

Complete Streets Policy

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Village of Pelham

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Preamble

In August 2011, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo signed the “Complete Streets” bill. This law requires Complete Street design guidelines be considered for the planning, design, construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation of roadways receiving federal and state funding. Typical design features include but are not limited to sidewalks, bicycle lanes, lane stripping, shared roadway signage, crosswalks, traffic calming, and bus pull outs. Such guidelines are intended to include convenient access and mobility to all users including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit users, and individuals of all ages and abilities.

Vision Statement

With the signing of the Complete Streets Law attention is being given to the concept of complete streets, which impacts the safety, health and vibrancy of New York State communities. The Village of Pelham Complete Streets Policy encourages the development of a complete streets network throughout the community to create a more balanced transportation system. The Complete Streets Policy shall be consistent with, and assist in achieving the goals and recommendations set forth in the Village of Pelham Comprehensive plan and other policy documents. The Policy shall ensure that new and updated public and private projects are planned, designed, maintained and operated to enable safe, comfortable and convenient travel to the greatest extent possible for users of all ages and abilities including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders.

Rationale for Complete Streets

The integration of land use and transportation is critical to the livability of a community and region. The Hudson Valley is currently undergoing significant employment and population shifts. New and existing residents and employees often have an expectation for a high quality of life, which often includes a walkable, bikeable and vibrant community. Incorporating complete streets into a community can assist in achieving this high quality of life

Complete streets may include elements such as defined pedestrian and bicycles spaces, street trees and benches, pedestrian scaled lighting, and transit stop shelters. They also enable seniors in our communities to “age in place.” Complete Streets elements have the capacity to increase bicycle, pedestrian and transit use of the street system, which would positively impact the physical health and safety of the community, the environmental quality of our neighborhoods and the economic vitality of the Village of Pelham.

Complete Streets are about very site-specific planning decisions that help to reconfigure existing road space in a manner that better accommodates the needs of users.

Health

Walking and biking can decrease the risk of diseases related to inactivity such as asthma, hypertension and obesity. In addition to its health benefits to individuals, walking and biking decreases automobile dependence, in turn improving air quality and the overall health of the environment we live in.

Safety

Today the number of people walking and bicycling to local destinations has dwindled. Providing well-defined pedestrian and bicycle facilities coupled with an educational program is a way to help address the safety concerns often raised.

Environment

Transportation accounts for a large amount of greenhouse gas levels which are negatively impacting the earth. Implementing a policy can have a positive impact on our environment by reducing the community’s reliance on a vehicular mode of transport and offering viable transportation options such as walking, bicycling and public transit.

Fiscal Impact

Designing complete streets is not additional work for planners, architects and engineers; it is different work. The fiscal impact of designing and implementing Complete Streets is mitigated by the use of updated planning practices, prevention of delays in the design process and elimination of the need for costly retrofits.

The costs associated with the routine accommodation of alternative transportation modes (i.e. walking, biking and transit) generally represent a small percentage of a community’s overall budget. Infrastructure costs are reduced by requiring less pavement per user, which in turn reduces long-term maintenance costs. The resources that are spent equate into a long-term investment in the financial and physical health of the Village of Pelham.

Additionally, the potential results from a complete streets policy can improve and maintain the economic vitality as well as support the economic vibrancy of Village of Pelham. Streets accommodating pedestrian and bicycle activity are welcoming and encourage residents and visitors to linger at local businesses, providing an important contribution to the tax base.

Exemptions

Where the Village of Pelham or a private developer decides that accommodating all users is impractical or burdensome, they may document their determination to be exempt from the policy's requirements. This documentation will be filled out and posted for each new street and sidewalk project. It lists who the decision makers are on the project, and the ways in which all users were accommodated, or the reasons they were not. Cost may be considered a valid basis for an exemption. In New York State, as with all road projects, if decision makers follow a proper review and decide not to include Complete Streets elements, they are afforded "design immunity" and cannot be sued for injury resulting from the project, unless they are found grossly negligent.

Objectives and Guiding Principles

- A. Establish a Complete Streets Taskforce
- B. Promote the safe use of our multi-modal transportation system by increasing the awareness of all users through appropriate educational outlets and programs.
- C. Pursue grant funding from federal, state and regional agencies for the purposes of promoting Complete Street Analysis, Complete Streets Checklist, and implementation of Complete Streets study/design and infrastructure upgrades.
- D. Incorporate locally sensitive "best practices" from a Complete Streets Analysis, United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, American Association of State Highway & Transportation Officials, Institute of Transportation Engineers, NYS Department of Transportation, Americans with Disabilities Act and other appropriate entities to enable citizens to safely travel by all transportation modes, including bicycling, walking and transit ridership.
- E. Reinforce collaboration with partners at the local, school district, county, state and federal levels to ensure appropriate connectivity for all travel modes.