

Houston Coalition for Complete Streets

Briefing for all candidates for Mayor and City Council of Houston



Let's make Houston streets safe for Houstonians in 2016, regardless of age, ability, or mode

Complete streets are streets that are safe for all people, for children in cars, professional drivers, and grandpas on bikes. Here in Houston we are making progress on Complete Streets, but there is much still to be done. Mayor Annise Parker issued her Complete Streets Executive Order October 10, 2013. Then the City changed the streets planning process and the underlying design and plan documents, to lay the groundwork to allow future progress. Our next Mayor should execute the Complete Streets and Transportation Plan and build a Houston-style Complete Streets Ordinance to ensure safe neighborhoods for all Houstonians.

We have been making progress towards defining and building Complete Streets

- The Houston Bike Plan is underway and calls for a high comfort level network across the City of Houston using a new toolbox of safe street options.
- The semi-decadal rewrite of chapter 10 of the Infrastructure Design Manual (IDM) includes instructions for all people seeking to design and build streets within the city limits of Houston. They are now asked to prioritize the safety of all users, to use narrower lane widths while they're at it, and to design for safer speeds so that the average person driving will instinctively travel at safe speeds below the speed limit.
- The design, bid, and building process now incorporates Complete Streets and Context Sensitive Design.
- Houston has a new bus network, 3 new light rail lines, and a transparent, award winning transit agency.
- The new Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan incorporates recommendations from the 2012 Inner West Loop Mobility Study. This means Dunlavy, Alabama, and others should be up to new codes sooner.

What is next to make the streets safe? The Houston Coalition for Complete Streets suggests the next Mayor and City Council of Houston should:

- Implement the Bike Plan
- Fund the Complete Streets and Transportation Plan
- Create a Complete Streets Ordinance
- Embrace Vision Zero and get it done in eight years
- Show on the ground progress in every district in the first term

How can the Houston Coalition for Complete Streets help?

The Coalition as a whole and individual members are ready to assist with educational efforts, research, and community engagement activities. For example, AARP-Texas leads Walk Audits of Houston neighborhoods to determine needs and priorities and give policy makers on the ground experience of users of all abilities in Houston. We are a broad coalition of 36 organizations ready to assist all the neighborhoods of Houston to become more walkable and bikeable, to have safe places to drive, to ride transit, to own a business, or to be a kid. We can give briefings on the ideas presented here and contribute to policy development.

For comments, call or email any of these four people:

Shondra E. Wygal	swygal@aarp.org	832.341.0384
Mary Blitzer	mblitzer@BikeHouston.org	281-940-6139
Jay Blazek Crossley	jay.crossley@houstontomorrow.org	713-523-5757
Jane Cahill West	janecahillwest@gmail.com	

AARP
BikeHouston
Houston Tomorrow
Super Neighborhood Alliance

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Five steps to safe streets for every neighborhood in the City of Houston

Implement the Bike Plan

- Fund pilots project and secure long term funding
- Incorporate into comprehensive, multimodal transportation plan (See CSTP below)
- Empower cross departmental leadership to work together toward goals of the Bike Plan

Complete and Implement a Complete Streets and Transportation Plan

- Detail the elements of the Complete Streets we want - sidewalk, bike lane, optimal lane width for given MMLOS, comfort level, presence of a median or green space, bus shelters or hot spot, etc.
- Determine who is responsible for what
- Change policy as needed to ensure we equitably measure progress toward Complete Streets
- Make it safe to get to school on every block with walking school buses, bike trains, design, and law
- Include affordable housing + transportation policy so all people have the option to live in active transportation proximity of their daily destinations

Create a Complete Streets Ordinance

- Ensure the current philosophy of building Complete Streets using Context Sensitive Design is systematically carried out throughout Houston
- Fund dedicated people in all departments necessary to carry out this work

Embrace Vision Zero and get it done within eight years

- Roadway deaths are preventable. We can focus our engineering, planning, enforcement, and education efforts on ending this epidemic
- Dedicated Vision Zero staff in core departments: Police, Fire, Health, PWE, Planning, together with existing staff in the Mayor's office, Administration and Regulatory Affairs, Planning Commission, Neighborhoods, Parks and Recreation, and more
- Collaborate with Harris County, Metro, H-GAC, and others to build a Regional Vision Zero Task Force and a reasonable target year for the whole region

Show on the ground progress in every district in the next term

- Continue Bayou Greenways with haste and build the Utility Line Easement network
- Build projects identified as short and medium term priorities in the Bike Plan
- By the end of the first term, implement a plan that will complete the City's sidewalk network
- Build the Blue Line, reward New Bus Network success with additional funds, and begin the transformation from a Downtown HOV Park and Ride system to a Regional Bus Rapid Transit system
- Complete a new Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan by the end of the first term

