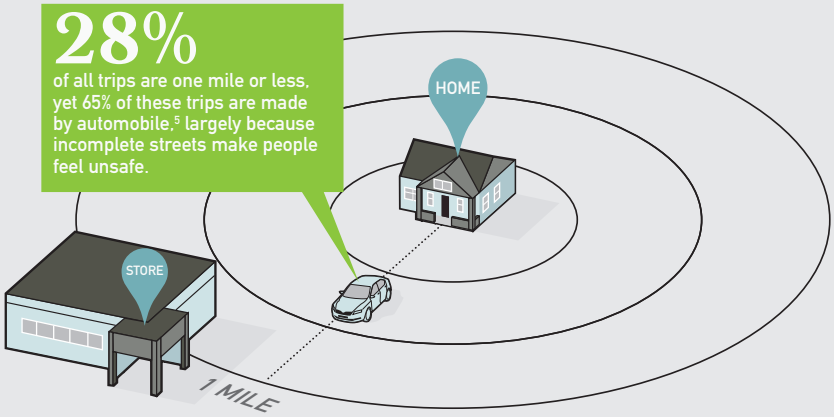
COMPLETE STREETS

benefit public & environmental health

Most of us know that the growing number of cars and trucks on the road takes a toll on our environment. But did you know that this trend also takes a heavy toll on our health? Increased traffic means that more people are spending more time in their cars, and less time getting the exercise they need. In walkable, bikable communities, every trip taken is an opportunity for physical activity. Every time a person chooses active travel instead of driving, they are helping to curtail traffic congestion and pollution. Complete Streets benefit both public and environmental health by decreasing the number of vehicle miles driven and encouraging more people to choose active forms of transportation.

28%
of all trips are one mile or less, yet 65% of these trips are made by automobile,[5] largely because incomplete streets make people feel unsafe.



Americans choose to drive, even for very short trips.

This is often because local streets aren't safe enough for healthy, environmentally friendly travel like walking or biking. Complete streets help to make the healthier choice the easier choice.

ENVIRONMENT & PUBLIC HEALTH

Incomplete streets take a toll on the environment and people's health. Driving increases vehicle emissions.

- Between 30 and 45 percent of Americans live in areas impacted by traffic-related air pollution. Evidence shows pollution from car exhaust causes asthma attacks in children, and can lead to cardiovascular disease and premature death.[8]
- A single person, who replaces a 20-mile round-trip car commute with public transit can reduce his annual CO_2 emissions by 4,800 pounds per year, equal to a 10 percent reduction in all greenhouse gases produced by an average two-adult, two-car household.[6]

During the 1990s, active commuting to work declined by 26% in the U.S., while adult obesity increased by 61%.

SOURCE: SURFACE TRANSPORTATION POLICY PARTNERSHIP, MEAN STREETS 2000.

INCOMPLETE STREETS & HEALTH

Illinois is experiencing a growing obesity problem.

- The number of overweight or obese Illinoisans has increased 80 percent in the last 15 years.[1]
- More than 29 percent of adults in Illinois are obese. Unhealthy weight gain increases one's risk for diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and some types of cancer.[2]

Americans are leading more sedentary lifestyles.

- Fifty-five percent of adults do not meet the minimum recommended physical activity.[3]
- Twenty-five percent of adults report being completely inactive.[4]

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Increased walking, biking, and transit reduce vehicle emissions.

- When the Village of Mount Prospect, Illinois completes all recommendations in its bike plan, two percent of all trips taken per day will be on bike, and the community will travel 13,000 fewer miles by vehicle per day, resulting in 117,096 fewer kilograms of greenhouse gas emissions.[7]
- In 1993, Boulder, Colorado, constructed a comprehensive transit network. Following completion, the number of transit trips grew by 500 percent, resulting in 500,000 fewer pounds of annual CO_2 emissions.[8]

And improve community health…

- Residents who have access to sidewalks are 65 percent more likely to walk than those who do not.[9]
- Nearly one-third of transit users meet the daily physical activity guidance recommended by the U.S. Surgeon General.[10]
- Public transit users take 30 percent more steps and spend roughly eight more minutes walking each day than drivers.[11]

…but roads must be designed to safely accommodate walking, biking, and transit use.

Healthy HotSpot Intiative

The places we live, work, learn, worship, and play matter to our healthy and can have an impact on how long and how well we live. Healthy HotSpots are places in suburban Cook County that have implemented one or more proven strategies to encourage postive behaviors, or to protect the public's well-being. Learn more at cookcountypublichealth.org/healthy-hotspot.

[1] Levi, Jeffrey, et al. (2011). F as in Fat: How Obesity Threatens America's Future. Washington, DC: Trust for America's Health. Retrieved from http://healthyamericans.org/assets/files/TFAH2011FasInFat10.pdf

[2] The State of Obesity. (2015). Illinois State Obesity Data, Rates, and Trends. Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Retrieved from http://stateofobesity.org/states/il/

[3] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2000). Healthy People 2010. 2nd edition. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Federal Highway Administration. (2001). National Personal Transportation Survey. Washington: U.S. Department of Transportation. Retrieved from http://nhts.ornl.gov/download.shtml#2001

[6] Davis, Todd and Monica Hale. (2007). Public Transportation's Contribution to U.S. Greenhouse Gas Reduction. McLean, VA: American Public Transportation Association. Retrieved from http://www.apta.com/resources/reportsandpublications/Documents/climate_change.pdf

[7] Health Effects Institute (2010). Traffic-Related Air Pollution: A Critical Review of the Literature on Emissions, Exposure, and Health Effects. Retrieved from http://pubs.healtheffects.org/view.php?id=334

[8] Active Transportation Alliance and Sam Schwartz Engineering. (2011). Mount Prospect Bicycle Plan. Retrieved from http://www.mountprospect.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=1924

[9] Giles-Corti, B. and R. J. Donovan. (2002). "The relative influence of individual, social, and physical environment determinants of physical activity." Social Science & Medicine, 54: 1793–1812.

[10] Besser, L. M. and A. L. Dannenberg. (2005). "Walking to public transit steps to help meet physical activity recommendations." American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 29(4): 273–280.

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