

# Complete Streets Improve Access to Physical Activity in York City, Pennsylvania

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## At A Glance

To improve access to physical activity in York City, Eat Play Breathe York (EPBY) educated city leaders about elements of Complete Streets. Complete Streets principles enable people to move through a city, no matter their age, ability, or transportation choice. Features include clearly marked bike lanes and crosswalks. York City Council created a Complete Streets policy in 2012. Now all roads must safely meet the needs of non-motorists, and residents have more opportunities to bike and walk.



## Public Health Challenge

According to the York City Bureau of Health and the 2012 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), 44% of adults are overweight or obese and 79% are not regularly physically active. Because weight gain and lack of physical activity put people at even greater risk for chronic conditions like heart disease and diabetes, residents need to change their practices. Adding physical activity to a person's daily routine isn't as simple as joining a gym. According to the most

recent US Census Bureau figures, more than 36% of York City's population is below poverty level. As that number is on the rise, people need affordable options for physical activity right outside their door. To address this challenge, EPBY was formed in 2010. The coalition includes representatives from the nonprofit, faith, business, education, government, and health care sectors of York City.

## Find Out More

Planning and starting the Complete Streets policy and environmental improvements will help increase physical activity access within our city. Your support in raising awareness of these transportation options will help motivate others to walk and bike in York City, which will help improve the health of our community.

*The implementation of a Complete Streets policy and environmental improvements are helping to improve the health of our city residents and visitors. York City will continue to work to make our roadways and walkways safe and accessible for all users.*  
- Jim Gross

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### Approach

One of EPBY's first projects was to bring Complete Streets to the city. These are roads and walkways that are designed with all forms of transportation and users in mind. Complete Streets make it easier for motorists, bike riders, pedestrians, public transportation users, and others to travel safely and comfortably throughout a city. Complete Streets began in August 2012.

### Results

With the addition of Complete Streets, more than 43,718 residents and thousands of visitors now have more opportunities to safely move throughout the 5-square-mile city. EPBY worked with the community leaders to add 24 new crosswalks, 15 Safe Routes to School signs, Safe Routes sidewalk stencils on 4 city blocks, 7 Yield to Pedestrian signs, and 4.5 miles of shared and bike-only lanes on main roads. Other changes include 12 curb extensions that slow traffic by widening the sidewalk and narrowing the road where pedestrians cross, 1 bike loop detector to extend traffic light changes for cyclists, and 15 bike parking improvements. EPBY also started a Bike to School Day in May and Walk to School Day in October. An average of 1,500 students participate in these events with local leaders.

### What's Next

To build on this success and ensure changes last, York City will review all future roadway projects for elements of Complete Streets and provide design guidelines when necessary. Projects must describe how construction will serve all users, better connect the city and improve the environment. A master plan has been drafted to add more bike routes that connect people to parks, schools, and a trail that leads to Maryland, by 2030. EPBY will also continue to lead bike and pedestrian safety workshops at schools and community events. Grants received by the York YMCA, City of York, York City School District, Lincoln Charter School, and other partners support these EPBY efforts.