

COMPLETE STREETS

Safer for Drivers, Safer for Pedestrians



What are Complete Streets?

Bethlehem believes that our roads are for everyone: drivers, cyclists, and walkers alike. This means that we need to design our roads as [Complete Streets](#) that are safe and efficient for drivers, for kids and adults on bikes, and for parents with strollers, people with disabilities and who require special accommodations to get around, school kids, dog walkers, and the like. Everyone should be able to move safely and efficiently along and across our complete streets.

When/why are Complete Streets needed?

Speeding is the primary issue reported on streets from North Bethlehem to Selkirk, though we also regularly hear concerns about **crosswalk safety**.

Like most municipalities, we can often address speed problems with periods of more intense traffic **enforcement** and temporary mobile signs that **educate** drivers of their speeds. In some cases, unfortunately, these aren't enough and **engineering** (physical changes to the roadway) are needed. Sadly, we have consistently found that just changing a speed limit does not slow traffic speeds, even with enforcement and education. Think Cherry Ave Extension in Slingerlands and Feura Bush Rd in Glenmont.

This is where [Complete Streets](#) come in. Roads designed as [Complete Streets](#) are safer for everyone because they have integrated physical changes that slow traffic and create space for walkers and cyclists. Engineering changes can include edge striping, clearer crosswalks, safety center islands, and more. Across America, [Complete Streets](#) designs have been proven to reduce car accidents, increase safety for cyclists and walkers, and make surrounding properties more attractive to businesses. In fact, the Federal Highway Administration strongly recommends [Complete Streets](#) designs to improve traffic safety on roads with fewer than 20,000 car trips daily.

Complete Streets design at work



The 2017 Delaware Ave Streetscape Enhancement is a [Complete Street](#) design that helped strengthen Delmar's Main Street character between the Four Corners and Elsmere Ave.

The new design provided safe and convenient travel and access for families and school children, bicyclists, and bus riders. It did this by combining a lower speed limit with improved sidewalks and crosswalks, clarifying on-street

parking, signs emphasizing that the road is a shared travel lane for bikes/motorists, and improved bus stops.

DELAWARE AVE COMPLETE STREETS PROJECT

Making Bethlehem's Streets Safer for Everyone



What is the problem?

Delaware Avenue between Elsmere Ave and the Town line was widened to four lanes in the early 1960's, creating conditions today that are dangerous for drivers, dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians, and unattractive for new businesses.

Between 2011 and 2015, there were 213 crashes on this section of Delaware Avenue, particularly involving cars making left turns. This is above the statewide average for roads of this size with this many cars.

The road is uninviting and sometimes challenging to people who would like to walk and cycle to schools and stores from nearby neighborhoods and the Rail Trail.

When new businesses contact our Economic Development Coordinator about moving to Delaware Avenue, they consistently reject space in this area, preferring instead to be in more "walkable" parts of town.

Isn't it a bad time for construction?

The Delaware Ave road surface is in poor condition and will be torn up and repaved by the state DOT regardless of how the lanes are striped. But first, the Town will replace the underlying water pipes and line the sewer pipes since they are very old (they went in just after WWII!), and the best time to do this work is right before the road is repaved.

What is the referendum all about?

On Election Day, Tuesday, November 2, there will be a town wide referendum (Proposal #6) on whether or not to take the financial steps needed to accept a \$2.9M state grant for:

- ⇒ continued public discussion,
- ⇒ additional traffic studies,
- ⇒ a detailed engineering plan,
- ⇒ sidewalk, crosswalk, and curb improvements.

a **YES** vote would accept the \$2.9 million grant to continue moving forward, with safety improvements,

a **NO** vote would reject the \$2.9 million grant, with major construction anticipated for 2024 only addressing the underlying water and sewer pipes, and repaving the road.

Delaware Ave Complete Streets Project *by the numbers*

Number of cars using Delaware Ave on the average workday: **15,000-18,000**

Crashes between 2011 and 2015: **213**

Cost of project to be covered by federal and state funds: **\$4.472 million**

Cost of project to be covered by the town: **\$728,000 or 14% of total project cost**

Public meetings held with community: **6**

Election Day: **Tuesday, 11/2/2021**

What is the proposal?

An intensive community-based planning effort in 2017 led to a recommendation that the 4-lane section of Delaware Ave be redesigned as a complete street. This proposed redesign would make the road safer and more attractive to walkers and cyclists by:

- ◆ Simplifying lanes to one each way with a center turning lane
- ◆ Introducing wide shoulders for turning vehicles, stopped buses, and cyclists
- ◆ Improving sidewalks
- ◆ Adding new crosswalks with center safety islands
- ◆ Building a landscaped gateway median near the bridge
- ◆ Lower the speed limit to 35mph (possible because of the engineering changes to the road)

This **Complete Streets** design would allow pedestrians to safely cross Delaware Ave (which they can only do now at Elsmere Ave and Delaware Plaza street lights – ½ mile apart), reduce the number of car accidents, and make the sidewalks safer for school children and more inviting to customers walking from nearby neighborhoods and the Rail Trail.

Questions: Contact Planning Director Rob Leslie at RLeslie@townofbethlehem.org or 518-439-4955 x1157.