# MTC Administrative Guidance:

## Complete Streets Policy

### Guidance for public agency staff implementing MTC Resolution 4493

### May 2022

## Background

In March 2022, MTC adopted Resolution 4493 updating the Bay Area's regional Complete Streets (CS) Policy, first adopted in 2006. The goal of MTC's Complete Streets (CS) Policy is to ensure people biking, walking, rolling, and taking transit are safely accommodated within the transportation network. This policy works to advance Plan Bay Area 2050 objectives of achieving mode shift, safety, equity, and vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emission reductions, as well as state & local compliance with applicable CS-related laws, policies, and standards, specifically the California Complete Street Act of 2008 (Gov. Code Sections 65040.2 and 65302) and locally adopted Complete Streets resolutions.

## Definition

Complete Streets are planned, designed, constructed, reconstructed, operated, and maintained to be safe and comfortable for everyone, regardless of age, ability, ethnicity, race, sex, income, disability or chosen transportation mode. Complete Streets provide safe mobility and improved connectivity to community destinations for all users, and especially for people walking, rolling, biking, and riding transit, while maximizing the use of the existing public right-of-way by prioritizing space-efficient forms of mobility (walking, cycling, shared mobility, and public transit) over space-intensive modes (single occupancy auto travel).

## Plan Bay Area

Plan Bay Area 2050 Strategy *T8* calls for development of a Complete Streets Network, enhancing streets to promote walking, biking and other micromobility[1] options through sidewalk improvements, car-free slow streets, and up to 10,000 miles of bike lanes or multi-use paths. MTC's Active Transportation Plan (AT Plan) defines an Active Transportation Network (AT Network), made up of regionally significant segments of local active transportation networks and regional trails, based on traffic safety, user comfort, equity, and connectivity to transit. The planned geographies of Priority Development Areas, Equity Priority Communities, and Mobility Hubs were used to focus on these principles.

## Policy

MTC's CS Policy is made up of two main components. Projects funded all or in part with regional discretionary funding or receiving MTC endorsements shall adhere to the policy.

1.  All projects must implement CS as recommended in adopted local and countywide plans, such as bicycle, pedestrian, active transportation, Vision Zero or other systemic safety plan, transit plans, and MTC-funded Community-Based Transportation Plans.

2.  Projects on the AT Network shall incorporate design principles based on designing for "All Ages and Abilities," contextual guidance provided by the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), and consistent with state and national best practices. A facility that serves "all ages and abilities" is one that effectively serves the mobility needs of children, older adults, and people with disabilities and in doing so, works well for everyone else. Design best practices for safe street crossings, pedestrian, and Americans with Disabilities (ADA) accessibility at transit tops, and bicycle/micromobility facilities on the AT Network should be incorporated throughout the entire project. The Proposed Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) by the U.S. Access Board should also be referenced during design.

**Complete Streets Policy and Checklist Process**
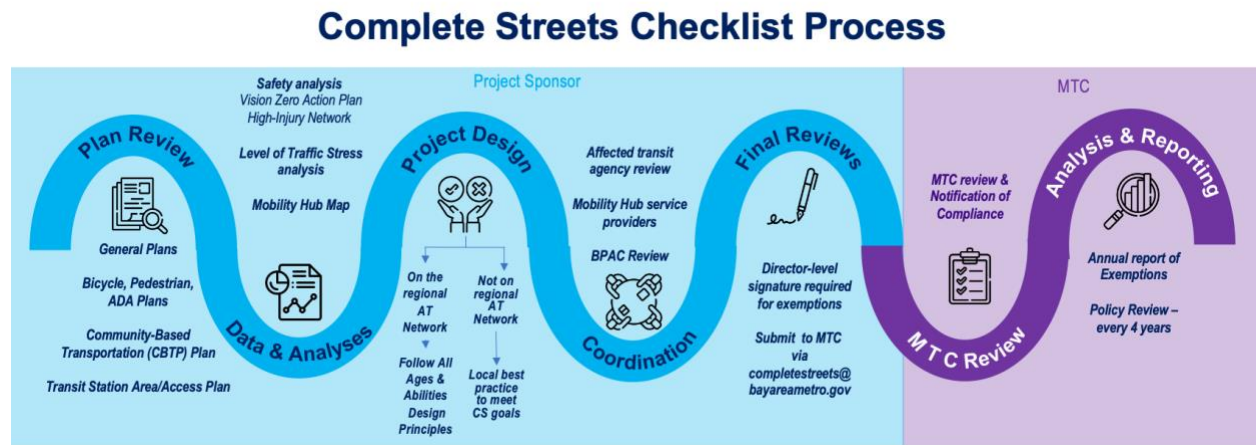


**MTC Internal CS Checklist Review Process**
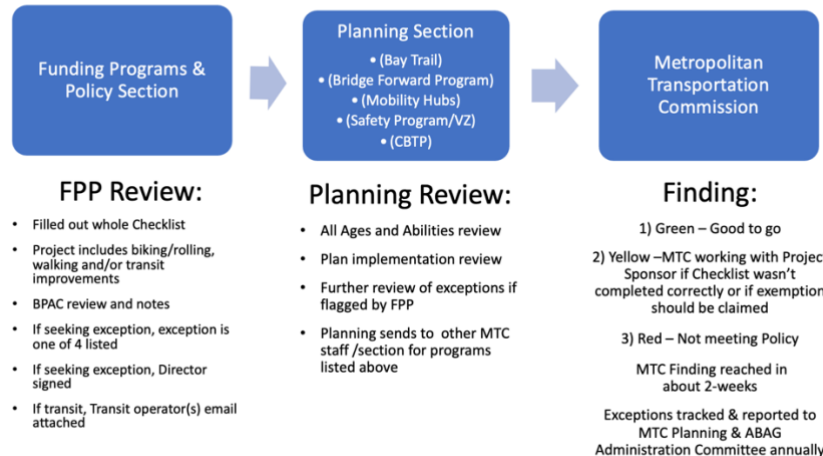
**Complete Streets Checklist Overview**

CS Policy requires that all projects with a total project cost of $250,000 or more applying for regional discretionary transportation funding or endorsement from MTC (such as, but not limited to, the One Bay Area Grant program (OBAG) or the Active Transportation Program (ATP)) submit a Complete Streets Checklist.

The Complete Streets Checklist (Checklist) is a form to help ensure local compliance with CS Policy and applicable laws. It is submitted to MTC online as part of a grant application process.

The Complete Streets Checklist consists of the following fields for project sponsors to complete:

- Project Name
- Project Location
- Project Description – 300-word limit, document upload allowed
- Contact Info - Name/Email/Phone/Agency
- Y/N choices related to project characteristics with a "Required Description" text field and ability to upload supporting documents.
- Statement of Compliance
- Claim of Exception statements (if applicable)
- Signature - Exceptions must have signatory approval from a Dept. Director-level (or above)

Note that project materials attached to the Checklist are not considered part of the formal Project Submittal or other grant application. If a grant application asks for the same materials, it is the responsibility of the applicant to provide them to the grant manager, as instructed in the Call for Projects, or equivalent.

Who Should Complete the CS Checklist?

- It is preferable for the sponsoring agency's project manager to complete the Checklist, or other staff who have managed elements of the project.
- As detailed below, the Checklist requires project collaboration with affected transit agencies and review by a local (city or county) Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC). It is incumbent upon the project sponsor to review each relevant grant application process to ensure that BPAC review is completed before application submittal deadlines.
- If a project is claiming an exception, the Checklist must be signed by the agency's Director of Public Works, Transportation Department (or equivalent), or their designee (and not the Project Manager).

**Complete Streets Checklist Content**

**Question 1: Bicycle, Pedestrian and Transit Planning**

*Is the project consistent with relevant Plans or other adopted policies?*

All projects must implement CS as recommended in recently-adopted local or countywide plans, such as bicycle, pedestrian, active transportation, Vision Zero or other systemic safety or transit plan, or MTC-funded Community-Based Transportation Plans. In the Checklist, jurisdictions should list the plan, plan date, and plan recommendation of the project that is seeking funding. The county or local BPAC can help to assist in compliance of past plan implementation.

For example, if a plan calls for a Class IV separated bike lane and a raised crosswalk, and the project is seeking funding for a Class II with no raised crosswalk, this would not be implementing CS as recommended in local plan(s).

Please provide detail on local plans that include recommendations affecting the project area, including the local plan adoption date. If the project is inconsistent, provide explanation.

**Question 2: Active Transportation (AT) Network**

Use MTC's AT Network map to determine if the project area contains segments of the AT Network. For OBAG 3, project sponsors may use the interactive pdf map available through MTC staff and the MTC Complete Streets webpage and CTAs. (Final adoption of the AT Network is anticipated in July 2022)

If a project is on the regional AT Network, it should incorporate design principles based on "All Ages and Abilities," contextual guidance issued by NACTO, as well as PROWAG issued by the U.S, Access Board, as described above and detailed in the CS policy. Jurisdictions may determine how best to advance AT Network implementation, such as choice of roadway(s), trail alignment, facility type, and roadway treatment type within defined AT Network corridors - ¼ mile in incorporated communities, 1,000 ft. on the Bay Area Trails Collaborative Corridor and ½ mile in all other areas. These corridor widths vary by land use and facility type and are further defined/detailed on the AT Network map. See "Contextual Guidance for Selecting All Ages & Abilities Bikeways" below, and in the CS Checklist.

Local agency staff should collaborate with respective CTA staff when a project modifies or implements a segment on the AT Network. CTA staff will be responsible for compiling local AT Network updates for transmission to MTC. The Network will be updated every 2 years or as needed.

## Contextual Guidance for Selecting All Ages & Abilities Bikeways

| Contextual Guidance for Selecting All Ages & Abilities Bikeways | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Roadway Context** | | | | **All Ages & Abilities Bicycle Facility** |
| **Target Motor Vehicle Speed*** | **Target Max. Motor Vehicle Volume (ADT)** | **Motor Vehicle Lanes** | **Key Operational Considerations** | |
| *Any* | | *Any* | *Any of the following:* high curbside activity, frequent buses, motor vehicle congestion, or turning conflicts‡ | **Protected Bicycle Lane** |
| < 10 mph | Less relevant | No centerline, or single lane one-way | Pedestrians share the roadway | **Shared Street** |
| ≤ 20 mph | ≤ 1,000 – 2,000 | | < 50 motor vehicles per hour in the peak direction at peak hour | **Bicycle Boulevard** |
| | ≤ 500 – 1,500 | | | |
| ≤ 25 mph | ≤ 1,500 – 3,000 | Single lane each direction, or single lane one-way | Low curbside activity, or low congestion pressure | **Conventional or Buffered Bicycle Lane, or Protected Bicycle Lane** |
| | ≤ 3,000 – 6,000 | | | **Buffered or Protected Bicycle Lane** |
| | Greater than 6,000 | | | **Protected Bicycle Lane** |
| | Any | Multiple lanes per direction | | |
| Greater than 26 mph† | ≤ 6,000 | Single lane each direction | Low curbside activity, or low congestion pressure | **Protected Bicycle Lane, or Reduce Speed** |
| | | Multiple lanes per direction | | **Protected Bicycle Lane, or Reduce to Single Lane & Reduce Speed** |
| | Greater than 6,000 | *Any* | *Any* | **Protected Bicycle Lane, or Bicycle Path** |
| High-speed limited access roadways, natural corridors, or geographic edge conditions with limited conflicts | | *Any* | High pedestrian volume | **Bike Path with Separate Walkway or Protected Bicycle Lane** |
| | | | Low pedestrian volume | **Shared-Use Path or Protected Bicycle Lane** |

* While posted or 85th percentile motor vehicle speed are commonly used design speed targets, 95th percentile speed captures high-end speeding, which causes greater stress to bicyclists and more frequent passing events. Setting target speed based on this threshold results in a higher level of bicycling comfort for the full range of riders.

† Setting 25 mph as a motor vehicle speed threshold for providing protected bikeways is consistent with many cities' traffic safety and Vision Zero policies. However, some cities use a 30 mph posted speed as a threshold for protected bikeways, consistent with providing Level of Traffic Stress level 2 (LTS 2) that can effectively reduce stress and accommodate more types of riders.[18]

‡ Operational factors that lead to bikeway conflicts are reasons to provide protected bike lanes regardless of motor vehicle speed and volume.

## Question 3: Safety and Comfort

Safety shall be prioritized for all modes, especially the safety of vulnerable road users, including people biking, walking and rolling. The safety of vulnerable roadway users should not be compromised to achieve improved level of service for people driving personal automobiles. Projects are encouraged to utilize MTC's Vision Zero safety analyses, High Injury Network (HIN) and other technical assistance, and to include traffic calming or other speed management features to reduce motor vehicle speed through physical design.

**Question 3A**: Is the Project on a known High Injury Network (HIN) or has a local traffic safety analysis found a high incidence of bicyclist/pedestrian crashes within the Project area?

Please list the project's traffic safety measures and describe the Systemic Safety Analysis Report, Vision Zero Action Plan, High Injury Network, or other analysis of the project area. The Bay Area Vision Zero system [https://bayviz.mysidewalk.com] can help to identify local and regional HINs.

**Level of Traffic Stress/Facility Suitability**

**Question 3B:** Does the project seek to improve bicyclist and/or pedestrian conditions? If the project includes a bikeway, was a Level of Traffic Stress (LTS), or similar user experience analyses conducted? Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) is an approach that quantifies the amount of discomfort that people feel when they bicycle close to traffic. The methodology was developed in 2012 by the Mineta Transportation Institute and San Jose State University.

If yes, please describe how the project seeks to provide low-stress transportation facilities or reduces a facility's LTS.

**Question 4: Transit Coordination**

If a project includes a transit stop/station, or is located along a transit route, the Checklist must include written documentation (e.g., email) by the affected transit agency(ies) to confirm transit agency coordination and acknowledgement of the project.

**Question 4A**: Are there existing public transit facilities (stop or station) abutting or within the project ROW? List transit facilities (stop, station, or route) and all affected agencies.

**Question 4B:** Have all potentially affected transit agencies had the opportunity to review this project?

If yes to 4A, please reference the list of Transit Agency Contacts. The project sponsor shall communicate and coordinate with all transit agencies with operations affected by the proposed project. The project sponsor should save email communication documenting transit agency communication/coordination for submittal with the Checklist.

**Question 4C**: Is there a Mobility Hub within the project area? If yes, please describe improvements and any coordination efforts with affected mobility providers, incl. bike share, scooters, car share.

Mobility Hubs are places in a community that bring together public transit, bike share, car share and other ways for people to get where they want to go without a private vehicle. Mobility hubs offer a safe, comfortable, convenient, and accessible space to seamlessly transfer from one type of transportation to another. Built around frequent and high-capacity transit, mobility hubs offer a safe, comfortable, convenient, and accessible space to seamlessly transfer from one type of transportation to another.

Mobility Hubs offer access to many different ways of getting around. MTC coordinates, funds, and provides technical assistance for new Mobility Hubs to support first and last mile connections through access to multiple travel options.

Where are Bay Area Mobility Hubs?

Mobility hubs can be located where transit services already come together, or in communities and locations where transportation is needed the most. MTC has prioritized pilot investments for regionally significant mobility hubs. MTC's Mobility Hub Locations can be found on the Mobility Hub website.

## Question 5:  Design

Does the project meet professional design standards or guidelines appropriate for bicycle and/or pedestrian facilities?

Examples of applicable design guidance documents include (but are not limited to):

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) - A Policy on Geometric Design of Highway and Streets, Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities; Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guide (PROWAG); Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD); Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG); National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) - Urban Bikeway Design Guide.

Please provide Class designation for bikeways. Cite design standards used.

## Question 6:  Equity

At MTC, equity means "inclusion into a Bay Area where everyone can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential." MTC's Equity Platform is based on a commitment to meaningfully reverse disparities in access and dismantle systemic exclusion.  For MTC's CS Policy, projects enhancing active transportation in Equity Priority Communities (EPC) and/or implementing recommendations from Community-Based Transportation Plans shall be given priority consideration in applicable regional discretionary funding programs. Projects located in EPCs should document the meaningful engagement that has occurred within the community to advance the project.

MTC's Community-Based Transportation Plans (CBTPs) take a grass-roots approach to addressing transportation issues facing low-income communities around the Bay Area. Community-Based Transportation Plans (CBTPs) bring local residents, community organizations and transportation agencies together to improve mobility options for low-income communities. These community-led plans identify the most important transportation challenges in low-income neighborhoods and develop strategies to overcome them. Completed CBTPs often include a high proportion of active transportation recommendations to address community identified

transportation issues.  The project sponsor should identify whether the project is implementing or addressing an active transportation solution included in a CBTP.

## Question 7:  BPAC Review

The goal of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) review requirement is to ensure a level of public review of projects affecting the public right-of-way, with a particular emphasis on accessibility, bicycle and pedestrian safety, and connectivity.

The required BPAC review of the Checklist is typically conducted during the grant application process.

Has a local (city or county) Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC) reviewed this checklist (or for OBAG 3, this project)? If yes, please include meeting date(s) and a summary of the BAPC comments as state in meeting minutes.

## Statement of Exception

The CS policy shall apply to all phases of project development except under one or more of these four exception conditions:

1. The affected roadway is legally prohibited for use by bicyclists and/or pedestrians.
2. The costs of providing Complete Streets improvements are excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use (defined as more than 20 percent for Complete Streets elements of the total project cost).
3. There is a documented Alternative Plan to implement Complete Streets and/or on a nearby parallel route.
4. Conditions exist in which Complete Streets policy requirements cannot be met, such as fire and safety specifications, spatial conflicts on the roadway with transit, or environmental concerns such abutting conservation land or severe topological constraints.

## PW/DOT Director Signature for Exception

To claim an exception, project sponsors must provide documentation in the Checklist detailing how the project meets one or more of the exception conditions. Exceptions must be signed by the agency's Director of Public Works, Transportation Department (or equivalent), or their designee, and not the Project Manager. The project sponsor shall collect the PW or DOT Director (electronic or signed) signature on the CS Checklist. A Complete Streets Checklist claiming an exception must still be reviewed by a local BPAC review, as stated above.

## Checklist Submittal

MTC staff are automatically notified when Checklists are emailed to completestreets@bayareametro.gov. MTC staff review the checklist for completeness and compliance and communicate findings to the applicant and MTC grant managers.  In the case of

exceptions, MTC staff may engage with the project sponsor to discuss whether modifications to the project may better achieve compliance with the CS Policy.

**Complete Streets Compliance Tracking & Reporting**

MTC will produce an annual summary of CS Checklists received from all projects that were awarded regional discretionary funding or endorsement. The report will also include a list of all exceptions claimed, by jurisdiction. The report will be provided as an information item on a forthcoming meeting agenda of the Joint MTC Planning Committee with the ABAG Administrative Committee.

Additionally, MTC staff, in partnership with CTAs, will provide the Joint MTC Planning Committee with the ABAG Administrative Committee a Complete Streets Policy Implementation Report aligned with the development of One Bay Area Grant Program (OBAG) funding cycles. The first such report will be provided in advance of OBAG 4 Program Guidelines. The report will reflect on the evaluation of Complete Streets Policy implementation (Complete Streets projects implemented from local plans and All Ages and Abilities facilities on the AT Network), as well as the Checklist review process, and may recommend program modifications as needed.