

Draft Complete Streets Ordinance – City of Tacoma

**AN ORDINANCE** relating to Tacoma’s Complete Streets Design Guidelines, identifying guiding principles and practices so that transportation improvements are planned, designed, and constructed to encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use while promoting safe operations for all users of the City’s transportation network.

**WHEREAS**, the City Council adopted Resolution Number 37916: “A Resolution relating to the City’s street design; endorsing the creation and ongoing development of Tacoma’s Complete Streets Design Guidelines; and directing the City Manager to implement the Mixed-use Centers Complete Streets Design Guidelines and the Residential Complete Streets Design Guidelines;” and

**WHEREAS**, the Tacoma’s *Transportation Master Plan* identifies a vision for a multimodal transportation system, offering travel options that provide safe access for all users, encouraging healthy living; and

**WHEREAS**, Tacomans identified increased transportation options as a community priority in *Tacoma 2025*; and

**WHEREAS**, Tacoma is expected to grow by 127,000 residents and 97,000 jobs by 2040; and

**WHEREAS**, Complete Streets will create a comprehensive, integrated, connected transportation system to serve the growing population; and

**WHEREAS**, other jurisdictions and agencies nationwide have adopted Complete Streets legislation, including the US Department of Transportation, Washington State Department of Transportation, and Pierce County; and

**WHEREAS**, transportation improvements will include facilities and amenities recognized as contributing to Complete Streets, including: street and pedestrian lighting, pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements; traffic calming; access improvements for freight; access improvements, including compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act; public transit facilities accommodation including but not limited to pedestrian access improvement to transit stops and stations; street trees and landscaping; green infrastructure; drainage; and street amenities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Public Works Department will design, operate, and maintain the transportation network to improve travel conditions for bicyclists, pedestrians, transit, and freight consistent with, and supportive of, the communities’ needs; and

**WHEREAS**, Complete Streets will balance access, mobility, health and safety needs of all users, which include pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities, as well as buses, streetcars, and commercial and private motorized vehicles; and

**WHEREAS**, Tacoma’s Transportation Master Plan calls for tracking of performance standards that will continuously evaluate the Complete Streets ordinance for success and opportunities for improvement; NOW, THEREFORE,

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF TACOMA AS FOLLOWS:**

## **Chapter 10.29**

### **COMPLETE STREETS**

Sections:

10.29.010 Purpose – Objectives.

10.29.020 Definitions.

10.29.030 Applicability.

10.22.260 Exceptions.

#### **10.29.010 Purpose – Objectives.**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide guiding principles and practices so that transportation improvements are planned, designed, and constructed to encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use while promoting safe operations for all users of the City's transportation network. The City of Tacoma Public Works Department shall develop a safe, reliable, efficient, integrated, and connected multimodal transportation system that promotes access, mobility, and health for all users. The Public Works Department shall ensure that the safety and convenience of all users of the transportation system are accommodated, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, people of all ages and abilities, motorists, emergency responders, freight providers, and adjacent land users.

#### **10.29.020 Definitions.**

For the purpose of this chapter the following words shall have the following meanings:

A. "City Engineer" means the City Engineer or his or her authorized representative.

B. "Complete Street", which is reflected in City Resolution No. 37916, relates to the City's street design; endorsing the creation and ongoing development of Tacoma's Complete Streets Design Guidelines; and directing the City Manager to implement the Mixed-use Centers Complete Streets Design Guidelines and the Residential Complete Streets Design Guidelines;"

#### **10.29.030 Applicability.**

The Public Works Department shall approach every transportation improvement and project phase as an opportunity to create safer, more accessible streets for all users. These phases include, but are not limited to: scoping, planning, programming, design, right-of-way acquisition, construction, construction engineering, reconstruction, resurfacing, operation, and maintenance. Other changes to transportation facilities on streets and rights-of-way, including capital improvements, re-channelization projects, major utility work, and major maintenance, must also be included.

A. Jurisdiction. All city-owned transportation facilities in the public right-of-way, including but not limited to streets, bridges, and all other connecting pathways shall be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained so that users of all ages and abilities can travel safely and independently.

B. Network and Connectivity. The Public Works Department shall continue to foster partnerships with Washington State Department of Transportation, Pierce County, neighboring cities and communities, business and school districts, and utility companies to encourage development of facilities that further the City's Complete Streets policy and continue such infrastructure within and beyond the City's borders. The City recognizes the need to create a comprehensive, integrated, and connected network for all modes and encourages street connectivity.

C. Complete Streets may be achieved through single projects or incrementally through a series of smaller improvements or maintenance activities over time. It is the City of Tacoma's intent that all transportation projects implement Complete Streets.

D. Design. The Public Works Department shall follow accepted or adopted design standards and use the best and latest design standards available, including, but not limited to, existing design guidance from the American Association of State Highway Officials, Washington State Department of Transportation, the Institute of Transportation Engineers, the National Association of City Transportation Officials, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines.

E. Context Sensitivity. The Public Works Department shall implement Complete Streets solutions in a manner that is sensitive to the local context and character, aligns transportation and land use goals, and recognizes that the needs of users may vary by case, community, or corridor.

F. Implementation. Implementation of Complete Streets shall begin through the consideration of the following potential starting points:

1. Incorporate policy into the *Comprehensive Plan*.
2. Modify Rights-of-Way Manual and other guiding documents in accordance with this policy.
3. Participate in US DOT's Mayor's Challenge for Safer People, Safer Streets.
4. Pursue highest certification level of Walk Friendly Community and Bicycle Friendly Community.
5. Continue engagement in Safe Routes to School program.
6. Identify gaps in the non-motorized transportation network, and work to fill these gaps.

#### **10.22.260 Exceptions.**

A. Exceptions. An exception to this section, including for private projects, must be approved by the City Engineer and be documented with supporting data that indicates the basis for the decision. Such documentation shall be publicly available. Exceptions may be considered for approval when:

1. An affected roadway prohibits, by law, use by specified users (e.g., interstate highways or pedestrian malls);
2. The costs of providing the accommodation are excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use;
3. Routine maintenance of the transportation network does not change the roadway geometry or operations, such as mowing, sweeping and spot repair (in which case existing bicycle and pedestrian traffic must be safely accommodated during maintenance); or
4. Other available means or factors indicate an absence of need, including future need.