

Busting the Myths About Complete Streets

COMMUNITIES *for* COMPLETE STREETS



MYTH #1

We don't need bike lanes or sidewalks because "everyone drives."

MYTH #2

Active transportation facilities are expensive

TRUTH

One-third of Americans don't drive automobiles. This includes older adults, youth under 16, people with disabilities, and people who can't afford a car. Transportation costs are one of the largest expenses for an individual or family. Bicycling, walking, and transit provide cheaper options to travel to where people live, work, learn, shop, and play. AAA estimates that in 2014, car ownership cost \$6.957 a year for a small sedan.

Even people that can drive are increasingly choosing not to drive. Young Americans between the ages of 18 and 34 take fewer and shorter car trips than older Americans.³ Between 1983 and 2010, the percentage of 18-year-olds with a driver's license dropped from 80% to 61%.⁴

³ National Complete Streets Coalition (2015) "Introduction to Complete Streets" slide presentation. Retrieved from www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets/complete-streets-fundamentals/.

⁴ CBS News (May 31, 2014). "How much does it cost to own a car in 2014?". Retrieved from CBS News, www.cbsnews.com/news/howmuchdoesitcosttoownacarin2014/.

Footnotes: Complete Streets at Work Diagram

¹ Hunter, W., et al. (1998). Bicycle Lanes Versus Wide Curb Lanes: Operational and Safety Findings and Countermeasure Recommendations. Federal Highway Administration. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation.

² Edwards, R. (2008). Public Transit, Obesity, and Medical Costs: Assessing the Magnitudes. Preventative Medicine, 46(1): 14-21. January, 2008.

³ Lindley, J. (2008). Guidance Memorandum on Consideration and Implementation of Proven Safety Countermeasures. Federal Highway Administration. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation.

⁴ Federal Highway Administration (2002). Pedestrian Facilities Users Guide: Providing Safety and Mobility. http://drusilla.hsrc.unc.edu/cms/downloads/PedFacility_UserGuide2002.pdf

⁵ Ohta, M., et al., 2007. Effect of the physical activities in leisure time and commuting to work on mental health. Journal of Occupational Health, 49, 46-52.



ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION
ALLIANCE

There is a better way

TRANSPORTATION CHOICES ARE A CRUCIAL ISSUE FACING OUR COMMUNITIES TODAY.

The cost of automobile travel is growing, public health discussions are becoming increasingly urgent, and more people associate safer streets with a higher quality of life. These issues are triggering a demand for more affordable, healthier travel options such as walking, biking, and transit. But many roadways lack basic facilities to support safe, active transportation. There is a better way.

Complete Streets are designed to support all modes of transportation, providing a variety of travel choices for people who want them and better safety for those whose choices do not include driving an automobile (e.g., young people, older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income residents).

Complete Streets is a growing movement that engages local government staff and community stakeholders to:

- Provide people with a choice of travel modes
- Help people save money on transportation
- Help youth stay active and healthy
- Allow older adults to age in place by preserving their mobility
- Improve transportation networks by providing greater access to more destinations

Some Elements of Complete Streets



BIKE LANE
Establishes space on road exclusively for bicycle travel. Bicycle lanes are striped and marked with a bicycle symbol and an arrow.



MARKED CROSSWALK
Uses a visual cue to designate space for pedestrian crossings and alert drivers to priority crossing areas.



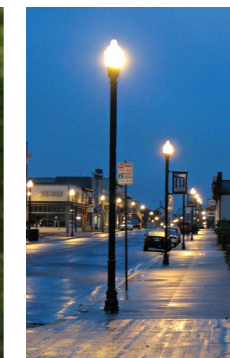
TRANSIT SHELTER
Protects waiting transit users from the elements. Makes bus-transit more appealing and easier to recognize.

PHOTO: GREEN DIARY



COUNTDOWN TIMER
Indicates amount of time pedestrians have to cross. Helpful for people with disabilities and seniors.

PHOTO: GOTHAMIST.COM



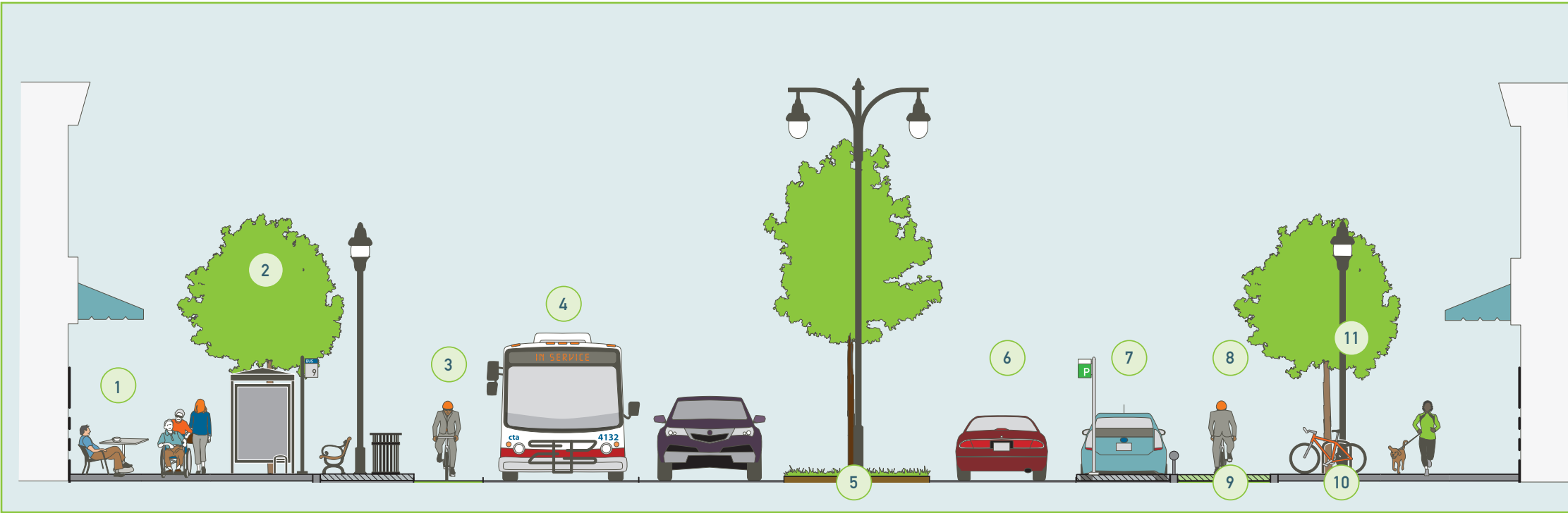
LIGHTING
Increases personal safety and makes pedestrians more visible to drivers. Indicates high-priority pedestrian areas and supports business districts.

PHOTO: PEDBIKEIMAGES.ORG (RON BLOOMQUIST)



RAISED MEDIAN ISLAND
Provides buffer and protection for pedestrians while crossing wide or busy streets. Adds space for green infrastructure.

PHOTO: PEDBIKEIMAGES.ORG (DAN BURDEN)



Complete Streets at Work *Footnotes located on back cover.

1. Economic development: A better pedestrian environment encourages more walk-in customers at local businesses.
2. Trees provide a safety buffer between walkers and moving cars, and shade on hot days.
3. Bike lane: Studies show that cyclists obey stops signs more on streets with bike lanes than on streets without them.¹
4. Public Transit users take 30 percent more steps and spend roughly eight more minutes walking each day than drivers.²
5. Raised medians at marked crosswalks have demonstrated a 46 percent reduction in pedestrian crashes.³
6. Narrower vehicle lanes calm traffic, reducing vehicle speeds. A mere 10 mph can impact a pedestrian's chances for crash survival by 40 percent.⁴
7. Street parking also calms traffic and creates a safety buffer between moving cars and the streetscape.
8. A 30-minute round-trip bicycle commute is associated with better mental health in men.⁵
9. Separating bike lanes from traffic can promote safety and encourage more people to try bicycling.
10. Bike rack: Secure bike parking encourages more people to travel and shop by bike.
11. Lighting promotes personal security for people walking or waiting for transit in the evenings.

IT'S ABOUT CHOICES

In many communities, our roadways are designed to support motor vehicles, but they lack safe places for people to walk or bike. As a result, people feel forced to bear the financial burden of driving everywhere they go, and those who don't drive are put at risk just getting from Point A to Point B. Complete Streets mean greater accessibility and more choices for people in their everyday lives.

IT'S ABOUT CHILDREN

Safe places to walk and bike are especially important for kids because they need physical activity for healthy development. Health care professionals fear that today's parents will be the first ever to outlive their children due to increases in illnesses like heart disease and diabetes.¹ In 1969, nearly half of American children walked or rode a bike to school each day. As of 2009, that number had dropped to 12 percent.² Complete Streets create a safer environment for children and families to walk or bike to school, to local parks and playgrounds, and to friends' houses.

¹ Olshansky, S., et al. (2005). "A Potential Decline in Life Expectancy in the United States in the 21st Century." *New England Journal of Medicine*, 352(11): 1138–1145.

² Federal Highway Administration. (2009). *National Household Travel Survey*.

IT'S ABOUT ACCESS

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was enacted in 1990 to make it easier for people with disabilities to enjoy the same access the rest of us take for granted. But today, 25 years later, most of our roads are still inaccessible. The principles of Complete Streets not only facilitate ADA compliance, but also put forth a number of creative solutions to support people of all ages and abilities in each phase of their daily trips.

IT JUST MAKES SENSE

Most people would agree that increased traffic congestion, reduced air quality, rising transportation costs, and obesity-related diseases are problems we face as a society. Communities with a connected network of Complete Streets help ease the impacts of these problems on their populations. These communities also protect property values, create a more stable housing market, and reduce household transportation costs, all of which helps support the local economy. In addition, Complete Streets produce healthier residents with a better connection to the neighborhoods they walk through each day, which in turn puts more eyes on the street to keep those neighborhoods safe. Giving voice to the Complete Streets movement allows citizen activists to be an integral part of creating these positive changes in their own communities.



Healthy HotSpot Initiative

Led by the Cook County Department of Public Health in collaboration with many partners, Healthy HotSpot aims to multiply the number of places that make healthier living easier in or near your community. Visit cookcountypublichealth.org/healthy-hotspot for more information about the Initiative.

What can local governments do?

- Join more than 700 jurisdictions nationwide that have adopted Complete Streets approaches and made a formal commitment to accommodate all road users in future roadway projects.
- Establish long- and short-term goals for the local streets network. Compile them into an active transportation plan that will guide progress and help win grant funding for projects.
- Incorporate new roadway design standards and national best practices.