

# Appendix 9-D

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## Complete Streets

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### **What are complete streets, and complete streets policies?**

Complete streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities must be able to safely move along and across a complete street.

Creating complete streets means transportation agencies must change their orientation toward building primarily for cars. Instituting a complete streets policy ensures that transportation agencies routinely design and operate the entire right of way to enable safe access for all users. Places with complete streets policies are making sure that their streets and roads work for drivers, transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists, as well as for older people, children, and people with disabilities.

### **What does a complete street look like?**

Since each complete street is unique, it is impossible to give a single description. But ingredients that may be found on a complete street include sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible transit stops, frequent crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, and more. A complete street in a rural area will look quite different from a complete street in a highly urban area. But both are designed to balance safety and convenience for everyone using the road. Look at our 'Many Types of Complete Streets' slideshow to see examples from across the country.

### **Why do we need complete streets policies?**

Complete streets improve safety. A Federal Highways Administration safety review found that streets designed with sidewalks, raised medians, better bus stop placement, traffic-calming measures, and treatments for disabled travelers improve pedestrian safety. Some features, such as medians, improve safety for all users: they enable pedestrians to cross busy roads in two stages, reduce left-turning motorist crashes to zero, and improve bicycle safety. Complete streets encourage walking and bicycling for health.

Complete streets address climate change and oil dependence. The potential to reduce carbon emissions by shifting trips to lower-carbon modes is undeniable. The 2001 National Household Transportation Survey found 50% of all trips in metropolitan areas are three miles or less and 28% of all metropolitan trips are one mile or less – distances easy to walk, bike, or hop a bus or train. Yet 65% of the shortest trips are now made by automobile, in part because of incomplete streets that make it dangerous or unpleasant for other modes of travel. Complete streets would help convert many of these short automobile trips to multi-modal travel

Complete Streets foster strong communities. Complete streets play an important role in livable communities, where all people – regardless of age, ability or mode of transportation – feel safe and welcome on the roadways. A safe walking and bicycling environment is an essential part of improving public transportation and creating friendly, walkable communities.

**Where are complete streets being built?**

Many states and cities have adopted bike plans or pedestrian plans that designate some streets as corridors for improvements for bicycling and walking. But a few places have gone beyond this to ensure that every street project takes all road users into account.

Among the places with some form of complete streets policy are the states of Oregon, California, Illinois, South Carolina, and Florida. The City of Santa Barbara, CA calls for “achieving equality of convenience and choice” for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and drivers. Columbia, MO adopted new street standards to encourage healthy bicycling and walking. And the regional body that allocates federal transportation dollars around Columbus, OH has determined that all projects must provide for people on foot and bicycle.

**What are some of the benefits of complete streets?**

Complete streets can offer many benefits in all communities, regardless of size or location. The National Complete Streets Coalition has developed a number of fact sheets, which are available through our website.

**How can I get a complete streets policy adopted in my community?**

This website has many resources to help you. See the Changing Policy tab for information on developing and implementing a good policy, working with local advocates, and the answers to many questions on implementation. The National Complete Streets Coalition offers interactive workshops led by national experts on policy development and policy implementation. Need to find transportation planning and engineering professionals ready to help create complete streets? Our Complete Streets Partner firms can offer the expertise and dedication you need.

For more information on the National Complete Streets Coalition:

<http://www.completestreets.org>