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NATIONAL POLICY & LEGAL ANALYSIS NETWORK
TO PREVENT CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Creating Pedestrian Friendly Streets

Policy Tools

phlp
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law & policy

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.


pedbikeimages.org/Heather Bowden

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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.

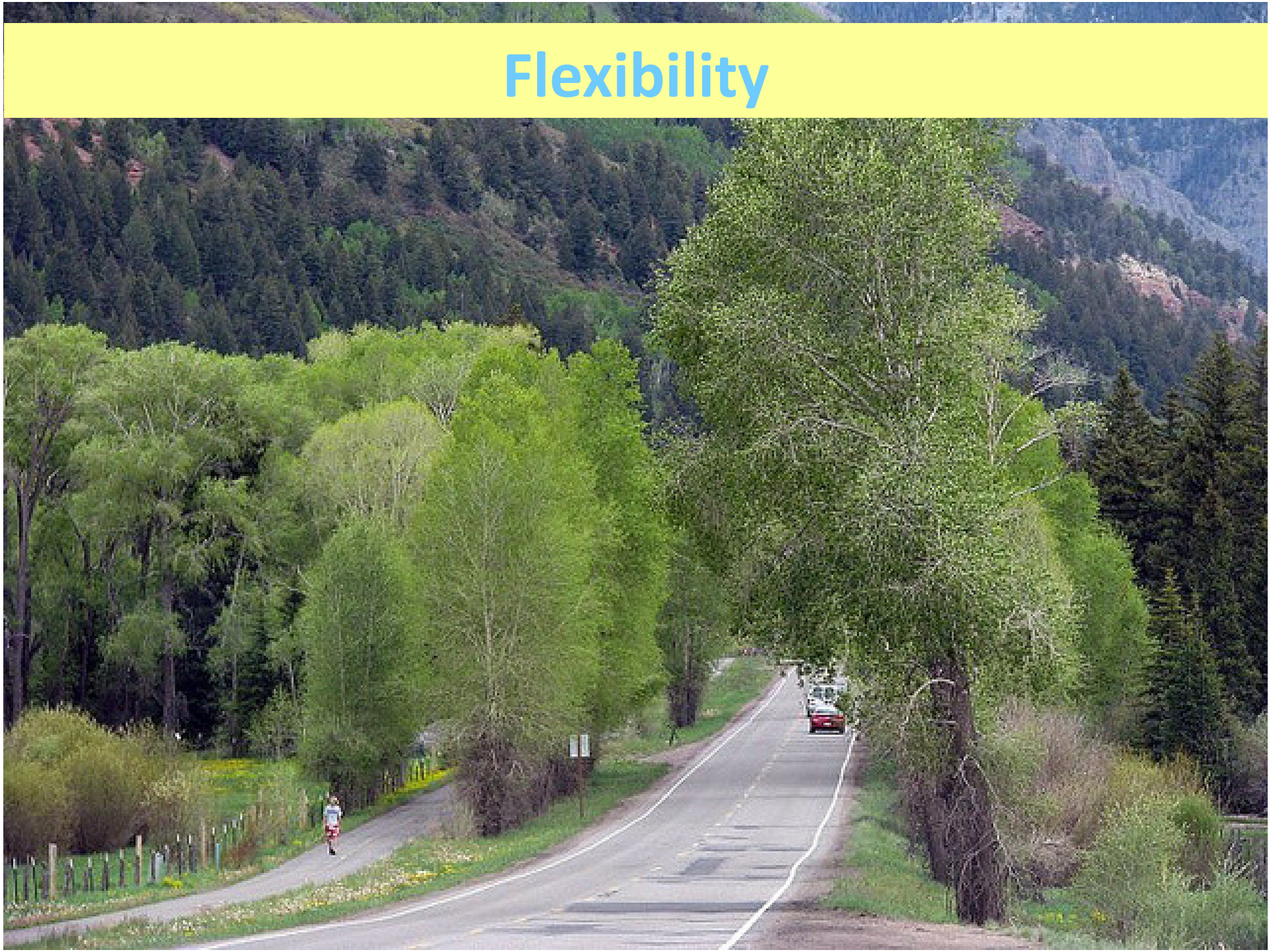
(a) [*Insert appropriate agencies, such as Department of Transportation, Department of Public Works, Department of Planning*] shall make Complete Streets practices a routine part of everyday operations, shall approach every transportation project and program as an opportunity to improve public [and private] 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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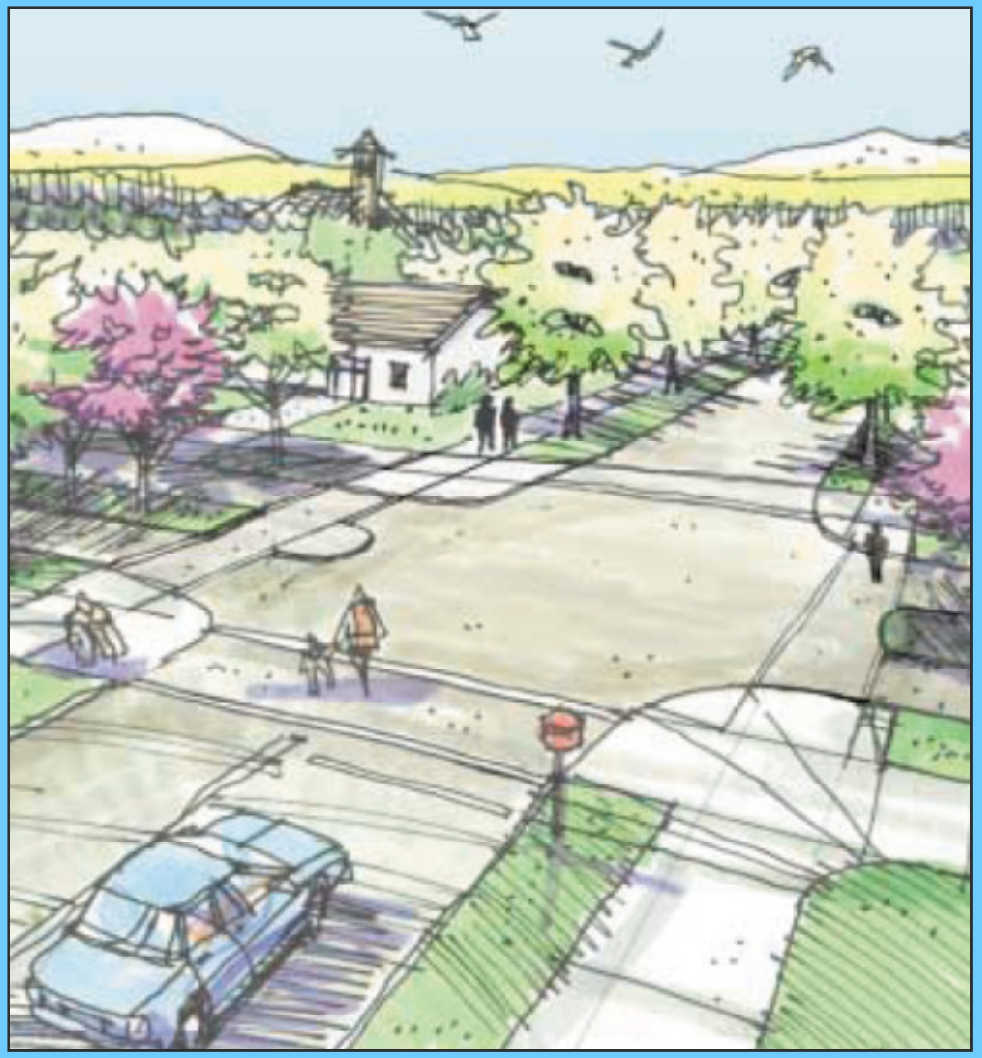
Revising Zoning & Subdivision Codes

What's the basic idea?

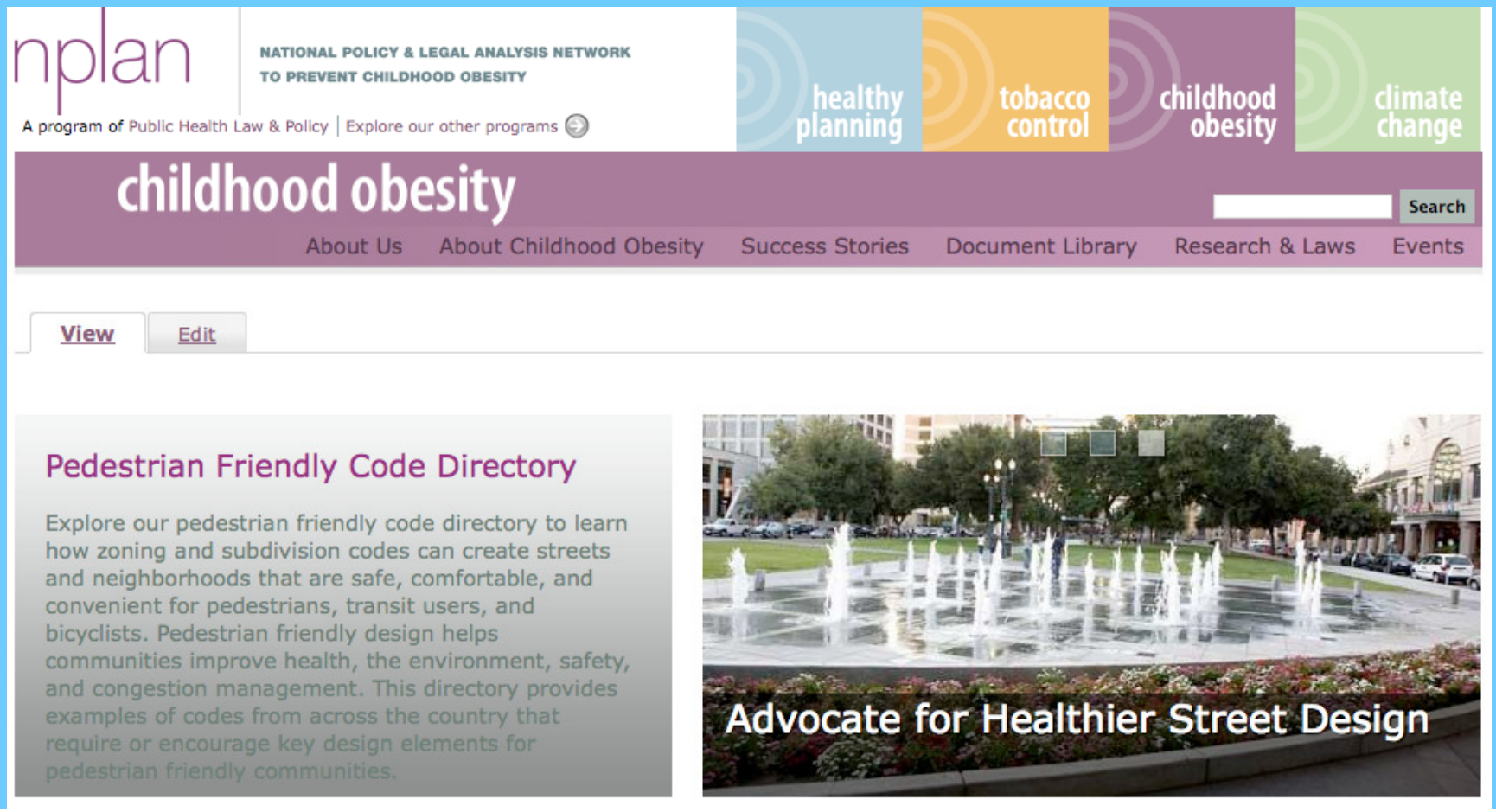
Municipal Law: zoning/subdivision/land development codes

Detailed local laws with **requirements** for:

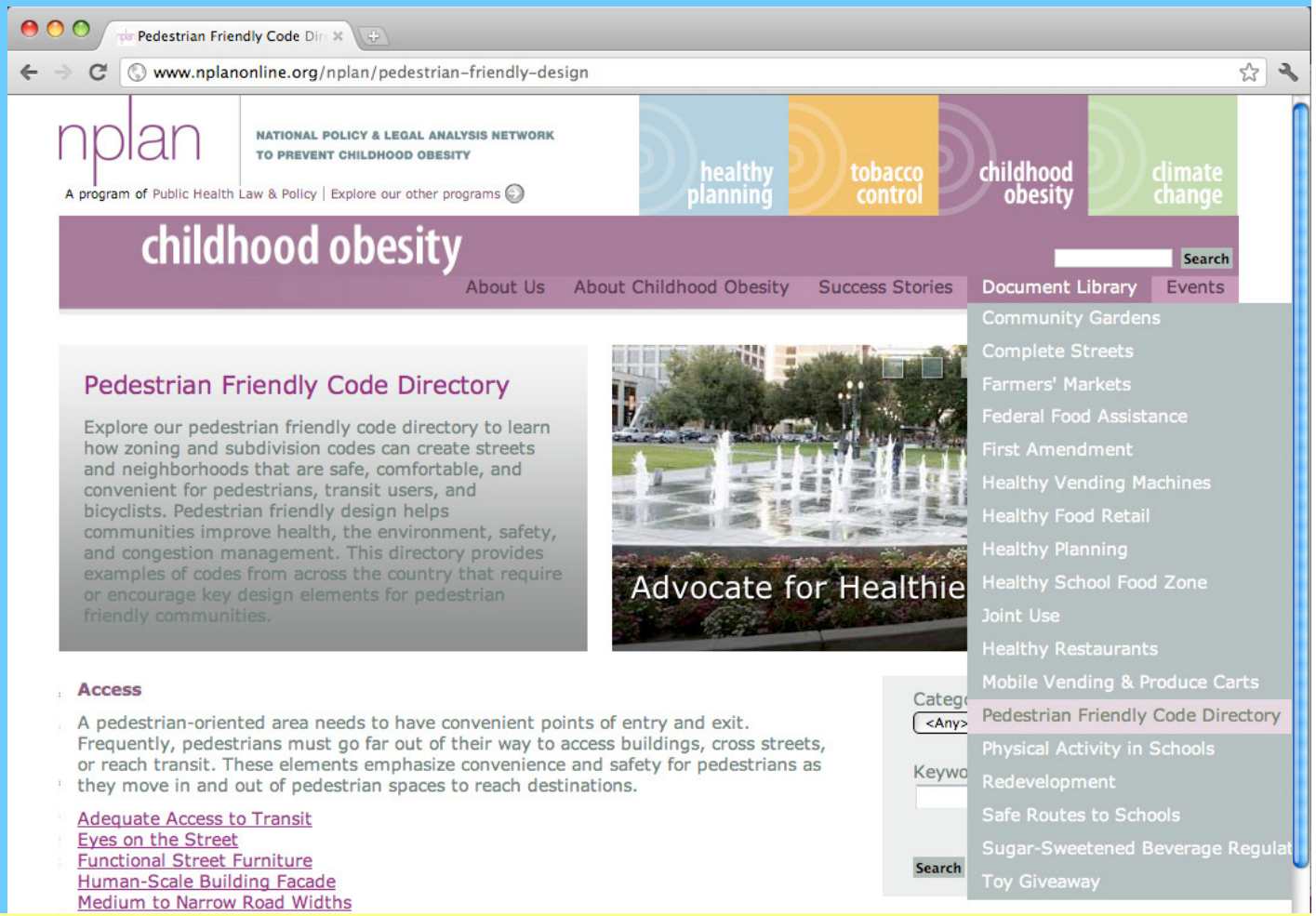
- **building use, design, and location**
- how **streets and neighborhoods** must be built



Pedestrian Friendly Code Directory



How do I find it?

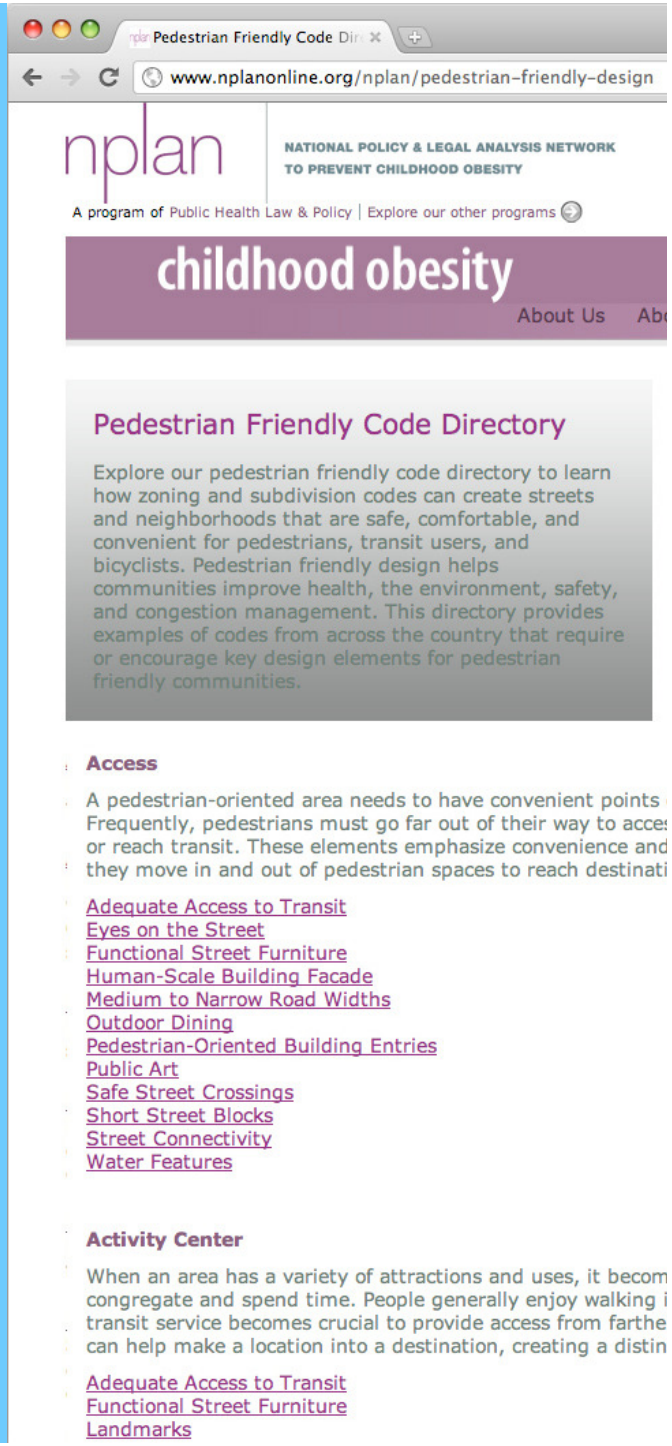


www.nplan.org/nplan/pedestrian-friendly-design

How do I use it?

The directory is organized into:

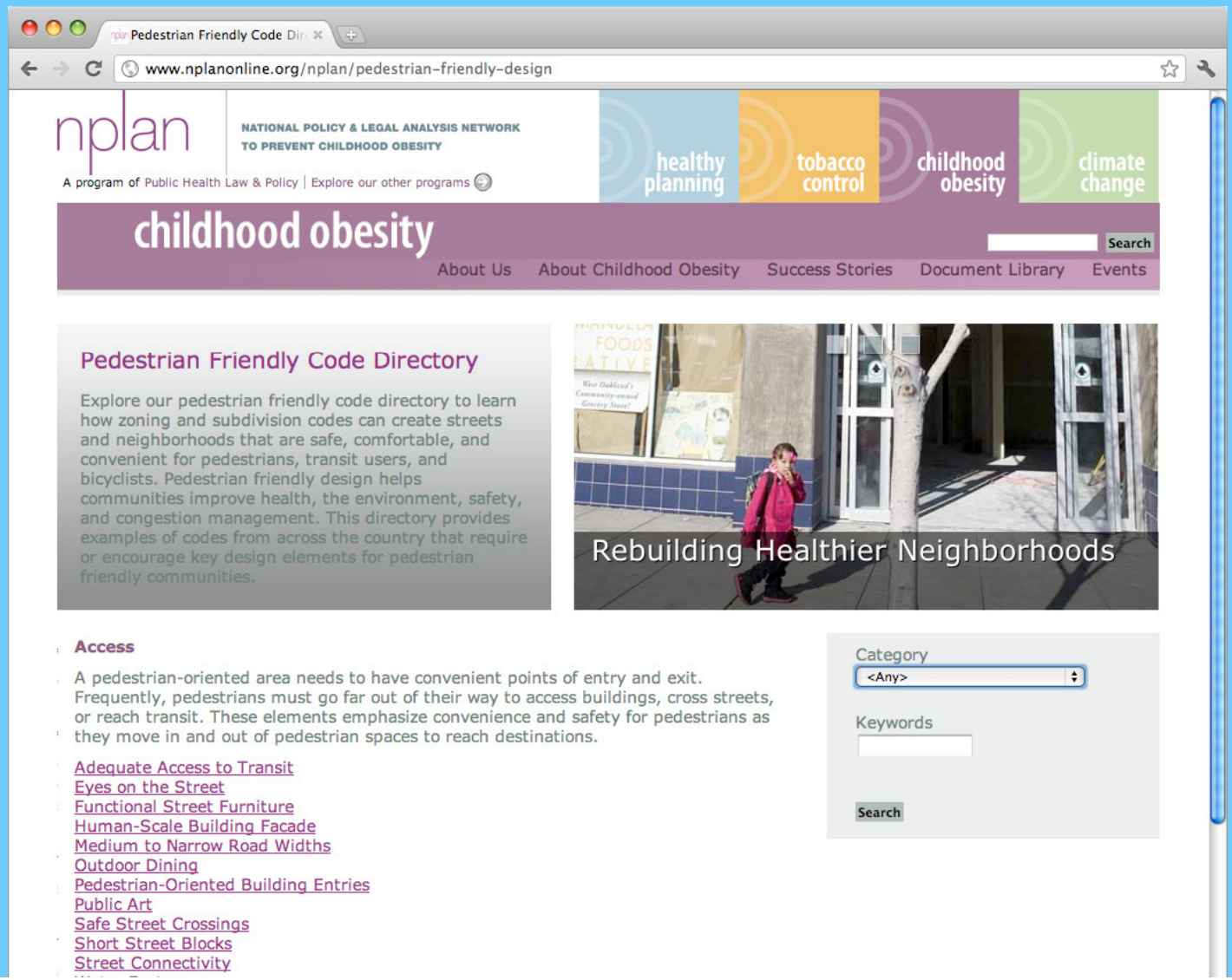
- **Categories** (what goal you are trying to achieve – e.g. safety, access)
- **Design elements** (specific street design changes)

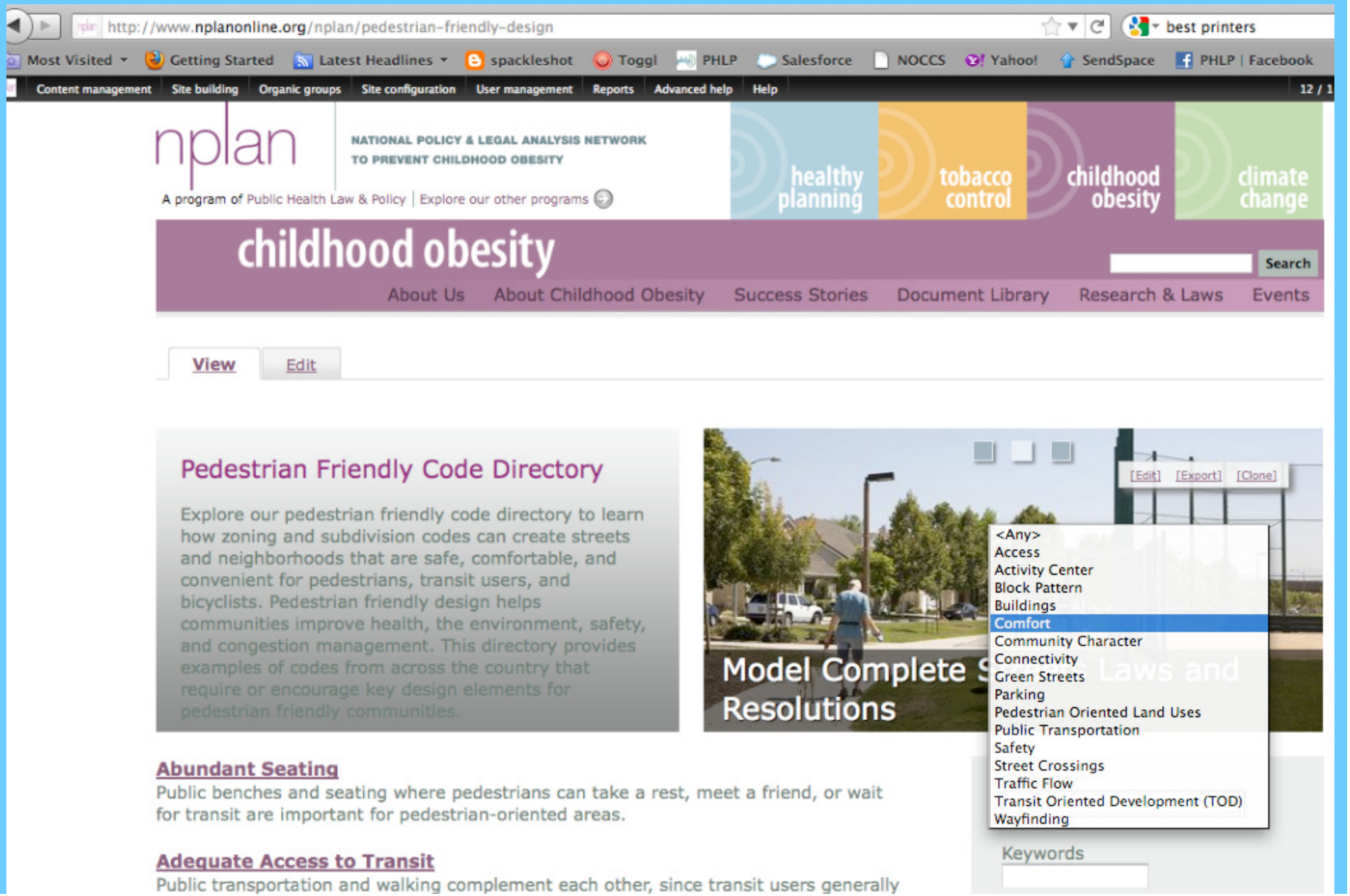


Categories include:

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

Categories (goals)

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Pedestrian Friendly Code Directory
Explore our pedestrian friendly code directory to learn how zoning and subdivision codes can create streets and neighborhoods that are safe, comfortable, and convenient for pedestrians, transit users, and bicyclists. Pedestrian friendly design helps communities improve health, the environment, safety, and congestion management. This directory provides examples of codes from across the country that require or encourage key design elements for pedestrian friendly communities.
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Model Complete S
Resolutions
Laws and
<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
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

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.

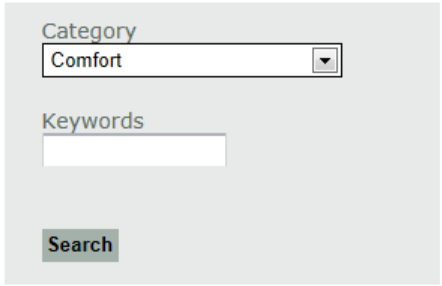
Shade Trees
Good street shade trees have a large canopy that hangs relatively low but is high enough not to endanger pedestrians walking underneath. Placed between the street and the sidewalk, shade provide a physical and psychological barrier between vehicles and pedestrians.

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.

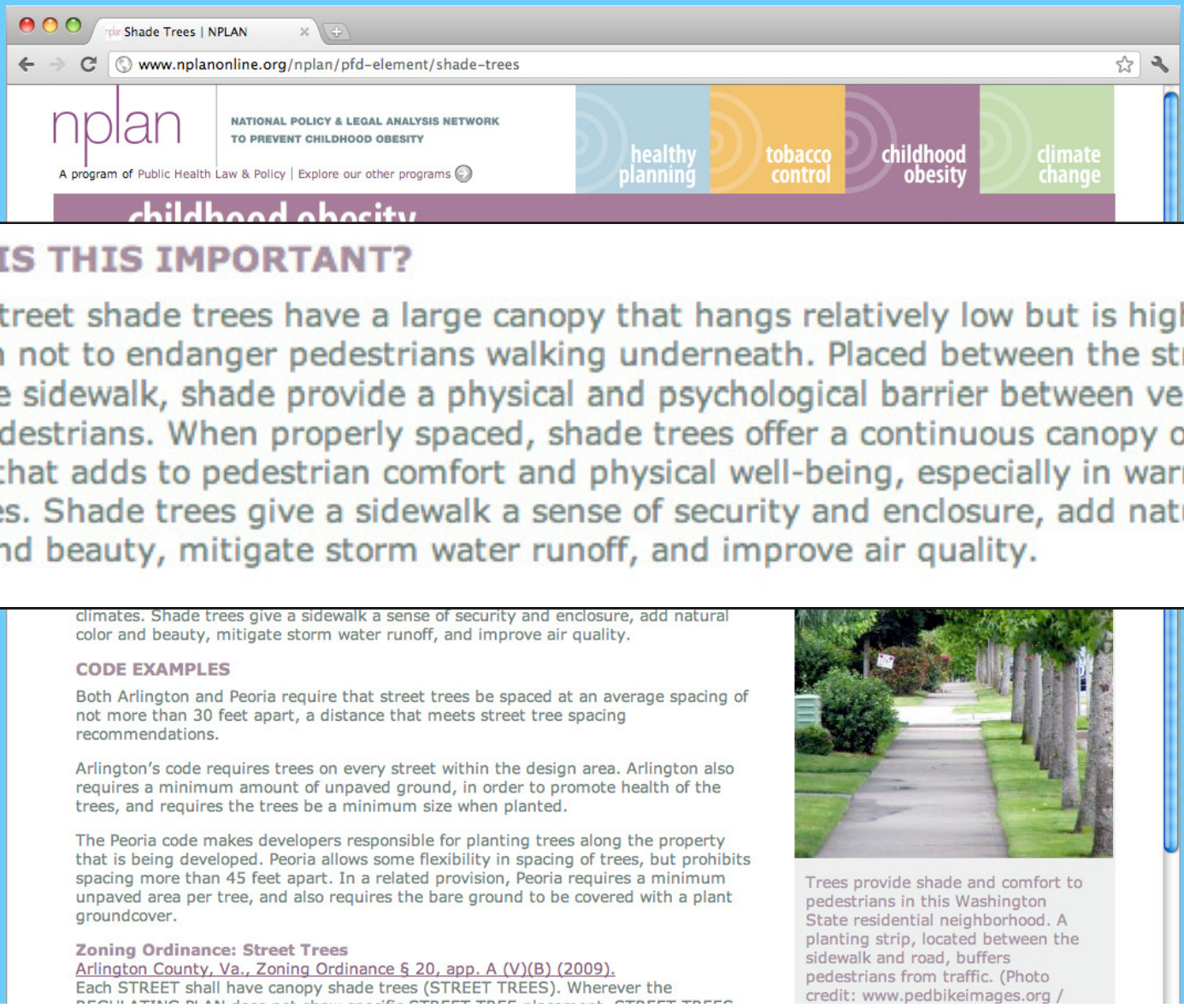
Underground Utilities
Putting utilities underground can greatly enhance the attractiveness of an area. Removing utility poles also often provides concrete benefits for pedestrians, preserving sidewalks for their use, maintaining a clear pathway for people with disabilities, and allowing for larger trees.

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-



Design element: Shade Trees

Design element: Shade Trees



Design element: Shade Trees

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

Pedestrian Friendly Code Directory

Explore our pedestrian friendly code directory to learn how zoning and subdivision codes can create streets and neighborhoods that are safe, comfortable, and convenient for pedestrians, transit users, and bicyclists. Pedestrian friendly design helps communities improve health, the environment, safety, and congestion management. This directory provides examples of codes from across the country that require or encourage key design elements for pedestrian friendly communities.

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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Safe Street Crossings | NPLA

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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

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