Complete Streets: The Road to Safer, Healthier, Livable Communities

Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District
Local Government Commission
WALKSacramento
California Department of Transportation
Sacramento Area Council of Governments

Complete Streets: What are they and why should we care

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Local Government Commission

Complete Streets conference
Sacramento, CA

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Local Government Commission

- Nonprofit membership organization based in Sacramento, CA of local government officials – elected and staff
- Founded in 1979 to work on solar energy
- During 1980s expanded to work on environmental issues: pollution prevention, waste management, hazardous waste
- 1991: Started working on land use issues

The Ahwahnee Principles, 1991

- Revitalize existing parts of our communities through infill development
- Plan complete and integrated communities with mix of uses
  - Within walking distance of one another
  - Within walking distance of transit stops
  - With a diversity of housing types
  - With a center focus
On your marks, get set, go...

- Population Growth: 38%
- Vehicle Miles Traveled: 142%

- Population Growth: 70%
- Vehicle Miles Traveled: 162%

U.S. Population Growth, 1950-1990

- Land has been urbanized 2⅓ times faster than the increase in urban population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Urban Population (millions)</th>
<th>Land (square miles)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Geographic
Graphic courtesy Design Community & Environment
What is a Complete Street?

A Complete Street is safe, comfortable and convenient for travel via automobile, foot, bicycle, and transit.

We know how to build correctly for all users.
Yet many roads are built like this

Recently completed IL 64 expansion with destinations on both sides of the road. Can you spot the pedestrian?

What is a Complete Streets policy?

A complete streets policy ensures that the entire right of way is planned, designed and operated to provide safe access for all users.
What is a Complete Streets policy?

A complete streets policy ensures that the entire right of way is planned, designed and operated to provide safe access for all users.
Complete streets policies provide for:

- Pedestrians
- Bicyclists
- Transit
- Motorists
- Travelers of all ages and abilities

Why have a complete streets policy?

- To *change practice*, integrating the needs of all road users into *everyday* transportation planning practices
Why have a complete streets policy?

- To gradually create a complete network of roads that serve all users.

Why have a complete streets policy?

- To shift transportation investments so they create better streets now.
Why have a complete streets policy?

- To save money: In the long run, retrofit projects always cost more than getting it right the first time.

Who wants Complete Streets?

- What percentage of the U.S. population doesn’t drive?
  - About one-third:
    - 21% of Americans over 65
    - Children under 16
    - Low income Americans can’t afford to drive
  - Transit is growing faster than population or driving
Americans want complete streets

From Active Transportation for America: the case for Increased federal investment in bicycling and walking. RTC 2008.
National transportation poll commissioned by Transportation for America, fielded by Harris Interactive from December 1–19, 2007.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Respondents Would Allocate Transportation Funding</th>
<th>How Transportation Funding is Currently Allocated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roads 37%</td>
<td>Roads 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Transportation 41%</td>
<td>Public Transportation 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike/walk 27%</td>
<td>Bike/walk 1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New National Poll

- 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’d walk and ride more often if things improved
- 56% express strong support for adoption of complete streets policies

Planning Complete Streets for an Aging America,
AARP Public Policy Institute (PPI), 2009
Benefits: Older Americans

- 21% of Americans over 65 do not drive
- More than 50% of non-drivers stay at home on a given day because they lack transportation options

Benefits: Health

- Americans move… without moving
- 60% of adults are at risk for diseases associated with inactivity:
  - Obesity
  - Diabetes
  - High blood pressure
  - Other chronic diseases
Benefits: Physical activity

- Residents are more likely to walk in a neighborhood with sidewalks.
- Cities with more bike lanes have higher levels of bicycling.
- 1/3 of regular transit users meet minimum daily physical activity requirement during their commute.

Benefits: Safety

- Sidewalks reduce pedestrian crash risk by 88%.
Benefits: Safety

- Intersections designed for pedestrians can reduce pedestrian risk by 28%.

Benefits: People with disabilities

- Improved mobility for disabled people and reduced need for expensive paratransit service.
Benefits: Better use of transit funds

- A year of paratransit service for a daily commuter: $38,500
- Making a transit stop accessible: $7,000-$58,000

Source: Maryland Transit Administration

Benefits: The environment

- Fewer emissions
- Less noise pollution
- Less wear and tear on our roads
- Less need to widen roads
Benefits: Reduced traffic

- Trips in metro areas:
  - 50% — less than three miles
  - 28% — less than one mile:
    - 65% of trips under one mile are now taken by automobile

Benefits: Economic activity

- Well designed multi-modal streets increase home values and help revitalize commercial areas
Benefits: Your wallet

- Transportation is the 2nd largest expense for most American households, and costs are rising.
- Complete streets let people leave their cars at home.

Complete Streets policies change intersection design.
Complete Streets policies change intersection design

Complete Streets policies change bicycling
Complete Streets policies change bicycling

Complete Streets policies change transit
Complete Streets policies change transit

Complete Streets policies change accessibility
Complete Streets policies change accessibility

Streets provide access to trails

Complete streets and trails can form a comprehensive non-motorized network

Complete Streets take pressure off overcrowded trails
Complete Streets is NOT:

- A design prescription
- A mandate for immediate retrofit
- A silver bullet; other initiatives must be addressed:
  - *Land use*
  - *Environmental concerns*
  - *VMT reduction*

  (but complete streets will help!)

What does a complete street look like?

There is no magic formula
The many types of Complete Streets

Safe Routes to School

Shoulder bikeways on rural roads
The many types of Complete Streets

Busy multi-modal thoroughfares

The many types of Complete Streets

Transit routes
The many types of Complete Streets

Suburban thoroughfares

The many types of Complete Streets

Residential skinny streets
The many types of Complete Streets

Low traffic streets

The many types of Complete Streets

Historic Main Street
What do the design guides tell us?
The AASHTO “Green Book” states:
“Sidewalks are integral parts of city streets”

Not added to streets — part of the street

AASHTO: American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
Green Book: A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets

What do the design guides tell us?
The AASHTO “Green Book” states:
“Shoulders are desirable on <…> urban arterials”

Bicycle Lanes: shoulders reserved for bicycle use

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Green Book: A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets
What’s the difference with Context Sensitive Solutions?
Bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users are more than “context”

Complete Streets
- Are sensitive to the community
- Serve adjacent land uses
- Serve all who potentially will use the street
Complete Streets Resources

www.completestreets.org

- Fact Sheets
- Monthly policy news
- Policy examples
- New Complete Streets Implementation Workshops
- Join the Coalition!

Complete Streets Coalition Workshops

- Three types of Interactive sessions:
  - Introduction to Complete Streets
  - Policy Development
  - Policy Implementation

- Led by two leading policy and engineering experts
For more information:

www.completestreets.org