

What are “Complete Streets” and Complete Streets policies?

Complete Streets are streets for everyone. They 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. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work. They make it safe for people to walk to and from train stations.

By adopting a Complete Streets policy, Newton directs transportation planners and engineers to **routinely design and operate the entire right of way to enable safe access for all users**, regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation. This means that every transportation project will make the street network better and safer for drivers, transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists - making your city a better place to live.

What does a “complete street” look like?

There is no singular design prescription for Complete Streets; each one is unique and responds to its community context. A complete street may include: sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible public transportation stops, frequent and safe crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, roundabouts, and more.



Complete main street in a Boston suburb



Why has Newton adopted Complete Streets policies?

Incomplete streets - those designed with only cars in mind - limit transportation choices by making walking, bicycling, and taking public transportation dangerous, inconvenient and unattractive. Newton's Complete Streets policies mean that walking, riding bikes, and riding buses and trains will be safer and easier. People of all ages and abilities will have more travel options.

Complete Streets are particularly prudent when more communities are tightening their budgets and looking to ensure long-term benefits from investments. An existing transportation budget can incorporate Complete Streets projects with little to no additional funding, accomplished through re-prioritizing projects and allocating funds to projects that improve overall mobility. Many of the ways to create more complete roadways are low cost, fast to implement, and high impact.

Where are complete streets being built?

MassDOT has adopted Complete Streets as the guiding principal behind its award-winning Design Guidelines, which are regularly cited as a national model. Communities such as Northampton, Cambridge and Boston have also adopted Complete Streets policies. Among the other places with some form of complete streets policy are the states of Oregon, California, Illinois, North Carolina, Minnesota, Connecticut, and Florida.

What are some of the benefits of Complete Streets?

Complete streets can offer many benefits:

1. *Improved 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.
2. *More walking and bicycling for health.* The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently named adoption of Complete Streets policies as a recommended strategy to prevent obesity. One study found that 43% of people with safe places to walk within 10 minutes of home met recommended activity levels; among individuals without safe place to walk, just 27% were active enough.
3. *Lower transportation costs.* Americans spent an average of 18 cents of every dollar on transportation, with the poorest fifth of families spending more than double that figure
4. *Strengthen 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.



Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Before & After Complete Streets