

CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

# Complete Streets Policy

A policy to develop an integrated and connected multimodal transportation system of Complete Streets that serve all neighborhoods and populations in Chester County.



# What is a Complete Street?

Below are some common elements of a complete street.



## Dedicated Bike Lanes

- Simple pavement markings creating a dedicated bike lane make both motorist and bicycle movement more predictable, and therefore safer for both. They may increase the likelihood of casual riders using bicycles for transportation.

## Active Sidewalks

- Sidewalks should be smooth, wide, feel safe, and have safe transitions to the street, making them easy to walk, or use a wheelchair on.

## Safe Crosswalks

- Clearly marked crosswalks allow pedestrian and wheelchair users to cross streets safely, while making sure cars know where to expect them.

## Vehicle Mobility

- Roadways balance vehicle mobility with the mobility and access needs of other roadway users. Roadway design components include alternative routes to and from destinations and width considerations that allow for multi-modal transportation amenities, emergency vehicle access, and designated routes for freight and transit access.

## Green Spaces

- Parks and public green spaces, create a destination encouraging community interaction and providing a rest from the surrounding urban environment.

## Planting Strips

- Street trees and landscaping slow speeding traffic, improve the aesthetic of roadway, provide shade, and create a buffer between cars and people, making a more inviting environment for pedestrians.

# Why a Complete Streets Policy?

The Complete Streets Policy is an important step forward to address the need for efficient transportation choices which increase safety and efficiency while enhancing the social equity needs of our transportation system. Multimodal transportation networks provide options for all travel modes—vehicular, bicycle, pedestrian, public transit, and freight—and are essential to maintaining communities that support public health, provide accessible transportation options for all, and help to mitigate climate change.

Chester County’s Complete Streets transportation policy requires streets to be planned, designed, retrofitted, and maintained to facilitate travel in a safe, convenient, and comfortable manner for all users regardless of their transportation mode. A complete street is more than adding facilities to accommodate pedestrians. Complete streets in Chester County represent an updated method of thinking about how our roadway corridors are utilized.

Chester County continues to be a desirable place to live and work and faces substantial growth in the form of new development and redevelopment. With an increasing population, limited opportunities to expand roadway capacity, and an existing automobile centric transportation system, there is need to develop safe, convenient, and efficient transportation options. These options may include the implementation of ‘road diets’ to right size the space required for transportation modes, or limited right-of-way expansion where necessary.



# Vision

Roadways in Chester County will meet the mobility needs of all users and provide for all appropriate modes of transportation with an emphasis on safety, equity, and environmental responsibility.

# Policy

The policy comprises six elements.

## Consider Complete Streets When Planning for Projects

Approach every transportation project as an opportunity to promote and advance the Complete Streets vision by considering the transportation needs for users including but not limited to pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and drivers of all ages and abilities, including those in underserved communities as defined by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's (DVRPC) Equity Analysis for the Greater Philadelphia Region. ▶



## Meet the Transportation Needs of a Growing Population

Design new transportation facilities and redevelop or reconfigure existing transportation facilities to incorporate the transportation needs of Chester County's growing population.

## Support a Sustainable Transportation Network

Create and maintain a comprehensive, integrated, connected, safe, and convenient transportation network within Chester County that encourages and supports sustainable development.



## Develop Context Sensitive Designs

Develop transportation designs which establish context sensitive solutions that best fit within the growth and rural resource area landscapes as defined by *Landscapes3*.

## Engage the Public

Incorporate outreach and public input from the community to advocate for increased safety and mobility for all users.



## Measure Success

Report results of Complete Streets Policy implementation through measurable data. Please refer to the Performance Measures section of this policy for those metrics.

# Applicability

This Complete Streets Policy is applicable to all public roadways either state or municipally owned located within the County of Chester.

Chester County will apply this policy as part of its Bridge Management Program since the county only owns bridges (no roadways). PennDOT similarly applies this concept as part of its 'Connects' policy required of all projects included on the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Successful implementation of this policy will also rely on Chester County municipalities to adopt, practice, and enforce the Complete Streets policy to create and/or enhance a network of multimodal transportation options and thus improve the quality of Chester County's built environment.

Opportunity for public comment including outreach to communities to be directly impacted shall be included in any public planning and/or proposed public improvements project led by the municipality to ensure that potential users of all ages and abilities may provide their input.

Examples of where this policy may be applied in the transportation improvement development process include but are not limited to the following three phases:

## PHASE ONE

### Planning

#### Comprehensive Planning

A Complete Streets Policy should be incorporated as part of any municipality's or multi-municipal region's Comprehensive Plan and applied to any transportation related recommendations provided within those planning documents.

#### Planning Tools

The policy shall be applied in the development of a Transportation Capital Improvements Plans as part of an Act 209 Traffic Impact Fees Ordinance and/or an Official Map that determine the locations of proposed transportation facilities.

#### Advisory Planning Documents

The policy shall be applied in the development of any planning study that addresses mobility where modifications to the existing transportation system are being considered and/or proposed.

#### Codes/Ordinances

The policy should lead to the creation or modification of municipal ordinances. Such ordinances may include but are not limited to:

- Zoning ordinances that would require the inclusion of active transportation facilities such as sidewalks, walkways, bus stops, bus shelters, and other related amenities;
- Subdivision/Land Development ordinances that would require the application of design standards for their implementation; or
- Any other municipal ordinance that addresses the use and maintenance of transportation infrastructure.

PHASE TWO

## Design and Implementation

### Public Roadway Improvement Projects

Any modification to an existing public right-of-way shall take into consideration the needs of existing and future user types, surrounding land-use types, and opportunities to improve connectivity with other transportation features.

### Land Development/Permit Reviews

Municipal land development review and/or permit review and approval processes provide an opportunity for the municipalities and PennDOT to ensure that the needs of all transportation system users are considered when the proposed development will impact the public roadways.

PHASE THREE

## Maintenance

### Roadway Shoulders

State and municipal roadway maintenance crews should prioritize the cleaning/sweeping of debris from roadway shoulders that may be used as part of a designated shared roadway or wherever bicycle and pedestrian use is prevalent.

### Roadway Resurfacing

When roadway pavement conditions warrant resurfacing, opportunities to provide for new on road bicycle facilities and/or pedestrian crossings shall be considered by referencing any existing or ongoing plans to include such facilities within the roadway to be resurfaced, as these facilities are often created by the placement of lane striping and/or pavement markings to be applied once the new surface is installed.

### Sidewalks

Many municipalities have sidewalk maintenance ordinances where adjacent landowners are required to clear snow and/or debris to ensure safe passage. Where sidewalk maintenance is not attributed to adjacent landowners, the municipalities shall ensure the sidewalks are maintained.

### Pavement Markings/Signage

Regardless of State or Municipal ownership status, local municipalities shall, if not already required to by a maintenance agreement with the State, provide for the maintenance of pavement markings and/or signage attributable to any on-road bicycle facilities such as bike lanes or shared roadways and pedestrian facilities such as crosswalks and mid-block crossings.



# Exceptions

Exceptions to the Chester County Complete Streets policy may be considered when:

## Ordinary Maintenance

A project involves only ordinary maintenance that does not change the roadway operations, including but not limited to, mowing, sweeping, spot pavement repair. This includes projects involving short term or emergency maintenance.

## Cost or Impact

The cost or impacts of accommodation is excessively disproportionate to the need or probable current and/or future use.

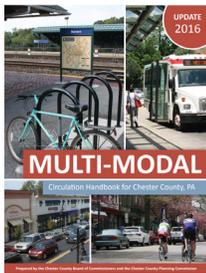
## Prohibited Uses

An affected roadway prohibits, by law, use by specified users, in which case a greater effort shall be made to accommodate those specified users elsewhere, including on roadways that cross or otherwise intersect with the affected roadway.

Review and approval of exceptions shall include a public notice identifying the list of exceptions being considered and their justification for public review and accountability.



# Design Standards



Many of the design standards applicable to multimodal transportation facilities are described, evaluated, and recommended within the Chester County Multi-Modal Circulation Handbook. ▶

## Key References

-  American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHTO)  
Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities ▶  
AASHTO's Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities ▶
-  Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) ▶
-  Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) ▶  
FHWA Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks ▶  
FHWA Safety Program's Road Diet Informational Guide ▶
-  Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Traffic Calming Measures and Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach ▶
-  National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Bikeway Design Guide ▶
-  NJDOT and PennDOT - Smart Transportation Guidebook ▶
-  PA Public Transportation Association's Building Better Bus Stops Resource Guide ▶
-  PennDOT Design Manual Part 2, Highway Design (2015) - Chapter 6: Pedestrian Facilities and the Americans with Disabilities Act ▶  
PennDOT Design Manual Part 2, Contextual Roadway Design (2021) - Chapter 14: Bicycle Facilities ▶  
PennDOT Publication No. 383 (2012), Pennsylvania's Traffic Calming Handbook ▶
-  SEPTA Bus Stop Design Guidelines ▶

# Implementing the Comprehensive Plan

The Chester County Commissioners adopted *Landscapes3*, Chester County's Comprehensive Plan in 2018. The *Landscapes3* Vision states:

"In 2045... Chester County abounds with healthy natural areas, robust farms, cherished historic sites, diverse housing, thriving businesses, quality education, accessible transportation, and vibrant communities for all."

A Complete Streets policy will advance this vision statement and the Plan's LIVE, PROSPER and CONNECT goals. The LIVE goal discusses convenient access to community facilities, services and amenities; the PROSPER goal considers a supportive infrastructure to encourage a culture of innovation and engaged communities; and the CONNECT goal, along with objectives A, B, and C, address the policy most directly and provide a framework for the design of Chester County's transportation corridors moving forward.

How We  
**CONNECT**



roadways • sidewalks • trails • public transportation • airports • freight • communications • utilities • energy • pipelines

## CONNECT goal

Advance efficient, reliable, and innovative transportation, utility, and communications infrastructure systems that responsibly serve thriving and growing communities.

## CONNECT objectives



A

**Meet travel needs and reduce congestion** through transportation demand management, roadway improvements, and expanded public transportation.

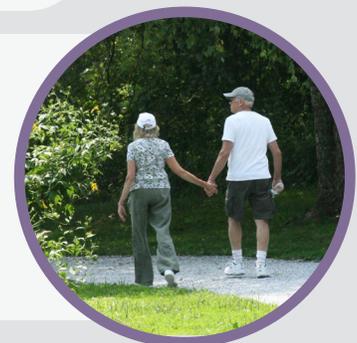


B

**Provide for the integrated development of transit-related, autonomous vehicle, automated traffic management,** and other technologically driven transportation options into the overall transportation network and the land development process.

C

**Provide universally accessible sidewalks, trails, and public transit connections** to create a continuous active transportation network within designated growth areas, and develop multi-use trails to interconnect all communities.



D



Ensure that rail, aviation, and select highway facilities provide for a **safe, efficient, and competitive transport** of freight, goods, and people through and within the county.



## Growth Areas

The appropriate level of active transportation facility development envisioned within each of the *Landscapes3* Growth Areas is shown below.



**Urban Center** landscapes include historic downtowns and established neighborhoods that serve as civic, economic, and population centers with a traditional town character. Urban Centers will accommodate substantial future growth at a medium to high intensity with a mix of uses, including commercial, institutional, and cultural destinations. Transportation infrastructure and amenities support a walkable community that is integrated into the public transportation and roadway systems.

### Active Transportation Elements

Sidewalks/ Walkways	Bike Lanes	Shared Roadway	Multi-Use Trails	Bicycle Parking	Bus Stops/ Shelters
●	●	●	●	●	●
Easy pedestrian access. Sidewalks along streets.	Bicycle lanes in roadway. Bicycle Boulevards on lesser vehicular volume streets.			Bicycle facilities, such as bike racks and lockers.	Bus shelters and pull-off areas for drop-offs and pick-ups.



**Suburban Center** landscapes are regional economic, population, and transportation centers with varying land uses. Suburban Centers will accommodate substantial future growth of medium to high intensity with a mix of uses, including commercial, residential, and industrial. As Suburban Centers grow, repurposing obsolete structures and sites and encouraging sustainable development will be critical. Transportation infrastructure and amenities will need to expand with new development to create an integrated multimodal network for a variety of users.

### Active Transportation Elements

Sidewalks/ Walkways	Bike Lanes	Shared Roadway	Multi-Use Trails	Bicycle Parking	Bus Stops/ Shelters
●	●	●	●	●	●
Buffered sidewalks and clear crosswalks along streets, within parking lots, and between buildings.			Direct trail connections to regional trail network.		Bus shelters and stops for public transportation and strong connections to nearby trains stations.



**Suburban** landscapes are predominantly residential communities with locally-oriented commercial uses and community facilities. The Suburban landscapes will accommodate growth at a medium density that retains a focus on residential neighborhoods, with enhancements in housing types and affordability. Neighborhoods are inter-connected by roads, sidewalks, and paths with convenient access to parks and community facilities.

### Active Transportation Elements

Sidewalks/ Walkways	Bike Lanes	Shared Roadway	Multi-Use Trails	Bicycle Parking	Bus Stops/ Shelters
●	●	●	●	●	●
Well designed and compatible vehicular and pedestrian access.			Extensive sidewalk and trail network.		Bus stops with pedestrian connectivity.



**Rural Center** landscapes often build from a village at a historic crossroads and expand over time to contain a mix of housing, commercial, and institutional uses that serve the surrounding rural and agricultural areas. Acting as community focal points for the surrounding area, Rural Centers will accommodate limited growth. Transportation infrastructure and amenities are provided at a village scale and character, with a focus on walkability within the core of the Rural Center.

**Active Transportation Elements**

Sidewalks/ Walkways	Bike Lanes	Shared Roadway	Multi-Use Trails	Bicycle Parking	Bus Stops/ Shelters
●		●	●	●	●
Pathways and sidewalks along streets and between buildings.			Connection to regional trail network.		

**Rural Resource Areas**

The appropriate level of active transportation facility development envisioned within each of the Landscapes3 Rural Resource Areas is shown below.



**Rural** landscapes consist of open and wooded lands, with scattered villages, farms, and residential uses. Very limited development occurs, preserving significant areas of open space and critical natural and cultural resources. Transportation infrastructure and amenities are context sensitive to the rural character and accommodate both residential and farm needs.

**Active Transportation Elements**

Sidewalks/ Walkways	Bike Lanes	Shared Roadway	Multi-Use Trails	Bicycle Parking	Bus Stops/ Shelters
		●	●		●
		Signed bike routes for touring cyclists.	Trails and pathways within developments connecting to local and regional trail networks. Regional multi-use trails / network.		



**Agricultural** landscapes consist of large concentrations of active and diverse farm operations, along with related support services. The landscape is dominated by working lands that support land-based livelihoods. Very limited development occurs at very low densities to preserve prime agricultural soils and farm operations. Transportation infrastructure and amenities are context sensitive to the agricultural character and accommodate farm and residential needs.

**Active Transportation Elements**

Sidewalks/ Walkways	Bike Lanes	Shared Roadway	Multi-Use Trails	Bicycle Parking	Bus Stops/ Shelters
		●	●		●
		Signed bike routes for touring cyclists.	Regional multi-use trails / network.		

# Active Transportation Elements

Sidewalks/Walkways



Bike Lanes



Shared Roadways



Multi-use Trails



Bike Parking



Bus Stops/Shelters



# Performance Measures

The Chester County Planning Commission will annually monitor, tabulate, and post on their website the following performance measures relevant to the Complete Streets Policy:



## **Bike Lane Distance**

Increased mileage of bicycle lanes.



## **Sidewalk Distance**

Increased mileage of sidewalks.



## **Transit Amenities**

Number of new or improved existing transit connections with shelters and/or connecting sidewalk/walkways.



## **Policy Adoption**

Number of Chester County Municipalities that adopt a Complete Streets Policy (either this policy or one of their own).



## **Travel Mode Shift**

Transportation mode shift (percentage) from single occupant vehicles to alternative modes such as walking, cycling, or use of public transit.

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