

Kentucky Complete Streets Toolkit for Advocates

Prepared by: Andrea Plummer, Kentucky Youth Advocates

Phone: 502-895-8167

Email: aplummer@kyyouth.org

Toolkit Components:

- ❖ Complete Streets Fact Sheet
- ❖ Complete Streets: Frequently Asked Questions
- ❖ Complete Streets Resources
- ❖ Tips for Encouraging Complete Streets in YOUR Community
- ❖ Sample Form Letter
- ❖ Op-Ed Sample #1
- ❖ Op-Ed Sample #2
- ❖ Letter to the Editor Sample #1
- ❖ Letter to the Editor Sample #2

FACT SHEET: *Complete Streets*



A complete streets policy ensures that roadways are designed to accommodate everyone, including motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, and public transportation users of all ages and abilities. When proper crosswalks, bike paths, sidewalks, and safety features are in a community, people can safely get from point A to point B while getting exercise at the same time. Implementing complete streets does not mean that every road must have a sidewalk, bike lane, etc. It means designing streets to be friendly to all modes of transportation in a context sensitive manner. Learn more at: <http://www.completestreets.org>.

KENTUCKY COMPLETE STREETS EXAMPLES:



US 42 / 127, Boone Co



KY 1303 – Turkey Foot Rd., Kenton Co

WHY DOES KENTUCKY NEED COMPLETE STREETS?

To increase physical activity:

- Kentucky has the 4th highest rate of adult obesity and the 3rd highest rate of childhood obesity in the nation.^{1,2}
- Kentuckians are highly inactive.³

To increase the safety of Kentucky roads for all users of the roadway:

- In 2010, more than 3 pedestrians or bicyclists were killed or injured on average everyday in Kentucky.⁴
- Over 400 children and youth ages 19 and under were injured or killed in traffic collisions while walking on roads in Kentucky in 2010.⁵
- In 2008, 58 percent of respondents of the KY Highway User Survey stated the need for additional pedestrian accommodations and 69 percent identified the need for more bicycle accommodations in Kentucky.

To provide safe places for children to walk or bike to school and play in their communities:

- In 2007, only 72 percent of children living in Kentucky urban areas had sidewalks or walking paths in their neighborhoods, and less than half of children in rural areas did.⁶

COMPLETE STREETS BENEFITS

When streets are complete, individuals and families have the choice to use multiple modes of transportation. With fewer vehicles on roadways and more people choosing active transportation options, there are multiple benefits:

- Reduced traffic congestion
- Reduced transportation costs for families
- Increased physical activity of residents
- Increased safety
- More children walking and biking to school

COMPLETE STREETS IN KENTUCKY

Complete streets can be implemented at the state or local level through statute, executive orders, written commitments, public ordinances and education of stakeholders. Over 200 complete streets policies have been enacted across the United States.

- Complete streets legislation was introduced during the 2008 Kentucky General Assembly; however, the bill failed to pass.
- In 2002, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) adopted the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel Policy Manual*, which states that bicycle and pedestrian facilities will be considered if certain conditions are met. However, this internal policy does not require KYTC to accommodate for all users.
- In 2008, Louisville, KY adopted a complete streets ordinance requiring new roadway construction to consider all users of the roadway.
- Lexington, KY is in the planning process of adopting a complete streets policy.
- Although Frankfort, KY does not have a complete streets policy, a local group of advocates produced a Bicycling and Walking Plan. This lays the groundwork and can be a precursor to complete streets.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Gather a small group of supporters and do a walkability assessment in your community. Share the results with your elected officials.
- Attend public meetings in your community and voice your concern for bicycle and pedestrian friendly streets in new and resurfacing projects.
- Write or e-mail your council representative or mayor asking them to pass a complete streets policy in your community.
- Engage the media on this issue through a news story, Op/Ed, or letter to the editor.
- Contact Andrea Plummer at aplummer@kyyouth.org to find additional ways to get involved.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Data. (2009). *Prevalence and Trends Data-Overweight and Obesity (BMI)-2009*. Available at <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/BRFSS/list.asp?cat=OB&yr=2009&qkey=4409&state=KY>. Accessed January 2011.

² National Survey of Children's Health Data Resource Center. (2007). Available at <http://www.nschdata.org/Content/Default.aspx>. Accessed January 2011.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Data. (2009). *Prevalence and Trends Data Kentucky Exercise-2009*. Available at <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/BRFSS/display.asp?cat=EX&yr=2009&qkey=4347&state=KY>. Accessed January 2011.

⁴ University of Kentucky, College of Engineering, Kentucky Transportation Center. (2011). *Analysis of Traffic Crash Data in Kentucky (2006-2010)*. Available at http://www.ktc.uky.edu/Reports/KTC_11_15_KSP2_11_1F.pdf. Accessed April 2012.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ National Survey of Children's Health Data Resource Center. (2007). Available at <http://www.nschdata.org/Content/Default.aspx>. Accessed January 2011.

Complete Streets

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a complete street?

Complete streets are designed to be safe for everyone that uses the road, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation users of all ages and abilities. Everyone should be able to safely move along and cross a complete street.

What is a complete streets policy?

A complete streets policy directs transportation planners and engineers to routinely design roads 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 town a better place to live.

Does a complete streets policy mean there has to be a bike lane and sidewalk on every road in the community?

There is no singular design for complete streets as each road is unique and has to fit the needs of the community which it will serve. The key component of complete streets is to analyze what types of users will be using the road and design the street to meet the needs of those users. A complete street in a rural area will look different from a complete street in an urban area, but both are designed to balance safety and convenience for everyone using the road.

How much will complete streets cost?

When complete streets are included in transportation planning and design, there is often little to no cost to implement. Incorporating elements of complete streets early into new street designs and resurfacing plans alleviates expensive retrofit projects to add bicycle and pedestrian facilities after a street is constructed. An important cost-containment strategy is to seize opportunities and implement complete streets incrementally, as a full scale change could take years.

What are the benefits of complete streets?

Some of the many benefits of complete streets include: improved safety, increased opportunities for physical activity and active transportation options, increased air quality, and reduced traffic emissions.

What impact will complete streets have on drivers?

Complete streets improve safety for everyone, including drivers. Elements of complete streets will make the roads safer for bicyclists and pedestrians and also increase drivers' awareness of other users of the road. It can also help reduce traffic congestion for drivers as other options become more appealing.

Complete Streets Resources

WEBSITES

National Complete Streets Coalition - The National Complete Streets Coalition seeks to fundamentally transform the look, feel, and function of the roads and streets in our community, by changing the way most roads are planned, designed, and constructed. This website contains fact sheets, model policies, information on where complete streets policies have been adopted, and many other resources.

Available at <http://www.completestreets.org>.

National Policy and Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity – Provides model complete streets resolutions, model policies, and model comprehensive plan language. Available at

<http://www.nplanonline.org>.

Safe Routes to School National Partnership - The Safe Routes to School National Partnership is a network of more than 500 nonprofit organizations, government agencies, schools, and professionals working together to advance the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) movement in the United States. This website contains fact sheets and information on complete streets and safe routes to school. Available at

<http://www.saferoutespartnership.org>.

Kentucky Youth Advocates – Kentucky Youth Advocates organizes the Kentucky Safe Routes to School Network. The Kentucky Network webpage contains fact sheets, this tool kit, presentations, and other information relevant to safe routes to school. Available at <http://www.kyyouth.org>.

REPORTS

Shaping Kentucky's Future – This document, produced by the Partnership for a Fit Kentucky, highlights complete streets as a key policy to reduce obesity in Kentucky. Available at

<http://afhkc.pub30.convio.net/assets/clubs/ky1-shaping.pdf>.

Complete Streets: Best Policy and Implementation Practices - The report provides insight into successful strategies and practices to create complete streets, including how to build support for complete streets, adopt policies, and integrate the policy into everyday practice. Available for purchase:

<http://www.planning.org>.

Planning Complete Streets for an Aging America - A major report on considering the needs of older people in multimodal street planning. Available at <http://www.aarp.org>

Bicycling and Walking in the United States: 2010 Benchmarking Report - This report from the Alliance for Biking Walking highlights data on biking and walking levels, safety, funding, policies, and more from 50 states and the 51 largest cities. Available at <http://americabikes.org>.

Tips for Encouraging Complete Streets in YOUR Community

Ensuring that Kentucky's streets are designed to be safe for everyone starts with someone passionate about change. This could be anyone such as a community member, advocate, mayor, city council member, or local government official. Beginning the conversation may be as simple as talking with an elected official about complete streets.

Here are some tips to help you work towards getting a complete streets policy in your community. Every situation is different, but these tips can help you get started. It is important to be flexible during this process as some of these tips may be more feasible than others and appropriate at different times.

1. Connect with potential supporters – Complete streets provide broad benefits to communities so there are many potential allies including advocates for children, health, the environment, bicycle and pedestrian safety, older adults, and people with disabilities. Schools, neighborhood associations, city planners, and local businesses may also be interested in the benefits provided by complete streets. Connecting with a few potential partners to evaluate interest in supporting a local complete streets policy is a great way to get started. Talking about the need for complete streets such as places in your community with incomplete sidewalks or narrow roads and sharing stories can help motivate interest. Doing a walkability assessment may help build your case. In addition, gathering data from your community such as pedestrian and bicycle crash data, obesity rates, and data on people that walk or bike to work or school can help make the case for complete streets in your community.

2. Evaluate the political environment – It is important to understand local politics, how decisions are made in your community and if there are potential champions. For example, an elected official who is an avid bicyclist, runner or parent of school-aged children may be interested in complete streets. Investigate previous work on bicycle, pedestrian, and transit planning including city/county comprehensive plans and transportation plans. It is important to understand how transportation planning and road design decisions are made in your community. If possible, attend open forums on transportation at the local and regional level, including Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Area Development Districts (ADDs). If your community has planning and zoning, attend a Planning Commission meeting or reach out to planning staff. Attend city council meetings or the county fiscal court in your community to help learn who the key players are and how decisions are made. Most meetings are open to the general public.

3. Build Support – Building the support of stakeholders, including political and government staff, the general public, and advocates requires education and outreach. Conduct surveys, hold public meetings, and present to stakeholder groups to promote buy-in from stakeholders. Communicate the many benefits of complete streets to help recruit supporters. Contact the KY

SRTS Network Organizer at Kentucky@saferoutespartnership.org if you would like to arrange a presentation on complete streets in your community.

Think about groups that may oppose a complete streets policy and reach out to address concerns ahead of time. For example, some transportation engineers may think a complete streets policy will require them to put a bike lane on every road they design in the community. You can ease these concerns by clarifying that complete streets do not mandate specific design treatments. Rather, complete streets involves looking at roads, the surrounding environment and all of the street's expected users to decide what the best and safest design elements are for everyone.

4. Find a local champion – Complete streets policies typically advance on the local level through a resolution or ordinance approved by the council/commission at the city level or fiscal court at the county level. After you have some allies and have thought about local politics, it is time to find a champion to carry the policy forward. This might be a member that is an avid bicyclist or someone interested in promoting community health. Research your city council members and mayor to identify a potential champion. Present your case to this leader using concrete stories, facts, evidence of support and a model policy.

Once you find an interested elected official, work with them to create a small working group of staff, city officials, and community stakeholders to explore how to move a complete streets policy or resolution forward in your community. Successful complete streets policies usually begin with a lot of planning and collaboration so that everyone is on board.

5. Engage the public and media – When things start moving forward, it is important to educate your community on what complete streets are and raise awareness of why you need them in your community using the media. Submitting letters to the editor or opinion/editorial pieces to your local news paper can help educate the general public. Contact the KY SRTS Organizer at Kentucky@saferoutespartnership.org if you need help writing or submitting a piece. Articles can clarify misconceptions about complete streets and build support for a policy.

6. Stay Committed – If a small taskforce or coalition of supporters forms in your community, be active. Help with testimonies at public forums or be there as a supporter. When it is time for policy adoption, attendance and support at public meetings is critical. Letters, emails and phone calls to elected officials make a difference. It is also important to stay engaged through the policy implementation process. A complete streets policy needs time and attention after it is passed to ensure proper implementation.

7. Be Patient and Positive – Some communities will adopt complete streets policies relatively quickly and easily. It may take other communities months or years to adopt a complete streets approach. It is important to celebrate small wins such as a local council member becoming supportive of complete streets or a transportation engineer that buys into the concept. Find common ground with opponents to work on initially and save the controversial aspects for later. The goal to change the way transportation is planned should be long-term, and incremental changes will help achieve this goal and keep supporters motivated.

SAMPLE FORM LETTER

<Date>

<Name>

<Address>

<City, State Zip code>

<Dear Elected Official>:

<I am/Organization is> asking that you support a complete streets policy in <your city>.

A complete streets policy ensures that roads are designed and operated to enable safe access for everyone. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and public transportation riders of all ages and abilities can move safely along and across a complete street. There is no prescription for what a Complete Street looks like but it could include elements such as wide paved shoulders, sidewalks, crosswalks, and/or bike lanes. A Complete Street in a rural area will look different from a Complete Street in a highly urban area, but both are designed to balance safety and convenience for everyone using the road.

As a resident of <your city>, I am greatly concerned about the safety of all users of our roads and also about the health of our community. *<add any relevant data, findings from surveys or walkability assessments, stories, etc. to help build the case (i.e. Last year X number of bicyclists and pedestrians were killed while walking on roads in our community. Further, we have a high rate of obesity and few places for physical activity)>*

Complete Streets improve safety and reduce crashes by providing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, such as safe crossings, sidewalks, or on-road bicycle lanes. Complete Streets promote public health by making it safe and convenient for children and families to incorporate physical activity into their daily lives as a way to combat the obesity epidemic.

Clearly, supporting Complete Streets is investing in a stronger and healthier <your city>. <I/We> urge you to consider a complete streets policy. Included is a fact sheet and sample model policy for you to review. Together we can create a more vibrant <your city>.

Please contact me with any questions at <email address and phone number>. I look forward to working with you on this issue.

Sincerely,

<Name>

<Title>

OP-ED SAMPLE #1

Op-Ed: Complete Streets Offer a Way toward Zero Fatalities

BY JAMES SIMPSON | THURSDAY, NOV 10, 2011 11:30AM | COMMENTS (3)



NJDOT Commissioner James Simpson

The following op-ed was written by [NJDOT Commissioner James Simpson](#).

When the word “transportation” is mentioned, New Jersey residents for the most part think of cars and trucks or buses and their daily commute. I have spent most of my adult life as a business owner, with locations in the Garden State. That experience has given me the perspective of a motorist. After becoming Commissioner of Transportation, I relocated near Trenton to one of the most walkable towns in the state, where the freedom from relying on a car for shopping, dining, entertainment and the occasional train trip to the “Big Apple” is second to none.

As a pedestrian, I’ve seen first hand drivers speeding down local streets showing a lack of regard for pedestrians and bicyclists. I see the need for more [Complete Streets](#). That means more and improved sidewalks, better markings at crosswalks to put motorists on alert, bike paths where needed, intersection improvements including countdown pedestrian signals and accessible curb cuts at crosswalks to accommodate the mobility impaired.

Last year, 141 pedestrians and 13 bicyclists were struck and killed by vehicles on New Jersey roads. Through October 25 of this year, the pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities had reached 99 and 13, respectively. Of this year’s 112 fatalities, five of the victims were under the age of 18 and a total of 20 were under age 30.

That’s why we are promoting New Jersey’s award-winning Complete Streets policy, and why NJDOT is helping counties and municipalities learn what Complete Streets is all about and how they can benefit by adopting their own policies.

Our Complete Streets policy requires that all major NJDOT roadway projects in the future include accommodations for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and the mobility impaired. Any exceptions to our policy must be explicitly requested and justified. Pedestrians and high-speed interstate freeways are not a good mix, so we generally would not include sidewalks in such projects. The opportunities for desirable and safe improvements, however, are almost limitless.

The advantage of inserting a dialogue about all users at the earliest stages of project development is that it provides the designers and the engineers the best opportunity to create solutions at the best price. It is easier and cheaper to build it right the first time than to retrofit the project later.

A local Complete Streets policy raises awareness among residents, elected officials and the private sector. When projects are proposed, pedestrian, bicycle and transit accommodations are no longer an afterthought – they become an integral feature of the overall investment plan. Since NJDOT adopted its policy, 13 municipalities and one county have followed suit.

Through our Pedestrian Safety Initiative, we have invested nearly \$15 million since 2007 on building more than 33 miles of sidewalks. The importance of this initiative is evidenced by the fact that we doubled that program's budget in FY 12 to \$4 million.

The Christie Administration supports Complete Streets through a number of NJDOT programs and Local Aid grant opportunities. Safety experts in the Department are in the process of assessing high-risk areas on state highways and propose improvements under our Pedestrian and Bicycle Safe Corridor program. I am personally chairing a committee to reduce pedestrian fatalities at the state's 314 railroad grade crossings.

We are putting the final touches on a Complete Streets video and will be offering regional workshops in the spring to local and county officials to introduce the benefits of Complete Streets and how to design for it.

Seven different Local Aid grant programs administered by NJDOT have provided funding in recent years to counties and towns to help them invest in projects that improve safety and access for pedestrians, bicyclists and others who share our roads.

Like other parents in my community, I push a stroller with my two young children in it and frequently witness inattentive drivers who ignore crosswalks without stopping for pedestrians as the law requires. Every day I see how all of us can make our communities and our state even safer for those non-motorists who share the streets and roads.

Education, Enforcement and Engineering, which I call "E to the third power" or "E-cubed," can and will make New Jersey safer for everyone. Motorists need to slow down and respect the law. Pedestrians and bicyclists must obey the rules of the road. I urge local governments to adopt Complete Streets policies and join us in this important effort to engineer safety into New Jersey's road network. Together we will save lives.

Complete streets need pedestrian room, too

Published: Monday, February 15, 2010, 11:31 PM



By **Guest Columnist**

Follow

6

[Share](#)[Email](#)[Print](#)

By Steph Routh

Imagine our roads are like a pie with a slice each for walking, biking, public transit and driving. We need to invest in these "complete streets" in order to share the road safely. The alternative is becoming increasingly expensive and dangerous.

Complete streets save lives. The Willamette Pedestrian Coalition has counted more than 20 people seriously injured or killed in traffic crashes while walking in our region since Halloween. A single crash is tragic. Twenty is just intolerable. The pedestrian slice of our transportation pie is dangerously and unacceptably small. Though Portland's Pedestrian Master Plan is now 12 years old, only a few of its much-needed improvement projects have been funded. We must invest in sidewalks and crossings in order to develop safe, walkable neighborhoods for everybody.

Streets must be designed for all uses -- walking, biking, driving and taking the bus. We need streets that naturally slow down young or careless drivers; that offer visible reminders to drivers to expect people to be walking or biking; and that provide the room and opportunity to bike on or walk across the road safely.

Complete streets save us money. We spend more money on our daily commutes than we think. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, we Americans spent, in an average household, almost the same for gasoline as we did for health care in 2008. If we can choose to walk or bike for some errands, we can save ourselves some of that \$2,756 we are spending at the pump. As taxpayers, we can also appreciate road design that requires less pavement per road user, a savings during construction as well as in long-term maintenance.

We deserve the freedom to choose how we get around from day to day. Imagine if everyone traveling less than two miles during commute time felt free and safe enough to walk, bike or get to the bus. When we can walk or bike that one to two miles safely, we save money in car maintenance and gas. If we must drive more than two miles to work in the morning and evening, more people walking and biking would mean a lot less congestion on our commute.

We need complete streets. Not just some of them, all of them. Our streets must be designed to allow us the freedom to choose our mode of transportation. We should feel safe to walk with our kids around our neighborhood before dinner or across the street from the car to the grocery store. Drivers should be provided visible reminders that someone could walk across the street at a corner or that they are sharing the road with cyclists.

Let's cut our pie into slices that give us choices, that save lives, that cost us less. Let's complete our streets.

Steph Routh is director of the Willamette Pedestrian Coalition.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR SAMPLE #1

Letters to the Editor

Talking bicycling, Complete Streets, taxes and more

BY METRO TIMES READERS

Roads for all

Thank you for your recent article: "[Pedaling influence](#)" (June 2). The article calls attention to walking and bicycling demands in society and how complete streets policies address it. I appreciate your interest in bringing these issues into the public debate.

As demonstrated in the article, more and more people are enjoying the benefits of bicycling and more people would cycle if they felt safer on the roads. The great people of this state pay the vehicle license and registration fees, gas taxes and sales taxes which are used to build Michigan roads. People in Michigan want to use their money to build safe roads that they can use when they are in and out of their car. The Complete Streets legislation I am working on ensures that all future transportation projects will consider all users of the roads, not just motorists.

Also mentioned in article, the County Road Association of Michigan, which represents county road commissions, is opposed to the legislation. They state that this is an unfunded mandate. This is false. The bill provides them a lot of discretion and cost exemptions.

What they fail to recognize is that this is a request from the owners of the roads; they want MDOT and road commissions to build roads that can be used for more than one purpose. Now, a "complete street" in Detroit is not going to be the same as a "complete street" in Frankfort. The bill does not require all the roads to have bike lanes or specific pedestrian crossings. This is not a cookie-cutter project approach, which might require some extra planning for road commissions, since it seems that is how they build roads. All we want is for a Complete Streets policy to be another check on the list that engineers and planners go through in their transportation projects.

We must find ways to revive our state and economy, and one way to do that is to make Michigan's communities and roads walkable and bikeable. —**Jon Switalski, state Representative, House District 25, Warren**

LETTER TO THE EDITOR SAMPLE #2

Consider Complete Streets program for Ocean City

Published in the May 25, 2011 issue

To the Editor:

Philadelphia voters recently chose Mayor Michael Nutter to be the Democratic candidate in the November mayoral election. It is probable that Mayor Nutter will serve another four years in office as the chief administrator of a large and diverse city. Why do I bring this up? Michael Nutter has been a strong supporter of "Complete Streets," a planning initiative that provides a network of transportation tools to assure the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, public transportation users and motorists. In adopting this policy, the mayor emphasized the many benefits of Complete Streets from cleaner air due to less vehicle traffic, efficient use of road space, and the attention it pays to the safety of its most vulnerable citizens: children, older adults and those with disabilities.

The New Jersey Department of Transportation has also embraced the growing need for implementing a Complete Streets policy in planning the construction of bridges and highways throughout the state and assisting cities and municipalities with their efforts to provide alternate ways for residents and visitors to travel within their environment. The most recent example is the design of the new 9th Street Bridge that will connect not only cars to Somers Point but will include a walking/cycling lane that will provide an alternate way to travel off the island.

The benefits of Complete Streets include efficient connections between residences, schools, parks, and retail destinations, safety improvements such as redesigning intersections and sidewalks, encouraging more walking and bicycling that provides an opportunity for fitness and better quality of life and easing transportation woes as well as reducing congestion.

A feasibility study in Ocean City that will be completed and released by the New Jersey Department of Transportation focuses on a complete bike route in Ocean City extending from the Longport Bridge to the 59th Street causeway. It is a plan that the citizens of Ocean City cannot afford to ignore. The safety issues in Ocean City are well documented: accidents involving distracted drivers and pedestrians, bike riders on busy streets that allow no room for error, lack of knowledge about right of ways and many others dangers. The Complete Streets vision could begin with a safe and accessible bike route in Ocean City. It would provide a reduction in car travel, an alternate to school buses for children going to school, a significant draw for tourists looking for a safe place for their families to ride their bikes and the right for the city to advertise as a true, environmentally friendly city.

Like many other cities and states, Ocean City should support the DOT study that focuses on the Complete Streets plan of action. Voters should encourage the city's administration to support this plan for the future improvement of our great city and for the welfare of our citizens and visitors.

Teresa Coggshall

Ocean City