



Interest in Dallas 'complete streets' plan depends on where you ask

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Depending on where you are in Dallas, interest varies on putting in wider sidewalks, bike lanes, attractive landscaping and other amenities that help streets function for something other than moving cars.

The City Council's transportation committee was briefed Monday on progress on a "complete streets" plan that City Hall is in early stages of implementing. The plan is intended to begin to improve the way Dallas builds its public right of way.

So far, city staff has examined 15 sites as potential pilot projects for complete streets, from Meadowcreek Drive in the north to Camp Wisdom Road in the south. Funding to implement the plans probably will be available for only a few of the areas studied, however.

But the study and a series of community meetings in each area did reveal some interesting things, said Theresa O'Donnell, director of the city's development department.

People in the [North Dallas](#) study area of Alpha Road made it clear they don't want car traffic impeded by street changes.

"In North Dallas, we saw quite a bit of interest in maintaining the traffic flow. You guys ... want to get there fast," O'Donnell said.

Farther north, along Meadowcreek Drive, people expressed interest in slowing down traffic but had low desire for designated bike lanes. Mainly, they wanted better lighting.

But residents and stakeholders in other parts of town expressed much more interest in seeing streets improve their function for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Along Knox-Henderson, wider sidewalks were by far the most important element people wanted. Designated bike lanes also ranked highly. Maintaining the traffic flow — keeping cars moving quickly, in other words — was a minor concern.

Throughout southern Dallas, from Davis Street to Lancaster Boulevard and as far south as Camp Wisdom Road, people expressed interest in "calming" streets — slowing traffic and making spaces where pedestrians feel safe.

And there appears to be more interest in those areas in making room on the streets for bicycles.

O'Donnell said the city is working on a design manual to give its engineers guidelines on designing complete streets.

But actually adding amenities to those streets is a question of available funds. And, for now, the city doesn't have many funds available.

The preliminary cost estimate of implementing proposed changes to all 15 study areas is \$38.9 million.

Some of that funding might be put into a 2012 bond program. Other funds might come from an assortment of sources, including partnerships with the county, [DART](#) and [TxDOT](#), or private entities.

And some projects will likely wind up on the backburner for some time.

In the short term, the city plans to implement two test projects at sites that have not yet been selected.

The short-term projects could be in place for months or longer, O'Donnell said. It's not clear when those sites will be selected. The city wants the test sites to be places that would likely get funding in the next bond program. The sites also need to be places that involve significant changes to the existing street configuration to test the impact of changes.

Council members offered little feedback Monday, although many have been supportive of the streets improvement plan.

AT A GLANCE: Complete streets

The "complete streets" effort is not so much a concrete plan as an overall effort to unite neighborhoods and public agencies behind the concept of livelier

streetscapes. A look at some facets of the effort:

PRINCIPLES

Accommodating all relevant transportation, from pedestrians to bikes, mass transit and cars. One of the things that means is more dedicated bike lanes. Also, more curbside parking and better lighting along avenues.

Using environmentally sustainable design methods.

Seeing streets as destinations rather than merely as traffic conduits.

ASSUMPTIONS

The concept is new for many people, so the transition should be gradual

Most streets are not right for the concept, so designers need to pick their spots.

SOURCE: City of Dallas

