



MEMORANDUM

PUBLIC WORKS

To: Farmers Branch City Council

Through: Ben Williamson, City Manager

From: Alex Pharmakis, Sustainability Manager – Public Works

CC: Jawaria Tareen, Deputy City Manager

Date: September 4, 2025

Subject: Summary of Active Transportation and Complete Streets Updates

The City Council received an overview of the Active Transportation Plan and Complete Streets Policy at the August 19, 2025 study session. Multiple comments were received from the City Council. Information addressing the comments and a summary of the changes to the documents are listed below.

Active Transportation Plan

- Culture of driving compared to other transportation options
 - Driving remains the default transportation option within the city. This is largely due to the development design of the region and is reflected by the current behavior of residents. The Plan addresses “creating a culture of walking and biking” as one of the goals of the Plan (Page 2). The public input gathered during the development of the Plan identified barriers to active transportation including: lack of connectivity, inadequate infrastructure, traffic and speeding. Implementing the Active Transportation Plan will address the barriers brought forth by the public in an incremental fashion and make walking or cycling a more attractive option for residents. It is unrealistic to assume that vehicle transportation will diminish drastically in a city designed for vehicle travel, however the plan will work to make active transportation safer for users of the system. Working towards creating a safer active transportation system will provide benefit to users who are unable to drive a vehicle such as those who are too young or old to hold a driver’s license, those who cannot afford a vehicle, and some users with disabilities.
- Extreme temperatures reducing the willingness of individuals to choose active transportation options
 - The Plan acknowledges the challenge of extreme heat and the importance of shade to provide thermal comfort for active transportation users (Page 63). The hottest summer months of July and August impede walking and cycling as a transportation option. However,

in the development of future active transportation infrastructure, the Plan provides tools to keep more moderate months bearable for the user, especially for those without access to a vehicle who are dependent on walking and biking to reach public transit or other destinations.

- High costs for installation of infrastructure
 - As with any infrastructure there is a significant cost for installation and maintenance. Through data collection and public input, the Plan identifies network improvements with a high likelihood of community usage, while weighing cost and potential funding sources. The Plan identifies per mile planning level costs (Page 40) that can assist staff and Council with identifying projects in a financially prudent manner.
- Utilizing funds in the most efficient manner/denial of past grant funding opportunities
 - The Plan identifies a list of grant and funding sources for active transportation infrastructure (Page 45). By having an adopted plan in place, it will increase the likelihood of receiving grant funding due to the thoroughness of the evaluation criteria (Page 8) in selecting projects. In the past, the city has received funding through the NCTCOG Transportation Alternatives program, the City has also declined these funds or chosen not to submit applications for usage. It is unclear if these actions will hinder the ability to receive funding in the future. It is worth noting that some applications have changed, now requiring Council resolutions in support of implementing the project prior to submitting a formal application.
- Previous studies and resident feedback on bicycle lanes
 - Staff will evaluate past studies and resident feedback, not only on the topic of bicycle lanes on certain roadways, but also in the development of the Trails Master Plan, Comprehensive Plan, and Active Transportation Plan. In addition, specific corridor studies can be conducted to ensure that the infrastructure proposed is the right fit for the roadway and nearby neighborhoods. As these projects move forward for Council consideration, there will be additional opportunities to solicit public input and consideration.
- Potential for demonstration projects
 - There will be opportunities for specific corridor studies and the potential to provide temporary demonstration projects, such as the coning of a lane for bicycle usage. These temporary demonstration projects have been utilized by many cities in the region and allow for a low-cost study on traffic impacts and resident satisfaction.
- Providing the highest priority to keeping pedestrians safe
 - The Council noted the highest priority should be given to pedestrians. Staff provided direction to the consultant from the beginning of plan development that “nearly everybody walks (even if it’s just from the car to a building), but not everybody rides a bike”. The Plan aligns with this priority by listing pedestrian improvements before bicycle improvements throughout the document. The priority is also shown to pedestrians, based on the weighted criteria of safety (Page 8) and the higher annual frequency of pedestrian crashes compared to bicycle crashes (Page 5).
- Other changes in the document
 - Updated Acknowledgments (Page 46) to reflect current Councilmembers post-election.
 - Shifted Inwood Trail project from near-term to long-term (Page 9) to reflect timeline of available grant funding opportunities.

Complete Streets Policy

- Not institutionalizing additional requirements on City staff
 - All references to “shall” and “must” have been replaced with “should” to eliminate additional requirements on staff. The changes allow for more discretion and will reduce the workload on staff to review potential projects. The document still aligns with the adopted Resolution 22-04 of the Regional Transportation Council of NCTCOG, supporting a regional model for complete streets.