


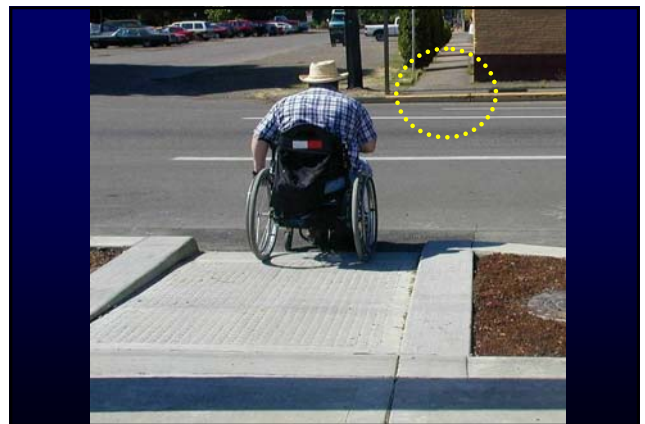
Complete Streets: What are they and why should we care

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What is a Complete Street?



A Complete Street is safe, comfortable and convenient for travel via automobile, foot, bicycle, and transit



We know how to build correctly for all users



Yet many roads are built like this



Recently completed IL 64 expansion with destinations on both sides of the road. Can you spot the pedestrian?



What is a Complete Streets policy?

A complete streets policy ensures that the entire right of way is planned, designed and operated for all users.



What is a Complete Streets policy?

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Complete streets policies provide for:

- Pedestrians
- Bicyclists
- Transit
- Motorists
- Travelers of all ages and abilities



US Access Board

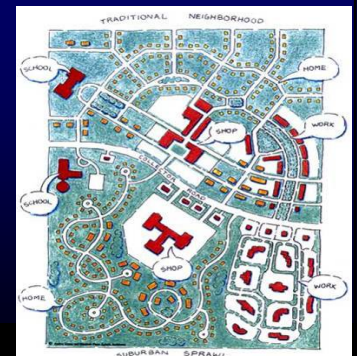
Why have a complete streets policy?

- To make the needs of all users the **default** for **everyday** transportation planning practices



Why have a complete streets policy?

- To gradually create a complete network of roads that serve all users



Why have a complete streets policy?

- To shift transportation investments so they create better streets *now*



Why have a complete streets policy?

- To save money: Retrofits cost more than getting it right the first time

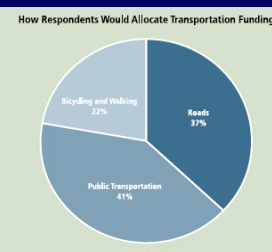


Who wants Complete Streets?

- Most Americans would rather drive less and walk more
- Transit is growing faster than population or driving
- About one-third of Americans don't drive:
 - 21% of Americans over 65
 - Children under 16
 - Low income Americans can't afford to drive

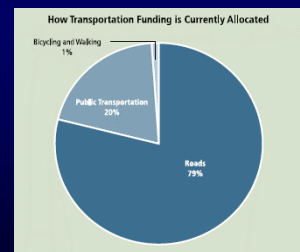


Americans want complete streets



Roads
Public Transportation
Bike/walk

37%
41%
27%



Roads
Public Transportation
Bike/walk

79%
20%
1%

From Active Transportation for America: the case for Increased federal investment in bicycling and walking. RTC 2008. National transportation poll commissioned by Transportation for America, fielded by Harris Interactive from December 1-19, 2007.

New National Poll

- 47% of older Americans say it is unsafe to cross a major street near their home
- 56% express strong support for adoption of complete streets policies



Planning Complete Streets for an Aging America, AARP Public Policy Institute (PPI), 2009



Benefits: Older Americans

- 21% over 65 do not drive
- More than 50% of non-drivers **stay at home** on a given day because they lack transportation options
- 54% of older Americans living in inhospitable neighborhoods say they'd walk and ride more often if things improved



Benefits: Health

- Americans move... without moving
- 60% of adults are at risk for diseases associated with inactivity:
 - Obesity
 - Diabetes
 - High blood pressure
 - Other chronic diseases



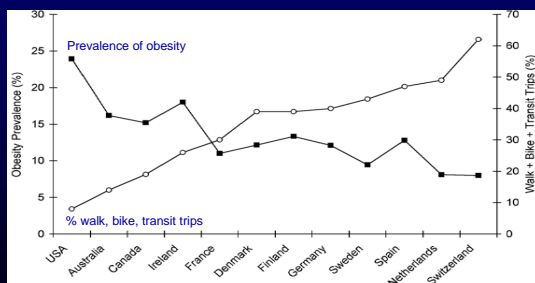
Benefits: Physical activity

- Residents are more likely to walk in a neighborhood with sidewalks
- Cities with more bike lanes have higher levels of bicycling
- 1/3 of regular transit users meet minimum daily physical activity requirement during their commute



Benefits: physical activity

- It makes a difference!



Source: *Journal of Physical Activity and Health* 2008, 5, 795-814.
Walking, Cycling, and Obesity Rates in Europe, North America, and Australia
David R. Bassett, Jr., John Pucher, Ralph Buehler, Dixie L. Thompson, and Scott E. Crouter



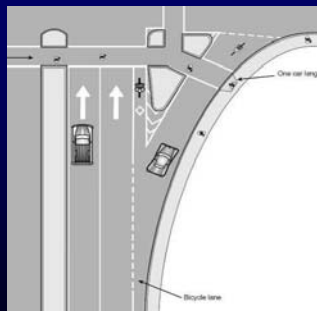
Benefits: safety

- Sidewalks reduce pedestrian crashes 88%
- Medians reduce crashes 40%
- Road diets reduce crashes 29%
- Countdown signals reduce crashes 25%



Benefits: Safety

- Intersections designed for pedestrians can reduce pedestrian risk by 28%



Benefits: People with disabilities

- Improved mobility for disabled people and reduced need for expensive paratransit service



Benefits: Better use of transit funds



A year of paratransit service for a daily commuter: \$38,500



Making a transit stop accessible: \$7,000-\$58,000



Source: Maryland Transit Administration

Benefits: The environment

- Fewer emissions
- Less noise pollution
- Less wear and tear on our roads
- Less need to widen roads



Benefits: Reduced traffic

- Trips in metro areas:
 - 50% — less than three miles
 - 28% — less than one mile:
 - 65% of trips under one mile are now taken by automobile



Source: National Household Travel Survey

Benefits: Economic activity

- Well designed multi-modal streets
 - Increase home values
 - Revitalize commercial areas
 - People can leave their car at home



Benefits: Your wallet

- Transportation is the 2nd largest expense for most American households, and costs are rising
- Complete streets let people leave their cars at home



How do Complete Streets change the built environment?



Before

After



Complete Streets policies change intersection design

From an intersection that looks like this...



Complete Streets policies change intersection design

... to one that looks like this.



Complete Streets policies change bicycling



Complete Streets policies change bicycling



Complete Streets policies change transit



Complete Streets policies change transit



Complete Streets policies change accessibility



Complete Streets policies change accessibility



Complete Streets policies and trails

- Streets provide **access** to trails
- Complete streets and trails can form a **comprehensive** non-motorized network
- Complete Streets take pressure off **overcrowded** trails



Complete Streets is NOT:

- A design **prescription**
- A mandate for **immediate** retrofit
- A **silver bullet**; other initiatives must be addressed:
 - *Land use (proximity, mix of uses, density)*
 - *Environmental concerns*
 - *Reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)*
 - (but complete streets will help!)



What does a complete street look like?

- One size doesn't fit all:
 - Complete Streets doesn't mean every street has sidewalks, bike lanes and transit



What does a complete street look like?



There is no magic formula

The many types of Complete Streets



Safe Routes to School

The many types of Complete Streets



Shoulder on rural roads

The many types of Complete Streets



Busy multi-modal thoroughfares

The many types of Complete Streets



Transit routes

The many types of Complete Streets



Suburban thoroughfares

The many types of Complete Streets



Residential skinny streets

The many types of Complete Streets



Low traffic streets

The many types of Complete Streets



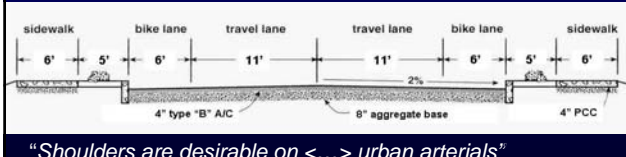
Historic Main Street

What do the design guides tell us?

The AASHTO "Green Book" states:

*"Sidewalks are **integral parts** of city streets"*

Not added to streets — part of the street



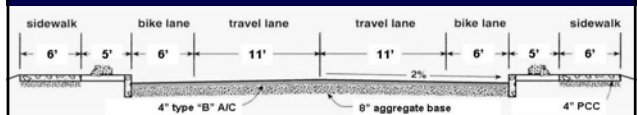
"Shoulders are desirable on <...> urban arterials"

Bike lanes are shoulders reserved for bicycle use!

AASHTO: American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
Green Book: A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets

Permission

- Many transportation engineers and planners know how to build good streets; they're seeking permission/support/direction to do so



Complete Streets and Context Sensitive Solutions

- Context sensitivity has focused primarily on surrounding physical context: land use, environment, nature, etc.
 - Less focus on users of the street or road
- Complete Streets focuses on people: Bicyclists, pedestrians, transit users, etc. are more than "context"



Illustration: AARP

Complete Streets

- Are sensitive to the community
- Serve adjacent land uses
- Serve all who potentially will use the street



Status Nationally

- In 2008, 20 communities adopted CS policies.
- The 100 mark was reached in 2009!
- Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Congresswoman Doris Matsui (D, CA-5) introduced the Complete Streets Act of 2009 in March
- Large percentage of complete streets workshops are sponsored by health organizations



What about funding?

- Complete streets is about using **existing resources** differently:
 - STP, CMAQ, TE, State, Bond measures, gas tax, sales taxes, and now the stimulus dollars... the usual suspects
- While retrofit funding is important, it is not necessary to get started
- **Additional** funding is not needed



A Complete Streets Policy

... ensures that all users of the transportation system, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users as well as children, older individuals, and individuals with disabilities, are able to travel safely and conveniently on streets and highways.



Complete Streets Resources

www.completestreets.org



- Fact Sheets
- Monthly policy news
- Policy examples
- Complete Streets Implementation Workshops (through APBP)
- Coming: Best Practices Manual
- Join the Coalition!

