

Complete Streets at the municipal level:

A review of American municipal Complete Street Policy

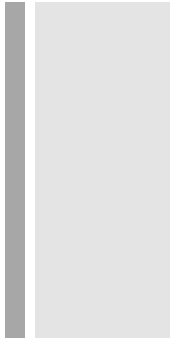
By: Kelly Gregg and Paul Hess PhD

Research Undertaken as part of the iCities-ORF project in 2015-2016



Overview

- Background of Complete Streets Policy
- Primary Research Questions
- Policy Sample and Methods
- Findings
- Discussion





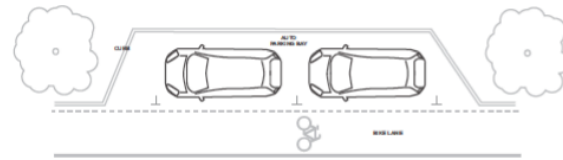
Background of Complete Street Policy

- The National Complete Streets Coalition (NCSC) promotes and tracks complete street policy development specifically in the U.S.
- Over 900 complete streets policies have been established in the US since 2004
- The US Complete Streets Act of 2009 accelerated policy development
- Most policy and literature define 'Complete Streets' as safe for all users and abilities





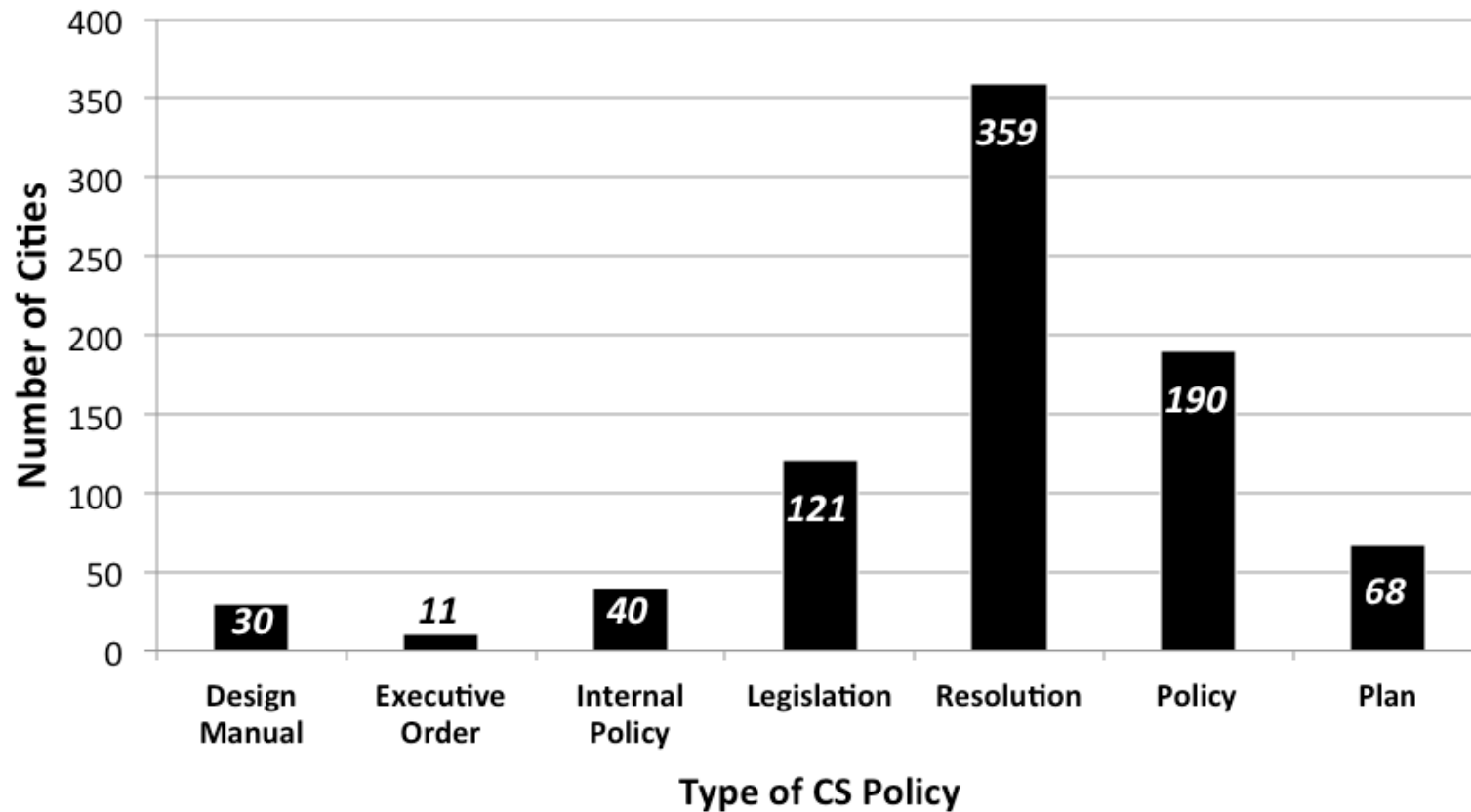
Research Questions

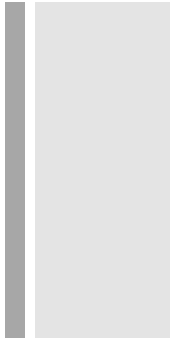


- What types of policies are being developed and how are they guiding complete street development at the municipal level?
- How are complete streets being defined in municipal policy?
- How are trade-offs within the street right-of-way and network considerations being addressed in municipal level policy?
- How do complete street policies challenge the primary accommodation of automobiles? What legal weight do they carry?
- *Review Limited to analyzing the content of Municipal Policy...*

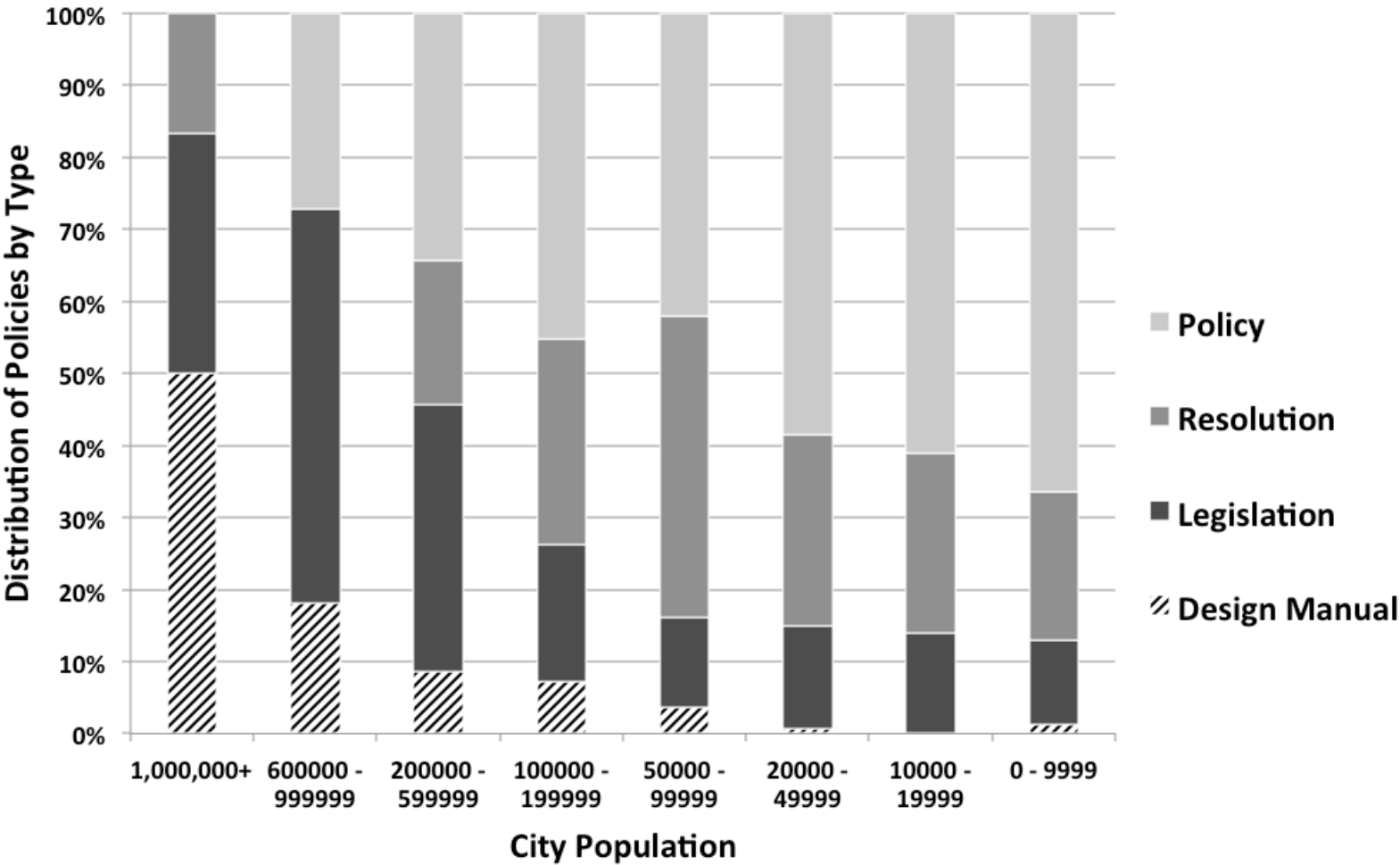


Policy Sample





Policy Type by City Size





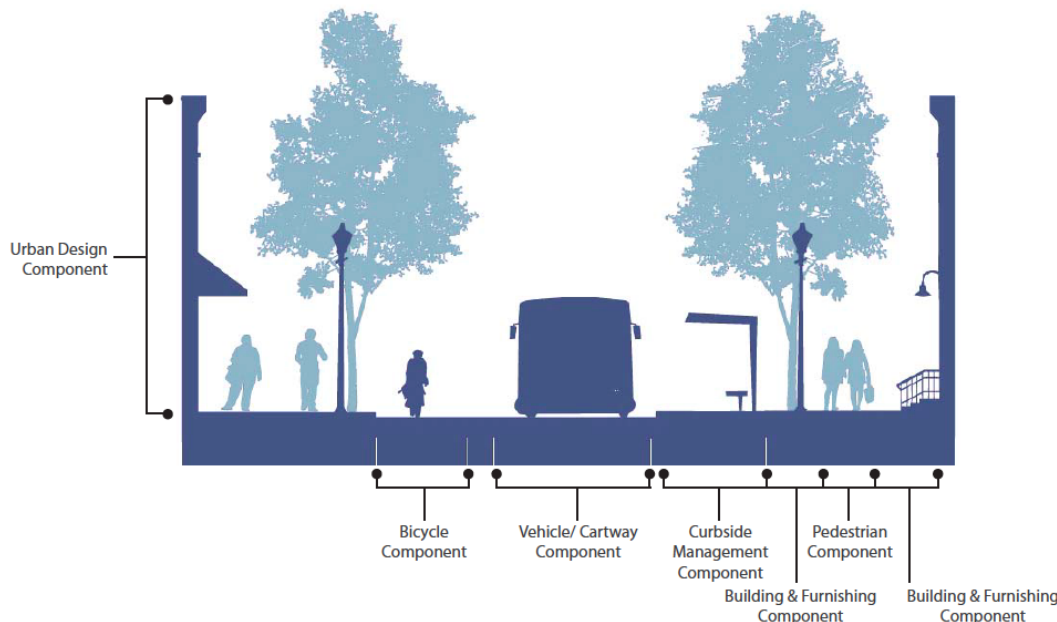
Methods

- We sampled a total of 113 municipal level complete streets policies, from The National Complete Streets Coalition's database.
- We focused on analyzing 'legislation', 'policy' and 'resolutions' as they represent 80% (n=670) of municipal CS policies within the NCSC database.
- Stratified the sample to capture the differences across both city size and policy type.
- For cities small cities (between 1,000 and 99,999 people) and large cities (between 100,000 and 1,000,000 people) we randomly sampled 15 policies from 'legislation', 'policy' and 'resolutions' policy types.
- We reviewed all policy types for the 6 cities with a million or more people, we also reviewed all 17 design manuals.

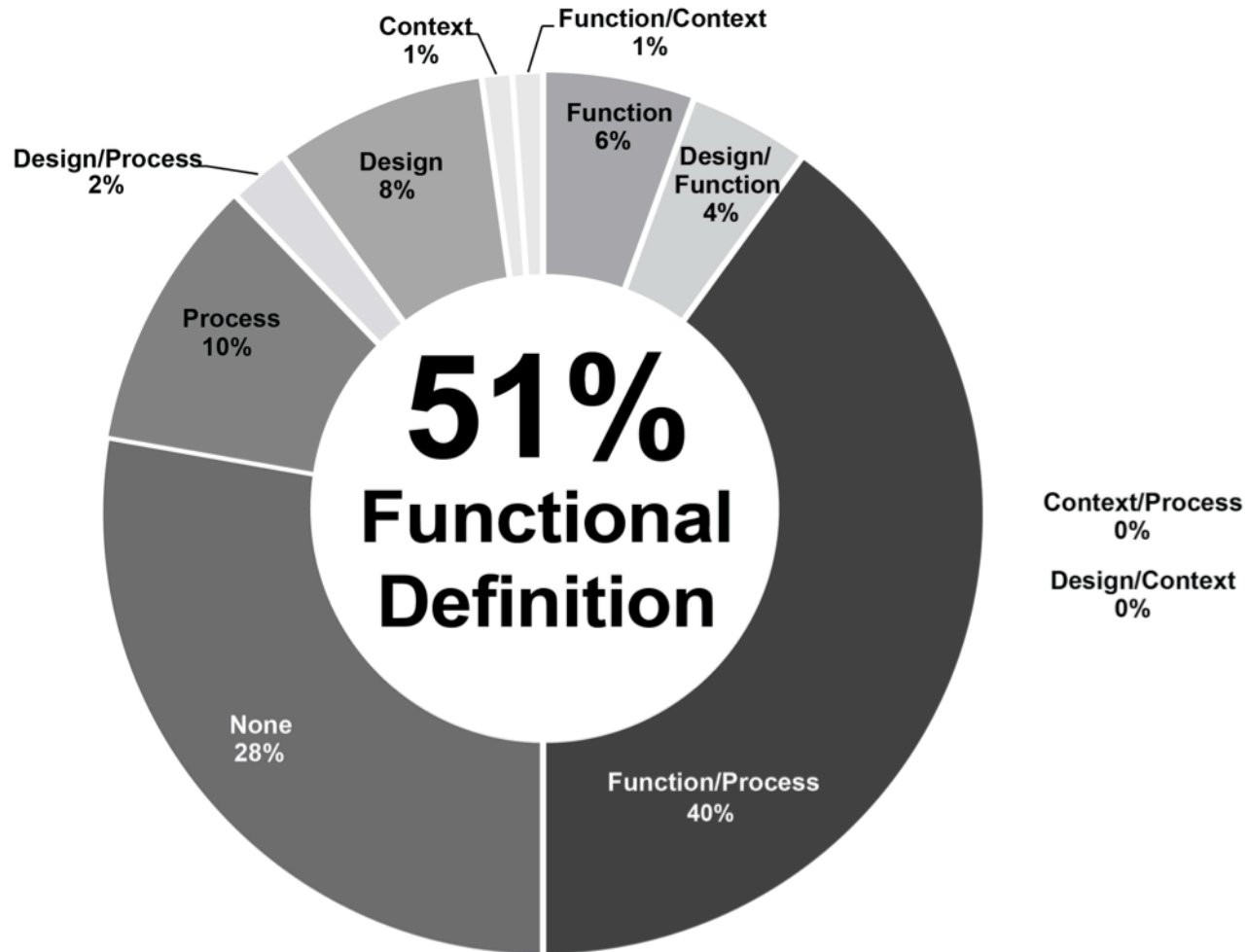


Findings

- Policy at the municipal remains broad and defer to general and idealistic goals of safely accommodating all user types regardless of ability, without recognizing an implicit hierarchy of accommodation.
- Most municipal Complete Street policies do not address negotiating trade-offs within the street right of way.



+ Defining 'Complete Streets' in municipal policy





Concluding Thoughts

- This study is limited to analyzing the content of the policies alone. It is necessary first step in critically thinking through Complete Street policy development and examining if current municipal policies are able to successfully challenge the primary accommodation of automobility.
- Without a critical analysis, there is a risk of replicating policy that is ineffective at producing streets that safely accommodate non-motorized users, or only provide minimum accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians.

