Village of Sharon Springs
Schoharie County, New York

COMPLETE STREETS POLICY GUIDELINES

FINAL DRAFT
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I. PURPOSE, VISION & APPLICABILITY

PURPOSE

The Village of Sharon Springs recognizes the importance of creating an environment that promotes healthier lifestyles, and provides optimal transportation accessibility and choices for its residents and visitors. The Village believes that the public right-of-way is more than just a conveyor of vehicles, and that it instead serves a vital role in shaping the community’s landscape and livability. The present network of roads, in many cases, provides for the needs of motor vehicles to the exclusion of alternative modes of transportation, including cycling and walking.

The Village therefore seeks to create a welcoming built environment and a system of roads, trails and pathways that will accommodate the needs of all users. Future land use and transportation planning policies will integrate safety improvements to reduce speed and congestion, minimize environmental impacts, encourage economic growth, and build Complete Streets that are safe, convenient and comfortable for all ages and abilities using any mode of transportation (motor vehicle, public transportation, foot, bicycle, etc) making the Village a more walkable, livable, and healthy place to live, work, and play. The Complete Streets Guidelines of the Village of Sharon Springs were developed to provide guidance for its residents, decision makers, planners and designers to ensure that Complete Streets design features are incorporated into transportation projects.

The general goal of a transportation system is to facilitate the efficient movement of people, goods and services. The community is dependent upon a well-maintained transportation system, which includes roads, bridges, walkways, trails, and public transportation facilities for quality of life. A well-planned and designed surface transportation system should be accommodating to all modes of traffic, be safe for use, visually appealing and pedestrian friendly. In August 2011 Governor Andrew M. Cuomo...
I. PURPOSE, VISION & APPLICABILITY

Signed the state’s Complete Streets (S5411.A/A8366) bill into law. Complete Streets are more than just having sidewalks and bike lanes… it’s having an environment with equal access for everyone.¹

By adopting a Complete Streets Policy, the Village can guide transportation planners and engineers to design local, county and state roads within the Village to enable safe access for all users, regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk and bike throughout the community. New roads should provide connections between communities and subdivisions. According to the National Complete Street Coalition:

> Complete Streets are streets for everyone and support active living. They are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation users of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a complete street. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work, by providing safe street crossing locations and marked crosswalks, shortening crossing distances, and slowing down traffic speeds. They allow buses to run on time and make it safe for people to walk to and from transit stop shelters. A Complete Street in a rural area will look quite different from a complete street in a highly urban area, but both are designed to balance safety and convenience for everyone using the road.

Even small projects can be an opportunity to make meaningful, easy-to-implement, low-cost improvements. For example, in repaving projects, an edge stripe can be shifted to create more room for pedestrians or cyclists, or a new crosswalk can be added. During routine work on traffic lights, the timing can be changed to better accommodate pedestrians walking at a slower speed. Reclaiming the right of way for other uses and reducing the number of lanes, and/or reducing the travel lane width, can potentially increase parking spaces for businesses by providing angled parking in areas. A strong Complete Streets Policy integrates Complete Streets planning into all types of projects, including new construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, repair, and maintenance.² When implementing Complete Streets design elements, the Village should:

- Keep it simple, and focus first on easy-to-implement and low-cost solutions.
- Match the treatment to the type of problem and the specific road classification.
- Identify and program longer-term improvement needs.

**Design Elements**

Complete Streets are roadways designed and operated to enable safe, attractive, and comfortable access and travel for all users of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets consider the convenient access and mobility on the road network by all users including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists and public transportation users by. All design elements of Complete Streets are not practical for all streets and there

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is great variety in the nature of streets within the Village’s road network. The selection of appropriate design elements will largely be a function of a streets functional classification, traffic volume, and accident history.

Typical Complete Streets design features accommodate and facilitate convenient access and mobility of all users, and may include, but need not be limited to:

- Wide sidewalks
- Paved shoulders suitable for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Bold lane striping
- Bicycle lanes
- Share the road signage
- Frequent crossing opportunities, especially for school routes
- Alternative pavement materials/textured/stamped crosswalks
- Crossing medians
- Raised crosswalks
- Sidewalk curb extensions/curb bulb outs
- Pedestrian control signalization
- Pedestrian-scale lighting or other lighting techniques that increase safety for all users
- Street trees and shrubs
- Shorter blocks
- Other traffic calming measures
- Street Furniture, (benches, bicycle racks, kiosks, trash receptacles)

*Example street cross section with typical Complete Street design features. Copyright Synthesis LLP.*
VISION FOR COMPLETE STREETS

The Village of Sharon Springs shall continue to enhance its transportation network to meet the needs of all motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, children, persons with disabilities, movers of commercial goods, users of public transportation, and seniors. The planning, construction, reconstruction, retrofit, maintenance, alteration, or repair of streets, bridges, or other portions of the transportation network undertaken by the Village in the public right-of-way shall seek to incorporate these needs. The Village shall view all transportation improvements as opportunities to improve safety and accessibility for all roadway users.

Needs and Benefits

Safety

The Village of Sharon Springs Comprehensive Plan cited speeding and traffic violations as well as confusing signage, lack of sidewalks on many of the roads in the Village, disrepair of existing sidewalks, and lack of pedestrian crosswalks on portions of Route 20 and Route 10 as key safety concerns. A major contributing factor to many of these safety concerns is roadway design, road layouts, and site lines that may favor the efficient movement of motor vehicles to the detriment of non-motorized modes of transportation. Adequate provisions for safe non-motorized travel should be considered a priority. Without a local police force, physical design changes and traffic calming measures can go a long way to control traffic speeding violations. Transforming streets with paint and bold striping can encourage safer vehicle speeds by visually narrowing the travel lanes, while still moving traffic.3

Senior Mobility

The Village of Sharon Springs has an aging population. According to the 2010 Census, 24.3% of the population is 60 years of age or older. A common complaint among senior citizens is the inconvenience or inability to get to shops and services without a car. Even those who reside

3 Cobleskill’s Path to Active Living, March 2011.
within a reasonable walking distance of their destination may encounter a hostile and unsafe environment. In a Complete Streets community, a number of techniques are deployed to increase the safety and convenience for senior pedestrians. These include re-timing of traffic signals to account for slower walking speeds, introducing sidewalk ramps and seating options, constructing sidewalk bulb-outs and median refuges to shorten crossing distances, and improving signage, street markings and lighting.

**Safer Routes to School**

Complete Streets offer a safer environment for school children through such techniques as traffic calming to reduce traffic speeds in and around school zones and improving sidewalks and street crossings. The Sharon Springs Central School is located within the Village of Sharon Springs, directly off of NYS Route 20. The School District had 322 students enrolled in the 2010-2011 school year, and according to the 2010 Census, 18.3% of the population in the Village is between the ages of 5 and 19. The decline in walking and bicycling to school has had an adverse effect on traffic congestion and air quality around schools nationwide, and there is a growing body of evidence showing that children who lead sedentary lifestyles are at risk for a variety of health problems such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. Safety issues are a big concern for parents, who consistently cite traffic danger as a reason why their children are unable to bicycle or walk to school. Improving children’s safety while walking and bicycling to and from school is the mission of the Federal Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program, and should be considered a local priority. Implementing Complete Streets design elements can provide families with transportation choices, and improve the health of our children and community as a whole.

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**Sustainability & Environment**

Improved roadway designs are a significant factor in reducing carbon emissions and achieving environmental goals. Providing residents with an efficient transportation network that supports alternative modes of transportation reduces the number of motorized trips and miles traveled.

Incorporation of alternative environmentally-friendly paving materials, drainage structures and street lighting is an important component of Complete Streets. Increased use of porous pavements greatly reduces the amount of stormwater runoff and associated pollution and sedimentation. The use of LED streetlight fixtures as an alternative to the traditional metal halide and high pressure sodium fixtures greatly reduces the amount of energy consumed and a longer service life. In addition, incorporating innovative green infrastructure techniques for water quality protection and stormwater management is cost-effective, sustainable, and environmentally friendly planning and design solution to creating walkable, attractive communities.

**Opportunities for Healthy Living**

As previously stated, the growing epidemic of obesity has communities nationwide searching for ways to improve the built environment and promote healthier living. The lack or inadequacy of sidewalks and bicycle paths are often cited as contributing factors to this nationwide problem. Complete Streets provide opportunities for increased physical activity by incorporating active design elements that promote walking, jogging and cycling.

**Economic Activity**

A major benefit of Complete Streets is the increase in the patronization of local businesses. Establishments located along popular pedestrian routes experience an increase in customer traffic. In an auto-dominated streetscape, customers often bypass local options in search of larger centers with an adequate parking supply. Another economic benefit of “reclaiming” the right of way for other uses and reducing the number of lanes, and/or reducing the travel lane width, can potentially increase parking
spaces for businesses by providing angled parking in areas where the road is wide enough. Other design features that enhance access and attractiveness of local businesses include high-visibility textured/stamped crosswalks, wider sidewalks, improved street lighting and signage, and sidewalk bulb-outs, bike lanes, bike racks, benches, street trees and landscaping.

**APPLICABILITY**

Establishing an accessible, safe, and well-connected transportation network means incorporating design elements and guidelines that address the needs of all users while remaining flexible and relevant. The majority of the Village’s transportation network is comprised of local roads with the classification of “minor” roads. According to the 2011 NYS DOT Highway Mileage Report, the Village has 4.8 miles of Local roads, and 2.5 miles of State roads.

The Village of Sharon Springs Complete Streets Policy Guidelines should be considered for all new public streets constructed by or for the Village and for all streets constructed by private entities that will be dedicated to the Village as public streets, as is typical of new residential subdivisions. In the latter case, the design elements of the policy will be reviewed and enforced in conjunction with any permit applications for building permits, subdivision applications, site plan review or variances.

While roads can theoretically be retrofitted in accordance with a Complete Streets policy at any time, there are certain circumstances which present a logical opportunity to evaluate and potentially redesign an existing street. These include roads undergoing full-depth pavement repair/replacement and roads undergoing horizontal realignment. All road projects of this magnitude will be reviewed for the feasibility of incorporating Complete Streets design elements.
Exceptions

Making a policy work in the real world requires developing a process to handle exceptions. The National Complete Streets Coalition believes the following exceptions are appropriate with limited potential to weaken the Complete Streets policy. They follow the Federal Highway Administration’s guidance on accommodating bicycle and pedestrian travel and identified best practices frequently used in existing Complete Streets policies. Exceptions to designing Complete Streets can be made where:

- It has been set forth in publically available document(s) that use of the road by bicyclists and pedestrians is prohibited by law.
- The cost would be disproportionate to the need as determined by factors including: land use context, current and projected traffic volumes, demonstrated lack of need, or that the use of the design features would have an adverse impact on public safety.
- There is a documented absence of current and future need for Complete Streets design elements.

The primary objective of Complete Streets is to provide safe accommodation for all users of the transportation network. Engineers and project managers are talented and creative problem-solvers and should be able to address project-level barriers in ways that still achieve an environment supportive of all users. Additional exceptions begin to weaken this goal and may create loopholes too large to achieve the Complete Streets vision.

In addition to defining exceptions through policy language, the Village Board must establish a clear process for granting exceptions. The National Complete Streets Coalition recommends that the board of elected officials, a publicly accountable committee, or a senior-level department head be charged with approving exceptions, as appropriate for the Village. Doing so will ensure that as the policy moves into implementation, its intent is carried out and exceptions are not abused.

Coordination with Other Jurisdictions

While the Village seeks a consistent and comprehensive application of the Complete Streets Policy Guidelines, much of the road network is under the jurisdiction of other entities such as the County or the State. Whereas the Village cannot mandate that any other entity adopt a similar policy, the Village will endeavor to coordinate with these other entities to promote continuity across jurisdictional boundaries.

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II. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICY GUIDANCE

Integrating Complete Streets practices into local planning and policy decisions will help encourage safe and active transportation, decrease pollution, and reduce the incidence of childhood obesity, social isolation, diabetes, and heart disease. By including Complete Streets language in the Comprehensive Plan, the Village is promoting street design and land use policies that allow people to get around safely on foot, bicycle, or public transportation. The following Goals and Strategies are included in the 2002 Village of Sharon Springs Comprehensive Plan and support and promote Complete Streets concepts:

**TRANSPORTATION POLICY GUIDANCE**

**Housing Goal 2:** To ensure that new residences and subdivision of land is done in a manner consistent with the Village’s historical architecture and setting.

**Strategy 2.2:** Amend zoning and subdivision regulations so that amenities such as sidewalks, street trees and lighting are design and layout requirements of new subdivisions.

**Transportation Goal 1:** To implement traffic and road planning options that are consistent with the existing small town scale of streets in the Village.

**Strategy 1.1:** New street layout should result in streets that are interconnected in a grid or modified grid pattern, rather than cul-de-sacs.

**Strategy 1.2:** Develop street standards that allow for new residential roads to be built in a manner that does not result in over-built roads. For example, two-way residential streets, allowing parking on one side can have a 50 foot right of way with room for four foot sidewalks on each side, street trees, and about 24 feet of pavement.
Strategy 1.3: Ensure that all new roads have sidewalks and street trees.

Transportation Goal 2: Resolve issues relating to sight distance limitations, speeding, streetscape character, signage, pedestrian safety, and parking on New York State highways in the Village.

Strategy 2.1: Continue to open up and pursue lines of communication with Region 9 staff of NYS Department of Transportation (DOT).

Strategy 2.2: Work to reduce speeds through the Village by creating a more “village-like” streetscape along Route 20. Work closely with Region 9 staff of NYS DOT to reduce the number of lanes on Route 20 through the Village to two lanes (with a maximum of three going east up the hill) and use the extra space for on-street parking and tree-planting. New trees should be planted as close to the road as NYS DOT will allow. A streetscape design for Route 20 should be developed to provide for transitional elements that will enhance people’s perception of the Village. This design should include, where feasible, changes in pavement texture, more formal landscaping, street trees and sidewalks, enhanced lighting, and new village entrance symbols.

Strategy 2.3: Increase the number of pedestrian crosswalks on Routes 10 and 20. Explore the feasibility with NYS DOT of developing pedestrian islands to accommodate pedestrian crossings of Route 20. Include NYS DOT in planning for using the road and pedestrian system along state highways to enhance the connection between “upstreet” and “downstreet” locations. If possible, the pedestrian walkway across a street should be defined by a change in texture in the street.

Strategy 2.6: Increase local enforcement efforts to reduce speeding and traffic violations on Routes 20 and 10 and on village streets.

Strategy 2.7: Work with NYS DOT to choose and implement traffic calming devices that will work to slow traffic. These could include planting street trees, pedestrian crossing signs and markings, textured pavements, bike lanes and benches.
Transportation Goal 4: To provide a well maintained, safe and contiguous system of sidewalks throughout the Village.

Strategy 4.1: Work closely with NYS DOT engineers and landscape architects to re-design a pedestrian system of sidewalks along Routes 20 and 10. Enhancements should pay careful attention to providing not only for the sidewalk, but also for ensuring the pedestrian’s safety and regarding ADA accessibility. This would include adequate lighting and crosswalks. Ensure that any new sidewalks along Route 10 and 20 are continuous and that they follow through across driveways. Consider, where feasible, use of texturing of the sidewalk to create a more pleasurable walking experience. Concrete sidewalks can be scored and colored to simulate materials such as brick. Seek federal and state funding for enhancing the sidewalk network.

Strategy 4.3: Encourage use of street furniture to enhance use of the pedestrian network. This should include benches, waste containers, planters, and bicycle racks. Street furniture should be selected to ensure compatibility with the architecture of the surrounding buildings and the character of the area. The zoning code should be amended to ensure that street furniture is allowed and encouraged. Consider making street furniture a component of new commercial uses in the Village.

Transportation Goal 6: To develop and implement a road and pedestrian network that encourages and supports a variety of users including cyclists, and pedestrians.

Strategy 6.1: Identify locations in the Village that could be used for accommodating a bike/hike trail. Specifically explore locations such as along Brimstone Creek, and places where a trail could connect with sidewalks in the village.

Strategy 6.2: Develop a bike/hike trail system plan that delineates potential trails, funding sources, long term maintenance needs, and costs and explores landownership issues, insurance and safety considerations. The trail system should be a regional village/town effort. A Village or Village/Town sponsored committee would be appropriate to develop a draft plan to accommodate biking and hiking. Pursue local, state, federal and private funds for bicycle compatible improvement projects.
**Strategy 6.3:** Explore the feasibility of and work with NYS DOT to provide for a shared roadway system that allows cyclists in a bike lane. Provision of useable shoulders on local roads may be the most economical method for accommodating bicyclists along many of the Village’s streets. The “FHWA Selecting Roadway Treatments to Accommodate Bicycles” offers a variety of standards that can be used for roadway design that accommodates bikes.

**Strategy 6.4:** Once developed, explore methods of funding the adequate marking and maintenance of all bike routes.

**Strategy 6.5:** Provide bike racks in the business districts. As bike paths are developed, work to connect them with the business locations in the Village.

**Parks, Cultural and Recreational Resources Goal 2: To enhance the Village’s pedestrian environment.**

**Strategy 2.1:** Use Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Community Development Block Grants (HUD CDBG), TEA-21 (Transportation Enhancement Act), and other state and federal funding for construction of new, and replacement of old sidewalks.

**Strategy 2.2:** Require that sidewalks be constructed by all developers of new construction.

**Parks, Cultural and Recreational Resources Goal 3: To improve access to and opportunities for passive recreational uses.**

**Strategy 3.1:** The Village should work cooperatively with surrounding municipalities to develop a bike-hike trail and nature trails. Consider use of a shared roadway system for such biking along Route 10 and 20.

**Aesthetic Resources Goal 2: To protect the small village and historical character of Sharon Springs while allowing for new commercial and residential development.**

**Strategy 2.1:** Zoning and subdivision laws in the Village should be amended to ensure that new commercial and residential development is consistent with the traditional layout patterns. This includes setbacks from streets, building height, and build-to lines, and lot-layout. Where large buildings are proposed,
traditional character can be maintained by requiring facade breaks that honor traditional styles.

**Strategy 2.3:** Road standards for new roads and streets in the Village should be developed so that they are in keeping with rural and small community standards. The Village should ensure that any new road or street is not overbuilt with excess pavement or right-of-ways.

**Aesthetic Resources Goal 3: To improve the overall aesthetic quality of Routes 10 and 20 and Village streets.**

**Strategy 3.3:** Development of new sidewalks and repair of existing ones will improve the aesthetics along these routes.

**MODEL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN LANGUAGE**

The following model language to support/promote Complete Streets has been extracted from a report developed by the National Policy and Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN). The model language can be incorporated into the Village of Sharon Springs Comprehensive Plan when the Village commences a comprehensive plan update. The Village is encouraged to tailor the sample policy and action items to local needs, concerns, and conditions to strengthen the Comprehensive Plan.

**Sample Transportation Vision Statement**

*Transportation Vision Statement:* The community envisions a transportation system that encourages healthy, active living, promotes transportation options and independent mobility, increases community safety and access to healthy food, reduces environmental impact, mitigates climate change, and supports greater social interaction and community identity by providing safe and convenient travel along and across streets through a comprehensive, integrated transportation network for pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation riders and drivers, [insert other significant local users if desired, e.g. drivers of agricultural vehicles, emergency vehicles, freight, etc.] and people of all ages and abilities, including children, youth, families, older adults, and individuals with disabilities.

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6 Model Comprehensive Plan Language on Complete Streets, National Policy & Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN), February 2010
Sample Transportation Goals, Objectives and Policies

Although the 2002 Village of Sharon Springs Comprehensive Plan has many targeted Transportation System Goals and Strategies that support and promote Complete Streets concepts\(^7\), the following sample Goals, Objectives and Policies can strengthen the Comprehensive Plan. The Village is encouraged to tailor the sample statements to local needs, concerns, and conditions, and to identify the agency or department responsible for implementation:

**Sample Goal:** Provide safe and comfortable routes for walking, bicycling, and public transportation to increase use of these modes of transportation, enable convenient and active travel as part of daily activities, reduce pollution, and meet the needs of all users of the streets, including children, families, older adults, and people with disabilities.

**Sample Objective:** Integrate Complete Streets infrastructure and design features into street design and construction to create safe and inviting environments for all users to walk, bicycle, and use public transportation.

**Sample Policy:** In planning, designing, and constructing Complete Streets:

- Include infrastructure that promotes a safe means of travel for all users along the right of way, such as sidewalks, shared use paths, bicycle lanes, and paved shoulders.

- Include infrastructure that facilitates safe crossing of the right of way, such as accessible curb ramps, crosswalks, refuge islands, and pedestrian signals; such infrastructure must meet the needs of people with different types of disabilities and people of different ages.

- Ensure that sidewalks, crosswalks, public transportation stops and facilities, and other aspects of the transportation right of way are

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\(^7\) See the 2002 Village of Sharon Springs Comprehensive Plan, Section 3: The Transportation System.
compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and meet the needs of people with different types of disabilities, including mobility impairments, vision impairments, hearing impairments, and others. Ensure that an ADA Transition Plan includes a prioritization method for enhancements and revise if necessary.

- Prioritize incorporation of street design features and techniques that promote safe and comfortable travel by pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation riders, such as traffic calming circles, additional traffic calming mechanisms, narrow vehicle lanes, raised medians, dedicated transit lanes, transit priority signalization, transit bulb outs, road diets, high street connectivity, and physical buffers and separations between vehicular traffic and other users.

- Ensure use of these additional features that improve the comfort and safety of users:
  - Pedestrian-oriented signs, pedestrian-scale lighting, benches and other street furniture, bicycle parking facilities, and comfortable and attractive public transportation stops and facilities.
  - Street trees, landscaping, and planting strips, including native plants where possible, in order to buffer traffic noise and protect and shade pedestrians and bicyclists.

Sample Policy: As necessary, restructure and revise the zoning and subdivision codes, and other plans, laws, procedures, rules, regulations, guidelines, programs, templates, and design manuals, in order to integrate, accommodate, and balance the needs of all users in all street projects on public [and private] streets.

What is a Road Diet?

A Road Diet is an approach to redesigning a street to shift the balance of right-of-way (ROW) from design elements for motor vehicle use - travel lanes, turn lanes, etc. - to design elements for other users (pedestrians, bicyclists, etc.).

Many roads are unnecessarily wide given the volume and character of motor vehicle traffic, thus the need for a “diet.” The result of a road diet is that ROW can be reclaimed for design elements that are supportive of non-motorized users, such as:

- Bicycle lanes;
- New or wider sidewalks;
- Street trees;
- On-street parking; and
- Wider medians/turn lane.
Sample Policy: Develop or revise street standards and design manuals, including cross-section templates and design treatment details, to ensure that standards support and do not impede Complete Streets.

Example Cross Section Template for a Complete Street

Sample Objective: Plan and develop a comprehensive and convenient bicycle and pedestrian transportation network.

Sample Policy: Develop a long-term plan for a bicycle and pedestrian network that meets the needs of users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation riders, [insert other appropriate users if desired] and people of all ages and abilities, including children, youth, families, older adults, and individuals with disabilities.

Sample Policy: Conduct a demand analysis for each category of user, mapping locations that are already oriented to each mode of travel and type of user and those for which there is latent demand.

Sample Policy: Identify and prioritize necessary changes in order to implement the preferred network; prioritize neighborhoods with the greatest need and projects that significantly alleviate economic, social, racial, or ethnic inequities.

Sample Policy: Explore the use of non-standard locations and connections for bicycle, pedestrian, and public transportation facilities, such as easements, restored stream corridors, and railroad rights-of-way.
**Sample Policy:** Develop funding strategies for addressing additional needs; actively pursue funding from state, federal, and other sources.

**Sample Policy:** Explore imposing dedication requirements on new development to create paths and other Complete Streets infrastructure.

**Sample Policy:** Collaborate with the County, State and other appropriate local and regional agencies, to integrate bicycle, pedestrian, and public transportation facility planning into regional and local transportation planning programs and agencies to encourage connectivity between neighboring jurisdictions.
III. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Communities known for their high quality of life are walkable, bikeable and vibrant and the integration of land use and transportation is critical to the livability of a community and region. Ensuring Complete Streets are consistently provided within the community contributes to this high quality of life. Complete Streets may include elements such as defined pedestrian and bicycle spaces, street trees and benches, pedestrian scaled lighting, and transit stop shelters. These elements allow people to safely walk to the grocery store library, take the bus to school, or bike to the park. Such elements increase the capacity of the street network and positively impact the physical health and safety of the community.

The Laberge Group reviewed the Village of Sharon Springs Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Law and Subdivision Regulations for consistency with Complete Streets concepts and the following technical recommendations represent our professional planning opinion on how these laws could be updated to enable safe and efficient access for all users. The proposed changes to these regulations will help the Village promote a number of community benefits including enhanced quality of life, improved community health, reduced dependence on automobiles, and less reliance on fossil fuels.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE ZONING LAW

Article I, Section 1.3: Purposes: Add language such as “to ensure that the existing and future built environment promotes healthy active lifestyles, and provides optimal transportation accessibility and choices for its residents and visitors”.

Article III, Section 3.14: Additional Lot and Building Location Regulations: The strict area and yard requirements outlined in this section limit the Village’s ability to build nodal developments, and to congregate buildings closer together to conserve land and create a traditional village pattern and neighborhoods that are walkable and connected. Certain zoning districts may
warrant more flexibility within the area and yard requirements for the purposes of creating a distinct sense of place, as well as promoting healthier lifestyles.

Article IV, Section 4.1: Parking: The parking requirements and design standards should be examined to allow for greater flexibility and to encourage rear parking lots where appropriate to conserve land and encourage a more comfortable walking environment on the street. Article VII, Section 7.9.3 G allows for such flexibility, but there could be a slight contradiction between these sections.

Article VI, Section 6.8: Standards for Individual Special Uses: This section should be examined to, wherever possible, encourage special accommodations for the safe and convenient circulation of prospective vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic as a condition of approval, i.e., sidewalks, pathways, lighting, signage, landscaping, etc.

Article VII, Section 7.1: Commercial Site Plan Review: Add language to ensure that future commercial development is designed to promote healthier lifestyles, and provides Complete Streets that are safe, convenient and comfortable for all ages and abilities using any mode of transportation (motor vehicle, public transportation, foot, bicycle, etc).

Article XI, Definitions: The definition of “street” should refer not only to “vehicular traffic”, but facilities for all users, including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation users, to the extent appropriate for the land use or the context of the street classification.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

Article I, Section 3: Purpose, subsection A.5: Add language to ensure that future streets are built to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle traffic as well as vehicular traffic. “The proposed streets shall compose a convenient system conforming to the Village Plan, as such exists at the time, and shall be of such width, grade and location as to accommodate the safe and convenient circulation of prospective vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic, and to facilitate fire protection and other services that would need to be provided for the safety and convenience of all users.”

Article III, Section 14: Roadways, subsection A.2: Add language to ensure that future streets are built to support active living. “The arrangement of streets in a subdivision shall provide for the continuation, if appropriate, of residential streets in the surrounding area and be such as to compose a convenient system
both for the subdivision and connections to the existing highway system for vehicular, as well as pedestrian and bicycle traffic.”

**Article III, Section 14: Roadways, subsection B:** Add language to ensure that future roadways, especially major and collector roads are built to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle traffic as well as vehicular traffic. Minor changes to the roadway design standards can add important buffers between vehicles and pedestrians, encourage safer vehicle speeds, and promote active living. Design considerations for major, collector and minor roads should be added for shared pedestrian/bicycle lanes (paved shoulders), sidewalks with buffers, mid-block and at intersection crosswalks, bike lanes, “share the road” signs, sharrow (shared lane) markings, curb bulb outs or neck downs, on-street parallel and angled parking. Complete Streets are supportive of all users, “complete” with sidewalks, street trees, bike lanes, crosswalks, crossing medians, and other elements that help make the area more walkable, livable and healthy.

**Article III, Section 14: Roadways, subsection B.6:** The classification of roadways should further defined and include a cross-section illustrating the required width of the travel lanes, bike paths, shared pedestrian/bicycle paths, sidewalks, parking areas and planting strips. The maximum allowable design standard for Minor roads with a travel lane width of 14 feet could be considered excessively wide for a village road. Encouraging narrower travel lanes will provide opportunities for wider sidewalks, bike paths and other necessary design elements to enhance pedestrian access and safety.

**Article III, Section 14: Roadways, subsection C.10:** The design requirements for sidewalks should based upon the road classification, i.e., a major or collector road can accommodate a wider sidewalk, and new residential and commercial developments near schools can require wider sidewalks. Sidewalks should adhere to the Americans with Disability Act standards. This section calls for a four (4) foot wide sidewalk, which conflicts with the minimum five (5) foot standard outlined in the Zoning Law, Section 7.9.2-N: Sidewalks and Trees.
Article III, Section 15: Blocks: The design requirements for blocks should be more in line with the current pattern of development within the core of the Village. Distances between blocks in the area off Main Street between Union Street and Pavillon Ave are between 300 and 600 feet. As indicated in the 2002 Comprehensive Plan, a block length of 1,500 feet may result in neighborhoods that are much different in character from the traditional village pattern of development, and may not be as walkable.

Article III, Section 20: Street Lights, Trees, Signs and Screening: This section should include more detailed elements language on the need for pedestrian-scaled street lighting and landscaping strips and/or medians that are designed for the purpose of accommodating the safety, comfort, and convenience of pedestrians and bicyclists.

Appendix C: Definitions: The definition of “street” should refer not only to “vehicular traffic”, but facilities for all users, including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation users to the extent appropriate for the land use or the context of the street classification.