MODEL COMPLETE STREETS POLICY FOR LUZERNE COUNTY MUNICIPALITIES

WHAT ARE COMPLETE STREETS?

Complete Streets are designed for all users to move safely and efficiently. Rather than designing roads only for motor vehicles, Complete Streets create an integrated transportation network to facilitate mobility for users of all modes of transportation, including pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, motorcycle riders, those using mobility devices, and drivers. They can be applicable in all communities, including rural, suburban, and urban areas.

INTRODUCTION TO THE MODEL POLICY

This Model Complete Streets Policy serves as a guide for the 76 municipalities in Luzerne County to develop and adopt their own Complete Streets policies. This Model Complete Streets Policy incorporates recommended elements from the National Complete Streets Coalition to ensure that municipalities adopt policies of the highest standard. These best practices help localities transition from policy to on-the-ground projects through committing to clear implementation steps. The Model Complete Streets Policy also takes elements from local and regional plans, including the Lackawanna Luzerne MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Study and the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

Creating a Model Policy allows all communities in Luzerne County to align with county standards for Complete Streets, especially communities who may not have the resources or time to draft their own policy from scratch. This Model Policy can and should be customized to address needs unique to each jurisdiction. As more municipalities adopt this Model Policy, localities across Luzerne County can demonstrate a joint commitment to safe and equitable transportation for all users.

Complete Streets can be implemented in all communities, and the Model Policy helps rural, suburban, and urban communities incorporate appropriate Complete Streets elements into transportation planning. Since PennDOT has jurisdiction over many roadway lane miles in Luzerne County, the Model Policy also ensures that each municipality will appropriately assign implementation to the proper governing body, whether local, regional, or statewide.

CUSTOMIZING AND ADOPTING THE MODEL POLICY

The Model Policy is provided as a simple Microsoft Word document so that municipalities across Luzerne County can adapt it to fit their unique community needs. Information in the blue boxes can be incorporated at the municipality's discretion. The Model Policy provides opportunities for municipal leaders to add in specific language that reflects how Complete Streets can best function in their community, along with fill-in-the-blank sections noted in brackets based on individual government structures. Aligning this policy with community goals will be key to building public trust and growing support.

Municipalities with previously adopted Complete Streets policies can still adopt the Model Policy by incorporating any elements from the model currently missing from their policy to reflect best practices. All communities should ensure that the Model Policy is consistent with their local ordinances and requirements.

Municipal elected officials may also choose to codify the policy through an ordinance. While policy adoption through a resolution establishes a commitment to Complete Streets, an ordinance creates legally enforceable implementation regulations and promises long-lasting commitment to Complete Streets as leadership changes over time.

[MUNICIPALITY] COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Through the establishment of a Complete Streets policy, *[municipality]* commits to developing an equitable, integrated, and connected multimodal transportation system. A Complete Streets approach facilitates safe and efficient access to destinations without the need for an automobile. By promoting all forms of transportation, including non-motorized transportation, *[municipality]* emphasizes the importance of active transportation on a healthy lifestyle, reduced emissions, and economic vibrancy.

This policy seeks to change how transportation investments are made in *[municipality]* by prioritizing mobility for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, public transit riders, people with disabilities, the elderly, children, motorists, freight providers, emergency responders, and agricultural users. A new investment structure ensures that all projects, regardless of funding source, will comply with this Complete Streets policy. *[municipality]* *also* recognizes that Complete Streets principles can be applicable in communities of any size, with solutions tailored to unique needs.

COMPLETE STREETS GOALS

This policy aligns with the Lackawanna Luzerne MPO 2015-2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan. To that end, the goals of this policy are:

1. Safely and securely accommodate the needs of all users, both motorized and non-motorized.
2. Protect and enhance the environment by decreasing vehicle emissions, reducing congestion, and promoting energy conservation through reducing reliance on vehicle only trips.
3. Enhance integration and connectivity of the transportation system across and between modes, for people and freight, to foster operational efficiency.
4. Emphasize preservation of the existing transportation system while promoting strategic improvements.
5. Increase economic vitality by increasing accessibility. Increasing facilities for non-motorized users to access downtown jobs can help companies attract new, young talent while simultaneously improving physical and mental health.
6. Ensure historically underserved, priority communities**, as defined by *[municipality]*, have equal access to community facilities by providing equitable transportation opportunities for all populations. Special attention will be given to Environmental Justice communities.

Priority Communities**
Priority communities refer to quantifiable underserved groups that must be particularly prioritized in transportation projects. Each municipality should determine their own priority communities, which may include, but are not limited to:

- Minority groups
- Low-income groups
- Senior populations (65 years and older)
- Persons with disabilities
- Persons with Limited English Proficiency
- Zero-vehicle households
- Plain sect communities

APPLICABILITY AND EXCEPTIONS

Applicability

This Complete Streets policy shall apply to all projects at all phases in *[municipality]*. This includes, but is not limited to, new construction, reconstruction and retrofit, rehabilitation, repair, and major maintenance projects that use any source of funding. During any construction or maintenance work, accommodations for all existing modes of transportation will be provided.

Example projects are dependent upon community context and needs, but may include:

- Roadway, sidewalk, shared-use path, or trail construction and maintenance
- Street repaving
- Bridge construction, rehabilitation, and replacement
- Pedestrian and bicycle facility construction and rehabilitation, including crosswalks, lighting, and landscaping
- Roadway projects and roadway widening projects
- Public transit or rail freight projects

Exceptions

While a Complete Streets approach is intended for all projects at all phases, there are limited scenarios in which Complete Streets may not be feasible. Exceptions to the policy may be granted only in the following situations:

1. The existing and future projected motor vehicle traffic volumes on a particular roadway or facility are so low that cyclists and pedestrians do not need to be specifically accommodated and/or are already addressed by the current design;
2. There is no existing bicycle and pedestrian demand or transit demand, and demand for those modes of travel is not anticipated in the future (or bicyclists and pedestrians are prohibited on the facility, such as a freeway);
3. The cost or impacts of accommodation are excessively disproportionate to the current or future need, which is defined by the FHWA at the time of the adoption of this policy as exceeding twenty percent of the cost of the larger project;
4. There is an existing or proposed parallel facility with sufficient accommodation, or it is more feasible and/or less costly to locate the proposed accommodation on an alternate route. Compared to the original route, the alternative shall not increase travel distance for pedestrians by more than ¼ mile and/or for cyclists by more than 1 mile.

Requests for exceptions must be submitted in writing to *[governing body, i.e. City Council, or head of agency, i.e., Director of Public Works]* and, with all supporting documentation (see the Appendix), be made publicly available for a minimum of 30 days to allow for public input. Exceptions and all public comments must be reviewed by *[governing body, i.e. City Council, or head of agency, i.e., Director of Public Works]* and the applicable PennDOT District Planner. Written approvals will be documented and made publicly available through *[municipality's website]*.

COORDINATION

All private development and public projects impacting the public right-of-way must comply with the Complete Streets policy. To ensure this coordination, *[municipality]* will work closely with PennDOT, the LLTS MPO Transportation Advisory Committee, and neighboring jurisdictions as needed. *[Decision-making body]* will have regularly scheduled meetings with PennDOT and appropriate LLTS MPO members to discuss Complete Streets projects.

Complete Streets implementation will be facilitated by interagency coordination with appropriate groups, which may include, but are not limited to, departments of transportation, public health, housing, and public works. *[municipality]* will also coordinate with local and regional transit providers, including Luzerne County Transportation Authority, Hazleton Public Transit, Martz Trailways, Fullington Trailways, Amtrak, and Greyhound Bus *[customize as needed to include transit providers in the municipality]*. Project and policy development must also align with regional plans, including the Luzerne County Safety Action Plan, the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan, and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Study.

Funding Opportunities

Funding and implementing Complete Streets projects may be difficult with multiple agencies having jurisdiction over different roads. Communities are encouraged to review local policies to ensure proper standards are met. To find funding sources, municipalities can look to the following: Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), DCED Multimodal Transportation Fund Program, Luzerne County Local Share Account Program, Act 13 Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Community Conservation Partnership Program, Pocono Forests and Waters Conservation Landscape Initiative Mini Grants, and various PennDOT programs, including the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program, Green Light Go Program, and Automated Red Light Enforcement Transportation Enhancement Grant Program.

DESIGN GUIDANCE AND COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Design Guidance

Designing Complete Streets-compliant projects requires adopting design guidance that directs *[municipal planner/engineer]* to turn policy visions into on-the-ground projects. Within one year of policy adoption, *[municipality]* will adopt design guidance to ensure *[municipal planner/engineer]* can plan for and construct multimodal projects. Design guidance will follow PennDOT and LLTS MPO directives, and may also include, but not be limited to, guidelines from the following:

- Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)
- Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG)
- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) publications
- Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG)
- Urban Bikeway Design Guide and Urban Street Design Guide by the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)

- Smal Town and Rural Multimodal Networks by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

[municipality] will also encourage innovation, understanding that each community has unique needs and goals related to accessible transportation.

Community Context

Within the adopted guidelines, context-sensitive solutions will ensure that policy implementation reflects the unique context and character of *[municipality]*. A flexible approach will be taken towards roadway and street design, considering local context such as traffic volumes, development patterns, and land use. The distinctive population breakdown of *[municipality]* will also be considered so as to mitigate any unintended harm towards vulnerable groups. *[Municipal staff]* will, as needed, review and update all policies and plans in ordinance with this policy. This may include land use policies, zoning ordinance, SALDO, and *[Municipal Comprehensive Plan]*.

EVALUATION AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Clear performance measures are key to evaluating success. Annually, the *[Complete Streets Committee**]* will monitor these performance measures, revising any metrics as needed. The *[Complete Streets Committee]* will publish their Complete Streets evaluating in a report annually. *[municipality]* will also use information from the LLTS MPO, which analyzes PennDOT safety data, to identify high-crash locations and determine key areas for safety improvements. Performance measures for this policy may include, dependent on unique community projects:

- Pedestrian, cyclist, and motorist crash rates
- Volume counts for vehicles, bus passengers, cyclists, and pedestrians
- Linear feet or miles of new or reconstructed sidewalks to improve and expand contiguous networks
- Number of new or reconstructed ADA accessible curb ramps
- Number of new or repainted crosswalks
- Number of new pedestrian signals
- Linear feet or miles of on-street bicycle facilities
- Walkability scores
- Percentage of transit stops accessible via sidewalks and ADA accessible curb ramps
- Increase in mode shares for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users

Complete Streets Committee**

Each individual municipality should establish a Complete Streets Committee of 5-7 members to lead policy implementation. This should be an interdisciplinary group to gain valuable perspectives. In their individual policies, communities should clearly identify committee members. While not every community will have the following groups represented, the stakeholders involved can include:

- Community Members (especially those representing Priority Communities)
- Municipal Planning Board
- Public Works
- Emergency Services: Law Enforcement, Fire, EMS
- School Representatives
- Business & Developer Community
- Elected Officials
- Transit Agency Representatives

- Share of roads with design speeds in the safe range for pedestrians
- Percentage of funds spent on bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities
- Number of projects that directly improve transportation accessibility for previously identified priority communities

A note on performance measures

Selection of a performance measure is a commitment to measure progress over time. As such, each municipality should select a small number of performance measures that meet three criteria:

- Align with the policy's vision and objectives
- Reflect the municipality's needs and desires for their streets
- Can be readily measured and reported on with available staff or financial resources

Fewer performance measures tracked regularly create better results than many performance measures that are not consistently tracked.

PROJECT SELECTION

A Complete Streets checklist, provided as an appendix to this policy, will be used for selection, planning, design, construction, and funding of all transportation projects. This tool must explicitly prioritize projects that improve safety and accessibility for all users as well as projects that alleviate disparities for vulnerable users, otherwise defined as priority communities. This tool may incorporate the performance measures, as well as prioritizing projects that improve public health, increase multimodal facilities, review ADA-compliancy, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. All proposed projects in *[municipality]* will be reviewed for consistency with this policy.

IMPLEMENTATION

While a Complete Streets policy is the first step, *[municipality]* will also establish implementation steps to ensure *[responsible party, i.e., Department of Public Works, Municipal Engineer, etc.]* can begin designing and constructing policy-compliant projects. Within one year of policy adoption, *[municipality]* will establish a Complete Streets Committee** consisting of a diverse group of stakeholders to lead implementation, in coordination with the LLTS MPO Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), the Technical Committee, and the Coordinating Committee. The Complete Streets Committee will have the following responsibilities:

- Revise all procedures, plans, regulations, ordinances for alignment with the Complete Streets policy, including SALDO, zoning ordinance, other codes, and *[Municipal Comprehensive Plan]*.
- Coordinate with the LLTS MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee on mulitmodal progress, especially on establishing a bicycle and pedestrian count program.
- Assess the local road network for Complete Streets opportunities.
- Educate adjacent municipalities on Complete Streets policy adoption.
- Review all municipal projects to ensure mobility for priority communities is emphasized.

- Review future projects in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and locally for applicability of this policy and review facility designs to ensure access for all users.
- Facilitate community engagement activities, which may include educational campaigns or outreach to priority communities to gather feedback about transportation projects.
- Once established, the Complete Streets Committee will meet quarterly for the first year and thereafter annually. The committee will be responsible for publishing annual reports on the performance measures, the above responsibilities, and anticipated measures for the upcoming year, which will be made publicly available for comments.
- To facilitate implementation, *[municipal staff]* and members of the Complete Streets Committee will attend training sessions that may be hosted by the LLTS MPO to design routes that accommodate all modes of travel.

APPENDIX: COMPLETE STREETS CHECKLIST

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project name

_____

Brief description

_____

_____

_____

Which of the following project types apply?

- ☐ Capital improvement project
- ☐ Street repaving
- ☐ Street resurfacing
- ☐ Street restriping
- ☐ Roadway reconstruction
- ☐ Bridge construction, rehabilitation, and/or replacement
- ☐ Active transportation
- ☐ Private development

PROJECT ELEMENTS AND EXCEPTIONS

In *[municipality]*, the Complete Streets policy applies to all project phases, including planning, programming, design, right-of-way acquisition, construction, construction engineering, reconstruction, operation, and maintenance. Complete Streets elements, including pedestrian, cycling, and transit infrastructure, must be applied to any of these projects unless *[municipality]* approves an exception. Reviews will occur on a rolling basis and will result in a recommendation to give public notice for the exception or to decline the exception; a decline may include a request for additional information. Public notice, including a project description and the reason for the exception, will be given for at least 30 days through the *[municipality]* website. The public will be given the opportunity to provide comments on the exception request.

The following list represents the qualifying exceptions that preclude Complete Streets elements in a project with proper documentation and approval.

1. The existing and future projected motor vehicle traffic volumes on a particular roadway or facility are so low that cyclists and pedestrians do not need to be specifically accommodated and/or are already addressed by the current design;
2. There is no existing bicycle and pedestrian demand or transit demand, and demand for those modes of travel is not anticipated in the future (or bicyclists and pedestrians are prohibited on the facility, such as a freeway);
3. The cost or impacts of accommodation are excessively disproportionate to the current or future need, which is defined by the FHWA at the time of the adoption of this policy as exceeding twenty percent of the cost of the larger project;
4. There is an existing or proposed parallel facility with sufficient accommodation, or it is more feasible and/or less costly to locate the proposed accommodation on an alternate route. Compared to the original route, the alternative shall not increase travel distance for pedestrians by more than ¼ mile and/or for cyclist by more than 1 mile.

Section A. Pedestrian Facilities

Does the project provide sidewalks or shared use paths on both sides of the street, along with curb ramps?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If "yes," go to Section B. If "no," fill out the appropriate information for the requested exception.

Exception 1: Volume

What is the anticipated traffic volume on the street, in vehicles per day? _____

Explain why that traffic volume is so low that sidewalks or shared use paths are not needed for safe pedestrian travel.

_____

_____

Exception 2: Pedestrian Needs

Please explain why there is no pedestrian demand and no pedestrian demand is anticipated in the future.

_____

_____

Exception 3: Disproportional Cost

What is the total cost of the project? _____

What is the total cost of adding these pedestrian elements? _____

Please provide any more information on why the cost of pedestrian accommodation is excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use.

_____

_____

_____

Exception 4: Alternative Route

What alternative accessible route with appropriate sidewalks and/or shared use paths can pedestrians access?

_____

_____

_____

How far is the alternative route? (As per the Complete Streets policy, the alternative route will not increase travel distance for pedestrians by more than ¼ mile.)

_____

Section B. Bicycle Facilities

Mark the traffic volume and posted speed limit of the project in Figure 1.

What bicycle facility is appropriate for the traffic volume and speed?

- ☐ Shared lane or bike boulevard
- ☐ Bike lane
- ☐ Separated bike lane or shared use path

Does the project include bicycle facilities of that type?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If "yes," go to Section C. If "no," fill out the appropriate information for the requested exception.

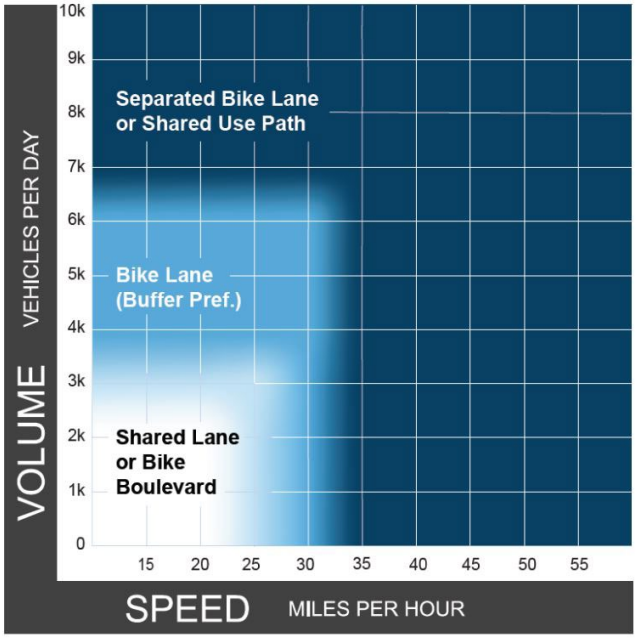


Figure 1. Source: Federal Highway Administration.

Exception 2: Bicyclist Needs

Please explain why there is no bicyclist demand and no bicyclist demand is anticipated in the future.

_____

_____

Exception 3: Disproportional Cost

What is the total cost of the project? _____

What is the total cost of adding these bicycle facilities? _____

Please provide any more information on why the cost of bicyclist accommodation is excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use.

_____

_____

_____

Exception 4: Alternative Route

What alternative accessible route with appropriate bicycle facilities can bicyclists access?

_____

_____

_____

How far is the alternative route? (As per the Complete Streets policy, the alternative route will not increase travel distance for bicyclists by more than ¼ mile.)

_____

Section C. Transit Facilities

Is the project on a bus route?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If "no," go to Section D.

Does the project include transit amenities, such as safe and accessible transit stops?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If "yes," go to Section D. If "no", fill out the appropriate information for the requested exception.

Exception 3: Disproportional Cost.

What is the total cost of the project? _____

What is the total cost of adding these transit elements? _____

Please provide any more information on why the cost of transit accommodation is excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use.

_____

_____

_____

Section D. Additional Information

What additional information should be considered by the [municipality]?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Section E. Applicant Information

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

_____

Phone _____

Email _____