

AGENDA MEMO

CITY COUNCIL DATE: MARCH 3, 2010

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

ITEM DESCRIPTION: R-11-2010 – APPLICANT/OWNER: CITY OF LAS VEGAS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a progress report by the Planning & Development Department regarding the Complete Streets Initiative.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

<i>Related Relevant City Actions by P&D, Fire, Bldg., etc and Property Sales</i>	
12/21/09	An internal staff meeting between Planning & Development, Public Work and Field Operations was conducted to discussion the Complete Streets Initiative and proposed resolution.
03/03/10	A resolution authorizing the support of a Complete Streets Policy for the city of Las Vegas has been scheduled for discussion and possible action for the 03/03/10 City Council Meeting.

ANALYSIS

Complete Streets Initiative

"Complete Streets" is an initiative by which cities, states, and other jurisdictions make a policy decision that all future roadway projects may be designed to safely accommodate all uses - pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, transit riders and vehicles, and people of all ages and abilities, including children, older adults, and people with disabilities. Residents across the U.S. are demanding street features that consider the needs of all users. In 2005, the Complete Streets Coalition was formed to advocate for and track the adoption of Complete Streets projects, as well as state and local Complete Streets policies and standards. The Complete Streets Coalition's website notes that there are over 110 cities, states and other jurisdictions that have adopted complete street policies.

What are Complete Streets?

Complete Streets are designed and operated so they are safe, comfortable, and convenient for all users – pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. The complete streets framework includes not only retrofitting existing streets to increase safety for all, but changing project scoping, planning procedures, and design standards so that streets are routinely designed with all users in mind from the outset.

Roadways considered to be "complete" are not of any one size or description. However, when focusing on urban arterials, a number of standard design techniques are typically used:

- Lanes are reduced in width (from 12 feet to 11 or even 10 feet).
- The number of lanes may be reduced, often from 4 to 3, which also improves safety for left turns and allows the most prudent driver to set the speed. This treatment is known as a "road diet."
- Sidewalks, if missing, are installed.
- Curb cuts (driveways) may be consolidated to reduce walkway interruptions by moving vehicles.
- Raised medians are installed, which improves safety for crossing pedestrians.
- Universal design features are installed, including audible signals, curb ramps, and providing a 4-foot wide clear path of travel on the sidewalk, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG).
- Pedestrian crossings are enhanced with ladder-style or zebra-style crosswalk markings, signal modifications such as a leading pedestrian interval or countdown timer, and as needed, flashing crosswalks -- lights embedded in the pavement that flash when activated by a crossing pedestrian.
- Street parking is maintained or installed, which helps to discourage speeding.
- Corner treatments are installed. These may include curb extensions, right-turn slip lanes, or tighter turning radii, all of which slow right turns and provide greater visibility for pedestrians.
- Transit accommodations are improved in a variety of ways.

Benefits of Complete Streets

Studies show that complete streets improve safety. A Federal Highways Administration safety review found that designing the street with pedestrians in mind — sidewalks, raised medians, better bus stop placement, traffic-calming measures, and treatments for disabled travelers — all improve pedestrian safety. One study found that designing for pedestrian travel by installing raised medians and redesigning intersections and sidewalks reduced pedestrian risk by 28%.

The implementation of complete streets encourages walking and bicycling for health. The National Institutes of Medicine recommends fighting childhood obesity by changing ordinances to encourage construction of sidewalks, bikeways, and other places for physical activity. A report of the National Conference of State Legislators found that the most effective policy avenue for encouraging bicycling and walking is complete streets.

Complete streets can ease transportation woes for the one-third of Americans that do not drive. Complete streets help provide safe access for people who use wheelchairs, have vision impairments, and for older people and children. More than one quarter of all trips are one mile or less — and almost half are under five miles. Most of those trips are now made by car. Streets that provide travel choices give people the option to avoid traffic jams and increase the overall capacity of the transportation network.

The instituting of complete streets makes fiscal sense. Integrating sidewalks, bike lanes, transit amenities, and safe crossings into the initial design of a project spares the expense of retrofits later.

Adopted Complete Street Policies

Over 100 cities, states and other jurisdictions have adopted complete street policies. In 2007, the mayor of Salt Lake City, Utah, by Executive Order mandated that bicycle and pedestrian ways be established in new construction projects in the public right-of-way. In response to neighborhood groups complaining about high traffic volumes and speeds, the City of Sacramento, developed a Best Practices for Complete Streets Manual. The City of Denver developed the Living Streets Concept: enhancing Denver's most congested roadways with pedestrian amenities and bicycle lanes without the expense of widening them.

City Policies and Initiatives that support Complete Streets

The Las Vegas 2020 Master Plan, the Sustainability and Urban Forestry Initiative all support the Complete Street Initiative. The Planning & Development Department has proposed the development of walkable community and corridor plans as tools for implementing many of the goals of the Las Vegas 2020 Master Plan. The first two walkable community plans are being developed in Wards 1 and 2 and are centered around Village Square and Meadows Mall respectively. The primary purpose of these plans is to facilitate walking and biking within neighborhoods and to encourage reinvestment in developed urban areas of the city.

As part of the form-based Unified Development Code, staff is preparing a new section tentatively called Complete Streets that will house the street standards that currently reside in Title 18. In addition to those standards, Planning and Development Department is working with the Public Works Department to update standards to integrate the Complete Streets concept by enhancing current street sections to include multimodal travel lanes, separated sidewalks, and parkways where signage, utility boxes, street light poles and other items can be put to ensure clear and open pedestrian access to seniors, children and the disabled.

Grant Funding Available

The American Reinvestment Recovery Act (ARRA) of 2009 included \$48 billion for transportation investments, of that \$27.5 billion were in funding categories that make funds eligible for complete street elements, and another \$3.8 billion were available for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

In addition, \$825 million of ARRA funds are set aside for the Transportation Enhancement program, which is often used for bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Community Development Grant funds (\$1 billion) and Energy Efficiency Block Grants funds (\$2.8 billion) include bicycle and pedestrian improvements as eligible uses.

Established in May 2006, the National Center for Safe Routes to School through funding from the Federal Highway Administration assists communities in enabling and encouraging children to safely walk and bike to school. Through Safe Routes to School, the Department of Transportation has provided \$600 million from fiscal year 2005 to 2009.

Complete Streets Resolution

At the March 3, 2010 City Council Meeting, a resolution authorizing the support of a Complete Streets Policy for the city of Las Vegas has been scheduled for discussion and possible action. The resolution will guide the development of a balanced system, through appropriate planning, that integrates multiple transportation modes, where appropriate, for transportation users of all types, ages and abilities. A copy of the resolution has been provided as an attachment to this report.

NOTICES MAILED

NEWSPAPER ONLY

APPROVALS

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PROTESTS

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