Complete Streets: In-District Meetings Guide

Please note: We provide additional resources and fact sheets on specific issues on our website:
- [http://www.completestreets.org/factsheets](http://www.completestreets.org/factsheets)

Two critical pieces to making this meeting a success:

1. **Make the Point:**
   Safe travel options for people of all ages and abilities are essential to your community. The best way to showcase that is to pick two or three local examples that make that point.

   While there are several talking points listed below, please discuss just two or three. You may opt to choose to discuss a topic not listed below. Select those topics that you or your group can best illustrate in this meeting.

2. **Make the Ask:**
   The Safe Streets Act (S. 2004/H.R. 2468)
   Look up the list of cosponsors on the bill.
   - If your Senators are not current co-sponsors, ask them support the Safe Streets Act (S. 2004) introduced by Senator Mark Begich (D-AK) and Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI).
     - If your Senator is already a co-sponsor, please offer your sincere thanks.
   - If your Representative is not already a co-sponsor, ask him or her to co-sponsor the Safe Streets Act (H.R. 2468) introduced by Congresswoman Doris Matsui (D, CA-5) and Congressman David Joyce (R, OH-14).
     - If he or she already is a co-sponsor, please offer your sincere thanks.

   The Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Act (S. 1708/H.R. 3494)
   Look up the list of cosponsors on the bill.
   - If your Senators are not current co-sponsors, ask them support the Safe Streets Act (S. 1708) introduced by Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and Senator Kelly Ayotte (D-NH).
     - If your Senator is already a co-sponsor, please offer your sincere thanks.
   - If your Representative is not already a co-sponsor, ask him or her to co-sponsor the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Act (H.R. 3494) introduced by Congresswoman Earl Blumenauer (D, OR-3) and Congressman Howard Coble (R, NC-6).
     - If he or she already is a co-sponsor, please offer your sincere thanks.
Who to bring to the meeting:

We suggest bringing three to five community leaders to the meeting, including public health leaders, state legislators, elected officials, staff in communities that have adopted Complete Streets policies, and leaders from the transportation advocacy community (for example, Safe Routes to School representatives, disabilities advocates, and bicycling organization leaders). You may also draw on local leaders you know from Coalition organizations, such as AARP, American Planning Association or transit agency leaders.

What to bring to the meeting:

1. Safe Streets Act handout:  

2. Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Act handout:  

3. Relevant news stories/facts from your community

4. Information about a Complete Streets policy in your community. Check with the Coalition’s online Atlas if you are unsure whether or not there is a policy in your district:  
   http://www.completestreets.org/atlas

5. One or two of the Coalition’s fact sheets you think will resonate with your elected official:  
   http://www.completestreets.org/factsheets
Talking Points and Meeting Guide

These talking points are intended to guide your conversation with your Representative and/or Senator. They are divided into an opening statement, a set of arguments and a final ask to your member of Congress or their staff member. To prepare, review these talking points with everyone attending the meeting. Decide ahead of time which points you want to stress, and which local streets and stories you will cite to help support your points.

1. OPENING STATEMENT
   Thank you very much for taking the time to meet with us today about importance of Complete Streets in our community.

   *(Each person introduces himself/herself.)*

   Safe and convenient travel options for people of all ages and abilities are essential for our community. By ensuring roads are safe for all users, regardless of ages or ability, Complete Streets policies reduce automobile crashes, expand transportation options, and help people get where they need to go.

   We recognize that every tax dollar has to go farther. Complete Streets policies address some of the most pressing issues facing our country and can be incorporated into a transportation budget without requiring additional funds. By right-sizing roadways and creating connected networks for all users, transportation agencies can see long-term savings on maintenance and infrastructure costs.

   Complete Streets can provide economic benefits. Attractive, accessible streets can help maintain or improve property values and support local businesses, especially on our community’s Main Street.

   *(If there are local issues or an opening statement that you feel will resonate more, please feel free to use them.)*

   We are here to ask for your support of the Safe Streets Act (and/or the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Act).

2. MAKE YOUR POINTS
   Complete Streets policies are popular, practical and money-saving ways to make streets safer for all users, of all ages and abilities.

   *(There are several arguments listed here, please pick 2–3 that you believe best resonate in your district and/or that you have a local example you can share. Include local examples and statistics where you can.)*

   SAFETY
   - Sixty-seven percent of all pedestrian fatalities in the last ten years took place on federal-aid roads.¹
- Pedestrian fatalities accounted for 14 percent of all deaths on U.S. roadways in 2011—a three percent increase from 2010.²
- In 2011, 55 percent of all traffic fatalities, including fatalities among motorists, pedestrians and cyclists, occurred in rural areas.³
- Implementation of Safe Routes To School interventions, including capital improvements around schools, in New York City was associated with a 44 percent reduction in the rate of school-aged pedestrian injury during school-travel hours.⁴
- Many of our community members do not drive—many of these people are older, low-income, or young—and without walking, biking, or transit, they have limited mobility.

ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION
- Street design that is inclusive of all modes of transportation, where appropriate, not only improves conditions for existing businesses, but also is a method for revitalizing an area and attracting new development. Lancaster Boulevard in Lancaster, CA, added 37 new businesses and more than 800 permanent jobs after Complete Streets improvements. The city estimates its modest $11.6 million investment in the boulevard’s reconstruction helped generate more than $273 million in private investment and local and state revenues.⁵
- Communities investing in more pedestrian-friendly downtown environments experience an infusion of private capital. As of 2011, Greenville, SC, experienced a total of $137 million in private investment in its downtown, and attracted the relocation of Clemson University graduate school programs.⁶
- Complete Streets projects encourage more residents to live, work and play in Decatur, GA’s downtown: This area added 729 new housing units between 2000 and 2008, and a 2003 private analysis of the City of Decatur revealed that there are more than 955 businesses and 9,820 employees operating within a one-mile radius of the city’s downtown district.⁷

HEALTH
- Compared with other health interventions, researchers in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine find “strong evidence that creation of or enhanced access to places for physical activity...is effective in increasing levels of physical activity” and recommend more policies and laws that promote this access.⁸
- A 2012 report by the U.S. Department of Transportation to Congress finds that bicycling and walking increased (49 percent and 22 percent, respectively) from 2007 to 2010 in four pilot communities that invested in capital improvements to support pedestrians and cyclists.⁹

COST SAVINGS – Infrastructure and maintenance
- A 2013 study by the Charlotte Department of Transportation found that adding typical Complete Street elements to a project is a very small percentage of the overall project budget.¹⁰
- The same study in Charlotte suggests that by integrating a Complete Streets approach into its scheduled resurfacing work, the city significantly reduces the cost of these projects.¹¹
- Creating Complete Streets can reduce the costs of new infrastructure and maintenance by requiring less pavement per users. Neighborhood streets built in a grid to serve all users can lower infrastructure costs between 35 and 40 percent.¹²
COST SAVINGS – Families
- Transportation is rapidly becoming the largest family expense. Complete Streets provide inexpensive and healthy travel options that help reduce congestion.

POPULAR
- There are more than 600 Complete Streets policies at the local, regional, and state levels. (Talk about policies in your community or region.)
- Complete Streets policies are important to a wide variety of organizations, because they provide a wide variety of benefits. AARP; American Planning Association; American Public Health Association; American Society of Landscape Architects; National Association of Realtors; Institute of Transportation Engineers; and American Public Transportation Association are strong supporters of Complete Streets.
- Talk about organizations in your area that support Complete Streets, or activities that relate to Complete Streets goals, such as new transportation plans or “Open Streets” events.

3. FINAL ASK
Will you co-sponsor the Safe Streets Act?
- If Yes: Ask with whom the National Complete Streets Coalition may follow-up.
- If No: Ask why.

Will you co-sponsor the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Act?
- If Yes: Ask with whom the League of American Bicyclists may follow-up.
- If No: Ask why.

It is critical to make this ask before you leave the office. As soon as the member of Congress or staff member starts to end the meeting, please make sure to make this ask before he or she leaves.

4. FOLLOW-UP AFTER THE MEETING
Be sure to send a thank you note within three days to those with whom you meet and to provide any materials they requested. In this note, provide a final summary of your visit’s key points.

Please let Laura Searfoss (lsearfoss@completestreets.org) know about the meeting, how your Representative or Senator responded to your request to cosponsor the bill, and if there is anything the National Complete Streets Coalition can do to help you in follow-up.

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