



S. 425 - The Complete Streets Act of 2021

The issue »

Complete Streets policies require that communities plan, design and build their streets for all users: a complete street can accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit users, not just cars and freight vehicles. For over 15 years, bicyclist and pedestrian organizations have joined the National Complete Streets Coalition and others to advocate for their communities and states to adopt these policies. During that time, more than 1500 Complete Streets policies have been passed in the United States, including by 35 States, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia.

Now, Congress can show leadership by taking the next step and offering technical assistance, funding, and guidance to local governments as they implement Complete Streets plans nationwide.

The solution »

The Complete Streets Act of 2021 (S. 425), introduced by Senator Markey [D-MA] will make our streets safe and accessible for all users.

What it does »

- » Strengthens language governing the design of federally funded surface transportation projects to require states and MPOs to adopt and implement complete streets standards,
- » Requires US DOT to create minimum standards for what a local complete streets policy must include, and
- » Requires states set aside 5% of their federal highway funding to establish a technical assistance and construction grant program to help local governments build complete streets projects.

Why it matters »

- » One in three traffic fatalities is someone outside a car: pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists and people using mobility devices including wheelchairs or scooters. These deaths are due to years of prioritizing traffic speed over safety in transportation engineering and we can prevent these deaths through legislative actions.
- » Complete streets policies ensure new roadways are designed safely and efficiently to serve all users, reducing the need for costly redesign in the future.
- » The state-level grant program helps communities retrofit where needed, fixing dangerous infrastructure and making transit, bicycling and walking safer and more accessible.
- » By having the US DOT set standards and guidance, the bill gives communities a place to start while also allowing flexibility for local context. Requiring federal aid highway are built to the same standards will create consistency.

How you can help »

Please co-sponsor S. 425, The Complete Streets Act of 2021.
To cosponsor the legislation, contact Eric_Kashdan@markey.senate.gov.

What does a Complete Street look like?

There is no singular design prescription for Complete Streets; each one is unique and responds to its community context. A complete street may include: sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible public transportation stops, frequent and safe crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, roundabouts, and more.

A Complete Street in a rural area will look quite different from a Complete Street in a highly urban area, but both are designed to balance safety and convenience for everyone using the road.



Who do they help?

Complete Streets are designed and operated to prioritize safety, comfort, and convenient access to destinations for all people who use the street, especially people who have experienced systemic underinvestment or whose needs have not been met through traditional transportation approaches. This includes older adults, people living with disabilities, people who do not have access to a car (8.7% of households, according to 2019 census figures), and Black, Native, and Hispanic or Latinx communities.

Complete Streets are truly for everyone. They improve equity, safety, and public health, while reducing transportation costs and alleviating traffic congestion.



What has already been done?

Complete Streets policies have been gaining traction across the country.

Over 1,600 Complete Streets policies have been passed in the United States, including those adopted by 35 state governments.

These policies include resolutions, laws, plans, design manuals, executive orders, and tax ordinances. The map to the right shows where these policies have been adopted.

