

5. Pedestrian System

Accomplishments Over the Past Five Years

In January 2005, the San Antonio-Bexar County MPO expanded its Bicycle/Pedestrian program with the addition of a full time Bicycle/Pedestrian Planner and shortly thereafter the City of San Antonio appointed a full time Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator. These two positions strengthened the region's commitment to pedestrian issues.

Also, the MPO expanded its Walkable Community Program (WCP) to include four activities: Walkable Community Workshops, Safe Routes to Schools Workshops, safety classes for adults and children, and bike rodeos. The WCP continues to be available to a wide variety of organizations and written reports are sent to elected officials, agencies and participants and are available on the MPO's website.

The annual Walk & Roll program has added two activities: the Walk & Roll Corporate Challenge (throughout the month of June) and the Walk & Roll Individual Challenge (throughout the month of September). The MPO also conducted a pilot event, "Southtown Walk & Roll for Life", a day long event comprised of walking and riding events targeted to a specific neighborhood. MPO staff also participates in many community events to publicize the MPO, and, in particular, its bicycle and pedestrian efforts. These events include, but are not limited to, the annual Earth Day Celebration, Solar Fest, Live Green Fest, and Fresh Air Friday. The MPO was successful in receiving a federal grant, Steps to a Healthier San Antonio, to assist with funding many public outreach activities.

The MPO's Pedestrian Mobility Advisory Committee (PMAC) advises the Transportation Policy Board (TPB) on pedestrian mobility issues. PMAC membership includes representation from interested citizens, the Alamo Area Council of Governments; Bexar County; Bexar ADA Council, City of San Antonio Disability Office, Parks and Recreation Department, Planning and Development Services Department, and Office of Environmental Policy; San Antonio Utility Coordination Committee, Texas Department of Transportation, VIA Metropolitan Transit; Greater Bexar County Council of Cities, school districts, and a walking organization.

In March 2009, the TPB unanimously approved a "Complete Streets" resolution (Figure 5.1) introduced by PMAC. The TPB sent a copy of the resolution to all governmental jurisdictions encouraging them to adopt similar resolutions supporting multi-modal travel. In addition, the City of San Antonio constructed 16 miles of multi-use paths along the linear creekways. The San Antonio Express-News newspaper supports the safety aspect of the program by printing the MPO's monthly pedestrian safety tips as a Public Service Announcement in the Metro Section.

Figure 5.1 Complete Streets Resolution adopted by the Transportation Policy Board



**A Resolution Supporting a
"Complete Streets" Policy**

WHEREAS, "Complete Streets" are defined as roadways that enable safe and convenient access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and drivers (of all ages) and is conducive to efficient movement of people; and

WHEREAS, "Complete Streets" policies support the San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) Metropolitan Transportation Plan mission statement which states "The San Antonio metropolitan area is served by an environmentally friendly transportation system where everyone is able to walk, ride, drive or wheel in a safe, convenient, and affordable manner to their desired destinations"; and

WHEREAS, "Complete Streets" policies support the goals of the MPO's adopted Regional Bicycle Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, "Complete Streets" policies support the MPO's Walkable Community Program, the Walk and Roll Program; and

WHEREAS, "Complete Streets" supports national and local public health efforts by recognizing the linkages between the built environment and human health and calls on public officials to participate in local and regional land use and transportation support planning and policy making processes; and

WHEREAS, "Complete Streets" may be achieved through single projects or incrementally through a series of smaller improvements or maintenance activities over time; and

WHEREAS, "Complete Streets" policies and plans have been adopted by the United States Department of Transportation, other Texas MPOs including Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and Houston-Galveston Area Council and cities including San Francisco, Sacramento, San Diego, Boulder, Chicago, Seattle and Portland.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization's Transportation Policy Board, in order to ensure all transportation options are available, and to improve air quality and the quality of life for residents in our communities, strongly encourages decision makers in all jurisdictions to adopt and implement similar "Complete Streets" policies and practices that:

- Serve as guiding principles to design, construct, operate and maintain the region's roadway system to promote safe and convenient access and travel for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and people of all abilities, as well as motor vehicle drivers and freight;
- Create a comprehensive, integrated, connected transportation network planned for people and the principles be incorporated into existing policies such as the Regional Bicycle Master Plan;
- Incorporate the "Complete Streets" policy except in unusual or extraordinary circumstances;
- To the extent possible, apply policies to both new and retrofit projects,
- Recognize the need for flexibility and identify "Complete Streets" solutions that fit in with the context of the community;

PASSED AND APPROVED this 23rd day of March 2009.


Sheila McNeil, Chair

San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization

Background

Walking is a viable, active, alternative mode of transportation. Nearly every trip starts and ends with walking, including trips that involve the use of an automobile. A comprehensive approach to planning transportation facilities must identify pedestrian needs. An inclusive approach ensures the needs of all potential users are addressed, including people with disabilities.

Alternative transportation systems can enrich the livability of a community and reduce congestion, improve mobility, as well as improve the overall quality of life for residents. Pedestrian travel does not stop where the sidewalk ends, as seen by the worn pathways throughout the study area, especially along transit routes. Poor street connectivity and low-density development patterns create longer, indirect distances between destinations, making it difficult to conveniently be accessed by walking.

In general, the regional land use patterns and lack of pedestrian facilities and amenities create conditions that are uninviting to pedestrians. Wide streets with narrow sidewalks, the absence of trees or building awnings for shade, and deep building setbacks, are all designed to the scale of the automobile, not the pedestrian. Auto-oriented frontage-road development, in which storefronts are separated from the street by vast, non-shaded parking lots are not ideal pedestrian environments. A non-existent or unsafe pedestrian system is a barrier to walking. Other barriers to walking include lack of a street grid system, gated communities, cul-de-sacs, and schools and public buildings built on major roadways.

Narrow streets with wide sidewalks, pedestrian islands or medians, buildings close to the street with shade, and parking areas behind buildings, provide safer environments and are incentives for pedestrian use. A 2005 MPO study estimated the cost of fixing substandard and constructing missing sidewalks in the region to be approximately three billion dollars.

MPO Programs

Walk & Roll Program

The Walk & Roll Program is a regional effort to focus on pedestrian and cycling issues during the month of May and throughout the air quality ozone season. The program encourages walking, cycling, transit or car/vanpooling instead of driving alone. It identifies active transportation as viable options that can be chosen to improve the health of the individual as well as the environment. May 2009 marked the thirteenth anniversary of the Walk & Roll program. With the support of the partner agencies, the

Walk & Roll events host hundreds of participants. These events also provide an opportunity to partner with the community and businesses throughout the region. Both the Rally and Fest are celebrations of the benefits of active transportation.

The Walk & Roll Corporate Challenge and the Walk & Roll Independent Challenge focus on the benefits to air quality when people leave their single occupancy vehicles and use active transportation. Individuals and employers are encouraged to actively participate in the challenges through use of other modes of transportation.

Figure 5.2 Walk & Roll Fest 2009, River North



Photos courtesy of the City of San Antonio's Office of Environmental Policy.

Walkable Community Program

The Walkable Community Program (WCP) is available to neighborhood associations, religious organizations, Parent Teacher Associations, or a group of active citizens who identify a need within a geographic boundary. Components of the Program are public workshops, safety classes, bicycle helmet distribution and bicycle rodeos. The MPO intends to continue the program and perhaps expand it. The reports documenting individual Walkable Community Workshops and Safe Routes to School Workshops are available on the MPO's website at www.sametroplan.org. These reports are also provided to TPB members, elected officials and partner agency staff to assist in identifying where the greatest transportation needs exist within the study area. Awareness of the potential improvements within the study area, safety, and providing the community with an opportunity for two-way communication with local agency staff are the primary goals of the program.

Pedestrian Facility Goals for the Region

The following goals and objectives support comprehensive, coordinated and continuous regional planning for pedestrian facilities:

- Goal 1** Develop a regional pedestrian system
 - Objective 1.1** Promote land use that encourages pedestrian travel
 - Objective 1.2** Complete sidewalk gaps and replace substandard or deteriorated sidewalks
 - Objective 1.3** Promote sidewalk continuity and connectivity within and between neighborhoods and activity centers
 - Objective 1.4** Foster partnerships and coordination with activity centers to provide dedicated, safe pedestrian ways
 - Objective 1.5** Extend pedestrian facilities to serve all transit stops and all transfer facilities

- Goal 2** Provide a safe pedestrian system.
 - Objective 2.1** Construct sidewalks and pathways at safe distances from vehicular traffic
 - Objective 2.2** Improve existing facilities to enhance safety
 - Objective 2.3** Promote pedestrian confidence by adding security features such as lighting and low level landscaping
 - Objective 2.4** Provide safe and accessible crosswalks, particularly in areas with high volumes of pedestrian traffic, such as schools, downtown, the medical center area, and within ¼ mile of all transit stops
 - Objective 2.5** Ensure safe pedestrian crossings over railroad tracks by providing accessible, well designed and constructed walkways with adequate warning systems

- Goal 3** Employ accessible, barrier-free, state-of-the-art design
 - Objective 3.1** Acquire sufficient right of way clear of utility conflict
 - Objective 3.2** Blend pedestrian facility design with area type and natural environment
 - Objective 3.3** Provide for landscaping and aesthetics as part of the overall facility design
 - Objective 3.4** Strive for barrier free sidewalks, eliminating mailboxes, utility poles, junction boxes, overhanging trees and vehicle parking that limits access

- Goal 4** Engage the public in the transportation planning process.
 - Objective 4.1** Continue the Walkable Community Program, Walk & Roll Program and other outreach programs
 - Objective 4.2** Increase use of website and develop publications and other outreach materials

- Goal 5** Identify and efficiently use available funding
 - Objective 5.1** Identify funding for stand alone pedestrian facilities
 - Objective 5.2** Encourage local governments to adopt preventive maintenance programs to extend the life of pedestrian facilities
 - Objective 5.3** Explore public-private partnerships to fund new and replacement pedestrian facilities

Future Pedestrian System

The MPO recognizes the importance of a balance among all transportation modes, the relationship between transportation and land use, and that economic and community development is sustained by the region’s quality of life. At this time the need for pedestrian facilities is still great. The region has achieved a great deal in the last five years, especially in the way of identifying needs and planning for improvements. Funding continues to be a barrier to a complete pedestrian system. A successful pedestrian transportation system depends on the regional partners’ ability to work together to enhance the pedestrian environment. Expanding on the “Complete Streets”

concept and developing policies and programs that support walkable communities is a key step for the future.

As more individuals are finding ways to become healthier and conserve scarce resources the region is seeing an increase in the need for a comprehensive system of transportation that includes the pedestrian. Figure 5.3 and Table 5.1 show currently unfunded sidewalk projects supported by the MPO's Pedestrian Mobility Advisory Committee. These projects, if funded, would expand the current pedestrian system and improve connectivity and safety throughout the region.

Figure 5.3 Unfunded Sidewalk Projects

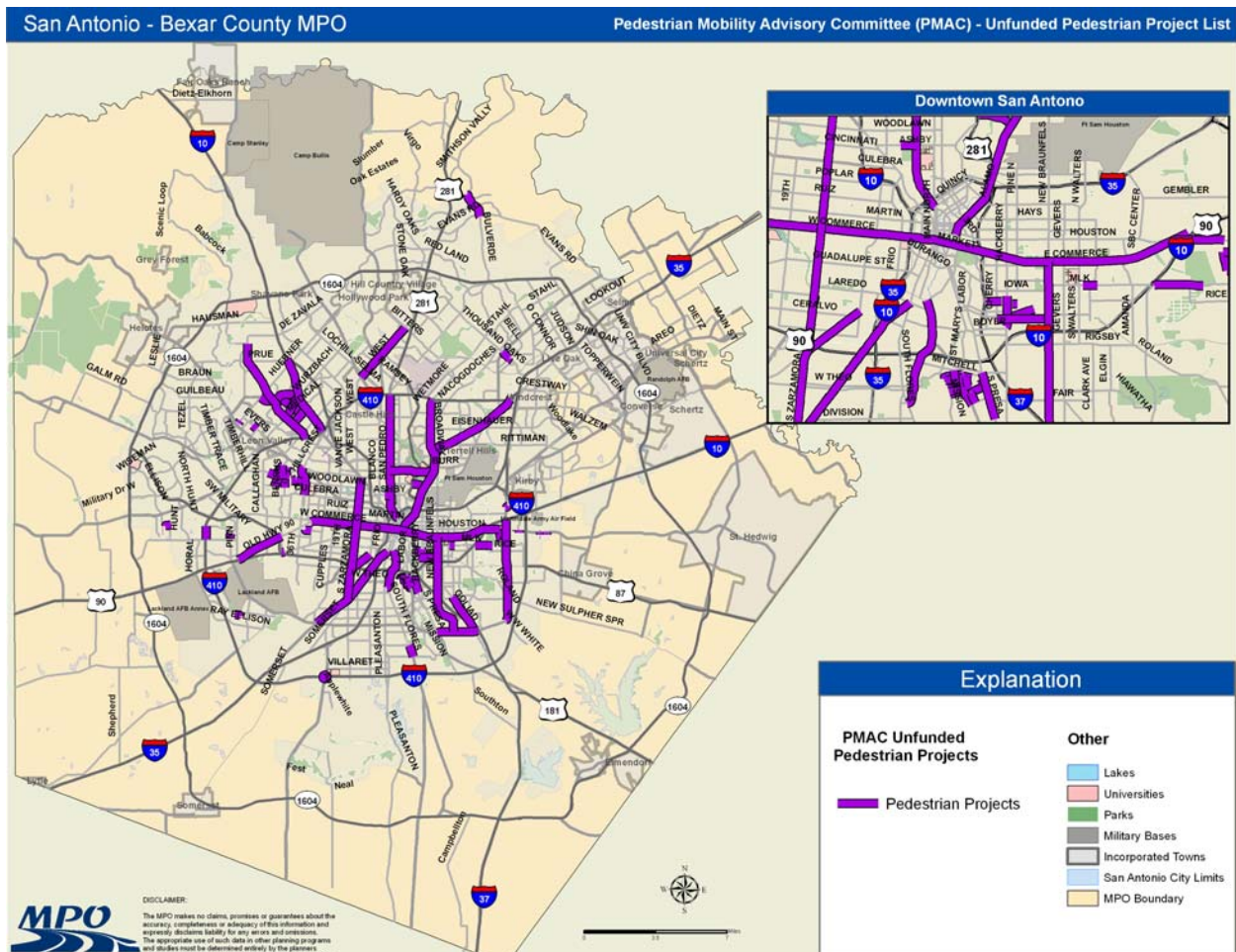


Table 5.1 Unfunded Pedestrian Project List

Street Name	From	To	Owner	Requested By
Austin Hwy	Broadway intersection	Loop 410	TxDOT	PMAC discussion
Babcock Rd	DeZavala	Loop 410	CoSA	PMAC discussion
Babcock Rd	Overlook	Pedestrian bridge for children	CoSA	Walkable Community Workshop
Bowie Street	Bonhan	Houston Street	CoSA	PMAC Discussion
Fredericksburg Road	IH 10	Loop 410	CoSA	PMAC Discussion/Bus Rapid Transit
Ingram (fill gaps)	Darwin	Broadview	CoSA	Walkable Community Workshop
New Braunfels Ave	Commerce Street	Military Drive	CoSA	PMAC discussion
Nogalitos	Downtown	Military Drive	TxDOT	PMAC discussion
San Pedro Ave	Ave Marie	Nova Mae	CoSA	VIA Request
Wurzbach	Babcock Road	Fredericksburg Road	CoSA	PMAC discussion
WW White (Loop 13)	Military Drive	IH 10	TxDOT	PMAC discussion
Commerce St	Old Hwy 90	New Braunfels Ave	CoSA	PMAC discussion
Commerce St	Union Pacific tracks	Kraft	CoSA	VIA Request
Martin Luther King	Freedom Bridge	IH 10	CoSA	PMAC discussion
Moursund Rd	Loop 410 underpass		TxDOT	PMAC discussion
Presa	Steves	Llano	CoSA	Walkable Community Workshop
S Flores	Formosa	Ashley	CoSA	VIA Request
Zarzamora	Saltillo	Merida	CoSA	VIA Request (gaps)
Ashby	San Pedro	N Flores	CoSA	VIA Request
Broadway	Downtown	Loop 410	CoSA/Alamo Hts	PMAC discussion
Goliad Rd	Southcross	Military Dr	CoSA	PMAC discussion
Hackberry (fill gaps)	Virginia	Westfall	CoSA	Walkable Community Workshop
Hamilton Wolfe	Oakdell Way	Fredericksburg	CoSA	PMAC discussion
Hildebrand	San Pedro	Broadway	CoSA	PMAC discussion
Houston	Commerce St	Eastwood	CoSA	VIA Request
Louis Pasteur	Babcock	Fredericksburg Road	CoSA	PMAC discussion
Martin Luther King	Poppy	Lacey	CoSA	VIA Request
Roosevelt	Kirkpatrick	Eads	CoSA	Walkable Community Workshop
Thousand Oaks	Nacogdoches	El Sendero	CoSA	VIA Requests (gaps)
W Military Drive	Woodgate Drive	Timbercreek Drive	CoSA	Walkable Community Workshop

Street Name	From	To	Owner	Requested By
Zarzamora	Kirk	Linares	CoSA	VIA Request (gaps)
Castroville	Acme	41 st Street	CoSA	VIA Request
Commerce St	Coca Cola	just west of Houston Street	CoSA	VIA Request
Floyd Curl Dr	Louis Pasteur	Hamilton Wolfe	CoSA	PMAC discussion
Gembler	Entire length		CoSA	PMAC discussion
Huebner	in front of Leon Valley Elementary School		City of Leon Valley	Walkable Community Workshop
Josephine	Austin	US 281 Access Road	CoSA	VIA Request
Military Dr (Loop 13)	IH 37	S. Presa	TxDOT	PMAC discussion
Mulberry St	US 281	Broadway	CoSA	PMAC discussion
New Braunfels	Hot Wells	SE Military Drive	CoSA	VIA Request
Old Hwy 90	San Felipe	San Joaquin	CoSA	VIA Request
Old Hwy 90	Suzette	Acme	CoSA	VIA Request
San Pedro	Downtown	Loop 410	CoSA	PMAC discussion
Zarzamora	French Place	Cincinnati	CoSA	VIA Request (gaps)
Zarzamora	Nogalitos	Fredericksburg Road	CoSA	PMAC discussion
Benrus	Ridge Drive	Blessing Street	CoSA	Walkable Community Workshop
Bulverde Rd	Evans	Marshall	Bexar County	PMAC discussion/sidewalks entire length
Commerce St	New Braunfels	IH 10	CoSA	PMAC discussion
Eckert	Huebner	Babcock	CoSA	PMAC discussion
Frio City Road	Brazos	Zarzamora	CoSA	VIA Request
SH 16	Loop 410		TxDOT	PMAC discussion
Probandt	S Flores	S Alamo	CoSA	PMAC discussion
SW Loop 410 Access Rd	Marbach	Timbercreek Drive	TxDOT	Walkable Community Workshop
West Ave	Military Drive	Bitters Rd	CoSA	PMAC discussion
Zarzamora	Woodlawn	French Place	CoSA	VIA Request/fill gaps
Aransas	Palmetto	Denver	CoSA	Walkable Community Workshop
Evers Rd	Forest Meadow	Forest Way	City of Leon Valley	Walkable Community Workshop
N St. Mary's	Tuleta	Commerce	CoSA	PMAC discussion or VIA Request
NW 36 th Street	Culebra	Bandera Road	CoSA	PMAC discussion
Stardust	Ingram	Ebony	CoSA	Walkable Community Workshop
El Sendero	Thousand Oaks	Las Cruces	CoSA	VIA Request
Lynhaven	E. Houston Street	320' South of Houston	CoSA	VIA Request

