

Mississippi Gulf Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization's

COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 2015

Designing and building roads that meet the needs of all road users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, users of mass transit, people with disabilities, older adults and young children, motorists, freight providers, emergency responders, and adjacent land users.

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MS GULF COAST MPO COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

Purpose

The scope of the metropolitan planning process includes direction to increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users. This requires that the MPO should plan, prioritize, promote and implement measures to accomplish this goal. We believe one way to realize this is through a MPO Complete Streets policy. Using the Complete Streets concept, we are working to change the paradigm from “moving cars quickly” to “providing safe mobility for all modes.” On September 24, 2015 the Transportation Policy Committee of the Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO adopted a Complete Streets policy for the region.

We believe the adopted approach is be suited to making our roadways safe and accessible for bicycles and pedestrians, while also being realistic and reasonable to implement. The policy includes specific measures to make our roadways more suitable for bicycles and pedestrians. We understand that while the final approval of the roadway designs to achieve the desired outcomes lies with the traffic engineers, being the licensed professionals charged with safe and efficient operation of the transportation system. Therefore, MPO staff treads lightly in getting too specific regarding street design. However, this policy is used to provide direction to the design engineers and other decision-makers as to what, at a minimum, shall be required to help achieve safe mobility for all roadway users.

This policy includes firm, but reasonable, language that requires both new and reconstruction roadway projects utilizing federal transportation funds on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, to include measures to accommodate bicycles, pedestrians and transit to the extent possible.

Toward making our streets more accessible and safe for all users, we present the MPO’s Complete Streets policy.

MS GULF COAST MPO COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

Highlights

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY?

To make all roadways in the urban area “suitable” for bicycle and pedestrian travel.

HOW IS THIS POLICY APPLIED?

To all Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funded roadway construction and reconstruction projects in the Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO’s urban planning area.

WHAT IS MEANT BY “SUITABLE” FOR BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRAVEL?

Based on traffic volume and speed, the *Bicycle Facility Guidance Matrix* indicates which bicycle amenity should be included on a roadway to make it suitable for bicycle travel.

WHAT DOES THIS POLICY REQUIRE?

The inclusion of paved shoulders, bicycle lanes, or a multiuse path on all roadway construction projects unless “shared lanes” are warranted. Sidewalks are also required.

ARE THERE ANY EXEMPTIONS TO THE APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY?

Yes. If the costs of inclusion of amenities for bicycle and pedestrian are extremely disproportional to the total cost of the project, then the project could be exempt from the requirements.

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Policy

APPLICABILITY

The Complete Streets policy applies to all of the following projects:

1. New construction and reconstruction of roadways/bridges within the Mississippi Gulf Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization's urban planning area that will use Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds for any phase of project implementation, including planning, design, right-of-way acquisition, construction, or construction engineering.
2. Roadway/bridge projects included in the TIP after the adoption of the Complete Streets policy and are not past the preliminary design phase or more than 30% complete with design at the time this policy is adopted.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Roadway projects should make use of the bicycle facility guidance matrix attached below to make a determination of which of the following bicycle amenities should be included in a roadway's cross-section:
 - A minimum 8-ft (10-ft preferred) multiuse path on one side of the roadway/bridge to accommodate 2-way bicycle traffic and pedestrian users simultaneously, or
 - Minimum 3-ft paved shoulders on each side of the road where curbs are present, or
 - Minimum 4-ft paved shoulders on each side of the road where curbs are absent, or
 - Minimum 5-ft bike lanes on each side of the road, or
 - If roadway's traffic volume and speed fall within the threshold of "shared lanes", shared lane signage and/or pavement markings can be used.

And,

- An existing or new continuous 5-ft sidewalk on both sides of the roadway/bridge, or
 - An existing or new continuous 5-ft sidewalk on one side of the roadway/bridge, or
 - If a multiuse path will be present on one side of the road, then a 5-ft sidewalk is preferred on the other side of the roadway/bridge, but not required.
2. If the project area has planned or currently includes fixed transit routes, applicant must request comments from Coast Transit Authority (CTA).

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Process

CALL FOR PROJECTS

At the beginning of each Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) update and amendment process, the Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO shall issue a call for projects for any roadway project that seeks to use federal funding and to be programmed in the TIP. In addition to the existing requirements for project applications, the LPA shall indicate the intent for the project to be Complete Streets compliant or to seek a Complete Streets exemption.

PROJECT REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Project descriptions will be reviewed by MPO staff prior to being submitted to the Technical Coordinating Committee and Transportation Policy Committee for their consideration to adopt into the TIP. MPO staff shall certify by that relevant projects are Complete Streets compliant unless a project receives an exemption under certain circumstances.

Exemption

COMPLETE STREETS POLICY EXEMPTION

MPO staff may certify that a roadway project is exempt from the requirements listed in II.B.1 above if any of the following conditions are met:

1. The project consists of ordinary maintenance activities designed to keep assets in serviceable condition (e.g. mowing, cleaning, sweeping, spot repair, and regular or seasonal maintenance).
2. The project involves a roadway that bicyclists and pedestrians are prohibited by law from using.
3. There are extreme topographic or natural feature constraints.
4. A reasonable and equivalent alternative already exists for certain users or is programmed in the TIP as a separate project.
5. The costs of including accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians can be demonstrated by the applicant agency to be greatly disproportional to the projected benefits from their inclusion, or to result in disproportional harm from foregone infrastructure projects.
6. Where the LPA's governing board issues a documented exception concluding that application of complete streets requirements presented here are inappropriate because it would be contrary to public benefits or safety.
7. The project is on a roadway outside of the MPO's urbanized planning area.
8. The project area is determined by a documented process by MPO staff not to have or expect to have bicycle and pedestrian traffic due to its proximity to existing or future land use generators for non-motorized traffic.

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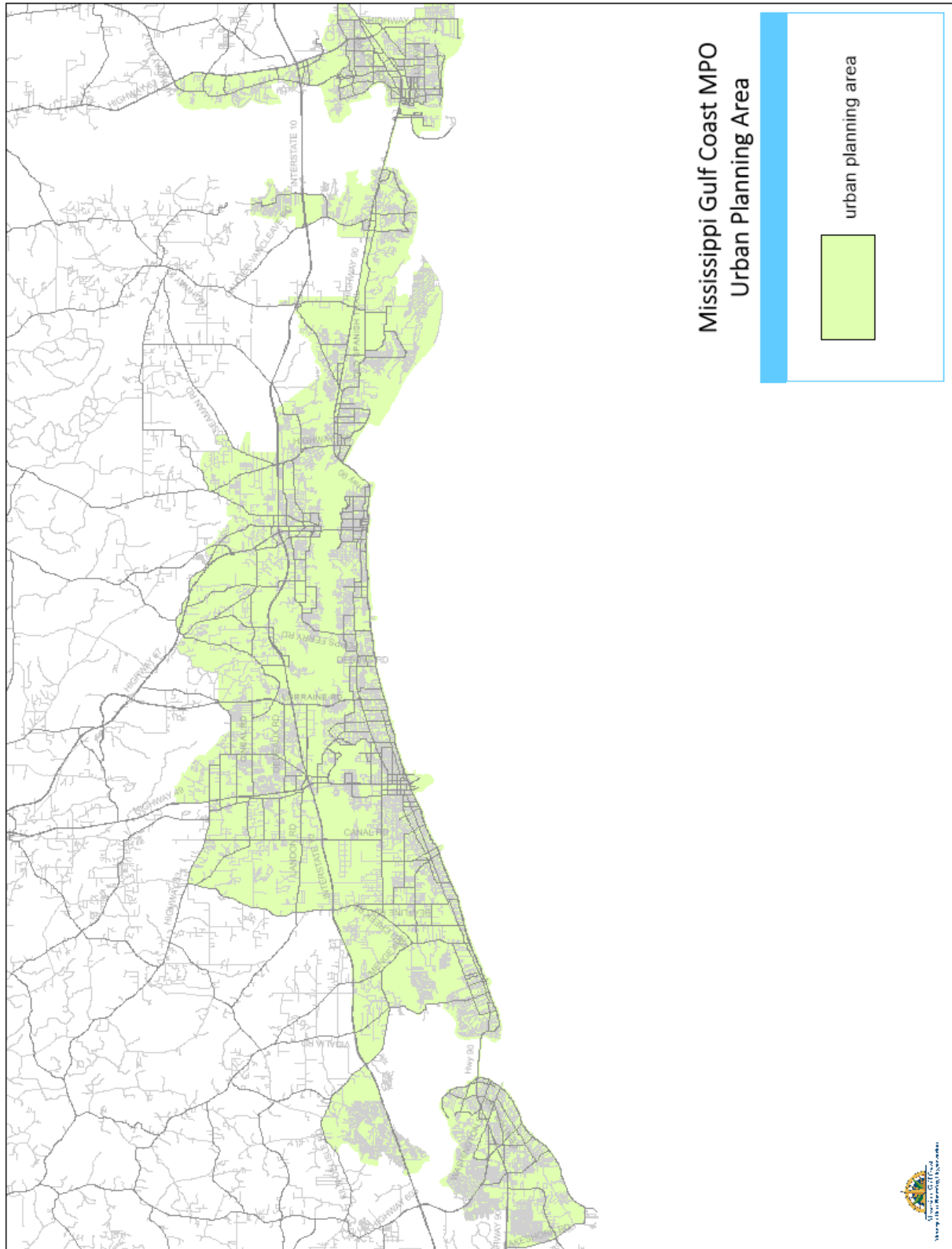
Bicycle Facility Guidance Matrix

Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)	18000								
	17000								
	16000								
	15000								
	14000								
	13000								
	12000								
	11000								
	10000								
	9000								
	8000								
	7000								
	6000								
	5000								
	4000								
	3000								
	2000								
	1000								
			15	20	25	30	35	40	45
	Posted Speed (MPH)								

	Shared lane
	Paved shoulder
	Bike lane
	Separated path

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Urban Planning Area



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Contact Information

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