

What are Complete Streets?

A “Complete Street” is one that has the means to provide safe access and mobility for ALL users: pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders, as well as motorists. It is part of a comprehensive, integrated, and connected multi-modal network of transportation options.

What do Complete Streets do?

Complete Streets do more than just move cars. By accommodating more than just vehicles they provide many benefits to residents, businesses, and the whole of the travelling public:

- *Complete Streets* improve safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, children, older citizens, non-drivers, and mobility-challenged individuals as well as those that cannot afford a car or who choose not to drive.
- *Complete Streets* provide connections to bicycling and walking trip generators including employment, education, residential, recreation, and retail centers, as well as public facilities.
- *Complete Streets* promote healthy and active lifestyles, and enhance the livability of host communities.
- *Complete Streets* can reduce traffic congestion and over-reliance on carbon fuels, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- *Complete Streets* can enhance the aesthetic value of a roadway and increase the value of adjacent property; they can also increase

transit ridership by providing safe, attractive access to transit at stations, stops, and activity centers.

What are the elements of Complete Streets?

Complete Streets are designed to provide safe and accessible accommodations for existing and future pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. Examples of such accommodations include: accessible sidewalks and curb ramps, crosswalks, countdown pedestrian signals, pedestrian signs, medians and refuge islands, curb extensions, pedestrian-scale lighting, designated bike routes and signage, shared lane markings, bike lanes, and bus shelters.

How do we make our streets complete?

First and foremost, establish a Complete Streets Policy to guide all current and future transportation projects. To date, Essex, Monmouth, Mercer, and Hudson Counties, as well as over fifty individual municipalities and the NJ Department of Transportation, have adopted Complete Streets Policies. Sample policies are available to use as templates.

The best way to create Complete Streets is to design roads to accommodate all users when they are originally built, or when they are subsequently re-built or improved. Designing roads to be Complete Streets makes fiscal sense because it is far easier and less costly to incorporate sidewalks, bike lanes, safe crossings and transit amenities into the initial design of a road, thus sparing the expense of retrofits later.

Where should we have Complete Streets?

Since transportation facilities are long-term investments, the design of roadways should always consider and anticipate their potential use by bicyclists, pedestrians and transit users, and

accommodate them with viable facilities that are safe, accessible and convenient. Moreover, there should be a presumption that facilities for non-motorized users of the road shall be included in every project unless there is a justifiable and documented reason not to. Designs of roadways, intersections, interchanges, and bridges should never preclude the provision of future improvements that would make a roadway into a Complete Street.

Are there standards for Complete Streets?

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities should always be designed to the best currently available standards including those in the *New Jersey Roadway Design Manual*, the *AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*, the *AASHTO Guide for the Planning, Design and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities*, and the *Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices*. Improvements must comply with Title VI/ Environmental Justice, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and they should be designed in the context of the surrounding community whenever possible.

What about our existing streets?

Transforming existing roads into Complete Streets need not be difficult. Many elements of Complete Streets, such as crosswalks and bike lanes, can be installed for little additional cost when a road is resurfaced. It is recommended that agencies establish a procedure to evaluate resurfacing projects for inclusion of Complete Streets elements according to length of project, local support, environmental constraints, right-of-way limitations, and funding resources. Additionally, provisions should be made for pedestrians and bicyclists when closing roads, bridges or sidewalks for temporary construction projects.