

The Many Benefits of Complete Streets

March 2015



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**National Complete
Streets Coalition**

What are Complete Streets?



Complete Streets are streets for everyone, no matter who they are or how they travel.



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What are Complete Streets?

Safe Comfortable Convenient



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Complete Streets benefit all users



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Complete Streets policies

Ensure that the entire right-of-way is planned, designed, constructed, operated, and maintained to provide safe access for all users



Benefits: Older Adults

By 2025, nearly 1 in 5 Americans will be 65 or older.

About ½ of all non-drivers over the age of 65 would like to get out more often.



Benefits: Older Adults

Complete Streets =
better design for
older folks driving
and walking.

Complete Streets =
staying active and
involved in
communities.



Benefits: Children

More than 1/3 of kids and teens are overweight or obese.

Unhealthy weight gain brings higher risk for pre-diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, sleep apnea, and joint problems.



Benefits: Children



Dedicated, safe spaces for bicycling and walking help kids be active and gain independence.

Being physically active helps kids learn and improves their mental health



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Benefits: Children

In a five-state study, infrastructure improvements and promotional programs increased walking by 45%

In New York City, areas with Safe Routes to School programs had a 44% lower pedestrian injury rate in 5 to 19 year olds.

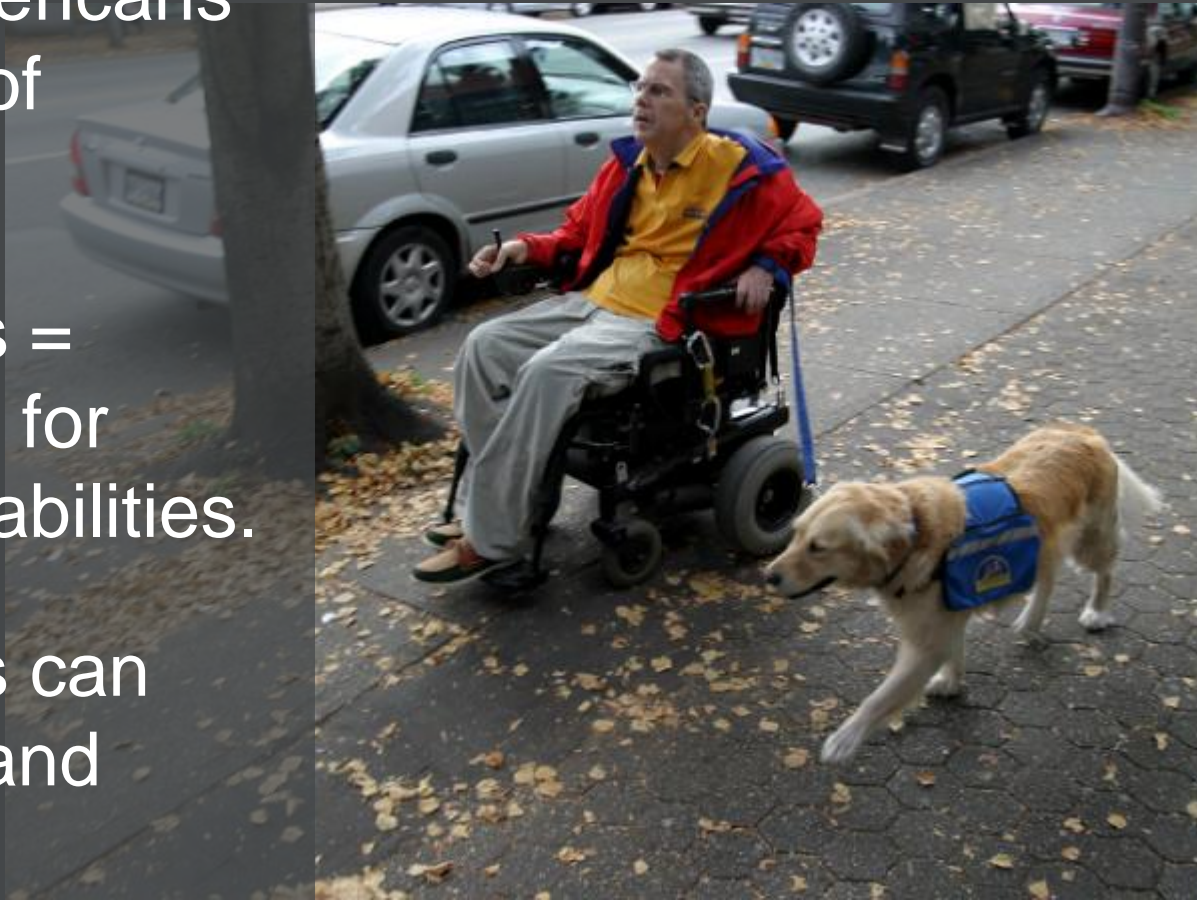


Benefits: People with Disabilities

Almost 1 in 5 Americans have some type of disability.

Complete Streets = attention to detail for travelers with disabilities.

Complete Streets can reduce isolation and dependence.



Benefits: Transit

Connect transit to work, to shops, to schools, to homes through appropriate planning and design for transit users.

Create smooth, predictable transit trips by planning and designing for transit vehicles.



Benefits: Transit

Complete Streets = easier to take transit.



Streets can benefit communities

Improve safety

Better health

Stronger
economies

Reduce costs

Provide choices

Smarter growth



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Benefits: Safety

There were 32,719 traffic fatalities in the U.S. in 2013. Of these fatalities:

21,132 were people in cars

4,735 were people walking

743 were people on bicycles

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: Fatality Analysis Reporting System 2010



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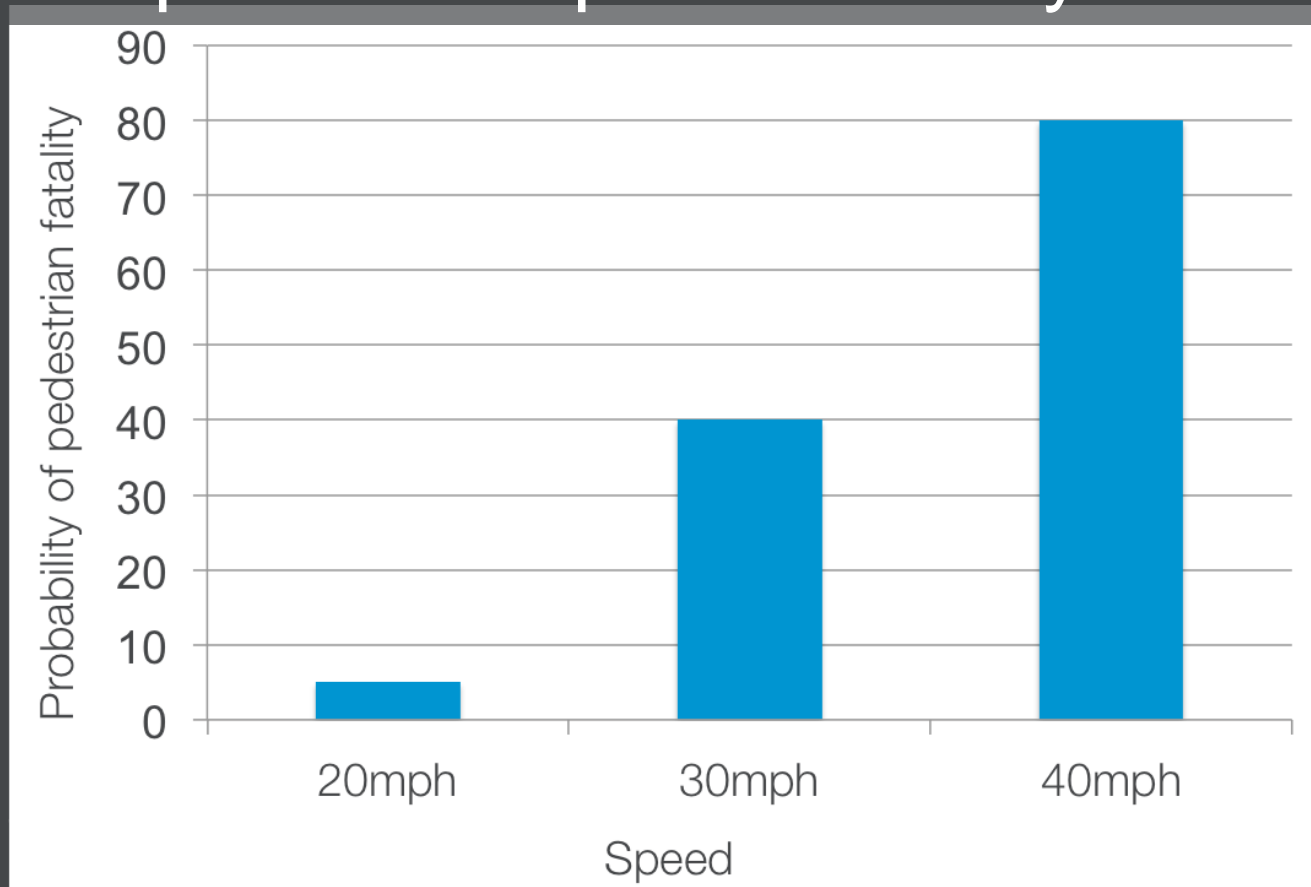
Benefits: Safety

More than 40% of pedestrian fatalities occur where there is no available crosswalk.



Benefits: Safety

Slower speeds = improved safety



W.A. Leaf and D.F. Preusser, "Literature Review on Vehicle Travel Speeds and Pedestrian Injuries Among Selected Racial/Ethnic Groups," US Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (1999).

Benefits: Safety

Pedestrian crashes

↓ **88%** with sidewalks

↓ **69%** with hybrid beacon

↓ **39%** with medians

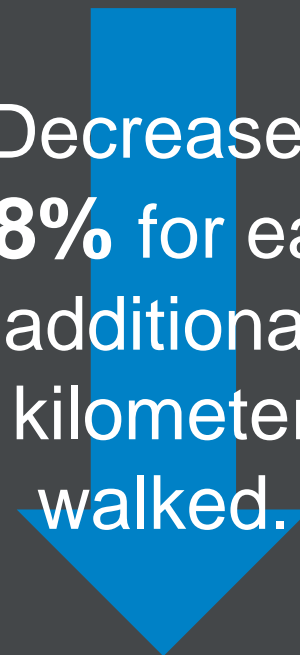
↓ **29%** with road conversions

Benefits: Health

Risk of obesity:



Increases
6% for each
hours spent
in a car.

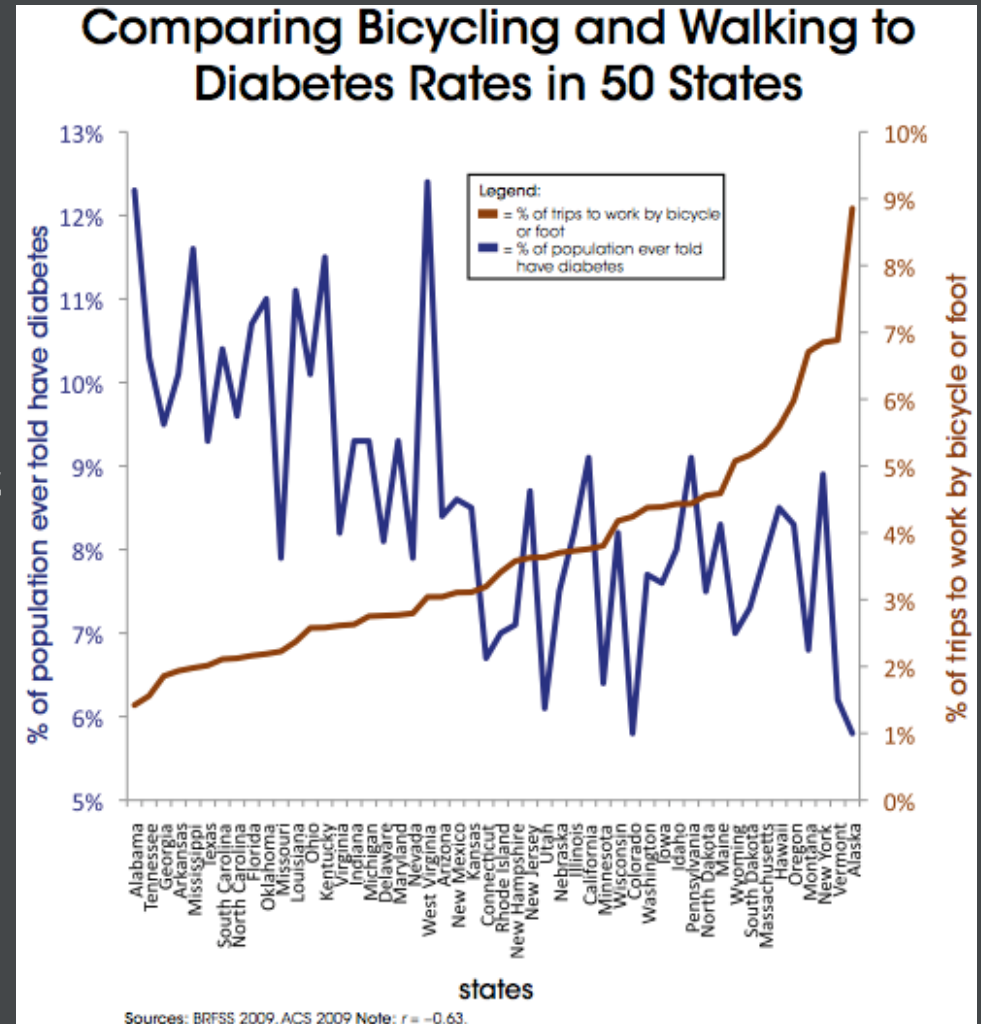


Decreases
4.8% for each
additional
kilometer
walked.

Frank, L., et. al. (2004). Obesity Relationships with Community Design, Physical Activity, and Time Spent in Cars. American Journal of Preventative Medicine 27(2).

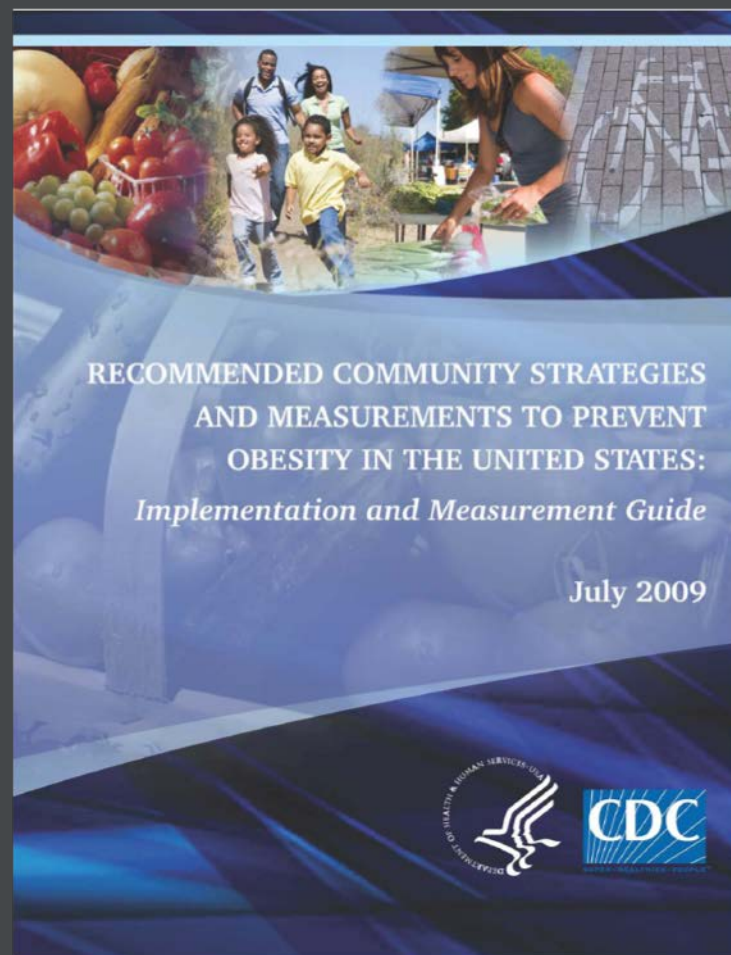
Benefits: Health

States with the lowest levels of biking and walking have, on average, the highest rates of obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure.



Benefits: Health

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend adoption of Complete Streets policies as a **strategy to prevent obesity.**



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Benefits: Health

Women who walk or bike 30 minutes a day have a lower risk of breast cancer.

A 30-minute round-trip bicycle commute is associated with better mental health in men.

People who live in walkable neighborhoods get more exercise than those who do not.



Benefits: Health

One third of regular transit users meet the minimum daily requirement for physical activity during their commute.



Benefits: Economy

Washington, DC: Barracks Row/8th Street SE



\$8 million public investment in streetscape improvements 2003-2004

\$8 million in private investment in following two years



32 new business establishments

\$80,000 in sales tax annually

Benefits: Economy

Lancaster, California:

- Reconstruction
- Changed signal timing
- Added landscape
- Created center “rambla” area
- \$10 million public investment



Benefits: Economy

Lancaster, California:

- Reduced speeding
- Fewer crashes
- 50 new businesses
- 800 new jobs
- Vacancy rate: just 4%
- Sales tax revenue: up 26%



Benefits: Economy

After 2007 redesign:

49% ↑

in retail
sales on 9th
Ave in
Manhattan.

49% ↓

in commercial
vacancies in
Union Square.



Benefits: Economy



Benefits: Job Creation

Under the 2009 stimulus:

Transit projects = **71%** more jobs per dollar than road projects.

Every \$1 billion spent on
highway projects = 2.4 million job hours
transit projects = 4.2 million job hours



Benefits: Job Creation

For each \$1 million invested:

- Bicycle projects = 11.4 jobs created
- Pedestrian projects = 9.6 jobs created
- Auto-only project = 7.8 jobs created



Benefits: Economy

In most metro areas, every +1 point on the Walk Score scale =  of \$500-\$3,000 in home value.

Walkable commercial neighborhoods in Washington, D.C. have 75% higher office rents than drivable, suburban neighborhoods.



Benefits: Economy

Millennials want to work in areas with high quality transportation and high quality of life.

Businesses that encourage active transportation attract young professionals and better business.



Benefits: Economy

“Young people do not want to work in office parks anymore... We’re seeing this big change in this country. **It’s not political...it’s more generational...** This is where we need to think very differently, because if you don’t, you will be left behind.”

-Mitchell Silver, Former Chief Planner, Raleigh, N.C.



Benefits: Economy

“Our employees are healthier, happier, and more productive. We’re attracting some of the best talent in the industry. And, most important, we’re attracting new and exciting clients to fuel the bottom line.”

—Christine Fruechte, President and CEO, Cole + McVoy



Benefits: Reduce Costs

“The advantage of inserting a dialogue about all users at the earliest stages of project development is that it provides the designers and engineers the best opportunity to create solutions at the best price.”

- James Simpson, Former Commissioner, NJDOT



Benefits: Reduce Costs

500 miles of Washington state highway system are 'main streets.'

Over ten years, 47% of projects on these streets had scope, schedule, or budget changes resulting in delay.



Benefits: Reduce Costs

Pilot project consulted community during planning, resulted in Complete Streets approach.

In 10 previous years, a Complete Streets process would have saved an average of \$9 million per Main Street project – about 30% – in reduced scope, schedule, and budget changes.



<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/research/reports/fullreports/733.1.pdf>



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Benefits: Reduce Costs

Lee County, Florida

- Re-examined 5 road-widening projects
- Found widenings unnecessary
- = \$58.5 million savings



Benefits: Reduce Costs

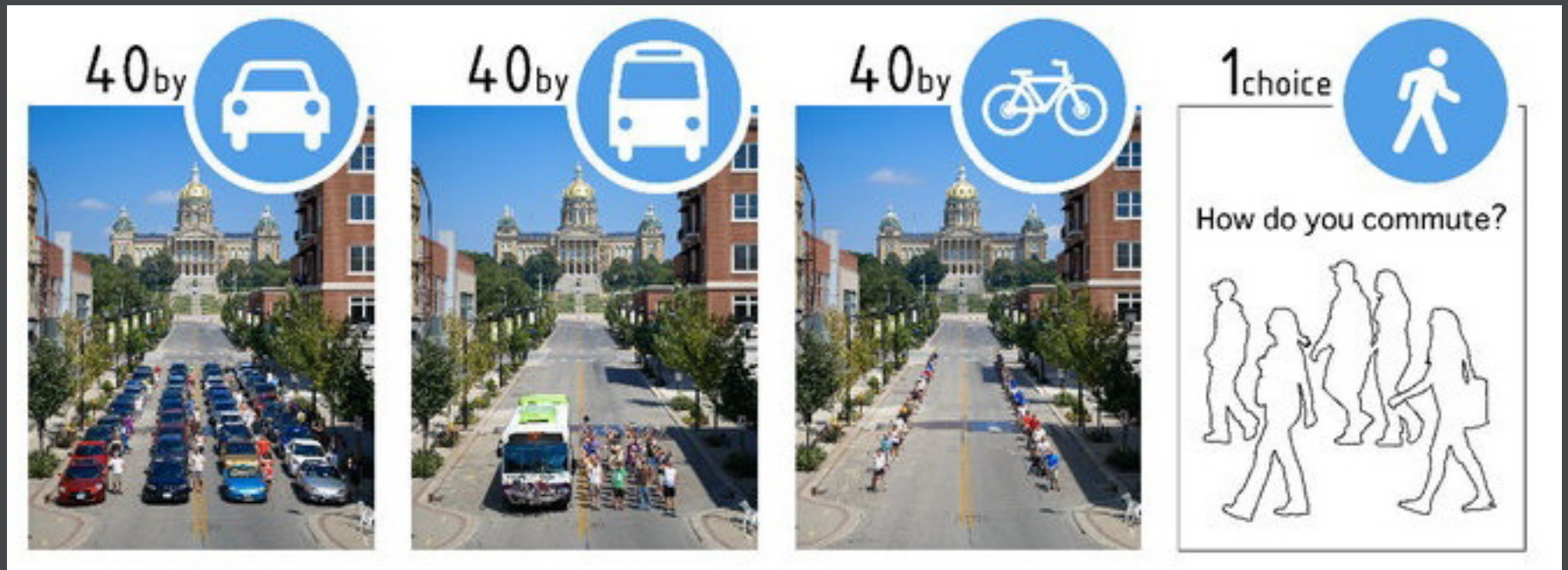
Richfield, Minnesota road needed replacement after sewer work. Priced at \$6 million to replace road as is.

MnDOT re-evaluated transportation needs and found no need for wide roadway. Reallocated road space for all users, saved \$2 million

“Feels like home”



Benefits: Capacity



Benefits: Provide Choices

Improvements in 4 communities over 4 years

- = 22% ↑ in walking overall
- = 49% ↑ in bicycling overall
- = 23.1% ↑ in utilitarian trips made by foot
- = 4.7% ↑ in utilitarian trips made by bicycle

16 million miles traveled on foot or bicycle that would have otherwise been driven in **one year**.



Benefits: Provide Choices

Residents are 65% more likely to walk in a neighborhood with sidewalks.



Cities with more bike lanes per square mile have higher levels of bicycle commuting.



Benefits: Provide Choices

Adding bike lanes in Marin County, CA =

↑ 366% bicyclists
on weekdays

↑ 540% bicyclists
on weekends



Benefits: Provide Choices

Twenty years of consistent investment in a has lead to measurable results in Boulder, CO:

Transit use is twice the national average.

Walking commutes are 3 times the national average.

Bicycle commutes are 21 times the national average.

2008-10 American Community Survey 3-Year Average



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Benefits: Provide Choices

Transportation is second largest expense for families: ~18% of budget

Low income households can spend up to 55% of budget on transportation.

Complete Streets give people more control over their expenses.



Benefits: Provide Choices



“It breaks my heart when our transportation systems fails anyone in America because I know how much people depend on it...Part of how we measure a good, safe, decent place to live has to do with access to transportation.”

— *Anthony Foxx, Secretary of Transportation, U.S. DOT*



Benefits: Livable Communities

Walkable communities =
happier communities

Residents of walkable
communities:

- are more likely to be socially engaged and trusting
- report being in good health and happy more often



Shannon H. Rogers, et al. Examining Walkability and Social Capital as Indicators of Quality of Life at the Municipal and Neighborhood Scales. (2010)



Benefits: Livable Communities

"Livability means being able to take your kids to school, go to work, see a doctor, drop by the grocery or post office, go out to dinner and a movie, and play with your kids at the park—all without having to get in your car."

— Ray LaHood, Former
Secretary of Transportation,
U.S. DOT



Complete and Green Streets



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Benefits: Cleaner Air

Transportation accounts for **nearly 1/3** of all greenhouse gas emissions.

Switching to walking or bicycling for short trips = **reduce CO2 emissions by 12 to 22 million tons/year.**



Benefits: Cleaner Water

Many elements of street design, construction, and operation can achieve both Complete Streets that work for all travelers and 'green' streets that improve environmental sustainability.



For more information

- Model policies & reports
 - *Best Complete Streets Policies*
 - *Local Policy Workbook*
- Implementation resources
- Latest news

www.completestreets.org

www.smartgrowthamerica.org

National Complete Streets Coalition Steering Committee

AARP

AECOM

Alliance for Biking & Walking

America Walks

American Planning Association

APTA

American Society of Landscape
Architects

Association of Pedestrian and
Bicycle Professionals

Institute of Transportation
Engineers

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Smart Growth America is the only national organization dedicated to researching, advocating for and leading coalitions to bring smart growth practices to more communities nationwide.

www.smartgrowthamerica.org

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