



Climate Smart Communities

PE6 Action: Complete Streets Policy

4 Points



BRONZE PRIORITY



SILVER PRIORITY

Why is this action important?

Streets are the main arteries of a community, moving people, goods, and services from one place to another. A Complete Streets approach to designing our roads incorporates safety, livability, and a place for all users – pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transit riders. Complete streets design features recognize that the needs of users vary according to rural, suburban, and urban contexts and they may include, but are not limited to, sidewalks, paved shoulders suitable for cycling, lane striping, bike lanes, share-the-road signage, crosswalks, road diets, pedestrian control signalization, bulb-outs (curb extensions), curb cuts, raised crosswalks and ramps, and traffic calming measures.

Complete Streets design can include more vegetation to provide shade and a buffer from traffic, and it can include green infrastructure to better manage stormwater. As stated in the [New York State Complete Streets Act of 2011](#), “Complete Streets will contribute to a cleaner, greener transportation system” and “more citizens will achieve the health benefits associated with active forms of transportation while traffic congestion and auto related air pollution will be reduced.”

B. How to implement this action

Local governments can implement this Climate Smart Communities (CSC) certification action by formally adopting a policy to enable safe access to public roads and appropriate forms of transportation for all by using complete streets design principles for transportation infrastructure projects. Specifically, the policy resolution should set forth the intention to consider the safe and convenient access and mobility on the road network by current and projected users of all ages and abilities, including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit users through the use of complete street design features in the planning, design, construction, reconstruction, and rehabilitation (not including resurfacing, maintenance, or pavement recycling) of transportation infrastructure projects undertaken within the municipal jurisdiction.

The policy should define complete streets, including a description of potential design features, and should set forth exemptions, such as roadways where complete streets design features would have an adverse impact on public safety or where the cost would be disproportionate to the need (as well as the factors upon which that determination should be made, such as the land use context, projected traffic volumes, population density, and level of community support). The complete streets policy should also include additional steps necessary for full implementation and measures to assess performance (such as a procedure for reporting on progress to institutionalize complete streets, including a time frame and the assignment of responsibilities) or should formally initiate the process of creating a more detailed complete streets implementation plan, including a timeframe for plan completion.

As with any change in local laws and policies, please consult with the local government attorney for guidance on drafting and enacting a Complete Streets policy. Local governments are encouraged to contact the [New York State Department of State Division of Local Services](#) for training, technical assistance and legal guidance on complete streets policies.

C. Timeframe, project costs, and resource needs

For many local governments, resolutions and policy changes can take up to a year to conduct background research, draft new language, consult with a local government attorney and enact. Planning consultants can be resources in crafting the language and determining the most appropriate changes to accomplish local goals.

D. Which local governments implement this action? Which departments within the local government are most likely to have responsibility for this?

Local governments with legislative authority can draft and adopt a Complete Streets policy. Planning departments (or planning boards), public works departments, and local government attorneys are typically responsible for implementing this action. Municipal committees, such as the CSC task force, conservation advisory councils or environmental conservation committees may also be involved.

E. How to obtain points for this action

To obtain points for this action, the local government must formally adopt a Complete Streets policy that either a) includes the additional steps necessary for full implementation and measures to assess performance, or b) formally initiates the process of creating a complete streets implementation plan, including a timeframe for plan completion.

To be eligible for points for this action, local governments are not required to incorporate these policies into their zoning or comprehensive plan; however, they are encouraged to do so, to reduce the risk of legal challenges.

F. What to submit

Submit a copy of (or link to) a Complete Streets policy that meets the requirements in Section E. The policy must be actively in use at the time of submittal. Include documentation showing the Complete Streets policy was formally approved and adopted by the local government; adoption can take the form of a resolution, executive order, law, or other formal policy.

All CSC action documentation is available for public viewing after an action is approved. Action submittals should not include any information or documents that are not intended to be viewed by the public.

G. Links to additional resources or best practices

- [New York State Department of Transportation - Complete Streets Act](#): This webpage includes sample resolutions and policies from local governments across New York State.
- [Smart Growth America – National Complete Streets Coalition](#)
- [City of Kingston, NY. Complete Streets Policy](#)
- [GObike Buffalo - Complete Streets in the City of Buffalo, NY](#)
- [DOH Public Health Live Webcast: Climate Smart Communities: Developing a Complete Streets Policy](#)

H. Recertification requirements

The recertification requirements are the same as the initial certification requirements.