



POLICY GUIDE

Increasing opportunities for active transportation

Active transportation involves getting from place to place in a physically active way, such as walking, biking, or using public transportation. Active transportation provides ample opportunities for Americans to meet the Surgeon General's recommendations for minimum daily physical activity. States can adopt policies and support community design that includes active transportation and ensures access for people with physical, economic or other limitations that impede access.

Opportunities to Promote Active Transportation:

- » Encourage implementation of Complete Streets for users of all ages and abilities.
- » Encourage safe routes to schools programs.
- » Design streets so as to increase pedestrian and bicycle safety and comfort.
- » Encourage bicycle boulevards, which usually run parallel to busy streets, providing bicyclists with a lower-speed, alternate route to popular destinations¹
- » Encourage use of signage, maps and other wayfinding methods for a variety of travelers (e.g., pedestrians, people with hearing or sight impairments, travelers using wheelchairs, etc).
- » Increase investments in infrastructure that support active transportation.²

Complete Streets

Complete Streets is a term used to describe streets that are designed for all users. They encourage walking, bicycling and transit-friendly environments for health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently named adoption of Complete Streets policies as a recommended strategy to prevent obesity.³

A complete street may include sidewalks, bike lanes, special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible public transportation stops, frequent and safe crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions and roundabouts. Over 200 communities have adopted Complete Streets policies at the state, regional or local level and more are underway.⁴

Please visit the Complete Streets Atlas for more information: www.completestreets.org/atlas

One study found that 43% of people with safe places to walk within 10 minutes of home met recommended activity levels; among individuals without safe places to walk, just 27% were active enough.⁵

A Comprehensive Multi-Level Approach for Passing Safe Routes to School and Complete Streets Policies in Hawaii⁶

- » The 2007 Hawaii Physical Activity and Nutrition Plan recommend increasing walking and bicycling to school.
- » Public health promotion efforts led by the Healthy Hawaii Initiative (HHI) at the Department of Health.
- » HHI used a multi-level approach focusing at the institutional, community and public policy levels of the social ecological model.
- » HHI briefed elected officials on built environment activities, state and county level policies, and national policy examples.
- » Legislation was introduced in January 2009 in the House for Safe Routes to Schools and Senate for Complete Streets.
- » Advocacy groups closely monitored the bill progress, testified at hearings, and crafted amendments to strengthen the bills.
- » In June 2009, both bills were signed into law by Hawaii's Governor.

Safe Routes to School²

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) employs a combination of evaluation, engineering, education, encouragement and enforcement to improve the safety of the physical environment surrounding schools and encourage children to walk and bicycle to school. SRTS programs operate in all 50 states and DC, and have impacted over 13,000 schools since 1997.

1. Dill, J. "Bicycling for Transportation and Health: The Role of Infrastructure." Journal of Public Health Policy. 2009 (30); S95–S110.

2. Partnership for Prevention. "Transportation & Health: Policy Interventions for Safer, Healthier People and Communities." July 2011. Available at www.prevent.org/data/files/transportation/transportationandhealthpolicycomplete.pdf.

3. Smart Growth America. "Benefits of Complete Streets." Available at www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/cs/factsheets/cs-health.pdf.

4. National Complete Streets Coalition. "Fundamentals." Available at www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets/complete-streets-fundamentals.

5. Powell, KE et al. "Places to Walk: Convenience and Regular Physical Activity." American Journal of Public Health. 2003 (93); 1519-1521.

6. Active Living Research. "A Comprehensive Multi-Level Approach for Passing Safe Routes to School and Complete Streets Policies in Hawaii." February 2010. Available at <http://www.activelivingresearch.org/node/11985>.

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Health in All Policies is a collaborative approach that integrates and articulates health considerations into policy making and programming across sectors, and at all levels, to improve the health of all communities and people.

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