

City of Farmers Branch

Complete Streets Policy

Definition

Complete Streets means transportation infrastructure within public access ways that is designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe, accessible, comfortable, equitable, and convenient access for all people and modes of travel. This includes persons traveling as pedestrians, by bicycle, by transit, by private motor vehicle, by commercial vehicle, and emergency responders so that persons of all ages and abilities are able to safely move both along and across a street.

Vision

Provide a safe, accessible, complete, connected, comfortable, efficient, and community-oriented transportation network system that supports mobility options, healthy living, and economic benefit for all members of the Farmers Branch community, especially vulnerable users of transportation and those most underinvested and underserved.

Scope and Application

The City should provide a complete and connected, context-sensitive transportation system for all users that supports mobility options, accessibility, healthy living, and economic benefit, and will ensure the safety, accessibility, comfort, and convenience of people of all ages and abilities, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and their passengers, public transportation users, emergency responders, freight providers, and adjacent land users.

This policy is applicable to all development and redevelopment in the public domain within the City of Farmers Branch. All roadways and routes need not be optimized for all modes; however, people using each mode require a network of safe and convenient travel routes and crossings throughout the City of Farmers Branch. In determining future need, City staff should consult relevant City and regional long-range plans for land use and transportation, including the City's 2045 Comprehensive Master Plan, Master Thoroughfare Plan, Four Corners Report, IH-35E Corridor Vision Study, Station Area Master Plan, and other relevant adopted plans.

1. All transportation facilities approved by the City, including but not limited to, facilities in public rights-of-way, access easements, and private streets should be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained so that people of all ages and abilities can travel safely and independently.
2. Complete Streets require connected travel networks that provide complete access to destinations. Streets should be connected to create complete street networks that provide travelers with choice of travel mode and route, and that helps to reduce congestion on major roadways. This network also includes appropriate off-street hard-surface trails for biking and walking.
3. The City should review all transportation projects designed by other agencies or entities that require funding or approval by the City for conformance with this policy and, where needed, recommend measures and/or require appropriate changes to bring a project into compliance.

4. The City should approach every transportation improvement and project phase, including new, retrofit/reconstruction, maintenance, and ongoing projects, as an opportunity to create safer, more accessible streets for all people. These phases include, but are not limited to: planning, programming, design, right-of-way acquisition, engineering, construction, reconstruction, operation, and capital maintenance.
5. The City should promote interagency coordination between government departments and partner agencies by the use of partnerships with entities not under its jurisdiction to satisfy this policy, including, but not limited to, the following: Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), Dallas County, special districts, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), Dallas College, and adjacent municipalities. Partner agencies are encouraged to adopt this Complete Streets Policy or an equivalent.
6. The City should develop and maintain a Safe Routes to School plan for the schools within the City limits. As part of the plan, the City may coordinate with the Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District, identifying issues and implementing appropriate steps and measures identified by the plan.

Exceptions

Any exception to this policy, including for private projects, should be reviewed and approved by the designees of both the Public Works and Planning & Zoning departments and be documented with supporting data that indicates the basis for the decision. Projects that request Complete Streets exceptions related to the Master Thoroughfare Plan or Subdivision Ordinance should follow the processes provided for in those documents.

1. Exceptions may be considered for approval whenever:
 - a. An affected roadway prohibits by law, use by specified users (e.g. an interstate highway or pedestrian malls), in which case a greater effort should be made to integrate mobility options along adjacent corridors and on roadways that cross or otherwise intersect with the affected roadway; and
 - b. The designees of the Public Works and/or Planning & Zoning departments, issue a documented exception concluding that the application of Complete Streets principles is unnecessary, cost prohibitive (generally defined as costs equal more than 20% of the project's overall budget), or inappropriate because of public safety issues; and
2. The City should periodically evaluate previous exception requests and decisions periodically to determine if policy updates are warranted.

Design Standards

The City should utilize design standards using the latest and best design criteria and guidelines available based on Texas Accessibility Standards (TAS), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), and National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO). These guidelines include, but are not limited to: the Farmers Branch Master Thoroughfare Plan, ITE Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach; AASHTO Guide for Planning, Designing and Operating Pedestrian Facilities, and AASHTO Guide for Designing Bicycle Facilities.

Other appropriate design standards may be considered, provided that a comparable level of safety for all travel modes is present.

Performance Measures & Reporting

1. The City should measure the success of this Complete Streets policy by using specific, equitable performance standards such as reductions in injuries and fatalities, reduction in transportation gaps, improved emergency services response times, impacts and benefits for traditionally disadvantaged communities, increased usage of alternative transportation modes, and economic performance of transportation investments.
2. An annual report may be made available to the public and be presented by staff to the Planning & Zoning Commission and the City Council showing progress made in implementing this policy. The report should be posted on-line.

Implementation

The City of Farmers Branch should view Complete Streets as integral to everyday transportation decision-making practices and processes. To this end:

1. Designees of the Public Works and Planning & Zoning departments, and other relevant departments, agencies, or committees may incorporate Complete Streets principles into all existing plans, manuals, checklists, decision-trees, rules, regulations, and programs as appropriate (including, but not limited to the Master Thoroughfare Plan, the Comprehensive Plan, Capital Improvement Plan, and other appropriate planning or guidance documents);
2. The City Engineer, City Staff, and other relevant City departments, agencies, or committees may update current design guidelines and standards, including subdivision regulations that apply to new roadway construction, to ensure that they reflect the best available design standards and guidelines to effectively implement Complete Streets;
3. When available, the City should encourage and fund staff training on Complete Streets and associated elements through participation in conferences, classes, seminars, workshops, etc.;
4. The City should prioritize opportunities to create a complete transportation network that provides connected facilities to serve all people and modes of travel, now and in the future. City staff should utilize project selection criteria to encourage funding prioritization for Complete Streets projects;
5. The Public Works and Planning & Zoning departments should prepare a Complete Streets project guide that ensures interdepartmental/interagency coordination during project scoping and consideration of all users and modes, connected travel networks, and the surrounding community's current and expected land use and transportation needs; and
6. Every Complete Streets project should include an educational component to ensure that those using the transportation system understand and can safely utilize Complete Streets project elements.