Creating Safer Streets

Activity-Friendly Routes to Everyday Destinations

What are activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations?

Activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations are connections that let people safely and easily walk, bike, or move actively using an assistive device to reach key locations, such as homes, workplaces, parks, grocery stores, schools, and other community amenities. Activity-friendly routes look different in every community, but can include sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks, or access to transit stops.

Learn more about activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations at:
https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/activepeoplehealthynation/index.html

Activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations create opportunities for physical activity by bringing destinations closer together and creating routes to help people safely, comfortably, and efficiently reach those destinations via walking, biking, or moving actively using assistive devices.

Unfortunately, in many communities it is difficult or impossible for people to safely travel via these active modes because destinations are too far apart or because streets are designed to prioritize high speed for drivers over safety for people outside vehicles. Sadly, this problem is worsening: 2016 to 2018 were the three deadliest years in the last 30 years for people walking.[1] Furthermore, older adults, Native Americans, Black people, and people walking in low-income neighborhoods are struck and killed by drivers while walking at disproportionately high rates.[2]

Through street design features like those described to the right, activity-friendly routes can make space for people to safely walk, bike, and move actively using assistive devices as well as encourage drivers to move at slower, safer speeds.

Safer street design features

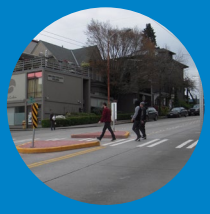

Photo: SDOT

Median islands shorten crossing distances and reduce pedestrian crashes by **65 to 89 percent.**[3]

Photo: North Charleston

Sidewalks create separate, designated spaces to walk or move actively and reduce pedestrian crashes by **56 percent.**[3]

Photo: NYCDOT

Networks of separated bicycle facilities create safer streets for everyone, reducing all traffic deaths by **44 percent.**[4]

Photo: SF Bicycle Coalition

Road diets, or decreasing the number and width of lanes to slow down drivers and reallocate space, reduce all crashes by **19 to 47 percent.**[3]

Smart Growth America
Improving lives by improving communities

National Complete Streets Coalition


Photo: Smart Growth America

To create activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations, decision makers should strive to create a network of sidewalks and bikeways throughout their community, not just at individual streets or intersections. By focusing on complete networks, activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations help to fill gaps in the transportation network for people walking, biking, and moving actively with assistive devices. For example, many communities lack convenient, clearly-marked crosswalks to reach key destinations, such as the bus stop pictured at the left. People walking have no safe way to reach this bus stop, and people who use wheelchairs and other assistive devices have no way to reach it at all. These sorts of first-mile/last-mile connections must be implemented wherever necessary as a matter of routine to create safe, complete activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations.

Twenty-eight percent of all traffic deaths, and a disproportionate share of people killed while walking, take place on commercial arterials like those pictured below.[5]

Photo: Flickr/gab482

Photo: Flickr/Doug Kerr

In contrast, activity-friendly routes ensure people can safely walk, bike, or move actively using assistive devices to reach their destinations.

Photo: City of Orlando

CALL TO ACTION

Adopt or update Complete Streets policies to create activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations as a matter of routine. Commit to prioritize safety for all people over high speeds for people in cars.

Additional resources

- To learn more about pedestrian fatality data nationwide or in your state or region, view the *Dangerous by Design* report: **https://smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-by-design/**
- To learn more about safer street design, view FHWA's proven safety countermeasures: **https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/**
- To learn more about implementing activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations, visit: **https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/activepeoplehealthynation/strategies-to-increase-physical-activity/activity-friendly-routes-to-everyday-destinations.html**

1. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (2020) Fatality Analysis Reporting System. Available from: https://www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/Main/index.aspx.
2. Smart Growth America (2020) Dangerous by Design. Available from: https://smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-by-design/.
3. Federal Highway Administration (2020) Proven Safety Countermeasures. Available from: https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/.
4. Marshall WE and Ferenchak NN (2019) Why cities with high bicycling rates are safer for all road users. Journal of Transport & Health 13(0): 100539.
5. Zaccaro (2019) Blind Spots: How Unhealthy Corridors Harm Communities and How to Fix Them. Washington, DC: Urban Land Institute.