



## **Complete Streets Program**

Updated February 2012

For more information, see [www.sustainablejersey.com](http://www.sustainablejersey.com).

“Complete Streets” is the concept that all roadways should be designed, built, and maintained for all travelers. Streets do not exist only for single-family motor vehicles. Other roadway users – pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users of all ages and abilities – must be considered.

A Complete Streets Policy that is formally adopted and implemented by a municipality ensures that each street is planned, designed and operated to provide safe access for multiple users. Because streets and sidewalks are built with public funds, they should accommodate all members of the public. Designing and maintaining plans that do not serve all users must be justified through a detailed exemption process and approved by the governing body.

Bike/pedestrian/bus/disabled access should be framed as an essential part of transportation policies. The adoption of a Complete Streets Policy represents a shift in priorities to include the needs of all roadway users as part of transportation planning and implementation.

A Complete Streets Policy is not:

- A design prescription. It’s not about adding sidewalks and bike lanes to every road, but it is about considering those options as part of municipal planning and decision making and coordinating designs with other municipal and regional authorities.
- A mandate for immediate installation or retrofitting of existing transportation networks. Rather, it is about creating a structure for implementing these improvements over time and whenever feasible.
- A magic formula. While implementing a Complete Streets program is an important sustainable community feature, other initiatives and issues must be addressed by municipalities, including land use planning, environmental

concerns, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction, and proximity of recreational land and other open space.

### **Who should lead and be involved with this action?**

Implementation of a Complete Streets program, which includes the adoption of an official municipal policy by resolution, requires a broad group of stakeholders which should include the governing body, mayor, planning and zoning board members, the environmental commission, business, transportation and housing agencies, any redevelopment agency, zoning officials, and the municipal police, fire, engineering, planning, public works, economic development, recreation, parks, and finance departments.

### **Timeframe**

A Complete Streets program can be developed, adopted and integrated into municipal procedures and decision making within six to eighteen months.

### **Project Costs and Resource Needs**

The cost to implement a Complete Streets program is low to moderate. This action mostly requires staff time or volunteers to accomplish the following:

- Develop and adopt a municipal Complete Streets policy that addresses integrating the needs of all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders into the municipality's roadway planning, design, construction and maintenance.
- Revise maintenance contracts, bid specifications and other municipal procedures for transportation projects to require consideration of all roadway users on every project.
- Integrate the policy into the work of municipal planners, engineers, township officials, and planning and zoning board members by incorporating it into the Municipal Master Plan, development ordinances and bid procedures.
- Collect data to evaluate how well the streets and public rights-of-way are serving all users.

If more resources are available, a municipality should reexamine, adopt or amend the circulation element of its municipal master plan. The circulation element prescribes how land-use decisions affect the transportation system and increase viable transportation options for people to access employment, goods, services, recreation and other resources to improve the quality of their lives.

### **Why is it Important?**

Complete Streets have numerous environmental, safety, and health benefits. Designing roadways that are inclusive of all appropriate forms of transportation can reduce serious injuries and fatalities by lowering the number of speeding drivers and providing access and accommodation for all potential travelers. Safer roadways encourage residents to walk and bike more often, which can greatly improve their health. Increased walking, biking and transit use also cuts carbon dioxide emissions and reduces reliance on fossil fuels. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), if one average driver leaves the car at home just two days a week, greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced by 1600 pounds per year.<sup>1</sup>

In any given community, approximately 30 percent of the residents cannot or have chosen not to drive. They may be too young; they may have decided to “give up the keys” due to poor health or advancing age; they may be physically handicapped; or they may have simply made a lifestyle or economic choice not to own or operate a car. These citizens need places to walk, bicycle, and use public transportation. They need Complete Streets.

To summarize, a Complete Streets program can:

- Gradually create a complete network of transportation facilities.
- Provide an equitable transportation system that serves all residents.
- Shift transportation investments so safer, better-functioning streets are created.
- Save money in the long run (because doing it right the first time costs less than retrofitting a project later).
- Encourage healthy habits by making it easier to walk and bicycle.
- Provide more transportation options and reduce traffic congestion, thus increasing the capacity of the overall transportation network.
- Improve air quality by cutting down on harmful carbon dioxide and other vehicle emissions.<sup>2</sup>
- Include parking solutions with both on- and off-street parking for motor vehicles and bicycles in order to minimize hazards for pedestrians and bicyclists.

### **What to do and how to do it (“How to”)**

Below we have listed the requirements for earning points for this action.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *Climate Change – What You Can Do*, 2008; <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/wycd/road.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.completestreets.org/benefits.html>

1. At a minimum, the governing body must adopt a Complete Streets policy by resolution. The policy must be in effect at the time of submission to receive credit for this action.

2. The adopted Complete Streets policy must reflect all of the items listed under “Develop and Adopt a Complete Streets Policy” (Section A) below.

We have provided extensive guidance and recommendations for implementing this action in the section that follows. You do not need to follow this guidance exactly as long as your final product meets the requirements.

### **What to Include in a Complete Streets Program**

- A. Develop and adopt a Complete Streets policy by resolution. To be effective, all Complete Streets policies should, at a minimum, include the following basic elements. Please note that these items must be reflected in the resolution submitted to earn credit for this action.

1. State an intent to plan, design, build and maintain all roads to meet the needs of all users.
2. Specify that “all users” include pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicle users and motorists, of all ages and abilities.
3. Commit to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected multi-modal transportation network within the community.
4. Recognize the need for flexibility and that all streets are different, and user needs must be balanced and fit into the context of the community.
5. Apply to both new and retrofitted projects, including design, planning, construction, maintenance, and operations, for the entire right-of-way.
6. Allow exceptions to the policy to be contingent upon the presence of specific safety concerns and set a clear procedure that requires high-level approval prior to granting exceptions. Create a system for exceptions that is explicit and understandable.
7. Require incorporation of the Complete Streets Policy into the next Reexamination, update, revision, amendment or adoption of the Master Plan.

- B. Implement the Complete Streets policy. The following items take the adopted policy and move it toward implementation. While these items are important components of any Complete Streets program and worth striving to include, they are more challenging and as such are not required for a municipality to earn credit for this action at this time.

1. Establish performance standards with measurable outcomes. (See section III, Tracking Results, below).
2. Address the need of bicyclists and pedestrians to cross roadways at intersections, interchanges/ramps and, when appropriate, mid-block.
3. Coordinate agencies and departments, including public works/maintenance, planning and engineering, police, etc.
4. Direct the use of the latest and best design and engineering standards, including:
  - a. Paving shoulders and/or narrowing travel lanes to provide striped shoulders on roads for bicycle, pedestrian, farm equipment, emergency and police use;
  - b. Avoiding placement of rumble strips on shoulders and in centerlines that could interfere with the safe operation of bicycles.
5. Anticipate future bicycle, pedestrian and transit demand, even on bridges and in and around train stations.

## **Recommended Process for Adopting a Complete Streets Program**

### **A. Steps for a municipally-initiated effort:**

1. Municipal administrator, mayor, engineers, planning professionals, public works staff, clerk and other officials meet to discuss current roadway construction and maintenance policies and how best to adapt them to the Complete Streets approach. Including a broad group of stakeholders at the beginning of the process helps to achieve better understanding and implementation of the policy later.
2. With input from the team of stakeholders, the governing body drafts and adopts by resolution a Complete Streets Policy that reflects, at a minimum, the basic elements listed under “Develop and Adopt a Complete Streets Policy” (Section A) above.
3. Staff, volunteers and consultants implement the adopted policy, determining how the Complete Streets approach will be formally adopted into the municipality’s comprehensive planning and decision-making processes. This should include reexamining or revising the Master Plan, adopting ordinances and amending transportation bidding and maintenance procedures. The policy should establish internal procedures so that all departments are working toward the same objectives.
4. Municipal officials receive training on the new procedures to help institutionalize the policy throughout municipal agencies and departments. The municipal governing body should instruct its engineering and planning professionals to utilize the new Complete Streets approach for all road construction projects by including Complete Streets specifications in its municipal operations.

5. Staff and consultants create data collection procedures to track how well the streets are serving all users.
6. Data are reviewed at least annually to determine effectiveness of projects and recommend appropriate changes.

#### **B. Steps for an Advocate-initiated effort:**

1. Advocates urge their governing body to adopt a Complete Streets Policy by requesting participation in the process and attending municipal meetings.
2. Advocates work with municipal officials to discuss current roadway policies and decision-making structures and how best to adapt them to the Complete Streets approach.
3. Advocates, preferably alongside staff and consultants, draft a policy that can be adopted by resolution that includes the basic elements listed under “Develop and adopt a Complete Streets Policy” (Section A) above. The goal is to implement the Complete Streets policy by incorporating it into the municipality’s comprehensive planning and decision-making processes. This should include revising the municipal master plan, adopting ordinances and amending transportation procedures. The policy should establish internal procedures so that different departments are working toward the same outcomes.
4. Advocates continue to work toward adoption of the Complete Streets policy, being diligent about meeting attendance and suggesting additional ways to strengthen local policies in favor of Complete Streets.
5. Advocates monitor proposed state, county and local construction projects, writing as needed to the New Jersey Department of Transportation, state legislators, county planning boards and county engineers to ensure that the Complete Streets approach is utilized.

### **Ways to Measure Progress**

#### **A. How to track progress**

In order to assess the effectiveness of a Complete Streets Policy and to encourage implementation, it is important to track results and measure progress. Instead of using traditional engineering procedures that focus on how well roads are serving the needs of motorists, the Complete Streets approach to roadway planning requires a broader look at how the transportation system is serving all travelers. It is recommended that communities track results using a variety of measures, including:

- miles of on-street bicycle routes created;
- new linear feet of pedestrian accommodations (sidewalks and trails);
- number of improvements that make it easier for seniors and children to cross roadways, including tightened corner radii, installed pedestrians’ refuge islands, marked crosswalks, or curb extensions;

- changes in the number of people using public transportation, bicycling, or walking (mode shift);
- number of new street trees planted and measures of local air quality.

#### B. Measurement resources

More information on tracking results and performance measures is available in Chapter 5 of the APA Complete Streets Best Practices Manual:

<http://www.completestreets.org/resources/complete-streets-best-practices/>

In addition, the fifth edition of the Highway Capacity Manual uses a new multi-modal Level of Service standard that measures the quality of a travel experience for multiple users. (See the Resources section for more information on this new way of measuring LOS.)

### **What to submit to get credit/points**

#### **In order to earn points, your submission must meet the following standards:**

1. At a minimum, the governing body must adopt a Complete Streets policy by resolution. The policy must be in effect at the time of submission to receive credit for this action.
2. The adopted Complete Streets policy must reflect all of the items listed under “Develop and adopt a Complete Streets policy” (section A) above.

Submit the following documentation to verify the action was completed to the above standards. (Log in to the password protected webpage where you submit your online application for certification to write in the text box and upload documents).

In the text box, please provide a short narrative (300 word max) to summarize what was accomplished and the general steps taken to accomplish it. If helpful, you can excerpt text from the required narrative description (see item 2 “upload file 2” below).

Upload the following documentation to your town’s online application:

1. In "upload file 1," submit a copy of the resolution adopting the Complete Streets policy.
2. In "upload file 2," submit a narrative description using the Complete Streets narrative template provided. All items from the template must be addressed to earn credit for this action.

### **Spotlight: What NJ towns are doing**

- **City of Hoboken, Hudson County, NJ**: The City of Hoboken passed its Complete Streets Resolution on November 15, 2010 and has been working aggressively toward implementation. The City has reconfigured roadways to

allow for more bicycle and pedestrian movement; added bike lanes and a local transit option “The Hop”; and instituted traffic calming and safety measures.

- **Lawrence Township, Mercer County, NJ**: In September 2010, Lawrence Township adopted by resolution its Complete Streets program. It has since become institutional within the Engineering Department whereby all present and future projects are evaluated by the Municipal Engineer for potential improvements that can improve roadway use for all users per the resolution.

## **Resources**

### **General:**

#### **Active Living Resource Center, Complete Streets Fact Sheet**

[http://www.activelivingresources.org/assets/complete\\_streets.pdf](http://www.activelivingresources.org/assets/complete_streets.pdf)

#### **APA Complete Streets Best Practices Manual**

<http://www.completestreets.org/resources/complete-streets-best-practices/>

#### **Complete the Streets for Smart Growth**

[http://www.realtor.org/smart\\_growth.nsf/docfiles/summer07\\_streets.pdf/\\$FILE/summer07\\_streets.pdf](http://www.realtor.org/smart_growth.nsf/docfiles/summer07_streets.pdf/$FILE/summer07_streets.pdf)

**Federal Highway Administration, US Department of Transportation, *Design Guidance for Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel: A Recommended Approach*,**

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/design.htm>

#### **Model Complete Streets Laws and Resolutions**

<http://www.nplanonline.org/nplan/products/model-complete-streets-laws-and-resolutions>

#### **Monmouth County**

Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders unanimously adopted Resolution 10-592 and became the first county in New Jersey to adopt a Complete Streets policy.

See <http://co.monmouth.nj.us/documents/149/e7%20completestreetspolicy.pdf>.

**National Complete Streets Coalition:** <http://www.completestreets.org>

*Policy Elements:* <http://www.completestreets.org/changing-policy/policy-elements/>

*Creating a Complete Streets Policy:* <http://www.completestreets.org/policies.html>

**National Policy & Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN), *Model Complete Streets Laws and Resolutions*, February, 2010**

<http://www.nplanonline.org/nplan/products/model-complete-streets-laws-and-resolutions>

#### **NJ Department of Transportation, Community and Mobility Form**

<http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/community/mobility/>.



**NJ Department of Transportation**, *Complete Streets Policy Fact Sheet*, January 2010

<http://www.njbikeped.org/index.php?module=Downloads&func=display&lid=1622>

NJ Department of Transportation, Internal Complete Streets Policy:

<http://www.completestreets.org/webdocs/policy/cs-nj-dotpolicy.pdf> and

<http://www.njbikeped.org/index.php?module=Downloads&func=display&lid=1622>

**Transportation Management Association(s)**: Your local Transportation Management Association (TMA) can provide expertise and guidance regarding your Complete Streets program. Visit the TMA Council of New Jersey's website to find out how to contact your town's local TMA: <http://tmacouncilnj.org/>

**Voorhees Transportation Center**, *Complete Streets in New Jersey, A Compilation of State, County and Municipal Policies*

<http://policy.rutgers.edu/vtc/bikeped/completestreets/Compilation%20of%20NJ%20CS%20Policies%2011.17.10.pdf>

### **Training:**

**The National Complete Streets Coalition** offers three types of Complete Streets Interactive Workshops: Introduction to Complete Streets, Policy Development and Policy Implementation. Classes are led by leading national policy and engineering experts. Visit <http://www.completestreets.org/changing-policy/workshops/> for more information.

**The NJ Bicycle and Pedestrian Resource Center** periodically offers trainings and workshops and can assist New Jersey communities interested in pursuing a Complete Streets Policy. Visit <http://www.njbikeped.org/index.php> for more information.

**Sustainable Jersey** periodically offers trainings and workshops on a variety of topics and holds a twice-monthly open conference call to answer questions. Visit <http://sustainablejersey.com/events.php> for more information.

## **Complete Streets Narrative Description Template**

To receive credit for this action, each community must complete this narrative template.

Please try to limit answers to two pages.

1. Describe the way the policy has been (or will be) further institutionalized within the municipality (e.g., incorporated into the Master Plan, bidding procedures, existing and future development ordinances).
2. Describe the methods that have been or will be used to train municipal officials, including planners, engineers, planning and zoning board members, on the new procedures to help institutionalize the policy throughout municipal agencies and departments.
3. Give an overview of the data that will be collected to track how well the streets, sidewalks and trails are serving all travelers. Refer to the Measuring Progress section for examples.