

FACT SHEET: AN ACT RELATIVE TO ACTIVE STREETS AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

S 68/H 3091, sponsored by Senator Chandler and Representative Lewis

PURPOSE OF THIS BILL

The presence of active transportation infrastructure in a community encourages residents to lead more active, healthier lifestyles. “Complete streets” are streets designed to allow for more trips to be taken via active transportation such as walking and cycling. The purpose of this bill is to create a program that encourages cities and towns across Massachusetts to routinely include contextually appropriate complete streets design elements in locally funded road projects. By providing additional accommodations for active transportation, the Active Streets Certification Program will help the state reach the goal set by MassDOT to triple the number of walking, cycling, and public transportation trips while simultaneously addressing public health goals related to increased activity. Communities that are certified by this program by adopting certain policies and procedures would be eligible to receive a modest amount of additional local transportation funding, thereby incentivizing these actions.

WHAT THIS LEGISLATION DOES

- Certifies municipalities as “Active Streets Communities” if they have met the following criteria:
 1. Adopt a complete streets bylaw, ordinance, or administrative policy in a manner which shall be approved by MassDOT and include at least one public hearing; such policy shall, at a minimum, identify the body, individual, or entity responsible for carrying out such policies. This bylaw, ordinance, or policy should reflect the municipality’s commitment to routinely including infrastructure for active transportation in its locally funded road projects.
 2. Coordinate with MassDOT to confirm the accuracy of a baseline pedestrian and bicycle accommodations inventory in order to prioritize projects.
 3. Identify procedures to follow when conducting municipal road repairs, upgrades, or expansion projects on public rights-of-way to incorporate complete streets elements.
 4. Confirm the existence of a review process for all private development proposals to ensure complete streets components are incorporated into new construction.
 5. Set a municipal goal for an increased mode share for walking, cycling, and public transportation where applicable to be met within five years and develop a program to reach that goal, and shall submit an annual progress report to MassDOT.
- Incentivizes the routine inclusion of complete streets design elements in locally funded road projects
- Leverages modest amount of state funding to encourage municipalities to adopt policies that meet multiple statewide policy goals
- Encourages collaboration between municipalities and MassDOT to address gaps in local pedestrian and bicycle transportation networks

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