

# Complete Streets

The streets of our cities and towns play an important role in the livability of our communities. Everyone, regardless of age, ability, income, race, or ethnicity, should have safe and convenient access to community destinations and public places—whether walking, wheeling, driving, bicycling, or taking public transportation. Yet, too many of our streets are designed only for cars, and how quickly they can move up and down streets. They are unsafe for people on foot or bike - and unpleasant for everyone. Changes are needed to improve the efficiency and capacity of our streets to move people in the same amount of space without having to rely on their car.

Many cities and towns now have plans and policies to ensure safety and convenience on streets throughout the community, not just for drivers, but for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders.

## What Are Complete Streets?

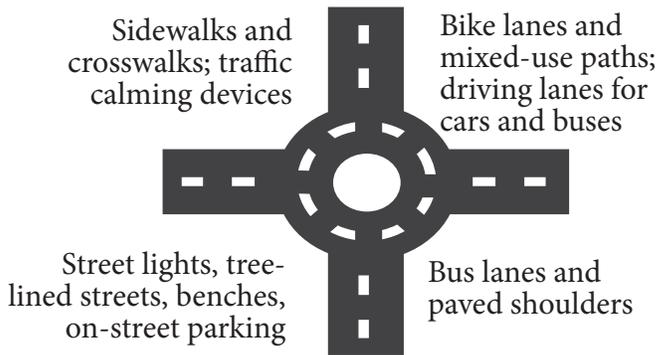
**Complete Streets are streets for everyone and provide an opportunity to engage in inclusive, community-wide health promotion.** By planning, designing, operating, and maintaining Complete Streets, communities of all sizes - from small rural towns to large cities- can provide convenient and comfortable access and travel for all users regardless of their transportation mode. Complete Streets enable those walking, wheeling, bicycling, driving automobiles, riding public transportation, and delivering goods to share the road safely and allow communities to achieve greater economic, environmental, and public health benefits. Complete Streets go beyond just the street; if the underlying principles of universal design are adhered to and effectively executed, an inclusive and accessible environment for pedestrians and transit users will be achieved.



**Two-thirds** of Americans want more transportation options so they have the freedom to get where they need to go.

Source: Future of Transportation National Survey (2010)

## Common Complete Street Elements



## One Size Doesn't Fit All Communities

Complete streets are meant to be context sensitive – a complete street in a city will differ from one in a rural community. There is no single, standard complete streets design because such streets must meet the needs of each individual community.



## Benefits of Complete Streets

Complete Streets can **bolster economic growth and stability** by providing accessible and efficient connections between destinations

By designing for pedestrian travel, Complete Streets can **improve safety** by reducing crashes between vehicles and pedestrians or cyclists.

Complete Streets **encourage walking and bicycling and improve air quality**, all important for our health (reduce obesity, asthma, and illness).

Complete Streets can help **ease transportation woes and increase the overall capacity** of the transportation network.

Complete Streets are **equitable** and help to provide access to daily activities (e.g., employment, school) among those who don't have a car.



Source: Smart Growth America



# Complete Streets meet the demand for transportation options while promoting other community goals.

Complete Streets are increasingly common practice. Today over **80** NY villages, towns and/or cities and **9** counties have complete streets policies or resolutions.

**Safety.** Designing the street with pedestrians in mind - improved lighting, sidewalks, raised medians, better bus stop placement, and traffic calming measures - has been shown to improve pedestrian, bicyclist, and motorist safety. Moreover, when more residents use active transportation there are more people in the public realm, and increased active transportation creates a safer setting for children as they travel.

**Economic Vitality.** Communities that undergo complete streets improvements can bolster local business and spur economic development. Complete streets encourage private investment and businesses often look at the health of a community when deciding where to locate because of insurance costs. Making it easier for residents and visitors to walk, bike, or take transit to their destinations helps them to spend money locally. Instead of paying for the cost of owning a car, individuals can pay for housing, restaurants, and entertainment.

**Job Growth.** Road improvement projects that include bike and pedestrian facilities create more jobs per dollar spent, compared to those that are only designed for vehicles. Moreover, cycling adds jobs to the economy through increased tourism, bicycle manufacturing, sales and repair, bike tours, and other activities.

Source: [www.smartgrowthamerica.org](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org)



## What Is A Complete Streets Policy?



A complete streets policy formalizes a community's desire to have streets that are safe for users of all ages and abilities. These policies direct decision-makers and stakeholders to consistently incorporate complete streets principles into both routine maintenance projects and new projects and to plan, design and build roadways with all users in mind – including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation riders, and motorists. Complete Streets policies come in many shapes and sizes. City councils have passed resolutions directing their transportation agencies to consider the needs of all users. Planning departments have worked with community members to include complete streets goals in master or comprehensive plans. Transportation agencies have written internal memorandums outlining policy changes and implementation steps, and policy makers have passed complete streets ordinances. Some policies are developed very quickly and some involve many steps beyond the initial adoption of a resolution or vision statement.

To learn more about Complete Streets visit <https://www.dot.ny.gov/programs/completestreets> or Smart Growth America at <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/>.



NYS Obesity Prevention Center for Excellence



Creating Healthy Schools and Communities