Dutchess County Complete Streets Policy (2026 update)

Policy

Dutchess County shall strive to plan, design, construct, operate, and maintain its streets, bridges, bus system (buses, stops, shelters, etc.), parks, trails, and buildings (herein after referred to as Facilities) to promote safe, comfortable, efficient, and convenient travel for people of all ages and abilities, and for all types of transportation, including walking, bicycling, riding the bus, and driving, to the greatest extent possible.

Over time, these Facilities will be integrated into a countywide network that promotes the health, safety, environment, and economic vitality of Dutchess County and makes it a more desirable place to live, work, and visit.

Jurisdiction

This policy shall apply to all transportation-related elements of projects involving County property, including County roads, parks and buildings, as well as public and private projects over which the County Department of Public Works has permitting authority (see **Exceptions** below).

The County shall foster partnerships with the State of New York, neighboring counties, municipalities, and school districts and other property owners to develop facilities that further the County's Complete Streets Policy.

Projects and Phases

Dutchess County shall approach every transportation-related improvement and project phase as an opportunity to create safer, more accessible Facilities for all people. However, this policy will be most effective when considered as part of project planning and design.

Design

Dutchess County will generally follow accepted or adopted design standards and use the latest design standards available, including but not limited to design guidance from the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHTO), the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the US Access Board's Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG).

Dutchess County shall implement this Complete Streets policy in a manner that is sensitive to the local context and character, aligns transportation and land use goals, and recognizes that needs may vary by case or community.

In recognition of these various contexts, public input and a variety of transportation needs, a flexible, innovative and balanced approach that follows other appropriate design standards may be considered, provided that a comparable level of safety for all people is present.

Performance Measures

Dutchess County shall measure the success of this Complete Streets policy using the following performance measures:

1. Countywide Walking & Bicycling Network:

    a. Total miles of sidewalk (countywide)
    b. Total miles of on-street bicycle facilities (countywide)
2. County Roads:
    a. Total miles of County roads with shoulder widths of four (4) feet or more
3. County Transit:
    a. Number of Dutchess County Public Transit bus stop shelters
    b. Number of Dutchess County Public Transit bus stop shelters accessible via sidewalks and curb ramps

Benchmarks for each performance measure will be used to track the performance of the policy. Performance measure reports shall be developed at least every five years and posted online.

Implementation

1. A project's compliance with this policy shall be determined based on completion of a Dutchess County Complete Streets checklist, unless it receives an exception (see **Exceptions** below).

2. The Department of Public Works, Department of Planning and Development, and other relevant County Departments and Divisions will incorporate Complete Streets principles into existing procedures, programs, plans, manuals, checklists, regulations, and other processes as appropriate.

3. The Department of Public Works, Department of Planning and Development, and other relevant County Departments and Divisions will review current design standards, guides, and policies, and develop new design standards/guides/policies or revise existing standards/guides/policies as needed to reflect current best practices.

4. The County shall support staff professional development and training on Complete Streets principles and best practices for implementing this Complete Streets policy.

5. The County shall promote inter-departmental coordination to ensure the consistent application of this Complete Streets policy.

Exceptions

Any exception to this policy must be approved by the Dutchess County Department of Public Works in consultation with the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development and other relevant County Departments and Divisions. Exceptions must be documented with supporting data that indicates the basis for the decision. Such documentation shall be publicly available if requested.

Exceptions may be considered when:

1. A Facility under consideration prohibits, by law, specified types of transportation, in which case greater effort shall be made to accommodate those transportation types nearby the Facility under consideration;
2. The costs of providing accommodation are excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use;

3. The existing and planned population, employment densities, traffic volumes, or level of bus or train service around a particular Facility is so low as to demonstrate an absence of current and future need;
4. The activities are routine maintenance that do not change the Facility's operations, such as mowing, sweeping, and spot pavement repair;
5. There is a reasonable and equivalent project near the Facility under consideration that is already programmed to provide the accommodations promoted by this policy.

Capital road maintenance projects are not exempted, as they may provide opportunities for improvements to shoulder widths and/or conditions, pavement markings, and signage.

This policy was adopted by the Dutchess County Legislature and signed by the County Executive on October 23, 2026.