

**NATIONAL POLICY & LEGAL ANALYSIS NETWORK  
TO PREVENT CHILDHOOD OBESITY**

# Creating Pedestrian Friendly Streets

## *Policy Tools*



Sara Zimmerman, JD



# Why Do Some Streets Encourage Walking?



# While Others Don't?



# Pedestrians Need Some Key Things:

- Convenient access
- Physical and mental comfort
- Safety (from crime and traffic)



# Policies that Promote Walkable and Bikeable Streets

- Complete streets policies
- Zoning & subdivision code revision
- Bike/pedestrian plans
- Good policies & priorities for **metropolitan planning organizations**
- **Basic traffic laws** that favor and protect pedestrians and bicyclists



# complete streets

***What's the basic idea?***

# A complete street is...

*a street that is safe, comfortable, and convenient for everyone using it – pedestrians, bicyclists, cars, public transportation riders, people with disabilities, and people of all ages.*



**COMMENT:** In defining “Street Project,” a municipality can use the following clause to reference and include the terms and definitions that are used to describe local street projects (e.g. capital project, major maintenance project, annual maintenance projects): “as well as [insert local project terms].”

(d) “Users” mean individuals that use Streets, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motor vehicle drivers, public transportation riders and drivers, [insert other significant local users if desired, e.g. drivers of agricultural vehicles, emergency vehicles, or freight] and people of all ages and abilities, including children, youth, families, older adults, and individuals with disabilities.

**Sec. [ \_\_\_\_ (\*3) ]. REQUIREMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE ENSURING SAFE TRAVEL.**

(a) [ Insert appropriate agencies, such as Department of Transportation, Department of Public Works, Department of Planning ] shall make Complete Streets practices a routine part of everyday operations, shall approach every transportation project and program as an opportunity to improve public [ and private ] Streets and the transportation network for all Users, and shall work in coordination with other

- Make complete streets practices a “routine part of everyday operations”
- Ensure that every new street and street project enables “reasonably safe travel” for all users

(b) Every Street Project on public [ or private ] Streets shall incorporate Complete Streets Infrastructure sufficient to enable reasonably safe travel along and across the right of way for each category of Users; provided, however, that such infrastructure may be excluded, upon written approval by [ insert senior manager, such as City Manager or the head of an appropriate agency ], where documentation and data indicate that:

**COMMENT:** This provision, which requires that street projects on new or existing streets create Complete Streets, is a fundamental component of a commitment to Complete Streets. This clause provides crucial accountability in the exceptions process by requiring documentation, a transparent decision-making process, and written approval by a specified official.



# Flexibility



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APPENDIX A  
**Findings for Complete  
Streets Laws and  
Resolutions**

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**Model State/Regional  
Resolutions on  
Complete Streets**

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public health  
law & policy

**Model Comprehensive  
Plan Language on  
Complete Streets**

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**Model Local Ordinance  
on Complete Streets**

Developed by the National Policy & Legal Analysis Network  
to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN), a project of  
Public Health Law & Policy (PHLP)

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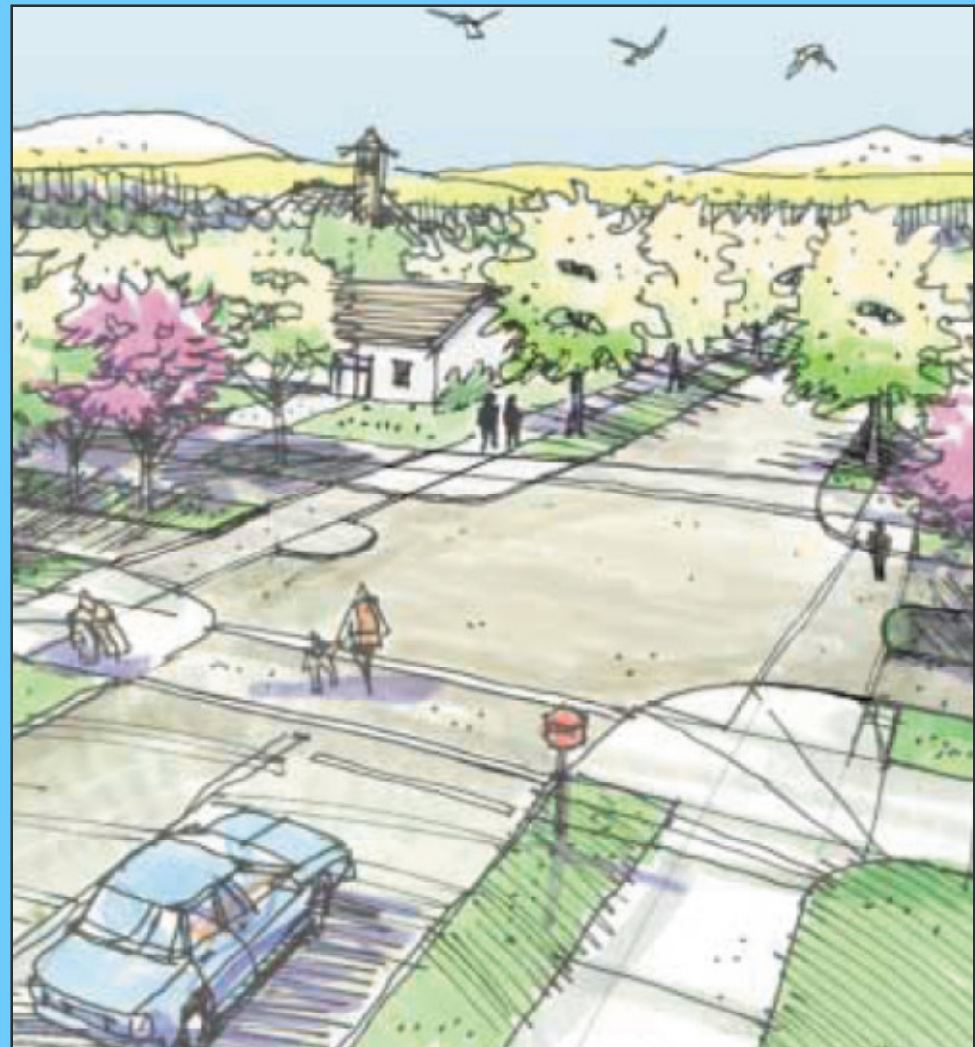
# Revising Zoning & Subdivision Codes

***What's the basic idea?***

# Municipal Law: zoning/subdivision/land development codes

Detailed local laws with requirements for:

- building use, design, and location
- how streets and neighborhoods must be built



# Pedestrian Friendly Code Directory

The screenshot shows the NPLAN website interface. At the top left is the NPLAN logo with the text 'NATIONAL POLICY & LEGAL ANALYSIS NETWORK TO PREVENT CHILDHOOD OBESITY' and 'A program of Public Health Law & Policy | Explore our other programs'. To the right are four colored navigation buttons: 'healthy planning' (blue), 'tobacco control' (orange), 'childhood obesity' (purple), and 'climate change' (green). Below these is a purple banner with 'childhood obesity' in white text, a search bar, and a 'Search' button. A navigation menu below the banner includes 'About Us', 'About Childhood Obesity', 'Success Stories', 'Document Library', 'Research & Laws', and 'Events'. On the left side of the page, there are 'View' and 'Edit' buttons. The main content area features a grey box with the title 'Pedestrian Friendly Code Directory' and a paragraph of text. To the right is a photograph of a public square with a fountain, with the text 'Advocate for Healthier Street Design' overlaid at the bottom.

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**childhood obesity** Search

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## Pedestrian Friendly Code Directory

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**Advocate for Healthier Street Design**

# How do I find it?

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL [www.nplanonline.org/nplan/pedestrian-friendly-design](http://www.nplanonline.org/nplan/pedestrian-friendly-design). The page features the NPLAN logo (National Policy & Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity) and navigation tabs for 'healthy planning', 'tobacco control', 'childhood obesity', and 'climate change'. The 'childhood obesity' section is active, displaying a search bar and a dropdown menu with the following items: Community Gardens, Complete Streets, Farmers' Markets, Federal Food Assistance, First Amendment, Healthy Vending Machines, Healthy Food Retail, Healthy Planning, Healthy School Food Zone, Joint Use, Healthy Restaurants, Mobile Vending & Produce Carts, Pedestrian Friendly Code Directory, Physical Activity in Schools, Redevelopment, Safe Routes to Schools, Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Regulation, and Toy Giveaway. The main content area includes a section titled 'Pedestrian Friendly Code Directory' with a description of the directory's purpose and a list of links: [Access](#), [Adequate Access to Transit](#), [Eyes on the Street](#), [Functional Street Furniture](#), [Human-Scale Building Facade](#), and [Medium to Narrow Road Widths](#). A photograph of a public square with a fountain is also visible, with the text 'Advocate for Healthie' overlaid.

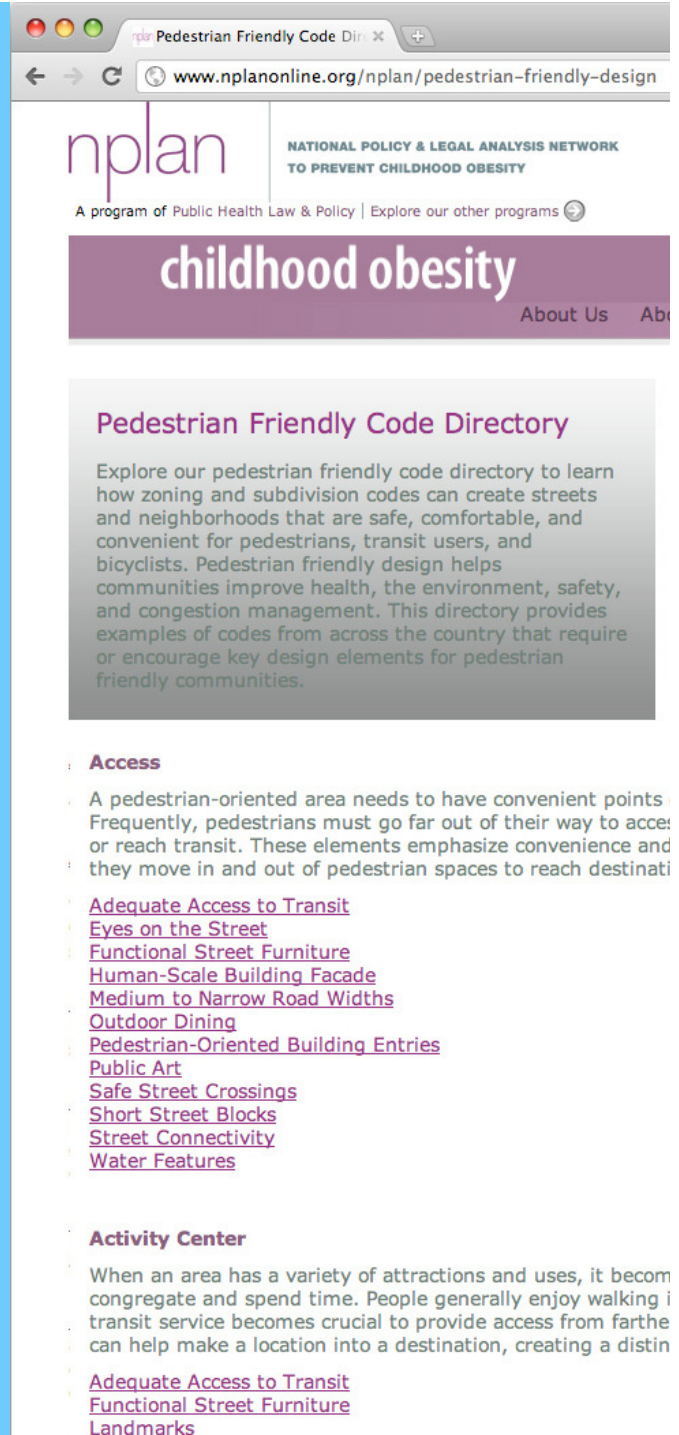
[www.nplan.org/nplan/pedestrian-friendly-design](http://www.nplan.org/nplan/pedestrian-friendly-design)

[Street Connectivity](#)  
[Water Features](#)

# How do I use it?

The directory is organized into:

- **Categories** (what goal you are trying to achieve – e.g. safety, access)
- **Design elements** (specific street design changes)



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL [www.nplanonline.org/nplan/pedestrian-friendly-design](http://www.nplanonline.org/nplan/pedestrian-friendly-design). The page header includes the NPLAN logo and the text "NATIONAL POLICY & LEGAL ANALYSIS NETWORK TO PREVENT CHILDHOOD OBESITY". Below the header is a purple banner with the text "childhood obesity" and "About Us". The main content area is titled "Pedestrian Friendly Code Directory" and contains a paragraph of introductory text. Below this is a list of design elements under the heading "Access", including "Adequate Access to Transit", "Eyes on the Street", "Functional Street Furniture", "Human-Scale Building Facade", "Medium to Narrow Road Widths", "Outdoor Dining", "Pedestrian-Oriented Building Entries", "Public Art", "Safe Street Crossings", "Short Street Blocks", "Street Connectivity", and "Water Features". Below this list is the heading "Activity Center" followed by a paragraph of text and a list of design elements including "Adequate Access to Transit", "Functional Street Furniture", and "Landmarks".

**Pedestrian Friendly Code Directory**

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**Access**

- A pedestrian-oriented area needs to have convenient points. Frequently, pedestrians must go far out of their way to access or reach transit. These elements emphasize convenience and they move in and out of pedestrian spaces to reach destinations.

- [Adequate Access to Transit](#)
- [Eyes on the Street](#)
- [Functional Street Furniture](#)
- [Human-Scale Building Facade](#)
- [Medium to Narrow Road Widths](#)
- [Outdoor Dining](#)
- [Pedestrian-Oriented Building Entries](#)
- [Public Art](#)
- [Safe Street Crossings](#)
- [Short Street Blocks](#)
- [Street Connectivity](#)
- [Water Features](#)

**Activity Center**

When an area has a variety of attractions and uses, it becomes a place where people congregate and spend time. People generally enjoy walking and transit service becomes crucial to provide access from farthest destinations. Transit can help make a location into a destination, creating a distinctive place.

- [Adequate Access to Transit](#)
- [Functional Street Furniture](#)
- [Landmarks](#)

# Categories include:

- Convenient access
- Comfort – physical and mental
- Safety from crime and traffic
- And many more...





# Categories (goals)

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL [www.nplanonline.org/nplan/pedestrian-friendly-design](http://www.nplanonline.org/nplan/pedestrian-friendly-design). The page header includes the NPLAN logo and navigation links for 'healthy planning', 'tobacco control', 'childhood obesity', and 'climate change'. The main content area is titled 'childhood obesity' and features a search bar and a navigation menu with links for 'About Us', 'About Childhood Obesity', 'Success Stories', 'Document Library', and 'Events'. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column has a heading 'Pedestrian Friendly Code Directory' and a paragraph of text. The right column has a heading 'Rebuilding Healthier Neighborhoods' and a photograph of a person walking on a sidewalk. Below the main content area, there is a list of links under the heading 'Access'. On the right side, there is a search filter with a 'Category' dropdown menu set to '<Any>', a 'Keywords' input field, and a 'Search' button.

**childhood obesity**

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**Pedestrian Friendly Code Directory**

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**Rebuilding Healthier Neighborhoods**

**Access**

- A pedestrian-oriented area needs to have convenient points of entry and exit. Frequently, pedestrians must go far out of their way to access buildings, cross streets, or reach transit. These elements emphasize convenience and safety for pedestrians as they move in and out of pedestrian spaces to reach destinations.
- [Adequate Access to Transit](#)
- [Eyes on the Street](#)
- [Functional Street Furniture](#)
- [Human-Scale Building Facade](#)
- [Medium to Narrow Road Widths](#)
- [Outdoor Dining](#)
- [Pedestrian-Oriented Building Entries](#)
- [Public Art](#)
- [Safe Street Crossings](#)
- [Short Street Blocks](#)
- [Street Connectivity](#)

Category: <Any>

Keywords:

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**Abundant Seating**  
Public benches and seating where pedestrians can take a rest, meet a friend, or wait for transit are important for pedestrian-oriented areas.

**Adequate Access to Transit**  
Public transportation and walking complement each other, since transit users generally

[Edit] [Export] [Clone]

- <Any>
- Access
- Activity Center
- Block Pattern
- Buildings
- Comfort**
- Community Character
- Connectivity
- Green Streets
- Parking
- Pedestrian Oriented Land Uses
- Public Transportation
- Safety
- Street Crossings
- Traffic Flow
- Transit Oriented Development (TOD)
- Wayfinding

Keywords

## Model Complete Streets Laws and Resolutions

# Design elements that contribute to comfort

## **Pedestrian-Oriented Lighting**

Lighting that is designed for pedestrians is important in areas in which people will walk after dark. Street lighting addresses actual safety concerns, both personal safety and traffic safety, and also increases the perception of safety.

## **Shade Trees**

Good street shade trees have a large canopy that hangs relatively low but is high enough not to endanger pedestrians walking underneath. Placed between the street and the sidewalk, shade provide a physical and psychological barrier between vehicles and pedestrians.

## **Street Connectivity**

An interconnected street network is crucial for pedestrians. Shorter blocks with frequent crossings provide quick connections so pedestrians can get directly to their destinations.

## **Street Walls**

A street wall consists of a continuous set of building façades with similar heights that are set back a similar distance from the property line. For pedestrians, having a street wall on both sides of the street creates a feeling of comfort and enclosure.

## **Underground Utilities**

Putting utilities underground can greatly enhance the attractiveness of an area. Removing utility poles also often provides concrete benefits for pedestrians, preserving sidewalks for their use, maintaining a clear pathway for people with disabilities, and allowing for larger trees.

## **Water Features**

Water features can make a pedestrian area much prettier and livelier. Water features can range from large public fountains with sculptural spray elements to small, wall-

Category

Comfort

Keywords

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# Design element: Shade Trees



Shade Trees | NPLAN

www.nplanonline.org/nplan/pfd-element/shade-trees

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[Pedestrian Friendly Code Directory: Shade Trees](#)

**Categories:** *Comfort, Community Character, Green Streets*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

Good street shade trees have a large canopy that hangs relatively low but is high enough not to endanger pedestrians walking underneath. Placed between the street and the sidewalk, shade provide a physical and psychological barrier between vehicles and pedestrians. When properly spaced, shade trees offer a continuous canopy of shade that adds to pedestrian comfort and physical well-being, especially in warm climates. Shade trees give a sidewalk a sense of security and enclosure, add natural color and beauty, mitigate storm water runoff, and improve air quality.

**CODE EXAMPLES**

Both Arlington and Peoria require that street trees be spaced at an average spacing of not more than 30 feet apart, a distance that meets street tree spacing recommendations.

Arlington's code requires trees on every street within the design area. Arlington also requires a minimum amount of unpaved ground, in order to promote health of the trees, and requires the trees be a minimum size when planted.

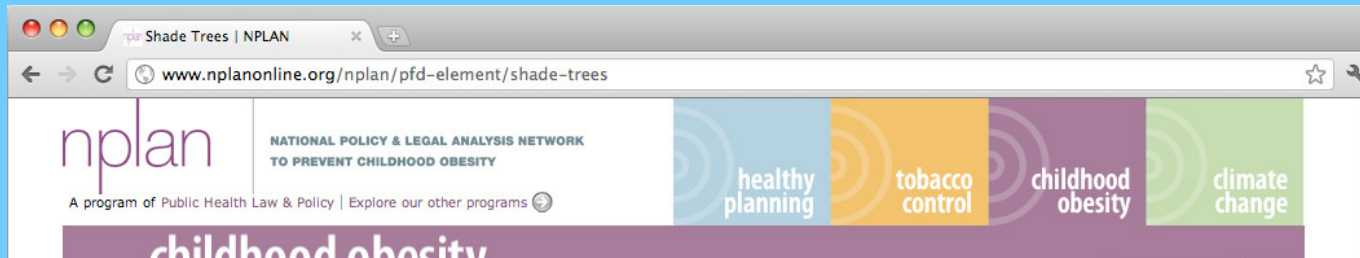
The Peoria code makes developers responsible for planting trees along the property that is being developed. Peoria allows some flexibility in spacing of trees, but prohibits spacing more than 45 feet apart. In a related provision, Peoria requires a minimum unpaved area per tree, and also requires the bare ground to be covered with a plant groundcover.

**Zoning Ordinance: Street Trees**  
[Arlington County, Va., Zoning Ordinance § 20, app. A \(V\)\(B\) \(2009\).](#)  
Each STREET shall have canopy shade trees (STREET TREES). Wherever the



Trees provide shade and comfort to pedestrians in this Washington State residential neighborhood. A planting strip, located between the sidewalk and road, buffers pedestrians from traffic. (Photo credit: www.pedbikeimages.org /

# Design element: Shade Trees



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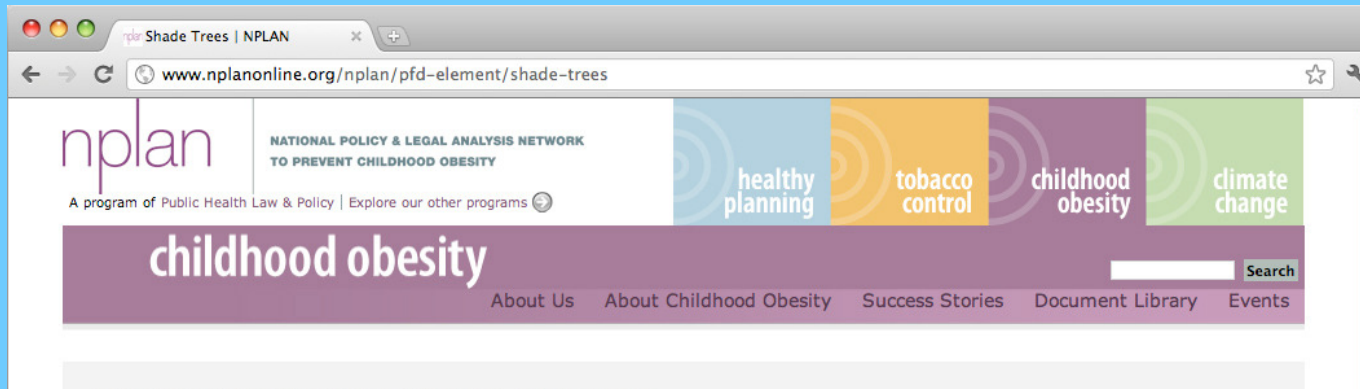
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# Design element: Shade Trees

## **Zoning Ordinance: Street Trees**

Arlington County, Va., Zoning Ordinance § 20, app. A (V)(B) (2009).

Each STREET shall have canopy shade trees (STREET TREES). Wherever the REGULATING PLAN does not show specific STREET TREE placement, STREET TREES shall be planted along the STREET TREE ALIGNMENT LINE at an average spacing not greater than 25 to 30 feet on center (measured per BLOCK face). Required tree planting area widths are specified on the typical street cross sections in the Master Transportation Plan – Part I. However, open soil surface area shall be not less than 60 square feet (with a minimum of 5 feet in any direction) per isolated tree, and connected (tree strip) planting areas are encouraged. The planting area's minimum dimension shall be not less than 5 feet. At planting, trees shall be at least 4 to 4.5 inches in diameter (4 feet above grade) and at least 12 feet in overall height. Species shall be selected from the Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District Street Tree List. Consult the ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW TEAM for the designated tree species for a particular STREET.

## **Land Development Code: Trees**

Peoria, Ill., Code app. C, § 6.8.3(b) (2009).

At the time of development, the applicant is responsible for installing/ planting the following street trees in the space fronting their property between the required building line and the travel lane: ... Each street-space shall have street trees planted along the street tree alignment line (generally three feet, six inches from the back of the curb) at an average spacing not greater than 30 feet on center (measured per block face). Required tree planting area widths are specified in the Street Type Specifications or on the regulating plan. Where necessary, spacing allowances may be made to accommodate curb cuts, fire hydrants and other infrastructure elements, however, at no location shall spacing exceed 45 feet on center.

# Curb extension





# Curb extension



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## Safe Street Crossings

Pedestrians must be able to cross streets safely. More than 40% of pedestrian fatalities take place where no crosswalk is available. Often, marked crosswalks alone are insufficient to protect pedestrians, and additional infrastructure is necessary to make the crossing safe.

Category

<Any>

Keywords

"curb extension"

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## Pedestrian Friendly Code Directory: Safe Street Crossings

**Categories:** Access, Activity Center, Block Pattern, Connectivity, Safety, Street Crossings, Traffic Flow

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Pedestrians must be able to cross streets safely. More than 40% of pedestrian fatalities take place where no crosswalk is available. Often, marked crosswalks alone are insufficient to protect pedestrians, and additional infrastructure is necessary to make the crossing safe. In areas with long blocks, or where pedestrians use both sides of the street heavily, crosswalks located both in the middle and at the end of blocks are helpful.

Mid-block crossings can be particularly dangerous because drivers may not anticipate or see pedestrians. Dangerous crossings can be made safer by installing features like signals, signage, crosswalk striping, flashing beacons or pedestrian-activated traffic signals, curb extensions or bulbouts, and median refuges.

There are additional safety considerations for crossings. Ramps and curb cuts leading to crossings should feature high-contrast detectable warning strips to alert pedestrians, particularly those who may be vision-impaired, that they are approaching traffic. Bus stops should be located after crosswalks so that transit riders crossing the street for a bus stop won't be hit by a bus, and so that stopped buses don't block drivers' view of pedestrians in crosswalks.

### CODE EXAMPLES

Aurora's code calls for mid-block pedestrian crossings. It appears in the context of a series of provisions providing for safe crossings at intersections and mid-block locations. Those provisions include a hierarchy of crosswalk treatments, signage requirements, and other features.

The code section here specifies that curb extensions, or bulbouts, should be considered to increase the safety of mid-block crossings where there is heavy use by pedestrians and bicyclists, particularly where blocks are long, and retail or other attractions line both sides of the street. However, because of the particular dangers to pedestrians of multilane mid-block crossings, Aurora's code discourages such crossings except where there is a signal.

The code from Kansas City, MO calls for mid-block crossings for blocks longer than 900 feet. The code specifies that crossings should be 10 feet in width, but provides for no other safety features. While this code is an important start, it is likely to leave

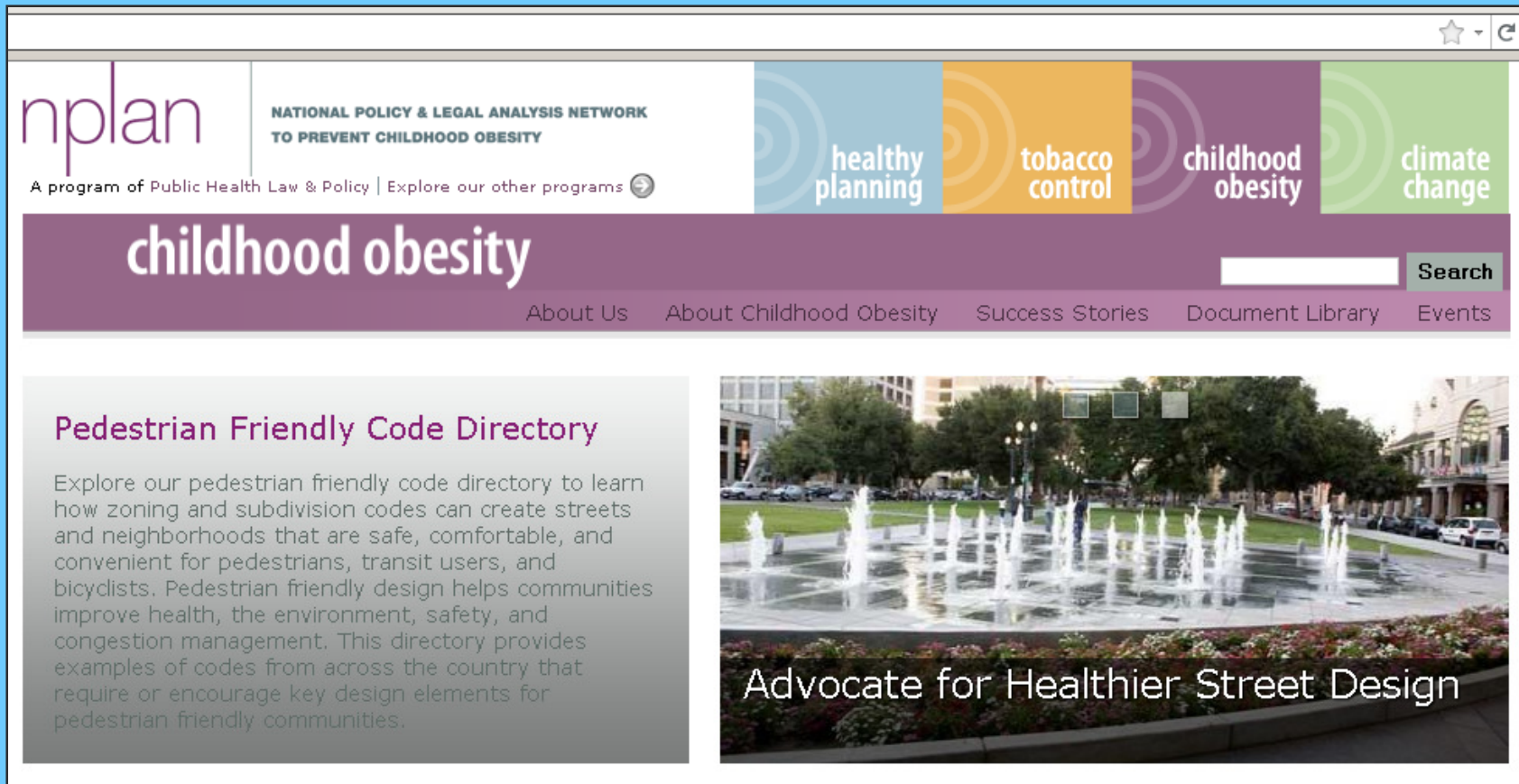


The image above displays a zebra or ladder-style crosswalk that is elevated to slow traffic. Textured and colored bricks contrast with pavement to call attention to the crosswalk (see "special paving" for more information on colored pavement). A bulbout on the right-hand side extends the sidewalk and increases safety by shortening the crossing distance and moving the pedestrian waiting area into drivers' line of sight, as opposed to behind parked cars. (Photo credit: www.pedbikeimages.org / Michael Frederick)

Category  
<Any>

Keywords

# Pedestrian Friendly Code Directory



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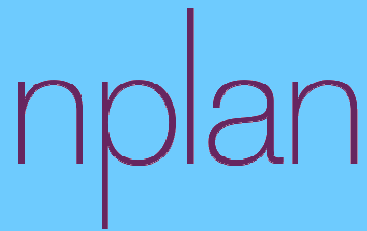
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Advocate for Healthier Street Design

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**NATIONAL POLICY & LEGAL ANALYSIS NETWORK  
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