

# Complete Streets: A Primer



Presented by David Riesland, PE  
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# Agenda

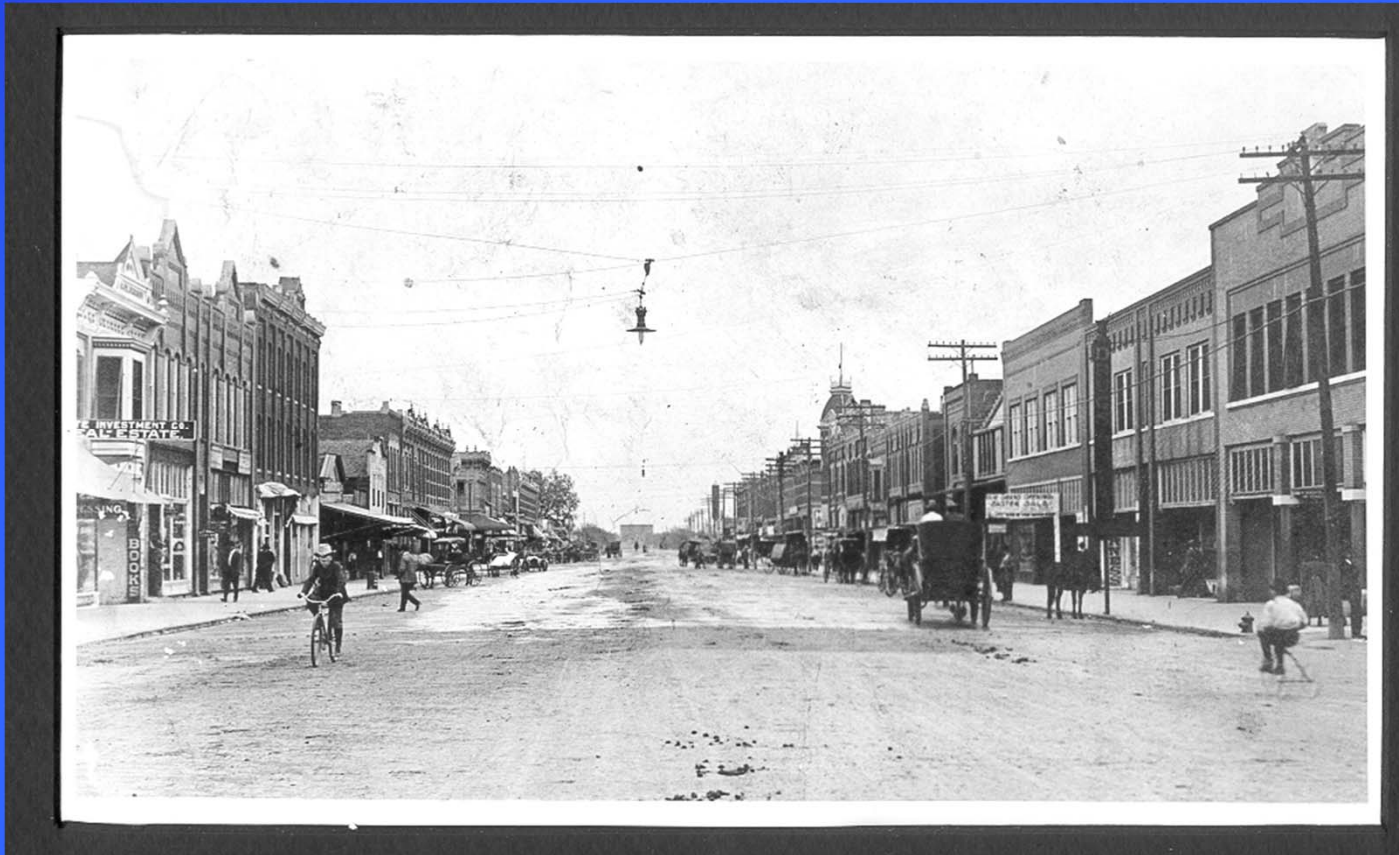


- First of all, we need to make one thing perfectly clear—I am no Complete Streets expert
- I assume that many of you in this room may also not be experts
- I have arranged this presentation to offer a primer, of sorts, on the basics of Complete Streets
- Then, we'll take you on a journey through Norman's efforts, to date, in this area



- 150 years ago, we probably didn't need to be concerned with Complete Streets
- The only modes we see here are horses, the horse and buggy, and pedestrians

- As time went by, more and more modes became available for the movement of people and goods
- Below, we see cars, horses, bicycles and pedestrians—talk about multi-modal!







- Without proper planning, chaos can result
- Looks like the example above might have been able to benefit from the application of some Complete Streets planning!

# So, What is Complete Streets?

- Complete Streets is a transportation policy and an approach to design
- It requires:
  - Planning
  - Design
  - Operation
  - Maintenance



# What are the Goals of Complete Streets?

- Offering improved safety, health, economic, and environmental outcomes



- Emphasizes the importance of safe access for all users, not just automobiles

# Complete Streets History

- Following World War II, many communities were designed to promote fast and easy access via automobiles
- Many rural and suburban communities have come to rely on the automobile as their sole means of transportation
- Even in those areas where alternative modes may be viable, the automobile has been the central focus of transportation, infrastructure, and land use policies



## Complete Streets History (cont.)

- Oregon enacted the first Complete Streets-like policy in 1971
- This Oregon policy required that all new or rebuilt roadways provide “routine accommodation” for bicycles and pedestrians
- It also called on state and local governments to fund bike/ped facilities within the public right-of-way



## Complete Streets History (cont.)

- In 2003, a search was coordinated to replace the term “routine accommodation”
- Complete Streets was suggested by David Goldberg who was the communications director for Smart Growth America
- This new term was adopted by a coalition of advocacy groups to refer both to a comprehensive approach to street design as well as to the coalition itself
- Hence, the National Complete Streets Coalition was born



## Complete Streets History (cont.)

- Coalition steering committee members included:
  - AARP
  - American Planning Association
  - American Society of Landscape Architects
  - American Public Transportation Association
  - Blue Cross Blue Shield Minnesota
  - National Association of Realtors
  - Institute of Transportation Engineers



## Complete Streets Make-up

- By its very definition, Complete Streets is a multi-modal concept
- We'll talk about many of these modes in the slides to come
- Let's begin with the pedestrian

# Pedestrian Elements

- Could include:
  - Sidewalks
  - Traditional and raised crosswalks
  - Median crossing islands
  - ADA compliant facilities
    - Audible cues for people with low vision
    - Pushbuttons reachable by people in wheelchairs
    - Curb cuts
  - Curb extensions
- Let's move on to traffic calming





# Traffic Calming Measures

- Measures to lower automobile speeds and to define the edges of automobile travel lanes could include:
  - Road diets
  - Center medians
  - Shorter curb corner radii
  - Elimination of free flow right turn lanes
  - Back-in angled parking
  - Street trees and planter strips
  - Ground cover
- Now, on to bicycles



# Bicycle Accommodations

- May include:
  - Protected or dedicated bicycle lanes
  - Neighborhood greenways
  - Wide paved shoulders
  - Bicycle parking
- Next, transit



# Bus Transit Accommodations

- Can include:
  - Bus Rapid Transit
  - Bus pullouts
  - Transit signal priority
  - Bus shelters
  - Dedicated bus lanes
- Now, some exceptions



## Exceptions for Complete Streets

- Roads where non-motorized transportation is banned by law
- Where the cost of accommodation would be disproportionate to the need or expected use
- Roadways where lack of present and future need is shown to make the accommodation unnecessary
- Next, the benefits



# Safety Benefits

- FHWA Study found:
  - Adding sidewalks decreases pedestrian injuries/fatalities by 88%
  - Adding hybrid beacon signals decreases pedestrian injuries/fatalities by 69%
  - Adding medians decreases pedestrian injuries/fatalities by 39%





## Health Benefits

- Multiple groups report that the elements of a Complete Streets plan help to fight obesity
- 43% of people with safe places to walk meet recommended physical activity levels
- These levels drop by 37% when no safe place to walk exists



## Economic Benefits

- A revitalization project in Lancaster, CA, that included Complete Streets, helped create 50 new businesses and over 800 new jobs
- Complete Streets redesign in parts of NYC resulted in 50% increase in retail sales on 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Manhattan and a 50% decrease in commercial vacancies in Union Square

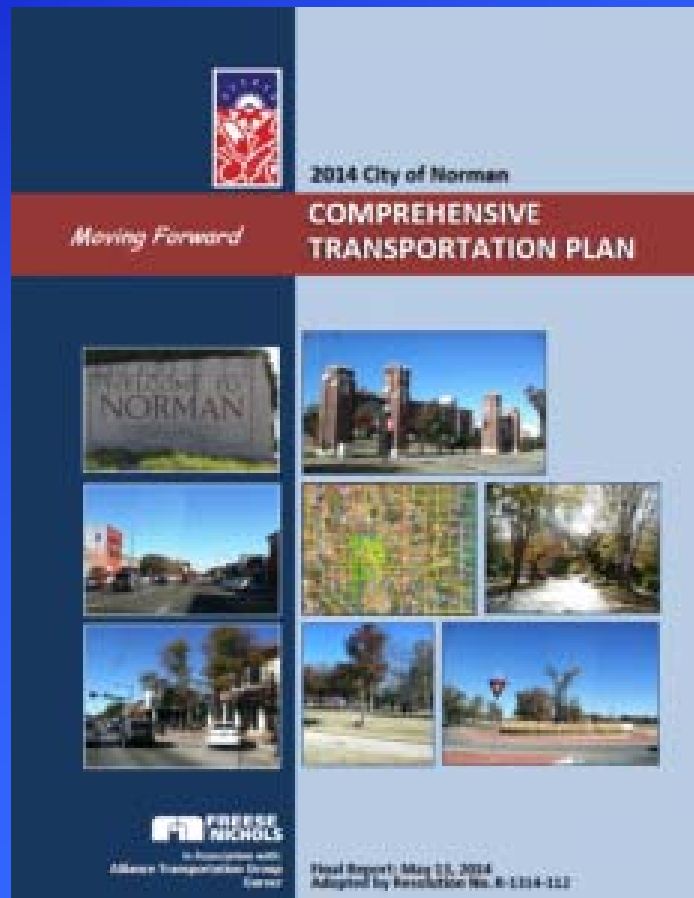


# Environmental Benefits

- Complete Street policies provide safe options for people to walk and bike
- Complete Streets policies can lead to fewer people driving in their cars which results in lower automobile emissions
- Now, how Norman is moving into Complete Streets



# Norman Moves Toward Complete Streets



- In May of 2014, Norman adopted its first Comprehensive Transportation Plan
- Action Item S2a in our CTP is to Adopt Complete Streets Policies, Program and Guidelines

# CTP Recommendations



- The consulting team working on Norman's CTP offered the Los Angeles County Model Design Manual for Living Streets as a guide in developing our Complete Streets Manual



# LA County Model Design Manual

- The on-line document is available for any jurisdiction to use and modify as needed
- They only ask that you keep the acknowledgements in your document and that you let them know when you have an adopted manual



## Creating Norman's Plan

- Review team consisting of five members from Public Works and one member from Planning
- Team met monthly to go through the LA County chapters one or two at a time
- Entire process took nearly a year to complete
- Along the way, a number of the photographs in the LA County manual were updated to feature Norman elements
- The next four slides provide some highlights from Norman's plan



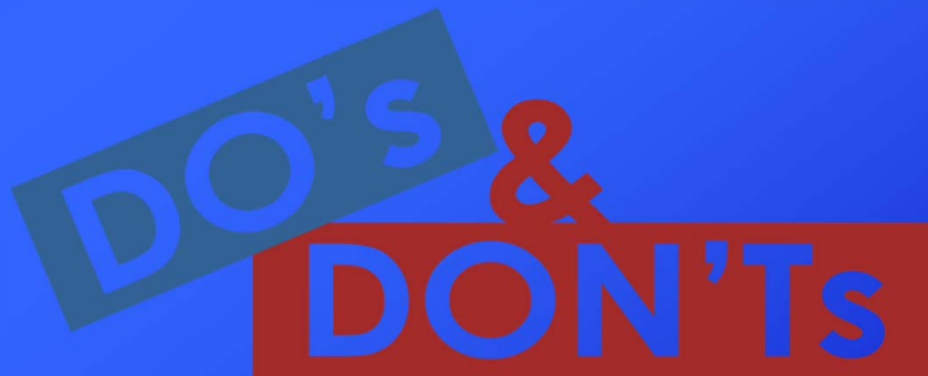
# Highlights of Norman's Plan

- Encourage neighborhood connectivity
  - Shorter trips
  - Encourages more pedestrian/bicycle trips
- Design to accommodate all users
- Access management
- Avoid skewed intersections
- Provide curb extensions where possible



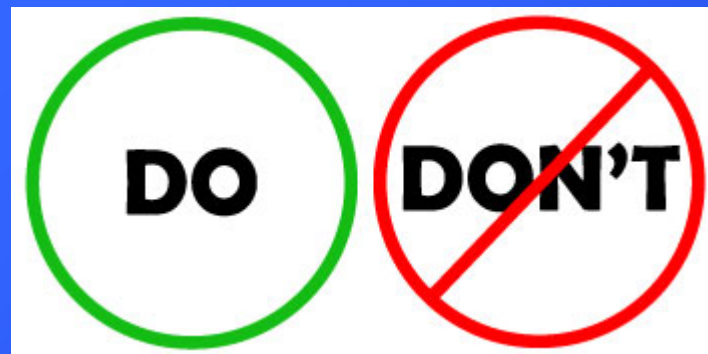
## Highlights of Norman's Plan (Cont.)

- Avoid diagonal curb ramps
- Utilize detectable warnings and accessible pedestrian signals
- Avoid colored or stamped crosswalks at uncontrolled intersections
- Consider use of the pedestrian hybrid beacon system at midblock crossings



## Highlights of Norman's Plan (Cont.)

- Provide bicycle facilities for a range of rider skill level
- Consider wayfinding for all users
- Encourage far-side transit stops
- Proper utilization of traffic calming measures can increase safety





## Highlights of Norman's Plan (Cont.)

- Reclaim stormwater as a valuable resource
- Support and encourage activities and destinations
- On street parking can provide a buffer between pedestrians and moving traffic
- Consider opportunities to narrow travel lanes or to implement road diets



## Next Steps

- Engage the Norman health community to secure their endorsement
- Through a series of study sessions, engage the Norman City Council as to the contents of the Manual
- Secure Council Adoption once all members have been brought onboard





# Questions?

(Hopefully someone in the room can answer them!)

