Complete Streets Active Transportation, Safety and Mobility for Individuals of all Ages and Abilities



The complete streets movement aims to develop an interconnected street network that is accessible and safe for users of all ages, abilities and modes of transportation. Complete streets support not only changes to community streets but also a shift in the decisionmaking process and policies. Such policies aim to integrate all users into the planning, design, construction and operation of the transportation system, and to foster community participation. A complete street could include various elements, like sidewalks, pedestrian refuge islands, bicycle lanes, reflective signs, accessible bus shelters or longer crossing times

for pedestrians. These policies apply to new streets as well as retrofit and maintenance jobs. APHA is committed to promoting changes to the built environment that encourage active transportation, minimize disparities in mobility and ensure the safety of all transportation users. The complete streets methodology aligns with APHA's principles.

Why are complete streets necessary?

- In 2009, 4,092 pedestrians were struck and killed by motor vehicles, accounting for 11.4% of all transportation-related fatalities.¹
- A study conducted in Connecticut suggested that less than 1% of pedestrians of ages 72 and older achieved a walking speed at or above 4 feet per second, which is the speed at which they would generally have to walk in order to cross an intersection in the allotted time.²
- Motor vehicle collisions are the leading cause of death among children ages 3 to 14; in 19% of these fatalities, the children involved were pedestrians.³

How can complete streets help?

- Studies have shown that bicyclist injuries and collisions with automobiles can be reduced by up to 50% by the creation of marked, on-road bike lanes.⁴
- The construction of a raised median, curbs and sidewalks has been demonstrated to reduce the amount of time during which pedestrians are exposed to traffic, and therefore at risk of collision, by 28%.⁵
- Streets that are designed for pedestrian safety often provide drivers with increased safety as well.⁶

Below are some examples of specific implementations of complete streets policies:



Boulder, CO: Boulder has used performance measures in the implementation of complete streets policies over the past fifteen years. The city's goals for its streets include increasing trips made by bicycle by 4% by 2020. Boulder has consistently tracked progress towards those goals: it now hosts 300 miles of bike lanes, and bicycle trips account for 13% of total trips made.⁸ Boulder has been successful in addressing traffic congestion by providing these additional options for travel. Hennepin County, MN: Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Health's Statewide Health Improvement Project funded Active Living Hennepin County, an organization that supports policies emphasizing the importance of complete streets and the built environment in the promotion of physical activity and health.⁹ Hennepin was the first county in the state to adopt a complete streets policy.

Nashville, TN: Complete streets were championed as a method to improve the health of Nashville's citizens. This action led the city not only to adopt an Executive Order requiring the consideration for pedestrians, cyclists, public transit and other modes of transportation in reconstruction projects, but also to include health impact assessments (HIAs) in new transportation projects.¹⁰

New York, NY: As part of the city's complete streets program, the New York Department of Transportation has planned safety upgrades to the intersection of 7th Ave and 23rd St, previously identified as an area that posed a significant danger to pedestrians. Upgrades include increasing crossing time, banning certain left turns and replacing some parking spaces with a pedestrian refuge island, a transit plaza and protected turn lanes.¹¹

Charlotte, NC: Charlotte has worked to integrate its Urban Street Design Guidelines into zoning and subdivision codes, which will require developers to follow them, ensuring a wellconnected network of complete streets. These guidelines were intended to improve residents' health by reducing congestion, improving air quality and promoting physical activity.⁷

Sources:

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- 6 Dumbaugg, E, Li, W. 2010. Designing for the Safety of Pedestrians, Cyclists, and Motorists in Urban Environments. Journal of the American Planning Association: 7(1).
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- 8 McCann, B., Rynne, S. Complete Streets: Best Policy and Implementation Practices. American Planning Association Planning Advisory Service Report Number 559.
- 9 http://hennepin.us/activeliving
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- 11 http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/20110119_7av-23st_presentation_slides.pdf



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