CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CONSIDERATION REQUEST

TO:	Mayor and City Council
FROM:	Councilwoman Shirley Gonzales
COPIES TO:	Erik Walsh, City Manager; Leticia Vacek, City Clerk; Andy Segovia, City Attorney; John Peterek, Assistant to the City Manager; Christopher Callanen, Assistant to City Council
SUBJECT:	Proposed Complete Street VZ Training
DATE:	August 13, 2019

Issue Proposed for Consideration

I ask for your support for the inclusion of the following item on the agenda for the next meeting of the Governance Committee:

Direct City Manager and Executive team to:

1. Immediately develop and implement a formal, year-round, sustained training program that focuses on innovative best practices for fully implementing the city's Complete Streets and Vision Zero policies for all transportation and SA Tomorrow planning, projects and programs.

2. Ensure that all city employees, consultants and contractors involved in implementing Complete Streets and Vision Zero mandates, including the budgeting, planning, engineering, designing, constructing, maintaining, managing and enforcing these policies are included in this training.

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3. Conduct a systematic review and revision of all policies, procedures, implementation manuals and departmental organization structures to ensure that Complete Street and Vision Zero principles are fully integrated into ongoing planning, budgeting and implementing operations and the development of UDC amendments.

4. Conduct a systematic review of land use policies that impact or are interrelated with Complete Streets and Vision Zero mandates and assess land use policies as well as corresponding zoning designations and UDC applications that should be updated to achieve Complete Streets and Vision Zero mandates.

5. TCI to Revise *City of San Antonio Design Guidance Manual* and supporting materials to

    a. reflect the safety principles and goals of Complete Streets and Vision Zero as the highest priority for transportation system design and operation,

b. Institutionalize the use of National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), Vision Zero and National Complete Streets Coalition design, implementation and operational guides.

6. Provide briefings on the best practices policy revisions and corresponding training to council members and their staffs as well as members of boards and commissions that address planning, zoning, housing, transportation, public safety and development matters.

7. Propose metrics for Transportation Committee approval that assess and report progress toward assimilation of NACTO, National Complete Streets Coalition and other design guides and practices that prioritize safety, walking and cycling into transportation planning and project delivery, and demonstrate progress toward the elimination of traffic fatalities. Include approved metrics in city budgets and the budgeting process.

8. Provide monthly dashboard reports to the appropriate council committees and quarterly to council B sessions.

Brief Background

San Antonio adopted a Complete Streets policy in 2012, Vision Zero in 2015 and became a member city of NACTO in 2016. By these actions San Antonio is officially committed to improving safety and accessibility for all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, motor vehicle drivers and other authorized users. However, measurable progress toward the elimination of traffic fatalities has not been demonstrated since 2015. It is critical; therefore, that accommodation and safety for all users become the foundational principles in the design, construction and operation of streets. It is critical to create a culture within city staff and all agencies responsible for designing, engineering and managing city streets to prioritize safety as the first design principle.

Recent public discussions regarding design of the 2017 bond-funded reconstruction of the corridors (such as Broadway, Roosevelt, Bynum and Probandt) and the newly adopted electric scooter policy have highlighted the need for additional Council direction for implementing the city's Complete Street and Vision Zero Policies, including accommodation of micro mobility lanes.

The current street design principle that requires critical review and reevaluation is referred to as Level of Service (LOS). According to the *Highway Capacity Manual* published by the Transportation Research Board of the National Research Council there are six LOS that are rated based on a driver's perception of operating conditions:

> "Letters designate each level, from A to F, with LOS A representing the best operating conditions and LOS F the worst. Each level of service represents a range of operating conditions and the driver's perception of those conditions. **Safety is not included in the measures that establish service levels."**

Unless there is emphatic council guidance mandating Vision Zero street safety principles as the overriding priority for all users (including people with disabilities, pedestrians and cyclists), automobile level of service (LOS) will continue to receive design preference. For example, priority consideration of Broadway LOS led to the draft design that redirects micro mobility lanes to Avenue B for a portion of the corridor. Thus, while the recent appointment of the first pedestrian mobility officer (PMO) is progress; without total commitment to **accommodation and safety first for all users** over the LOS principle, the PMO could well become a "lonely voice in the desert". This would be especially true without a thorough review of organizational and procedural revisions required to effectively manage and support the city's Complete Streets/Vision Zero policy of accommodation and safety first for all users.

Evidence of this need is provided in the current TCI *City of San Antonio Design Guidance Manual (2017)* with a direct statement on the actual practice in **Section 7 Roadway, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Design, 7.1 Overview**

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19 AUG 15 AM 11:43

> *"As roadway designers, engineers strive to satisfy the needs of the driving public, while minimizing the impact of the roadway on the surrounding environment."*

Thus, despite the existing council adopted Complete Street and Vision Zero policies, the ingrained traffic engineering *modus operendi* permeates even those sections that purport to allow for pedestrian and bicycle design accommodations which are, in fact, relegated to the "surrounding environment."

One reason for this inconsistency is that the city utilizes The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidance, as the primary source for street design. This is provided by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' (AASHTO) in its design "bible" *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets ("Green Book").*

The *Green Book* has been widely criticized by urban transportation experts including NACTO President Janette Sadik-Kahn and Vision Zero Network Founder Leah Shahum, for minimizing, if not totally ignoring, the needs of pedestrians and cyclists. In response to the *Green Book* deficiencies, FHWA has issued subsequent memoranda and FAQs endorsing NATCO and Vision Zero design guides emphasizing safety and slower speeds for use by city engineers. In fact, the 2018 update of the *Green Book* states:

> "This edition presents an updated framework for geometric design that is more flexible, multimodal, and performance-based than in the past".

The National Complete Streets Coalition has also become an effective resource for cities committed to streets that are

> "...designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities."

The Coalition's implementation updated guide for 2018 states the following:

"The strongest Complete Streets policies call for the key implementation steps below.

- *Restructure or revise related procedures, plans, regulations, and other processes.* These processes should make accommodating all users on every project a routine part of transportation planning and operations. This could include incorporating Complete Streets checklists or other tools into decision-making processes.
- *Develop new design policies and guides.* Communities may also elect to revise existing design guidance to reflect the current state of best practices in transportation design, or they may adopt national or state-level recognized design guidance.
- *Offer workshops and other training opportunities.* These trainings should educate transportation staff, community leaders, and the general public so that everyone understands the importance of the Complete Streets vision. Trainings could focus on Complete Streets design and implementation, community engagement, and/or equity.
- *Create a committee to oversee implementation.* The committee should include both external and internal stakeholders as well as representatives from advocacy groups, underinvested communities, and vulnerable populations such as people of color, older adults, children, low-income communities, non-native English speakers, those who do not own or cannot access a car, and those living with disabilities.
- *Create a community engagement plan.* The plan should incorporate equity by targeting advocacy organizations and underrepresented communities. The best community engagement plans use innovative outreach strategies that don't require people to alter their daily routines to participate. This report highlights initiatives that excel in community engagement, even if they do not have a formal engagement plan.
- *Implement Complete Streets projects.* After taking other key implementation steps, jurisdictions can incorporate a Complete Streets approach into all transportation projects as routine practice. In doing so, they can work toward creating a comprehensive transportation network that is safe, reliable, comfortable, convenient, affordable, and accessible for all people who use the street."

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Consequently, a focused effort is needed to fully develop and institutionalize San Antonio Complete Streets design, engineering practices and organizational structure to *prioritize Safety for all users over Level of Service*. The following guides and related supporting materials are references for use in conducting the best practices review and revision of guides and procedures and developing a continuous training program with the assistance of NACTO, Vision Zero and National Complete Streets Coalition consultants. *Urban Street Design Guide*, NACTO

- *The Vision Zero Street Design Standard*, Transportation Alternatives
- *The Elements of a Complete Streets Policy-2018*, National Complete Streets Coalition
- *Dangerous by Design*, Smart Growth America

Unsafe Street' New Liability, University of Iowa College of Law

Submitted for Council consideration by: _____

Councilmember Shirley Gonzales, District 5

Supporting Councilmembers' Signatures (4 only)	District
1. _____	4
2. _____	7
3. _____	3
4. Jada Andrews-Sullivan	2

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