

Implementing Complete Streets in St. Mary's County

Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Team

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What Are Complete Streets?

Complete streets are transportation routes that accommodate vehicles and designed or retrofitted to:

- Allow people to get around safely on foot, bicycle, or public transportation;
- Provide safe, convenient travel for everyone—including children, families, older adults, and people with disabilities;
- Reduce traffic and pollution; and
- Help people stay active and healthy.

There is no singular design for a Complete Street. Each one is unique and responds to community context.

A Complete Street may include:

- Sidewalks,
- Bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders),
- Special bus lanes,
- Comfortable and accessible public transportation stops with bike parking,
- Frequent and safe crossing opportunities,
- Median islands,
- Accessible pedestrian signals,
- Curb extensions,
- Narrower travel lanes,
- Roundabouts,
- Signage and more.

Complete Streets Are Broadly Supported

By adopting a Complete Streets policy, communities direct their transportation planners and engineers to routinely design, build, retrofit, and operate the entire right-of-way to enable safe access for all users, regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation.

Local and state governments have the power to make communities healthier by implementing laws and policies that support complete streets. Nationwide, a total of 1,232 policies are now in place, in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia, including 33 state governments, 77 regional planning organizations, and 955 individual municipalities. In Maryland:

- State legislation adopted in 2000 (Maryland Trans. Code Ann. Title 2 subtitle 602)
- State Highway Administration Complete Street Policy adopted in 2012
- 9 Maryland jurisdictions (4 counties and 5 cities) have adopted and are implementing complete street policies
- St Mary's County's Lexington Park Development District Master Plan (LPDDMP) adopted in 2016 includes complete streets policies and goals for adopting implementing regulations



Complete Streets Encourage Physical Activity

Research shows that the design of streets, sidewalks, and transportation networks affects the amount of regular physical activity that children and adults get.

Complete streets promote:

- Lower obesity rates.** Studies have found that people who live in the most walkable neighborhoods are less likely to be obese than those living in the least walkable areas.¹
- Physical activity for children.** In a review of 33 studies, researchers found that sidewalks and destinations within walking distance were linked with greater physical activity among children, while traffic hazards and unsafe intersections were linked with lower levels of physical activity.²
- Physical activity for teens.** A study of teenagers in San Diego found that for both Mexican American and white teens, those who lived in walkable neighborhoods were more physically active than those in less walkable neighborhoods.³
- Active travel.** More children walk to school when there are sidewalks along main roads.⁴

Complete Streets Recommendations in the LPDDMP

§4.2.2. Complete Streets...should be applied to all public transportation projects within the LPDD such as...new road construction, reconstruction, retrofits, upgrades, resurfacing and rehabilitation. This policy also covers privately built roads intended for public use.

§4.2.2.B. Existing roads should be considered for modifications to incorporate Complete Streets concepts and traffic calming in order to expand sidewalk and bikeway networks even when there are no planned improvements to automobile travel lanes.

§4.2.3. ... provides criteria for including Complete Street into site designs and identifies types of traffic calming devices that should be considered.

§8.3.12.A.i. Work with the county health improvement coalition, the Healthy St. Mary's Partnership, to establish a multidisciplinary collaboration that will develop and implement a Complete Streets policy.

§8.3.12.A.ii. Systematically review and revise county design related to transportation and community planning affecting the Lexington Park Development District to include Complete Streets language, ensuring that Complete Streets considerations are applied to new construction, retrofitting/reconstruction, repair, resurfacing/restoration/rehabilitation, master planned neighborhoods and planned unit developments, transit, and other project types.

Complete Streets Are Needed In Rural Areas

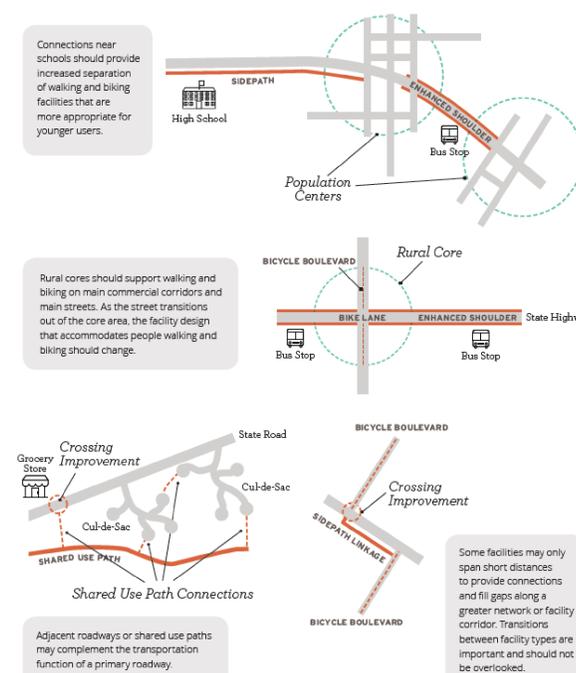
Creating safe walking, bicycling, and public transportation network for rural residents builds a more livable, accessible community for people of all ages, abilities, or income level. While rural places vary considerably in geographic scale and character, there are common issues that prevail:

- Longer Non-local Trip Distances**
*Rural trip distances have been increasing.*⁵
- Higher Crash Rates**
*While only 19 percent of the population lives in rural areas, 58 percent of all fatal crashes and 60 percent of traffic fatalities were recorded in rural regions.*⁶
- Income Disparities**
*Urban households earn 32 percent more in yearly income than rural households.⁷ Reduced income negatively impacts transportation and access to care result in poorer health outcomes for many rural residents.*⁸
- Health Disparities**
*Rural areas have higher rates of physical inactivity and chronic disease than urbanized areas.*⁹

Network Improvements are possible in Rural Areas

The lack of alternate routes and concentration of motor vehicle traffic on major roads can make connecting facilities within rural communities. challenging

Designers must consider how all roadway types and independent connections (such as those in the illustration below¹⁰) can be used to create access to important community locations and destinations.



Retrofits To Existing Streets Can Be Low Cost

Each new street doesn't require the same features to be safe for active travel.

In addition, inexpensively retrofit of can make existing roads safer and more friendly for active travel.

- Use Paint effectively:**
 - Add More Crosswalks and paint them to improve the visibility and prominence of crosswalks especially on higher volume streets.
 - Reduce lane width and add a bike lane doing slows traffic speed and provides a buffer for pedestrians
 - restore tight, old-fashioned "square" corners to road intersections, so motorists must slow down to make turns and distance for people crossing streets is reduced
- Take advantage of maintenance projects**
Plan and design mill and overlay/repaving ahead of time to include bicycle and walking needs .
- Add Pedestrian Islands**
Provide a median refuge for pedestrians crossing busy streets
- Add "curb extenders" at intersections**
Shorten the distance across a street and make pedestrians more visible to oncoming drivers.
- Convert Four-lane "Collector" Streets to Three-lane "Multi-modal" Streets.**
A 3-lane street with periodic turning lanes to take turning cars out of the flow of traffic is safer than a 4-lane road where turning and lane change movements are unpredictable . Reducing the number of lanes provides opportunity to add bicycle lanes or shoulder parking spaces. It is safer for a pedestrian to cross a three lane street with median or turn lane .
- Install Roundabouts** Effective and inexpensive alternative to traffic signals or stop signs.

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