



Complete Streets are designed and operated so they work for all users— pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Communities that adopt complete streets policies are asking transportation planners and engineers to consistently design and alter the right-of-way with all users in mind. Contact the National Complete Streets Coalition (www.completestreets.org) to learn about the diverse groups working together to enact complete streets policies across the country!

Complete Streets Spark Economic Revitalization

More than a decade ago, streets in downtown West Palm Beach were designed so drivers could quickly pass through without stopping. The properties downtown were 80% vacant, the city was \$10 million in debt, and street crime was common. In an effort to revitalize a barren downtown, the mayor looked first to transportation investments, such as pedestrian crossings, traffic calming measures, and streetscaping. Today, West Palm Beach boasts a booming, safe downtown with an 80 percent commercial occupancy rate. Commercial and residential property values along the improved corridors have soared.¹



Complete streets transformed West Palm Beach's downtown into a friendly destination during the day, and in the evening.

Photos courtesy of Downtown Development Authority
West Palm Beach

Incomplete streets restrict economic development

In today's landscape, retail and commercial development is often accessible only by automobile along roads that have become jammed even on weekends. Potential shoppers are left with no choice but to fill up the tank and drive. For many, that can mean staying home. This is particularly true for seniors; research shows that that "half of all non-drivers age 65 and over – 3.6 million Americans – stay home on a given day because they lack transportation."² The economy cannot reach its maximum potential when buyers are unable to reach retail destinations.

Lack of transportation options also affects the workforce. In a 2006 Airport Corridor Transportation Association report on employment centers outside Pittsburgh, 30% of employers responded that transportation was the number one barrier to hiring and retaining qualified workers.³ Although bus routes serve a portion of the center, more than 50% of employees responded that there was no bus stop convenient to home or work. Other employees noted that they didn't use public transportation because bus stops in the area had no sidewalks to safely reach their destination. The lack of a network of complete streets in and around this activity center makes it difficult to attract and retain employees.

Incomplete streets hinder economic growth and can result in lost business, lower productivity, and higher employee turnover.

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Complete Streets Steering Committee Organizations

AARP
Alliance for Biking and Walking
America Bikes
America Walks
American Council of the Blind
American Planning Association
American Public
Transportation Association
American Society of
Landscape Architects
Association of Pedestrian and
Bicycle Professionals
City of Boulder
HNTB
Institute of Transportation Engineers
League of American Bicyclists
McCann Consulting
National Association of Area Agencies
on Aging
National Center for Bicycling
and Walking
Safe Routes to School National
Partnership
Smart Growth America
SvR Design Company

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Complete Streets Spark Economic Revitalization

Complete Streets create viable, liveable communities

Creating infrastructure for non-motorized transportation and lowering automobile speeds by changing road conditions can improve economic conditions for both business owners and residents. When Valencia Street in San Francisco's Mission District slimmed its traffic lanes to slow down cars and accommodate other users, merchants reported the street changes enhanced the area. Nearly 40 percent of merchants reported increased sales, and 60 percent reported more area residents shopping locally due to reduced travel time and convenience. Overall, two-thirds of respondents described the increased levels of pedestrian and bicycling activity and other street changes improved business and sales.⁴ A network of complete streets is more safe and appealing to residents and visitors, which is also good for retail and commercial development.



Right: Don Burden

Complete streets in North Carolina attract more tourists: in 2004, NC DOT invested \$6.7 million in bicycling infrastructure which brings in \$60 million annually from visitors.

Street design that is inclusive of all modes of transportation, where appropriate, not only improves conditions for existing businesses, but also is a proven method for revitalizing an area and attracting new development. Washington, DC's Barracks Row was experiencing a steady decline of commercial activity due to uninviting sidewalks, lack of streetlights, and speeding traffic. After many design improvements, which included new patterned sidewalks, more efficient public parking, and new traffic signals, Barrack's Row attracted 44 new businesses and 200 new jobs.⁵ Economic activity on this three-quarter mile strip (measured by sales, employees, and number of pedestrians) has more than tripled since the inception of the project.

Complete streets also boost the economy by increasing property values, including residential properties, as generally homeowners are willing to pay more to live in walkable communities. In Chicago, homes within a half-mile of a suburban rail station on average sell for \$36,000 more than houses located further away.⁶ Similarly in Dallas, the new public transportation rail line helped spur retail sales in downtown Dallas, which experienced sales growth of 33 percent, while the sales in the rest of the city grew 3 percent.⁷

¹ Street Redesign for Revitalization, West Palm Beach, FL. Case Study No. 16. http://www.walkinginfo.org/pedsafe/casestudy.cfm?CS_NUM=16.
² Surface Transportation Policy Partnership. Aging Americans: Stranded Without Options. 2004. http://www.transact.org/library/reports_html/seniors/aging.pdf
³ Airport Corridor Transportation Association (ACTA). Study of Improved Shared Ride Transportation Services to the Robinson/North Fayette Employment Center. October 26, 2006. <http://www.acta-pgh.org>.
⁴ Drennen, Emily. Economic Effects of Traffic Calming on Urban Small Businesses. 2003. http://www.emilydrennen.org/TrafficCalming_full.pdf.
⁵ Barrack's Row Annual Report. 2006. <http://www.barracksrow.org/public/AnnualReports/BAR-001-AnnualRprt4.pdf>.
⁶ American Public Transportation Association. Public Transportation Means Business. http://www.apta.com/government_affairs/tea21/documents/brochure_transit_means_business.pdf.
⁷ APTA. Public Transportation Means Business.