Technical Assistance for Sustainable Communities:
Building Blocks

Technical Assistance Tool: Complete Streets Design Implementation
Memphis, TN
June 18-19, 2014

To: Kyle Wagenschutz, Bikeway/Pedestrian Coordinator,
Memphis Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

From: Cynthia Hoyle and John LaPlante, Smart Growth America

Date: July 2, 2014

Re: Suggested Next Steps For Memphis

Background

In signing the Memorandum of Understanding for our technical assistance award with the City of Memphis, Smart Growth America committed to delivering a final report summarizing the workshop on Complete Streets implementation and recommending specific strategies for next steps. The workshop had two components: a public presentation on the evening of June 18, and a full-day workshop on June 19. City officials, transit agency staff, TDOT representatives, Sierra Club members, local business owners, and members of the public attended the June 18 presentation. The June 19 workshop brought together a number of the members of the committee working on the Complete Streets Guidebook, including city staff, members of the development community, a Sierra Club member, health department staff, a representative from the disabled community, and county government staff.

The workshop provided an overview on how Memphis can move forward with implementation of a Complete Streets policy, including issues of design, land-use, decision-making processes, performance measures, and how to put together an implementation plan. The workshop provided case studies and data demonstrating the impacts of Complete Streets implementation as well as examples of how to design for a broad variety of street environments and contexts with applicability to Memphis.

The intent of the workshop was neither for Smart Growth America to create a plan nor bind the community to any particular course of action, but rather to facilitate a discussion within the community about how best to implement its Complete Streets policy and next steps for Memphis to address creating additional public support and processes for success.
Purpose of this Memo

The workshop was an opportunity to further the discussions on how the City might make design decisions to help achieve the objectives of its Complete Streets policy and practices. The purpose of this memo is to summarize Smart Growth America’s recommendations on what action steps the City might take following that discussion.

Key issues addressed during the workshop

- How to explain benefits of Complete Streets to the public and build public support for Complete Streets
- How to overcome funding issues and obstacles
- How to provide mobility access to everyone, especially non-drivers
- How to make streets quality public spaces
- How to identify the economic benefits of Complete Streets and how to document and publicize them
- How to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists and how to collect and publicize such safety data
- How to reach out to and educate City Council and the engineering community
- How to create safe crossings for pedestrians on city streets, particularly wide and high volume streets
- How to conduct an internal review of city documents, processes, procedures, and checklists to incorporate Complete Streets into design, planning, construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and operations
- How to incorporate utilities into Complete Streets designs
- How to connect Complete Streets to trails
- How the federal level can support local efforts
- How to strategically implement interconnected transportation networks/systems to enhance economic development

Targeted policies/ideas/strategies

- Create a public outreach strategy to create ongoing programs, such as:
  - Routine publicity for local Complete Streets projects that include short case studies with before and after pictures and data analysis of identified metrics. Post on websites, push out to media, hold ribbon-cutting events, etc.
  - Conduct before and after interviews with local business owners adjacent to streets identified for conversion to Complete Streets design and provide results to local officials and the public.
  - Hold public events to engage people in a way that demonstrate the benefits of Complete Streets.
- Develop a street plan and policy for all streets that will build on the MPO’s functional classification plan and identify where Complete Street design implementation is most
needed and will be most effective.

- Create a process and committee to review city documents, processes, procedures and checklists to incorporate Complete Streets into design, planning, construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and operations.
- Finalize and implement the Complete Streets design guide (February deadline).
- Create a Bicycle and Pedestrian plan (15-18 months).
- Create regular training programs for elected officials, and make the presentations at their public meetings to ensure attendance.

Performance measures discussed for Memphis included, but are not limited to:

- Mode share
- Bikes on buses
- Bike volumes
- Trees planted along streets (proposed)
- Bicycle Friendly Community status (going for Silver)
- Bike parking
- VMT
- Miles of bicycle facilities
- Elimination of sidewalk gaps
- Crashes
- Economic case studies on corridors
- Number of crosswalks installed
- Number of ADA ramps and audible countdown signal heads
- Reduction of curb cuts on arterial streets (maybe)
- Pedestrian counts and additional identified pedestrian measures
- Bicycle Stress Analysis

**Actions to address policies/ideas/strategies**

- Utilize the neighborhood sidewalk assessment currently underway to:
  - Create a pedestrian plan.
  - Identify funding for needed improvements (Highway Safety Funds, MPO transportation funds).
  - Apply for Walk Friendly Community recognition.
- Identify groups to communicate with and to provide education for, including staff; elected/appointed officials; professionals such as engineers, architects, planners, and landscape architects; and the general public.
- Implement a public outreach strategy through creation of ongoing programs that engage the general public and officials in creating active healthy communities with Complete Streets as a tool. Tailor the message to the audience using creative programs. Such programs could include:
  - Creation of a Mobile App & Crowdsourcing Map Now to allow photo uploads to engage the community in redesigning identified streets to Complete Streets
design. “Transform Woodward” is an example that has Apple and Android apps.

- Complete Streets bicycling tours.
- Walking tours to introduce Complete Streets. You could also conduct before and after walking tours of Complete Street designs.
- Creation of short videos of Complete Street events and/or interviews to post on websites. Interviews of neighbors, small business owners, officials etc. describing their ideas for a Complete Street as well as follow-up interviews on-site that provide information on the positive benefits provided by the implementation of the Complete Street design. Examples of short videos can be found at Streetfilms.
- Street festivals, where appropriate, to celebrate successful redesign projects.

• Upon completion of the Complete Streets guide (currently under development with a target date of February), identify needed changes to internal documents such as the Unified Development Code and develop a timeline for revisions.
• Create crosswalk guidelines to address the issue of safe pedestrian crossing of wide streets utilizing recommended best practice crossing techniques such as: high visibility crosswalk markings, RRFBs, HAWK pedestrian beacons, and medians in two-way left turn lanes. Adoption of the crosswalk guidelines and development of processes and checklists will ensure consistent application during street renovation, redesign, and new construction.

Timeline for actions to address policies/ideas/strategies

30 days after workshop:

- Set up the committee to:
  - Review city documents, processes, procedures and checklists to incorporate Complete Streets into design, planning, construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and operations.
    - This committee will be charged specifically with identifying how to resolve the procedural problems with permit issuance through the Building Department prior to review by other departments, as well as how to incorporate utilities and low impact stormwater management techniques into Complete Streets designs.
  - Assess whether Memphis has the staff needed to successfully undertake the creation, revision, and/or amending of design guidelines, unified development code, internal processes, project management/delivery, and procedures.
  - Identify performance measures/metrics and establish processes, procedures, and timeline for routine collection of data and reporting to be provided to the public outreach committee.
- Establish a public outreach committee to:
  - Identify groups to target for communications and education.
  - Create a public outreach strategy that includes publicizing metrics that
demonstrate progress toward implementation of Complete Streets goals and objectives (as measured by the performance measures).
  - Communicate and celebrate successes with the public, particularly emphasizing the impacts on safety and local economy.

- Set up a committee to begin work on development of crosswalk guidelines in cooperation with local area agencies, TDOT, and the MPO.

6 months after workshop:
- Finalize and implement the Complete Streets design guide by February.
- Work with community groups to identify ways in which to:
  - Fund sidewalk repair and gap-fill.
  - Increase access to transit.
  - Identify better funding options for transit.
  - Improve transit amenities and perception of safety.
- Identify timeline and funding for the creation of pedestrian and bicycle plans.
- Begin development of a street plan and policy for all streets. These should build on the MPO’s functional classification plan to identify where Complete Street design implementation is most needed and will be most effective.

1 year after workshop:
- Adopt crosswalk guidelines developed through local committee as standard practice for all Memphis streets.
- Apply for Walk Friendly Community recognition.
- Advance the creation of a new comprehensive plan.
- Establish a strategic vision plan for City of Memphis.

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