



Complete Streets Workshop
City of Cheyenne, Wyoming

Next Steps Memorandum
July 2012



Sustainable Communities Building Blocks

Complete Streets Workshop for the City of Cheyenne, Wyoming

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1. INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) selected the Cheyenne Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Sustainable Communities Building Blocks technical assistance focused on developing improvements to their internal processes to facilitate the implementation of complete streets improvements.

This memorandum describes the Complete Streets Workshop held on May 30, 2012 at the Cheyenne Fire Training Facility, and focuses on the next steps that the community may undertake as a result of this technical assistance. EPA Contractor Dan Hardy, P.E., PTP, of Renaissance Planning Group led the Complete Streets Workshop in partnership with MPO staff and representatives of EPA Region 8, and facilitated the workshop focusing on preliminary activities the city can undertake to improve complete streets implementation activities.

2. WORKSHOP EVENTS

The technical assistance entailed a day-long workshop involving a review of national complete streets policy guidance, current local transportation implementation processes, and brainstorming sessions on tools to assist the development of complete streets implementation strategies. About 30 staff from city and regional agencies in the Cheyenne region participated in the workshop, representing a range of transportation planning, traffic engineering, health services, housing, and fire/rescue agencies. Participation also included Cheyenne planning commissioners, the Wyoming Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration and members of the development community.



Figure 1. Workshop breakout group discussion.

The day's activities included a bus tour of the developing portions of the city, which demonstrated recent sidewalk implementation in a light-industrial campus setting, opportunities for substantial improvements along a strip-retail portion of East Lincolnway (US 30), and recent success stories in implementing sidewalk connectivity at a new professional services park and in retrofitting a wide collector street near a public school to provide bicycle lanes and pedestrian refuges.

The workshop concluded with a public workshop from 7:00 – 8:30 PM at the Laramie County Library to introduce the complete streets concept. Public meeting attendees included six attendees from the day's workshop and about eight residents. Some residents expressed concern that the concept of complete streets seemed to be an unjustified use of tax dollars and might reflect an infringement on property rights. These concerns were addressed through dialogue regarding the context-sensitive nature of the complete streets approach and how transportation planning and engineering staff engage local communities in the decision-making process.

On the day after the workshop and public meeting, the contractor met with Cheyenne and EPA Region 8 staff to review the events and potential next steps, as summarized in this memo.

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3. KEY ISSUES + STRATEGIES

The city of Cheyenne has had recent successes in multimodal transportation implementation in the form of a series of curb extensions in the downtown grid, an extensive greenway bicycle trail system, and neighborhood traffic management projects. Implementation of complete streets in the lower density portions of the city remains a challenge due to the extent of wide streets with attached sidewalks as the city developed in the second half of the twentieth century.

Cheyenne adopted a Unified Development Code (UDC) in January 2012 that will encourage sustainable

development and more pedestrian-oriented site planning. The UDC also identifies a range of street design types that will be designated in the subsequent Plan Cheyenne work program item to update the 2006 Comprehensive Plan. The City has strengthened their design standards in recent years, which has helped bring greater success in requiring developers to install sidewalks and landscaping as part of the site plan approval process. The staff still experience considerable private sector resistance to installing “sidewalks to nowhere” in the case of a greenfield or leapfrog development, as well as concern that the City does not hold their own capital projects to the same standards they require of the private sector. The workshop provided an opportunity to identify possible implementation efforts that could improve the predictability of the development approval process as well as opportunities for improved public/private coordination for phasing complete streets elements.

The Unified Development Code contains language describing the intent of the transportation elements that served as a useful starting point for developing a Complete Streets Vision Statement. The workshop participants modified the UDC language to create the following draft vision statement as a starting point for continuing dialogue:

Provide for efficient, comfortable, safe, and equitable movement and access along all public ways through a variety of modes of transportation, including automobiles, bicycles, pedestrians, and potentially transit. Develop and maintain balanced and flexible street designs (“complete streets”) for regional and local routes in a context sensitive and affordable manner through partnerships across all agencies and stakeholders that accommodate all potential users of the street and rights-of-way, so that the interests of a single mode of transportation do not unnecessarily compromise other modes of transportation.



Figure 2. Phased sidewalk implementation on East Lincolnway.



Figure 3. Fence limiting pedestrian connectivity along College Drive.

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Workshop attendees considered elements that could be improved within of their current planning and implementation processes. The concept of a layered network with mode-specific quality of service criteria for different place types was well received by the attendees. This concept reflects the UDC land use context and was viewed by many attendees as a way to “zone the right-of-way”. The outcome would to both identify street types that match planned land uses (i.e., for residential neighborhoods, local commercial centers, and commuter boulevards) and provide performance measurement guidance to public and private sector implementers alike to tailor street designs to both the local land use context and the desired quality of service for each mode.

4. ACTIONS/ TIMEFRAMES/ RESPONSIBILITIES

The following action matrix summarizes the next steps for the Cheyenne city staff and elected officials to consider.

Action	Purpose	Lead Agency	Timeframe
A. Policy Actions			
Develop and adopt a Complete Streets Policy	Provide support for complete streets activities and prioritization from elected officials	MPO/Planning/Engineering develop for Governing Bodies	8-12 months
Create Complete Streets Policy checklist	Ensure that both public and private project reviews incorporate a complete streets approach that celebrates accomplishments and documents exceptions	MPO/Planning/Engineering develop for Governing Bodies	8-12 months
Develop Modal Emphasis Map	Establish Quality of Service objectives for each mode of travel in different geographical context zones (business district, local neighborhood, commuter corridor, etc.) to define modal priorities for street segments in a layered network approach and establish expectations for required performance measurements and flexibility to consider design exceptions.	MPO/Planning/Engineering in coordination with Plan Cheyenne	8 months
Develop Right-of-Way Zone concepts	Establish concepts to “zone the right-of-way” by defining ranges of modal element presence and widths and design flexibility based on the Modal Emphasis Map	MPO/Planning/Engineering in coordination with Plan Cheyenne	8 months
Develop process for public project reviews that is consistent with private project reviews	Incorporate review of public projects by governing bodies in a public manner similar to that of private projects to align objectives and requirements and elevate public discussion of complete streets elements of public projects.	Administration (Mayor/Governing Bodies)	9-12 months
Note: Impact/Development Fee approach incorporated under Review			

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Action	Purpose	Lead Agency	Timeframe
B. Internal Review Actions			
Establish Complete Streets Committee (CSC)	Initiate regular communication among City departments, coordinate Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project development and private development reviews to identify implementation opportunities. Initial CSC task is to define roles/responsibilities for city departments, outside agencies, and opportunities for early public engagement on remaining Next Steps activities.	Designated representative from each agency	Immediate
Develop project development and review process	Smooth the transition from planning/visioning to design and implementation by a review of planning objectives at beginning of design process to communicate nuances of intended purpose and need	MPO/Planning/Engineering	Immediate
Create toolbox of complete streets solutions	Develop a list of complete streets options with guidance as to how to apply to different contexts	CSC	6-18 months
Explore code changes regarding limitation on city action to fix detached sidewalks	Current code may prohibit city from directly repairing detached sidewalks (need to cite/bill property owners instead, which is more arduous than directly making repairs)	City	6-18 months
Review current processes that may be restricting complete streets design principles	Examine codes, design standards, and internal processes for places where complete street elements may fall through the cracks	City/County/State	6-18 months

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Action	Purpose	Lead Agency	Timeframe
C. Education Actions			
Reach out to targeted stakeholder groups	Develop relationships with groups such as AARP and public health organizations to identify mutually-supportive objectives in complete streets implementation	CSC	6-18 months
Conduct public/stakeholder education on complete street processes	Describe complete streets processes to elected officials, civic groups, general public	City, CSC	6 – 18 months; continuous process
Conduct staff training	Conduct professional development sessions on complete streets for wider range of city staff	City	2+ years
Conduct exploratory study on innovative financing opportunities	Identify potential for innovative approaches for public-private partnerships to help fund complete street implementation	City, with other jurisdictions and private sector	6 – 18 months; continuous process
D. Implementation Actions			
Consider Sidewalk Fund	Develop options to establish separate CIP fund for sidewalk completion	City Engineering	Immediate (for study of options)
Consider impact fees	Develop options to augment or replace portion of the exaction process with impact fees to aggregate and fund missing links , similar to community facilities fee	MPO Planning	Immediate (for study of options)

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Action	Purpose	Lead Agency	Timeframe
Coordinate with business grant funding	Coordinate with development agencies such as the Wyoming Business Council to link local review and support for business grant applications (i.e., Community Development Block Grants) to complete streets implementation	City Planning	Immediate (for study of options)
Consider expedited development	Develop options to “green tape” developments that commit to substantially exceed complete streets requirements in development application	City Development	Immediate (for study of options)
Explore options for phased improvements	Allow deferral of certain improvements not warranted at time of initial occupancy to be tied to a development phasing plan with specific percent complete triggers (i.e., certain key sidewalk links completed before permits for final phase of development issued)	City Planning/Development	Immediate (for study of options)
Explore potential for Tax Increment Financing and Special Assessment Districts	Leverage private sector investment to fund complete streets improvements (TIF may require change to state law)	Wyoming Association of Municipalities	Immediate (for study of options)

Note: CSC = Complete Streets Committee

In summary, the Cheyenne Complete Streets Workshop provided staff from city, regional, state, and federal agencies with tools and techniques for developing complete streets design policies, and served as a useful catalyst for further actions. The workshop outlined options to improve cross-departmental and agency communication about street design, to raise awareness among elected officials and the community about complete streets concepts, and to develop policy guidance that will facilitate development of Plan Cheyenne and encourage complete streets elements in future projects. Participation in the workshop was robust; participants included key city and regional officials. This matrix of next steps provides the starting point to help the City strengthen its transportation planning and implementation processes, helping make Cheyenne an even more attractive place to live, work and play.

5. Appendix

Field walk map and additional photos



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Figure 4. Utility pole limiting crosswalk access along East Pershing Boulevard.



Figure 5. Downtown district pedestrian improvements.



Figure 6. Retrofit bicycle and parking lane delineation.



Figure 7. Front yard sign showing local resident concern about vehicle speeds.