

2.5 Conclusions for Chapter 2

Enhancing community design to promote active transportation creates a number of co-benefits in addition to the individual and environmental health benefits associated with the primary goal of increasing trips made by walking and bicycling. Every motor vehicle trip that is replaced by a walk or a bicycle ride means less pollution, congestion, noise, and other elements that affect quality of life and adds social capital in the form of stronger community ties and a more human-scale environment.

The elements of community design that encourage active transportation also lead to more livable communities and improved quality of life. Greater connectivity, achieved by keeping block sizes small enough to be comfortable and walkable, locating key destinations closer together, and giving incentives for more compact and mixed-use development all contribute to the vibrancy of a community.

With the increase in interest in expanding transportation infrastructure investments that support active transportation, new, more human-scale approaches to street design are being adopted. Policies like Complete Streets make roadways compatible for all users. Programs like Safe Routes to School organize the provision of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure around children's trips to and from school, but they have the effect of enhancing infrastructure for all pedestrians and bicyclists and increasing active transportation choices for all.

Bicycle boulevards, improved lighting, better crosswalks, added wayfinding and signage oriented to the non-motorized user, and slower speeds make active transportation a more attractive choice and increase active transportation trips, while making a community more attractive and livable as well.

In roadway facilities' design and operation, the needs of all road users are being incorporated into performance measures like level of service. More consideration is needed for pedestrian and bicyclist route analysis and pedestrian-friendly vehicle design.

Finally, public transit is a natural partner to walking and bicycling, and by making it easier for pedestrians and bicyclists to use transit, walking and bicycling's attractiveness as transportation alternatives increases. While there has been some progress in transit systems' capacity for carrying bicycles, the integration of walking and bicycling with transit in terms of station and stop design can be expanded considerably, along with enhanced use of transit aids such as online arrival information and route planning. The link between transit and pedestrians and bicyclists can also be strengthened by encouraging more mixed-use, compact development near transit stops and stations, increasing the convenience of access to the transit system for those who walk and bicycle.