

## 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/>.

**Proposed language:**

**RESOLUTION NO.: 2018 -157**

**WHEREAS**, Chemung County desires to adopt a Complete Streets Policy for the Chemung County; and

**WHEREAS**, the applicable definitions are as follows:

- "Complete Streets" are streets that are part of a connected travel network and are safe, convenient and comfortable for persons of all ages and abilities using various modes of transportation (including, but not limited to, vehicles, public transportation, walking, and bicycling);
- "Complete Streets Program" is a system of implementing Complete Streets;
- "Multi-modal transportation" refers to various modes of transportation (walking, bicycling, automobile, transit, etc.); and

**WHEREAS**, Chemung County recognizes that the needs of people of all ages and abilities should be considered in the planning, design, maintenance and operation of all new street construction and reconstruction undertaken in the county; and

**WHEREAS**, Complete Streets concepts, design features and practices include, but are not limited to: sidewalks, shared use paths, bicycle lanes, bicycle routes, paved shoulders, street trees, landscaping, planting strips, lighting, accessible curb ramps, crosswalks, refuge islands, pedestrian signals, wayfinding signage, benches, bicycle parking facilities, bus pull-outs, bus stop shelters, sidewalk snow removal, bicycle lane maintenance, and traffic calming measures such as curb bump-outs, center islands, and pavement markings; and

**WHEREAS**, Complete Streets has been recognized and adopted as law in New York State; and Complete Streets policies and laws have been adopted at the state, county, town, village and city levels across the country for the purpose of improving multi-modal transportation options, safety, and accessibility for all users; and

**WHEREAS**, Chemung County recognizes that Complete Streets will increase opportunities for multi-modal transportation, reduce traffic congestion, increase the capacity and efficiency of the road network, incorporate traffic calming actions, limit greenhouse gas emissions, improve social interactions, promote healthy lifestyles, improve safety, create a stronger sense of community, strengthen the local economy, and improve the quality of life for people in the community; and

**WHEREAS**, Chemung County and the County Public Works Departments will work with organizations including the New York State Department of Transportation, the Elmira-Chemung Transportation Council, the Chemung County Planning Department, the Chemung County Soil and

Water Conservation District, Southern Tier Economic Growth, and neighboring communities and counties, businesses and school districts, to explore the development, maintenance and expansion of the pedestrian, bicycle and trail network within neighborhoods, to and from Chemung County and surrounding municipalities and put into practice a Complete Streets Program to address issues of these amenities,

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT**

**RESOLVED**, that Chemung County hereby recognizes the importance of creating Complete Streets through the planning, design, funding and implementation of local highway, street, and sidewalk projects undertaken by and in the county that enable safe multi-modal transportation for people of all ages and abilities, including children, youth, families, seniors and individuals with disabilities; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that Chemung County encourages the New York State Department of Transportation, the local municipalities and Chemung County, as the owners of roadways within Chemung County, to incorporate Complete Streets concepts, design features, and practices in the planning, design, construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation of their respective roadways, and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that Chemung County hereby adopts the following Complete Streets Policy as an official policy of Chemung County:

1. Chemung Counties Public Works Department shall incorporate Complete Streets concepts, design features and practices, to the extent appropriate, feasible, and practicable in the planning, design, operation and maintenance, funding and implementation of local highway, street and sidewalk improvement projects undertaken by Chemung County.
2. Context Sensitivity. The addition of Complete Streets facilities shall be consistent with the scope of the construction or improvement project, sensitive to the surrounding area, and shall not be disproportionate with the cost of the larger project.
3. Guidance. The County shall plan, design, develop, and maintain Complete Streets facilities in accordance with bicycle and pedestrian facility guidelines adopted by the Federal Highway Administration, the New York State Department of Transportation, the National Association of City Transportation Officials and others, as applicable. The County and its partners will train staff on implementation, maintenance and operations of the Complete Streets features.
4. Exemptions. Exemptions to the Complete Streets Policy shall be presented to the Elmira-Chemung Transportation Council (ECTC) in writing and documented with supporting data that includes the reason for the exemption and may include the following:

- a. Non-motorized users are prohibited on the roadway;
  - b. Scarcity of population, travel and attractors, both existing and future, indicate an absence of need for such accommodations;
  - c. Detrimental environmental or social impacts outweigh the need for these accommodations;
  - d. Cost of accommodations is excessively disproportionate to cost of project;
  - e. Complete Streets features would compromise the safety or timing of a project;
  - f. Determinations. If, during the review process, Chemung County Department of Public Works determines that a roadway cannot accommodate Complete Streets features within Chemung County right-of-way proposed for construction or improvement, the Department of Public Works shall provide said determination in writing to ECTC, with supporting documentation, for its files.
  - g. Revisions to Plans and Policies. Chemung County will incorporate Complete Streets principals into its planning documents, manuals, rules, regulations and programs.
  - h. Performance Measures. Chemung County shall measure the success of this Complete Streets policy using the following performance measures as examples, and post the result online annually:
    - i. Linear feet of new or reconstructed sidewalks;
    - j. Linear miles of new or restriped on-street bicycle facilities;
    - k. Number of new or reconstructed curb ramps;
    - l. Number of traffic calming projects approved and implemented; and
    - m. Number of crosswalk and intersection improvements.
5. Funding. Chemung County and its partners shall actively seek sources of appropriate funding for Complete Streets facilities to implement this policy, including federal transportation funds, state grants, Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) funds, and local funds; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that this Resolution shall take effect immediately.