

**Complete Streets
Policy & Implementation
Assessment**
for
Battle Ground Washington

This analysis was prepared by Brendon Haggerty, Clark County Public Health.

For further information, contact: Tricia Mortell,
tricia.mortell@clark.wa.gov or (360) 397-8000 ext 7211

Introduction

Purpose

The city of Battle Ground Washington, like other Washington jurisdictions, has a collection of policies that address complete streets. These policies are articulated through the Growth Management Act, Comprehensive Plans, and local codes.

Complete streets are streets designed and operated for all users of all abilities such that people moving by foot, bicycle, transit, or passenger vehicle can safely and comfortably travel. The task of this assessment is to compare these sets of policies to model complete streets policies.

This assessment serves several functions. First, it helps Battle Ground prepare for a grant program established by the 2011 legislation ESHB 1071. To be eligible for grant funding, agencies must “have a complete streets ordinance, resolution or demonstrated equivalent ordinances or resolutions and standards in place”. Secondly, it implements the recommendations of the Clark County’s Growing Healthier Report of 2012. Finally, this work is part of a CDC Community Transformation Grant aimed at enhancing community health.

We examined existing policies and procedures through the lens of the National Complete Streets Coalition (NCSC) Policy Analysis Tool, as well as the criteria established by the Washington State Legislature. The two are quite similar, as displayed in Table 1.



Table 1. Complete streets criteria

NCSC Criteria	WSDOT Criteria
Intent	Vision
All Users and Modes	All users
Projects and Phases	Applies to new and retrofit projects, phases
Exceptions	Makes exceptions specific and sets a clear procedure
Network	Encourages street connectivity & connected network
Jurisdiction	Covers all roads within jurisdiction
Design	Directs use of the latest and best design criteria and guidelines
Context Sensitivity	Directs that CS will complement community
Performance Measures	Establishes performance standards and measureable outcomes
Implementation	None

Benefits of complete streets

Streets that accommodate all modes of transportation have many community benefits. Some of these are described below, but they represent only part of the wide range of benefits often cited by jurisdictions implementing complete streets.

Economic development—Street scape enhancements can make commercial districts more attractive places to be and can help increase property values.

Safety—Design features that meet best practices for accommodating all users can reduce injury and fatality crashes, especially in areas where pedestrians and bicyclists are exposed to fast-moving traffic.

Transportation costs—The Center for Neighborhood Technology estimates that a typical household in Clark County spends more than a quarter of its income on transportation. Increasing transportation choices can help make housing more affordable by reducing transportation costs.

Clean air—In Clark County, on-road vehicles are a major source of particulate pollution and carbon emissions. Making low-emission travel more attractive by accommodating all modes can help reduce the impact of transportation on air quality.

Public health—Active transportation (walking, biking) can help prevent obesity and related chronic diseases, and can reduce symptoms of many illnesses. Facilities that encourage and accommodate active travel can help reduce the burden of disease in Clark County.

The benefits to public health are the primary reason that Clark County Public Health has taken on the task of assessing complete streets policies. In 2009, an estimated \$111 million was spent on health care costs in Clark County with approximately 70% of those costs associated with chronic diseases. Currently 7 out of 10 deaths in the U.S. result from obesity related chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, cancer and stroke.

What Does a Complete Street Look Like?

It is important to know that there is not one singular design prescription for what constitutes a complete street. Complete streets in rural vs. urban areas mean very different things. Complete streets should be unique and respond to the needs of the community. And complete streets help communities of all sizes provide quality of life and public health benefits residents desire. Examples of complete street components include: sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible public transportation stops, frequent and safe crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, roundabouts, and more.



Our Assessment Process

Battle Ground municipal code, title 12 streets and sidewalks was the main source of information used in this assessment. The 2004-2024 Comprehensive Plan was also reviewed. However it was not necessary to cite this document as Battle Ground has a well-organized and straight-forward code for transportation issues.

Clark County Public Health staff assigned a score for each criterion, which is weighted in accordance with the NCSC policy analysis tool. Following these scores is a set of recommendations describing the minimum changes necessary to meet grant eligibility criteria. Finally, we identify additional actions to strengthen complete streets policies.



Policy Assessment

Criteria 1: Intent

SCORE: 6 out of 6

A vision for how and why the community wants to complete its streets.

Strengths: Code 12.116.010 uses strong language establishing minimum standards for all transportation facilities (specifically includes sidewalks, accessways, trails, bicycle lanes). The purpose statement also identifies creation of a pedestrian-friendly community as one of the intents of the transportation standards.

Criteria 2: All users and modes

SCORE: 12 out of 20

Specifies that 'all users' includes pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit passengers of all ages and abilities, as well as trucks, buses, and automobiles.

Strengths: Code 12.116.010 clearly identifies bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and trail facilities as planning priorities.

Weaknesses: Transportation policies do not specifically articulate that the intent is to serve all users of all ages and abilities.

Criteria 3: Projects and phases

SCORE: 12 out of 12

Applies to both new and retrofit projects, including design, planning, maintenance, and operations for the entire right of way.

Strengths: Code 12.116.010 is clear that standards apply to improvements constructed within the city by developers or by the city.

Criteria 4: Exceptions

SCORE: 16 out of 16

Makes any exceptions specific and sets a clear procedure that requires high-level approval of exceptions to the complete streets ordinance or equivalent.

Strengths: Code 12.116.290 sets out clear process and criteria for exceptions to standards.

Criteria 5: Network

SCORE: 2 out of 2

Encourages street connectivity and aims to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected network for all modes.

Strengths: Code 12.116.040 sets clear standards for maximum intersection spacing for collector and residential streets and limits cul-de-sacs. 12.116.070 requires accessways when streets do not connect. 12.116.200 states intent to develop an efficient street grid.

Criteria 6: Jurisdiction

SCORE: 8 out of 8

Covers all roads within the jurisdiction.

Strengths: Code 12.116.010 is clear that standards apply to improvements constructed within the city by developers or by the city. Bike and sidewalk requirements are clear for all street types. 12.116.270 refers to working with WSDOT on state projects.



Criteria 7: Design

SCORE: 4 out of 4

Directs the use of the latest and best design criteria and guidelines, while recognizing the need for flexibility in balancing user needs.

Strengths: 12.116.080 includes requirements for traffic calming. 12.116.040 cites AASHTO, WSDOT, and MUTCD guidance. 12.116.145 allows pedestrian streets.

Criteria 8: Context sensitivity

SCORE: 8 out of 8

Directs that complete streets solutions will complement the context of the community.

Strengths: Code 12.116.290 C states that the city engineer may make technical changes to meet best practices.

Criteria 9: Performance measures

SCORE: 0 out of 4

Establishes performance standards with measurable outcomes.

Strengths: Chapter 12.120 lays out level of service standards and capacity analysis guidelines and makes reference to the Highway Capacity Manual.

Weaknesses: Chapter 12.120 only measures performance of intersections for vehicles. It does not measure performance of segments for any mode, and does not measure performance in any way for bike/ped/transit. No apparent application of 2010 Highway Capacity Manual multi-modal level of service.

Criteria 10: Implementation - NCSC

SCORE: 8 out of 20

1) Revise related procedures, plans, and regulations, 2) Develop new design policies and guides to reflect the current state of best practices, 3) Offer workshops and other training opportunities to transportation staff and the public, 4) Institute ways to measure performance on how well streets are serving all users.

Strengths: Codified standards inherently implement policy. Partially adopts national standards.

Weaknesses: To fully meet the National Complete Streets Coalition implementation standards Battle Ground would need to reference use of current best practice documents such as the 2010 Highway Capacity Manual and the National Association of City Transportation Officials Bikeway Design, develop plans for ensuring workshops and trainings are available for staff and the public, and institute performance measurements for all users.

TOTAL SCORE: 76 out of 100



Opportunities for Improvement

Battle Ground, Washington has most of the necessary components already in place to meet the basic elements of a complete streets policy and the goals of 2011 legislation ESHB 1071. In this assessment, Battle Ground received 76 out of 100 points. There are only minor improvements recommended .

Participation in this assessment process as well as continued engagement with Clark County Public Health and others working to support training and other regular skill updates will ensure the City also meets the intent of implementation strategy as outlined in the National Complete Streets Coalition assessment process.

The following suggestions are based on a) points lost on the complete streets assessment, and b) analysis of the implementation mechanisms for county policies. There are two actions that Battle Ground would need to undertake to meet the criteria for complete streets articulated by WSDOT.

Minimum changes necessary to meet complete streets criteria

Measure performance of non-automobile transportation.

Battle Ground received zero points in this category. The concurrency management system focuses solely on automobile transportation. As a result, there is no measurement of how the transportation system performs for other modes, especially bicycling and walking. Additionally, current Battle Ground performance measures focus only on intersections. Intersections are important, but the segments between them are also very important for non-auto modes, especially in areas where there are long distances between intersections.

To meet best practices under WSDOT criteria, Battle Ground should establish performance measures for bicycle and pedestrian modes. Since the data and technical capacity needed for multi-modal level of service could become complex, Battle Ground should consider appealing to the Regional Transportation Council for aid in developing multi-modal level of service measurement.

Clarify vision by language changes to purpose statement. It is recommended that language be added to Battle Ground transportation policies articulating that the intent is to serve all users of all ages and abilities.

Additional changes that strengthen complete streets policies

According to the National Complete Streets Coalition, there are four components of an implementation plan. In our assessment, Battle Ground fully met component one, partially met component 2 and is well on the way to making the changes that would allow them to meet components 3 and 4.

Battle Ground can easily receive full points in this section by:

- taking part in upcoming regional trainings and networking opportunities to update skills,
- adopting performance measurement plans suggested earlier,
- and referencing and using documents such as the 2010 Highway Capacity Manual which includes multi-modal level of service measurement guidelines that could help Battle Ground meet best practices, and the NACTO Bikeway Design Guide (and other similar documents) which provide guidance on implementing innovative street designs.

It is our hope that this document is a useful tool for planners, public health professionals, community members, and policy makers in making our complete streets policies more effective.

