



Smart Growth America

Improving lives by improving communities



National Complete  
Streets Coalition

# Complete Streets Policies

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# Complete Streets policies

Ensure that the entire right-of-way is planned, designed, constructed, operated, and maintained to provide safe access for all users.

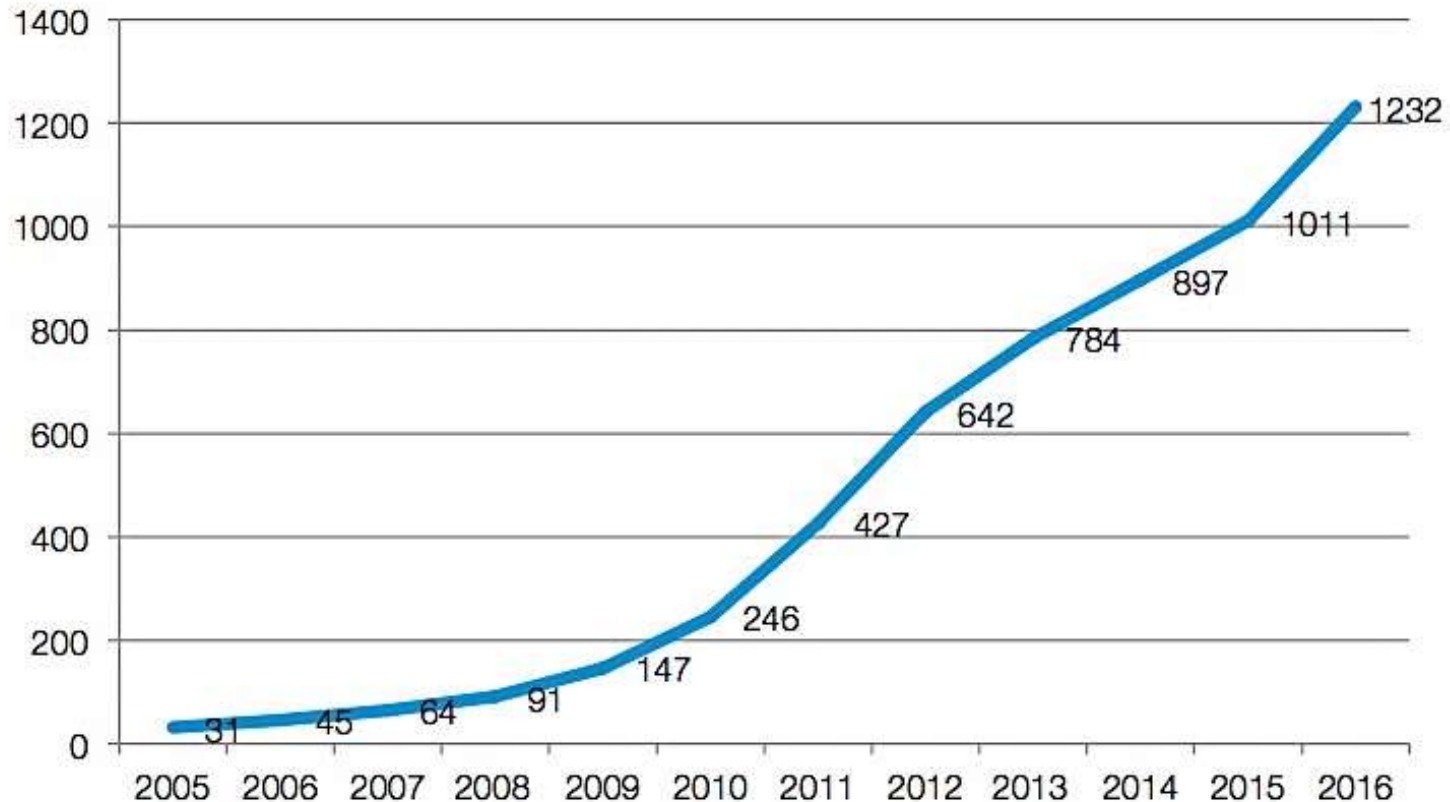


# Changing Expectations

Cultural  
Political  
Practical

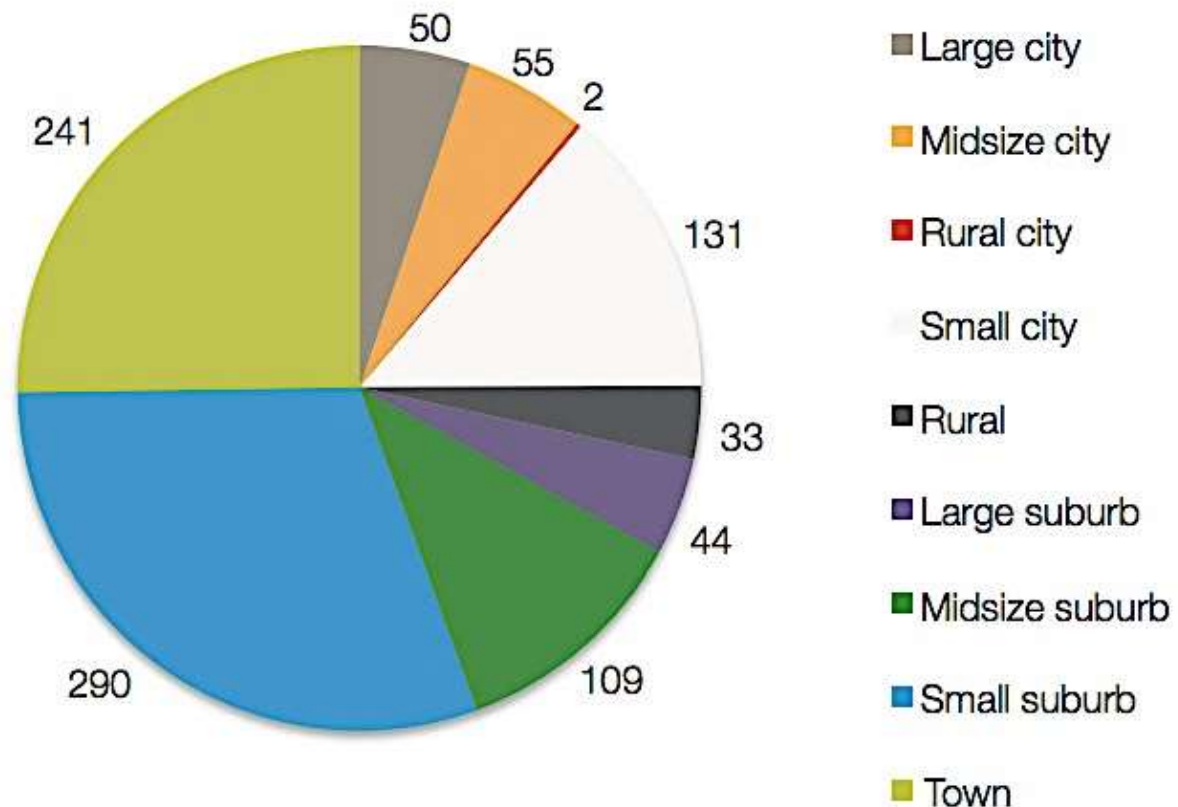
# Over 1,200 policies have been passed nationwide

Complete Streets policies adopted, over time



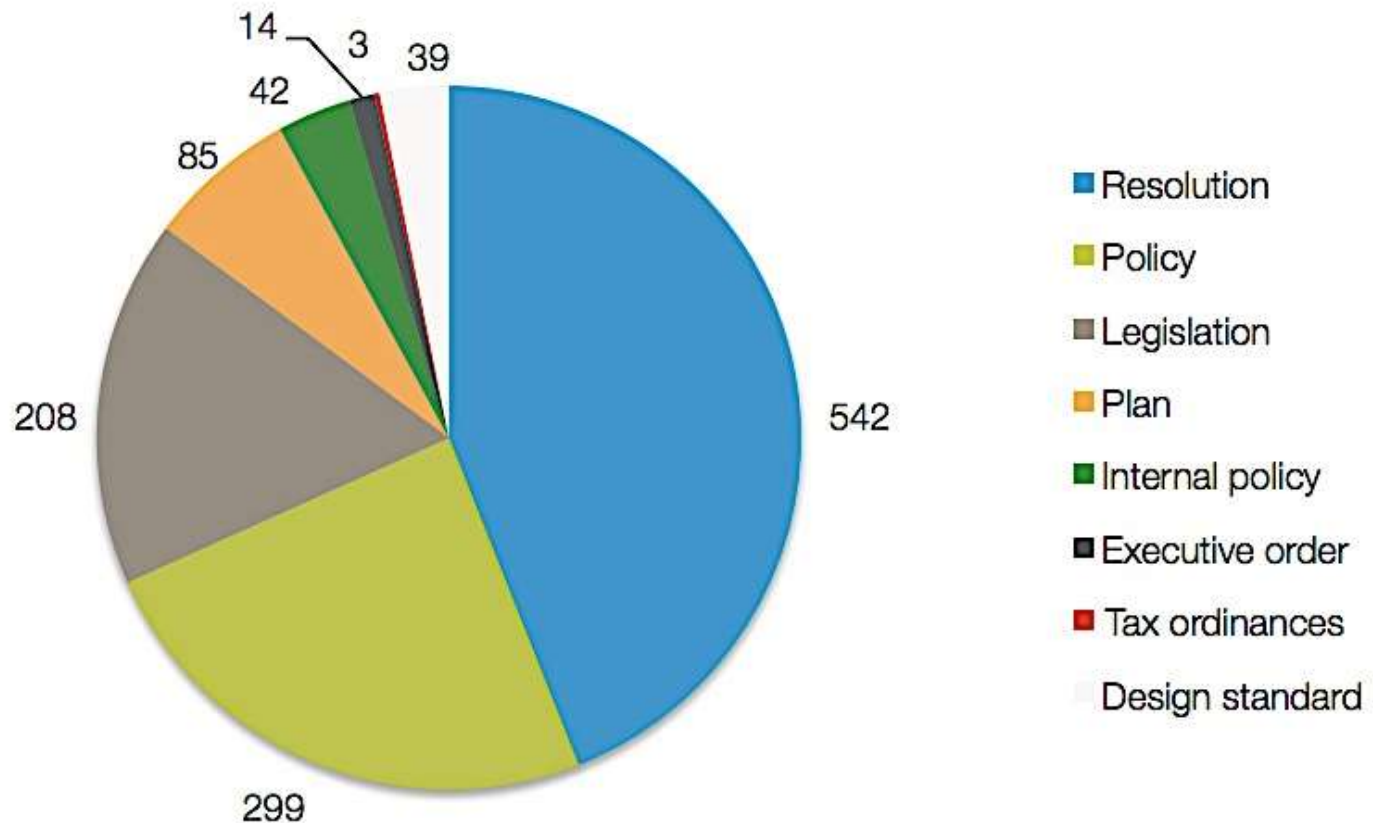
# Most policies are adopted by smaller, suburban communities and towns

Municipalities with Complete Streets policies, by size

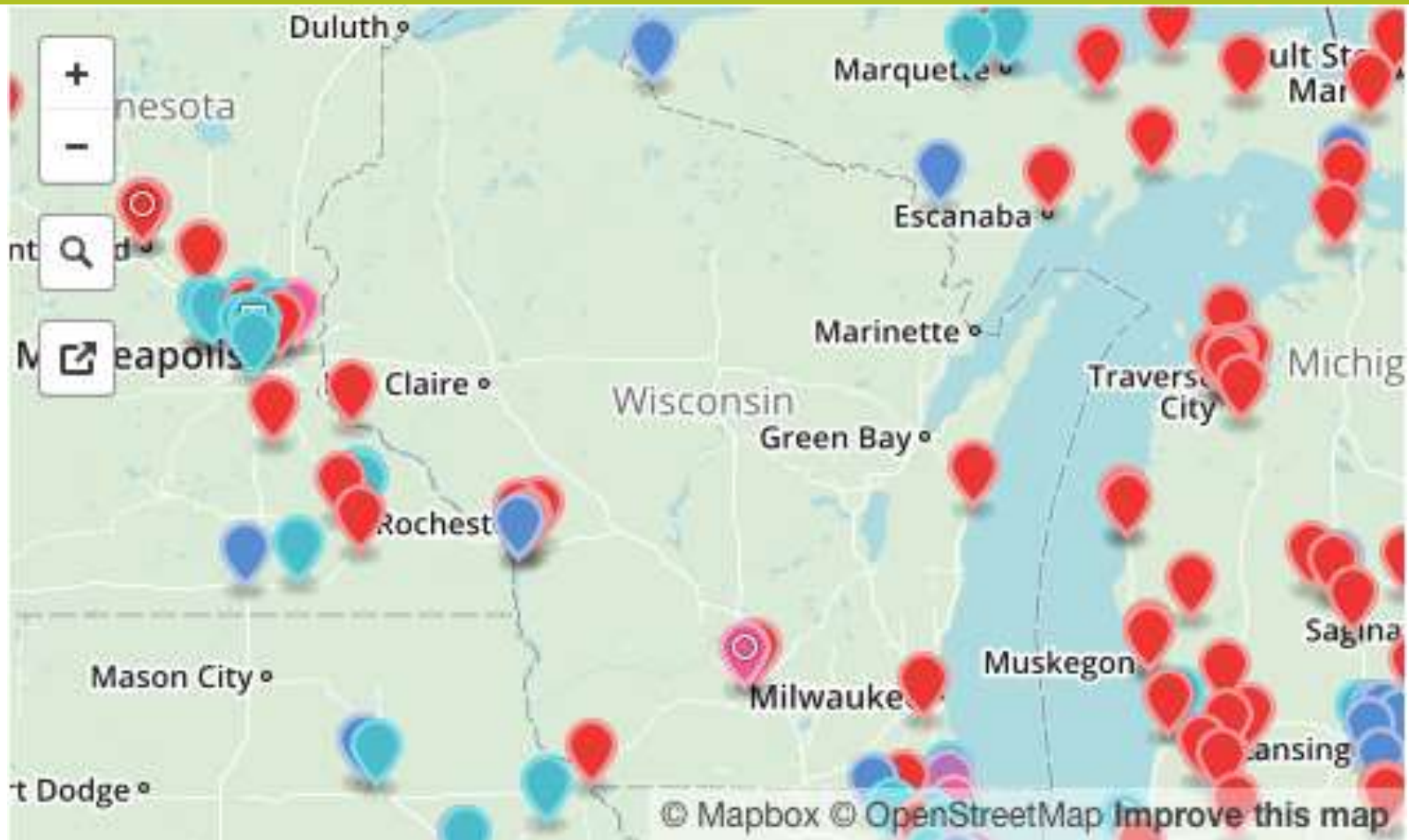


# Most policies are resolutions and policies passed by an elected board

All Complete Streets policies, by type

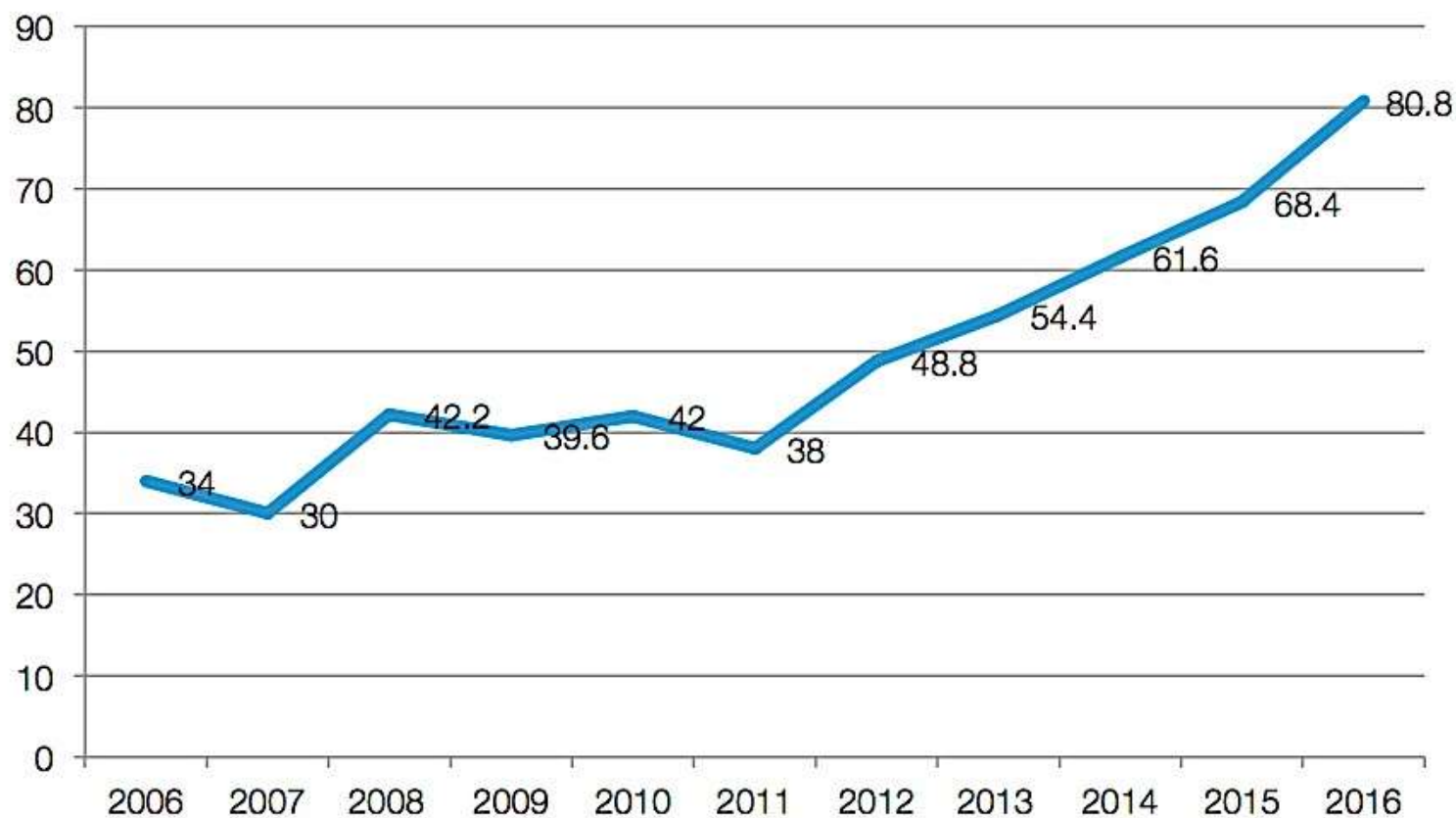


# Policies in Wisconsin



# Policy scores are improving

Median policy score, over time



# Ten Elements of a Complete Streets Policy

1. Vision
2. All Users and Modes
3. All Projects and Phases
4. Clear Accountable Exceptions
5. Network
6. Jurisdiction
7. Design
8. Context Sensitivity
9. Performance Measures
10. Implementation

# Scores going up

✓ All users of all ability

# Scores going up

- ✓ All users of all ability
- ✓ More modes

# Scores going up

- ✓ All users of all ability
- ✓ More modes
- ✓ Network

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- ✓ Context Sensitivity
- ✓ Design Guidance

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# Vision



What do you want from your streets? What will consistently rally support from the community and its leaders?



# Vision: Northfield, MN

- Northfield intends and expects to realize long-term cost savings in improved **public health, better environmental stewardship, reduced fuel consumption**, and reduced demand for motor vehicle infrastructure through the implementation of this Complete Streets policy. Complete Streets also contribute to walkable neighborhoods, which can **foster interaction, create a sense of community pride and improve quality of life**

# All users & modes

- A clearly stated directive to include the needs of all people, regardless of how they travel, into the everyday transportation decision-making process.



# All users & modes: Hayward, CA

- The City of Hayward expresses its commitment to creating and maintaining Complete Streets ...that serves all categories of users, including **pedestrians, bicyclists, persons with disabilities, motorists, emergency vehicles, movers of commercial goods, users and operators of public transportation, seniors, children, youth, and families.**

# All projects & phases

- Integrate Complete Streets into all projects:
  - New construction
  - Reconstruction
  - Rehabilitation
  - Repair
  - Repaving
  - Major maintenance
  - Operations



# All projects & phases: Ogdensburg, NY

- A. All City-owned transportation facilities in the public right-of-way including, but not limited to, streets, bridges, and all other connecting pathways shall be **designed, constructed, operated, and maintained** so that users of all ages and abilities can travel safely and independently.
- B. Privately constructed streets and parking lots** shall adhere to the policy.
- C. ...

# All projects & phases: Ogdensburg, NY

- D. The City shall approach every transportation improvement and project phase as an opportunity to create safer, more accessible streets for all users. These phases include, but are not limited to: **planning, programming, design, right-of-way acquisition, construction, construction engineering, reconstruction, operation, and maintenance**. Other changes to transportation facilities on streets and rights-of-way, including **capital improvements, re-channelization projects** and **major maintenance**, must also be included.

# Exceptions

- Provides flexibility, but must not be exploited.
- Common exceptions:
  - User groups are prohibited
  - Cost is excessively disproportionate to need and use
  - Documented absence of current AND future need
- Management approval required



# Exceptions: Oak Park, IL

- Exemptions to the Complete Streets policy must be **documented** in writing by either the Director of Public Works or Village Engineer **with supporting data** that indicates the reason for the decision and are limited to the following:
  1. Non-motorized users are **prohibited** on the roadway.
  2. There is documentation that there is an **absence of current and future need**.
  3. The **cost** of accommodations for a particular mode is **excessively disproportionate** to the need and potential benefit of a project.
  4. The project involves **ordinary maintenance activities** designed to keep assets in acceptable condition, such as cleaning, sealing, spot repairs, patching and surface treatments, such as micro-surfacing.

# Network & connectivity

- More than one or two “complete” streets
- Connected, integrated system that provides for all users
- Ensures gaps are filled



# Network: Miami Valley RPC, OH

- ...A well-connected network provides **safe and convenient transitions from one mode of transportation to another, from one jurisdiction to another and from one type of infrastructure to another**...Every effort should be made to provide a continuous, uninterrupted network accessible to all users and modes...

# Other agencies

- Many agencies have a stake in the funding, planning, and development of our streets.
- Create partnerships
- Communication between jurisdictions and agencies at all levels



# Other agencies: Trenton, NJ

Recognizing the inter-connected multi-modal network of street grid, the City of Trenton will work with **Mercer County**, the **Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission**, **traffic consultant** AECOM and **state agencies** through existing planning efforts to ensure complete streets principles are incorporated in a context sensitive manner

# Design guidance & flexibility

- Use the best and latest design standards available
- Allow for flexible approaches to design



# Design & flexibility: Salem, MA

The latest design guidance, standards, and recommendations available will be used in the implementation of Complete Streets, including the most up-to-date versions of:

- The **Massachusetts Department of Transportation's** Project Design and Development Guidebook
- The National Association of Transportation Officials (**NACTO**) Urban Bikeway Design Guide
- The National Association of Transportation Officials (**NACTO**) Urban Street Design Guide
- The latest edition of American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (**AASHTO**) A Policy on Geometric Design of Highway and Streets
- The United States Department of Transportation **Federal Highway Administration's** Manual on Uniform Traffic Design Controls

# Design & flexibility: Salem, MA

*(cont.)*

- **Pioneer Valley Planning Commission's** Healthy Community Design Toolkit
- The **Architectural Access Board** (AAB) 521 CMR Rules and Regulations
- Documents and plans created by the **City of Salem**, including but not limited to:
  - Bicycle Master Plan
  - Open Space and Recreation Action Plan
  - Salem Downtown Renewal Plan

# Design & flexibility: Portland, ME

...The City will follow the design manuals, standards and guidelines above, as applicable, but **should be not be precluded from considering innovative or non- traditional design options** where a comparable level of safety for users is present or provided.

# Context sensitivity

- Design relates well to type of neighborhood and buildings
- Responds to multimodal transportation needs



# Context: Austin, TX

The City will align land use and transportation goals, policies, and code provisions to create Complete Street solutions that are **appropriate to the individual contexts... and that support land use policies** of the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan... The City will take a flexible, innovative, and balanced approach to creating context-sensitive Complete Streets that meet or exceed national best-practice guidelines. **Design criteria shall not be purely prescriptive but shall be based on the thoughtful application of engineering, architectural, and design principles.**

# Performance measures

- Systematic collection and reporting of data
- Ensures compliance with policy goals
- Enables informed decision-making
- Short and long term measurements



# Measures: Indianapolis

- Number of new curb ramps installed along city streets
- Crosswalk and intersection improvements
- Percentage of transit stops accessible via sidewalks and curb ramps (beginning in June 2014)
- Rate of crashes, injuries and fatalities by mode
- Rate of children walking or bicycling to school (beginning in June 2014)

# Policy development best practices



## Include all stakeholders

- Members of the community
- Elected officials
- Other agencies

# Policy development best practices



Policy development helps to:

- Change transportation priorities
- Establish a new ideal for streets
- Communicate with the public

# Policy development best practices

Usually part of a broader movement

- Bicycle/pedestrian planning
- Smart growth
- Community visioning
- Safety initiatives
- Climate change initiatives
- Physical activity/health campaigns

# Next steps: Implementation

- Clear direction beyond policy adoption
- Maintain momentum
- Assign oversight to new or existing committee
- Regular public reporting to engage community, show accountability, and celebrate accomplishments



# Implementation: Ft. Lauderdale, FL

- A. Lead Department.** The Transportation & Mobility Department shall lead the implementation of this policy...
- B. Inventory.** The City will maintain a comprehensive inventory... and will prioritize projects... to eliminate gaps in the sidewalk and bikeways networks.
- C. Capital Improvement Project Prioritization...**
- D. Revisions to Existing Plans and Policies....**

# Implementation: Ft. Lauderdale, FL

*(cont.)*

E. Public Official and Staff **Training**...

**F. Coordination.** The City will utilize inter-department project coordination...

**G. Funding.** The City will actively seek sources of public and private funding to implement Complete Streets...

# Group Excursie

# Exercise: ID the right policy

- What departments are involved in making decisions regarding your streets?
- What plans, policies, and procedures guide our decision-making process?
- How do we change policy now? What type of policy would give us the support to effectively pursue Complete Streets?
- Who will champion policy adoption?
- How do we work with the community?

# Exercise: Complete Streets vision

- What outcomes do we seek?
- What benefits do we want to achieve from Complete Streets?
  - What messages will consistently rally support for Complete Streets outcomes?

# Exercise: Users & modes

- What modes will be covered in our policy?
- How will we address the needs of:
  - Older adults?
  - Children?
  - People with disabilities?
  - Minority populations?
  - Lower-income residents?

# Exercise: Projects & phases

- How will the policy address:
  - Scoping? Planning? Design? Construction?
  - Operations? Maintenance?
- When does the policy apply?
  - New construction? Reconstruction?  
Resurfacing? Rehabilitation? Retrofits?  
Signalization?
- How will consultant contracts reflect Complete Streets goals?

# Exercise: Exceptions

- When can categorical exceptions be made?
- How will exceptions be approved? By whom?
- What kind of accountability measure will we use? How will the process be transparent?

# Exercise: Network

- How will the policy address the need to create comprehensive, connected networks for all modes?
- How will the policy apply to subdivisions?
- Do we have specific goals for increasing connectivity?
- What opportunities can we identify to connect non-motorized networks?
- Do we have existing guidance on network decisions?

# Exercise: Jurisdiction

- What departments, agencies have some control or interest in our streets? At what point in our process do we include outside agencies?
- How do we coordinate with other jurisdictions that have Complete Streets policies? That don't have policies?
- Will private developers need to follow this policy? How?

# Exercise: Design guidance & flexibility

- What design guidance do we use now? Does it vary based on program or funding?
  - When was it/were they last updated?
- Who is responsible for approving guidance?
- What guidance will our policy reference?
  - AASHTO, Access Board, state DOT, NACTO, ITE...
- How will we encourage flexible design that addresses the needs of all modes/users?

# Exercise: Context sensitivity

- How will we account for adjoining land uses, building form, and community context?
- How will the policy address differences in applying Complete Streets to rural, suburban, and urban areas?
- How will adjacent residents, businesses, and frequent visitors be involved in the planning and design process?
- How will we encourage street design to reflect unique qualities of our neighborhoods?

# Exercise: Performance measures

- How will we know if the policy is achieving our goals?
- What measures are important for our community?
- What are our current performance measures?  
Which can be adjusted/updated for Complete Streets?
- What kinds of outputs will we measure?
- What kinds of outcomes will we measure?
- Which departments, agencies, programs, etc. can help collect data and benchmark these measures?

# Exercise: Implementation

- What parts of this policy will need more development later? Who will lead those efforts?
- Who (position, committee) will be responsible for overseeing implementation?
  - Will we establish a new committee? Assign responsibility to an existing committee?
  - How will the public participate?
- What accountability measures will we include to ensure these steps are taken?

# Exercise: Implementation

- What documents and procedures will need to be reviewed and updated?
  - Plans, codes, project selection criteria...
  - Will legislative action be required or helpful?
- Will we need to reevaluate or adopt new design guidance?
- Will we develop new performance measures?  
What data will need to be collected?
- How will we support ongoing education for staff and other leaders? How will we keep community residents engaged?

# Exercise: Additional elements

- Do we have additional transportation system goals that could be integrated into this policy?
- Where do they fit? Will they complicate the Complete Streets directive?
- How do we effectively cross-reference Complete Streets with other policies, plans, initiatives?