Below is a model ordinance recommended for adoption by Allegheny County’s local municipalities. The text is based on model policy language recommended by the National Policy and Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN), and also incorporates language from adopted policies for Rochester, Minnesota and Seattle, Washington. The model ordinance is concise by intent, focusing on the simple principle that roadway projects should accommodate all users. The language can be modified for use on resolutions and executive orders.

**Complete Streets Model Ordinance**

AN ORDINANCE relating to complete streets policy for the ___ of _____, stating guiding principles and practices so that transportation improvements are planned, designed and constructed to encourage walking, bicycling and transit use while promoting safe operations for all users.

WHEREAS, implementing transportation improvements that are planned, designed and constructed to safely accommodate walking, bicycling, and transit use increase the general safety, health and overall welfare of the citizens of and visitors to the ___ of_____; and,

WHEREAS, the ___ of ______ will seek to enhance the safety, access, convenience and comfort of all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and drivers, motorists and freight drivers, and people of all ages and abilities, including children, older adults, and persons with disabilities, through the design, operation and maintenance of the transportation network so as to create a connected network of facilities accommodating each mode of travel; and,

WHEREAS, transportation improvements are to be planned and designed in a manner consistent with, and supportive of, the surrounding community, recognizing that all streets are different and that the needs of various users will need to be balanced in a flexible manner;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE _____ OF ______ AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. All roadway projects, including construction, re-construction, re-paving and rehabilitation, will provide appropriate accommodation for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders and drivers, motorists and freight drivers, and people of all ages and abilities, including children, older adults and persons with disabilities, except under one or more of the following conditions:

- The roadway project is comprised of ordinary maintenance activities designed to keep assets in serviceable condition (e.g., mowing, cleaning, sweeping, spot repair and surface treatments such as chip seal);
- Where use by nonmotorized users is prohibited by law;
- The cost would be excessively disproportionate to the need or probable future use over the long term;
- There is an absence of current and future need.

Section 2. Appropriate accommodations include facilities and amenities that are recognized as contributing to complete streets, which may include sidewalks and pedestrian safety improvements such as median refuges, pedestrian signals, bulbouts and crosswalks; street and sidewalk lighting; improvements that provide ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant accessibility; transit accommodations including improved pedestrian access to transit stops and bus shelters; bicycle accommodations including shared-use lanes, wide travel lanes or bike lanes as appropriate; paved shoulders; bicycle parking; street trees, landscaping, street furniture and adequate drainage facilities; and other facilities.

Section 3. Complete streets principles will be incorporated into the comprehensive plan, subdivision and land development ordinance, and other plans, manuals, regulations and programs as appropriate.

The first paragraph of the model ordinance summarizes the ordinance, and indicates the purpose. The preamble (“Whereas” clauses) indicate the reasons why the municipality is adopting a complete streets ordinance; it is recommended that officials of local municipalities in Allegheny County add reasons specific to their community, if possible.
Section 1 indicates that complete streets policies will be followed on roadway projects in the municipality, with the exception of simple maintenance projects, and projects where there is no need or where implementation of the policy will result in disproportionate costs. These exceptions are common provisions in adopted complete streets policies nationwide. They help address concerns on the part of some that implementation of a complete streets policy will significantly increase costs.

Section 2 provides examples of complete streets facilities. The examples are similar to those found in the NPLAN model ordinance, and in adopted policies. However, not every local municipality has listed typical examples of complete streets facilities in their adopted policies.

Section 3 indicates that the local municipality will incorporate complete streets principles into other municipal ordinances, plans, and standards as appropriate. Although, as discussed earlier, there is not a prescribed complete streets treatment, the municipal standards should be reviewed to determine whether there are basic standards for sidewalks and bike facilities. Further, there should not be one set standard for travel lanes; flexibility for this feature is desirable.

In addition to local municipalities, developers should consider Complete Streets approaches when planning, designing and building large scale projects (e.g., The Waterfront at Homestead and South Side Works).

Where Have Complete Streets Policies Been Adopted?

According to the National Complete Streets Coalition, over 150 jurisdictions across the country – state, county, and local governments – have adopted complete streets policies, or committed to doing so. PennDOT does not have a formal complete streets policy, but it has increasingly followed a complete streets approach to roadway projects in policy and implementation. This approach is exemplified in its Bicycle and Pedestrian Checklist. When issuing the Checklist, PennDOT stated: “Department policy requires the evaluation of the access and mobility needs of pedestrians and bicycle users in highway and bridge transportation corridors. This revised policy mandates that highway and bridge projects must evaluate the existing, latent, and projected needs of pedestrians and bicycle users. It requires the integration of the identified needs into project planning and design processes.”