



CITY OF HOUSTON

Planning & Development
Department

Interoffice

Correspondence

To: Mayor Annise D. Parker

From: Patrick Walsh, P.E. 
Director

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Subject: **HOUSTON COMPLETE STREETS AND
TRANSPORTATION PLAN ANNUAL
REPORT**

INTRODUCTION

This 2014 Houston Complete Streets and Transportation Plan (HCSTP) Annual Report is required by Executive Order (E.O.) 1-15, commonly referred to as the Complete Streets Executive Order. The purpose of this Report is to provide the Mayor with an update on implementation of the HCSTP. This Report overviews work recently completed documents measurements of success, and lays out a schedule of relevant activities for the upcoming year. The contents of this Report were developed in close collaboration with the Department of Public Works & Engineering (PWE).

2014 PROGRESS

The Planning and Development Department (P&D) and PWE began work towards implementing the HCSTP immediately following the signing of the E.O. in November 2013. Since then, the City has made significant progress towards accomplishing the E.O.'s objectives. This progress includes near-term accomplishments as well as progress towards a longer-term implementation strategy.

Near-term Accomplishments

P&D and PWE's significant 2014 accomplishments relating to E.O. implementation include the following:

1. PWE implemented immediate procedural changes to begin implementing the E.O. In particular, PWE incorporated the following enhancements into the "pre-engineering" component of PWE's project development process:
 - Context review – PWE included an enhanced review of land use context along a roadway corridor, and how this context affects infrastructure needs. This review acknowledges, for example, impacts resulting from schools, social services and parks.
 - Multi-modal considerations – PWE added a review of multi-modal classifications identified in previously completed sub-regional mobility studies. For corridors that have not been studied for multi-modal considerations, PWE utilized an enhanced consideration of multi-modal needs, including pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users.
 - Transit coordination – PWE added a review of bus stop placement, including the location of bus stops in relation to intersections and dedicated pull outs for buses at specific locations.

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- Emphasis on intersection capacity – PWE placed increased emphasis on enhancing intersection capacity through intersection-specific improvements, including use of dedicated turn lanes with stacking to remove turning traffic from through lanes.
- Alternative intersection layouts – PWE provided greater consideration for alternative intersection layouts, including grade separations and roundabouts.
- Local street considerations – PWE added various local street considerations. These considerations included an enhanced evaluation of sidewalk and parking needs within neighborhoods, consideration of one-way configurations for local streets with inadequate right-of-way in fully developed areas, and investigation of right-of-way impacts to keep roadside ditches.

It should be emphasized that PWE develops street reconstruction projects over a multi-year process. The projects affected by the procedural enhancements described above are in PWE's "pre-engineering" phase, and this phase will be followed by preliminary engineering and design before construction will commence. As a result, it will be several years before the full effects of these procedural changes affect the built environment. However, PWE is also strategically looking at previously programmed Capital Improvement Plan projects for opportunities to adjust their design to reflect complete streets policy.

2. P&D and PWE continued the advancement of several sub-regional mobility studies. These sub-regional mobility studies are a critical component of the City's approach to accomplishing complete streets. The studies provide for several enhancements to the City's capital project development, as follows:

- The studies provide a systems-level, rather than corridor-level, approach to identifying needs for corridors across an area. A systems-level approach acknowledges the impact that improvements to one corridor may have on the needs for other adjacent corridors;
- These studies include a significant review of the needs of all modes of travel; and
- These studies offer significant public input opportunities into transportation planning, ensuring that the City's transportation efforts reflect an adequate understanding of community interests.

During 2014, P&D and PWE completed three sub-regional studies: the Heights-Northside Mobility Study, the Northwest Mobility Study, and the Texas Medical Center Mobility Study. These studies reviewed the land use context and developed a recommended multi-modal classification for thoroughfares and collectors throughout each study area. These multi-modal classifications will be utilized by PWE during the design process for reconstruction projects. P&D and PWE released the final reports for these studies in December 2014. P&D and PWE also continued work on the on-going Greater West Houston Mobility Study in coordination with the Houston-Galveston Area Council and area management districts. The final report for this study will be released in January 2015.

P&D and PWE are currently reviewing target areas and potential funding sources for future mobility studies.

3. P&D has further incorporated the context-sensitive approach identified in the E.O. into the City's annual process for amending the Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan (MTFP). In 2014, P&D administered 56 amendments to the MTFP, of which 40 were proposed by P&D, and the remainder proposed by external applicants. 39 of these 40 amendments were drawn from the previously completed Inner West Loop Sub-regional Mobility Study. These amendments were developed using the complete streets philosophy identified in the E.O.

4. During 2014, the City committed to an update of the City's Bicycle Master Plan, and is nearing the completion of a process to identify funding partners and select a consultant. This project will complete the first comprehensive review of the City's bicycle-related plans and programs since 1993. P&D anticipates that this project will be complete in late 2015 or early 2016. The updated Bicycle Master Plan will provide important input to the HCSTP by identifying corridors requiring special bicycle considerations.
5. METRO's System Reimagining Plan, planned for implementation in 2015 will provide a simpler, faster, more frequent transit service throughout the METRO service area. This Plan will also provide a frequent network connecting a million residents and a million jobs with bus service within a 15-minute timeframe.

Long-Term Implementation Approach

To develop a long-term implementation approach, P&D and PWE held a series of interdepartmental meetings to define and develop consensus on the components, products, and procedures necessary to accomplish the objectives of the E.O. A schedule of work towards developing and publishing these products is included below.

To document ongoing accomplishments and overall transparency of the processes, a HCSTP website will be developed by P&D and PWE. This website will be used for continued updates regarding current and future activities, as well as for public outreach. The web address is www.houstontx.gov/completestreets.

The website will also provide documentation and links to the following products that comprise the HCSTP:

- HCSTP Framework – This framework will identify the guiding principles, define the components of the HCSTP, and describe implementation process.
- Tools – In order to implement the HCSTP, various tools will be developed as needed, such as the following:
 - HCSTP Map – The map will provide information about the Plan components for each street, including a multi-modal classification.
 - Best Practices Reference – This reference will identify guidelines acceptable to the City in communicating best practices and design considerations. This reference relies on existing best practices from national and local sources.
 - Other tools to be developed as needed to support implementation.

2014: MEASURING SUCCESS

The E.O. requires that the City measure its success in implementing the HCSTP. The E.O. stipulates that Fiscal Year 2014 serves as a baseline for improvements implemented. The required measurements that comprise this baseline are below. It should be noted that since the E.O. was issued in November 2013, and Fiscal Year 2014 ended on June 30, 2014, a complete fiscal year has not occurred since the E.O. became effective. These indicators may be modified in future reports.

Indicator	Total
Linear feet of new/reconstructed sidewalks	415,013 feet
Linear miles of new/restriped on-street bicycle facilities	59.08 miles
Number of new/reconstructed curb ramps	1,710
Number of transit stops added to system	29
Percentage of new/reconstructed transit stops with shelters	52
Number of linear miles of new/reconstructed streets	32.4 miles
Number of linear miles of overlaid streets	128.7

PROPOSED 2015 ACTIVITIES

The schedule for delivering additional HCSTP products is as follows:

Task	Anticipated Completion
Initiate coordination with agencies on the Plan components: transit, parking and rail.	1 st Quarter 2015
Publish HCSTP website	1 st Quarter 2015
Distribute formal planning and design guidance incorporating complete streets philosophy	1 st Quarter 2015
Publish HCSTP Map	2 nd Quarter 2015
Publish draft HCSTP Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context Typologies • Multi-modal Classification • HCSTP Process 	2 nd Quarter 2015
Infrastructure Design Manual Chapter 10 update	2 nd Quarter 2015
Capital Improvement Plan Process Manual update	2 nd Quarter 2015
Identify Best Practices References	3 rd Quarter 2015
Complete Context and Multi-modal Classification for ReBuild Houston 5+5 projects	4 th Quarter 2015
Transit Plan	4 th Quarter 2015
Bicycle Master Plan update	1 st Quarter 2016
Pedestrian Plan	TBD
Parking Plan	TBD
Rail Plan	TBD

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