



COMPLETE STREETS POLICY PLANNING PROCESS

Updated July 2, 2025

Summary

This document provides information about the concept of Complete Streets, the components of a complete streets policy, and the methods to adopt Complete Streets policies at the local level.

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Preface

Established in 1973, North Country Council has been providing land use, transportation, environmental, and economic development planning services for over 40 years. We are one of nine Regional Planning Commissions established by NH RSA 36:46, that serves 50 communities across Coos County and the northern halves of Carroll and Grafton Counties. The Council plays an advisory role to local governments in order to promote coordinated planning, orderly growth, efficient land use, and transportation access. The Council supports the region and its individual communities in addressing challenges and seizing opportunities. We do so by providing technical assistance and ongoing forums for regional collaboration. Our services assist the region in planning for a better future and finding practical solutions to identified challenges. In addition to being a Regional Planning Commission, North Country Council is a federally-designated Economic Development District by the US Economic Development Administration, through which we assist communities in accessing certain federal funding opportunities.

Our Mission

It is the mission of North Country Council to encourage effective community and regional planning for the development of economic opportunity and the conservation of natural, cultural and economic resources. This will be accomplished by providing information, regional advocacy, technical assistance, community education, and direct service to the region, its organizations, and political subdivisions.

NADO Technical Assistance

This document was created through the support of the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) through a USDA Rural Technical Assistance Grant. Starting in 2022, the North Country Council received transportation technical assistance from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO). The goal of this technical assistance was to study the rural mobility challenges of northern New Hampshire, reach out to groups across the region to better understand local needs and concerns, and develop mobility models, treatments, and solutions that best fit the needs of the region.

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Purpose

The purpose of this document is to assist local officials, advocates, and the general public in understanding, developing, and adopting a Complete Streets Policy in their community. The Complete Streets approach aims to create roadways that are safe, accessible, and convenient for all users, regardless of their mode of transportation, age, ability, or socioeconomic status. Complete Streets represent a fundamental shift in transportation planning and design philosophy moving away from a car-centric approach towards one that prioritizes people.

There is no one-size-fits-all Complete Streets policy that is applicable to every jurisdiction. A complete streets policy should be tailored to meet the specific transportation needs and character of the community where it is adopted. Effective Complete Streets policies clearly identify the specific needs that their community wants to address. This document explains the key steps in planning and developing processes for implementing the Complete Streets Policy.

Background

The term “Complete Streets” was first coined in the early 2000s to highlight the need for promoting safety among all users of a street, regardless of travel mode, age, or ability. The National Complete Streets Coalition was founded in 2005 as a joint effort of America Bikes, the American Planning Association, Smart Growth America, and other groups ([APA](#)) to advance the goals of the complete streets initiative. Today, the term has become a regular part of planning vocabulary, and the [National Complete Streets Coalition](#) reports approximately 500 communities and agencies across the country with an adopted Complete Streets policy.

New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT)

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) promotes active transportation through project review and designs and the Complete Streets Advisory Committee (CSAC). CSAC is made up of representatives from a variety of organizations including regional planning commissions (rural and urban), bicycle advocacy groups, rail trail advocacy, transit providers, municipalities, and other NH state agencies. The purpose of CSAC is to advise the Commissioner of the NHDOT on policies, programs, and recommendations to support bicycling, walking, and transit as safe, convenient, economically and environmentally beneficial forms of transportation and recreation. CSAC serves as a forum to exchange information, ideas, and resources related to bicycling, walking, and transit among the NHDOT, other state agencies, regional partners, and community organizations.

North Country Council (NCC)

North Country Council is one of nine regional planning commissions in New Hampshire established by RSA 36:46. The commission’s region consists of 50 communities and 25 unincorporated places in the northern region of New Hampshire. The commission serves an advisory role to local governments to promote coordinated planning, orderly growth, efficient land use, transportation access, and environmental protection.

NCC updated their Regional Transportation Plan in 2023. This plan provides a guiding vision for transportation decisions and planning efforts for communities throughout the region and presents goals and objectives to help achieve that vision. This plan is meant to be a helpful resource for community residents, local officials and staff, and other stakeholders that informs and guides transportation policies and decision-making. NCC conducted public outreach, and the results clearly show that a state of good repair and a focus on safety are the highest priorities for the region.

In order to achieve a reduction of fatal and serious injury crashes on regional roadways, the 2025 North Country Transportation Safety Action Plan established a goal and actions related to Complete Streets and other safe system policies.

1. Policy & Planning: Adopt standards and design guidelines for projects that address safety for vulnerable road users

1.1 Incorporate innovative safety guidance and best practices into the project planning process

- 1.1.1 Use the Safe Systems Approach to inform transportation projects and decision making
- 1.1.2 Encourage the adoption of Complete Streets policies at the local level
- 1.1.3 Design local and regional transportation projects using proven safety countermeasures
- 1.1.4 Integrate vulnerable road user considerations into project review and scoring activities
- 1.1.5 Balance all modes and types of travel when reviewing regional projects
- 1.1.6 Educate local and regional officials about the use of proven safety countermeasures in capital projects
- 1.1.7 Incorporate the needs of all users when discussing speed limits and speed data

First Steps and Initial Actions

Complete Streets policies are a major strategy that communities can use to tackle roadway safety issues such as excessive speeds, dangerous intersections, lack of accessibility, and lack of connections between neighborhoods. But the adoption of a Complete Streets policy can be a daunting process and might not be the best fit for your community. This section contains information about different strategies that communities can use to engage the public about roadway issues, study the situation, and develop a vision of what the community wants to accomplish. These strategies could be used on their own or could be steps towards eventual adoption of a Complete Streets policy. The community can use pre-existing plans and studies such as local Master Plans, Regional Plans, or long-range Transportation Plans as the basis for what goals the town wants to accomplish through their process to build a policy.

Develop a Downtown Action Plan / Neighborhood Action Plan

A great way to build off existing conversations around safer streets is to develop a targeted action plan for the town center, downtown, or a specific neighborhood. The action plan sets a clear path forward and details what strategies and improvements will be made. These action plans are focused and oriented towards achievable goals. An action plan can be the first step towards adopting a Complete Streets policy, as it shows the clear wants and needs from the community and the steps to address them. A complete streets policy can help solve many local concerns that come up in an action planning process such as vehicle safety, pedestrian connections to services, state of repair, and accessibility for seniors and the disabled.

Below are some steps to create a neighborhood action plan:

1. Create a planning team
2. Host a few public meetings
3. Create a clear vision and priorities
4. Develop strategies / treatments
5. Establish a timeline for implementation
6. Approval by Selectboard
7. Get to work!

Downtown Action Plan Examples:

- [Millinocket, ME Downtown Action Plan](#)
- [Burnt Bridge Creek Neighborhood Action Plan](#)

Conduct a Walk Audit

A Walk Audit is an activity where participants observe and evaluate the walkability and safety of a location to identify and document if and how pedestrians can safely travel along a street, navigate an intersection, and get from Point A to B. Walk Audits are a great way to gather input about community infrastructure needs and investments and educate residents about design elements that support safety. Walk audits can also empower community members and local leaders to lead change in the community. Walk audits are also a great way to inform projects that lead to reduced traffic congestion, healthier and more active communities, and safer streets for people of all ages and abilities.

The supplies needed to conduct a walk audit are cheap and easy to find. They include safety vests, clipboards and worksheets, a smartphone/camera, and a printed or online map. Plus, it is important to wear comfortable and weather-suitable clothing and supplies such as a headlamp or flashlight if conducting the walk audit at night/twilight.

Walk Audit Resources:

- [AARP Walk Audit Toolkit](#)
- [America Walks – How to Conduct a Walk Audit](#)
- [America Walks – All About Walk Audits](#)

Host a Pop-up Event

Traffic calming pop-up projects are community-led efforts to see how low-cost and temporary street design elements affect the behavior and safety of all people using local streets and roadways regardless of ability, age, or means of getting around. Pop-ups can also help showcase how minor changes can beautify a neighborhood and create a sense of place. These pop-up events can last from as little as a single day up to a month or more, depending on the materials being used and the information being collected.

Traffic Calming Treatments include:

- Traffic Islands
- Curb Extensions/bulb-outs
- Pedestrian Refuge Islands
- Roundabouts
- Redesigned parking lanes
- Bicycle lanes

These treatments can all be installed during a temporary pop-up with supplies such as traffic cones/delineator posts, chalk, tempura paint, duct tape or pavement tape, and flower planters. Pop-ups take stakeholders' time, effort, and cooperation to set up and host. Before starting, identify the outcomes you want to accomplish with a pop-up project. Below are three types of projects that can help you focus your efforts.

- Addressing a specific safety issue near a school, community center, or during an event
 - Focused on building community support for longer-term solutions
- Collecting data and public input to inform street design policy decisions and planning efforts
 - Focused on engaging the public with planners and policymakers to inform local or regional transportation plans and policies
- Piloting or testing out a street design before an opportunity for permanent installation
 - Focused on collecting data and public input on a specific design that may be implemented permanently in a proposed development

Resources for Pop-Up Events:

- [Bike Walk Montana Traffic Calming Pop-Up Guide](#)
- [FHWA Traffic Calming ePrimer](#) (the official, in-depth guide for traffic calming information)
- [Tactical Urbanism Guide](#) (Materials for making pop-ups)

Traffic Studies

Conducting a traffic study is a great way to collect concrete data about the situation in a project area. Traffic counter units can collect all kinds of data, including vehicle speed, class/type, direction, and overall volume. Traffic Counter units are typically placed out for at least a week and can be reinstalled to compare data at other times in the season.

Turning Movement Counts (or Intersection turning counts) quantify the amount of traffic entering and exiting an intersection during a given period of time. Typical data collected are the number, type, and directional travel of vehicles as they move through intersections and make turns. Turning count data is used to improve traffic flow by

adjusting signal timing, informing road upgrades and infrastructure design, and increasing safety for all users of an intersection.

Both regular traffic count data (speed, direction, type) and turning movement count data are very useful for better understanding and proving the traffic problems in a given area. This data can also be used to prove the effectiveness of infrastructure, such as traffic calming treatments or roadway changes, such as comparing vehicle speeds before and during a pop-up event.

Traffic Count Resources

- [NCC – Traffic Data Collection & Studies](#)
- [NHDOT – Traffic Data and Information](#)

Considerations for the Town:

- Funding – What funding sources are out there that can be used to support complete streets projects?
- Designs – Will the town need more in-depth engineering or other designs prepared for projects?
- Approvals – What review, permitting, and approvals are needed to move a solution forward?
- Coordination – Who else will need to be involved? Have NHDOT and/or other agencies been contacted?
- Implementation – What will the result look like? Will the possible solution be permanent or seasonal (ex., permanent curb extensions vs. traffic delineators with improved striping)?

Policy Development

The policy development process is built from the feedback received during the initial work studying how the community wants to approach complete streets. Policy development involves local staff and elected officials, the public, and stakeholder groups.

Topics for Policy Creation

- Overarching framework – What is important for the town to include? How in-depth will the policy be?
- Preferred legislative action – How will the policy be adopted?
- Vision – What is the overarching vision and goals of the policy?
- Applicable projects – Will the policy cover all local projects or specific types of projects?
- Exceptions to the policy – What, if any, exceptions to the policy will there be?
- Preference on how binding the language should be

Host Public Workshops

Engagement with your community is essential to the successful adoption of a Complete Streets policy. It is important to find local “champions” in the community who can help lead efforts and help develop the way forward. And while Complete Streets policies are locally focused, it is helpful to connect with regional and state agencies such as North Country Council, NHDOT, county governments, and local advocacy groups to engage people in the process.

Locally-hosted public workshops are great opportunities to collect feedback from residents about what types of transportation facilities are sought after and desired on a given type of street. Workshops can be held in many formats including open houses with interactive stations and no formal presentation to allow attendees additional flexibility on arrival and departure times, or with more focused discussions and presentations of policy details and examples.

It is encouraged to share meeting flyers with the general public, local departments, neighborhood associations, business and advocacy groups, employers, municipal committees, bicycle/pedestrian committees and groups, and transit agencies.

It is encouraged to meet with each local board to seek feedback due to complete streets impacting a wide array of topics. A public survey at this initial phase will also allow people unable to attend any in-person workshops to still provide feedback and comments.

Each policy element detailed in the Appendix combines standard language to provide structure to the policy, as well as context-specific language [*denoted in brackets*] to more clearly identify local conditions or policy variations. Model language is meant to give guidance to the development of a comprehensive policy, but it is not meant to be prescriptive.

Types of Complete Streets Policies

One of the first decisions to make is what legislative action to take to integrate a Complete Streets approach into its transportation practices and decision-making processes. This action typically comes through an adopted ordinance or resolution, and below are brief descriptions distinguishing between these two types of legislative actions:

Ordinances

A local law that prescribes general, uniform, and typically permanent rules of conduct relating to the corporate affairs of the jurisdiction. Changes to a jurisdiction’s standard codes, zoning, and land development regulations

are common legislative acts accomplished through ordinances. Ordinances are passed according to procedures required by state law or charter (such as notice, multiple readings during separate public hearings, number of votes, and publication). Typically, ordinances cannot go into effect immediately and some may be subject to referendum. Ordinances are generally considered permanent and can only be amended by enacting a new ordinance.

Resolution

A formal expression of opinion, will, or intent from a governing body that addresses a matter of special or temporary administrative nature. In most instances, resolutions do not need to be published, can be adopted by a majority of a governing body (assuming a quorum), and go into effect immediately. Similarly, resolutions can be changed at any time by a vote of the governing body. Resolutions are often procedurally easier to enact than ordinances, and they can be a preliminary step before the passage of an ordinance.

According to the [National Complete Streets Coalition](#)'s database (updated in June 2023), approximately 25% of Complete Streets-related actions in the United States are enacted by ordinance and approximately 42% are addressed by resolution. Additionally, some jurisdictions implement Complete Streets through internal policies (such as an executive order, departmental directive, or manual), planning documents, or design guidance. The preferred type of action is determined by the governing body's internal or mandated procedures, the intended duration of the proposed action, and the governing body's preference for how binding it would like the action to be.

Policy Structure

Complete Streets policies, whether they are Ordinances or Resolutions, will have a similar structure. This section details the different sections of the policy and explains what details can or should be included. The model ordinance presented in this document includes the policy elements that provide the structure for the policy.

1. Intent
2. Definitions
3. Applicability
4. Exceptions
5. Land Use and Context Sensitivity
6. Design Guidance
7. Implementation
8. Performance Measures

Intent

Declaration of Intent

The first section of the policy presents the intention of your community to adopt a complete streets policy and the evidence-based findings that led to this decision. Data examples include crash history, goals and objectives included in a comprehensive plan or other adopted plans, studies and reports, previous resolutions or ordinances, public health outcomes, and population statistics. By clearly identifying the intention behind pursuing a Complete Streets policy, your jurisdiction is able to develop the policy language in a way that best reflects the community's needs and desired outcomes.

Community Commitment & Vision

The second section of the policy will establish your community's commitment to integrating a Complete Streets approach into its transportation practices and decision-making processes. This section should provide a clear statement of your jurisdiction's **vision** by describing its motivation for pursuing a Complete Streets policy. Examples of **motivating factors** include growth management, economic development, public health, safety, accessibility, resiliency, equity, quality of life, or environmental protection outcomes. Factors to include:

- Safety – Reduce the risk of crashes and improve safety outcomes. Enhancing pedestrian infrastructure.
- Accessibility – Improve the ability of residents to reach destinations that support their everyday and critical needs, build out transportation infrastructure that is accessible to people regardless of age or ability
- Shared Burden – Hold developers financially responsible for infrastructure-related costs associated with proposed developments, promote projects with high return on investment and consider economic benefits
- Quality of Life – Improve access to recreational opportunities, develop new trail connections, expand multi-modal transportation options, improve the affordability of transportation in the region. Alleviating disparities in health factors
- Resiliency – Better prepare a community's transportation system to recover from natural hazards and unexpected events, incorporate proven design and construction methods to lengthen infrastructure lifespan

User Groups

After establishing the vision of the Complete Streets policy, the third section could highlight the full range of targeted user groups, if any, in which the jurisdiction is specifically working to improve travel conditions through

the policy. Potential **targeted user groups** could include pedestrians (or specific subgroups, like people with disabilities, youths, and older adults), bicyclists, low-speed vehicle users (such as golf carts and mopeds), light-duty motor vehicle drivers (including Taxi and TNC operators), mid- and heavy-duty commercial drivers, agricultural vehicle operators, transit operators, electric vehicle drivers, motorcyclists, and emergency responders. More detailed “definitions” of these groups would be included in the **Definitions** section.

Related Policies and Plans

Finally, the fourth section will conclude with **cross-references** to any existing plans, ordinances, design guidance, or policy language that support the Complete Streets policy or will be superseded by it.

Definitions

A list of definitions will be included with the policy to reinforce the policy’s stated purpose, highlight the responsibilities of local officials and staff during implementation of the policy, and – most importantly – reduce any ambiguity in the terminology used throughout the policy. Definitions of important terms are included in the Model Ordinance in the appendix.

Applicability

The third part of the Complete Streets policy to be developed will identify which **types of projects and phases of a project** that the jurisdiction would like to apply the policy. The types of projects can be detailed in this section or cross-referenced in the definitions section under “Street Project” (or another similar phrase). Similarly, the agencies/departments to which this policy applies can be defined in this part of the policy or cross-referenced in the definitions section under “Project Sponsor” (or another similar phrase).

Types of projects could include:

- New construction
- Reconstruction/retrofit
- Rehabilitation
- Resurfacing
- Repaving
- Restriping
- Upgrades, improvements, and enhancements

Phases of projects could include:

- Planning
- Scoping
- Design
- Approval process
- Implementation (construction, reconstruction, alternative, or retrofit)
- Operation
- Maintenance

Exceptions

Effective policy implementation requires a detailed description of **exceptions** to the Complete Streets requirements. The exception process must also be transparent by providing public notice with an opportunity for comment (public meeting or an online posting) and clear, supportive documentation justifying the exception.

Potential exceptions may include:

- Accommodation is not necessary on corridors where Targeted User Groups are prohibited, such as interstate highways. Exclusion of certain users on particular corridors should not exempt projects from accommodating other permitted users.
- Cost of accommodation is excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use.
- A documented absence of current and future need, with due consideration given to future users, latent demand, and the social and economic value of providing a safer and more convenient transportation system for all users.
- Emergency repairs such as a water main leaks or road repairs that require immediate, rapid response; however, temporary accommodations for all modes should still be made.
- Transit accommodations are not required where there is no existing or planned transit service.
- Routine maintenance of the transportation network that does not change the roadway geometry or operations, such as mowing, sweeping, cleaning, spot repair, and interim measures on detour routes.
- Where a reasonable and equivalent project along the same corridor is already programmed to provide the same or similar facilities as the proposed project at hand.
- Projects with a total cost below a specified threshold (\$X).

There must be a clear process for granting these exceptions, preferably with approval from the governing body or responsible committee. (planning board, conservation commission, etc.) Establishing this within a Complete Streets policy provides clarity to local officials and staff charged with implementing the policy and improves transparency and accountability to other agencies and residents.

Land Use and Context Sensitivity

There is no one-size fits all Complete Streets policy that is appropriate for all communities or all areas within a community, a single policy may not be appropriate for all roadway types. To address this, a jurisdiction can incorporate context-sensitive policy language that specifies various roadway classifications within a jurisdiction. To better integrate land use into the Complete Streets policy, a jurisdiction can also consider the inclusion of “community context” as a factor in decision-making or just mention it as a potential factor.

Complete Streets principles include the development and implementation of projects in a context-sensitive manner that is sensitive to the community’s physical, economic, and social setting that considers stakeholder and community values. The overall goal of this approach is to preserve and enhance scenic, aesthetic, historical, neighborhood character, and environmental resources while improving or maintaining safety, mobility, and infrastructure conditions.

A complete streets policy in a rural area will look much different than those adopted in an urban or suburban area. For a town center, the complete streets policy could include improving pedestrian access to from neighborhoods to businesses and services by adding sidewalks, crosswalks, and curb extensions. The complete streets policy for a village center could be focused on creating shared spaces for pedestrians and vehicles, with designated parking areas and enhanced landscaping to create a more inviting environment. Outside of town and village centers, complete streets policies could focus on prioritizing safety with advisory/paved shoulders, pedestrian lanes, and multi-use paths.

Below are a number of examples of agencies using specific priorities, context, and categories to inform their policies and implement solutions.

- **Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)** recently revised its statewide [Complete Streets policy](#) and developed a [Complete Streets Handbook](#) (2022) to assist with implementation. To help staff identify modal priorities for a given roadway, MnDOT also developed a [hierarchy tool](#). The tool incorporates data on expected traffic volumes, vulnerable road user, and other factors.

- **Northeast Georgia Regional Commission** documents a typology of all thoroughfares (as identified by posted speed limit and the “intent” of the street) and recommended Complete Streets design elements with its [Complete Streets Guide](#) (2020).
- **Miami-Dade** break from traditional street classifications to show street typologies with special planning overlays and land use typologies within its [Complete Streets Design Guidelines](#) (2016).
- **The North Carolina Department of Transportation** designates in its [Complete Streets Planning & Design Guidelines](#) (2012) urban, suburban, and rural area types; provides an overview quality of service metrics for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders; and creates a matrix for implementation of design elements that are appropriate for a given area and street to provide a specified service quality.
- **Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization** uses Complete Street checklists for corridors and programs within its [Complete Streets Evaluation Toolkit](#) (2015).

Design Guidance

The municipality will adopt project design standards as part of the policy adoption process. These guidelines could be a new document or be an updated version of a current set of roadway specifications used by the community. The design guidance document will contain information on roadway repairs as well as the commonly used complete streets roadway treatments.

Adoption of the design guidance document would be done within a specific timeframe (60 days, 90 days, etc.) using the decision-making process noted above. There are many examples of design guidance and complete streets toolkits from state and local agencies across the country that can be used to base a local policy.

Implementation

This section will establish how the community will implement the complete streets policy. There are many different ways the community can accomplish implementation, including:

- Establishing Project Review / Selection Criteria
- Tracking improvements (project completion)
- Setting Performance Metrics, and
- Creating a public engagement plan and timeline (could be incorporated into an existing plan)

This section will also contain details on the local board/committee/governing body responsible for implementing and enforcing the policy (oversight/review of policy activities and decision-making)

Performance Measures

In order to monitor and fully understand progress that is being made towards the implementation of Complete Streets, the community shall establish internal and external performance measures as part of the Complete Streets ordinance. Here is an example showing the categories and metrics to measure the internal implementation of the Complete Streets ordinance:

Category	Metrics
Ordinance	1) Percentage of policies updated to comply with Complete Streets ordinance 2) Number of exemptions granted
Personnel	1) Number of staff trainings completed 2) Number of community engagement activities

The community shall use the categories and metrics listed below to measure the external implementation of the Complete Streets ordinance:

Category	Metrics
Safety	1) Number of crashes resulting in fatalities and/or serious injury 2) Crash location
Infrastructure	1) Amount of new sidewalks built 2) Amount of existing sidewalks repaired 3) Amount of new trails/bike lanes built 4) Number of connective* projects completed
Economic Development	1) Retail sales 2) Number of visitors

Appendix: Model Ordinance Language

Intent

Ordinance No. _____

AN ORDINANCE OF THE [GOVERNING BODY] OF [JURISDICTION] ADOPTING A COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

WHEREAS, the purpose of a complete streets policy is to create an equitable, balanced, and effective transportation system where every street user can travel safely and comfortably and where sustainable transportation options are available to everyone;

WHEREAS, Make streets safer, more comfortable, and more convenient for users of all travel modes, including walking, using mobility aids, bicycling, riding public transportation, and driving motor vehicles;

WHEREAS, to formalize the planning, design, operation, and maintenance of streets so they are safe for all ages and abilities and provide a multi-modal transportation network;

NOW THEREFORE, it is the intent of the [Governing Body], in enacting this ordinance to *[insert community's motivation for pursuing a Complete Streets policy, such as "encourage healthy, active living, reduce traffic congestion and fossil fuel use, and improve the safety and quality of life"]* for residents of [jurisdiction] by providing *[insert statement of multimodal focus, such as "safe, convenient, and comfortable routes for walking, bicycling, and public transit"]*.

[Article/Chapter] of the [jurisdiction's code] is hereby amended to read as follows:

VISION. The purpose of this [Article / Chapter] is that [jurisdiction] *[shall provide; will encourage]* *[insert more detailed statement of multimodal focus, such as "safe, convenient, and comfortable routes for walking, bicycling, and public transportation that encourage increase use of these modes of transportation and meet the needs of users of the street"]* in order to create a complete, connected transportation network.

TARGETED USERS. [Jurisdiction] recognizes that users of various modes of transportation, including but not limited to, *[insert list of at least four targeted user groups, including pedestrians and bicyclists]*, are legitimate users of the transportation network and deserve facilities that support safer travel.

RELATED. [Jurisdiction] hereby acknowledges that this policy is in addition to and/or supersedes the [Local Plan Name]...

[insert cross-references to any existing plans, ordinances, design guidance, or policy language that support the Complete Streets policy or will be superseded by the policy.]

Examples include Community's comprehensive plan, transportation plan, pedestrian safety plans, bicycle plans, accessibility guidelines (ADA compliance), land use regulations, traffic calming strategies, and relevant state or federal transportation policies.

Definitions

DEFINITIONS. The following words and phrases, whenever used in this [Article / Chapter], shall have the meanings defined in this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

Street – Any right of way, *[public or private,]* including arterials, collectors, local streets, alleys, bridges, tunnels, and any other portion of the transportation network.

Street Project – The planning, scoping, design, approval process, implementation (construction, reconstruction, alteration, or retrofit), operation, monitoring, and maintenance of any Street, except that “Street Project” does not include *[insert exceptions from]*.

Targeted User Group – A category of travelers along a Street by transportation mode, such as *[insert traveler categories including pedestrians, bicyclists, low-speed vehicle users, light-duty motor vehicle drivers, electric vehicle drivers, mid- and heavy-duty motor commercial drivers, transit operators, agricultural vehicle operators, and emergency responders]*.

Vulnerable Users – A user group most at risk for serious injury or death when involved in a traffic collision, including but not limited to *[insert high-risk user groups including pedestrians, bicyclists, children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities]*.

Pedestrians – Any person walking, standing, or using a mobility-assist device such as a wheelchair, walker, cane, or crutches along a Street.

Bicyclists – Any person or group of persons riding or parking a bicycle along a Street, including but not limited to standard bicycle, tandem bicycle, recumbent bicycle, cargo bicycle, or electric-assist bicycle.

Complete Streets – Consideration of the needs of all transportation user groups along and across streets, intersections, and crossings in a manner that is sensitive to the local context; recognizes that needs vary in urban, suburban, and rural settings; and gives additional consideration to the safety and accommodation of Target User Groups *[or Vulnerable Users]* during a Street Project.

Complete Streets infrastructure – Design features that contribute to a safe, convenient, or comfortable travel experience for users, including but not limited to features such as: Sidewalks; shared use paths; shared use, vehicle and pedestrian street designations; bicycle lanes; automobile lanes; paved shoulders; street trees and landscaping; planting strips; curbs; accessible curb ramps; bulb outs; crosswalks; refuge islands; pedestrian and traffic signals, including countdown and accessible signals; signage; street furniture; bicycle parking facilities; narrow vehicle lanes; raised medians; and if the city funds a traffic calming program, traffic calming devices such as rotary circles, traffic humps, and surface treatments such as paving blocks, textured asphalt, and concrete.

Project Sponsor – The individual agency that supports the project manager by keeping projects aligned with overall goals, communicating with stakeholder groups and senior management, securing commitments from stakeholders, and managing project resources.

Active Transportation Facilities (or whichever term will be used for CS elements) – Infrastructure elements related to human-powered mobility including but not limited to sidewalks, crosswalks, speed humps/bumps, curb extensions/bump-outs, bike lanes, and medians and mean refuge islands.

Applicability

Applicable Projects (example 1) Every *[Street Project]* on public right-of-way shall *[or should]* incorporate Complete Streets infrastructure sufficient to enable reasonably safe travel along and across the right-of-way for each Targeted User Group, as identified in the *[Design Guidance]* Section. The following project types will be evaluated for the potential inclusion or expansion of active transportation facilities.

- New construction
- Reconstruction/retrofit
- Rehabilitation

- Resurfacing
- Repaving
- Restriping
- Upgrades, improvements, and enhancements

[If breaking out new construction from other types of projects:] If the safety and convenience of the Targeted User Groups can be improved within the scope of pavement resurfacing, restriping, or signalization operations on public *[or private]* Streets, such projects shall *[or should]* implement Complete Streets infrastructure to increase safety for the Target User Groups.

Applicable Projects (example 2) *For municipality/county policies*

- Policy requires all new construction and reconstruction/retrofit projects to account for the needs of all modes of transportation and all users of the road network.
- Policy requires all maintenance projects and ongoing operations, such as resurfacing, repaving, restriping, rehabilitation, or other types of changes to the transportation system to account for the needs of all modes of transportation and all users of the road network.

Applicable Projects (example 3)

Policy specifies the need to provide accommodation for all modes of transportation to continue to use the road safely and efficiently during any construction or repair work that infringes on the right of way and/or sidewalk.

Maintenance of Traffic Plans. *[The Project Sponsor]* shall *[or encourages; may]* provide accommodation for specified Targeted User Groups to continue to use the Street safely and efficiently during any construction or repair work that infringes on the right of way *[, pathway, walkway, or bikeway]*.

Exceptions

Exceptions. Such infrastructure may be excluded, upon written approval by *[governing body and/or responsible party]*

- Accommodation is not necessary on corridors where specific users are prohibited, such as interstate freeways or pedestrian malls. Exclusion of certain users on particular corridors should not exempt projects from accommodating other permitted users.
- Cost of accommodation is excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use.
- A documented absence of current and future need.
- Emergency repairs such as a water main leak that require an immediate, rapid response; however, temporary accommodations for all modes should still be made. Depending on the severity of the repairs, opportunities to improve multimodal access should still be considered where possible.
- Transit accommodations are not required where there is no existing or planned transit service.
- Routine maintenance of the transportation network that does not change the roadway geometry or operations, such as mowing, sweeping, and spot repair.
- Where a reasonable and equivalent project along the same corridor is already programmed to provide facilities exempted from the project at hand.

Example 1 When an affected roadway prohibits, by law, use by specified users (such as a pedestrian mall), in which case a reasonable and equivalent project shall be designated to accommodate those specified users elsewhere, including on roadways that provide similar access to a route or destination; ii. When the

activities are ordinary maintenance activities designed to keep assets in serviceable condition (e.g., mowing, cleaning, sweeping, spot repair, and surface treatments such as chip seal)

Example 2 Transportation infrastructure may only be excluded, upon approval of the [Governing body and/or responsible department], where documentation and data indicate that costs or impacts of accommodation are excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use or future use. Further, the [Name of the community] shall use existing public notification protocol, as well as social media and public open houses, to inform residents and community stakeholders of proposed exceptions to using the Policy in order to gather community input before a final determination is made.

An exception shall [or should] be granted by [governing body] only if:

- A request for an exception is submitted in writing, with supporting documentation, and made publicly available with a minimum of [30 days] allowed for public input; and
- The exception is approved in writing by the [governing body and/or responsible party] and the written approval is made publicly available.

Land Use and Context Sensitivity

Land Use. Land use policies must [or should] support the [jurisdiction's] Complete Streets vision by promoting [insert list of related land use considerations, such as transit-oriented development], where appropriate. The [jurisdiction] shall [or should] require specific evidence in all new or revised land use policies, plans, zoning ordinances, or equivalent documents about how they support the [jurisdiction's] Complete Streets policy.

All transportation projects must be sensitive to the surrounding land uses, current and planned, as documented in the [jurisdiction's] [Master Plan, Comprehensive land use plan, Subdivision Regulations, Conservation Commission related ordinances and other relevant plans and policies].

Design Guidance

Design Guidance. The [jurisdiction] shall [or should] update current or develop new plans, subdivision codes, laws, procedures, rules, regulations, and guidelines, including [insert name of comprehensive plan and any other relevant document names], to integrate, accommodate, and balance the needs of all Targeted User Groups in all transportation projects taking place on public rights-of-way.

Design Guidance (example 1) Complete Streets design recommendations shall be incorporated into all publicly and privately funded projects, unless approved for an exception by the [governing body] as appropriate. All transportation infrastructure and street design projects requiring funding or approval by the [Jurisdiction] as well as projects funded by the State and/or Federal government shall adhere to [Jurisdiction] Complete Streets Policy.

The Complete Streets Policy will focus on developing a connected, integrated network that serves all road users. Complete Streets will be integrated into policies, planning, and design of all types of public and private projects, including new construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, repair, and maintenance of transportation facilities on streets and redevelopment projects. To the greatest extent possible, the [Jurisdiction] shall work to incorporate native plant species and sustainable landscaping elements into Complete Streets projects.

All Street Projects [within public right of way] shall [or should] conform to the following standards unless granted an exception by the [governing body]:

[Jurisdiction can adopt any of the following guidance by reference]:

- American Association of State Highway & Transportation Officials (AASHTO)

- *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*
 - *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*
 - *Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operations of Pedestrian Facilities*
- Federal Highway Administration
 - *Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)*
- National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)
 - *Urban Bikeway Design Guide*
 - *Urban Street Design Guide*
 - *Transit Street Design Guide*
- U.S. Access Board
 - *Accessible Public Rights-of-Way: Planning & Designing for Alterations*
- Alta Planning + Design
 - *Small Town and Rural Design Guide*
- *[insert state, regional, and local design guidance]*
- Additionally, the design guidance, standards, and recommendations listed above shall be updated at least once every five (5) years.

Implementation

Priorities. While this ordinance applies throughout the community, *[jurisdiction]* shall develop plans and set goals to prioritize and ensure successful implementation of Complete Streets in *[insert statement on priority areas that further refines the targeted user groups, such as neighborhoods or populations that have experienced historic disinvestment, poor health outcomes, or heavy development pressure]*.

When considering the various elements of street design, the *[jurisdiction]* shall *[or should]* give priority as follows:

- *[Ex. "Safety is an imperative, and vulnerable road users have the highest priority. The jurisdiction shall prioritize projects in areas where data indicate crash risk and health disparities."]*
- *[Ex. "Street design elements that encourage and support walking, bicycling, and transit trips in a manner that considers the context of the surrounding community as well as the broader urban design needs of the jurisdiction."]*
- *[Ex. "The jurisdiction recognizes that not all modes receive the same degree of accommodations on every street, but the goal is for all users of all ages and abilities to safely, comfortably, and conveniently travel across and through the network."]*

Public Participation. *[insert appropriate agency or agencies]* shall *[or should]* establish procedures to allow full public participation in policy decisions and transparency in individual determinations concerning the design and use of Streets. *[Alternative: The jurisdiction can develop a community engagement plan or incorporate into the existing plan for public engagement in the project selection, design, and implementation process. The engagement plan shall include equitable community engagement strategies.]*

Implementing Agency. *[insert appropriate agency or agencies]* shall *[or should]* implement, administer, and enforce this *[Article / Chapter]*. *[Agency]* is hereby authorized to issue all rules and regulations consistent with this *[Article / Chapter]* and shall *[or should]* have necessary powers to carry out the purpose of and enforce this *[Article / Chapter]*.

[Jurisdiction] shall organize a "Complete Streets Committee" for the purpose of initial implementation of the ordinance. After such steps have been completed, the name shall be changed to the "Bicycle and Pedestrian

Advisory Committee” and it shall serve as the permanent advisory committee for Complete Streets projects and bicycle and pedestrian endeavors. In both the initial and permanent form, the committee can be composed of the following:

- One elected official
- One school official
- One local business owner or member of a chamber of commerce
- Two members of the community who rely on a mode of transportation besides a motor vehicle as a primary means of transportation
- One health official
- Two representatives from a) a neighborhood with historic disinvestment, b) a neighborhood with poor health outcomes, or c) an area with diminished access to transportation options
- One sustainability official
- One municipal staff employee who serves in an advisory role

The Complete Streets Committee, in collaboration with appropriate staff, shall collect and publicize the performance measures identified in this ordinance.

Statutory Limitations. This Ordinance shall be construed so as not to conflict with applicable federal or state laws, rules, or regulations. Nothing in this Ordinance authorizes any *[agency in the jurisdiction]* to impose any duties or obligations in conflict with limitations on municipal authority established by federal or state law at the time such agency action is taken.

Severability. In the event that a court or agency of competent jurisdiction holds that a federal or state law, rule, or regulation invalidates any clause, sentence, paragraph, or section of this Ordinance or the application thereof to any person or circumstances, it is the intent of the Ordinance that the court or agency sever such clause, sentence, paragraph, or section so that the remainder of this Ordinance remains in effect.

Enforcement. In undertaking the enforcement of this Ordinance, *[jurisdiction]* is assuming only an undertaking to promote the general welfare. It is not assuming, nor is it imposing on its officers and employees, an obligation through which it might incur liability in monetary damages to any person who claims that a breach proximately caused injury.

Appendix: Key Elements of a Complete Streets Ordinance

Vision and Intent – This part of the ordinance lays out what Complete Streets are and how the implementation of this ordinance will help to make that vision a reality

Diverse Users – This section recognizes the various users of the ordinance, not just in terms of mode and typical elements considered in diversity, but also goes a step further to identify the need to assist particular areas of the jurisdiction that have been harmed by past policies.

Full Commitment – This component further emphasizes that as an overall ordinance, Complete Streets in the municipality will work to support the needs of all road users.

Clear Exceptions – This portion of the ordinance outlines where specifically a Complete Streets ordinance can NOT be applied and how such a determination is made.

Jurisdiction – This component of the ordinance identifies who must comply and who must collaborate in order for the ordinance to be effectively implemented.

Design – This section outlines potential resources that can inform elements of future projects developed once the ordinance is adopted.

Land Use and Context Sensitivity – This portion identifies ways that the ordinance will interact with land use and define how projects will meet the needs and desires of the immediate community where they will be developed.

Performance Measures – This section outlines the ways in which the municipality will work to determine how successfully it is implementing the Complete Streets ordinance.

Project Selection Criteria – This section is meant to help the municipality determine which opportunities should move up and down on the list of projects undertaken.

Implementation Steps – The implementation section outlines the specific steps the municipality will take to bring Complete Streets to fruition.

Appendix: Model Resolution

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A COMPLETE STREETS POLICY FOR THE [Name of the Community] [Name of the State]

WHEREAS, a "complete street" is designed to be a transportation corridor for all users: pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and motorists. Complete streets are designed and operated to enable safe, continuous travel networks for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and bus riders of all ages and abilities are able to safely move from destination to destination along and across a network of complete streets; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of a complete streets program is to create an equitable, balanced, and effective transportation system where every street user can travel safely and comfortably and where sustainable transportation options are available to everyone; and

WHEREAS, transportation improvements, facilities and amenities that may contribute to complete streets and that are considered as elements of a "complete street" include: street and sidewalk lighting; pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements; access improvements, including compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act; public transit facilities accommodation including, but not limited to, pedestrian access improvement to transit stops and stations; street trees and landscaping; drainage; and street amenities; and

WHEREAS, the [Name of the Community] supports incorporating "complete streets" elements into its transportation projects, where economically and technically feasible, in order to provide appropriate accommodation for bicyclists, pedestrians, transit users, and persons of all abilities, while promoting safe operation for all users, in comprehensive and connected networks in a manner consistent with, and supportive of, the surrounding community; and

WHEREAS, the [Name of the Community] supports including complete streets principles in its planning documents, upon subsequent updates, and in other public works and engineering plans, manuals, rules, regulations, operational standards, and programs as appropriate; and

WHEREAS, it is a goal of the [Name of the Community] to foster partnerships with the [State] and neighboring communities in consideration of functional facilities and accommodations in furtherance of the [Name of the Community]'s complete streets policy and the continuation of such facilities and accommodations beyond the city's borders; and

WHEREAS, the [Name of the Community] recognizes that complete streets may be achieved through single elements incorporated into a particular project or incrementally through a series of smaller improvements or maintenance activities over time; and

WHEREAS, the [Name of the Community] supports drawing upon possible funding sources to plan and implement this policy and investigating grants that may be available to make complete streets elements more economically feasible.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the [jurisdiction governing body] that the attached Complete Streets Policy is hereby adopted.

[Municipality can include the text of their policy here including: Vision & Purpose, Core Commitment, Best Practices (Context, Design standards, Eval of performance measures, Partnerships, Implementation)]

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the [Governing Body] of the [Name of the Community] the ____ day of ____.

Appendix: Project Selection Checklist Template

1. What accommodations for pedestrians currently exist within the proposed project limits? Please describe all checked items.
 - ☐ Sidewalks
 - ☐ Crosswalks/Crosswalk Markings
 - ☐ ADA-compliant curb ramps
 - ☐ Pedestrian Activated Traffic Signals
 - ☐ Pedestrian Crossing Pavement Marking/Pedestrian or School Zone Signage.
2. What Accommodations for bicyclists currently exist within the proposed project limits? Please describe all checked items.
 - ☐ Off-Road Improved Surface Path. Specify Surface: _____
 - ☐ Off-Road Unimproved Surface Path. Specify Surface: _____
 - ☐ On-Road Bike Lane(s)
 - ☐ Sharrows
 - ☐ Bike Parking Facilities (Public / Private)
3. If no pedestrian or bicycle facilities current exist within the project area, please describe relative location of and access to nearest pedestrian and bicycle facilities
4. What trip generators exist in the vicinity of the project area that attract pedestrians and/or bicyclists?
 - ☐ Schools
 - ☐ Central Business District
 - ☐ Medical Facilities
 - ☐ Parks
 - ☐ Other Shopping
 - ☐ Senior Facilities
 - ☐ Other (Please describe):
5. If there have been stakeholder or public meetings regarding the proposed project, what comments have been received from the public regarding pedestrian/bicycle accommodations?
6. What accommodations, if any, are included for pedestrians and/pr bicyclsts in the proposed project design? Please describe:
 - ☐ Sidewalks
 - ☐ Crosswalks/Crosswalk Markings
 - ☐ ADA-compliant curb ramps
 - ☐ Pedestrian Activated Traffic Signals
 - ☐ Pedestrian Crossing Pavement Marking/Pedestrian or School Zone Signage
 - ☐ Off-Road Improved Surface Path. Specify Surface
 - ☐ Off-Road Unimproved Surface Path. Specify Surface
 - ☐ On-Road Bike Lane(s)
 - ☐ Sharrows
 - ☐ Bike Parking Facilities
 - ☐ Other
7. Will the proposed project remove an existing pedestrian/bicycle facility or block or hinder pedestrian/bicycle movements? If so, why?
8. How will Pedestrian bicycle access be maintained during construction?
9. Does the project help to extend intermodal transportation systems? Please describe.
10. If funding were available, could the project limits/project scope be expanded to further improve interconnectivity of intermodal transportation systems? If so, please describe:

Checklist Completed: _____
Name/Title

Date

Appendix: Resources

This appendix contains a list of resources from a variety of sources that can help in creating a complete streets policy, drafting design guidelines, or preparing other types of road safety studies.

[Road Diet FAQ Sheet](#) Federal Highways Administration

[Road Diet Informational Guide](#) Federal Highways Administration

[Traffic Calming ePrimer](#) Federal Highways Administration

[Low Speed, Low Volume Roadways Can Be Shared](#) NACTO

[Promoting Walking and Bicycling Accommodations in New Hampshire](#) New Hampshire Department of Transportation

[Complete Streets](#) New Hampshire Business and Economic Affairs

[Busting the Myths about Complete Streets](#) Active Transportation Alliance

[Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks](#) FHWA, ALTA Planning. Rural Design Guide

[Roadway Cross-Section Reallocation: A Guide](#) National Academies

[Pop-Up Traffic Calming Guide](#) Bike Walk Montana

[Slow Your Street Guide](#) One STL

[Pop-Up Placemaking Toolkit](#) AARP

[Where the Duct Tape Meets the Road](#) Safe Routes Partnership

[Bridging Bicycle Promotion and Emergency Response](#) Streets Blog SF

- [Burlington Public Works Quick-Build Design and Materials Standards Guide \(Burlington Vermont Public Works and partners, undated\)](#)
- [Primer Pop-Up Traffic Calming & Placemaking](#)
- [Big Sky/ Rural Communities Traffic Calming Toolkit](#)
- [Demonstration Project Implementation Guide \(Minnesota DOT, 2019\)](#)

Examples of Complete Streets policies in New Hampshire

Several examples of complete streets policies across the state can be found at the StoryMap link below:

- <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/952fc598a56c46f588227de59adfe652>.

Samples of Complete Streets policies and other documents are listed below:

- Town of Harrisville [adopted a resolution](#) identifying the vision & purpose, goals, scope of applicability, intergovernmental cooperation and implementation.
- Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission
 - Model [Resolution](#)
 - Model [Policy Template](#)
- [Complete Streets in the Nashua Region \(developed by Nashua Regional Planning Commission\)](#)
- [City of Keene Complete Streets Resolution](#)
- [Town of Troy Complete Streets Policy](#)

Examples of Complete Streets Policies from other States

Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) recently revised its statewide [Complete Streets policy](#) and developed a [Complete Streets Handbook](#) (2022) to assist with implementation. To help staff identify modal priorities for a given roadway, MnDOT also developed a [hierarchy tool](#). The tool incorporates data on expected traffic volumes, vulnerable road user, and other factors.

Northeast Georgia Regional Commission documents a typology of all thoroughfares (as identified by posted speed limit and the “intent” of the street) and recommended Complete Streets design elements with its [Complete Streets Guide](#) (2020).

The North Carolina Department of Transportation designates in its [Complete Streets Planning & Design Guidelines](#) (2012) urban, suburban, and rural area types; provides an overview quality of service metrics for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders; and creates a matrix for implementation of design elements that are appropriate for a given area and street to provide a specified service quality.

Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization uses Complete Street checklists for corridors and programs within its [Complete Streets Evaluation Toolkit](#) (2015).

Southern Georgia Regional Commission a collection of best practices for complete streets in rural communities highlighting different treatments for different contexts and types of districts.
[Best Practices for Complete Streets in Rural Communities](#)