Complete Streets
for North Country Communities

Advocacy Toolkit

Produced by
North Country Healthy Heart Network, Inc.
www.heartnetwork.org
The following toolkit was designed to assist Complete Streets advocates in planning and implementing policy and built environment changes at both the community and regional level. After reading this guide, you should have a solid understanding of the policy options available to your community. Begin your advocacy efforts today by completing the tools and exercises that follow. Forming a diverse working group or coalition in your community to do this work is the best approach, but individuals should not be dissuaded from starting this process on their own - the tools will help you identify other stakeholders that you can recruit to advocate for Complete Streets.

**Street & Road Assessment Tools (Appendix 2)** - Begin by reviewing the Assessment Guidelines, which provide helpful directions and tips for completing the assessments. Each tool is designed to gather baseline information on existing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in your community. The Complete Streets Assessment is best used on streets located in residential and business districts within the hamlet, while the Road Assessment is best used on roadways outside the hamlet center. Use the results to identify problem areas where Complete Streets infrastructure is most needed.

**Local Policy Assessment Tool (Appendix 3)** - This checklist corresponds directly to the policy options highlighted in this guide. It is designed to facilitate a comprehensive review of the existing plans, policies, and laws currently in place in your community. Completing the tool will require research and outreach to local government officials and other potential stakeholders, which helps set the stage for your advocacy efforts. Use the results to brainstorm policy change options that would best meet the needs of your community (consider the results of the assessments in Appendix 2).

**Policy & Project Evaluation Tool (Appendix 4)** - Once your group has identified policy change options for your community, this tool will help you evaluate the challenges and opportunities for each option and determine your odds of success. Use the results to identify one or more policy goals that your group will advocate for.

**Strategic Planning Exercise (Appendix 5)** - Complete the strategic planning exercise for each policy change goal your group identifies. The exercise is designed to help you identify your key audiences, develop core messages, assess resources and identify others who should be involved. It also prompts your group to identify how you will begin your advocacy campaign (first steps) and how you will evaluate progress.

**Action Plan Template (Appendix 6)** - Starting with the first steps identified in your strategic planning exercise, your group should begin to develop a comprehensive action plan for achieving your policy goal. Use the action plan template to identify specific actions, a responsible party for each, and a rough timeline for accomplishing each one. This will help your group focus on incremental steps rather than getting overwhelmed by the big picture. Action plans should be reviewed, revised and updated on a regular basis to ensure your group stays focused on the ultimate goal of winning a policy change.
APPENDIX 1
Complete Streets Assessment Guidelines

*A supplement to the Road & Sidewalk Assessment Tools*

It is the vision of any Complete Streets campaign that streets, roadways, sidewalks and other transportation facilities are safe and accessible for all users at all times. It is important to conduct street, sidewalk and rural road assessments to establish an inventory of existing infrastructure conditions for biking, walking and accessibility in each community. Conducting these assessments in each target community will allow you to identify and prioritize those areas that need improvement.

Below are some guidelines and explanations of what you should be looking for as you complete these Assessments in your community.

**Sidewalks** – to the right is a picture of an ideal sidewalk (Figure 1) in a highly trafficked area (perhaps the main street of your community). The Frontage zone should be at least 2ft wide to leave space for opening doors. The Sidewalk itself should be a minimum of 4ft wide. The Furniture Zone (sometimes called the buffer zone) should be 4ft wide. The Furniture Zone is not required but it provides a barrier between pedestrians and motorists as well as a location for telephone poles, garbage cans etc... (NYSDOT)

Many streets in your community are probably less traveled and will not necessarily have a Furniture Zone or a frontage zone which is OK. However, it is important to still be aware of obstacles in the sidewalk which would make it difficult for someone with a disability to get around, such as telephone poles (i.e. photo 1). Sidewalks should have at least 4ft of navigable space clear of obstacles (NYSDOT). Also note the maintenance of the sidewalk in photo 1. Sidewalks with cracks and holes or covered in dirt will be harder to navigate.

You should also keep an eye out for the slope of the sidewalk (Figure 2). Sidewalks which have a significant slope can be more difficult for someone with a disability to navigate. Additionally they will be more dangerous in the winter.

**Driveways, Crosswalks and Ramps** – Where a sidewalk crosses the street or a driveway there should be a flat, level surface available as well as a ramp if necessary. For driveways there are generally two options, the sidewalk breaks for the driveway or the sidewalk continues over the driveway. When sidewalks break for driveways, a ramp should be used if necessary and the crossing should be flat and level. If the sidewalk continues over the driveway it is important that it is not sloped (see figure 2) where it crosses the driveway.

Photo 2 exhibits many of the desirable elements of a crosswalk. Crosswalks should have curb ramps on both
ends. Crosswalks should also be well marked with **signage** on the side of the road and if necessary in the middle of the road. If the road is very wide an island might also be appropriate. Also, notice how the curb ramp on the right is extended from the sidewalk and has a concrete post at the end of it. This protects the pedestrian and allows them to see and be seen farther down the road. The **painted markings** on a crosswalk should also be clear and distinct and the crosswalk surface should be **smooth and level**. If it is a busy intersection the crosswalk may also have a **Crossing Signal**.

Photo 3 shows an **acceptable ramp**. It has a **gentle slope** with **flared sides** and **Detectable warnings** (bumps) for the vision impaired. **CAUTION:** This ramp has a problem. Notice how the curb at the end of this ramp is slightly higher than the ramp. **Ramps should be flush with the road.** Also, check for wear on detectable warnings, they are often worn flat and need replacing.

Roads, Streets and Bike Facilities – Most of the area in your community is most likely taken up by rural roads where there is no sidewalk. Where roads do not have sidewalks a usable shoulder should be provided not only for safe motor vehicle travel but safe bicycle and pedestrian travel as well. **Rural roads** should have, at a **minimum**, a clearly marked **shoulder which is 2-3 feet in width** whenever feasible (NYSDOT). This provides space for cars to pull off the road as well as space for pedestrians and bicyclists to use the road. There should also be **no debris** on the shoulder.

Rural roads which are heavily traveled by bicyclists and busy streets in town should have additional accommodations so that bicyclists may safely use the roadway. This usually means an officially designated bike lane or a shared use lane. Figure 3 Below shows an example of a **shared use lane**. The NYSDOT recommends a shared use lane be a minimum of **12ft (3.6m) wide not including any on street parking**. Figure 4 shows a sample **bike lane**. The NYSDOT recommends a bike lane be at least **5ft (1.5m) wide not including any on street parking**.

**Signage** - Lastly, areas with heavy traffic or many bicyclists should have plenty of **signage**. The NYSDOT requires **striping** for an official bike lane and recommends **some sort of painted marking in the lane** as seen in photo 4. ANY area which bicyclists or pedestrians may use whether it’s a rural road or a busy main street can benefit from increased signage, some possible signage is shown in Figure 5.
## Complete Streets Assessment

**Street Name:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment:</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Date</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### ROAD

1. **How would you characterize this segment?**
   - [ ] Commercial
   - [ ] Residential
   - [ ] Rural

2. **Road Surface Material**
   - [ ] Paved
   - [ ] Gravel
   - [ ] Other_________

3. **Condition of road**
   - [ ] Good: smooth, few potholes or cracks.
   - [ ] Fair: Minor heaves, bumps, potholes or cracks
   - [ ] Poor: uneven, major heaves, potholes or cracks

4. **Cleanliness of Road**
   - [ ] Good: no dirt, garbage or debris in road
   - [ ] Fair: a little dirt, garbage or debris in road
   - [ ] Poor: substantial dirt, garbage or debris in road

5. **Is there a usable shoulder?**
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No (skip Q6 and Q7)
   - [ ] <3’
   - [ ] 3’-6’
   - [ ] >6’
   - [ ] on street parking only
   - [ ] unusable slant/culvert
   - [ ] paved/unpaved “shoulder” <2’

6. **What is the condition of the shoulder?**
   - [ ] Good: smooth, few potholes or cracks.
   - [ ] Fair: Minor heaves, bumps, potholes or cracks.
   - [ ] Poor: uneven, major heaves, potholes or cracks.

7. **Is the shoulder marked as a bike lane?**
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No
   - Do markings need to be repainted?____

8. **What is the volume of traffic in this area?**
   - [ ] High traffic
   - [ ] Moderate traffic
   - [ ] Low traffic

9. **Primary Traffic Type**
   - [ ] Commercial
   - [ ] Commuter
   - [ ] Residential

10. **Do Motorists obey the posted speed limit?**
    - [ ] Yes
    - [ ] No

### SIDEWALK

11. **Sidewalk Material**
    - [ ] Concrete
    - [ ] Brick
    - [ ] Asphalt
    - [ ] Other_________

12. **Condition of sidewalk**
    - [ ] Good: smooth even surface with no cracks or heaves
    - [ ] Fair: Smooth, fairly even surface with minor defects
    - [ ] Poor: Uneven surface with significant defects

13. **Width of Sidewalk**
    - [ ] <3’
    - [ ] 3’-6’
    - [ ] >6’

14. **Do any obstructions block the sidewalk?**
    - [ ] Yes
    - [ ] No
    - Please specify____________________

15. **Is there a buffer between the sidewalk and road?**
    - [ ] Yes
    - [ ] No
    - Width of buffer________

### CROSSWALKS

16. **Where the sidewalk breaks for a driveway...**
    - [ ] There is a level surface to walk across
    - [ ] There is a curb ramp
    - [ ] There is a properly marked crosswalk
    - Where are markings appropriate but missing?

17. **Are crosswalks located at main destination points?**
    - [ ] Yes
    - [ ] No
    - Some
    - Where are they missing?
18. Are crosswalks located across main intersections?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Some

   Where are they missing?
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________

   (If there are no crosswalks skip the rest of this section)

19. Condition of Crosswalk(s)
   - Good: smooth even surface with no cracks or heaves
   - Fair: Smooth, fairly even surface with minor defects
   - Poor: Uneven surface with significant defects

20. Are there any signs identifying crosswalks?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Some

21. Are there traffic signals present at crosswalks?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Some

22. Do all crosswalks have curb ramps?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Some

23. Are curb ramps at least 36" wide at the base?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Some

24. Are curb ramps flush with the road?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Some

Crosswalk Comments
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________

ACCESSIBLE PARKING

25. Is there designated on street parking in this segment?
   - Yes (continue)
   - No (skip this section)

26. Are designated accessible parking spaces provided?
   - Yes
   - No (skip this section)

27. Are there any obstacles on sidewalk blocking access to accessible parking spaces?
   - No
   - Yes
     - Sign
     - Pole
     - Other__________________________

28. How far are the nearest curb cuts from designated accessible parking spaces?
   - <10'
   - 10'-25'
   - >25'

Parking Accessibility Comments
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________

OTHER FACTORS

29. Is there any Pedestrian/Bike signage in this segment (other than crosswalk or accessible parking signage)?
   - Pedestrian
     - Yes
     - No
     - Some
   - Bike
     - Yes
     - No
     - Some

   How many___
   How Many___

   What do signs say/show?____________________________
   Where may signage be missing?_____________________

30. Is bike parking available on the street/sidewalk or in parking lots?
   - Yes
   - No
   - # of spots available____

31. Overall how would you rate the safety of this area for biking/walking?
   - bike
     - Good: safe place
     - Fair: OK but needs improvements
     - Poor: unsafe place
   - walk
     - Good
     - Fair
     - Poor

32. How popular is this area for biking/walking?
   - bike
     - Good: people would/do use regularly
     - Fair: people might use regularly
     - Poor: People probably wouldn’t use
   - walk
     - Good
     - Fair
     - Poor

33. Did you see anyone walking or biking?
   - Yes
   - No
   # walking____
   # biking____

34. List destinations in this segment:
   - Recreational, Commercial, Community or Residential
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________

35. Other Comments
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________
### Road Assessment

**Street Name:**

**Segment:**

**To:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Mode of Transportation</th>
<th>Town</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. **How would you characterize this segment?**
   - Commercial
   - Residential
   - Rural

2. **Road Surface Material**
   - Paved
   - Gravel
   - Other

3. **Road Condition**
   - Good: smooth, few potholes or cracks.
   - Fair: Minor heaves, bumps, potholes or cracks
   - Poor: uneven, major heaves, potholes or cracks

4. **Cleanliness of Road**
   - Good: no dirt, garbage or debris in road
   - Fair: a little dirt, garbage or debris in road
   - Poor: substantial dirt, garbage or debris in road

5. **Is there a shoulder?**
   - Yes
   - No (skip Q6 and Q7)
   - <4’
   - Guard rails or other barrier
   - 4’-6’
   - ditch
   - >6’
   - paved/ unpaved “shoulder” <2’

6. **What is the condition of the shoulder?**
   - Good: smooth, few potholes or cracks.
   - Fair: Minor heaves, bumps, potholes or cracks.
   - Poor: uneven, major heaves, potholes or cracks.

7. **Is the shoulder marked as a bike lane?**
   - No
   - Yes
   - Do markings need to be repainted?

8. **Is there any Pedestrian/Bike signage on the road?**
   - Pedestrian
   - Yes
   - No
   - How many
   - Bike
   - Yes
   - No
   - How Many
   - What do signs say?
   - Where may signage be missing?

9. **Do Motorists obey the posted speed limit?**
   - Yes
   - No

10. **What is the volume of traffic in this area?**
    - High traffic
    - Moderate traffic
    - Low traffic

11. **Primary Traffic Type**
    - Commercial
    - Commuter
    - Residential

12. **Overall how would you rate the safety of this area for biking/walking?**
    - **Bike**
    - Good: safe place
    - Fair: OK but needs improvements
    - Poor: unsafe place
    - **Walk**
    - Good: people would/do use regularly
    - Fair: people might use regularly
    - Poor: People probably wouldn’t use

13. **How popular is this area for biking/walking?**
    - **Bike**
    - Good: people would/do use regularly
    - Fair: people might use regularly
    - Poor: People probably wouldn’t use
    - **Walk**
    - Good: people would/do use regularly
    - Fair: people might use regularly
    - Poor: People probably wouldn’t use

14. **Did you see anyone walking or biking?**
    - Yes
    - No
    - # walking
    - # biking

15. **List destinations in this area:**
    - Recreational, Commercial, Community, or Residential
    - __________________________________________________________________________________________
    - __________________________________________________________________________________________
    - __________________________________________________________________________________________
    - __________________________________________________________________________________________
    - __________________________________________________________________________________________
    - __________________________________________________________________________________________
    - __________________________________________________________________________________________

**Additional Road Comments**

______________________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX 2
1. WHO can we influence?
Which governments, departments and agencies operate in the community?
- County Government
- Town Board
- Village Board
- Planning Board
- Other Advisory Board: ____________________________
- County Highway Dept.
- Town Highway Dept.
- Dept. of Public Works
- Parks & Rec. Dept.
- Regional DOT Rep.

2. What PLANS can we influence?
   ➢ Comprehensive or Master Plan
     Does this community have a comprehensive plan? Yes ___ No ___
     If yes, when was it adopted? _________________
     Any current plans for drafting or updating the plan? Yes ___ No ___
   
   ➢ Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP)
     Does this community have an LWRP? Yes ___ No ___
     If no, is the community eligible to draft a LWRP? Yes ___ No ___
     If yes, when was it adopted? _________________
     Does the plan support Complete Streets? Yes ___ No ___
     If yes, explain how:

   ➢ Other Community Plans
     Does this community have any of the following plans?
     Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan Yes ___ No ___
     Safe Routes to School Plan Yes ___ No ___
     Snow Removal Plan for sidewalks Yes ___ No ___

   ➢ Scenic By-Way Plans
     Is there a Scenic By-Way in this community? Yes ___ No ___
     If yes, which one:
     Adirondack Trail (Route 3) 
     High Peaks (Route 73 & 9N)
     Lakes to Locks (Route 22 & 9N)
     Olympic Trail (Route 3 & 86)
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3. Is there an opportunity to influence LEGISLATION?

➢ Resolution of Support
  Has any government or department issued a Resolution of Support for Complete Streets in the community? Yes ____ No ____
  If yes, which government or department? ________________________________

➢ Local Law or Ordinance
  Does this community have a Complete Streets law or ordinance? Yes ____ No ____
  If yes, at what level?
  County __________
  Town __________
  Village __________

➢ Land Use Codes and Zoning Regulations
  Does this community have a Local Land Use Code? Yes ____ No ____
  If yes, when was it adopted or updated? ______________
  If yes, does the Code promote mixed use development? Yes ____ No ____
  If yes, does the Code require sidewalks to be in compliance with ADA requirements? Yes ____ No ____
  Any current plans for drafting or updating Local Codes? Yes ____ No ____

  Does the community have Subdivision Regulations? Yes ____ No ____
  If yes, do they support Complete Streets? Yes ____ No ____
  If yes, do they require sidewalks to be built for all developments (housing, school, commercial)? Yes ____ No ____
  If yes, do they require bike lanes to be built for all developments (housing, school, commercial)? Yes ____ No ____

  Does the community have Design Guidelines for landscaping? Yes ____ No ____
  Does the community have Design Guidelines for streetscapes? Yes ____ No ____
  If yes, do the design guidelines support Complete Streets? Yes ____ No ____

  Does the community have Bicycle Parking Requirements in the Land Use Code? Yes ____ No ____
Complete Streets Policy Assessment Tool

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4. Is there an opportunity to change PRACTICES or PROCEDURES that could support movement towards Complete Streets in the community?

➢ **Complete Streets Policy/Bike & Pedestrian Policy**
  Does the community have a Complete Streets or Bike & Pedestrian Policy or Rural Roads Policy? Yes ____ No ____
  If yes, at what level? (County, Town, Village): ____________

➢ **Local Budget Process**
  Does the local government address the community’s operating budget to make walking & biking a priority? Yes ____ No ____
  Does the local transportation and/or highway budget set aside money for Complete Streets-related improvements? Yes ____ No ____
  If yes, is it adequately funded? Yes ____ No ____
  If no, would a policy change support such funding? Yes ____ No ____

➢ **Site Plan Review**
  Does the community have a Planning Board? Yes ____ No ____
  If yes, is the board responsible for site plan review? Yes ____ No ____
  If yes, does the board routinely make recommendations or require bike & pedestrian accommodations for new development? Yes ____ No ____

➢ **Procedural Manuals for Transportation Departments**
  Does the community have a local Highway Department or Department of Public Works? Yes ____ No ____
  If yes, does the department have a design manual that includes bike & pedestrian designs for local roads? Yes ____ No ____
  If yes, does the department have a maintenance schedule it follows for local roads? Yes ____ No ____
  If yes, does the department have a capital improvement project schedule for local roads? Yes ____ No ____
  Does the maintenance and/or project schedule include bike and pedestrian infrastructure? Yes ____ No ____

➢ **Advisory Boards & Staff**
  Does the community have a Bike & Pedestrian Advisory Board (or a board with a similar focus)? Yes ____ No ____
  If no, does the community have an existing board that could take on this role? Yes ____ No ____
  Does the community have a Complete Streets Coordinator? Yes ____ No ____
  If no, is there an existing staff person that could take on this role? Yes ____ No ____
APPENDIX 3
# Project Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Criteria</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Readiness</strong></td>
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<td>How ready is this community to initiate this? (Politically, design, etc.)</td>
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<td>1=extremely ready 5=not ready at all</td>
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<td><strong>Implementation</strong></td>
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<td>How easy will this be to implement?</td>
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<td>1=extremely easy 5=extremely difficult</td>
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<td><strong>Impact</strong></td>
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<td>Will it have the impact on the population that you desire? (How many people will be affected?)</td>
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<td>1=many impacted 5=few impacted</td>
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<td><strong>Cost</strong></td>
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<td>How much will it cost to implement and how readily available is the financing?</td>
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<td>1=low cost/funding available 5=high cost/funding unavailable</td>
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<td><strong>Measuring Success</strong></td>
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<td>How easy will it be to measure the success of this project?</td>
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<td>1=easy 5=difficult</td>
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<td><strong>Total Score</strong></td>
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<td>Add up the scores for each project idea</td>
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<td>Low score=good odds of success 5=bad odds of success</td>
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(1=best meets criteria; 5=does not meet criteria)
APPENDIX 4
Complete Streets – Strategic Planning Exercise

GOAL:  What specific policy or built environment change do we want?

AUDIENCES:  Who has the power to make the change?

MESSAGE:  What message will convince those with power to act for change?

MESSENGERS:  Who must be mobilized to deliver the message?

DELIVERY:  How can we get those with power to hear the message?

RESOURCES:  What do we already have?

NEEDS:  What additional resources do we need to develop?

FIRST STEPS:  How do we begin? (*answer forms basis for Action Plan*)

EVALUATION:  How do we measure progress?
APPENDIX 5
Complete Streets – Policy & Project Action Plan

Community:

Policy or Project Goal (summary):

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Person(s) Responsible</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>√ when complete</th>
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