

Model Complete Streets Policy

Draft Model Ordinance

The National Complete Streets Coalition promotes a comprehensive policy that addresses ten main elements for communities to adopt. These elements include an identified vision, specific direction and commitment, interpret clearly the community's desire, and establish flexibility in planning and implementation to ensure real results through good process. Provided is a description of each section and sample language for consideration.

A strong **vision** can inspire a community to follow through on its policy. Every community has its own set of challenges and desires, which has encouraged them to develop Complete Streets as an effective policy to combat them. At its core, complete streets identifies that all users upon the roadways should be safely accommodated into the planning, design, construction and operation of the transportation system.

- *Whereas; Establish (your community) as a safe and accessible community by improving bicycle and pedestrian friendliness through consistent public realm design standards to a revitalized mixed-use downtown district.*

Clarity in the **intent** of the policy makes it easy for those who are tasked with its implementation and follow through. All involved understands this new goal and can determine what changes in the current process need to occur.

- *Whereas; The (your community) shall plan for, design, construct, operate and maintain appropriate facilities for all transportation users in all new construction, retrofit and reconstruction projects.*

Complete Street policies come with an understanding that **all users and modes** shall be accommodated upon the roadway. This recognizes that our streets are for more than moving vehicles through them. Streets should also be places for those who travel by foot and bicycle for they too are deserving of safe facilities to travel upon.

- *Whereas; streets that integrate multiple transportation choices for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit, with special consideration for children, the elderly and people with disabilities, contribute to the public life of a community, sustainable economic development and efficient movement of people and goods.*

The complete street policy should apply to all street **projects and phases**. Whether it is new construction, reconstruction, maintenance or operations all transportation improvements should be viewed as an opportunity to create safer, more accessible streets for all users.

- *Whereas; the (your community) shall, to the maximum extent practical, scope, plan, design, construct, operate and maintain all streets to provide a comprehensive and integrated network of facilities for all users of all abilities.*

There are some **exceptions** that should be in place to ensure the policy is not too onerous. However, a process to handle exceptions is needed and should not weaken the overall policy. The Federal Highway Administrations guidance on accommodating bicycle and pedestrian travel identifies when accommodations may not be necessary on corridors where specific users are prohibited, such as interstate freeways or pedestrian malls; the cost of accommodation is excessively disproportioned to the need or probable use; there is a documented absence of current or future need.

- *Whereas; Any exception to applying this Complete Streets Policy to a specific roadway project must be approved by (the Village Trustees) with documentation of the reason for the exception. Exceptions may be made when the project involves a roadway on which non-motorized use is prohibited by law. In this case, an effort shall be made to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists elsewhere.*

Streets must be organized in an integrated **network**. Residents have many potential destinations in their daily travel. A complete street provides an interconnected network that meets this demand.

- *Whereas; This policy will create a comprehensive, integrated, connected transportation network for (your community) that balances access, mobility, health and safety needs for all residents. Planning, funding, designing, constructing, managing and maintaining a complete multi-modal network, ensures this.*

Implementing a complete street network can become difficult with multiple agencies having **jurisdiction** over the planning, design and construction of different roads. Within your community, the state and county may also have jurisdiction over some of the roadways. Additionally, new developments may be built in town and new roadways established by private developers.

- *Whereas; It is the intent of this policy to foster partnerships with the state, county, school district, citizens, businesses, interest groups and neighborhoods to implement complete streets.*

Communities should **design** their streets using the best and latest design standards available.

- *Whereas; The (your community) shall adapt, develop and adopt departmental policies, design criteria, standards and guidelines based upon recognized best practices in street design, construction and operations including but not limited to the latest editions of American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets; AASHTO Guide for Planning, Designing, and Operating Pedestrian Facilities; AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities; Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach; National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Bikeway Design Guide; U.S. Access Board Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines; Highway Capacity Manual and Highway Safety Manual.*

All communities are different and it is important that each maintain their character and sense of place when designing complete streets. A **Context sensitive** approach does this by adapting roads to fit the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

- *Whereas; the implementation of this policy shall reflect the context and character of the surrounding built and natural environments while enhancing the appearance of such. In doing so, the (your community) shall consider methods of providing development flexibility within safe design parameters such as context-sensitive design solutions and shall attempt to employ all solutions consistent with and sensitive to the context of the project.*

Performance Measures help communities measure their success. The evaluation of complete streets projects can help identify this success by determining improvements in safety, economic development and changes in mode share. These can include the total number of bike lanes added, increase in building permits issued to the increase in activity levels of residents because they are now walking or biking more often.

- *Whereas; Complete Streets should be continuously evaluated for success and opportunities for improvement sought. This policy encourages the regular evaluation and reporting of implementing complete streets through the following performance measures:*
 - *Increase in the share of bicycles, pedestrians and transit users;*
 - *Crash data;*
 - *Use of new projects by mode;*
 - *Compliments and complaints;*
 - *Linear feet of pedestrian accommodations built;*
 - *Number of ADA accommodations built;*
 - *Miles of bike lanes/trails built or striped;*
 - *Number of transit accessibility accommodations built;*
 - *Number of street trees planted;*
 - *Number of building permits issued along new complete street;*
 - *Number of exemptions from this policy.*

Once a policy is passed, the work is not done. There are a number of steps that a community can take to ensure the **implementation** of complete streets. There are five key steps to follow in order to be successful, these include:

1. Restructure or revise related procedures, plans, regulations and other processes to accommodate all users.
 2. Develop new design policies and guides or revise existing ones to reflect current best practices in transportation design.
 3. Ensure that staff responsible for implementing the policy, as well as community leaders and the general public has opportunities to attend workshops or other training opportunities so that everyone understands how to implement the policy effectively.
 4. Identify ways to evaluate and measure the performance of your new complete streets by collecting data and sharing with the general public how well the streets are serving them.
- *Whereas; The (your community) shall implement the following steps to ensure successful implementation of complete streets:*
 - *Advisory Board: the (your community) will establish an interdepartmental advisory board to oversee the implementation of this policy. The committee will include members of the village (board members, planning board, school board, highway department), county (planning department and highway department), the NYS Department of Transportation, the police department as well as representatives from bicycling, pedestrian, disabled, youth and elderly communities or any other organizations as deemed relevant.*

- This committee will meet quarterly and provide a written report to the (your community's elected officials) evaluating progress and advising on implementation.*
- *Inventory: The (your community) will maintain a comprehensive inventory of the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and will prioritize projects to eliminate gaps in the sidewalk and bikeway networks.*
 - *Capital Improvement and Maintenance Project Prioritization: The (your community) will reevaluate capital improvement and maintenance project prioritization annually to encourage implementation of pedestrian and bicycle improvements.*
 - *Revisions to Existing Plans and Policies: The (your community) will incorporate complete street principles into the comprehensive plan, zoning code and other plans and manual, rules, regulations and programs.*
 - *Other Plans: The (your community) will prepare, implement and maintain a Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan, a Safe Routes to School Plan, an Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan, and a Street Tree and Landscape Plan.*
 - *Storm Water Management: The (your community) will prepare and implement a plan to transition to sustainable storm water management techniques along our streets.*
 - *Staff Training: The (your community) will train all pertinent staff on the content of the complete streets principles and best practices for implementing the policy.*
 - *Coordination: The (your community) will utilize inter-departmental project coordination to promote the most responsible and efficient use of fiscal resources for activities that occur within the public right of way.*
 - *Street Manual: The (your community) will create and adopt a Complete Streets Design Manual to support implementation of this policy.*
 - *Funding: The (your community) will actively seek sources of appropriate funding to implement complete streets.*