

Vermont's Complete Streets Law and What It Means For You



The new sidewalk in Windsor along US-5 provides connections from downtown to Paradise Park and local shops.

For two years dozens of Vermont organizations, led by AARP Vermont, advocated for a Complete Streets law in Vermont. The Governor signed Vermont's Complete Streets bill (H.198, Act 34) into law, effective July 1. This technical bulletin is intended to give a brief overview of what Complete Streets are, what the bill said and what it means for transportation projects across Vermont.

What is a Complete Street?

The principle underlying the Complete Streets concept is that streets should safely accommodate all transportation system users, regardless of age, ability, or what mode of transportation they prefer – walking, biking, driving, or use of transit.

Why do we need complete streets?

- A significant proportion of Vermont's population does not drive including those under age 16, the elderly, and the disabled. Maintaining a car can also be a financial burden on low-income households.
- Incomplete streets (i.e. built only for cars) limit travel options and create unsafe conditions for bicycles and pedestrians.
- Complete streets enable more energy efficient travel and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

What is the purpose of the Complete Streets bill?

The purpose is "to ensure that the needs of all transportation system users are considered in all state and municipally managed transportation projects and project phases, including planning, development, construction, and maintenance, except in the case of projects or project components involving unpaved highways. These 'complete streets' principles shall be integral to the transportation policy of Vermont." (H.198, Act 34)

