Complete the Streets
Barbara McCann
National Complete Streets Coalition

July 31, 2008
What you’ll hear

- Why we need complete streets policies
- The benefits they deliver
- Attributes of an ideal policy
- Real-world examples
- How to get there
What is a Complete Street?

A Complete Street is safe, comfortable & convenient for travel via automobile, foot, bicycle, & transit.
We know how to build right
Yet too many roads still turn out like this

John La Plante
or this
What is a Complete Streets policy?

A complete streets policy ensures that the entire right of way is planned, designed & 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 & 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 are creating better streets now.
CS changes intersection design
CS changes intersection design
CS changes bicycling
CS changes bicycling
CS changes transit
CS changes transit
CS changes accessibility
CS changes accessibility
Streets that benefit communities

Bridgeport Way, University Place, Washington
Streets that benefit communities

- increased capacity
- safer streets
- improved health
- economic growth
- lower emissions
- reduced costs
- smarter growth
Streets that benefit communities

Complete Streets Promote Good Health!
In 2012, Little League in Washington, DC, adopted a Master Community Action Plan in direct response to a 17% increase in the adult obesity rate. Complete streets policies include safer streets for bicyclists and sidewalks that improve accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.

Complete Streets Help Keep Kids Safe!
Outside Philadelphia, two children who missed School Year for Kids (SYK) in a busy street. In many parts of the world, kids are killed on the way to school. Complete streets policies can help ensure that kids can safely walk and ride to school.

Complete Streets Improve Mobility for Disabled Americans
In December 2012, a local pedestrian was hit by a car while crossing the street on a busy street in Washington, DC. Complete streets policies can improve mobility for disabled Americans. Complete streets can help ensure that streets are designed and built to be safe for all, including people with disabilities.

Complete Streets: A Problem for Older Americans
In April 2016, the Elderly Services Office in San Francisco was flooded with complaints about unsafe streets. Complete streets policies can improve mobility for older Americans. Complete streets can help ensure that streets are designed and built to be safe for all, including older adults.

Incomplete streets are a barrier
When streets are designed with short pedestrian sidewalks, they may not be safe for everyone. They often deter the use of sidewalks for people who are not used to using them. Pedestrians may feel unsafe on these streets, and they may not use them. Complete streets policies can help ensure that streets are designed and built to be safe for all, including everyone who uses them.

Complete streets a problem for older Americans
Even when older adults have basic pedestrian facilities, they often do not use them because of the safety concerns of older Americans. The American Council on Aging projects that the baby boomer generation will increase to 17% by 2030, with 62 million people over 65. As people age, many people grow more vulnerable.

Incomplete streets are a major source of deterioration and danger for people with disabilities. A recent study found that older pedestrians were three times more likely to cross the street, but many older people do not feel safe doing so. Complete streets policies can help ensure that streets are designed and built to be safe for all, including older adults.
Complete streets and trails

- Streets provide access to trails
- Complete streets and trails can form a comprehensive non-motorized network
- Complete streets take pressure off overcrowded trails
Benefits: for physical activity

- 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: for physical activity

➢ One third of regular transit users meet the minimum daily requirement for physical activity during their commute
Public health researchers agree:

Actions to encourage more physical activity:

- Build more sidewalks
- Improve transit service
- Shift highway funds to create bike lanes

The tremendous potential

Trips in metro areas:

- 48% - < 3 miles
- 28% - < 1 mile:
  - 65% of trips under 1 mile are now taken by automobile
BIKE JACKER...
Transit, bicycling, walking all up

“David Jones said Yuba City is nice for bicycling because it's flat but the area could use more bike lanes and racks, and motorists could be more aware of cyclists on the road.”

–Marysville Yuba Appeal Democrat July 2008
An ideal complete streets policy

- Is inclusive of all modes
- Applies to all transportation projects
- Specifies and limits exceptions allowed
- Clarifies senior manager approval for exceptions
- Is context-sensitive
- Emphasizes connectivity
- Uses latest design standards & is flexible
- Sets performance standards
Complete Streets is NOT:

- a design prescription
- a mandate for immediate retrofit
- a silver bullet. Other initiatives will still be needed to address:
  - Land use
  - Environmental concerns
  - VMT reduction

(but complete streets will help!)
Complete Streets and Smarter Growth

- Complete streets policies ‘pave the way’ for future walkable development

- They invest traditional highway funds in meeting basic smart-growth principles.
Select Complete Streets policies across the country

- Illinois
- Oregon
- California
- Massachusetts
- DuPage County, IL
- Sacramento, CA
- Johnson County, IA
- Arlington County, VA
- Charlotte, NC
- Chicago, IL
- Columbus, OH
- Decatur, GA
- Ft. Collins, CO
- Iowa City, IA
- Madison, WI
- Roanoke, VA
- Salt Lake City
- Sacramento, CA
- Seattle, WA
Select Complete Streets policies across the country

- Illinois
- Oregon
- California
- Massachusetts

- DuPage County, IL
- Sacramento, CA
- Johnson County, IA
- Arlington County, VA

- Charlotte, NC
- Chicago, IL
- Columbus, OH
- Decatur, GA
- Ft. Collins, CO
- Iowa City, IA
- Madison, WI
- Roanoke, VA
- Salt Lake City
- Sacramento, CA
- Seattle, WA
The safety and convenience of all users of the transportation system including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, freight, and motor vehicle drivers shall be accommodated and BALANCED in all transportation and development projects and through all phases of a project SO THAT even the most vulnerable—children, elderly, and persons with disabilities—can travel safely within the public right-of-way.
"All public street projects or public street reconstruction projects (not including maintenance) in the City of Iowa City shall be designed to accommodate travel by pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit, and motorized vehicles and their passengers with the following exceptions..."
Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are not required where they are prohibited by law such as within interstate highway corridors.

Public transit facilities are not required on streets not serving as transit routes;

If the cost... is excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use, defined as at least 20% of the overall project cost, the City Council may choose not to require bicycle, pedestrian and/or transit facilities.
Seattle: ordinance

“Section 1. SDOT will plan for, design and construct all new City transportation improvement projects to provide appropriate accommodation for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and persons of all abilities, while promoting safe operation for all users, as provided for below.”
“Section 2. SDOT will incorporate Complete Streets principles into: the Department's Transportation Strategic Plan; Seattle Transit Plan; Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plans; Intelligent Transportation System Strategic Plan; and other SDOT plans, manuals, rules, regulations and programs as appropriate.”
Charlotte NC
Transportation Action Plan

“The City will promote a balanced and multi-modal transportation system that serves the mobility needs of all segments of the population, accommodates all travel modes and promotes community economic development needs.”
Charlotte NC
Urban Street Design Guidelines

- Key component of the ‘TAP’
- Lays out a six-step multimodal planning process for use in all projects
Changing Philosophy

Previous:
- Focus on motorists
  - Little distinction by land use

USDG:
- All modes considered equally
  - Defined land use/urban design expectations
The road diet

After

East Boulevard, Charlotte NC

07/31/2006
Streets are safer

Before: 12.6

After: 8.4

34% Reduction

1 crash every 2.5 days (146 per yr)

1 crash every 4.2 days (87 per yr)
More people walking

Before: 2,136
After: 2,632

23% Increase
More people biking

![Bar chart showing a 30% increase in the number of bicycles from 375 before to 486 after.]
## Edgewater Drive Evaluation Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avoid Increasing Traffic On Neighborhood Streets</th>
<th>YES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduce Speeding on Edgewater Dr</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase Bicyclist Volumes</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase Pedestrian Volumes</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce Crashes</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase On-Street Parking Use Rates</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase Pedestrian Satisfaction (Residents)</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase Parking Satisfaction (Residents)</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Decatur’s Community Transportation Plan

Adopted April 7, 2008:
“To create a safe and efficient transportation system that promotes the health and mobility of Decatur citizens and visitors, creating better access to businesses and neighborhoods.”
Madison: MPO plan

- Calls for multi-modal investments
- Sets TIP criteria to favor projects that include bicycling, walking and transit facilities
Putting it all together in Sacramento

- City: Pedestrian Friendly Street Standards
- County: tax ordinance
- Citizens: Complete Streets Best Practices Guide
- MPO: Multi-modal transportation plan
- State: Deputy Directive 64
Putting it all together in Sacramento
Putting it all together in Sacramento
Putting it all together in Sacramento
Putting it all together in Sacramento
HR 5951
The Safe and Complete Streets
Act of 2008

“all users of the transportation system, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users as well as children, older people, motorists, and those with disabilities, are adequately accommodated in all phases of project planning and development”
Implementation:

from policy to practice
An effective policy should result in:

- New training for planners and engineers
An effective policy should result in:

- Restructure procedures

Diagram:

1. Define Land Use Context
2. Define Transportation Context
3. Identify Deficiencies
4. Describe Future Objectives
5. Define Street Type and Initial Cross-Section
6. Describe Tradeoffs and Select Cross-Section
An effective policy should result in:

- Re-written design manuals
An effective policy should result in:

- New measures to track success

![Graph showing the comparison between before and after the policy, with specific percentages and values for pedestrian numbers, parking utilization, and speeding analysis.](image)
National Complete Streets Coalition
Steering Committee

- AARP
- Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals
- Active Living by Design
- America Bikes
- America Walks
- American Council of the Blind
- American Planning Association
- American Public Transportation Association
- ASLA
- City of Boulder
- Institute of Transportation Engineers
- Kimley-Horn and Associates
- League of American Bicyclists
- NCBW
- Safe Routes to School National Partnership
- Smart Growth America
- Thunderhead Alliance
Complete Streets Resources

- **Fact Sheets**
- **Monthly policy news**
- **Policy examples**
- **New Complete Streets Implementation Workshops**
Complete Streets Coalition Workshops

Three types of Interactive sessions:

- Introduction to Complete Streets
- Policy Development
- Policy Implementation

Led by a pair of leading policy & engineering experts

Administered by Assoc. of Bicycle & Pedestrian Professionals
Things to do

- Sign up for Complete The Streets News
- Visit our website & review your policies and procedures
- Schedule a presentation or workshop; get citizens involved
- Draft a policy
For more information:

www.completestreets.org