

## **Make Your Community Safer and Healthier with *Complete Streets***

In 2016, 140 pedestrians and 18 bicyclists were killed in traffic crashes in Ohio. More than 560 pedestrians and 167 bicyclists were seriously injured. To improve travel safety for pedestrians and bicyclists, many cities around Ohio and the nation are adopting ***complete streets policies*** in the design of their streets and roads.

The goals of these *complete streets policies* are:

- 1) To create a comprehensive, integrated, and connected transportation network that supports compact, sustainable development and provides livable communities.
- 2) To ensure safety, ease of use, and ease of transfer between modes for all users of the transportation system.
- 3) To provide flexibility for different types of streets, areas, and users.

In addition to improving travel safety, *complete streets* improve the health of both the community and the people living in it. By encouraging people to walk and bicycle, *complete streets* can reduce carbon dioxide emissions and ease traffic congestion. Increased walking and bicycling also lowers the risk of obesity and the host of health problems that come with it.

Finally, *complete streets* encourage people to get out of their houses, meet their neighbors, and take pride in their community – something that many neighborhoods lack in our high-tech society.

### **What is a *complete street*?**

A *complete street* is safe, comfortable, and convenient for travel via automobile, foot, bicycle, and transit.

Traditional road design has focused on moving high volumes of motor vehicle traffic as quickly and efficiently as possible. *Complete streets* aim for lower volumes of motor vehicle traffic moving at slower speeds, which leads to less traffic congestion and improved pedestrian safety. *Complete streets* also have walkways and bike lanes for pedestrians and cyclists that provide separation from traffic.

It is important to note that *complete streets* may be achieved incrementally through a series of smaller improvements or maintenance activities over time.

### **What makes a street complete?**

#### **Sidewalks**

*Complete streets* have sidewalks that are at least four (and preferably five) feet wide, with an additional space separating pedestrians from motor vehicles in the right-of-way. The area providing separation is frequently a utility strip landscaped with grass, trees, and other vegetation. On-street parking can also effectively separate pedestrians from moving vehicles. At crossings, sidewalks should have curb ramps to make the crossing accessible for wheelchairs and strollers.

## Crosswalks

Crosswalks can occur at intersections or mid-block. Mid-block crosswalks<sup>1,2</sup> should always be delineated with pavement markings. Crosswalks at intersections should be strategically marked in accordance with the [OMUTCD](#). The OMUTCD (see Parts 3 and 7) generally recommends the use of marked crosswalks at:

- designated school crossings,
- locations where there is a high volume of pedestrian traffic combined with a high volume of vehicular traffic, and
- locations where there may be confusion due to unusual geometrics or traffic operations.

Crosswalk refuges (or median islands) are another option for *complete streets*. By breaking the crossing into two segments, crosswalk refuges allow pedestrians to focus on one car movement at a time.

Other elements of crosswalk design that can be useful for improving pedestrian safety and accessibility include NO TURN ON RED signs, countdown signals that let pedestrians know how much time they have to complete the crossing, and pedestrian signage used in accordance with the [OMUTCD](#). Some of the pedestrian-related sign sections and standards provided in OMUTCD Part 2 include: 2C.50 (Pedestrian Crossing warning sign); 2B.11 (Yield Here to Pedestrian Signs); 2B.12 (In-Street and Overhead Pedestrian Crossing Signs); and 2B.51 (Pedestrian Crossing Signs).

## Bicycle Lanes

Re-striping the road to create bike lanes is an inexpensive *complete streets* solution. AASHTO recommends that bicycle lanes be four feet wide when in an open space and five feet wide when next to a curb or parking. The bicycle lane sign and the pavement markings are pictured below in the following two photos.



<sup>1</sup> Resources include: FHWA Course, Bicycle & Pedestrian Transportation, [Lesson 12: Midblock Crossings](#).

<sup>2</sup> See also: [Midblock Crosswalks](#) (National Association of City Transportation Officials).



### **Transit-friendly features**

Bus shelters and pull-outs can make public transit more convenient and accessible for a variety of users. These features are particularly important for high-boarding stops, especially on high-volume roads. Concrete pads with benches and sidewalk connections can also improve the quality of a moderate-use transit stop. Incorporating trees, lighting, benches, and art can help make a stop attractive and inviting.

### **For more information**

For more information about *complete streets* and how to incorporate them into your community, visit [www.completestreets.org](http://www.completestreets.org).

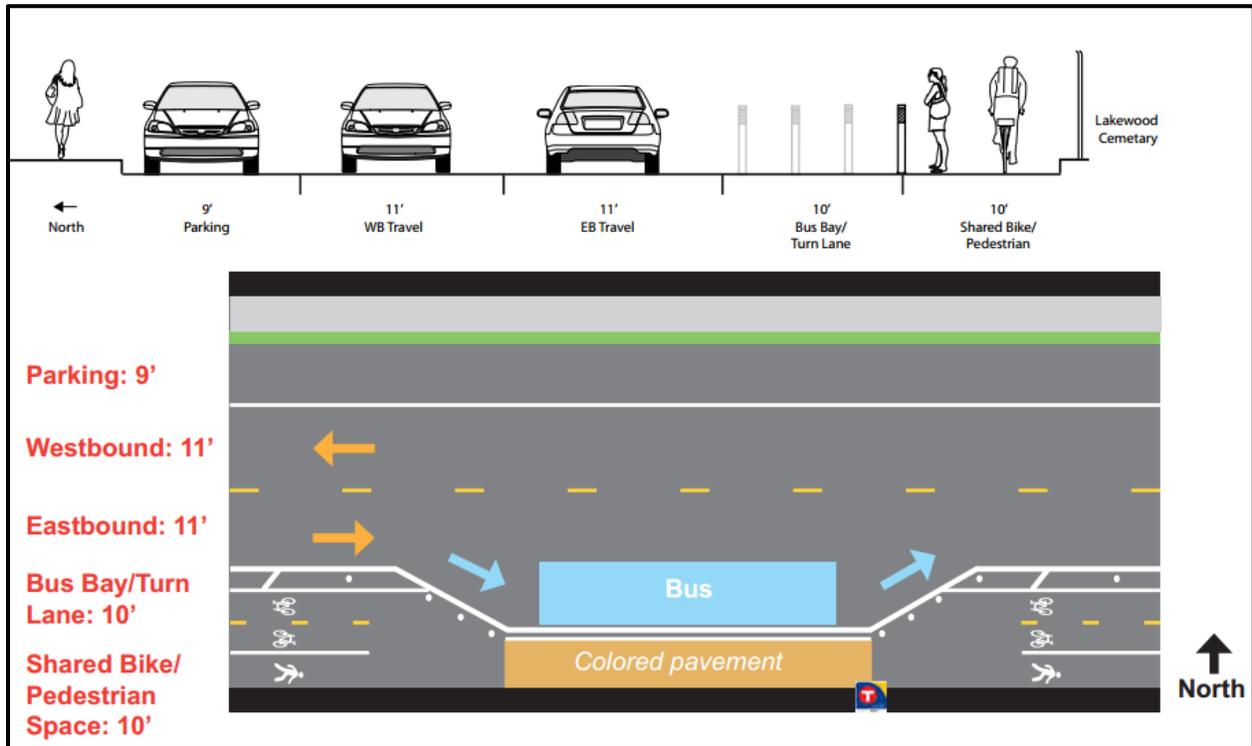
Some good examples of cities across Ohio that have existing *complete streets policies* include Dayton, Piqua, and Hilliard. Also, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) and the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission have

been cited by SmartGrowth America as having excellent policies in place. You can find information on each of their policies by visiting their websites.

If you are interested in researching some funding sources to begin planning a *complete street* project, you might start with ODOT's Planning Division's Funding Chart, which is available online at: <http://www.dot.state.oh.us/Divisions/Planning/SPR/bicycle/Funding/FundingChart.pdf>

“*Complete streets policies* are a reminder that providing for safe travel by users of all modes is the primary function of the corridor. Under *complete streets*, basic facilities for bicyclists, pedestrians, transit users, and disabled travelers are necessities, rather than optional items. Their needs must be included regardless of their presence or lack thereof at stakeholder meetings.”

– National Complete Streets Coalition



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