transition

3. WHAT SHOULD OUR NEXT STEPS BE TO ADVANCE COMPLETE STREETS IN SAN DIEGO?

EDUCATION

- Do pilot and demonstration projects: start small to provide good examples – measure and document success.
- Show where it has worked in the past (case studies)
- Learn from other cities/ exchange program information
- Engage and educate the public
- Examples of cost-effective projects that have been implemented, best practices
- Education
- Momentum. Attend technical events to stay connected.
- Education. Learn CEQA updates, complete streets methodology.
- Implementing Right (Education, Engineering, Evaluation, Enforcement)
- Education – public support
- Asking “why not” instead of “why”
- Public outreach and education - elected officials as well.
- Design professionals need to be better versed in complete streets strategies to promote them in their projects
- Public outreach and education on the benefits of complete streets. Develop more incentives to use alternative modes. More pilot programs to demonstrate the benefits of complete streets. More liberal design standards for bike and ped facilities. Integrate CS into planning and TE tools.
- Educate public and policy makers on complete streets. More demonstration projects. Specific plans for implementation.
- Educating the public about benefits of complete streets (including public health benefits) – visualizations important. Financing/Infrastructure district. Pilot/ demo projects. Educating elected officials, school districts
- Proponents for Complete Streets in everyday meetings/ discussions
- Political (public) advocacy
- Education through activity/ experience. (Ped/Bike audits)
- More outreach at the community level to generate more positivity and advocacy.
- Sharing info between agencies and how it improves business, economics, etc.

- Educate the politicians – make it a priority, show pay-offs/benefits, safety, economic, political win
- Get involved/advocate in ways that won't conflict with your job
- Getting demonstration projects built – pressure needs to come from top
- Education at all levels – among ourselves – agencies be more flexible with existing and new standards
- Education, workshops
- Public outreach and education
- Benefits to be emphasized
- Getting the message out, particularly building political support
- Cheap, best practices examples
- More information to demonstrate tie-ins between complete streets and economic development
- More events where multiple disciplines come together
- Use “alternative modes of outreach”, pilot programs

STANDARDS

- Tools need to change. Activity based model at SANDAG.
- Raise threshold for EIR?? – How?
- Transnet 3% raise 5%
- SANDAG finish TIS guidelines update
- Someone develop design guidelines for more innovative design treatments
- Readily available guidance/ studies to prove substantial evidence
- Work on standards
- Address LOS same as policy in CEQA legislation
- Need for case studies to document basis for threshold
- Getting new standards adopted
- Incorporate into policies

CONSISTENCY & COORDINATION

- Organization to centralize/ coordinate effort within each agency
- Focus on structure of organizations to improve quality of life for the city
- Bridge gap between planners and engineers.
- Locally how do we address updating CEQA guidelines? Regionally consistent
- Local agencies need to break down the barriers of their silos to come together to implement new strategies
- Rely more on policy docs than on CEQA
- Integrate land use that encourage alternate modes of transportation
- Coordinate between engineers, environmental, community members, politicians, etc.
- Consolidation of plans e.g. instead of separate bike/ped
- Look to future collaboration
- Join maintenance of street plan with update plan

OTHER

- Define area goals and base standards or goal
- Local jurisdictions should develop guidelines with metrics that can be applied.
- Local policy and implementation: start with a district, then expand beyond
- Policy