

# Complete Streets in the States: A Guide to Legislative Action

AARP Government Affairs, State Advocacy & Strategy Integration  
Stefanie Seskin, National Complete Streets Coalition, Smart Growth America  
Barbara McCann, McCann Consulting

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AARP, 601 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20049

<http://www.aarp.org/livable>

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## Foreword

The State Advocacy and Strategy Integration team has created this Complete Streets advocacy toolkit to assist AARP state offices in successful efforts to enact state-level Complete Streets policies, while also providing information to assist in local-level advocacy efforts. AARP's public policy supports local and state jurisdictions in the adoption and implementation of transportation plans that accommodate all users, including pedestrians and bicyclists.

Much of the nation's work on road safety has focused on the needs of the drivers and passengers of motor vehicles, but the notion of planning for Complete Streets addresses safety from the perspective of all users. Complete Streets are designed and operated for safe, comfortable, and convenient travel by pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Such programs are augmented by transportation networks that provide a variety of services, thus allowing consumers a broad choice in how to travel safely and in line with their personal preferences, schedules, and budgets. The focus of Complete Streets initiatives has been on changing transportation agency policies and procedures so that these multimodal accommodations become a routine part of project development.

## Introduction to the Toolkit

Central to the creation of livable communities is the possibility for everyone, regardless of age or ability, to travel safely. Yet, many of our nation's roads do little to meet the needs of the growing population of older Americans. The U.S. Census Bureau projects that, by 2025, nearly one in five Americans, or 62 million Americans, will be over the age of 65. While many of these older adults will continue to drive, some will seek other transportation options and find them lacking.

Complete Streets policies offer the opportunity to improve the travel options of people of all ages. Planning, designing, and building roads that respond to the needs of all users will provide older adults a variety of options for getting around, whether walking, taking public transportation, driving their own cars, or sharing rides with family and friends. By following a Complete Streets process, one may balance the sometimes-competing requirements of older

drivers and older pedestrians by slowing vehicles down where necessary, by creating an easily navigated multimodal network of streets, and by improving visibility.

Instituting a Complete Streets policy at the state level is essential in creating transportation networks that give older adults the mobility and the access to destinations they need and want. The states control many community roadways and often set the standard for streets in cities and counties. Over half the states have already adopted some form of Complete Streets policy, and a handful of states are working to institutionalize the approach in their everyday operations.

This document offers guidance and materials that may be used in a statewide Complete Streets effort. It includes model legislative language and the reasons for the use of that language, comments on existing state legislation related to Complete Streets, information on potential partners that might support Complete Streets efforts, basic strategic guidance and resources, and insight into ways five states are working toward the implementation of Complete Streets policies.

## Model State Legislation

The model legislation below is based largely on existing language in state statutes. Read Legislative Elements Explained, hereafter, for an explanation and for commentary about the model.

### Section 1. Complete Streets

1.1 Vehicular, public transportation, bicycle, and pedestrian modes are integral to the transportation system, and the *[state Department of Transportation]* shall view all transportation improvements as opportunities to improve safety, access, and mobility for all travelers.

1.2 All transportation projects receiving federal or state funds shall improve safety, access, and mobility for users of all ages and abilities, who are defined to include pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation vehicles and their passengers, motorists, transporters of commercial goods, persons with disabilities, older adults, and children.

1.3 Accommodations for all users shall be included in the planning, design, construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, maintenance, and operations of any state, county, or local transportation facilities receiving funds from the *[Department of Transportation]*. The *[department]* shall aim to create a safe, comprehensive, integrated, and connected network to accommodate all users in a manner that is suitable to the rural, suburban, or urban context.

1.4 The *[Department of Transportation]* shall use the latest and best design standards as these apply to bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and highway facilities, including the latest editions of the following:

- a. *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets* (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials)
- b. *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach: An ITE Recommended Practice* (Institute of Transportation Engineers)
- c. *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities* (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials)
- d. *Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities* (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials)
- e. "Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines" (United States Access Board)
- f. *[Other relevant federal, state, or local guidance as appropriate]*

1.5 The *[Department of Transportation]* may provide assistance to and coordinate with local and regional agencies in developing and implementing complementary Complete Streets policies. In the development of projects within municipal boundaries, the *[department]* and municipality shall share expertise in multimodal transportation planning.

1.6 The [*Department of Transportation*] shall modify its procedures, documents, training systems, and performance measures in a timely manner to ensure that the needs of all users of the transportation system are included in all phases of all projects. The [*department*] shall create an implementation plan, including a schedule and a public and local or regional government outreach plan, in consultation with the Advisory Board, as outlined in section 3.

## **Section 2. Exceptions**

2.1 The provision of facilities pursuant to section 1 shall not be required if the [*commissioner of transportation or other senior management title*] determines, with respect to a highway, road, or street, that:

- a. Use of the transportation facility by pedestrians, bicyclists, or other users is prohibited by law
- b. The cost of new accommodation would be excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use
- c. There is a demonstrated absence of future need as determined by factors including current and future land use, current and projected user volumes, population density, and crash data

2.2 The agency shall consult local and regional plans and leaders, as appropriate, in assessing exceptions.

2.3 Documentation on any granted exceptions shall be made publicly available and shared with the Advisory Board as established in section 3.

## **Section 3. Advisory Board**

3.1 There is established a Complete Streets Advisory Board within the [*Department of Transportation*] for the following purposes:

- a. Providing education and advice to the state Transportation Commission [*or other board*], county road commissions [*or other similar organizations*], municipalities, interest groups, and the public
- b. Making recommendations to the [*department*] on restructuring procedures, updating design guidance, providing educational opportunities to employees, and establishing new measures to track success in multimodal planning and design
- c. Submitting to the legislature, through the [*department*], annual reports as outlined in section 3.4

3.2 The members of the Advisory Board shall be appointed by the Governor's office and shall include one member representing each of the following:

- a. The [*state Department of Transportation*]
- b. The state Transportation Commission [*or similar*]
- c. The [*state Department of Public Health*]
- d. Licensed engineers with expertise in transportation
- e. [*State*] chapter of the American Planning Association [*or equivalent*]
- f. [*State association of counties*]

- g. [State municipal league]
- h. A major local or regional public transportation agency
- i. AARP [state]
- j. An organization interested in the promotion of bicycling
- k. An organization interested in the promotion of walking
- l. An organization representing persons with disabilities
- m. An automobile and/or trucking transport organization
- n. Other interested parties as determined by the Governor

3.3. [Set terms for Advisory Board, such as term limits, a meeting schedule, and the appointment of the chairperson.]

3.4 By [date] and annually [on date] thereafter, the Advisory Board shall submit a report to the Governor, the Commissioner of Transportation [or similar title], and the legislature [or relevant committee(s) thereof] on the status of the implementation of section 1.

- a. Reports should include information such as the following:
  - i. A summary of specific actions taken by the [Department of Transportation] in the preceding year to improve the safety, access, and mobility of roadways for all users as defined in section 1.2
  - ii. Any identified statutory recommendations to facilitate Complete Streets implementation
  - iii. Modifications made to or recommended for protocols, guidance, standards, or other requirements to facilitate Complete Streets implementation
  - iv. The status of the development of multimodal performance indicators
  - v. Information collected from agencies on the percentage of trips made by foot, bicycle, and public transportation, together with the target level of the use of these modes
  - vi. Crash statistics by mode, age, road type, location, and other relevant factors
  - vii. Other, related information that may be requested by the Governor
- b. Such reports shall be coordinated with a representative or representatives of the [Department of Transportation].

#### **Section 4. Effective Date**

4.1 This Act shall take effect on [date], provided that section 1 shall apply to any transportation project for which a preliminary design has been completed on or before [January 1 after a full calendar year].

## Legislative Elements Explained

### Ideal Complete Streets Policy

The National Complete Streets Coalition promotes a comprehensive policy model. The model includes 10 elements. These seek to ensure that the policy leads to on-the-ground changes that improve safety for all users. Though the Complete Streets concept is simple and inspiring, the coalition has found through research and practice that a policy must do more than merely affirm support for Complete Streets.

A comprehensive policy includes the following 10 elements:

- A vision for how and why the community wants to complete its streets.
- Specification that “all users” includes pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit passengers of all ages and abilities, as well as trucks, buses, and automobiles.
- Both new and retrofit projects are subject to the policy, including design, planning, maintenance, and operations, for the entire right-of-way.
- Any exceptions are specified and approval of any exceptions must come from a high-level official.
- Street connectivity is encouraged with the aim to create a comprehensive, integrated, and connected network for all modes.
- All other agencies can clearly understand the policy and may be involved in the process.
- The latest and best design criteria and guidelines are recommended for use, while recognizing the need for flexibility in balancing user needs.
- Community context is considered in planning and design solutions.
- Performance standards with measurable outcomes are included.
- Specific next steps for implementation of the policy are described.

### Ideal State Law

In the development of state law, the most important and effective elements are those that constitute the core of the Complete Streets approach, as follows:

- The specification of users and modes should include people of all ages and abilities who are walking, riding bicycles, driving cars and trucks, and riding public transportation.
- The application of the policy to all possible projects, including the construction of new roadways; capital projects, such as reconstruction work or road-widening projects; and rehabilitation and maintenance efforts that involve changes to the right-of-way or signal operations.
- Clearly defined exceptions to the policy with a requirement for approval from a high-level transportation official and a transparent process.

More recently adopted state laws have employed accountability measures or established a state-level advisory board to oversee implementation, which we recommend to ensure that the laws are implemented. Full details on how a state may implement the law are not practical or

advisable in legislation, but advocates should press for annual reports, a formal implementation plan, and an opportunity to become a resource for the state transportation agency as it begins to transform its approach into one consistent with the Complete Streets concept.

Other elements in the ideal list represent best practices, but may not be included in state legislation because of their complexity. An advisory board can work with the DOT to develop guidance on such elements, or the department can develop them on its own.

## Elements of the Model Legislation

The model legislation includes phrases and ideas in existing state-level legislation and best practices in federal guidance and local policy efforts. The model applies primarily to the state DOT and the roads the department controls. The reasons for each section are described below, and some alternatives are provided, as appropriate.

Always read existing state legislation related to the activities and governance of the state DOT and consult with knowledgeable experts on state law before introducing legislation. A thorough review can reveal opportunities to build on existing guidance or discover legislative restrictions on the creation of Complete Streets. Adapt the policy language to fit the state's legislative context.

### Section 1. Complete Streets

This section establishes the Complete Streets requirements. Change the section number to fit within your state's titles and chapters. You may find that you must modify other existing statutes related to how the DOT is governed to include all concepts presented in the model or address other obstacles to Complete Streets.

1.1 Vehicular, public transportation, bicycle, and pedestrian modes are integral to the transportation system, ...

This subsection defines the purpose of the section and begins by establishing parity among travel by foot, bicycle, transit, and automobile.

...and the [*state Department of Transportation*] shall view all transportation improvements as opportunities to improve safety, access, and mobility for all travelers.

The next phrase establishes a clear vision for the state transportation system whereby, every time a road is maintained, preserved, rebuilt, or improved, it will be made better for all users. The phrase highlights three important reasons for adopting a Complete Streets policy: safety, access, and mobility. Safety is the primary motivation for the adoption of a Complete Streets policy and should be cited early in the policy process.

Use the correct name for your state's transportation department. It may be the Department of Transportation, Agency of Transportation, Department of Roads, Highway and Transportation Department, or another variation.



The model language does not use the term “Complete Streets” or define “Complete Streets elements.” Using the term or definition perpetuates the notion that such elements are separate from ordinary roadway planning. Instead, it is clear that the legislative intent is to routinely provide safe travel for everyone.

#### 1.2 All transportation projects receiving federal or state funds shall improve safety, access, and mobility...

This subsection covers projects and users. By specifying that projects receiving state or federal funds are required to follow the law’s intent, all projects should be covered by the law. Thus, if the law limits applications only to those projects receiving federal funds, many other street projects could go forward outside the Complete Streets approach. This subsection will help streamline Complete Streets applicability. Project managers will not need to track whether specific funding sources may or may not require Complete Streets; rather, they will simply assume that every project is governed by this requirement.

If there is reticence in naming funding sources, strike “receiving federal or state funds” from the phrase. If the law will only apply to transportation projects under the jurisdiction of the state, but not to those under the jurisdiction of local agencies, specify this through language such as “all state transportation projects” or “all transportation projects undertaken by the Department of Transportation...”

...for users of all ages and abilities, who are defined to include pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation vehicles and their passengers, motorists, transporters of commercial goods, persons with disabilities, older adults, and children.

This section fully defines the range of users and modes to be considered under the law. Specify the widest possible range of users and clearly include people of varying ages and abilities.

#### 1.3 Accommodations for all users shall be included in the planning, design, construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, maintenance, and operations...

This subsection clarifies the applicability of the law by integrating the Complete Streets approach into all types of projects and all phases of each project. Planning, design, construction, and reconstruction must be included.

Rehabilitation and maintenance may be sticking points for the state DOT as the legislative process advances. Be prepared with potential compromise language, such as that mentioned below. Point out that, for the state, road maintenance will likely become a larger focus than the traditional emphasis on building new roads. Maintenance work provides many opportunities for enhancing the environment for travelers on foot and bicycle through relatively easy and inexpensive means, such as repainting the right-of-way to include bicycle lanes or using repaving as an opportunity to add or improve a crosswalk. The process involved in considering Complete Street approaches to road maintenance need not be burdensome or time consuming.

You might compromise by removing “rehabilitation and maintenance” and providing the following sentence: “New accommodations should be made in pavement resurfacing projects

whereby bicycling, pedestrian, and transit areas can be added within the scope of the original roadwork.” You may also be challenged on the word “operation.” Many small operational changes, such as signal timing, can be major boosts to the comfort of people who are walking or bicycling, but some agencies may view the inclusion of these changes as too broad. If rehabilitation and maintenance are removed in the legislation, work through the Advisory Board to ensure that operational activities can come to represent opportunities for implementation.

...of any state, county, or local transportation facilities receiving funds from the [*Department of Transportation*].

Through this phrase, the scope of the law is broadened to include not only projects in which the state DOT is the lead, but also cases in which localities are using state funds. This effectively makes the Complete Streets law applicable in all communities and will help create seamless networks within and between towns. Meet to discuss any concerns with representatives of municipal and county organizations before introducing this language. This phrase may be changed to “any state transportation facilities” if resistance remains significant.

The [*department*] shall aim to create a safe, comprehensive, integrated, and connected network to accommodate all users...

The policy does not apply to only one street, but across all projects, thereby creating safe routes between destinations and for multiple modes. Instead of trying to make each street perfect for every traveler, states can build an integrated network of streets that emphasize different modes and provide high-quality access for everyone.

...in a manner that is suitable to the rural, suburban, or urban context.

The last phrase clarifies two issues: (a) that the policy is meant to improve safety in all areas of the state, from urban boulevards to rural routes and (b) that design approaches are not intended to be the same across all these contexts, but to vary so that streets are appropriate for the surrounding land uses. Including a clear statement about context sensitivity in the legislation can help allay fears that, if adopted, the law will require inappropriately wide roads in quiet neighborhoods or force the construction of miles of rarely used sidewalks in rural areas.

If your state DOT is already a proponent of context sensitivity or “context-sensitive solutions,” you may find it helpful to message this legislation as complementary to those efforts that are already underway.

1.4 The [*Department of Transportation*] shall use the latest and best design standards as these apply to bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and highway facilities, ...

This subsection ensures that new facilities are planned, designed, and built according to the latest design standards and that the designs are in line with current best practices. If the state is using older manuals, some excellent design options may not be considered because they are not “in the book.”

...including the latest editions of the following:

This important qualifier ensures that states are not relying on outdated guidance.

a. *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets* (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials)

This is the go-to design manual for all states. It is commonly referred to as “the green book” because of its green cover. Some states will have identified specific modifications in the version they use that will often be more restrictive than the original, but will share the same common base. The latest edition (2011) should already be on reference shelves. Some practitioners will mistakenly declare that the manual does not allow for the application of safe, cost-effective multimodal transportation networks; however, the most recent edition provides significant flexibility to allow for Complete Streets planning and design.

b. *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach: An ITE Recommended Practice* (Institute of Transportation Engineers)

A relatively new publication, *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares* is one of the best nationally applicable design manuals that supports thoughtful design. It may be used in large cities or along small town Main Streets to build safe, attractive streets for multiple users. Developed by the Institute of Transportation Engineers, the Congress for the New Urbanism, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Federal Highway Administration, this manual has been tested and approved for use by many reputable engineers. The latest edition is marked 2010.

c. *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities* (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials)

This is the go-to guide for the design of bicycle facilities at the state level. The latest edition of the manual is dated 2012. States should not continue to use the 1999 version.

d. *Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities* (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials)

This is another go-to guide for state DOTs. It covers engineering specifications for pedestrian facilities. The latest edition is dated 2004, and an update is currently being prepared.

e. “Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines” (United States Access Board)

These guidelines cover the various elements of rights-of-way that present unique challenges to accessibility by people with disabilities. They provide insight into best practice in the design of crossings, curb ramps, street furniture, and other elements. Only a draft is currently available; however, the Federal Highway Administration has endorsed the 2005 draft guidelines as the current best practice for accessible pedestrian design. The draft is a widely recognized and used guidance document, and states should look to the guidelines as a resource in Complete Streets planning and design. A formal regulatory review of the draft is underway.

f. *[Other relevant federal, state, or local guidance, as appropriate].*

In developing legislation appropriate for your state, you may wish to include additional resources that the state already uses, such as the state’s highway design manual. Work with your allies within the state DOT to be sure you include any progressive state or local manuals, if they exist, or any significant new elements if the state is planning a manual update. Only include state manuals that advance the vision of Complete Streets.

1.5 The *[Department of Transportation]* may provide assistance to and coordinate with local and regional agencies in developing and implementing complementary Complete Streets policies.

Creating Complete Streets networks is difficult because many agencies have a stake in the planning, design, and construction of the transportation network. This subsection encourages coordination between local and state Complete Streets efforts. The first sentence allows the state to assist in local and regional policy development and implementation, which could include workshops or reference documents, and to coordinate with localities and regional bodies, enabling the creation of a stronger network of safe, multimodal streets.

This coordination could be part of the ongoing “3-C” (continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative) transportation process already undertaken by metropolitan planning organizations to be eligible for federal transportation and transit funding. This process includes the 20-year regional transportation plan, as well as the shorter-term transportation improvement program (known as a TIP), both of which are key tools in planning and funding Complete Streets.

In the development of projects within municipal boundaries, the *[department]* and municipality shall share expertise in multimodal transportation planning.

The state is directed to provide technical resources to communities looking to apply Complete Streets approaches to municipal—not state—projects. This helps create uniformity in the approach to and knowledge of the concept. It will help smaller jurisdictions with fewer resources get it right, while also allowing those municipalities with more expertise in multimodal planning to take the lead. While the state DOT may resist this sentence, localities may demand it so they can be at the table when the state takes on work in their communities. Some state DOTs want to be seen as transportation leaders, and this gives them the opportunity to be so seen. This section should reflect any specific local outreach plans that may already exist.

1.6 The *[Department of Transportation]* shall modify its procedures, documents, training systems, and performance measures in a timely manner to ensure that the needs of all users of the transportation system are included in all phases of all projects.

This section reflects current best practices in ensuring that Complete Streets policies result in changes in everyday decision making. It covers three of the National Complete Streets Coalition’s steps to implementation: making changes to guiding documents, ensuring that practitioners are trained in the policy and in policy implementation, and using new or better

ways to measure system performance for those not traveling in motor vehicles. It is not drawn from existing state legislation, but is a recommended addition to any legislative efforts. Though the phrase “timely manner” may be open to interpretation, the following sentence will help establish a time frame for this work.

The [department] shall create an implementation plan, including a schedule and a public and local or regional government outreach plan, in consultation with the Advisory Board as outlined in section 3.

Here the DOT-directed implementation work is tied to the oversight and resources provided by the Advisory Board established later in the law. This phrase lends additional accountability in requiring a schedule for tasks. A plan for outreach to local and regional governments and the public may be related to any existing plan the DOT has in place, or it may be a new effort. Such a plan is important to ensure local buy-in.

Consider whether a time frame for the creation of this implementation plan is appropriate. If so, it is recommended that one be developed within 18 to 24 months after the law’s adoption. One year may not be sufficient time to form a committee; fully evaluate the procedures, documents, training systems, and performance measures that guide decision making; and develop a workable plan. However, if you and your allies feel confident, or if you have already begun some of this work before the law’s adoption, you may choose to require the plan’s completion much sooner.

## Section 2. Exceptions

State law must include clear exceptions to the policy to provide flexibility in Complete Streets application and to address the concerns of project managers and designers.

2.1 The provision of facilities pursuant to section 1 shall not be required if the [commissioner of transportation or other senior management title] determines, ...

Through this subsection, the law as established in the above section may not apply to projects for which the commissioner of transportation determines an exception is warranted. In your state, the commissioner may be too high ranking, and another senior management position may be better suited for this role. Work with your allies in the state DOT to be clear about the person (or persons) accountable for each decision to exempt a project from Complete Streets requirements; sign-off must be at a higher level than the project manager.

...with respect to a highway, road, or street, that:

a. The use of the transportation facility by pedestrians, bicyclists, or other users is prohibited by law

This exception reiterates existing legislation in allowing for some streets, such as interstate highways, transit malls, or pedestrian-only street segments, not to include facilities for legally prohibited users. It is based on Federal Highway Administration guidance, “Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel: A Recommended Approach.”

b. The cost of new accommodation would be excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use

Provide for flexibility for cases of financial constraint and in which facilities would not be needed or would not be used often. Do not attach a percentage of the total project budget unless pressed to do so; each project's context may demand that a different percentage of the budget be dedicated to certain users. For example, a Main Street project may put more funds in pedestrian facilities, while a project on a farm road would dedicate a larger budget share to wider road shoulders for access by farm equipment and long-distance bicyclists. This exception is also based on Federal Highway Administration guidance, "Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel: A Recommended Approach," which uses a 20-percent guideline. If you must include a percentage, do not use a number lower than 20.

c. There is a demonstrated absence of future need as determined by factors including current and future land use, current and projected user volumes, population density, and crash data

The final exception allows for the state to build roads according to future needs. It also provides examples of how a project manager may determine whether the need justifies facilities. For example, if an area is planned for development in five years, the state should anticipate this need while doing the roadwork now. However, if the area is to remain modestly developed, with large lots in the foreseeable future, facilities common to a more urban setting would not be required. This exception is based on Federal Highway Administration guidance, "Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel: A Recommended Approach."

2.2 The agency shall consult local and regional plans and leaders, as appropriate, in assessing exceptions.

This subsection encourages coordination among local, regional, and state entities in making transportation decisions. Some data needed for making the above exceptions can be found within the plans adopted by these agencies, removing some of the research onus from the state. It allows localities to express to the state their expectations clearly with regard to their transportation networks.

2.3 Documentation on any granted exceptions shall be made publicly available...

This subsection encourages transparency in decision making. With this information, advocates can hold the state accountable for making decisions that they feel are out of line with the intent of the law or the needs of the local community.

...and shared with the Advisory Board as established in section 3.

If an Advisory Board is established, it should receive information about exceptions directly from the DOT.

### Section 3. Advisory Board

Within this section, the law establishes a multidisciplinary advisory board that can help guide implementation and ensure that steps are being taken within the DOT to enact the law. The board creates a formal relationship among state agencies, advocates, and other stakeholders.

When you establish membership and other aspects of the board, keep in mind that the best outcome is a board that can develop a strong working relationship with DOT staff and that, through its actions, can help provide political and, potentially, technical support for the changes the staff must make.

3.1 There is established a Complete Streets Advisory Board within the [*Department of Transportation*] for the following purposes:

Most advisory boards are housed within the DOT for administrative reasons. You may or may not need to state this detail here.

a. Providing education and advice to the state Transportation Commission [*or other board*], county road commissions [*or other similar organizations*], municipalities, interest groups, and the public

This clause provides the Advisory Board with the opportunity to serve as a resource for the state and other organizations in the implementation of the law. You may substitute the correct names for the organizations here or remove them as warranted.

b. Making recommendations to the [*department*] on restructuring procedures, updating design guidance, providing educational opportunities to employees, and establishing new measures to track success in multimodal planning and design

The Advisory Board helps direct the implementation of the law according to the National Complete Streets Coalition's established steps for successful implementation: changing the process for decision making, revising and updating design documents, helping staff members learn about the policy and how it impacts their work, and developing new ways to measure the success of roadway projects and the transportation system holistically.

c. Submitting to the legislature, through the [*department*] annual reports as outlined in subsection 3.4

The board's third responsibility is to report to the legislature each year on the board's recommendations and on the accomplishments of the DOT. Some DOTs may be concerned about the administrative burden of reporting. You should first point to the handful of state transportation agencies that are successfully producing reports on a regular basis now (see the Resources section for examples). You may include language that allows the Complete Streets reports to be drafted in coordination with other legislative reporting requirements. Doing so will ensure that reports are produced on implementation activities, though these activities will not be as highly profiled as they would be if the focused reports were released separately.

More details on the report contents are included in subsection 3.4.

3.2 The members of the Advisory Board shall be appointed by the Governor's office...

The legislation describes some characteristics of the people serving on the Advisory Board, but the governor's office may select the individuals. This is common. You might assign the board's responsibilities as detailed above to an existing board or expand the scope of an existing board to include Complete Streets work.



...and shall include one member representing each of the following:

- a. The *[state Department of Transportation]*
- b. The state Transportation Commission *[or similar]*
- c. The *[state Department of Public Health]*
- d. Licensed engineers with expertise in transportation
- e. *[State]* chapter of the American Planning Association *[or equivalent]*
- f. *[State association of counties]*
- g. *[State municipal league]*
- h. A major local or regional public transportation agency
- i. AARP *[state]*
- j. An organization interested in the promotion of bicycling
- k. An organization interested in the promotion of walking
- l. An organization representing persons with disabilities
- m. An automobile and/or trucking organization
- n. Other interested parties as determined by the Governor

This list represents the organizations most commonly participating on such boards. You may add to or remove organizations from this list so that the final group includes a broad selection of professional and interest groups established in your state that support Complete Streets or have a stake in roadway planning and design. Often, the organizations that advocate for the legislation are those asked to serve on the board. Organizations that might not necessarily be supportive of Complete Streets should also have a seat at the table. The board should be constituted to ensure the strong participation of high-level DOT employees in several relevant divisions; these individuals may serve as members or be directed to participate in a staff capacity. Be aware that, if there are more individuals, meetings may be less manageable.

### 3.3. *[Set terms for the Advisory Board, such as term limits, a meeting schedule, and the appointment of the chairperson.]*

You will need to develop terms for the board based on practices in your state. Often, laws will address the terms for each member and a way to alternate membership so that an entirely new board is not possible in a given year. You may be asked to set a date for the end of a particular committee's work. If so, we recommend at least five years; implementation can take several years, and the board should be available to ensure that the most important issues are addressed. You should set a minimum number of times the board should meet, including a regular schedule, such as quarterly. You may establish a method for selecting the chairperson, the secretary, and other roles. See legislation passed in Connecticut, Hawaii, and Michigan for some ideas on basic structure.

You may allow the governor to set terms for the committee. If so, be aware that changing political winds could mean an enhanced or a reduced role for the board.

### 3.4 By *[date]* and annually *[on date]* thereafter, ...

This subsection describes the information that should be contained in annual reports. For the first report, you may set a date that provides sufficient time for action to have been taken on



the law. For example, if the law is signed in June, a report in December may contain little information. By the following June, though, there should be something to report. Annual reports tend to be delivered toward the end or beginning of a calendar year, depending on the state legislature's schedule.

...the Advisory Board shall submit a report to the Governor, the Commissioner of Transportation [*or similar title*], and the legislature [*or relevant committee(s) thereof*] on the status of the implementation of section 1.

This model includes audiences commonly included in other state laws; you may remove or change these as appropriate for your state.

For examples of reports issued in other states, see the Resources section of this toolkit.

a. Reports should include information such as the following:

i. A summary of specific actions taken by the [*Department of Transportation*] in the preceding year to improve the safety, access, and mobility of roadways for all users as defined in section 1.2

The reports offer an opportunity to celebrate successful changes, new approaches to projects, and better outcomes for all users. For advocates and supporters, they offer insight into what exactly has been done during the previous year to implement the law and what has not been done yet.

ii. Any identified statutory recommendations to facilitate Complete Streets implementation

The Advisory Board, working with the DOT, may find that there are legal restrictions to certain aspects of Complete Streets implementation or that additional clarity in statutes is needed. Such sections of statutes may be noted in board reports. Champions in the legislature may turn these recommendations into bills.

iii. Modifications made to or recommended for protocols, guidance, standards, or other requirements to facilitate Complete Streets implementation

This subsection specifically calls for information on the progress achieved by the state in modifying procedures and documents to comply with Complete Streets. Reports can be, as noted above, celebratory and boast successes. The Advisory Board should make its own recommendations on how to build on the steps the DOT has taken.

iv. The status of the development of multimodal performance indicators

Too often, good plans and designs are curtailed because performance measures respond solely to the automobile and to automobile travel. The Advisory Board should report on ways that the DOT has worked to change measures of success so that they cover other modes of travel and all user groups. This is an important step, which is the reason it has been assigned a separate subsection. However, this subsection may be combined with the subsection above (iii), as follows: "...made to or recommended for protocols, guidance, standards, performance

indicators, or other requirements....” Doing so may potentially minimize the importance of modifying or creating new measures, but this could streamline the legislative language.

v. Information collected from agencies on the percentage of trips made by foot, bicycle, and public transportation, together with the target level of the use of these modes

The numbers may be difficult to collect, or the data may be associated with caveats, but annual reporting on such data provides a benchmark for the state in the effort to achieve a larger shift from single-occupancy vehicle trips to other modes.

vi. Crash statistics by mode, age, road type, location, and other relevant factors

Gathering crash data is key to accurately understanding the safety issues of existing roadways. It can reveal that specific intersections or corridors should be a high priority in addressing pedestrian, bicyclist, and motorist injuries and deaths. Such numbers can also be used as a benchmark to measure the success of Complete Streets implementation activities.

vii. Other, related information that may be requested by the Governor

The governor or other high-level officials may request the inclusion of different or additional information.

b. Such reports shall be coordinated with a representative or representatives of the [Department of Transportation].

The DOT should work with the Advisory Board on the report, providing information and resources relevant to the topic areas outlined above.

## Section 4. Effective Date

4.1 This Act shall take effect on [date], ...

There may be a standard period of time before laws are enacted or a standard date when new laws go into effect. Use the appropriate date or use the term “upon its approval” if no such custom exists in your state.

...provided that section 1 shall apply to any transportation project for which a preliminary design has been completed on or before [January 1 after a full calendar year].

This allows projects already in the pipeline to continue without the need to follow the guidance set out in the law. This allowance is an unfortunate side effect of changing attitudes. Many DOTs will be concerned that a change in laws will mean more delays and labor to revisit projects that are closer to completion; this sentence gives them some wiggle room to get their guidance in order while ensuring they apply this provision in the early phases of new or newly begun projects. Work with your DOT allies to establish a time frame that will be viewed as reasonable. This may be a technical description such as “30 percent design completion.” Projects that are still in the planning stage must be reevaluated for compliance with the law; often, these projects will still be subject to several more rounds of planning before the necessary approvals are obtained to move on to the design phase.

## Analysis of Existing State Laws

To date, 18 state legislatures have adopted Complete Streets laws. Each of these laws is summarized below. Strengths and potentially problematic language are noted. Additionally, each has been scored in accordance with the National Complete Streets Coalition’s policy analysis methodology, which compares final legislative language with the 10 ideal elements of a Complete Streets Policy.<sup>1</sup> Minnesota’s state law has the highest score: 64.4 out of a possible 100. The mean score for state laws is 41.3. The model policy will score close to 100 if adopted as is.

Despite having the top score, Minnesota’s law should not be used wholesale in other states. To adopt the law that is best for their state, Complete Streets supporters must understand the context within which their state transportation agencies work (see the Strategic Guidance and Resources section) and the strengths and weaknesses of the varying approaches presented in the model legislation and existing state laws. Based on such an understanding, the model legislation may be adapted to prompt the best outcomes from the DOT.

This toolkit does not cover the possibility of state-level Complete Streets resolutions or departmental policies. Resolutions are a weak form of policy that is not recommended unless they are part of a more comprehensive strategy to build support for the concept of Complete Streets. Departmental policies will be structured in a fundamentally different way than legislation. For examples on best practices in adopting such policies, review the “Complete Streets Policy Analysis” report.<sup>2</sup> For more on the differences between legislation and internal policies, see the Strategic Guidance and Resources section.

### State of California

#### The Complete Streets Act (AB 1358)

2008

Score: 44.8/100

<i>Element</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Possible Score</i>
Clear intent of Complete Streets vision	6.0	6.0
Includes all users and modes	20.0	20.0
Covers all projects and phases	0.0	12.0
Specific exceptions and approval	0.0	16.0
Creates a network of streets	2.0	2.0
Understood by multiple jurisdictions	3.2	8.0
Specific design guidance and flexibility	1.6	4.0
Context sensitive	8.0	8.0
Names performance measures	0.0	4.0
Establishes implementation steps	4.0	20.0
<i>Sum:</i>	44.8	100.0

California’s state law differs from most others in that it does not apply to activities undertaken by the state DOT. It requires that all city and county general plans—already required by law—incorporate Complete Streets into their circulation elements. In a state in which comprehensive planning is taken seriously and plans are followed, the law has enormous potential to transform the transportation system within and between every community.

The law, found in revisions to Section 65302 of the Government Code, clearly states its purpose: “upon any substantive revision of the circulation element, the legislative body shall modify the circulation element to plan for a balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users of streets, roads, and highways for safe and convenient travel.” It includes a requirement for context sensitivity “in a manner that is suitable to the rural, suburban, or urban context of the general plan.” Users are defined to include “bicyclists, children, persons with disabilities, motorists, movers of commercial goods, pedestrians, users of public transportation, and seniors,” an excellent and inclusive definition. Existing law directs the Office of Planning and Research, which is part of the Office of the Governor, to create guidance for communities in the development of general plans that are responsive to state law; the guidance on Complete Streets can be found online at [http://opr.ca.gov/s\\_generalplanguidelines.php](http://opr.ca.gov/s_generalplanguidelines.php).

However, the law leaves much up to the Office of Planning and Research and to local agencies in determining the other elements of a Complete Streets policy. Notably, there is little guidance on the types of projects that are included and the exclusion of certain streets from consideration. This type of flexibility is good in that it gives local communities more control over the whens and the hows, but it could be an obstacle to a change in mindset about projects that are not specified in the plans. Rather than viewing every potential change to a street’s design or operation, including regular operations and maintenance work, as an opportunity to make the street more complete, city staff may only apply the principles to streets as directed in the plan.

The California Department of Transportation has an internal Complete Streets policy that was adopted in 2001 and updated in 2008, when the law was signed. The implementation work for the policy has produced valuable supporting documents for AB1358.

## State of Colorado

### Colorado Statutes 43–1–120 (HB 1147)

2010

Score: 27.6/100

<i>Element</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Possible Score</i>
Clear intent of Complete Streets vision	6.0	6.0
Includes all users and modes	0.0	20.0
Covers all projects and phases	12.0	12.0
Specific exceptions and approval	9.6	16.0
Creates a network of streets	0.0	2.0

Understood by multiple jurisdictions	0.0	8.0
Specific design guidance and flexibility	0.0	4.0
Context sensitive	0.0	8.0
Names performance measures	0.0	4.0
Establishes implementation steps	0.0	20.0
<i>Sum:</i>	27.6	100.0

The 2010 change in Colorado statutes mirrored an internal document adopted by the state DOT the previous year. The law is short and limited in scope, but covers some of the core elements of Complete Streets well enough to inspire changes in everyday decision making within the DOT.

The law includes only pedestrians and bicyclists, though without additional details on ages or abilities, but it is clear that the department “shall provide transportation infrastructure” to accommodate those who are walking and bicycling. The law applies to the “planning, design, and operation of transportation facilities,” with exceptions to the policy that are documented according to criteria established by the DOT. There is no further information on street connectivity, context sensitivity, work with other agencies, appropriate design guidance, performance measures, or implementation activities and accountability.

### State of Connecticut

#### Public Act 09–154 (SB 735)

2009

Score: 62.8/100

<i>Element</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Possible Score</i>
Clear intent of Complete Streets vision	6.0	6.0
Includes all users and modes	16.0	20.0
Covers all projects and phases	12.0	12.0
Specific exceptions and approval	12.8	16.0
Creates a network of streets	0.0	2.0
Understood by multiple jurisdictions	8.0	8.0
Specific design guidance and flexibility	0.0	4.0
Context sensitive	0.0	8.0
Names performance measures	0.0	4.0
Establishes implementation steps	8.0	20.0
<i>Sum:</i>	62.8	100.0

A clear, short statement of accommodation for multiple users in the “planning, design, construction, and operating” of all state roads is the core of Connecticut’s law. Section 1 outlines four exceptions to that requirement and, in a rarity among state laws, establishes that

a minimum of 1 percent of the total expenditures on transportation projects are to be spent to provide facilities for all users.

Section 2 establishes a statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board, consisting of 11 required representatives. It describes the terms of membership. The duties of the board are outlined, including the promotion of bicycling and walking and the duty to advise agencies on “policies, programs, and facilities for bicycles and pedestrians.” Annual reports on the progress of state agencies in implementing the law and recommendations on ways to improve policies and procedures are required of the board. The commissioner of transportation is also required to submit yearly lists of all transportation projects that include bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. The lists are to show funding sources and costs and to describe the facilities.

The clarity of purpose makes this law one of the standouts nationally, though it does not excel in every element of an ideal Complete Streets policy. Though older adults and people with disabilities are present on the Advisory Board, they are not specifically defined as users within the legislation. Use of the latest and best design guidelines is not required, nor are there mentions of context, a network approach, or performance measures. These elements may be addressed through the Advisory Board, though the mention of the direct steps that are to be taken by the DOT would more clearly establish expectations for meaningful implementation.

## State of Florida

### Florida Statute 335.065 (Bicycle & Pedestrian Ways)

1984

Score: 23.2/100

<i>Element</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Possible Score</i>
Clear intent of Complete Streets vision	6.0	6.0
Includes all users and modes	0.0	20.0
Covers all projects and phases	12.0	12.0
Specific exceptions and approval	0.0	16.0
Creates a network of streets	2.0	2.0
Understood by multiple jurisdictions	0.0	8.0
Specific design guidance and flexibility	0.0	4.0
Context sensitive	0.0	8.0
Names performance measures	0.0	4.0
Establishes implementation steps	0.0	20.0
<i>Sum:</i>	23.2	100.0

An early adopter of Complete Streets, Florida legislators took a relatively simple approach by requiring full consideration of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in transportation projects, plans, and programs. The law allows for three exceptions and encourages collaboration with other government agencies to create an integrated statewide network for people walking and bicycling.

Because it is such an early example of the Complete Streets approach, the law only covers the core of a policy (a multimodal approach in all projects with limited exceptions). Users are not defined beyond the mention of people who walk or bike; collaboration with local agencies is not addressed; and design guidance and context sensitivity are not discussed. The law also lacks a clear description of next steps to ensure that the DOT will begin to change its routine decision making.

## State of Hawaii

### Act 054 (SB 718)

2009

Score: 59.6/100

<i>Element</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Possible Score</i>
Clear intent of Complete Streets vision	1.2	6.0
Includes all users and modes	16.0	20.0
Covers all projects and phases	12.0	12.0
Specific exceptions and approval	3.2	16.0
Creates a network of streets	0.0	2.0
Understood by multiple jurisdictions	3.2	8.0
Specific design guidance and flexibility	0.0	4.0
Context sensitive	8.0	8.0
Names performance measures	0.0	4.0
Establishes implementation steps	16.0	20.0
<i>Sum:</i>	59.6	100.0

Hawaii's law, like several others, does not immediately require the DOT to accommodate all users in its transportation projects. Rather, the law requires the department, as well as the county transportation departments, to adopt their own Complete Streets policies. It describes some elements that must be included in these policies, specifying a broad range of users ("pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, motorists, and persons of all ages and abilities") to be accommodated in a wide range of transportation projects across all contexts. The law also includes four exceptions, with only the fourth (allowing an exception for safety risks) showing some misunderstanding about the Complete Streets concept. It does not include an approval process for the exceptions, nor does it discuss street connectivity, address directly the need for flexible and current design practices, or include specific performance measures.

Hawaii was among the pioneers in establishing a task force to work with the DOT on implementing the law and the Complete Streets vision. The law includes general, but good language on the activities that should be undertaken by the task force, some of which relate to policy elements not addressed in the law, such as design guidance and performance measures. Ten groups were named to the task force, including representatives of the DOT and county departments, many supporters of the bill, developers, and the health department. However,

the law gave the task force a short life span: two reports on the findings and recommendations of the task force were required, one in 2010 and the final one in 2011. The task force disbanded after filing the final report.

Spearheading the effort was the One Voice for Livable Islands Coalition, which includes AARP’s Hawaii state office, the Hawaii Bicycling League, the Hawaii Public Health Association, and many other bicycle, pedestrian, and health advocates.

## State of Illinois

### Public Act 095–065 (SB0314)

2007

Score: 32.4/100

<i>Element</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Possible Score</i>
Clear intent of Complete Streets vision	3.6	6.0
Includes all users and modes	0.0	20.0
Covers all projects and phases	12.0	12.0
Specific exceptions and approval	12.8	16.0
Creates a network of streets	0.0	2.0
Understood by multiple jurisdictions	0.0	8.0
Specific design guidance and flexibility	0.0	4.0
Context sensitive	0.0	8.0
Names performance measures	0.0	4.0
Establishes implementation steps	4.0	20.0
<i>Sum:</i>	32.4	100.0

The core statement of the Illinois law is like many of the early Complete Streets laws: simple, but clear in intention. The law requires full consideration of “bicycle and pedestrian ways” in the planning and development of transportation projects and in state plans and programs. It narrows the consideration of such facilities to the “construction, reconstruction, or other change of any State transportation facility[ies]” in or within one mile of an urban area. The exceptions include resurfacing projects that do not widen roadways and projects for which the Secretary of Transportation agrees to the exclusion of specific facilities because of safety issues, cost, or the absence of need. The law allows for the inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in resurfacing projects if the local community demands them or if they can be included as part of the overall project scope. This is an important provision given that resurfacing provides a low-cost opportunity to respond to the needs of users who are not traveling in automobiles. The DOT is required to establish standards for design and construction, but the law offers some flexibility in the application to projects already in the pipeline.

Its clarity and brief nature also mean that the law does not reflect current best practices in Complete Streets policies. It does not include users or modes beyond people walking and bicycling and does not address topics such as the creation of a network of safe facilities, context



sensitivity, design guidance, performance measures, or working with local and regional agencies. Though implementation is addressed, the law does not require reporting on the progress achieved or create a stakeholder group to supply resources and knowledge to the DOT.

## State of Maryland

### Maryland Trans. Code Ann. Title 2 subtitle 602

2000

Score: 21.6/100

<i>Element</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Possible Score</i>
Clear intent of Complete Streets vision	3.6	6.0
Includes all users and modes	0.0	20.0
Covers all projects and phases	12.0	12.0
Specific exceptions and approval	0.0	16.0
Creates a network of streets	2.0	2.0
Understood by multiple jurisdictions	0.0	8.0
Specific design guidance and flexibility	4.0	4.0
Context sensitive	0.0	8.0
Names performance measures	0.0	4.0
Establishes implementation steps	0.0	20.0
<i>Sum:</i>	21.6	100.0

Maryland’s 2000 Complete Streets law covers several elements of an ideal Complete Streets policy, but is limited in scope and in the implementation steps. The law requires the needs of people riding bikes and walking to be considered in “all phases of transportation planning, including highway design, construction, reconstruction, and repair.” The law asks that the DOT take a network approach to improving these transportation modes, using the best engineering practices. It also attempts to break down the modal “silos” within the department so that people can easily move between and use multiple modes of transportation.

Other users (such as older adults) and modes (such as public transportation) are not part of the legislation. There is no discussion of context sensitivity. Exceptions are not specified, nor are any clear steps to implementation outlined. In later sessions, the legislature has made some attempts to improve transparency and progress in the law’s implementation by requiring reports from the DOT.

## State of Massachusetts

### Bicycle-Pedestrian Access Law (Chapter 90E)

1996

Score: 28.4/100

<i>Element</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Possible Score</i>
Clear intent of Complete Streets vision	3.6	6.0
Includes all users and modes	0.0	20.0
Covers all projects and phases	12.0	12.0
Specific exceptions and approval	12.8	16.0
Creates a network of streets	0.0	2.0
Understood by multiple jurisdictions	0.0	8.0
Specific design guidance and flexibility	0.0	4.0
Context sensitive	0.0	8.0
Names performance measures	0.0	4.0
Establishes implementation steps	0.0	20.0
<i>Sum:</i>	28.4	100.0

In two sentences, Massachusetts’s Complete Streets law requires “reasonable accommodations” for bicyclists and pedestrians in the “planning, design, and construction, reconstruction or maintenance of any project” undertaken by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, with limited exceptions approved by the Commissioner after review by the bicycle program coordinator.

Though an expectation for accommodations is established and applied to a full range of transportation projects, the law lacks many details that would aid in its interpretation by the DOT and ensure its implementation. The law lacks a broad definition of users and makes no mention of people of varying ages and abilities. It does not address context, measures of success, or implementation. The language is not entirely clear; thus, “reasonable” could be interpreted in a variety of ways. As a result, the state struggled to implement the law fully or embrace the law’s vision. The early implementation of the law resulted in a directive describing specific methods of accommodation that offered little flexibility in design according to context, need, or the variety of potential users.

However, this simple law helped catalyze a 2004 task force of diverse stakeholders charged with rewriting the state’s Project Development and Design Guide. The guide provides more design flexibility and encourages the everyday incorporation of the concept.

## State of Michigan

### Public Act 135 of 2010 (HB6151)

2010

Score: 54.4/100

<i>Element</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Possible Score</i>
Clear intent of Complete Streets vision	1.2	6.0
Includes all users and modes	20.0	20.0
Covers all projects and phases	7.2	12.0
Specific exceptions and approval	3.2	16.0
Creates a network of streets	2.0	2.0
Understood by multiple jurisdictions	4.8	8.0
Specific design guidance and flexibility	0.0	4.0
Context sensitive	8.0	8.0
Names performance measures	0.0	4.0
Establishes implementation steps	8.0	20.0
<i>Sum:</i>	54.4	100.0

As with several other state laws, Michigan’s law does not directly require the DOT to accommodate all users in DOT projects. Instead, it defines the terms “Complete Streets” and “Complete Streets policy” and requires the DOT to adopt its own policy and create a model policy for use by municipalities and counties within two years. These definitions are reasonably comprehensive, covering a broad range of users of all ages and abilities, as well as new projects and reconstruction projects. There is also specific mention of the need for an interconnected network across urban, suburban, and rural settings.

The legislation outlines specific ways for municipalities, counties, and the state to collaborate in developing capital improvement plans that respect the Complete Streets policies adopted by each. The DOT is permitted to provide assistance to local agencies, including sharing technical expertise on state roads within municipal boundaries. Another section establishes a minimum 1 percent expenditure of the Michigan transportation fund to benefit nonmotorized accommodation.

Exceptions to the construction of nonmotorized facilities are included, though three of the four may be problematic in achieving the true integration of the Complete Streets approach into everyday decisions. Especially problematic are two exceptions: one allows projects to move ahead without accommodations because the 1 percent threshold of the transportation fund has already been met, and the other allows projects to move ahead without considering all users because facilities are already deemed adequate. These exceptions create too many ways for project planners and designers to ignore the many simple and important changes that can make streets safer and more comfortable for all users.

A 16-member Complete Streets Advisory Council was created by the law, which also described the terms of council membership. The members are tasked with providing education and advice; writing annual reports to the governor, state transportation commission, and legislature; and advising the state transportation commission on model policies.

The bill’s passage was spearheaded by the Michigan Complete Streets Coalition, which includes AARP’s Michigan state office, the Michigan Environmental Council, and the League of Michigan Bicyclists.

## State of Minnesota

### Sec. 52. Minnesota Statutes 2008, section 174.75

2010

Score: 64.4/100

<i>Element</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Possible Score</i>
Clear intent of Complete Streets vision	1.2	6.0
Includes all users and modes	20.0	20.0
Covers all projects and phases	12.0	12.0
Specific exceptions and approval	0.0	16.0
Creates a network of streets	0.0	2.0
Understood by multiple jurisdictions	3.2	8.0
Specific design guidance and flexibility	4.0	4.0
Context sensitive	8.0	8.0
Names performance measures	0.0	4.0
Establishes implementation steps	16.0	20.0
<i>Sum:</i>	64.4	100.0

Minnesota’s law was the result of a fruitful partnership between the Minnesota Department of Transportation and a variety of groups organized as the Minnesota Complete Streets Coalition. Coalition members had tested the waters with an earlier bill and found good bipartisan support for Complete Streets in the state house. Meanwhile, the DOT completed a Complete Streets report to the legislature, which had recommended that the department adopt its own Complete Streets policy to complement and augment current DOT work. In late 2009, the Coalition and top DOT officials worked to create mutually agreeable legislation. The Coalition pushed for changes to resolve statutory barriers faced by local agencies, while also respecting the DOT’s need to maintain ownership of Complete Streets efforts.

The resulting law scores as the best state law in the country, though it does not directly mandate the DOT to follow a Complete Streets approach. Rather, it defines the term and requires the DOT to work with a group of stakeholders in the development of a DOT policy language and in implementation. This partnership allows Coalition members to help the DOT address the existing barriers in relevant protocols, guidance, standards, and requirements and develop a thorough and workable vision and a plan for changes within the department. The law

also requires regular reporting by the DOT to ensure transparency and accountability in implementation. Minnesota is unusual in that some design standards are included in state statutes. The Coalition and its partners had a clear understanding of this barrier and included language to allow additional design flexibility in requests for variances for projects looking to achieve Complete Streets goals.

However, it lacks some pieces of an ideal law. Notably, Minnesotans felt that listing exceptions and creating an exceptions process could be replaced by emphasizing context sensitivity in all environments, urban, suburban, and rural. The law also does not clearly address the creation of a network of Complete Streets.

### State of New York

#### Highway Law Section 331 (Bill S. 5411)

2011

Score: 46.8/100

<i>Element</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Possible Score</i>
Clear intent of Complete Streets vision	3.6	6.0
Includes all users and modes	16.0	20.0
Covers all projects and phases	7.2	12.0
Specific exceptions and approval	3.2	16.0
Creates a network of streets	0.0	2.0
Understood by multiple jurisdictions	4.8	8.0
Specific design guidance and flexibility	0.0	4.0
Context sensitive	8.0	8.0
Names performance measures	0.0	4.0
Establishes implementation steps	4.0	20.0
<i>Sum:</i>	46.8	100.0

The New York law aims to ensure accommodations for people of all ages and abilities who are driving, walking, riding a bike, or taking public transportation in new construction, reconstruction, and rehabilitation projects. Four types of exceptions are enumerated, and all require publicly available documentation. The law is one of a few that establishes factors that determine the need for facilities, including traffic volume, land use, population density, and “lack of community support.”

Rather than directly requiring the accommodation of all people using the state’s roadways, the law requires the use of “Complete Streets design features,” which are defined to include specific physical designs such as sidewalks, bicycle lanes, signage, and signals. This perpetuates the notion that such elements are separate from ordinary roadway planning. Additionally, the legislation applies to local, county, and state projects that use both state and federal funds; if a project uses only one or neither, the law does not apply.

The final section of the law requires that, within two years, the DOT must publish a report on its progress in implementing the law, including changes in design guidance and procedures. The report must also include best practices for Complete Streets implementation, including practices recommended from other jurisdictional levels, public transit agencies, developers, and advocates for bicycling, walking, or people with disabilities.

Passage of the New York law was spearheaded by a coalition that included AARP’s New York state office and a state transportation reform group that worked closely with supportive members of the legislature.

## State of Oregon

**ORS 366.514**

**1971**

**Score: 25.2/100**

<i>Element</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Possible Score</i>
Clear intent of Complete Streets vision	6.0	6.0
Includes all users and modes	4.0	20.0
Covers all projects and phases	7.2	12.0
Specific exceptions and approval	3.2	16.0
Creates a network of streets	0.0	2.0
Understood by multiple jurisdictions	4.8	8.0
Specific design guidance and flexibility	0.0	4.0
Context sensitive	0.0	8.0
Names performance measures	0.0	4.0
Establishes implementation steps	0.0	20.0
<i>Sum:</i>	25.2	100.0

The Complete Streets law in Oregon is the oldest of all such laws. It requires at least 1 percent of the State Highway Fund to be used to build and maintain "footpaths and bicycle trails." Exceptions are established, though no approval process is spelled out. The language specifies that cities and counties receiving funds from the state shall also comply with the law; a court ruling found that this means all agencies except the Port Authority must follow a Complete Streets policy, effectively covering all roads within the state.

The brevity of the law, as well as its early adoption year, mean that many elements now recognized as best practice are not specified in the law. Rather than redefining transportation projects to consider people, the law focuses on establishing facilities to aid in walking and bicycling. It does not clearly apply to repair, maintenance, or operations work, and it does not direct a flexible, context-sensitive approach to planning and design. No steps to ensure action are specified, leaving the law’s application up to willing professionals in the DOT and other agencies. The law was not fully implemented until bicycle advocates in Portland filed suit in the 1990s.

## State of Rhode Island

### Chapter 31–18: Pedestrians Section 31–18–21

1997

Score: 33.2/100

<i>Element</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Possible Score</i>
Clear intent of Complete Streets vision	3.6	6.0
Includes all users and modes	0.0	20.0
Covers all projects and phases	12.0	12.0
Specific exceptions and approval	12.8	16.0
Creates a network of streets	0.0	2.0
Understood by multiple jurisdictions	4.8	8.0
Specific design guidance and flexibility	0.0	4.0
Context sensitive	0.0	8.0
Names performance measures	0.0	4.0
Establishes implementation steps	0.0	20.0
<i>Sum:</i>	33.2	100.0

This three-sentence law packs a lot of content into a brief statute. It directs the DOT “to provide for the accommodation of bicycle and pedestrian traffic” in construction, reconstruction, and resurfacing projects. Limited exceptions are granted by the director or a designee.

The law does not extend to a broader group of users, nor does it provide clear implementation direction for the DOT. There is no mention of a flexible design that responds to the surrounding community or across a network of facilities. Its three exceptions do not follow Complete Streets best practices. Thus, the law does not fully realize a positive concept that aims to improve safety and add flexibility to design. Instead, it focuses on a negative concept whereby the law should not be applied if the resulting design would be dangerous, degrade the environment, or “conflict with existing right-of-way.” The last exception can be interpreted too broadly so as to allow any project to move ahead without considering the needs of people traveling in modes other than cars.

### General Laws, Title 24, Chapter 16: Safe Access to Public Roads

2012

Score: 46.8/100

<i>Element</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Possible Score</i>
Clear intent of Complete Streets vision	1.2	6.0
Includes all users and modes	16.0	20.0
Covers all projects and phases	7.2	12.0
Specific exceptions and approval	6.4	16.0

Creates a network of streets	0.0	2.0
Understood by multiple jurisdictions	8.0	8.0
Specific design guidance and flexibility	0.0	4.0
Context sensitive	0.0	8.0
Names performance measures	0.0	4.0
Establishes implementation steps	8.0	20.0
<i>Sum:</i>	46.8	100.0

Because the 1997 law lacked measures to ensure accountability and allowed numerous loopholes, Complete Streets supporters regrouped in the 2010s to pursue more detailed legislation. The opening section of the new law, “Legislative Findings,” describes a broad vision of the state’s transportation network, one that is "cleaner" and "greener," and considers the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation riders, motorists, and people of all ages and abilities. The findings direct all state and local transportation projects eligible for both state and federal funding to provide for these users through the inclusion of “Complete Streets Design Features.” This section of the law is unique and potentially problematic in interpretation: Are the “findings” considered binding? If a project is eligible, but does not use these funding sources, must it follow the law? Must a project be eligible for both state and federal funding to comply, or must any project that is eligible for one or the other comply? Because of the law’s recent adoption, answers to these questions have not yet been determined.

The next section of the law calls on the state to consider pedestrians and bicyclists of all ages and abilities in the construction or modification of roadways. This also adds confusion in interpretation because these user groups do not match those described in the legislative findings section.

Exceptions to the law are in line with generally accepted best practices that allow flexibility, but limit overuse. Notably, the law defines the factors to be used in determining a lack of need for accommodations: “(i) land use context; (ii) current and projected traffic volumes including non-motorized traffic; and (iii) population density.”

However, the law relies on the indirect approach to accommodation, requiring the use of Complete Streets design features, which is defined to include specific physical features such as sidewalks, bicycle lanes, signage, and signals. This perpetuates the notion that such elements are separate from ordinary roadway planning.

The DOT is required, within two years, to report on its progress in institutionalizing Complete Streets approaches in its projects, including revisions in design guidance. Best practices, barriers, and documentation on the exceptions granted are also to be included in the report.

The law does not establish an advisory body, but directs the DOT to consult with transportation, land use, and environmental officials from all levels of governance, relevant state agencies,



public transportation agencies, developers, and advocates for older adults, people with disabilities, bicyclists, and foot travelers.

A coalition of state and local organizations, including AARP's Rhode Island state office and the Sierra Club, worked with legislators to pass this bill.

## State of Vermont

### Act 0–34 (H.198)

2011

Score: 56.4/100

<i>Element</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Possible Score</i>
Clear intent of Complete Streets vision	3.6	6.0
Includes all users and modes	16.0	20.0
Covers all projects and phases	12.0	12.0
Specific exceptions and approval	12.8	16.0
Creates a network of streets	0.0	2.0
Understood by multiple jurisdictions	8.0	8.0
Specific design guidance and flexibility	0.0	4.0
Context sensitive	0.0	8.0
Names performance measures	0.0	4.0
Establishes implementation steps	4.0	20.0
<i>Sum:</i>	56.4	100.0

Legislation adopted by the General Assembly of Vermont in 2011 establishes that the state's transportation policy considers the safety and accommodation of "motorists, bicyclists, public transportation users, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities." These user groups are to be considered in the planning, development, construction, and maintenance of roadways. Uniquely, the law provides for this requirement not only in state-managed projects, but also in municipality-managed projects. This provision is important in states such as Vermont where most roadways are under local jurisdiction because the Complete Streets approach will be applied to many more roadways that residents use every day.

The three exceptions to this policy are clear and in line with current best practices in Complete Streets policies. The first seems obvious: wherever "pedestrians, bicyclists, or other users" are legally prohibited from using the facility. However, the law is one of the few at any level to recognize that some streets may not allow motorized use and others may not allow nonmotorized use.

The second exception allows a project to be exempted if the cost of applying the law is disproportionate to the need. The law defines the factors to be used in determining a lack of need: "land use, current and projected user volumes, population density, crash data, historic

and natural resource constraints, and maintenance requirements." The state is directed to consult with local and regional plans to assess these factors.

Finally, the law allows projects to move ahead without consideration of all users if the scope of the project would not permit such consideration. Though this exception would allow projects such as the installation of guiderails to move forward easily, it might also be interpreted more broadly.

Project managers are required to document any exceptions and make the document available to the public, allowing supporters an opportunity to hold planners and engineers accountable for their use of the exceptions.

By March 2012, the state Agency of Transportation was required to report to the legislature on its progress in complying with the new law. The agency is also required to "make available to the public upon request and in an easily understandable format a list of all state and municipally managed projects that have incorporated Complete Streets principles," as well as a list of those that have not.

Projects for which the preliminary engineering is complete as of the law's effective date are exempt from compliance. This phrase identifies the point in the project's design where too much of the project has been completed to allow for a cost-effective reconsideration. Preliminary engineering typically covers projects through what is known as "30%" design completion.

Overall, the law enables a well-written and robust policy, but it lacks some ideal elements: a direction to use flexible, context-sensitive design according to the best and latest in engineering and design guidance; actionable steps to achieve Complete Streets implementation; and the creation of a stakeholder advisory board to assist and provide oversight.

**State of Washington**  
**Chapter 257, 2011 Laws**  
**2011**  
**Score: 30.0/100**

<i>Element</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Possible Score</i>
Clear intent of Complete Streets vision	1.2	6.0
Includes all users and modes	8.0	20.0
Covers all projects and phases	7.2	12.0
Specific exceptions and approval	0.0	16.0
Creates a network of streets	0.0	2.0
Understood by multiple jurisdictions	3.2	8.0
Specific design guidance and flexibility	2.4	4.0
Context sensitive	8.0	8.0

Names performance measures	0.0	4.0
Establishes implementation steps	0.0	20.0
<i>Sum:</i>	30.0	100.0

The main purpose of Washington's 2011 law is to create a grant program that would award funds to local governments that have adopted their own Complete Streets ordinances. The law establishes eligibility requirements and goals and provides for an annual report on projects funded through the program. The program is not funded, but, once it is, may inspire the adoption of more Complete Streets ordinances by local governments across the state.

The law does more than merely create a grant program. It also clearly establishes that the policy of the state is to employ context-sensitive design to provide for the safe access of "bicyclists, pedestrians, motorists, and public transportation users" to all state highways within incorporated towns and cities. The final section of the legislation requires the DOT to consult with local jurisdictions and their residents on all construction, reconstruction, or other major projects. It also requires the department to "consider the needs of all users ... consistent with peer-reviewed, context-sensitive solutions guides, reports, and publications."

Given that the focus of the legislation is largely unrelated to the activities of the DOT, many elements of an ideal law that would affect the DOT's everyday operations are missing. Users of all ages and abilities are not among those named in the law, and smaller projects, such as those involving maintenance or operations work, are not affected. Exceptions are not listed, and the need for a network approach to the creation of Complete Streets is not addressed.

Though the required collaboration with local communities and stakeholders should result in better street design, there is no big-picture accountability to ensure that the DOT institutionalizes the concept of Complete Streets. No department-specific actions, such as changing procedures, offering training, developing new performance measures, or reporting on progress, are contained within the law.

Legislators worked toward this law with the support of the Washington Transportation Choices Coalition, which is composed of public sector agencies, corporations, nonprofit organizations, and foundations.

## State of Wisconsin

### State Statutes Section 1918gr. 84.01 (35)

2009

Score: 30.8/100

<i>Element</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Possible Score</i>
Clear intent of Complete Streets vision	6.0	6.0
Includes all users and modes	0.0	20.0
Covers all projects and phases	7.2	12.0

Specific exceptions and approval	12.8	16.0
Creates a network of streets	0.0	2.0
Understood by multiple jurisdictions	4.8	8.0
Specific design guidance and flexibility	0.0	4.0
Context sensitive	0.0	8.0
Names performance measures	0.0	4.0
Establishes implementation steps	0.0	20.0
<i>Sum:</i>	30.8	100.0

Wisconsin’s law is simple and to the point. It states that the DOT "shall ensure that bikeways and pedestrian ways are established in all new highway construction and reconstruction projects funded in whole or in part from state or federal funds." There are five exceptions. That the law follows funding sources means that the pool of projects covered by the Complete Streets approach could extend beyond those managed by the DOT to those under the control of cities and counties.

The first exception is standard: if a law prohibits bicyclists and pedestrians from using a roadway, then accommodations are not required. The second exception applies if the cost of providing bikeways or pedestrian ways is excessively disproportionate to the need; the cost is defined as 20 percent of the total project cost. However, this exception can only be granted by the secretary of transportation or a designee who understands "the purpose and value of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations." The third exception is a bit too wide. It allows projects to move ahead without bikeways or pedestrian ways if these would "have excessive negative impacts in a constrained environment," but does not define the kinds of negative impacts that could be excessive. The fourth exception is for absence of need, "as indicated by sparsity of population, traffic volume, or other factors." Finally, if local communities refuse to maintain pedestrian ways, these will not be built. The last exception is troubling because jurisdictions may refuse sidewalks and other facilities essential to improving safety without addressing a prime reason for such opposition: that the cost of maintenance and construction of such facilities are often borne by local governments.

The law's brevity means that many other elements of an ideal Complete Streets policy are not present. Users of all ages and abilities are not specifically included, and the bikeway and pedestrian way requirements are not set in a context with other uses, such as motor traffic or public transportation. Maintenance and operations activities are not directly affected. There is no discussion of the creation of an integrated network for all users that is appropriate to the surrounding communities or designed according to the best and latest in design guidance. There are no accountability measures and no specific next steps for the DOT in implementing the law.

## Commonwealth of Puerto Rico

Senate Bill 1857

2010

Score: 54.8/100

<i>Element</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Possible Score</i>
Clear intent of Complete Streets vision	1.2	6.0
Includes all users and modes	16.0	20.0
Covers all projects and phases	12.0	12.0
Specific exceptions and approval	6.4	16.0
Creates a network of streets	0.0	2.0
Understood by multiple jurisdictions	3.2	8.0
Specific design guidance and flexibility	0.0	4.0
Context sensitive	0.0	8.0
Names performance measures	0.0	4.0
Establishes implementation steps	16.0	20.0
<i>Sum:</i>	54.8	100.0

The opening paragraphs of Puerto Rico’s 2010 law establish a strong case for Complete Streets on the island. They cite the potential benefits for public health, social welfare, and economic development if streets are “reclaimed” for use by all modes and users.

The law defines the term “Complete Streets” and declares Complete Streets to be the policy of the Government of Puerto Rico. The definition covers users who are “pedestrians, cyclists, mass transit users, drivers of motor vehicles, persons of all ages and abilities.” The law directs the Department of Transportation and Public Works and the Highways and Transportation Authority, as well as municipal transportation departments, to adopt their own Complete Streets policies. Such policies may apply to a range of projects, with two exceptions: wherever walking and bicycling are prohibited and where the cost to accommodate all users exceeds 20 percent of the project budget. The law also clearly states that the development of Complete Streets should be prioritized according to population density or future needs. A process for granting approval for the exceptions is not established or suggested.

Within 30 days, the governor is directed to appoint representatives of a broad number of organizations to a temporary committee. Within one year, this committee is to set standards and guidelines to enforce and evaluate implementation, as well as propose changes to existing laws and regulations and changes to guidelines and standards for road design. The law also establishes a meeting schedule. The committee is dissolved once its recommendations are submitted.

The law contains little guidance on the establishment of a network of Complete Streets. It calls for the best and latest in design standards, for efforts to ensure that designs take into consideration the surrounding communities, and for the creation of performance measures.

However, the temporary committee may include such guidance in its report, which could be more detailed and directive than possible or desirable within legislative language.

## Strategic Guidance and Resources

Campaigning for statewide Complete Streets policy change is much like any other campaign effort: you must build partnerships with other organizations, think strategically about your desired results, consider the current policy and political environment, and draw from successes and challenges experienced elsewhere. This toolkit offers basic strategic advice on building a coalition and understanding your state's transportation decision-making process. It also lists additional resources that provide more detail.

If you need more information about the benefits of a Complete Streets approach, visit the "Fundamentals" tab at [www.completestreets.org](http://www.completestreets.org). You will find fact sheets addressing a wide variety of issues; note that the web version of each fact sheet includes a constantly updated list of additional resources at the bottom of each page. The monthly Coalition newsletter is also an ongoing source of new stories and resources that may be helpful in your campaign.

### Build Your Coalition

One of the keys to a successful Complete Streets campaign is the building of a broad coalition that includes many "unusual suspects." State legislatures respond to many different constituents, and the more types of concerns you can address, the greater your ability will be to show that a shift to a Complete Streets approach is in the best interest of the state. The list below is based in part on the groups that are involved in the leadership of the National Complete Streets Coalition; many of these groups have local chapters that may be willing to work with you at the local and state levels.

- State chapter of the American Planning Association: <http://www.planning.org/chapters/>
- State chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects: <http://www.asla.org/Chapters.aspx>
- Local section of the Institute of Transportation Engineers: <http://www.ite.org/aboutite/districts.asp>
- Bicycle and pedestrian advocacy groups: <http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org/site/index.php/site/memberservices/C530>
- Advocacy groups for people with disabilities, such as the Centers for Independent Living or local chapters of Easter Seals
- Public transportation agencies and members of their advisory committees
- Transit advocacy groups
- Local members of the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals
- Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Safe Routes to School planners inside local transportation and planning agencies
- Area agencies on aging: <http://www.n4a.org/about-n4a/?fa=aaa-title-VI>
- State and local associations of the National Association of Realtors: <http://www.realtor.org/leadrshp.nsf/webassoc?OpenView>

- Local offices of multimodal planning and engineering firms:  
<http://www.completestreets.org/who-we-are/funders-and-partners/>
- Regional or state Safe Routes to School organizers:  
<http://saferoutespartnership.org/about/contacts>
- Local Smart Growth groups: <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/about/our-coalition/>
- Local YMCAs, particularly those that have participated in Achieve or in Pioneering Healthy Communities
- Elected officials or transportation practitioners in nearby communities with Complete Streets policies

For more information on how to build a successful coalition and work for change, see *From Inspiration to Action: Implementing Projects to Support Active Living*, a publication of the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute and AARP. It is available for free download at <http://www.walklive.org/project/implementation-guide/>.

### Choosing the Right Type of State-Level Complete Streets Policy

Changing state law is only one of several strategies you may choose in your pursuit of a state commitment to Complete Streets. A number of states are moving toward Complete Streets based on policies adopted internally by the state transportation agency's director or policies adopted by the state transportation commission. In other states, advocates and stakeholders have decided to focus primarily on policy adoption and implementation at the local and regional levels before tackling the more difficult tasks of changing the approach of the state-level agency. Even within an active state legislative strategy, working with the state agency and with local governments will strengthen the campaign.

#### State Law

Passage of a state Complete Streets law can be a powerful route to change. It clarifies to those running the state transportation agency exactly what is expected of them in serving the needs of all users. It can spark a highly visible discussion of transportation safety that is an invaluable education tool. Perhaps most importantly, a state law will help take reforms beyond the term of a progressive department director and can be used for leverage even years after the law's passage.

In deciding to work at the state level, you should understand the lines of power in the state transportation agency, usually referred to as the department of transportation or the DOT. Some of these agencies operate quite independently of the state's executive branch, and the governor may exert only indirect control by appointing members of the transportation commission. In many states, legislators view transportation department staff as experts and will almost always defer to their professional judgment. Researching previous legislative efforts can give you a sense of these relationships as well.

Looking at what state law says about modes of transportation can also help you determine the realm of the possible in your state and how much the state legislature directs the state transportation agency. If you cannot find anything on bicycling or walking, check on the state



role in providing or supporting public transportation. If you are unfamiliar with state-level transportation policy, read *The Innovative DOT: A Handbook of Policy and Practice*, published by the State Smart Transportation Initiative and Smart Growth America. Reach out to groups that have knowledge and expertise in working for transportation reform at the state level. These are likely to be smart growth, bicycle advocacy, or public transportation advocacy groups.

Any legislative initiative should include a concerted effort to engage the DOT leadership, with a focus on ensuring that the agency will continue working on Complete Streets into the implementation stage. Given the complexity of implementing Complete Streets once a law is passed, trying to push through a state law with the state transportation department in full opposition is a worst-case scenario. The DOT is a formidable opponent, and winning will be much more difficult. Even if you do win, the DOT leadership can easily stall the implementation process if the leaders do not fully own or understand the concept or do not want to go along with the policy. Internal directives to implement the law may not result in any discernible change. The case studies included in this report are intended to give you an idea of what could happen after policy adoption and to demonstrate the varied ways state DOTs have interpreted and implemented Complete Streets directives. The National Complete Streets Coalition continues to develop resources on implementation that discuss opportunities and challenges in more detail.

When you engage with the transportation agency, you are likely to encounter some common misperceptions about the legislation. Thus, some believe that the legislation will require immediate retrofits, causing safety problems, or resulting in significantly increased costs. The resource links listed below can help you overcome these challenges. Bringing in outside experts, especially professional transportation engineers, to make your case has proven helpful in other states.

If the DOT leadership remains strongly opposed to the Complete Streets legislative initiative, you may still want to proceed forward as a way to draw attention to the issue or to continue to build support with the DOT and other organizations. To succeed, you will need to find lower-level agency champions, build an even stronger coalition to support the initiative, and include a strong implementation plan as part of your strategy.

If the transportation agency opposes a Complete Streets measure, you can likely identify at least one career DOT employee—a planner or engineer—who supports the concept and is willing to help you understand the workings of the agency. His or her perspective can help you adjust your legislative task and create an implementation plan that is most likely to reflect the agency's existing systems and culture.

To build a stronger coalition, you must be joined by voices with at least as much credibility as the state DOT in speaking to lawmakers and testifying at hearings: elected officials or transportation agency leaders. These people should represent cities, counties, and regions within the state that have adopted their own Complete Streets policies and want to see policy consistency at the state level. You might also look to nearby states; advocates in Indiana

brought in a top official from the Minnesota DOT to testify about the state's experience with Complete Streets.

Pay special attention to what your bill calls for in terms of implementation planning. Implementation should be a process that systematically addresses the concerns of the DOT and helps the DOT develop a Complete Streets approach, while building trust and collaboration with a broader set of stakeholders.

### Internal Policy

If the legislative route seems unrealistic, you may choose to focus on getting an internal policy adopted. This approach can work well if advocates have direct connections to agency officials and may be able to work with them through nonlegislative channels. This will also be much easier if you have a supportive transportation director or transportation commission and an agency with a track record of working with citizens, or one that, at least, has good formal channels for input. Your state DOT may prefer an internal policy over legislative action.

You may be in a state where the transportation agency has adopted an internal Complete Streets policy. Passing a state law in these states can be a way to codify practices before a change of administration that may lead to the abandonment of the initiative. Alternately, you may choose to focus on creating a partnership with the transportation agency to help it move toward full implementation and everyday integration.

For more information on how to collaborate with your state transportation department, see *A Citizen's Guide to Better Streets: How to Engage Your Transportation Agency*, published by the Project for Public Spaces and AARP. This report, written by Gary Toth, a former state DOT official, provides insight into the way transportation agencies operate and is valuable no matter which policy route you choose. It is available to download freely at <http://www.pps.org/store/books/a-citizens-guide-to-better-streets-how-to-engage-your-transportation-agency/>.

### Local Policy Initiatives

Advocates in a number of states have decided to work first to put strong local and regional policies in place. This strategy will build support for Complete Streets among local transportation professionals and community leaders, who become key allies when you start a dialogue with the state DOT. These local professionals, with their experience of success, will also become significant assets during a state legislative campaign. They can testify about their successes and bring aboard their state legislative representatives. They can even be a tremendous help with implementation; for example, North Carolina's state policy was heavily influenced by officials in the city of Charlotte.

Check out the National Complete Streets Coalition's online policy atlas ([www.completestreets.org/atlas](http://www.completestreets.org/atlas)) to see the communities in your state that already have Complete Streets policies. The coalition's most recent policy analysis report ([www.completestreets.org/policyanalysis](http://www.completestreets.org/policyanalysis)) will let you know if any policies in your state have

been recognized for their powerful language. If so, you may want to borrow some of that language in writing state policy.

Guidance on working for policy adoption at the local level can be found in the National Complete Streets Coalition's *Complete Streets Local Policy Workbook*, available for free download at <http://www.completestreets.org/webdocs/resources/cs-policyworkbook.pdf>.

The publication *From Inspiration to Action: Implementing Projects to Support Active Living* also includes information on working with local governments and building Complete Streets champions at the community level. It is available to download freely at <http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/act/walkable-livable-communities/inspiration-to-action-implementing-projects.html>.

### Questions to Answer

The questions in the following section should help you decide on the strategy that is right for your state, while preparing a successful campaign. Before beginning your campaign to change state law, you should become familiar with the current policy and political landscape.

1. What do current state statutes say about Complete Streets, bicycling, walking, public transportation, or any multimodal facilities?
2. How many local and regional Complete Streets policies have been adopted in your state? Do any of these jurisdictions exert strong influence at the state level? Are any neighboring states leading the way on Complete Streets?
3. How is the state transportation agency governed? Is there a commission? How does it operate?
4. How open is the state DOT leadership to change? Does it have any other progressive initiatives, such as context-sensitive solutions, that you can build upon?
5. Does the state transportation agency have a track record of work with citizen advisory committees? Are any existing committees relevant for Complete Streets?
6. Do you have any potential champions inside the state agency? At what level?
7. Who are the champions or potential champions in the legislature?
8. Who do we most need to win over to pass a policy and to get it implemented?
9. What other groups care about these issues? How can they help on a state campaign?
10. What type of initiative is most likely to bring change to the agency's practices?
11. What are the next steps? Who should take them?

It is helpful to understand the broader transportation planning context in your state. But everyone working on the Complete Streets campaign does not need to become an expert. Most likely, advocacy groups within the coalition you build will know the answers to these questions and will be a helpful resource as you develop your campaign.

1. What portion of roads in the state are controlled and managed by the state DOT?
2. Is yours a Dillon-rule state or a home-rule state?
3. What do long-range transportation plans say about multimodal transportation?

4. What design manuals are already in use by the state DOT? Do they present any barriers?
5. To receive federal funding, the state must write a strategic highway safety plan, and most are updating such plans now. What does your state's plan say?
6. How many nonmotorized users are injured or killed each year in your state? What is the trend? Have any of these crashes become a subject of public debate?

## Resources

Below is a partial list of additional resources and information on state Complete Streets policy development and implementation, as well as general resources on state transportation agencies.

### Complete Streets Reports and Resources in States

#### California

- General information: [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ocp/complete\\_streets.html](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ocp/complete_streets.html)
- Complete Streets Implementation Action Plan (February 2010): [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ocp/documents/complete\\_streets\\_files/CompleteStreets\\_IP03-10-10.pdf](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ocp/documents/complete_streets_files/CompleteStreets_IP03-10-10.pdf)

#### Connecticut

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board, general information: <http://www.ctbikepedboard.org/>
- 2011 Annual Report (January 2012): [http://www.ctbikepedboard.org/uploads/1/0/3/8/10385744/annual\\_report\\_2011\\_ctbpad.pdf](http://www.ctbikepedboard.org/uploads/1/0/3/8/10385744/annual_report_2011_ctbpad.pdf)
- 2010 Annual Report (January 2011): [http://www.ctbikepedboard.org/uploads/1/0/3/8/10385744/annual\\_report\\_2010\\_ctbpad\\_final.pdf](http://www.ctbikepedboard.org/uploads/1/0/3/8/10385744/annual_report_2010_ctbpad_final.pdf)
- 2009 Annual Report (January 2010): [http://www.ctbikepedboard.org/uploads/1/0/3/8/10385744/cbpab\\_report\\_final1.pdf](http://www.ctbikepedboard.org/uploads/1/0/3/8/10385744/cbpab_report_final1.pdf)

#### Hawaii

- Complete Streets Task Force, Final Complete Streets Legislative Report (November 2010): <http://hawaii.gov/dot/administration/library/legislature/2011/ACT%2054-%20SLH%202009%20REPORT%20-2011-%20-%20COMPLETE%20STREETS%20TASK%20FORCE%20-Part%201%20of%202.pdf>

#### Louisiana

- Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, Complete Streets Work Group Report (January 2010): [http://www.norpc.org/assets/pdf-documents/studies-and-plans/Complete\\_Streets\\_Final\\_Report\\_07-29-2010.pdf](http://www.norpc.org/assets/pdf-documents/studies-and-plans/Complete_Streets_Final_Report_07-29-2010.pdf)

#### Michigan

- Michigan Complete Streets Coalition: <http://michigancompletestreets.wordpress.com/>

- Michigan Department of Transportation Complete Streets Advisory Council: [http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,1607,7-151-9623\\_31969\\_57564---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,1607,7-151-9623_31969_57564---,00.html)
- Complete Streets Advisory Council Report (December 2011): [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdot/MDOT\\_SCACreport\\_12-31-11\\_372951\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdot/MDOT_SCACreport_12-31-11_372951_7.pdf)

## Minnesota

- Minnesota Complete Streets Coalition: <http://mncompletestreets.org/>
- General information: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/completestreets/>
- Complete Streets Implementation Work Plan (March 2012): <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/completestreets/docs/csworkplan.pdf>
- 2009 Complete Streets legislative report (October 2009): <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/completestreets/legislation.html>
- 2011 Complete Streets legislative report (January 2011): <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/completestreets/2011report.html>
- 2012 Complete Streets legislative report (January 2012): <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/completestreets/2012report.html>

## New Jersey

- General information: <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/eng/completestreets/>
- Complete Streets Implementation: <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/eng/completestreets/>
- Complete Streets Checklist (October 2011): <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/capital/pd/documents/CompleteStreetsChecklist.doc>
- New Jersey Bicycle and Pedestrian Resource Center: <http://www.njbikeped.org/>
- “Filling in the Gaps: Assessing the implementation of NJDOT’s Complete Streets Policy” (New Jersey Future, September 2011): <http://www.njfuture.org/2011/09/07/completestreets-policy/>

## Complete Streets Policy Development and Implementation

- Complete Streets Workshops: <http://www.completestreets.org/workshops>
- “Planning Complete Streets for an Aging America” (AARP, May 2009): [http://www.aarp.org/home-garden/livable-communities/info-08-2009/Planning\\_Complete\\_Streets\\_for\\_an\\_Aging\\_America.html](http://www.aarp.org/home-garden/livable-communities/info-08-2009/Planning_Complete_Streets_for_an_Aging_America.html)
- “Complete Streets: Best Policy and Implementation Practices” (American Planning Association, May 2010): <http://www.planning.org/apastore/search/Default.aspx?p=4060>
- “Complete Streets Local Policy Workbook”: <http://www.completestreets.org/webdocs/resources/cs-policyworkbook.pdf>
- “Complete Streets Policy Atlas”: <http://www.completestreets.org/atlas>
- “Complete Streets Policy Analysis Report”: [completestreets.org/webdocs/resources/cs-policyanalysis.pdf](http://www.completestreets.org/webdocs/resources/cs-policyanalysis.pdf)

- Complete Streets Resources: <http://www.completestreets.org/complete-streets-fundamentals/resources/>
- “NCHRP Synthesis 436: Local Policies and Practices that Support Safe Pedestrian Environments” (Transportation Research Board, 2012): <http://www.trb.org/Main/Blurbs/167603.aspx>

#### General Advocacy and Department of Transportation resources

- *Streets as Places: Using Streets to Rebuild Communities*: [http://www.pps.org/pdf/bookstore/Using\\_Streets\\_to\\_Rebuild\\_Communities.pdf](http://www.pps.org/pdf/bookstore/Using_Streets_to_Rebuild_Communities.pdf)
- “Great Corridors, Great Communities: The Quiet Revolution in Transportation Planning”: [http://www.pps.org/pdf/bookstore/Great\\_Corridors\\_Great\\_Communities.pdf](http://www.pps.org/pdf/bookstore/Great_Corridors_Great_Communities.pdf)
- “A Citizen’s Guide to Better Streets: How to Engage Your Transportation Agency”: [http://www.pps.org/pdf/bookstore/How\\_to\\_Engage\\_Your\\_Transportation\\_Agency\\_AA\\_RP.pdf](http://www.pps.org/pdf/bookstore/How_to_Engage_Your_Transportation_Agency_AA_RP.pdf)
- “From Inspiration to Action: Implementing Projects to Support Active Living”: <http://www.walklive.org/project/implementation-guide/>
- “The Walkability Workbook”: <http://www.walklive.org/project/walkability-workbook/>
- “Going the Distance Together: A Citizen’s Guide to Context Sensitive Solutions for Better Transportation” (Transportation Research Board, September 2011): <http://www.trb.org/main/blurbs/166933.aspx>
- “Making New York a Complete Streets State: A Report on Pedestrian Safety in Five Upstate Counties” (AARP): <http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/learn/transportation-mobility/making-new-york-complete-streets.html>
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center: [www.walkinginfo.org](http://www.walkinginfo.org) and [www.bicyclinginfo.org](http://www.bicyclinginfo.org)

## State Level Implementation Stories

While this report focuses on the adoption of state Complete Streets laws, the ultimate aim is not to pass a law; it is to change the everyday practices of transportation agencies so that all projects are built for the safety of everyone using the facilities. Passing a law is only the beginning of the process. It is important to remember that the people who pass the law—the state lawmakers—are not the same people who will be implementing the law from day to day. The leadership of the implementing agencies needs to understand the problem of dangerous streets and the potential for a Complete Streets policy to help solve this problem before these leaders and their agencies will be ready to own the concept as their own.

Once a policy has been adopted, it will take time for changes to show up in individual road projects. But advocates can mark progress by seeking the answers to these five questions:

- Has the agency adopted an implementation plan?
- Are everyday procedures being changed?
- Are new design standards under consideration?
- Is the agency training its personnel and others on the new Complete Streets approach?
- Is the agency establishing new measures of success that reflect safety for all users?

The National Complete Streets Coalition and AARP continue to work on new resources that detail implementation. Check out the National Complete Streets Coalition’s website, the resources listed above, and the case studies below for additional information.

The analyses of existing state laws in this toolkit are based on written legislation. The following case studies illustrate the variety of paths taken to move state-level Complete Streets laws or internal policies from paper to practice. Two of the case studies, Hawaii and Minnesota, show different paths after passage of the state laws. New Jersey is an example of an internal departmental policy with a strong implementation process. California and Massachusetts represent, respectively, one of the most well documented internal policies, which has been bolstered by a complimentary state law, and one of the older state laws.

### Minnesota

Minnesota’s Complete Streets law was signed by Governor Tim Pawlenty in May 2010. But advocates and the Minnesota Department of Transportation had already been working together on Complete Streets for some time before passage of the law.

A bill requiring a study of the feasibility of Complete Streets at the state level had passed in 2008. This law established committees that brought advocates together with DOT officials to discuss the issues. The statewide Minnesota Complete Streets Coalition was formed while the study was being developed. It focused its first efforts on the study process. The coalition, spearheaded by the environmental group Fresh Energy and the Twin Cities–based Transit for Livable Communities, knew that a negative outcome associated with the study would be a huge setback in reaching their goal of passing a strong Complete Streets law.

Shortly before the final report came out in late 2009, DOT Commissioner Tom Sorel met with the coalition's leadership and acknowledged the culture change that would need to occur inside the DOT to make Complete Streets happen. He offered to lead the effort inside his agency.<sup>3</sup> The report's final recommendation to the state legislature stated that Complete Streets was not only a beneficial, affordable, and feasible approach, but also that it could be integrated with the state's existing commitment to context-sensitive solutions. The report included a number of specific recommendations on how the DOT could proceed.

Coalition members continued to work with the DOT even as they led a multipronged legislative campaign and introduced a bipartisan bill a few months later. That bill was ultimately supported by the DOT, so much so, in fact, that the agency even released an implementation plan shortly before the bill's passage. The plan included steps to create and implement a Complete Streets policy, as directed by the legislation.

Since then, the coalition has continued to work closely with the DOT on implementation both informally and through strong representation on the Complete Streets External Advisory Group (EAG). The coalition representatives are not the only advocates serving on the EAG. Local communities, supported by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, had been writing and passing their own Complete Streets policies as part of active living initiatives, and six sets of policies were in place across the state by the time the state law was passed; 15 more had come into being by the end of 2011. Several of these communities are now bringing their local experience to the table at the state level through the EAG. Together, they have been working on the development of an internal DOT policy to formalize and clarify the agency's Complete Streets approach. To ensure that all aspects of Complete Streets are covered, the committee is using the National Complete Streets Coalition's policy analysis system to meet each of the 10 ideal elements of a Complete Streets policy. It has also reviewed many other state and local policies for inspiration and chosen the New Jersey DOT's policy as the template.

One member of the advisory committee reflected that "the relationship with [the Minnesota DOT] has gone from adversarial to neutral, and the pendulum is continuing to swing to where they are now becoming allies." He gave three reasons that some DOT staff have begun to change their minds: "They see the body of research [supporting the concept], they are able to see the broad coalition that wants this, and they see *that we are not going away.*"

The DOT has hardly been passively adopting outside direction from the EAG. The agency has assigned the head of the context-sensitive solutions division and the state aid division director as co-champions in the department's Complete Streets efforts. A recent update of the DOT's Complete Streets work plan covers dozens of activities in every area of the department's operations: planning, funding, community outreach, design and project development, maintenance and operations, training, and performance measures. In many cases, the items assign responsibility and timelines, showing that the agency is taking a leadership role in making Complete Streets a reality in its everyday operations.



Minnesota is addressing changes in its statewide design standards on a parallel track, in part because these standards are included in state statutes and have been exceptionally strict. For example, the original standards required local agencies to build lanes that are 12 feet wide, while federal guidance allows a range from 10 to 12 feet. Any deviation from the standards required application for a formal variance in a process controlled by the State Aid Rules Advisory Committee, which is dominated by engineers from rural parts of the state who do not see as much demand for multimodal accommodation. The DOT has worked to make the process more transparent and to encourage more flexibility in the standards. In a departure from past practice, the committee has invited outside comment from members of the EAG. Based on new research on the safety of narrower travel lanes, the committee has approved modest flexibility in the lane-width requirement. This will make it easier in some situations for communities to add bike lanes without going through a formal process of asking for a design variance. Other changes are also under consideration.

The DOT is launching a number of research projects to help it determine the best multimodal solutions. For example, it received a grant from the Transportation Research Board to pilot a planning tool in collaboration with the city of Grand Rapids, Minnesota, to help the city create a plan for balancing the street network to serve all modes. The DOT is also funding small studies to determine best practices for at-grade trail crossings and the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists at roundabouts.

The National Council of State Legislatures included a short case study of Minnesota's Complete Streets law in its "On the Move" report, at <http://www.ncsl.org/documents/transportation/On-THE-MOVE.pdf>.

## Hawaii

Hawaii was an early adopter of a state Complete Streets law (Act 054). The law was promoted by a diverse advocacy coalition, a hallmark of the Complete Streets movement. The One Voice for a Livable Island Coalition (now the Hawaii Complete Streets Coalition) includes the AARP Hawaii state office, the Hawaii Bicycle League, and the Hawaii Public Health Association, as well as the advocacy group Peoples Advocacy for Trails Hawaii. The coalition launched a successful legislative campaign, earning media coverage by focusing on the issue of pedestrian safety and conducting surveys showing that safer roads were an overwhelming priority for older adults in Hawaii. They also brought in outside experts and collaborated closely with state lawmakers on the wording of the legislation. The Hawaii Department of Transportation participated in the discussions with lawmakers and did not actively oppose the bill.

Act 054 was signed by Governor Linda Lingle in May 2009. The law required the DOT and Hawaii's counties to adopt Complete Streets policies that were to take effect in all projects begun after January 1, 2010. The law created a short-term multidisciplinary Complete Streets task force to review design standards and propose changes in procedures and design manuals. The DOT was slow in convening the task force, and the first meeting was not held until nine months later, in February 2010. The task force initially worked on recommendations for specific design treatments, but concluded that it was "an overwhelming challenge to reach consensus

on preferred design standards” before the final report of the task force was due in December. The task force then refocused on drafting a statewide policy and “providing guidance on when and where Complete Streets should be considered and implemented.”<sup>4</sup> One advocate described the final report that came out in November 2010 as “very generic.” The policy recommendation in the report states that Complete Streets principles should be considered during project development and long-term planning and that exceptions should be approved at a high level. The rest of the recommendations in the report are framed more as general suggestions than as specific action items for the counties or the state. The task force disbanded once the final report was issued.

While the DOT director who presided over the task force was considered supportive, the 2010 elections brought in a new governor, who then appointed a new DOT director. The new director had other priorities, and Complete Streets progress at the state level stalled. In mid-March 2012, the chair of the Senate Committee on Transportation and International Affairs, Senator Kalani English, held a briefing on the lack of progress. At the briefing, English echoed language used by the task force when he called for “a paradigm shift in our attitudes about road usage and solving our traffic problems. We need to plan communities for all road users and not just for cars.” Only a few days prior to the hearing, the DOT approved a “Complete Streets Highway Division Procedure” (No. 06–12–01). The document is not available on the DOT website and was provided by a third party. It restates general Complete Streets principles and includes a project evaluation form with general yes-or-no questions and a space to explain exceptions. In an interview, a senior DOT planner said the document is in line with the policy recommendations made by the task force and that the DOT is beginning to hold internal meetings to discuss implementation.

Since the legislatively mandated task force disbanded, Hawaii Complete Streets Coalition members have focused most of their energy on moving policy at the county and regional levels, bringing in a string of outside experts to help craft policies and projects. Policies have been adopted and are being implemented by the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization and the city and county of Honolulu. The greatest progress has been made in Kauai County, where an effort spearheaded by the public health initiative Get Fit Kauai has helped the county develop new procedures, design standards, and performance measures.

### New Jersey

The New Jersey Department of Transportation commissioner signed an internal Complete Streets policy in December 2009 following calls for a policy from a coalition of planning, environment, transportation, and health groups, including AARP’s New Jersey state office.<sup>5</sup> The comprehensive policy appeared after many years of innovation by the DOT, including a number of specific funding commitments to bicycle, pedestrian, and public transportation access. With that background knowledge, DOT staff were able to write a policy that ranks as the strongest state policy according to the National Complete Streets Coalition’s 2011 “Complete Streets Policy Analysis.”

The DOT bicycle and pedestrian coordinator had been a Complete Streets champion for years, and she spearheaded the development and implementation of the internal departmental policy. The DOT has focused on updating its documents and processes, starting with the department's "Problem Statement," which outlines the department's mission. The DOT has also created a detailed Complete Streets checklist for all projects.<sup>6</sup> The checklist is designed to ensure that those engaged in initial concept development and preliminary engineering have considered a wide variety of factors affecting access by bicyclists, pedestrians, transit users, and people with disabilities. In addition, the documents and forms specific to different departments have all been altered, most with the help of the DOT bicycle and pedestrian program staff. The Office of Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning must sign off on projects at every stage in the development process. A formal process for granting exemptions from the Complete Streets policy has been created, and the office must comment on any requests for such exemptions.

Soon after the policy was signed, the department initiated a series of six training workshops among senior managers at DOT headquarters and then worked with project managers at the central office and in the district offices. At the beginning of each workshop, the deputy transportation commissioner welcomed attendees and clarified the importance of the policy, which emphasized the commitment to Complete Streets by the DOT leadership.

The DOT has also taken a number of steps to encourage adoption of policies at the local level. Unlike other states in which local governments have been the first adopters, only one New Jersey city (Montclair) had a policy before the state adopted its own policy. Close to 30 jurisdictions have now adopted policies, in large part as a result of the outreach done by the DOT.<sup>7</sup> The DOT sponsored a series of 12 workshops aimed at local and county governments, created a video to introduce more people to the concept, and developed policy guidance for localities. In the spring of 2012, the DOT and the Federal Highway Administration funded a program called New Jersey Ambassadors in Motion, one aspect of which is peer-to-peer assistance in the adoption of local Complete Streets policies. Jerry Fried, former mayor of Montclair and champion of that town's Complete Streets policy, has traveled the state to meet with local elected officials about Montclair's experience with the policy and offer assistance in helping in the development of new local policies. The state DOT has added an incentive for municipalities applying for the competitive Local Aid funding program by giving an extra point to project proposals from cities with a Complete Streets policy.

Advocacy groups in New Jersey have taken on a watchdog role during the implementation process; New Jersey does not have a formal role for outside stakeholders. A detailed 2011 assessment of the policy's implementation by the advocacy group New Jersey Future helped allay early fears that the policy's exemption clauses were too broad by finding that only one project had been exempted since the policy's adoption. The report applauded the change to the state's Local Aid program, but called for the Complete Streets policy to be expanded to more effectively cover resurfacings.<sup>8</sup> While the DOT has not broadened the policy, resurfacings now prompt a review that can result in the Office of Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning adding the corridor to its list of future priorities for improvement.

In his 2012 testimony on the New Jersey DOT capital budget, Commissioner James Simpson highlighted the state's investment in Complete Streets projects, including work to retrofit corridors where commercial growth has led to increased nonmotorized traffic.

The DOT is also undertaking road projects in which pedestrian safety is primary, such as a reconfiguration of a main corridor through the town of Woodbury to reduce speeding and conflict points. The project is converting a four-lane undivided roadway into two through lanes with a center turn lane, along with many features to help pedestrians safely walk along and cross the roadway, such as extending sidewalks with pedestrian bulb-outs at signalized intersections and reconstructed wheelchair ramps. The DOT expects the project to ease traffic congestion, as well as create a safer corridor.

### Massachusetts

Massachusetts was among the first states to require the state DOT to build every transportation project with all users in mind, through a simple two-sentence law passed in 1996.<sup>9</sup> The state initially struggled with the meaning of the law, issuing a too-prescriptive directive the following year that laid out specific methods of accommodation, with little regard for context or need. Though several later documents provided guidance, there was still a strong desire for a more flexible design that responded more closely to community needs.

In April 2003, Governor Mitt Romney formed the Highway Design Manual Task Force as part of a larger initiative to provide communities with more flexibility and input into transportation projects. Comprising representatives of municipalities, metropolitan planning organizations, advocacy groups, professional organizations, and state agencies, the task force turned toward the development of a new design guide. Bicycle, smart growth, and disability advocacy groups cited the state law in pushing for a rewrite that fully incorporated the needs of all users of the transportation system. Though Governor Romney had requested a final version by October 1, 2003, the magnitude of the project forced a delay in the release until January 2006.

Three guiding principles emerged in the process: multimodal consideration, context-sensitive design, and a clear project development process. Here is an excerpt:

Multimodal Consideration. To ensure that the safety and mobility of all users of the transportation system (pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers) are considered equally through all phases of a project so that even the most vulnerable (e.g., children and the elderly) can feel and be safe within the public right of way. This includes a commitment to full compliance with state and federal accessibility standards for people with disabilities.

These goals helped to shape the final document, the "Project Development and Design Guide."<sup>10</sup> Throughout, the guide takes the approach that nonmotorized modes are fundamental to the transportation network, and all modes—bicyclists, pedestrians, public transportation, and motorists—are integrated in every aspect of design.

Full implementation of the principles in the award-winning guide has been slow. A particular

sticking point has been the agency's initial resistance to efforts by the cities of Arlington, Boston, and Cambridge to reallocate space along Massachusetts Avenue for bicyclists and pedestrians. In the end, the state approved design exceptions to allow most of the improvements, but advocacy groups have pushed to see more fundamental changes in the agency's approach to projects. In 2012, Massachusetts worked with consultants and the National Complete Streets Coalition to provide three- and six-hour training sessions across the state for local and state engineers, planners, and consultants.<sup>11</sup> The workshops highlighted specific language in the guide and provided examples, a chance for discussion, and field exercises.

Complete Streets has become an important element in continuing support for transportation funding in Massachusetts. Discussion in the state senate of a \$250-million bond for road repairs in 2011 included a proposal for a Complete Streets fund; the fund was not included, but lawmakers emphasized that they expected to see a Complete Streets approach integrated across the agency's projects.<sup>12</sup> Such an approach has also been a key part of the state's GreenDOT sustainability initiative.<sup>13</sup>

## California

California's state transportation agency, Caltrans, was an early leader in multimodal accommodation, adopting Deputy Directive 64 in 2001 to direct full accommodation of bicyclists and pedestrians in Caltrans projects, in part to comply with guidance drafted by the Federal Highway Administration under federal transportation law TEA-21.

Advocates in the state kept Complete Streets in the spotlight by pushing for and achieving passage of a state law in 2008, AB 1358, which requires local governments to include Complete Streets policies when they update their general plans.<sup>14</sup> While the issue was in the state legislature, Caltrans reviewed its own 2001 policy. A few days after the bill became law, Caltrans issued a new version of its policy, updating the policy to include transit and users of all ages and abilities and to incorporate other advances of the Complete Streets movement. A core statement of the revised document, DD64-R1, emphasizes the state's role in ensuring transportation options: "The Department views all transportation improvements (new and retrofit) as opportunities to improve safety, access, and mobility for all travelers and recognizes bicycle, pedestrian, and transit modes as integral elements of the transportation system."

A steering committee and a technical advisory committee, with membership drawn from within the agency, guide the implementation process at Caltrans. A statewide Active Transportation and Livable Communities group includes agency and external stakeholders and meets quarterly to discuss and recommend ways to improve active transportation across the state. Complete Streets is one of several issues the group monitors.

After delays caused by budgetary issues and personnel turnover, Caltrans has pursued a deliberate implementation process, creating a 73-step action plan in 2010 with input from advocates via the Active Transportation and Livable Communities group.<sup>15</sup> The action plan focuses on seven areas of implementation:<sup>16</sup>

1. Highest focus areas (design manual and project development manual revision)
2. Guidance, manuals, and handbooks
3. Policy and plans
4. Funding and project selection
5. Raising awareness
6. Training
7. Research

The state is revising a wide variety of documents and procedures, including the project development manual and the highway design manual, and has issued a new Complete Intersections Guide, a comprehensive and easy-to-follow tool that identifies actions to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists at intersections and interchanges.<sup>17</sup> Caltrans also commissioned a review of the potential of bicycle and pedestrian performance measures. A new planning and scoping information sheet now travels with each project from planning to project development to ensure that consideration for all users is included during final construction.<sup>18</sup>

The state points to a number of recently completed projects as examples of the policy's implementation:<sup>19</sup>

- A half-million dollar project to convert a four-lane undivided segment of State Route 225 in Santa Barbara to two lanes, with a new center turn lane and bike lanes.
- A partnership between Caltrans and the City of Arcata to make pedestrian and bicycle improvements on the Samoa Gateway Project on State Route 255. The project is filling gaps in the sidewalk network, adding bicycle lanes and landscaping, and including new wayfinding features.<sup>20</sup>
- The Mission Gorge Road detour in Santee, where Caltrans considered the needs of nonmotorized users during construction by having staff bike the proposed detour to ensure that it minimized out-of-direction travel before directing the public there. The cost of providing the detour, including a bike lane and signage, amounted to a fraction of the total project cost and increased work zone safety.

The existence of the state policy has put Caltrans into a leadership position as local governments have begun to implement their own Complete Streets policies. Caltrans has also remained responsive to transportation advocacy groups that continue pushing the department on specific issues both directly to department officials and by going to the state legislature. For example, when advocates considered legislative action to add nonmotorized representatives to the state's traffic control committee, Caltrans quickly added the positions on its own. The big challenge ahead for Caltrans is ensuring that all the changes planned at the state level are reflected in changes in the 12 district offices.

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<sup>1</sup> More information on the policy analysis methodology is found in the annual "Complete Streets Policy

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Analysis.” See, for example, the 2011 edition, at

<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/cs/resources/cs-policyanalysis.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> The full policy analysis report may be downloaded at

<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/cs/resources/cs-policyanalysis.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> An excellent account by Ethan Fawley of Fresh Energy was posted on the blog of the National Complete Streets Coalition. See <http://www.completestreets.org/policy/complete-streets-bill-passes-in-minnesota/>.

<sup>4</sup> Hawaii Department of Transportation (November 2010), “Complete Streets Task Force: Final Complete Streets Legislative Report,” <http://hawaii.gov/dot/administration/library/legislature/2011/ACT%2054-%20SLH%202009%20REPORT%20-2011-%20-%20COMPLETE%20STREETS%20TASK%20FORCE%20-Part%201%20of%202.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> New Jersey Department of Transportation (December 2009), Policy No. 703,

<http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/eng/completestreets/pdf/completestreetspolicy.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> The checklist may be downloaded at

<http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/eng/completestreets/implementation.shtm>. See also New Jersey Department of Transportation (October 2011), “NJDOT Complete Streets Checklist,”

<http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/capital/pd/documents/CompleteStreetsChecklist.doc>.

<sup>7</sup> See New Jersey Complete Streets policies by browsing

<http://policy.rutgers.edu/vtc/bikeped/completestreets/policies.php>.

<sup>8</sup> New Jersey Future (September 2011), “Filling in the Gaps: Assessing the Implementation of NJDOT’s Complete Streets Policy”, <http://www.njfuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/complete-streets-report-FINAL-web.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> National Complete Streets Coalition, “State-Level Complete Streets Policies,”

<http://www.completestreets.org/webdocs/policy/cs-state-policies.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Massachusetts Department of Transportation (January 2006), “Project Development and Design Guide,” <http://www.mhd.state.ma.us/default.asp?pgid=content/designguide&sid=about>.

<sup>11</sup> See Baystate Roads Program; browse “Workshops,” at

<http://baystateroads.eot.state.ma.us/workshops/>.

<sup>12</sup> Belmont Citizens-Herald (March 28, 2011). “Road Fix Bill Advances,” Belmont, MA,

<http://www.wickedlocal.com/belmont/newsnow/x1608500490/Road-fix-bill-advances>.

<sup>13</sup> Massachusetts Department of Transportation (2012), “GreenDOT” (retrieved 8/22/12),

<http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/greendot.aspx>.

<sup>14</sup> National Complete Streets Coalition, “State-Level Complete Streets Policies,”

<http://www.completestreets.org/webdocs/policy/cs-state-policies.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> California Department of Transportation (February 21, 2010), “Complete Streets Implementation Action Plan,” [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ocp/complete\\_streets\\_files/CompleteStreets\\_IP03-10-10.pdf](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ocp/complete_streets_files/CompleteStreets_IP03-10-10.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> California Department of Transportation (February 2010), “Complete Streets Implementation Action Plan: Implementation of Deputy Directive 64-R1: Complete Streets; Integrating the Transportation System,” [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ocp/complete\\_streets\\_files/CompleteStreets\\_IP03-10-10.pdf](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ocp/complete_streets_files/CompleteStreets_IP03-10-10.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> California Department of Transportation (2010). “Complete Intersections: A Guide to Reconstructing Intersections and Interchanges for Bicyclists and Pedestrians,”

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/survey/pedestrian/Complete-Intersections-A-Guide-to-Reconstructing-Intersections-and-Interchanges-for-Bicyclists-and-Pedestrians.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> California Department of Transportation, Complete Streets Program website (retrieved 8/6/12),

[http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ocp/complete\\_streets.html](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ocp/complete_streets.html).

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<sup>19</sup> National Complete Streets Coalition (March 14, 2012), “Caltrans is Completing the Streets!”  
<http://www.completestreets.org/policy/state/caltrans-is-completing-the-streets/>.

<sup>20</sup> See <http://www.cityofarcata.org/departments/public-works/samoa-summary>.