Basics and Benefits of Complete Streets

OTEA Conference
October 23, 2014
What are Complete Streets?

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

Safe   Comfortable   Convenient

Smart Growth America
Making Neighborhoods Great Together

National Complete Streets Coalition
What are Complete Streets?

Safe   Comfortable   Convenient
Americans want choices

66% of Americans want more transportation options so they have the freedom to choose how to get where they need to go.

73% currently feel they have no choice but to drive as much as they do.

57% would like to spend less time in the car.

Future of Transportation National Survey (2010)
Getting Out of Traffic

Future of Transportation National Survey (2010)

59%

We need to improve public transportation, including trains and buses, to make it easier to walk and bike to reduce traffic congestion.

We need to build more roads and expand existing roads to help reduce traffic congestion.
The tremendous potential

Of all trips:

39% are less than 3 miles

17% are less than 1 mile

47% are driven of these trips...

National Household Travel Survey (2009)
Every trip starts and ends with walking.
People will walk

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2012, newpublichealth.org
Who wants Complete Streets?

47% of older Americans say it is unsafe to cross a major street near their home.

54% of older Americans living in inhospitable neighborhoods say they would walk and bike more often if the built environment improved.

56% express strong support for adoption of Complete Streets policies.
Who wants Complete Streets?

Millennials are driving less and looking for other transportation options.
Incomplete streets are unsafe

More than 40% of pedestrian deaths in 2007 and 2008 occurred where no crosswalk was available.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s Fatality Reporting System
Incomplete streets are unsafe

Especially for:

• People of color
• Low-income communities
• Older adults
Streets are inadequate

- No sidewalks
- Too dangerous to cross on foot
Streets are inadequate

• Unsafe for bicyclists
Streets are inadequate

- Traffic jams on arterials
- Too many crashes
Streets are inadequate

• Uninviting for bus riders
Streets are inadequate

- Inaccessible for wheelchair users
Streets are inadequate

• No room for people!
We know how to build right
We know how to build right
We know how to build right
Yet too many roads still turn out like this:
or this:
The Solution: Complete Streets Policies
Complete Streets policies

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

High-level policy direction

Change the everyday decision-making processes and systems

Incremental approach

Long-term results
Complete Streets does not mean:

One ‘special’ street project
A design prescription
A mandate for immediate retrofit
A silver bullet; other issues must be addressed:
  Land use (proximity, mixed-use)
  Environmental concerns
  Transportation Demand Management
Many types: rural streets
Many types: shared streets
Many types: skinny streets
Many types: main streets
Many types: urban streets
Many types: traffic circles
Many types: Bus Rapid Transit
Many types: neighborhood greenways
Many types: angled head-out parking
Many types: cycle tracks
Many types: modern roundabouts
Many types: paved shoulders
The Many Benefits of Complete Streets

January 2013
Complete Streets benefits all users
Benefits: Older Adults

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

About \( \frac{1}{2} \) 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

17% of kids and teens are obese.

Limited physical activity contributes to the obesity epidemic.

Dedicated, safe space for bicycling and walking help kids be active and gain independence.
Benefits: People with Disabilities

Nearly 1 in 5 Americans have a 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
**Benefits: Safety**

There were **32,885 traffic fatalities** in the U.S. in 2010. Of these fatalities:

- **23,303** were people in cars
- **4,280** were people walking
- **618** were people on bicycles

*National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: Fatality Analysis Reporting System 2010*
Benefits: Safety

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

Slowing traffic improves safety for people walking

Benefits: Safety

Pedestrian crashes

↓ 88% with sidewalks

↓ 69% with hybrid beacon

↓ 39% with medians

↓ 29% with road conversions
Benefits: Health

Pucher, “Walking and Cycling: Path to Improved Public Health,” Fit City Conference, NYC, June 2009
Benefits: Health

Risk of obesity:

Increases 6% for each hour spent in a car.

Decreases 4.8% for each additional kilometer walked.

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

Obesity Trends* Among U.S. Adults
BRFSS, 2010
(*BMI ≥30, or ~30 lbs. overweight for 5' 4" person)

Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC.
Benefits: Health

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend adoption of Complete Streets policies as a strategy to prevent obesity.
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 improvement 2003-2004

32 new business establishments

$8 million in private investment in following 2 years

$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

Making bus routes work better:
Fordham Road (Bronx)

- **20% increase in bus speeds**
- **10% increase in bus ridership**
- **71% increase in retail sales**
  (at locally-based businesses, compared to 23% borough-wide)

- Delivery windows
  (curb dedicated to trucks at key times)

- Curbside red bus lanes
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 100 point Walk Score scale = $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, 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, 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.

Complete Streets planning could have saved an average of **$9 million** per Main Street project – **about 30%** – in reduced scope, schedule, and budget changes over the last 10 years.

http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/research/reports/fullreports/733.1.pdf
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 necessary sewer work

Priced at $6 million to replace road as is

MN/DOT 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
Benefits: Provide Choices

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.
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

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, U.S. DOT, Secretary of Transportation
Livable Communities

“Safety is our highest priority and that commitment is the same regardless of which form of transportation people choose, including walking and biking. This initiative is aimed at reversing the recent rise in deaths and injuries among the growing number of Americans who bicycle or walk to work, to reach public transportation and to other important destinations.” Anthony Foxx, U.S. DOT, Secretary of Transportation
Lower Emissions, 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.
Green Streets

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.
Implementation Strategy: Better Blocks “Dry Run”
For more information

- Fact sheets, photos, hand outs
- Information on changing policy
- Policy tracking & examples
- Complete Streets blog & monthly newsletter
- Links to research & publications

www.completestreets.org
www.smartgrowthamerica.org
National Complete Streets Coalition Steering Committee

**Benefactor**
- AARP
- America Bikes
- American Planning Association
- American Public Transportation Association
- Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota
- National Association of REALTORS
- Smart Growth America

**Platinum**
- American Society of Landscape Architects
- SvR Design Company

**Bronze**
- Active Living by Design
- Alliance for Biking & Walking
- Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals

**Supporter**
- America Walks
- Institute of Transportation Engineers
- League of American Bicyclists
- National Association of City Transportation Officials
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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