COMPLETE STREETS
POLICY PLANNING PROCESS FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

JANUARY 2025

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PURPOSE

A Complete Street is a road that is designed to be safe for drivers; bicyclists; transit vehicles and users; and pedestrians of all ages and abilities. This is a transportation design approach that 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. Rather, each jurisdiction should assess its interrelated transportation and land use needs to create a policy that reflects the local context. Although the addition of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is a common focus of many Complete Streets policies, due to a historic lack of investment and a growing desire for safer micromobility facilities, other considerations include farm vehicles, low-volume roads, low-speed electric vehicles, scooters and mopeds, motorcycles, transit and paratransit, taxi and Technology Network Companies (such as Lyft and Uber), freight and commercial vehicles, passenger vehicles (including high-occupancy passenger vehicles), and emergency responders. Effective Complete Streets policies clearly identify the specific needs that their community wants to address. In addition, these policies make it easier for agencies and developers to understand the community's expectations while creating a process to hold them accountable for achieving these expectations. [i]

BACKGROUND

The origin of the "Complete Streets" policy initiative first came into being in the early 2000s. The term was coined by America Bikes, a non-profit transportation advocacy group, to highlight the need for promoting safety among all users of a street, regardless of mode, age, or ability. To advance the goals of the initiative, 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). Today, the term has become a regular part of the planning profession's vocabulary, and the National Complete Streets Coalition documents approximately 500 communities and agencies across the country with an adopted Complete Streets policy. This document explains the key steps in planning and developing processes for implementing the Complete Streets Policy.

ENGAGEMENT

Complete Streets policies function best when they accurately represent a community's vision for its transportation network. Identification of "champions" within the community, including elected officials and key stakeholders, to encourage public feedback during the development process is critical to documenting the community's vision and for seeking adoption of the policy. The goals identified from the regional transportation plan could be utilized as the first step in the engagement process.

To encourage community engagement and provide transparency with the public, it will help to work with communities and create a webpage to host all information related to this project.

Initial Staff-level Consultation – This can occur with the jurisdiction staff and any available Complete Streets "champions" from the area to develop the overarching framework for the draft policy, including preferred legislative action, language to include in the vision section, applicable projects section, exceptions section, and overall preference on how binding the language should be.[ii]

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: [iii]

- **Ordinance** – 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.

Public Workshops – It is advised to facilitate public workshops to solicit feedback from people living and working in the region on what transportation facilities are generally desired on a given street typology to inform context. The format for the workshops could be an open-house format with interactive stations and no formal presentation to allow attendees additional flexibility on arrival and departure times.

It is encouraged to share meeting flyers with homeowner associations, neighborhood associations, business associations, advocacy groups, employers, citizen advisory committees, bike/ped committees/groups, transit agencies, freight operators, local municipal representatives, and members of relevant municipal committees.

It is encouraged to meet with each city board to seek feedback. A public survey at this initial phase will allow people unable to attend the in-person workshops to still provide feedback.

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

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 each area. This data can also be used to

prove the effectiveness of infrastructure, such as traffic calming treatments or roadway changes, or comparing vehicle speeds before and during a pop-up event.

Pop-Up Complete Streets Demonstration – Pop-Up Demonstration Projects enable communities to experience the value of new infrastructure without having to commit to it long-term. These are short-term infrastructure installations that utilize temporary, low-cost materials like washable paint, traffic tape, planter boxes, flexible bollards, and cones to temporarily reconfigure streets. Pop-Up Demonstrations typically can last for around a week, and survey and observational data can be collected before, during, and after the demonstration to help public and the community officials better understand project benefits and impacts. It is helpful to work with local community groups such as bicycle/pedestrian advocacy groups, school districts, parent teacher associations, student volunteers, and local chambers of commerce.[iv] Example projects are included in the resources section.

Considerations for the local/regional Complete Streets Policy committee/team:
- Funding – What funding sources are out there that can be used to support complete streets projects?
- Designs – Will the jurisdiction 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 the DOT 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 are 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

Using the engagement process and feedback from staff, elected officials, and the public, the specific language for 11 policy elements can be drafted. As detailed in the tasks below, each policy element 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. The standard language and context-specific language options were developed from Complete Streets case studies and best practices collected across the country by Smart Growth America and ChangeLabSolutions. This model language is meant to give guidance to the development of a comprehensive policy, but it is not meant to be prescriptive. The intention is to stimulate broad thinking about the types of provisions a community might wish to explore.[v]

INTENT

The first section of the policy will list the findings which supply a variety of evidence-based conclusions that support the need for the adoption and implementation of a Complete Streets policy. Examples could include crash history, goals included in a comprehensive plan or other adopted plans, previous resolutions or ordinances, public health outcomes, population statistics, and requested building permits. The findings section is part of the policy, but it usually does not become codified in the local government code.

The second section of the policy will establish the 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 the jurisdiction's **vision** by describing its motivation for pursuing a Complete Streets policy. Examples of **motivating factors** include reducing a jurisdiction's share of capital costs for new transportation infrastructure spurred by development, growth management, economic development, public health, safety, accessibility, resiliency, equity, quality of life, or environmental protection outcomes. By clearly identifying the intention behind pursuing a Complete Streets policy, the jurisdiction is able to develop the policy language in a way that best reflects the community's needs and desired outcomes.[vi]

Factors to include:
- **Safety** – Reduce the risk of crashes and improve safety outcomes.
- **Accessibility** – Improve the ability of residents to reach destinations that support their everyday needs, like workplaces, schools, grocery stores, and medical facilities through a safer auto-oriented network or alternative modes of transportation.
- **Shared Burden** – Hold developers financially responsible for infrastructure-related costs associated with proposed developments.
- **Quality of Life** – Improve access to recreational opportunities, develop new trail connections, expand the number of available multi-modal transportation options, and improve the affordability of transportation in the region. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect the environment.
- **Resiliency** – Better prepare a community's transportation system to recover from natural hazards and unexpected events.

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 are included in this document **(Definition).**

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. This section may be merged with the design guidance-related clauses included in this document **(Design).**

Model Ordinance Language

Ordinance No. _____

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

WHEREAS, *[insert background information that has informed the need for this policy]*
WHEREAS, *[insert background information that has informed the need for this policy]*
WHEREAS, *[insert background information that has informed the need for this policy]*

NOW THEREFORE, it is the intent of the [adopting 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. *[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.]*

DEFINITIONS

A list of definitions will be included within the second part of the policy to reinforce the policy's stated purpose, highlight the responsibilities of individual parties during implementation of the policy, and – most importantly – reduce any ambiguity in the terminology used throughout the policy.

Model Ordinance Language

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.

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.

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 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
- Monitoring
- Maintenance

Model Ordinance Language

Applicable Projects. Every *[Street Project; or list out project types and phases]* on public *[or private]* Streets 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 *[Design Guidance]*.

Each Project of XX type will be evaluated for the potential inclusion or expansion of active transportation facilities (checklist template attached)

[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.

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]*.

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

A jurisdiction's formal commitment to the Complete Streets approach is only the beginning. Once the policy is adopted, additional steps and coordination are needed to ensure that the policy can be implemented. This process can be difficult because many different agencies build and maintain streets, such as state, county and local agencies, as well as private developers included under **developer coordination.** Overcoming this distribution of responsibilities requires interagency coordination and clearly defining roles within a jurisdiction's own departments (i.e., public health, housing, planning, engineering, public works, transportation, school district, transit, executive office/elected officials, etc.) and between multiple jurisdictions.

The first step that a jurisdiction can consider is developing or modifying its **project review process** to ensure that all required Complete Streets elements are being considered, as shown in **design guidance** included in this document. This process should begin during the planning phase of a Street Project, and it should identify the department or position responsible for conducting the compliance review.

Complete Streets-specific **training** for reviewers and department heads could also help to ensure that all departments are aware of their responsibilities within the Complete Streets policy. The training could focus on Complete Streets design, public engagement, and implementation. This training could also be expanded to educate community leaders and the general public on the jurisdiction's vision for Complete Streets. The best Complete Streets policies identify which staff members are required to attend the training and how frequently the training is provided.

In addition, a jurisdiction can create a **Complete Streets committee** to oversee coordination and implementation of the policy (or it can assign these responsibilities to an existing committee). The use of a committee can help to ensure accountability. An effective Complete Streets committee can specify membership for both external and internal stakeholders. These stakeholders can include representatives from advocacy groups, underinvested communities, and vulnerable populations. Examples of these underinvested and vulnerable groups are people of color, older adults, children, residents of low-income communities, non-native English speakers, those who do not own or cannot access a car, and those living with disabilities.

Model Ordinance Language

Interagency Coordination. *[insert appropriate jurisdictional agencies] [shall make; will consider]* Complete Streets practices a routine part of everyday operations, *[shall; will]* approach every transportation project and program as an opportunity to improve public *[and private]* streets and the transportation network for all users, and *[shall; will]* work in coordination with other departments, agencies, and jurisdictions to achieve Complete Streets.

The head of each participating agency or department shall *[or should]* report back to the *[jurisdiction] [within one year of the date of passage of this Ordinance; annually]* regarding the steps taken to implement this Ordinance, additional steps planned, and any desired actions that

would need to be taken by *[jurisdiction]* or other agencies or department to implement the steps taken or planned. *[Tailor this clause to direct agencies to carry out additional, specific implementation tasks, as appropriate.]*

Review Process. All initial planning and design studies *[health impact assessments, environmental reviews, and other project reviews]* for projects requiring funding or approval by *[jurisdiction]* shall *[or should]* evaluate the effect of the proposed project on safe travel by all Target User Groups and identify measures to mitigate any adverse impacts on such travel that are identified.

Complete Streets Committee. A committee is hereby created, to be composed of *[insert desired committee composition]* and appointed by the *[position or adopting body]* to forward *[jurisdiction's]* implementation of Complete Streets practices by:

- Addressing short-term and long-term steps and planning necessary to create a comprehensive and integrated transportation network serving the needs of all Targeted User Groups;
- Assessing potential obstacles to implementing Complete Streets practices in *[jurisdiction]*;
- If useful, recommending adoption of *[legislative action]* containing additional steps; and
- Proposing revisions to the *[insert name of comprehensive plan]*, zoning and subdivision codes, and other applicable law to integrate, accommodate, and balance the needs of Target User Groups in all Street Projects. The committee shall *[are encouraged to]* report on the matters within its purview to the *[adopting body]* within on year following the date of passage of this Ordinance.

Training. Trainings in how to integrate, accommodate, and balance the needs of each Targeted User Group shall *[or should]* be provided for planners, civil and traffic engineers, project managers, plan reviewers, inspectors, and other personnel responsible for the design and construction of Streets. Such trainings shall *[or may]* cover a range of topics: a basic introduction to the concept of Complete Streets, an exploration of advanced implementation questions, or an overview of how to apply new systems, policies, and requirements put in place by the jurisdiction to implement Complete Streets. Complete Streets training and workshops will be held annually in coordination with *[insert departments and agencies]*, which will send at least one representative to each training. Each representative is responsible for disseminating information learned within the training to their respective departments.

DEVELOPER COORDINATION

In the case of private developers, jurisdictional review may entail requiring the developer to demonstrate how they will address the Complete Streets policy in their project through the jurisdiction's application review and permitting process, with approval of the permit being contingent upon meeting the Complete Streets requirements laid out by the jurisdiction. The Complete Streets policy developed during this initiative will address how the jurisdiction can ensure that compliance with the policy is demonstrated by individual development submittals.

Any proposed future transfers of private investments must demonstrate full compliance with the Complete Streets Policy before the municipality will assume ownership. This part of the Complete Streets policy can be omitted if it is clear in previous parts that the policy applies to private developers and that the review process is already identified.

> ### Model Ordinance Language
> **Private Developer Coordination.** *[jurisdiction]* requires *[encourages]* private development to comply *[or follow]* Complete Streets approach and design guidance.

EXCEPTIONS

Effective policy implementation requires a **transparent process** for 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 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, 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 leak that require 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, 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).
- At the end of each year, any exceptions to the complete streets policy that were granted by administrative staff are reported to city/village council.

There must be a clear process for granting these exceptions, preferably with approval from senior management. Establishing this within a Complete Streets policy provides clarity to staff charged with implementing the policy and improves transparency and accountability to other agencies and residents.

Model Ordinance Language

Exceptions. Such infrastructure may be excluded, upon written approval by *[insert position title of senior management]*, where documentation and data indicate that:

- *[list exceptions]*

An exception shall *[or should]* be granted by *[jurisdiction, department, or 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 *[responsible department or position title]* and the written approval is made publicly available.

LAND USE INTEGRATION

An effective Complete Streets policy must be sensitive to the surrounding community including its current and planned buildings, facilities, and parks, as well as overlapping transportation projects. Complete Streets must be designed to serve the current and future land use, while land use policies and zoning ordinances must support Complete Streets within the given context of the project location (for example, this includes the promotion of less dense, single-family development in rural areas). Incorporating land use into a Complete Streets policy requires the identification of new or revised land use policies, plans, zoning ordinances, or equivalent documents to specify how they will support and be supported by the community's Complete Streets vision. A less binding approach would be for the Complete Streets policy to discuss the connection between land use and transportation, as well as including general recommendations on how to integrate land use and transportation planning. Conversely, a Complete Streets policy requires new or revised transportation plans and design guidance to specify how transportation projects will serve current and future and use, such as by defining streets based not just on transportation function but on the surrounding land use.

In addition, the National Complete Streets Coalition also encourages the consideration of **unintended consequences**, such as displacement of residents due to rising costs of living, within a Complete Streets policy. Additional consideration should be given to a lack of attainable or affordable housing within the area to which the Complete Streets policy applies.

Model Ordinance Language

Land Use. Land use policies and zoning ordinances 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 use context, current and planned, as documented in the *[jurisdiction's comprehensive land use plan and other relevant plans and policies]*.

Unintended Consequences. Unintended consequences, such as involuntary displacement, shall *[or should]* be avoided when possible *[or addressed with equity and fairness to the affected party]*.

CONTEXT

Just as there is no Complete Streets policy language that is appropriate for all jurisdictions or areas within a jurisdiction, a single policy may not be appropriate for all roadway types. To address this, a jurisdiction may desire to incorporate context-sensitive policy language that specifies various roadways within a jurisdiction. This flexibility can be incorporated into a policy by categorizing roadways into separate **classifications** and then developing separate user **hierarchies** for each classification. To better integrate land use into the Complete Streets policy, a jurisdiction can consider the inclusion of "community context" as a factor in decision-making or just mention it as a potential factor.

- **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

Complete Streets implementation relies on using the best and latest state-of-the-practice design standards and guidelines to maximize design flexibility. Creating meaningful change on the ground both at the project level and the creation of a complete, multimodal transportation networks requires jurisdictions to create and regularly update their existing design guidance and standards to advance the objectives of the Complete Streets policy.

This part of the Complete Streets policy will **direct the adoption** (or reference while not formally adopting) specific, state-of-the practice design guidance and may require the development/revision of internal design policies and guides within a specific timeframe using the decision-making process identified in Context section.

Model Ordinance Language

Design Guidance. *[Insert appropriate agencies]* shall *[or should]* review and either revise or develop proposed revisions to all appropriate plans, zoning, subdivision codes, laws, procedures, rules, regulations, guidelines, programs, templates, and design manuals, 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 Street Projects on public *[or private]* Streets. In design guidelines, *[insert appropriate agencies]* shall *[should]* coordinate templates with street classifications and revise them to include Complete Streets infrastructure, such as *[pathways, walkways, bikeways, and street crossings]*.

All Street Projects *[within public right of way]* shall *[or should]* conform to the following standards:

- 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*
- *[insert state, regional, and local design guidance]*

Because Complete Streets design is an evolving field, the latest edition of these standards shall [or should] be referenced for design guidance. Among the listed standards, AASHTO and MUTCD are considered the definitive design guides for changes within public right of way. This section of the Complete Streets policy shall *[or should]* be updated a minimum of every *[three years]* by the *[insert appropriate agency]* to ensure that the listing of design standards is current.

IMPLEMENTATION

In addition to directing the design of planned and proposed transportation projects by public agencies and private developers, a Complete Streets policy can help to direct the jurisdiction's **project selection criteria** for funding transportation projects. Criteria for determining the ranking of projects could include assigning weight to metrics that will lead to measurable progress towards the stated Complete Streets intent (i.e., enhancing active transportation infrastructure, access improvements for underserved communities or communities of concern, equity considerations, alleviating disparities in health factors,

improved safety, increased economic benefit, improved access to critical destinations, enhancing multimodal network connectivity for all users, etc.). These metrics can be quantitative or qualitative and specified in greater detail within the Performance Monitoring section.

These metrics should be routinely revised to reflect current conditions using public feedback. To provide public feedback on the metrics for project selection, a jurisdiction can create **a community engagement plan or include in an existing planning document.** The community engagement plan can establish a process for engaging Targeted User Groups or specific demographics that are relevant to the local context (i.e., non-Native English speakers, people with disabilities, etc.) and can set specific strategies for who, when, and how the jurisdiction will approach public engagement in the project selection, design, and implementation process.

Implementation of the community engagement plan may require the use of outreach strategies such as holding public meetings at easily accessible times and places (i.e. clinics, schools, parks, and community centers, etc.), collecting written and verbal input at community gathering spaces, and hosting and attending community meetings and events. The best community engagement plans do not require people to alter their daily routines to participate and specifically address how the jurisdiction will overcome barriers to engagement for underrepresented communities.

Model Ordinance Language

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 herby 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]*.

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.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Specific performance standards, with clear benchmarks and timeframes, greatly increase accountability and the ability to assess progress toward a goal. Communities with Complete Streets policies can measure success in a number of different ways, from quantifying the number or percent of a given Complete Streets element (e.g., miles of bikeways), highlighting specific policy outcomes (i.e., health, safety, economic development, resilience, etc.), or highlighting process outcomes (e.g., how well the public engagement process reached underrepresented groups). Performance measures can pay particular attention to how Complete Streets implementation impacts the communities of concern identified in the policy. Regardless of the approach, the selected performance measures should be specific and time bound. Policies should also set forth an accountable process to measure performance, including specifying who will be responsible for reporting on progress, how often these indicators will be tracked, and how they will be shared with the public.

Model Ordinance Language

Monitoring. *[insert appropriate agency or agencies]* shall *[or should]* put into place performance standards with measurable benchmarks reflecting the ability of Targeted User Groups to travel in safety and comfort.

[insert appropriate agency or agencies] shall *[or should]* collect data measuring how well Streets of the municipality are serving each Targeted User Group. These measures shall *[or should]* include:

- [Ex. "*Crash data by type of injury and modes involved*"]
- [Ex. "*Estimated level of service by mode*"]
- [Ex. "*Transit on-time performance*"]
- [Ex. "*Travel time reliability by mode*"]
- [Ex. "*Lane miles of bikeways in fair or good condition*"]
- [Ex. "*Lanes miles of sidewalks in fair or good condition*"]
- [Ex. "*Miles of pathways in fair or good condition*"]
- [Ex. "*Percent of commute mode share for walk- or bicycle-, or transit-to-work trips*"]

[insert appropriate agency or agencies] shall *[or should]* summarize progress towards performance standards *[every year]* in a report to the *[governing body or Complete Streets committee]*. The report must be made available to the public by posting it on *[website]*, and to the greatest extent possible, all underlying data used in preparing the report must be made available to the public.

RESOURCES

- https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road_diets/resources/pdf/fhwasa17021.pdf
- https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road_diets/resources/fhwasa16100/#n2
- https://highways.dot.gov/safety/other/road-diets/road-diet-informational-guide
- https://nacto.org/publication/urban-bikeway-design-guide/designing-ages-abilities-new/low-speed-low-volume-roadways-can-be-shared/
- https://www.dot.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt811/files/inline-documents/nhdot-bicycle-ped-guide.pdf
- https://www.nheconomy.com/office-of-planning-and-development/resources/complete-streets
- https://www.activetrans.org/sites/files/cs.pdf https://ruraldesignguide.com/
- https://www.trb.org/Publications/Blurbs/182870.aspx https://trailnet.org/our-work/planning/current-projects/
- https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5d2371db887b590001831b41/t/5df916ec9d4f1f00e2057028/1576605433323/POP-UP+GUIDE+FINAL.pdf https://trailnet.org/our-work/planning/current-projects/
- https://drive.google.com/file/d/1b1LlnIRmN9vaHyY-dspcu0aaKVhhEJaV/view
- https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/tool-kits-resources/info-2019/what-is-a-pop-up-demonstration.html
- https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/pdf/where_the_duct_tape_meets_the_road.pdf
- https://sf.streetsblog.org/2024/03/12/bridging-bicycle-promotion-and-emergency-response
- https://www.cdc.gov/active-communities-tool/php/about/index.html
- https://publichealth.robbins.baylor.edu/impact/rural-active-living-measurement-tools
- https://www.kcmo.gov/city-hall/departments/public-works/vision-zero

[i] Complete Streets Information | Dorchester County, SC website. (n.d.).
https://www.dorchestercountysc.gov/government/planning-development/complete-streets-workshops
[ii] AA. (n.d.). Complete streets. In Local toolkit. https://mml.org/pdf/resources/21c3/MN_CSLocalGovtToolkit.pdf
[iii] City Health. (2024, March 1). Complete Streets Policy Action Guide - CityHealth — Helping everyone live healthy, full lives. CityHealth — Helping Everyone Live Healthy, Full Lives. https://www.cityhealth.org/resource-center/complete-streets-action-guide/
[iv] Programs and coalitions - Smart Growth America. (n.d.). https://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/programs-and-coalitions/
[v] Complete Streets Policy Framework - Smart Growth America. (n.d.).
https://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/knowledge-hub/resources/elements-complete-streets-policy/
[vi] A strong Complete Streets policy establishes commitment and a vision (element #1) - Smart Growth America.
(n.d.). https://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/knowledge-hub/news/complete-streets-element-1/