

COMPLETE STREETS

General Background: Complete streets are roadways that consider the safety, access, and mobility of existing and potential roadway users. Some of the safety features of Complete Streets include sidewalks, bicycle lanes, paved shoulders, crosswalks, signage, pedestrian control signs, bus pull-outs, curb cuts, ramps, street trees and other traffic calming measures.

Programs, Incentives, and Help Available: Capital Projects Complete street checklist is available to help identify the most appropriate and safe pedestrian, bicyclist, transit and freight accommodations. The Smart Growth Screening tool is used to evaluate transportation infrastructure and provides an opportunity to identify Complete Street elements for inclusion in project. NYSDOT Smart Planning Website provides direct links to NYSDOT activities and programs related to transportation and land-use in communities and potential sources of funding.

Counties in New York Currently Implementing Complete Streets:

- Allegany County
- Cattaraugus County
- Chautauqua County
- Delaware County
- Dutchess County
- Erie County
- Essex County
- Nassau County
- Orange County
- Rockland County
- Suffolk County
- Ulster County
- Westchester County

Complete Streets in Chemung County: The Town of Southport was the first municipality in Chemung County to adopt a Complete Streets policy in 2017. The policy was an action item from the Town's Comprehensive Plan, which encourages planning for residents of all ages and encouraging walkable and bikeable streets. In 2017, the Elmira City Council voted unanimously in 2018 to implement Complete Streets in their community. So far, they have upheld their resolution and continue to rehabilitate local roads with the needs of all residents in mind. Earlier in 2019, the Village of Elmira Heights became the third community to adopt a policy. The Town of Big Flats and several other municipalities are considering adoption of Complete Streets policies as well.

Potential Costs: If Chemung County adopts Complete Streets guidelines, its departments involved with planning and construction will aspire to promote the safety, access, and mobility of all roadway users. However, the policy does not require any specific action or expenditure. There is no cost associated with adoption of a Complete Streets policy, nor is there any requirement for the County to include additional Complete Streets elements in a road construction project.

Potential Revenue Gains and Savings: The implementation of Complete Streets policies helps to increase the number of safe ways a person can navigate throughout a location. This increased mobility

may contribute to sales tax growth through existing businesses and encourages economic development in areas considered unnavigable, while improving the overall marketability of an area. In addition, the increased safety features help reduce the potential for vehicular collisions and injuries that can result in physical harm and expense.

Potential Benefits: Complete Streets may encourage the public to use more active forms of transportation, lessening the production of greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles. Citizens will also reap the health benefits associated with a more active lifestyle and experience a more interconnected community in which they can interact with people they may not otherwise meet. In some places, as found by a Smart Growth America study [source as footnote], Complete Streets reduced the amount of vehicular traffic as people used alternate forms of travel. Complete Streets has the potential to improve safety for all roadway users by slowing speeds, decreasing potential areas of conflict and providing alternatives.

Potential Downfalls: Complete Streets may cause discontent among citizens who are concerned about potential increases in public spending; they may not want their money to go to this program. In addition, traffic in some areas may increase depending on the implementation strategy.

County Officials: We have spoken to Legislator Christina Sonsire and Commissioner of Public Works Andy Avery. They both strongly support this initiative and have confirmed that County Planning Commissioner and Elmira-Chemung Transportation Council Director Nicolette Wagoner is also strongly supportive. In their opinions, complete streets will better the community, keep everyone safe, and help protect the environment.

Where to learn more: <http://www.dot.ny.gov/programs/completestreets> and <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/program/national-complete-streets-coalition/>.