



## POLICY EXPLAINER

# Complete Streets and Vision Zero

## *Complimentary Policy Approaches*

Communities looking to create systems that support safe, healthy, and accessible transportation will often turn to **Complete Streets** or **Vision Zero** policies. There is a misconception that these efforts are in competition, when in fact, they are complementary efforts around a common goal and can often be used to support each other.

### CHANGING THE STATUS QUO

Complete Streets and Vision Zero are commitments to rethinking the status quo in transportation to support communities where all can be safe, healthy, and engaged.

TRADITIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND POLICIES	COMPLETE STREETS AND VISION ZERO
Prioritizes the movement of cars	Prioritizes the movement of people
Success is flow of traffic and number of vehicles moved across a corridor	Success is how transportation supports a community's health, safety, and accessibility
Siloed approach	Interdisciplinary approach
One-size-fits-all mindset	Context sensitive and reflective of the community's vision
Reactive in addressing safety concerns	Proactive in creating safe places

**While different and independent of one another, Complete Streets and Vision Zero Policies can complement one another in creating safe, healthy, and accessible communities.**

**COMPLETE STREETS:** Complete Streets is an approach that enables safe access to streets for all people who need to use them, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets policies support the implementation of this approach.

**VISION ZERO:** Vision Zero is a strategy that aims to eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries while improving access to safe and accessible transportation. A Vision Zero proclamation or Action Plan sets the community on the path to achieving this.

## SELECTING COMPLETE STREETS OR VISION ZERO

A community might opt to work on Complete Streets or Vision Zero individually for many reasons, including community support, the political environment, and other local

context. Here are the things to keep in mind when selecting one over the other:

	COMPLETE STREETS	VISION ZERO
<b>What's the format?</b>	Policies, resolutions, and ordinances that are binding and discuss implementation.	Proclamations as well as policies, resolutions, and ordinances aimed to demonstrate intent.
<b>What's the work?</b>	Steps to improve safety and accessibility through changes to street design.	Also includes interventions not tied to the built environment.
<b>What's the approach?</b>	Tackling transportation from a multi-disciplinary approach explicitly including land use and zoning.	Tackling transportation from a multi-disciplinary approach drawing on public health principles of injury prevention.
<b>Who's responsible?</b>	Strong Complete Streets efforts will assign responsibility of implementation and accessibility often to Departments of Public Works or Transportation.	Responsibility for Vision Zero will depend on the strategies incorporated and the format of the commitment.

## Together, Complete Streets and Vision Zero create a legacy of health through safe and accessible transportation

When simultaneously adopted and implemented, Complete Streets and Vision Zero efforts can have a powerful impact on how a community moves. They demonstrate to a community that leadership and staff are committed to changing transportation to support all modes and that the health and safety of all residents are a priority. They are complementary to one another, achieving a shared vision, and having both in place leads to resources, systems, and implementation being reinforced throughout a city's organizational structure. Moreover, this shared vision is not only communicated to community members but embraced and owned as their own.

### A SHARED FUTURE

Complete Streets and Vision Zero policies support communities in creating a legacy of health for all residents.

- **A legacy of safe and active transportation:** The vision in a Vision Zero Action Plan and implementation of a Complete Streets policy come together to create

spaces where people can walk, bike, and roll safely and conveniently.

- **A legacy of equity:** Complete Streets and Vision Zero both prioritize equity, addressing disparities created by past decision-making and prioritizing resources to areas and residents who need them most.
- **A legacy of health:** Complete Streets and Vision Zero use data to target high-risk areas, track implementation, and measure success. Data transparency provides information to practitioners but also creates accountability.

### BUILDING A SAFER FUTURE

At a time when the U.S. is facing a historic crisis on our roadways, any movement towards safer, healthier, and more accessible streets should be embraced as it is a commitment to creating a brighter future for communities. Done separately or together, they can put places on a path to supporting transportation for all community members.

Learn more at [cityhealth.org](https://cityhealth.org)