

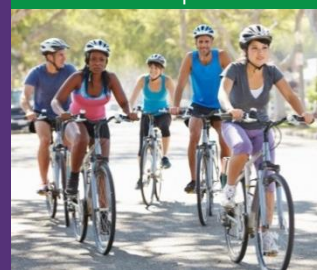
Walkable streets



Elected officials announce Complete Streets funding



Active transportation



## LYFE Coalition Leads Movement for Walkable, Bikeable Streets in Yonkers

“We applaud our elected officials, Program Staff and Community Partners for working together to develop a much needed Complete Streets policy in the city of Yonkers.”

Dr. Jim Bostic  
Executive Director  
Nepperhan Community  
Center, Inc.

### Challenge

Everyone, regardless of age, ability, income, race, or ethnicity, should have safe and convenient access to community destinations and public places—whether walking, wheeling, driving, bicycling, or taking public transportation. Prior to Nepperhan Community Center receiving funding from the New York State Department of Health through the *Creating Healthy Schools and Communities* initiative, many streets in Yonkers were unsafe and inaccessible, making it unappealing and even impossible to walk and bike through Yonkers neighborhoods.

### Solution

The Yonkers **Living Your Fullest Everyday (LYFE) Coalition**, with leadership from the Yonkers Family YMCA and the Nepperhan Community Center, decided it was time to address this problem. Buoyed by the State’s commitment to Complete Streets, they prioritized passing a policy in Yonkers in 2016. Complete Streets are accessible to all people with all abilities, and provide an opportunity to engage in inclusive, community-wide health promotion.

The LYFE Coalition hosted community listening sessions, where Tri-State Transportation provided information about Complete Streets, and laid out actionable next steps for passing a policy. Just a few months after their initial community listening session, the **LYFE Coalition and City Council were able to produce draft Complete Streets policy language**: an ordinance to require new projects to adhere to Complete Streets principles. The policy was approved on September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and will **impact all 200,000 people who live in Yonkers**.

Type of Change: Policy

Expected Outcome: Increased physical activity, increased community cohesion

Setting: Community

Reach: 200,000 residents in Yonkers

## Lessons Learned

How was the LYFE Coalition able to achieve such large and rapid change? A number of factors were critical to their success:

- **Buy-in from elected officials.** A major factor in pushing these changes forward has been the support from Mayor Mike Spano, City Council President Liam McLaughlin, Minority Leader Michael Sabatino, along with City Council members, staff and City Department leaders. All are supporters of the Yonkers LYFE Coalition and were advocates for Complete Streets legislation. The ordinance received bi-partisan support and passed unanimously!
- **Coalition infrastructure.** The LYFE Coalition was originally established under a former CDC Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) grant awarded to the Yonkers Family YMCA. When the REACH grant ended, LYFE remained committed to leading community change efforts. The Coalition has broad membership from businesses, schools, community-based organizations, faith-based institutions, healthcare providers, elected officials, and community members.
- **Community engagement.** The LYFE Coalition mobilized community support for Complete Streets through a series of community educational seminars. At these sessions, community members were able to provide their input on their vision for a safer, more accessible Yonkers.
- **Credible content experts in Complete Streets.** The LYFE Coalition engaged Tri-State Transportation to support their community engagement sessions, providing a credible voice with substantial experience in Complete Streets. They were also able to suggest sample policies for benchmarking and various Complete Streets resources.

## Achieving Sustainable Success

Adopting a Complete Streets ordinance is a huge first-step on a journey toward making Yonkers a healthier community. Follow-up plans include additional walking audits, understanding the root causes of pedestrian accidents throughout the city, as well as prioritizing bike lanes and Accessible Pedestrian Signals.

“As a sponsor of the City’s proposed complete streets ordinance, I am happy to collaborate with city departments and the community at large as we work toward, a safer, cleaner and more orderly transportation system. Complete streets will provide for the safety and accessibility of everyone.”

*Liam McLaughlin  
City Council President*



Community members participate in Complete Streets forum



Creating Healthy Schools  
and Communities