There is a new transportation movement happening across the country. Before, roads were built for the use of cars. Now, people are eager for better access to more forms of transportation included in their communities, including: mass transit, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and much more. This movement creates safer streets, healthier communities, improved home values, transportation savings and local economic growth for everyone.

The New York Bicycle Coalition is working to bring complete streets to communities across New York State. This fact sheet is meant as an introduction to creating a complete streets campaign in your local area.

**What are Complete Streets?**
Complete streets provide transportation options for everyone by creating safer places to walk and ride bicycles. They also provide better access to public transportation, improve transit efficiency, and calm traffic. Complete streets create complete communities.

**What do Complete Streets policies do?**
Complete streets policies plan for multiple forms of transportation, not just cars. Implementing these polices in the planning process of street design often adds a small amount to the cost of the street project, but provides many more benefits in the long run.

**What does a Complete Street look like?**
Complete streets are adapted for individual communities. These streets can include sidewalks, share the road side, separate bike lanes for cyclists, medians in busy intersections, and integrated sidewalk ramps for people who use wheelchairs. Complete streets adjust to the needs of the community. Rural roads look very different from urban avenues. They reduce pedestrian and bicycle accidents by making designated areas for non-car users. They can also increase mass transit efficiency by separating buses from automobile traffic, and calm street traffic by reducing the number of automobiles on the road.

Many people may also think complete streets are expensive. It is true that adding complete street components to a project does raise the cost of road construction slightly. However, the benefits long outweigh the extra expenses. Also, implementing the complete street philosophy in the design phase is less expensive than retrofitting streets after construction is complete.
What are some of the benefits of Complete Streets?

**Complete Streets improve safety.** Pedestrians are separated from cars and given safe places to wait for public transportation. Complete streets also can add sidewalks and bike lanes to remove pedestrians and cyclists from being to close to cars. One study found that designing for pedestrian travel by installing raised medians and redesigning intersections and sidewalks reduced pedestrian risk by 28%.

**Complete Streets encourage walking & bicycling for health.** By creating safer places for people to walk and ride their bicycles, it encourages people to go out and get exercise. Statistically, community physical activity has improved as these complete street policies are included in new construction or built into already existing neighborhoods. One study found that 43 percent of people with safe places to walk within 10 minutes of home met recommended activity levels, while just 27% of those without safe places to walk were active enough.

**Complete Streets can lower transportation costs for families.** Many families spend 18% of their budget on transportation. By creating complete streets, communities have access to more affordable options for transportation, such as walking, taking mass transit, or riding bicycles.

**Complete Streets foster strong communities.** Many communities have shown economic growth from implementing complete street policies into their towns. By having complete streets, downtown and retail areas are more accessible for everyone, and people are encouraged to walk and shop without having to worry about traffic. Homeowners also see their property values improve as complete streets are added to their communities.

**Complete Streets create independence for everyone in the community.** These streets create better access for people who have disabilities and elderly populations who may no longer feel comfortable owning and operating an automobile. With better options for public transportation and safer more accessible streets, everyone is able to be more independent during longer stages of their lives.

**Complete Streets can ease traffic woes.** Studies have shown that most trips people take are close to home and not related to work commuting. Instead, people are going to the gym, the grocery store, taking children to school and a variety of other errands. By creating transportation alternatives that are safer and efficient for individuals to use, people drive less, and create less automobile traffic.