

**BMTS Article Digest
February - March 2021**

BMTS Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee Members:

The following is a compilation of articles that may be of interest to BMTS Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee members. This and past digests can also be accessed in the Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee page of www.bmtsonline.com.

Scott

Pedestrian & Bicycle Information Center (PBIC) Messenger e-Newsletter

Go to <http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/newsroom/newsletters.cfm>.

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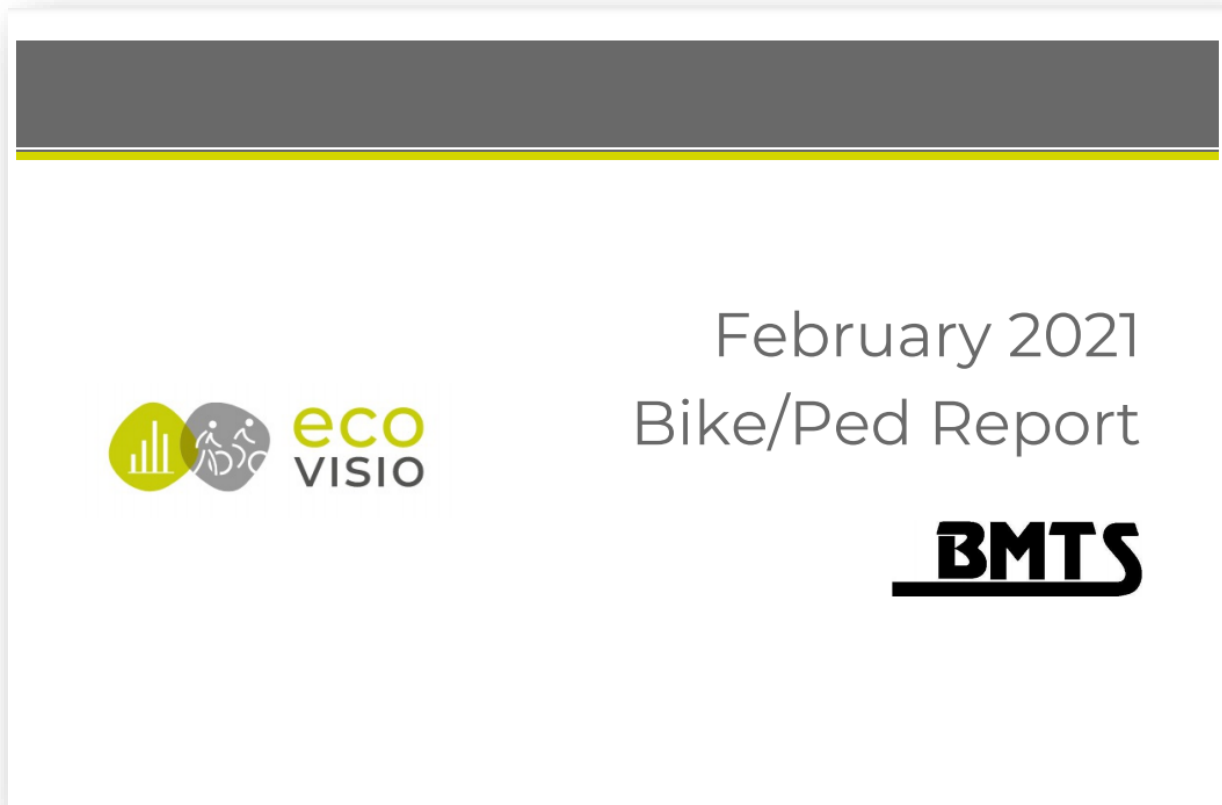


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See the **Two Rivers Greenway Pedestrian & Bicycle Counting February 2021 Report** at <http://bmtsonline.com/node/46>.



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Sunday, 7 February 2021

SOCIETY



Spanning Time

Gerald R. Smith Guest columnist

The history of the bus in Broome County

As many of you realize, I grew up in what could be called “the boondocks.” What was once a largely farming community has transformed into a suburban area as more and more family farms went away.

Although it was only a few miles outside of Binghamton, if you did not have a car, you had to rely on a bus to get you into the “big city.” In the mid-1960’s, my brother and I were allowed to take a BC Transit bus from the Town of Chenango to go and shop in Binghamton.

At that time, there were only two times the bus ran into our area — once in the early morning about 7:30, and once in the afternoon leaving Binghamton about 2:30. If you missed either one, you were stuck.

Being careful, we always caught the bus on time. I always wondered why there weren't any more times when we could catch a bus. I did not realize that it was at that time that the county had started to try and expand the bus routes and runs to bring more ridership and more revenue into a complicated operation.

What is today BC Transit dates back to the days of the trolleys in the Binghamton area. The Binghamton Railway Co. evolved with the merger with several smaller firms to become the Triple Cities Traction Co. The number of trolley routes transected the Triple Cities area, with loyal riders dropping their tokens into the coin box to take the trolley to and from work or home.

By the 1930's, however, trolleys were phased out as the company moved to the use of buses to transport its passengers. By the end of that decade, the move was complete, and the area was just getting used to the idea of bus travel as the region moved toward the transformation that occurred during the Second World War.

You would have thought that the need for workers to get to work via buses would have brought more revenue into the company's coffers. But you would be wrong.

The lack of making a profit forced the sale of the company in January 1942. At an auction held in federal court in New York City, a syndicate made up of George Schreiber of Binghamton, Edward Tirrell of Philadelphia and their respective spouses outbid competitors with a bid of \$276,000. Schreiber had been manager of operations at the Triple Cities Traction Co., and Tirrell held a similar position for the Municipal Traction Co. of Philadelphia.

The two had been friends for 25 years, and saw a real opportunity in taking over the company.

With the war effort in full steam, the need for reliable transportation was necessary. By December of that year, the owners informed the New York State Public Service Commission that changes in routes had to be made to handle the increased traffic and allow for some buses to be in reserve. The buses were full to capacity through the end of the war in 1945.

In 1951, Edward Tirrell died, and George Schreiber became the sole stockholder of the Triple Cities Traction Co. While the firm had success during the war, ridership began to decline throughout the late 1940's and into the 1950s. That loss prevented the firm from making profits, and companies cannot succeed with those profits.

In 1957, Schreiber sold the company for a reported \$290,000 — only a few thousand more than he paid for it. The new owners again tried running the company, but only 10 years later, they approached the Broome County

government. In 1967, the county was amenable to the purchase considering that a transportation bond issue allowed federal dollars to replace the existing 35 buses with 25 new medium-sized buses.

In 25 years, the trolley/bus company went through four owners — each with a vision of offering and improving on public transportation for Broome County. Today, the county still struggles with the operation of a service that is necessary, yet difficult to realize profits.

No wonder, in that expansion of routes in the 1960's, my brother and I had to catch the one bus in and the one bus out. At least we weren't late.

Gerald Smith is a former Broome County historian. Email him at historysmiths@stny.rr.com.



People and Blue Motor Coach Line buses on Henry Street in Binghamton, about 1950.

PHOTOS BY
BROOME COUNTY
HISTORICAL



Edwin Crawford, chairman of supervisors, aboard a BC Transit bus in June 1968.

Florida crossing guard hailed a hero after saving 7-year-old from getting struck by car

'Ms. Kathleen Quinn is nothing less than a hero'

By [Daniella Genovese](#) | [Fox News](#)

A crossing guard in [Florida](#) has been [hailed a hero](#) after she saved a 7-year-old girl from getting hit by a reckless driver.

Crossing guard supervisor Kathleen Quinn was patrolling an intersection at Culbreath Road and Nature's Way Boulevard in Valrico on Wednesday when a car "swept through" the area, ignoring her commands to stop, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office said.

Without hesitation, Quinn grabbed the 7-year-old who had been walking her bike across the street.

"I saw her coming and I put my arm out to make sure Madeline didn't get hit by the car," Quinn told the sheriff's office.

Ultimately, she prevented what could have been a truly tragic accident, according to officials.

"She stepped into harm's way to protect a child from a reckless driver," Sheriff Chad Chronister said in a statement. "I am overwhelmed with pride to say she is part of our team of dedicated crossing guards who treat every child on their route as their own and ensure they get to and from school safely."

The young child's mother, Mia Carlson, had witnessed the near-tragedy while waiting for her daughter on the other side of the road and reported "Quinn's heroic actions" to the sheriff's office.

"As a mother, I was really so thankful for her," Carlson said. "You can't rewind something like that."

The sheriff's office said Quinn's act of heroism exemplifies the valuable role crossing guards play in helping children get to and from school safely.

"Ms. Kathleen Quinn is nothing less than a hero," Chronister said.

Car Lanes to Become Bike Lanes on 2 Major New York City Bridges



By Emma G. Fitzsimmons and Winnie Hu

Jan. 28, 2021

Mayor Bill de Blasio wants to add bike lanes on the Brooklyn and the Queensboro Bridges to encourage cycling as the city recovers from the pandemic.



The city will ban cars from the inner lane of the Manhattan-bound side of the Brooklyn Bridge to build the bicycle lane and restrict the existing promenade area to pedestrians only. Credit...Julie Jacobson/Associated Press

New York City's slow transformation away from a vehicle-oriented metropolis will soon get a visible and significant boost: the city plans to close a lane on both the Brooklyn and Queensboro Bridges and reserve them for bicyclists.

The new cycling plan for the two East River crossings — called “Bridges for the People” — was unveiled as part of Mayor Bill de Blasio's final State of the City speech on Thursday.

The bike lanes are the latest victory for cyclists and transportation advocates who have increasingly pushed Mr. de Blasio, a Democrat in his second term, to chip away at the entrenched car culture that has dominated the city's more than 6,000 miles of streets.

During the mayor's tenure, city transportation officials have built more than 120 miles of protected bike lanes as part of the city's efforts to create 1,375 miles of bike lanes, creating the largest urban network in the nation.

They have also expanded the city's popular bike share program, Citi Bike, and are working on a [\\$58.4 million bike safety plan](#) following a spike in cycling fatalities on city streets in 2019. The plan includes installing more protected bike lanes and redesigning intersections to make turns safer for cyclists.

Biking in New York and in many cities across the world has soared during the pandemic as people have sought alternatives to public transit.

The spike has led transportation and street safety advocates to pressure the mayor to go further at a time when the need for more space has helped spur the biggest change in the streets in decades. The city's open streets program has become one of the most notable successes of the pandemic, turning once car-clogged streets over for walking, cycling and outdoor dining.

Now, the city will finally address longstanding concerns about the Brooklyn Bridge, which has long been known as a particularly dangerous route for cyclists, and the Queensboro Bridge.

Under the plan, the city will ban cars from the inner lane of the Manhattan-bound side of the Brooklyn Bridge to build a two-way bike lane. The existing promenade area at the center of the bridge, which is elevated above the car lanes, will be used only by pedestrians. Cyclists will no longer be able to ride on the promenade, where there is currently a bike lane.



Image

An illustration from the mayor's office shows the proposed protected bike lane on the Brooklyn Bridge. Credit...Office of the Mayor

In announcing the plan, the de Blasio administration said that it was time to bring both bridges “into the 21st century and embrace the vision of a future without cars with a radical new plan.”

The new bike lanes are the result of decades of lobbying by cyclists and transportation advocates. “Converting car lanes into bike lanes on two of our most important bridges is a giant leap forward for New York City,” said Danny Harris, executive director of Transportation Alternatives, an advocacy group.

“We look forward to working with the de Blasio administration on this vital new project and other efforts to improve infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians on bridges and streets across the five boroughs,” Mr. Harris added.

But State Assemblyman David I. Weprin, a Democrat from Queens who is running for city comptroller, said he was concerned that taking a lane away from cars on the two bridges would only make congestion worse once the city recovered from the pandemic and more people returned to work.

“There are still plenty of people who drive into Manhattan as well as small businesses who rely on those bridges,” Mr. Weprin said. “It certainly will be an issue once the city comes back.”

The plan for the new bike lanes comes amid an extraordinary surge in biking — the city had nearly 1.6 million bike riders before the pandemic, and cycling has exploded with trips at the city’s four East River bridges into Manhattan jumping by 55 percent in November compared with the same month in 2019.

The annual speech by the mayor has often become an opportunity to propose bold ideas like a sleek streetcar between Brooklyn and Queens, which Mr. de Blasio announced in 2016 with great fanfare but has not been built.

City officials said they want to build the two-way protected bike lane on the Brooklyn Bridge, which opened in 1883 and runs between Lower Manhattan and Brooklyn, by the end of this year.

The Queensboro Bridge, also known as the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge, runs between Midtown Manhattan and Queens and opened in 1909.

The plan calls for converting the northern outer roadway of the Queensboro Bridge into a two-way bike lane. The southern outer roadway, which is currently used by Queens-bound cars, will be reconfigured as a pedestrian walkway. Construction should begin this year, but city officials said they did not know when it would be finished because of other construction already taking place on the bridge.

Cycling has expanded significantly across the Queensboro Bridge in particular during the pandemic, leading to more conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians, who currently share a two-way lane on the northern outer roadway.

City Councilmen Ben Kallos and Jimmy Van Bramer, whose districts include either end of the Queensboro Bridge, have fought for years for a separate bike lane. They have held several rallies and recently marched across the bridge during the pandemic.

“This news couldn’t have come sooner as more people rely on bikes during the pandemic,” Mr. Kallos said. “The single shared lane on the Queensboro Bridge has gotten more crowded and dangerous.”

Is spending 2 hours outdoors the new 10,000 steps?

The physical and mental damage inflicted by COVID-19 has doctors, researchers and others racing to tap into nature’s therapeutic effects

By Betsy Morris | **The Wall Street Journal**

Will two hours in the park become the next 10,000 steps?

As people spend more time indoors, a mountain of scientific research says spending time in nature is critical to health and increases longevity. That means being in fresh air, under trees and away from cars and concrete—on a regular basis. And, no, the Peloton doesn’t count.

"There’s an urgent need emerging in science and at the gut level to increase the nature experience. This field is just exploding," says Gretchen Daily, a professor of environmental science at Stanford University.

The benefits have been clear to scientists for some time, but the pandemic has made the matter more urgent. The physical and emotional toll the virus has taken, especially in urban areas with little green space, has galvanized doctors, researchers and others to tap into nature’s therapeutic effects.

Spending time in the woods—a practice [the Japanese call "forest bathing"](#)—[is strongly linked](#) to lower blood pressure, heart rate and stress hormones and decreased anxiety, depression and fatigue.

Scientists have repeatedly found that human anticancer natural killer cells significantly increase after walks in a forest. [In one such study](#), published in 2010 in the Journal of Biological Regulators and Homeostatic Agents, the number and activity of killer cells increased in a group of twelve healthy men after two walks, each two hours long, in a one-day trip to a forest park in the Tokyo

suburbs. So did anti-cancer proteins, according to the research led by Qing Li, an associate professor at the Nippon Medical School. Cortisol in the blood and adrenaline in the urine significantly decreased. The effects lasted at least seven days, the researchers found.

Time in a forest is linked to decreased inflammation, which has been implicated in chronic disease.

"People are deciding whether or not this type of coffee bean or that type is better for you, when there is such an obvious health tool at your disposal. You literally just walk outside. People don't know," says Jared Hanley, co-founder and CEO of NatureQuant, a startup working on an app for users to track the time they spend in nature much like they count steps.

A study [published in Nature's Scientific Reports](#) in 2019 found the 20,000 participants were significantly more likely to report good health and well-being when they spent 120 minutes or more in nature a week. The good vibe peaked at 200 to 300 minutes a week. Anything less than two hours didn't make a difference.

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Saturday, 20 February 2021

State's Investment in Parks Pays Off

Outdoor spaces, historic sites across NY see record attendance in 2020

Joseph Spector New York State Team USA TODAY NETWORK

ALBANY – The COVID-19 pandemic limited travel last year for most New Yorkers, so they found an outdoor alternative nearby: the nation's largest parks system in their home state.

Attendance at New York's 180 parks and 35 historic sites hit a new attendance record in 2020 with 78 million visits, a 1.2% increase from 2019.

New York has invested heavily in the park system, and the \$1 billion investment has paid off, state officials said: The state has had nine years of visitor growth, up 34% during that span.

"In 2020, our state parks became an even more critical resource than before as New Yorkers sought safe places for solace, exercise and relief from the pandemic," Gov. Andrew Cuomo said in a statement Jan. 26.

The state expects big years ahead: It recently finished completion of the 750-mile Empire State Trail, a recreational trail that runs across New York.

Parks officials said the increase was particularly pronounced in the spring and fall as COVID prompted New Yorkers to turn to state parks, trails and historic sites for recreation.



A runner makes her way around the lake at Rockland Lake State Park in Rockland County, N.Y. Feb. 13. New York state set a record with 78 million visitors to its parks in 2020 as more people headed outdoors amid the COVID pandemic.

SETH HARRISON/THE JOURNAL NEWS



The trails at Rockwood Hall at the Rockefeller State Park Preserve in Pleasantville on Friday, Dec. 18, 2020. JOHN MEORE/THE JOURNAL NEWS

But the pandemic prompted uneven attendance last year.

Some parks, beaches, pools, historic sites and trailheads operated with reduced capacity. And out-of-state travel bans and a ban to the U.S. from Canada also had a major impact.

The Niagara Fall State Park, for example, is usually the most visited, but attendance fell 38% last year to 6 million due to the lack of Canadian visitors.

So the most visited park in 2020 was Jones Beach, where trips to the ocean off Long Island hit 8.3 million, a 2% increase from 2019. Nearby, Robert Moses State Park's attendance leaped 39% to nearly 6 million visitors.

"As other park systems were closing at the start of the pandemic, Governor Cuomo focused on taking the necessary precautions to open them safely," Erik Kulleseid, the state's parks commissioner, said in a statement.

"Our state parks and open spaces proved to be true sanctuaries for people to escape inactivity and isolation during this difficult year."

In the Hudson Valley, Bear Mountain State Park along the Hudson River had about 2.2 million visitors, on par with 2019, making it the seventh most visited park in the state.

The Old Croton Aqueduct park in Dobbs Ferry was a more popular spot last year than in 2019: Attendance jumped 34% to nearly 1.7 million.

Attendance on The Walkway Over the Hudson in Poughkeepsie fell 10% to 558,000, records showed.

In the Albany area, John Boyd Thacher park was a popular COVID retreat: Attendance soared 86% to 1.1 million last year.

In the Finger Lakes, Watkins Glen State Park had a drop in attendance of 36%, falling to 663,000.

But the Robert Treman and the Buttermilk Falls state parks in the Finger Lakes each went over 440,000 in attendance, up 20% and 35%, respectively.

Fifteen parks exceeded attendance of 1 million last year. Letchworth was next: It got to 966,000, an increase of 15% from 2019.

The parks department said it made a number of improvements last year.

Those included a new visitor center at Minnewaska State Park in Ulster County, an expanded Purple Heart Hall of Honor in Orange County and a new recreation complex at Letchworth.

This year, Cuomo announced a launch of NY Parks 100 to celebrate the state's 100 years of parks in 2024.

The state, Cuomo proposed, would invest at least \$440 million over the next four years in its parks system.

The 100th anniversary will be of the State Park Act, which was created by Gov. Al Smith in 1924.

"NY Parks 100 will continue crucial investments in park infrastructure while enhancing opportunities to reach the full range of New York State's recreational and cultural offerings, including local parks and trails, regional flagship parks and historic sites and vast wilderness parks," the parks department said.

"The initiative will focus on creating places to recreate locally, relieving overcrowded parks, welcoming new visitors and protecting New York State's environmental and historic legacy."



Joseph Spector is the Government and Politics Editor for the USA TODAY Network's Atlantic Group, overseeing coverage in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware.

From left, Al and Diane Denardo take a walk at James Baird State Park in Pleasant Valley on February 12. PATRICK OEHLER/POUGHKEEPSIE JOURNAL



The trails at Rockwood Hall at the Rockefeller State Park Preserve in Pleasantville on Friday, December 18, 2020. JOHN MEORE/THE JOURNAL NEWS

S5130 has been referred to the Senate Transportation Committee.

Senate Bill S5130

Enables safe access to public roads for all users by utilizing complete street design principles

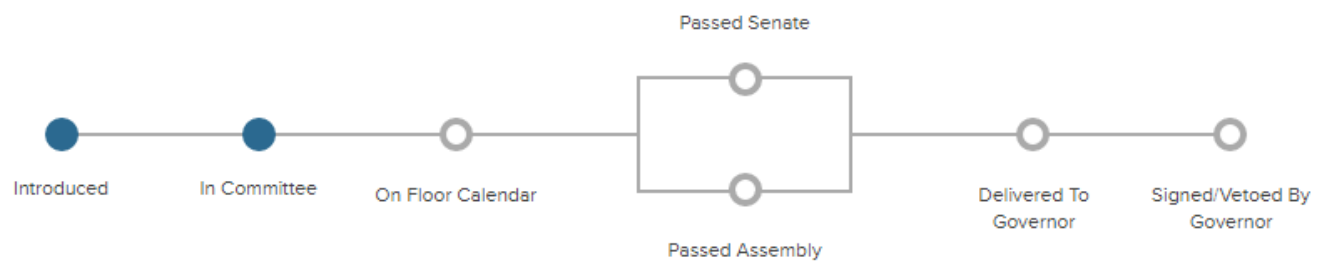
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Recent Actions:

- Feb 24, 2021 - REFERRED TO TRANSPORTATION

[Review S5130 on NYSenate.gov](#)



STATE OF NEW YORK

5130

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

February 24, 2021

Introduced by Sen. KENNEDY -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Transportation

AN ACT to amend the highway law, in relation to enabling safe access to public roads for all users by utilizing complete street design principles

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Subdivision (a) of section 331 of the highway law, as added
2 by chapter 398 of the laws of 2011, is amended to read as follows:

3 (a) For all state, county and local transportation projects that are
4 undertaken by the department or receive both federal and state funding
5 and are subject to department of transportation oversight, the depart-
6 ment or agency with jurisdiction over such projects shall consider the
7 convenient access and mobility on the road network by all users of all
8 ages, including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transpor-
9 tation users through the use of complete street design features in the
10 planning, design, construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation, [~~but~~
11 ~~not including resurfacing, maintenance, or pavement recycling of such~~
12 ~~projects~~] resurfacing, maintenance and pavement recycling of such
13 projects.

14 § 2. Paragraph (iii) of subdivision (c) of section 331 of the highway
15 law, as added by chapter 398 of the laws of 2011, is amended to read as
16 follows:

17 (iii) demonstrated lack of need as determined by factors, including,
18 but not limited to, land use, current and projected traffic volumes,
19 including population density, or [~~demonstrates~~] demonstrated lack of
20 community support; or

21 § 3. This act shall take effect immediately, provided that it shall
22 not apply to transportation projects undertaken or approved prior to the
23 date on which this act shall have become a law.

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD07036-01-1



Smart Growth America
Improving lives by improving communities

The Complete Streets Act is back

<https://smartgrowthamerica.org/the-complete-streets-act-is-back/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=7af3278a-5aae-490b-b232-2d45c81db9ee>

By [Helen Hope](#) · February 24, 2021



Today, Senator Edward J. Markey (MA) and Congressman Steve Cohen (TN-09) re-introduced the Complete Streets Act of 2019, a bill that promotes safer and more accessible street design across the United States.

The United States has a crisis: pedestrian fatalities increased by 35.4 percent between 2008 and 2017. In 2018 alone, 6,227 pedestrians

were killed in motor vehicle crashes, the highest fatality rate since 1990.

The alarming increase in the number of people killed while walking is happening because our streets, which we designed for the movement of vehicles, have not changed. In fact, we are continuing to design streets that are dangerous for all people.

These numbers can change with better street design (as we argue in our [landmark report on pedestrian fatalities](#) every other year). A “[Complete Street](#)” is one designed to provide safe and accessible transportation options for multiple modes of travel, as well as for people of all ages and abilities. They can accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit users, not just cars and freight vehicles.

To create safer streets, the Complete Streets Act does three basic things:

- Sets aside federal funds to support Complete Streets projects (five percent of annual federal highway funds)
- Requires states to create a program to provide technical assistance and award funding for communities to build Complete Streets projects

- Directs localities to adopt a Complete Streets policy that meets a minimum set of standards to access that dedicated funding

The Complete Streets Act requires that states set aside a portion of their federal highway funding to create a grant program that funds Complete Streets projects to make transit routes safer and more accessible. Through this program, eligible local and regional entities can apply for technical assistance and capital funding to build safe streets projects, such as sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks, and bus stops.

The federal Complete Streets Act is modeled on a landmark law in Massachusetts that has catalyzed the adoption of nearly 200 local Complete Street policies and implementation plans and funded over 100 safety projects in just three years. The cumulative effect is safer roads for everyone—no matter whether they're walking, biking, scooting, taking transit, or driving.

The best way to understand the value of Complete Streets is to experience them—which is why the Complete Streets Act would make it easier for communities to launch “demonstration projects” that showcase the positive impact of Complete Streets. In 2018, Smart Growth America helped community members and county officials in Lexington, KY deploy inexpensive, flexible materials to redesign dangerous intersections by redirecting cars and adding crosswalks and pedestrian refuges.

Unlike a state program, a federal Complete Streets law dedicates more resources to safety, has a wider impact, and helps undo some of the damage that has been done thanks to federal transportation policy that incentivizes states to prioritize high vehicle speeds above all else. After all, federal dollars and policies helped create unsafe streets in the first place, and federal funds, policies, and guidance have a significant role to play in fixing our existing streets and in designing the streets we'll build tomorrow.

“Federal transportation policy incentivizes states to make every street—even a community road lined with businesses and homes—a high-speed thoroughfare. As a result, the number of people struck and killed while walking is skyrocketing,” said Scott Goldstein, policy director of Transportation for America, a program of Smart Growth America. “The Complete Streets Act is a huge step towards reversing these perverse incentives by reallocating existing funding and empowering cities and towns to design streets that keep everybody safe. We are pleased to support this important legislation again this year.”