

Definition

Complete Streets is an approach to planning, designing, building and operating streets in an equitable and context-sensitive manner to prioritize safety, comfort, and connectivity to destinations for everyone who uses the street network.

Complete Streets are achieved primarily by focusing on the planning and design of transportation projects, including construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, repair, and operation and maintenance of roadways, bridges, and related infrastructure that improves safety and comfort for all road users while providing access and mobility. Complete Streets designs and countermeasures highlight key strategies for encouraging safe speeds.

Complete Streets may also include contextually appropriate green infrastructure to improve community resilience and consider allocation and management of curb space to maximize mobility, safety and access for the wide variety of growing curb demands.

Vision and Intent

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) Long Range Transportation Plan, *SmartMoves for a Changing Region*, puts forth the Regional Vision of a world-class, safe, well maintained and connected multimodal transportation system that provides mobility for all, empowers resilient and sustainable communities, and supports a globally competitive economy. To advance this vision, *SmartMoves* identifies strategies that focus on:

- Working toward Vision Zero by investing in safety for all system users.
- Providing equitable mobility options for all users through improvements in public transit, pedestrian, and bicycle infrastructure.
- Regional collaboration to implement Complete Streets policies in communities across the region. This includes education and promotion of best practices and the benefits of Complete Streets, and assistance in securing funding for Complete Streets improvements.

SPC shall integrate a Complete Streets approach into transportation planning, practices, policies and decision-making processes to prioritize safety, comfort, and connectivity to destinations for everyone who uses the street network, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users, children, older individuals, individuals with disabilities, motorists, and freight vehicles.

SPC recognizes the local jurisdictions that have completed Complete Streets policies and encourages those who haven't already done so to develop and implement policies to prioritize the safety of all users in transportation network planning, design, construction, and operations.

A connected multimodal transportation system is necessary for providing access to jobs, education, health care, recreation, transit, and other essential services in urban, suburban, and rural areas throughout the region. Adoption and implementation of a regional Complete Streets Policy will positively impact the safety of all roadway users by advancing the Regional Vision; serve as a tool to help reverse the trend of increasing fatalities and serious injuries on our roadways; and help create equitable levels of access to affordable and reliable

transportation options, enhance economic opportunity, reduce environmental burdens, create more sustainable and resilient communities, and improve quality of life.

Diverse Users

The Complete Streets approach considers the safety and comfort of all people and the diverse modes they choose or rely on when traveling, including but not limited to walking, biking, riding micromobility vehicles (scooters, e-bikes, etc.), driving, horse and buggy travel, wheeling/rolling, public transportation, car sharing/carpooling, paratransit, ride-hailing, delivering goods and services, agricultural movements, and providing emergency response transportation.

With the increasing concern for balancing the needs for all roadway users and the growth in a wide variety of curb demands, SPC will encourage Project Sponsors to integrate the current and evolving needs of freight movement with the active transportation approaches of Complete Streets to create more efficient, comprehensive, resilient, and cohesive networks.

SPC is committed to implementing Complete Streets equitably by identifying underserved communities and engaging them through public participation initiatives, recognizing their varying transportation needs, and prioritizing the creation of safe, connected networks in these communities. This approach will support innovation in design and prioritize safe and accessible options for vulnerable road users¹, communities identified as vulnerable under the SPC Environmental Justice Analysis², and disadvantaged communities as defined by the Justice40 Initiative³. A vulnerable road user (VRU) may be someone who is walking, biking, rolling, or using a mobility device, such as a wheelchair. VRUs are particularly susceptible to being killed or injured in a crash, and they account for a growing share of all transportation fatalities, both in Pennsylvania and throughout the U.S.

Applicability

This Policy applies to all projects seeking funding through SPC-administered competitive funding programs (listed below) for new construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, repair, maintenance and ongoing operations of roadways, bridges, transit and paratransit infrastructure, on-street sections of trails, and physical changes to other transportation infrastructure. SPC will evaluate procedural outcomes from early applicability to align this Policy with all projects receiving state or federal funding.

- Congestion Mitigation + Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)
- Carbon Reduction Program (CRP)
- Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA)
- Smart Transportation for Livable Communities (STLC)

All projects, including those sponsored by PennDOT and private developers, should provide accommodations for all existing users of the road network to continue to use the road safely and efficiently during any construction

¹ https://highways.dot.gov/sites/fhwa.dot.gov/files/2022-10/VRU%20Safety%20Assessment%20Guidance%20FINAL_508.pdf

² www.spcregion.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Appendix-VI-EJ-report-.pdf

³ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/environmentaljustice/justice40/>

or repair work that infringes on the right-of-way and/or sidewalk. Accommodations shall be provided in accordance with applicable local ordinances or policies that may be in place within the project jurisdiction. Public passage on existing sidewalks or designated pathways should be safe, protected and ADA accessible. If public passage is not possible on existing sidewalks or designated pathways, a pedestrian reroute around the work area is required. When cycling infrastructure is impacted by construction or repair work, it must be rerouted, detoured, or accommodated in a manner consistent with the facility being impacted.

Projects on facilities where walking and bicycling is prohibited by law are required to comply with the policy as it pertains to existing connections across them, such as underpasses and overpasses, and with other modes of transportation that may travel along them, such as public transit or paratransit. Additionally, projects limited exclusively to maintenance-type activities are required to comply with the policy but may be permitted to include low-cost accommodations that can feasibly be incorporated within the extent of the maintenance project.

Due to the variety of approaches that may be implemented to ensure the safe and adequate accommodation for all users of the transportation system, the Project Sponsor will be encouraged to find an acceptable solution for both parties in cases where a project does not appear to meet the requirements of this Policy.

Interagency Coordination

Implementation of this Policy will be accomplished by continued interagency coordination through SPC's comprehensive planning and programming process with a focus on collaboration between PennDOT, USDOT/FHWA, FTA, regional transit operators and other planning partners at the county and regional levels. SPC will continue to collaborate with PennDOT and local jurisdictions to identify and advance Complete Streets projects through the Connects planning process.

Projects that address how they will account for the needs of all modes and users are given extra consideration for funding through SPC's project selection processes which support Complete Streets principles and prioritize investments in connected multimodal networks. Projects located within jurisdictions that have an adopted Complete Streets Policy will also be given extra consideration for funding based on evaluation and scoring of policy adherence to Complete Streets principles.

Project Sponsors will be required to complete a pre-funding application that will include questions to ensure that CS elements have been incorporated in the project and that coordination with appropriate stakeholders has occurred, unless project is exempt from complying with the policy.

Design

Communities should rely on state-of-the-practice design standards and guidelines to maximize design flexibility and embrace innovative safety treatments, while ensuring the proposed design does not conflict with federally required standards.

SPC supports adoption of standards and guidance that promote safety and accessibility for all users and encourages innovation in design. Local governments are encouraged to adopt the latest design manuals and/or develop or revise internal design policies and guides to embrace innovation and current practices. National and

state standards, and current guidelines and resources supported by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and PennDOT include, but are not limited to, those listed below. Additional design guidance resources are included in Appendix A.

National Standards

[Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices \(MUTCD\); 11th Edition of the MUTCD](#)

Pennsylvania Standards

[PennDOT Design Manual Part 2, Contextual Roadway Design \(Publication 13\)](#)

Per PennDOT Publication 13, the following is a list of available resources currently recognized by PennDOT as acceptable design guides:

- [Achieving Multimodal Networks: Applying Design Flexibility and Reducing Conflicts](#) (2015), FHWA
- [Bikeway Selection Guide](#) (2019), FHWA
- [Guide for Incorporating On-Road Bicycle Networks in Resurfacing Projects](#) (2015), FHWA
- [Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities](#) (2012), AASHTO
- Roadside Design Guide (2011), AASHTO
- [Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide](#) (2015), FHWA
- [Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks](#) (2016), FHWA
- [Guide for Improving Pedestrian Safety at Uncontrolled Crossing Locations](#) (2018) FHWA

Context Sensitivity

A Complete Streets approach does not mean putting a bike lane or sidewalk on every street or a bus on every corridor. This Policy recognizes that the context and needs of users are different in rural areas and towns, suburban and urban communities, and urban cores; and that the hierarchy of the roadway network and roadway environment are important considerations in engineering and design. As a result, a design for a Complete Street in a rural area may look quite different from one in an urban or suburban area, even when using a Complete Streets approach.

Each project is unique and should be designed to fit its own distinct context, circumstances, and local characteristics as well as the surrounding community's current and future land use and transportation needs. Designers are encouraged to apply design flexibility to ensure safety for all users and respond to local community goals and needs. Project sponsors should refer to PennDOT Publication 13; Chapter 1 – Context Based Design and Flexibility for guidance on identifying land use contexts and road typologies to develop contextually appropriate multimodal solutions.

Tracking and Evaluation

Policy Implementation

SPC will routinely evaluate progress in reviewing and editing SPC policies and procedures to eliminate barriers to implementing Complete Streets and make recommended changes to the CS Policy, if any.

Each project funded through one of the SPC-administered competitive funding programs and proposed on the 2025-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) shall document the following Complete Streets Performance Measures on a Complete Streets Checklist Form to be completed by Project Sponsor:

- Proposed improvement length and number of modes impacted by improvement
- Whether project location has excess societal costs per the Highway Safety Network Screening list published by PennDOT Central Office
- Number of pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries within the project limits in the last five years
- Number of bicycle fatalities and serious injuries within the project limits in the last five years
- Length of new sidewalk; Length of reconstructed sidewalk
- Number of new ADA curb ramps; Number of reconstructed ADA curb ramps
- Length of separated bicycle lanes; Length of reconstructed separated bicycle lanes
- Length of new bicycle lanes; Length of reconstructed bicycle lanes
- Length of new shared lane markings; Length of reconstructed shared lane markings

The following Complete Streets Regional Performance Measures will be tracked on a regular basis to document progress of policy implementation:

- Number of jurisdictions with adopted Complete Streets policies
- Number of Complete Streets projects
- Number of projects that incorporate green infrastructure elements
- Percent of SPC discretionary funding spent on Complete Street projects in communities of concern
- Miles of new active transportation corridors added to roads
- Number of critical connections made (e.g. bridge crossings, road crossing improvements along major corridors and/or intersections, trail gaps closed, etc.)
- Miles of bicycle facilities (separated by types such as miles of bike lanes, miles of separated bike lanes, miles of bike routes with shared lane markings and miles of trails)
- Percentage of households within three miles of a low-stress bicycle route
- Miles of sidewalks
- Number of curb ramps
- Number of countdown signals
- Number of audible traffic signals
- Percent of households within ½ mile of a low-stress pedestrian route
- Number of first-and-last mile improvement projects
- Percent of households within ½ mile of transit by way of a low-stress pedestrian route
- Percent of households within three miles of transit by way of a low-stress bicycle route
- Number of communities with low-stress connections to regional trail networks (connections include low-stress pedestrian routes, low-stress bicycle routes and/or local trails)
- Proximity to parks and trails (proportion of residences within a 10-minute walk or drive to a local or regional park or trail access point)
- Commute mode share
- Number of business establishments created in communities that are connected to a regional, state or multi-state trail network

Performance Targets

SPC and its planning partners collaborate on establishing and updating performance targets that reflect the region's priorities, incorporate equity considerations and are regularly reported to the public. The following performance targets are tracked annually and data will be disaggregated by demographic factors to identify and address the transportation needs of groups who have been traditionally underserved by the transportation planning process:

- Total fatalities
- Fatality rate-per million miles of vehicle travel (MMVT)
- Total serious injuries
- Serious injury rate-per MMVT
- Total number of pedestrian fatalities
- Total number of pedestrian serious injuries
- Total number of bicycle fatalities
- Total number of bicycle serious injuries

Implementation Steps and Future Work Tasks

- Review SPC policies and procedures to include data collection and analysis, planning, project selection and performance measures. Edit as needed to eliminate barriers to implementing Complete Streets and/or develop new policies and procedures to prioritize safety.
- Revise the "SPC Federal Funding Pre-Application" to incorporate questions that allow SPC staff to determine if a project is exempt or required to comply with this Policy; and to ensure that non-exempt projects sufficiently incorporate Complete Streets elements, consider current and evolving needs of freight movement, and document interagency coordination.
- Encourage adoption and implementation of additional local Complete Streets policies that prioritize the safety of all users in transportation network planning, design, construction, and operations.
- Develop and implement a Pedestrian and Bicyclist Road Safety Audit program that will focus on bicyclist and pedestrian safety while working within the context of mobility, access, and/or surrounding land uses. Outcomes will identify potential safety issues affecting all road users under all conditions and suggest measures for consideration by the design team or responsible agency. The design team will include experts on bicycle and pedestrian safety and facility design (e.g. sidewalks, bike lanes, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements)
- Update the SPC Active Transportation Resource Center to feature SPC's Complete Streets Policy and highlight key Complete Streets and curbside management resources to assist local governments in transforming roadways to create safe, comfortable and connected networks for all people who use the street network, especially vulnerable road users
- Sponsor Complete Streets webinars and/or other activities to provide additional education on this approach.
- Develop an up-to-date trail connectivity prioritization plan that identifies a specific list of off- and/or on-street trail projects to advance the vision of connecting regional trails to each other and into communities.
- Identify a list of Complete Streets candidate projects to improve the safety, mobility and/or accessibility of a street.

Appendix A: Design Guidance Resources by Topic Focus**Safety**

[Proven Safety Countermeasures](#) (FHWA)

Pedestrians

[Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach](#) (ITE)

Bicyclists

[Essentials of Bike Parking](#) (APBP)

Transit

[Improving Safety for Pedestrians and Bicyclists Accessing Transit](#) (FTA)

[Manual on Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections to Transit](#) (FTA)

[Transit Street Design Guide](#) (NACTO)

Street Design

[A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, 7th Edition](#) (AASHTO)

[Global Street Design Guide](#) (NACTO)

[Urban Street Design Guide](#) (NACTO)

[Urban Bikeway Design Guide](#) (NACTO)

Green Infrastructure

[Urban Street Stormwater Guide](#) (NACTO)

Intersection Design

[Don't Give Up at the Intersection](#) (NACTO)

Speed Management

[Safe System Approach for Speed Management](#) (FHWA)

[City Limits: Setting Safe Speed on Urban Streets](#) (NACTO)

[Integrating Speed Management](#) (FHWA)

Curbside Management

[Curbside Management Practitioners Guide](#) (ITE)

Acronyms

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)

Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP)

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE)

National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)

New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT)

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)