



Town of North Hempstead

Complete Streets Policy Guide



**Adopted
January 25, 2011**

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I. Vision and Purpose

The Town of North Hempstead recognizes the importance of taking a well-balanced approach to transportation planning and providing optimal transportation accessibility and choices for its residents and visitors. The Town believes that the public right-of-way is more than just a conveyor of vehicles, and that it instead serves a vital role in shaping a community's landscape and livability. The present network of roads, in many cases, provides for the needs of motor vehicles to the exclusion of alternative modes of transportation, including cycling and walking.

The Town therefore seeks to create a road system that will accommodate the needs of all users and will integrate safety improvements and sustainable practices to reduce congestion, minimize environmental impacts, promote healthier lifestyles, encourage economic growth, and increase overall efficiency.

II. Policy Statement

The Town of North Hempstead shall provide for the needs of all motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, children, persons with disabilities, movers of commercial goods, users of public transportation, and seniors. The planning, construction, reconstruction, retrofit, maintenance, alteration, or repair of streets, bridges, or other portions of the transportation network undertaken by the Town in the public right-of-way shall seek to incorporate these needs. The Town shall view all transportation improvements as opportunities to improve safety and accessibility for all roadway users and recognizes bicycles, pedestrians, and mass transit modes as integral elements of the transportation system.

III. Definitions

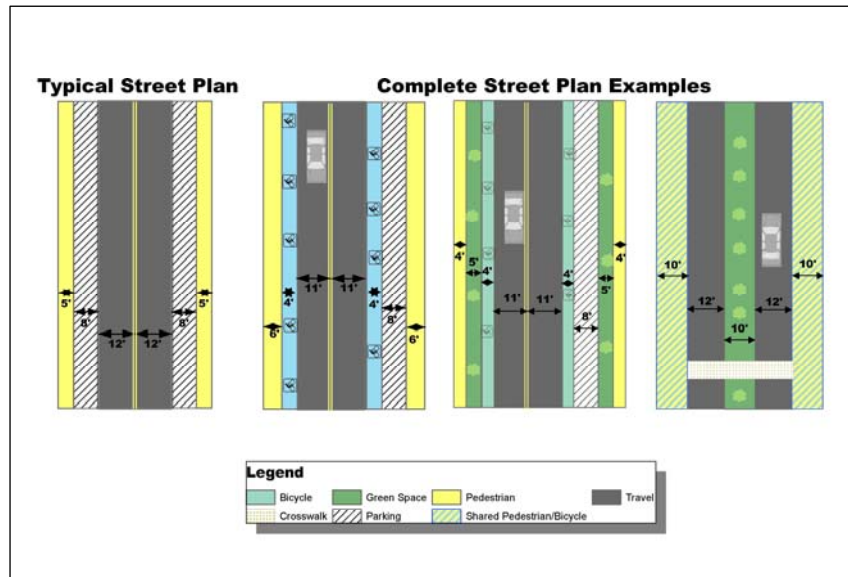
Complete Streets

Complete streets are those designed and operated to accommodate all users, across a full range of transportation modes. Users must be able to travel safely along and across a complete street network.

Ideal Cross Section

The optimum number of travel lanes, paths and walkways, and their specific dimensions, for each functional classification of roadway and associated design speed.

Examples of ideal cross sections:



Roadway Network

A multi-modal, integrated system of public thoroughfares that includes local and arterial roads (exclusive of limited-access highways), walkways, paths, trails and fixed-route transit corridors.

Users

Motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, children, persons with disabilities, movers of commercial goods, and transit riders of all ages and abilities utilizing all modes of ground transportation.

IV. Needs and Benefits

Safety

From 2006-2008 there were 307 accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists within the Town. Of these 307, over 60% of incidents—including four fatalities and 189 injuries—occurred on roads administered by the Town. While the causes of these accidents are numerous and varied, a common contributing factor is roadway design, specifically road layouts, site lines and signal patterns that favor the efficient movement of motor vehicles to the detriment of non-motorized modes of transportation. Adequate provisions for safe non-motorized travel were often an afterthought.

Senior Mobility

A common complaint voiced to the Town's Department of Services for the Aging is the inconvenience or inability for seniors to get to shops and services without a car. Even those who reside within a reasonable walking distance of their destination find that they encounter a hostile and unsafe environment. In a Complete Streets community, a number of techniques are deployed to increase the safety and convenience for senior pedestrians. These include re-timing of traffic signals to account for slower walking speeds, introducing sidewalk ramps and seating options, constructing sidewalk bulb-outs and median refuges to shorten crossing distances, and improving signage, street markings and lighting.

Safer Routes to School

At the other end of the spectrum, a Complete Streets community offers a safer environment for school children through such techniques as traffic calming to reduce traffic speeds in and around school zones and improving street crossings.

Environment

Improved roadway designs are a significant factor in reducing carbon emissions and achieving sustainability goals. Providing residents with an efficient transportation network that supports alternative modes reduces the number of motorized trips and miles traveled.

A Complete Streets policy may also incorporate innovative techniques in the selection of paving materials, drainage structures and street lighting. Increased use of porous pavements greatly reduces the amount of stormwater runoff and associated pollution and sedimentation. The use of LED streetlight fixtures as an alternative to the traditional metal halide and high pressure sodium greatly reduces the amount of energy consumed and a longer service life.

Congestion Relief

Traffic congestion is not only an inconvenience but is detrimental to the environment and the economy in terms of increased emissions and time lost to delays. A Complete Streets community encourages more efficient use of the road network by offering alternatives to the automobile through innovative design. Promoting and providing non-auto travel options such as walking, bicycling, carpooling and public transportation can reduce the demand for roadway use by single-occupancy vehicles during peak hour travel and help ease congestion.

Health

The growing epidemic of obesity has communities nationwide searching for ways to improve the built environment and promote healthier living. The lack or inadequacy of sidewalks and bicycle paths are often cited as contributing factors. Complete Streets provide opportunities for increased physical activity by incorporating active design elements that promote walking, jogging and cycling.

Economic Activity

A major benefit of a Complete Streets policy is the increase in the patronization of local businesses. Establishments located along popular pedestrian routes should experience an increase in customer traffic. In an auto-dominated streetscape, customers often bypass local options in search of larger centers with an adequate parking supply.

V. Local Examples

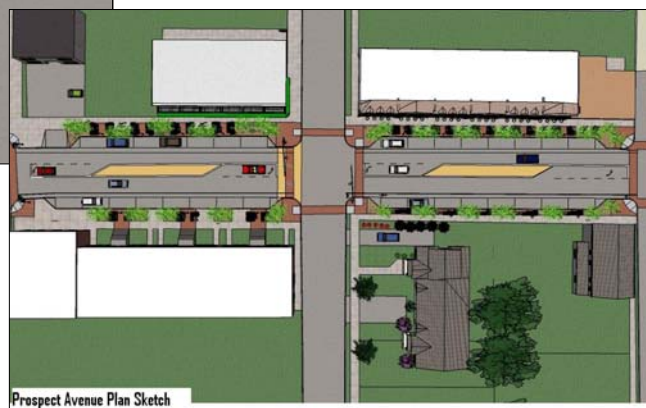
The Town of North Hempstead has long embraced Complete Streets concepts well in advance of adopting a formal policy. Two specific projects in the advanced stages of implementation are worth noting. Both involve streets that were formerly under the control of Nassau County but are now under the Town's jurisdiction.

Prospect Avenue, New Cassel

Running for just over a mile from Post Avenue to the Wantagh Parkway, Prospect Avenue is the central spine road in the hamlet of New Cassel. Though vehicular traffic is relatively light for a main thoroughfare (around 11,000 cars/day), the volume of pedestrians is among the highest in the Town. A 1960s-era road widening to four lanes has caused operating speeds to routinely exceed 55 mph despite a posted speed limit of 30, resulting in numerous pedestrian/vehicle accidents.

An \$8.5M reconstruction of Prospect Avenue is nearing completion which seeks to implement community goals identified in an extensive public visioning process. Identified objectives include increasing pedestrian safety, reducing traffic speeds, and providing non-motorized travel options along the corridor. These goals are currently coming to fruition through a major rehabilitation of the roadway.

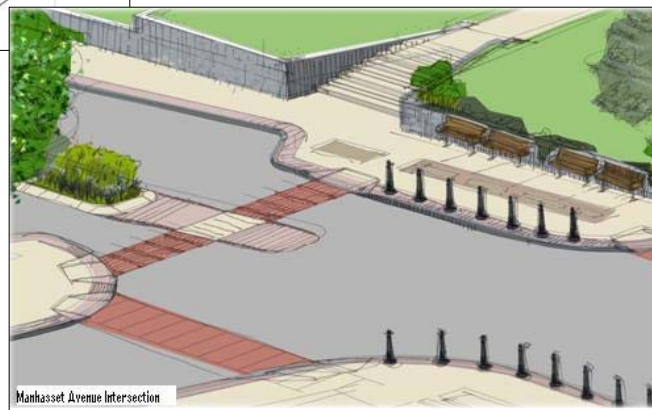
Traffic calming improvements include the elimination of one traffic lane and the creation of a dedicated bicycle lane in each direction, sidewalk curb extensions, textured/stamped crosswalks, re-striped parking lanes, and street enhancement elements such as pedestrian lighting, countdown signals at crosswalks, tree planting, bicycle racks, trash receptacles, and other pedestrian and cyclist safety enhancements.



Plandome Road, Manhasset

Another effort to improve public safety along a major corridor is in process along Plandome Road, the “main street” of Manhasset. This route is heavily used by pedestrians, including a large number of school children and teens traveling to-and-from both a public middle-and-high school campus and a private high school. Despite the presence of sidewalks and crosswalks, pedestrians experience a number of hazards including narrow pathways, physical obstructions and a large number of turning vehicles at every intersection. Though only a single lane in each direction, travel lane widths are in excess of 17’ encouraging higher speeds and the creation of an unofficial “third lane” for passing vehicles.

Utilizing a “Safe Routes to School” grant, a number of traffic-calming improvements are proposed to increase safety and promote a vibrant business district. The design features reduced travel lane widths, high-visibility textured/stamped crosswalks, wider sidewalks, improved street lighting and signage, and sidewalk bulb-outs.



VI. Program Guidelines

The North Hempstead Complete Streets Policy includes a number of design elements intended to enhance not only safety but sustainability as well.

Applicability

The Policy will be implemented for all new public streets constructed by or for the Town and for all streets constructed by private entities that will be dedicated to the Town as public streets, as is typical of new residential subdivisions. In the latter case, the design elements of the policy will be reviewed and enforced in conjunction with any permit applications for building permits, site plan review or variances. Review of subdivision applications will occur in conjunction with Nassau County review.

While roads can theoretically be retrofitted in accordance with a Complete Streets policy at any time, there are certain circumstances which present a logical opportunity to evaluate and potentially redesign an existing street. These include roads undergoing full-depth pavement repair/replacement and roads undergoing horizontal realignment. All road projects of this magnitude will be reviewed for the feasibility of incorporating Complete Streets design elements.

All elements of a Complete Streets policy are not practical for all streets and there is great variety in the nature of streets within the Town's road network. The selection of appropriate design elements will largely be a function of a streets functional classification, traffic volume, and accident history.

Recommended Items

Establishing an accessible, safe, and well-connected transportation network means incorporating design elements and guidelines that address the needs of all users while remaining flexible and relevant. Complete Streets support a livable community by including shorter blocks and wider sidewalks, as well as standard traffic calming measures and a functional design aesthetic that is hospitable and welcoming to non-vehicular users. Recommended items include, but are not limited to median islands, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible transit stops, frequent crossing opportunities, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, and more.

Sustainable Design Elements

Potential right-of-way design improvements for increased sustainability of the roadway network range from changes in landscaping and lighting to the utilization of alternative pavement materials. These alterations can result in energy savings, minimize drainage problems, and reduce pollution.

Lighting

Complete Streets shall employ lighting techniques that increase safety for all users, minimize light pollution and glare, and are energy efficient. An example of this are LED (light-emitting diode) fixtures which utilize less energy than traditional street lights and generally require less maintenance over time. If feasible, the utilization of solar power sources is also encouraged to operate these lighting systems.



Landscaping

Bioswales, xeriscaping (use of indigenous and drought-resistant plantings to minimize the need for water), trees, and rain gardens can serve as decorative landscaping while at the same time provide greater filtration and retention of stormwater runoff. Addition of these types of green elements can also reduce the urban heat island effect which occurs when pavement is exposed to the sun and increases temperatures.



www.sitephocus.com, "12 Avenue-Portland-004"

Paving materials

Similar to stormwater treatment through landscaping, introduction of pervious pavement/paving stone or porous cement allows for the capture of a greater amount of storm water than traditional paving materials. These alternative pavement types filter runoff before ground penetration and can reduce flooding.



Specific Design Standards

Local Streets

The vast majority of the Town's transportation network is comprised of roads with the functional classification of "local street". Local streets are typically 30' from curb to curb centered within a 50' right-of-way. Most of the town's local streets do have sidewalks, but are generally built to a 4'-wide standard instead of the current 5'. Wheelchair accessible ramps are not as common on local streets as they are on the major thoroughfares.

Though usually unmarked, most local streets allow for one travel lane in each direction with parallel parking permitted along the curblines. It is frequently the case, however, that two vehicles traveling in opposite directions cannot pass if there are vehicles parked along both curbs. Other common hazards are obstructed sidewalks and poor sightlines. Most local streets are characterized by driveways every 50'-60' from which drivers back out to the street. Visibility may be further reduced if there is overgrown vegetation blocking the view of pedestrians and other vehicles.

To the greatest extent practicable, the Town will employ the following Complete Streets design elements for local streets:

Lane Widths

- 10'-12' travel lanes, generally unmarked
- 7'-8' parking lanes
- 4'-6' sidewalks with ADA compliant curb ramps

Pedestrian Safety

- Crosswalks for school routes
- LED streetlight fixtures
- Pedestrian-scale lighting

Drainage/Landscaping

- Porous pavement
- Bioswales
- Xeriscaping
- Street trees and shrubs
- Planters
- Stormwater street pits for small trees or large shrubs

Collectors and Minor Arterials

Unlike most counties in the State, municipalities in Nassau generally do not maintain major streets and thoroughfares. However, in 2007, the Town took over the jurisdiction of a number of County roadways that may be functionally classified as either “collector” or “minor arterial”. These include Plandome Road in Manhasset, Main Street in Port Washington, Warner Avenue in Roslyn Heights and Prospect Avenue in New Cassel. These thoroughfares provide the best opportunity to employ Complete Streets design elements.

These “main streets” are typically characterized by high traffic volumes, a high percentage of commercial traffic, often multiple travel lanes in each direction and high pedestrian volumes accessing local shops and services. On-street parking is usually permitted. Sidewalks are usually wider than 4’, but are often obstructed by mailboxes, streetlight poles, garbage cans and even parked vehicles. While many street intersections have traffic signals and crosswalks, there are often periods where numerous vehicular turning movements leave no opportunity for a safe crossing.

The following design elements will be utilized wherever practical on main thoroughfares:

Lane Widths

- 10’-12’ marked travel lanes
- 7’-8’ marked parking lanes
- 4’-6’ sidewalk system with ADA compliant curb ramps and 5’-6’ dedicated bicycle lanes or 10’ combined bicycle and pedestrian walkways
- Minimum 6’ landscaped median or 3’ green spaces adjacent to sidewalk

Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety

- Textured/stamped crosswalks
- Crosswalk timers/audible signaling devices
- Sidewalk curb extensions
- Cyclist safety enhancements, such as bicycle lane stripings and pavement marking
- Improved signage
- Bus shelters

Drainage/Landscaping

- Porous pavement
- Bioswales
- Xeriscaping
- Street trees and shrubs
- Planters
- Stormwater street pits for small trees or large shrubs

Lighting

- LED streetlight fixtures
- Pedestrian-scale lighting

Street Furniture

- Parking meters
- Kiosks
- Benches
- Bicycle racks
- Trash receptacles

Exceptions

Although encouraged elsewhere, this policy does not apply to roadways that are outside the jurisdiction of the Town, specifically those roads administered by New York State Department of Transportation, Nassau County Department of Public Works or those under the control of incorporated villages.

Coordination with Other Jurisdictions

While the Town seeks a consistent and comprehensive application of its Complete Streets policy, much of the road network is under the jurisdiction of other entities as stated above. Whereas the Town cannot mandate that any other entity adopt a similar policy, the Town will endeavor to coordinate with these other entities to promote continuity across jurisdictional boundaries.

Conformance to other codes and standards

Dimensional requirements and operational standards for roadway design are found at the local, state and federal levels. Of particular relevance are the Nassau County *Regulations for the Subdivision of Land*, the New York State *Highway Design Manual* and the AASHTO *Policy on the Design of Highways and Streets*. While the Town generally believes that its Complete Streets policy is in conformance with these standards, there may be instances where a conflict arises. The Town will coordinate with the applicable agencies to ensure compatibility.

VII. Implementation

The Town intends to begin implementation of its Complete Streets policy immediately upon adoption by undertaking the following steps:

Inventory and Assessment

The Town intends to perform a full inventory of its road network broken down by functional classification and further categorized by traffic volume, presence and condition of sidewalks, access ramps and crosswalks. Popular walking routes and streets with transit facilities will also be assessed.

Develop Priority List

While it will take many years before every road is evaluated and, where warranted, improved, the Town can identify which roads need attention first. Criteria for priority listing shall include;

- physical condition of the pavement, sidewalks, streetlights, drainage structures and street furniture;
- A higher than average volume of pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorized transportation modes;
- A high accident rate, particularly vehicle/pedestrian accidents;
- The presence of vehicle/pedestrian hazards and conflicts, even if the street has a low accident rate;

Pursue Additional Funding Sources

Already, federal “Safe Routes to School” grants have been obtained for Plandome Road in Manhasset and Main Street in Port Washington and are funding a program of traffic calming improvements in each location. The Town will vigorously pursue additional grants at the local, state and federal levels to fund additional projects.

Monitor Performance

It is important to track the performance of roads that have been improved utilizing Complete Streets principles. Accident rates will be checked against the prior condition to gauge the effectiveness of the policy in terms of improving traffic safety. Wherever possible, the Town will obtain data to determine if there have been reductions in travel times and vehicular miles traveled as a result of the Policy.

Power consumption of new streetlights will be compared to the prior condition to quantify both the cost and the energy savings. Wherever such data is available, the Town will assess whether the creation of walkable downtowns is effective in generating new customer traffic and additional revenues for local businesses.