

AARP®

Livability Fact Sheets

The Complete Collection



Livable Communities are Great Places for All Ages

Bicycling

Density

Economic Development

Form-Based Code

Modern Roundabouts

Parking

Revitalization Without Displacement

Road Diets

Sidewalks

Street Trees

Traffic Calming

A Publication of



aarp.org/livable



The Livability Fact Sheets collected in this booklet were created in partnership by AARP Livable Communities and the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute. The two organizations have the shared goal of helping towns, cities and communities nationwide to become safer, healthier, more walkable and overall livable for people of all ages.

A package of 11 comprehensive, easy-to-read livability resources, the fact sheets can be used individually or as a collection by community leaders, policy makers, citizen activists and others to learn about and explain what makes a city, town or neighborhood a great place to live.

Each topic-specific fact sheet is a four-page document that can be read online — by visiting aarp.org/livability-factsheets — or printed and distributed. We encourage sharing, so please forward the URL and use the fact sheets for discussions and research. If you have comments or questions, contact us at livable@aarp.org and/or community@walklive.org.

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The vision for the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute (WALC) is to create healthy, connected communities that support active living and that advance opportunities for all people through walkable streets, livable cities and better built environments. The Institute's mission is to inspire, teach, connect and support communities in their efforts to improve health and well-being through better built environments was formed for charitable, educational and scientific purposes to help communities address the negative effects of the built environment on health, safety, social welfare, economic vitality, environmental sustainability and overall quality of life.

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Bicycling | A LIVABILITY FACT SHEET

Half of all trips taken in the United States are three miles or less, yet most Americans drive — even to the closest destinations. Only 3 percent of commuting trips in the U.S. are by bicycle, compared to up to 60 percent in The Netherlands.

Still, it's not unreasonable to believe we can improve our numbers. The popularity of bicycling has been on the rise. The number of bike trips doubled between 1990 and 2009, and many communities and the federal government are embracing the bicycle as a transportation solution for a healthy and viable future.¹

Surveys show that 60 percent of Americans would ride a bicycle if they felt safe doing so, and eight out of 10 agree that bicycling is a healthy, positive activity.

Although issues related to bicycling continue to be debated, experience shows that bicycle-friendly features increase safety for all road users, including motor vehicles.²

In 2010, New York City removed a traffic lane and painted a two-way bicycle path with a three-foot parking lane buffer

alongside Brooklyn's Prospect Park. Weekday bicycling traffic tripled, speeding by all vehicles dropped from 74 to 20 percent, crashes for all road users dropped 16 percent and injuries went down 21 percent, all without a change in corridor travel time.³ Throughout New York City, deaths and serious crashes are down 40 percent where there are bike lanes.⁴

Bicycling also provides economic benefits: Two-thirds of merchants surveyed on San Francisco's Valencia Street say that bike lanes have improved business. In North Carolina's Outer Banks, bicycle tourism has already generated \$60 million in annual economic activity on its \$6.7 million bicycle infrastructure investment. In 2009, people using bicycles spent \$261 million on goods and services in Minnesota, supporting more than 5,000 jobs and generating \$35 million in taxes.⁵

Building bike infrastructure creates an average of 11.4 jobs for every \$1 million spent. Road-only projects create 7.8 jobs per \$1 million.⁶ The average American household spends more than \$8,000 a year on its cars; the cost to maintain a bicycle is about \$300 a year.⁷

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This path in New Smyrna Beach, Fla., is part of a Volusia County plan to link schools, parks and businesses through interconnected paths. Fifteen miles were completed by 2012 with overwhelming public support. (Image: bikeflorida.net.)

Myth-Busting!

■ “Bicyclists don’t follow rules.”

While there are bicyclists who do break the law, a large Federal Highway Administration study found that motorists failed to yield the right of way in 43 percent of crashes; bicyclists were at fault 36 percent of the time.⁸ Since the 1982 passage of Idaho’s “stop as yield” law, which allows cyclists to treat stop signs as yield signs, there has been “no discernible increase in injuries or fatalities,” according to the Idaho Department of Transportation.⁹

■ “Bicyclists don’t pay their fair share.”

All road users — cars, trucks, bicycles, pedestrians, buses, light rail — are subsidized to some extent by society at large. Funding for U.S. roadways comes partly from vehicle taxes, fuel taxes and tolls, which together account for up to 60 percent of direct costs. General taxes and fees pay the remaining 40 percent. The federal gas tax of 18.4 cents per gallon has not been raised since 1992.

Cars, buses and trucks impose much higher maintenance and capital costs on roads than bicycles do, and they benefit from subsidies that are not directly paid by motorists.¹⁰ In 2009, the Seattle Department of Transportation paid only 4 percent of its road expenses with the gas tax while non-motor vehicle funds paid for the rest.¹¹

Motor vehicle crash injuries cost society \$99 billion in 2010 due to medical expenses and lost productivity.¹² Pedestrians and bicyclists bear a larger share of costs than they impose.¹³

■ “Bicycling is for fit middle-class white guys.”

Six in 10 young bicycle owners are women, eight out of 10 American women have a positive view of bicycling and two out of three believe their community would

be a better place to live if biking were safer and more comfortable. Between 2001 and 2009, the fastest growth in bicycle use in the U.S., from 16 to 23 percent, occurred among self-identified Hispanics, African-Americans and Asian-Americans, 86 percent of whom have a positive view of bicyclists.¹⁴

■ “Bicycling is too dangerous.”

Bicycling does tend to have higher fatality rates per mile than motorized travel, but a typical motorist drives five to 10 times more miles than a typical cyclist.

Bicycling risk can be significantly reduced through improved infrastructure and a greater number of bicycles on the road.¹⁵ Bicycling also imposes a minimal risk to other road users and provides significant health benefits that can offset crash risks.¹⁶

There were no bicycling fatalities in bicycle-friendly Portland, Ore., in 2013 even though bicycling accounts for at least six percent of all trips. By comparison, 21 people were killed inside motor vehicles that year.¹⁷

■ “Bicyclists slow down cars and create congestion.”

Average traffic speeds in Manhattan increased nearly seven percent since the installation of bicycle lanes south of 60th Street in 2008.¹⁸ Bicycles take up way less road space than motor vehicles and cyclists tend to avoid congested roads that don’t have bike lanes.¹⁹

■ “Bicycle lanes hurt business.”

After the installation of protected bike lanes on Manhattan’s 8th and 9th avenues in 2007, retail sales increased 49 percent in those areas compared to 3 percent in the rest of the borough.¹⁹

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How To Get It Right



Bicycle parking promotes bicycle riding. Bike racks can be placed on or off the street. Fun Fact: One vehicle parking space can accommodate 12 bicycles.



Grade-separated, protected bike lanes (like this raised cycle track in Missoula, Montana) provide separate, defined spaces for riders and drivers.

To encourage bicycling and bicycle-friendly streets and communities, try the following:

■ Embrace a public process and build support

Develop an education and awareness campaign prior to implementation, and reach out broadly to community members, elected officials and municipal leaders. Government officials may need to see public support before acting. Toward that end, advocates can share this fact sheet, talk to neighbors, build community support and then meet with decision makers, the media, experts and others to discuss the benefits of bicycling. Agency staff can engage residents by hosting workshops to build acceptance and understanding.

■ Start with a pilot project

Do a simple, low-cost project, such as striping a bike lane in an area with high bicycling potential and an existing right of way. This can help residents become comfortable with bicycling and enable municipal staff to document what works and what doesn't. Promote the pilot as a road improvement project rather than only as a bicycle project.

■ Provide adequate bicycle parking

Bicycle racks encourage bicycling. Well-placed racks provide a secure place for parking bikes while shopping, working or playing. Racks can be located inside buildings or bolted into sidewalks or even the street. A single parking space can hold up to 12 bicycles on staple racks (they look like an inverted "U" shape) mounted in a row.

■ Create routes and wayfaring signs

Develop a system of routes cyclists can follow to get around town safely. Install highly-visible wayfaring signs that indicate distances, destinations and street names and install signs at all important crossings.

■ Establish a bike share

More than 500 communities worldwide, including at least 50 in the U.S., have a short-term bicycle rental or bike share program.²⁰ (New York City and Washington, D.C., feature popular bike share networks.) People can join a share program for the day or a full year by paying a nominal fee. To participate, a rider checks out a bicycle from a computerized kiosk and then returns the bike at a share program rack near his or her destination.

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Success Stories

■ Palo Alto, California: Bicycle Boulevards

Bicycle boulevards are low-volume, low-speed streets that have been optimized for bicycle travel. Palo Alto has an extensive network of paths, bike lanes and boulevards, including connections to schools throughout town.

Data from the 2010 Census showed 7.1 percent of residents commuted to work by bicycle, an increase from 5.6 percent in 2000. The city continues to provide facilities, services and programs to promote travel by bicycle.

■ Indianapolis, Indiana: Cultural Trail

The eight-mile, \$63 million walk-bike trail was completed in May 2013, having been financed by both public and private dollars.

The trail winds through the downtown of this auto-oriented city (home of the Indy 500), connecting a half-dozen emerging cultural districts, a 1.5 mile section of the historic Indianapolis Canal and to White River State Park, a former industrial wasteland that's now filled with museums, lawns and attractions. By April 2014 the trail had added more than \$864 million to the local economy.

■ Memphis, Tennessee: Broad Avenue

The Broad Avenue Arts District initiative revitalized a struggling commercial and residential area. The project's popularity exploded when the focus was expanded to include bicycles.

"The lanes slowed down traffic and people started noticing the businesses more," says Pat Brown, co-owner of T Clifton Art Gallery. "Our revenues have grown on average 30 percent per year. Yes, that's for an art-related business

in a tough economy." The district has seen more than 15 new businesses and nearly 30 property renovations. Restaurants report a growth in business due to bicyclists.

WHY IT WORKS

Protected Bike Lanes provide a barrier between motor vehicles and cyclists. (This barrier can be installed and permanent, or as simple as a row of parked cars, planters or plastic posts.) They're good for ...

Business: A Portland study found that bike riders will go out of their way to use a street that has good bicycling infrastructure. That's more business exposure.

Safety: Drivers don't have to worry about unexpected maneuvers by cyclists and pedestrians don't need to dodge bike riders on sidewalks.

Lawfulness: Protected bike lanes in Chicago resulted in a more than 150 percent increase in the number of bike riders obeying traffic lights.

Everyone: Bicycles don't pollute, they cause less wear and tear on roadways than cars do, they help people stay healthy!

Source: Adapted from the Tranitized.com infographic "Why Build Protected Bike Lanes?"

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Density | A LIVABILITY FACT SHEET

When the topic is land use, the word “density” is generally defined as the amount of residential development permitted on a given parcel of land. The larger the number of housing units per acre, the higher the density; the fewer units, the lower the density.¹

Dense, mixed-use developments come in a variety of forms, from small-lot detached homes, to condo buildings and townhouses in a suburban town center, to apartments atop downtown retail shops. These types of communities are proving to be very popular. In fact, a majority of Americans prefer such communities — and it shows.²

The Federal Reserve Bank of New York found that a doubling of an area’s density increases worker productivity by up to 4 percent.³ When the housing market imploded in the late 2000s, the neighborhoods that held their property values the best were high density communities that featured a mix of uses (housing, retail, restaurants and office space) located within a walkable core.^{4,5}

One reason these types of communities withstood the

storm is that many baby boomers and young adults are choosing to settle in walkable neighborhoods that offer a mix of housing and transportation options and close proximity to jobs, schools, shopping, entertainment and parks. Nationally, 70 percent of people born between 1979 and 1996 say they want to live in walkable, urban neighborhoods and that they don’t believe it’ll be necessary to move to a suburb once they have children.⁶

Demographic trends are changing what Americans need and expect from a home. From 1970 to 2012 the percentage of households consisting of married couples with children plunged from 40 to 20 percent, while households with a single person living alone jumped from 17 to 27 percent.⁷ The nation’s decreasing birthrate and aging population will continue to boost the demand for smaller homes in more compact neighborhoods.

Regulation and site design practices such as form-based code⁸ (we have a fact sheet about that too!) can transform urban, suburban and rural areas into thriving, connected, livable communities.⁹

The nation’s decreasing birthrate and aging population will continue to boost the demand for smaller homes in more compact communities.



High Point, a former World War II-era public housing project in Seattle, Wash., is now an award-winning, sustainable, highly diverse neighborhood featuring a community center, library, medical clinic and dental clinic.

Myth-Busting!

■ “Density means big, ugly apartment buildings.”

Density is generally defined as the amount of residential development permitted on a given parcel of land. In previous decades, density often meant large complexes that concentrated low-income housing or long rows of nearly identical suburban homes.

Higher density projects can instead be townhouses, apartments, accessory units and live-work spaces that accommodate a broader range of lifestyles. These residences are in addition to, not instead of, single-family detached homes with front porches and small yards. Smart density also includes areas for parks and open space.¹⁰

■ “Density reduces property values.”

Well-designed density actually increases property values — at two-to-four times the rate seen with conventional sprawl. Good locations for increased density are typically along principle roads or in clusters such as mixed-use villages.¹¹

■ “Density breeds crime.”

With good planning and design, high-density development helps populate streets and sidewalks, putting more “eyes on the street,” which is a known crime deterrent.¹² Over the past 30 years, the city of Vancouver, British Columbia, has watched its downtown peninsula become one of the most densely developed urban areas in North America, yet the city has seen crime rates drop as density has increased.¹³

■ “Density brings traffic and parking problems.”

By combining a mix of land uses (housing, businesses, schools, etc.) density brings daily destinations within an easy walk, bicycle ride or transit trip. People spend less time driving and looking for parking. Traffic counts fall

with well-designed higher density development and make transit a viable option.¹⁴

■ “Density is worse for the environment.”

Conventional subdivisions with single-family homes on large lots have a more harmful impact on natural systems than high-density areas. When land is developed compactly it leaves more green space for filtering stormwater runoff, providing wildlife habitats, absorbing carbon dioxide and reducing greenhouse gases.

Since people in transit-supported dense areas walk more and drive less, density causes less — not more — air and water pollution.¹⁵

■ “Density places a burden on schools and other public services.”

High-density housing typically places less of a demand on schools and other infrastructure than conventional subdivisions containing single-family homes on large lots. Compact urban areas require less expansive infrastructure, making them less costly than sprawl.¹⁶

■ “Rural towns can’t benefit from density.”

Many people are attracted to vibrant small towns that have higher population densities.

In a 2013 survey in which 100,000 people nominated and voted for their favorite small towns, all but three of the 924 towns considered had a population density of more than 500 people per square mile.¹⁷

Increasing a small town’s density so it can feature the benefits of a more urbanized lifestyle can be key to the community’s future success. If increasing density in the town core becomes a priority of the community’s growth plan, it can decrease some of the negative effects of the kind of population loss common in many rural regions.¹⁸

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How To Get It Right



Nine residences sit above storefronts in Davis, Calif., population 6,600 people per square mile.



Street life is abundant in Davis. People walk and bike for fun, exercise, to run errands and get around.

Since density can be pursued in ways that don't contribute to livability, it's important to get density efforts right. Try the following:

■ Embrace a public process and build support

Develop an education and awareness campaign prior to implementation and reach out broadly to community members, elected officials and municipal leaders. Illustrate different alternatives for what high-density, mixed-use neighborhoods might look like.

■ Inspire the public with model projects

Because many Americans have strong feelings about high-density, mixed-use development, be prepared to highlight local or regional success stories.

■ Compatibility matters

Neighbors may worry that a new development will clash with the look and feel of the community, so engage residents in meetings where they can have input into the design. Ensure that any new development complements a neighborhood's existing homes and streetscape.

■ Get the design right

In many new suburban communities, developers have been permitted to build tract-style homes, each with identical two-car garages, large driveways and small yards. Sometimes the development code calls for overly wide streets as well, which undercuts the benefits of mixed-use

density by allowing cars to predominate over pedestrians and bicyclists. A way to achieve moderate density is to build smaller single-family homes on small lots with rear-access garages or street parking. This can also be done by creating accessory dwelling units, such as a 500- to 800-square-foot "in-law" apartment.

■ Review zoning and development guidelines

Make sure developers receive clear guidance about building design and placement. Consider ways to achieve transitions from higher to lower density areas, such as by creating special district densities.

■ Utilize form-based code

Form-based codes offer a powerful alternative to conventional zoning since it uses the physical form rather than the separation of uses as its organizing principle.

Such codes consider the relationships between buildings and the street, pedestrians and vehicles, public and private spaces and the size and types of streets and blocks.¹⁸ The code also establishes rules for parking locations and limits, building frontages and entrance location(s), elevations, streetscapes, window transparency and block patterns (i.e., no oversized "super blocks").

Since form-based code can be customized, the code in one area might be about preserving and enhancing the character of the neighborhood while the goal elsewhere is to foster dramatic change and improvements. Often, a community's form-based code does both.¹⁹ (Learn more by reading our Livability Fact Sheet about form-based code.)

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Success Stories

■ Davis, California: Old North Davis

One of the most walkable places in America, the Old North Davis neighborhood evokes a classic small town feel even though the community has an overall density of 10.7 units per acre. The neighborhood features a variety of housing types: Some homes take up an entire lot while others have a large yard or two small houses sharing the lot.

Walking is popular, especially to the neighborhood's five-acre park, which twice a week hosts the nation's largest farmers' market. (The venue attracts 600,000 visits a year.) The city provides a bus service and uses angled parking for cars. In addition, there's enough bicycle parking to accommodate hundreds of cyclists. (See the pair of Davis photos on the previous page.)

■ Portland, Oregon: Fairview Village

Fairview Village is a cohesive network of neighborhoods built around a community core that has shopping, civic buildings and public parks that are all scaled to people rather than cars. Village designers wanted to create a community that has the warmth and security of a small town while offering the vitality and convenience of an urban setting.

Fairview has become a popular place to live and work, with a range of housing types and density, parks and open space, a library, a school, civic buildings and a small downtown.

■ Langley, British Columbia: New Villages

This Canadian city expects to double its population in 30 years to about 200,000. To be ready, Langley plans to create eight distinct villages, separated by large stretches of open space and agricultural land. Plans call for most neighborhoods to be developed densely enough to leave nearly 80 percent of the land green, providing residents with direct links to trails and fresh food from local farms.

WHY IT WORKS

Before and After

Communities can be transformed by integrating land use and transportation planning. Streets become human scale, new investments are made and the building density is diversified, as illustrated by the photovision below.



An actual roadway in rural Hot Springs, Ark., (above) and after imagined streetscape improvements.



RESOURCES

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Economic | A LIVABILITY FACT SHEET

Development

For many years, public transit, bicycle lanes, trails and sidewalks have suffered from a lack of investment. The consequences are congestion, inactivity and obesity, as well as more air pollution and traffic crashes and a loss of economic vitality.

If current trends continue, total U.S. costs resulting from obesity are expected to be as high as \$957 billion by 2030.¹ The price of poor air quality due to transportation is predicted to be between \$50 billion and \$80 billion a year.² Expenses from traffic crashes in urban areas are expected to exceed \$299 billion annually,³ with congestion costs adding \$121 billion or more to the bill each year.⁴

A more balanced transportation system is needed or these costs will continue to climb and undermine the nation's economic health and quality of life.⁵ One study estimates that if the U.S. would grow in a more compact way between 2000 and 2025, the country could save \$110 billion in local road costs.⁶

A more balanced transportation system saves and earns

money. For instance, bicycle infrastructure creates an average of 11.4 jobs for every \$1 million spent while road-only projects create 7.8 jobs per \$1 million.⁷ After slowing traffic and improving bicycling on Valencia Street in San Francisco's Mission District, nearby businesses saw sales increase by 60 percent, which merchants attributed to increased pedestrian and bicycle activity.⁸

Houses with above-average levels of walkability command a premium of about \$4,000 to \$34,000 more than homes with average levels of walkability.⁹ A 1999 study by the Urban Land Institute of four new walkable communities determined that home buyers were willing to pay \$20,000 more for the houses than they would for similar homes in less walkable areas.

A nationwide survey by Smart Growth America of 17 development studies concluded that dense, mixed-use development costs 38 percent less than conventional suburban development on average, generates 10 times more tax revenue per acre and saves municipalities an average of 10 percent on public services such as police, ambulances and firefighting.¹⁰

Houses with above-average levels of walkability command a premium of about \$4,000 to \$34,000 more than homes with average levels of walkability.



This block in Kingston, Wash., is located between a strip mall and a street. Prior to the shops and sidewalk being built, the space was simply a parking lot. Now there's retail on an active streetfront and still adequate parking.

Myth-Busting!

■ “Investing in downtown is expensive, the suburbs are cheaper to develop.”

Revenue-starved cities can garner far more taxes per acre from downtown multistory buildings than from strip malls and housing subdivisions. And in the next 20 years, the needs and preferences of aging baby boomers, new households and one-person households will drive real estate market trends.

Downtown locations are likely to attract many of these people.¹¹ Asheville, N.C., has a big box retail store less than three miles east of its downtown. The tax value of the store is \$20 million, but it sits on 34 acres of land, yielding about \$6,500 an acre in property taxes. A remodeled department store in downtown Asheville generates \$634,000 in tax revenue per acre.¹²

■ “Big box retailers bring big revenues to the communities they do business in.”

Big box retail stores encourage sprawling land uses, automobile dependence and the paving of large tracts of land. In addition, the stores contribute to the decline of urban and neighborhood centers because they pull retail activity out of central business districts and into the urban fringe. As local businesses close, residents increasingly use automobiles and travel farther to shop.

Several studies have found that for every job created at a big box store one to two existing jobs in the community are destroyed.¹³

A University of Massachusetts study found that income spent on a locally owned business had four to five times the local economic impact of a big box store does. Further, when a big box store closes, the community is left with a huge, unappealing building with limited reuse options.

■ “Narrow roads hurt business.”

By reducing traffic speeds and accommodating people who are walking and bicycling, narrower roads are one of the best ways to increase retail revenues. This technique, called a “road diet,” can even create more on-street parking spaces. The slower speeds provide drivers with better sight lines and make streets, entrances and exits easier to negotiate.¹⁴

■ “We need more parking lots, not less.”

In Portland, Ore., property values and customer volume in parking-restricted areas near transit stations are higher than in other areas, and the properties sell and rent quickly even without dedicated parking spaces.

An off-street parking space costs between \$3,000 and \$27,000 to build and about \$500 a year to maintain and manage. On-street parking is more efficient and can bring in as much as \$300,000 per space in annual revenues.¹⁵

■ “People in cars bring more business than those who walk or bicycle.”

Pedestrian and bicyclists tend to spend more money at local businesses than drivers do.¹⁶ Bicycle- and walk-friendly streets boast slower speeds that allow drivers to more easily see business storefronts.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation found that although bicycle facilities in the Outer Banks cost \$6.7 million to build, they bring an annual economic gain of \$60 million and 1,400 jobs created or supported.

After the installation of protected bicycle lanes on Manhattan’s 8th and 9th avenues in 2007, retail sales increased up to 49 percent compared to 3 percent in the rest of the borough.¹⁷

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How To Get It Right



Investments in mixed-use development, such as this town square in Arcata, Calif., can pay back 10 times more than a big box or strip center development.



Walkability tends to keep money local, attract shoppers, lower health costs and produce jobs, such as for this new sidewalk in Houston, Texas.

Economic development can make or break a community, so it's important to get it right

■ Embrace placemaking

Strong networks of streets and destinations foster social networks, interaction and strong economies.

But great places can only exist when people choose to participate in creating them. That's why architects, designers, planners and engineers need to move beyond shaping cities through the lens of their professional disciplines and instead partner with residents, advocates and people who work in transportation, economic development, parks and health agencies. Engaging the people who will be living in or using the end result provides a larger vision for the space and community.

■ Small projects, big results

Consider doing a simple, low-cost project first, such as striping a bike lane. This will give people a chance to get comfortable with the concept and allow municipal staff to document the outcome. Sidewalk cafes, striped crosswalks

and community gardens are improvements that can be done quickly and foster economic growth.

■ Focus on downtown

From small villages to large cities, downtowns have traditionally been the heart of a community, a place where people work, shop, socialize and often live. However, in recent decades America's downtowns have suffered from the proliferation of enclosed malls, strip malls, big box retail outlets and office parks at the urban edge. Dedicate efforts on revitalizing the downtown core with walkable, mixed-use development and destinations.

■ Utilize form-based code

Form-based code offers a powerful alternative to conventional use-based zoning by addressing the relationship between building facades and the public space the shape and size of buildings in relation to one another and the size and types of streets and blocks. The codes are adopted into city or county law and are drafted to implement a community plan.

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Success Stories

■ Portland, Oregon: Economic Dividend

By enacting a growth boundary, increasing density, introducing mixed land uses and investing in transit, walking and biking, Portlanders are saving time and money on transportation.

More than \$2.6 billion has been funneled back into the local economy. Portland-area residents travel about 20 percent fewer miles a day, or 8 million less miles per day, compared to other large metropolitan regions. (Vehicle miles traveled per person per day peaked in 1996.)

A commitment to smart growth policies and the prevalence of walkability has attracted people and business to the region. In one decade the number of college educated 25 to 34 year-olds increased by 50 percent, which is five times faster than in the nation as a whole. Even design elements such as street trees can raise property values. Trees on the street in front of Portland homes add more than \$7,000 to selling prices.¹⁸

■ West Palm Beach, Florida: Clematis Street

A once-lively Main Street anchored by a plaza, library and waterfront on one end and a historic train station on the other, Clematis Street was only 30 percent occupied in 1993.

After a \$10 million traffic-calming project rebuilt a fountain, restored key buildings and provided for event spaces, property values on the street doubled, \$350 million in private investment came to the area and more than 80 percent of the building space became occupied. As traffic slowed, social links between neighbors increased, trash along the streets disappeared, and the area evolved from abandoned to alive. The average home sale price increased from \$65,000 to \$106,000.

■ Lancaster, California: Lancaster Boulevard

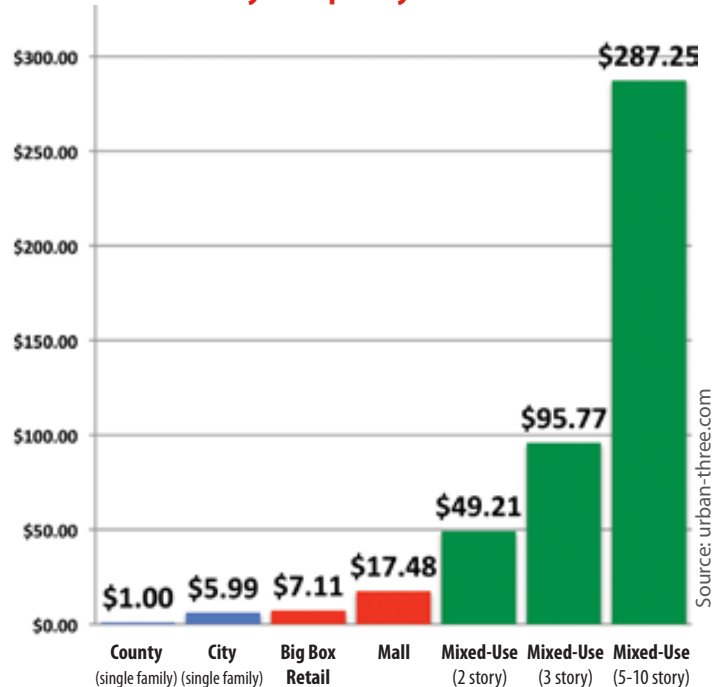
The redesign of its main boulevard helped transform

downtown Lancaster into a thriving residential and commercial district by adopting a form-based code, streetscaping, new public facilities, affordable homes and local businesses. The project won the EPA's top smart growth award and has generated almost \$300 million in economic output and nearly 2,000 jobs.

WHY IT WORKS

As this chart comparing data from 30 cities across 10 states shows, for every dollar in property taxes raised by a county for a single family home, \$5.99 was raised for a city home within the county and up to \$287.25 was raised for valuable five- to 10-story mixed-use properties.

Ratio of County Property Taxes Per Acre



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Form-Based Code | A LIVABILITY FACT SHEET

Smart zoning and land use codes are the foundation upon which great communities are built.

The use of zoning regulations began in the early 20th century in response to urban overcrowding and the intrusion of heavy industry into residential and retail areas. Communities chose to address the problem by separating incompatible uses and limiting residential density.¹ Those efforts shaped the form of the built environment in unintended and occasionally unwanted ways.

For instance, because traditional zoning rules often promote low-density development and limited “one-size-fits-all” housing choices, the policies encourage excessive land consumption and automobile dependency.² Such zoning can stand in the way of communities seeking to create vibrant, walkable neighborhoods that give residents the option of walking to a store, park or work.

Some zoning ordinances can even interfere with a person working from home or operating a home-based business.³

By using the physical form rather than the separation of uses as an organizing principle, form-based code offers a powerful alternative to conventional zoning. With form-based code what matters are the relationships between buildings and the street, pedestrians and vehicles, public and private spaces and the size and types of roads and blocks.⁴ Instead of dictating or limiting activities, the code focuses on such elements as parking locations and limits, building frontages and entrances, window standards, streetscaping and building elevations.

Form-based code can be customized to fit a community’s vision, be it to preserve and enhance a neighborhood’s character or dramatically change and improve it. Form-based codes can do both.⁵

By using the physical form rather than the separation of uses as an organizing principle, form-based code offers a powerful alternative to conventional zoning.



In the Village of Oak Park, Ill., form-based code helped rescue and repurpose older buildings while inspiring new mixed-use construction. The improvements draw investors and residents to the community’s downtown.

Myth-Busting!

■ “Form-based code is too restrictive and disregards the market.”

Both form-based codes and conventional or traditional zoning codes establish controls on development. While form-based codes emphasize standards that shape the neighborhood or community and offer a great deal of flexibility, conventional codes contain vague standards that often fail to benefit the larger public good.

Form-based codes have precise standards and a streamlined and predictable process. This clarity and predictability open development potential within communities by bringing together planning, design, economic development, engineering and public safety professionals. By joining these stakeholders and others, and doing so early in the process, it becomes possible to get input from multiple points of view, assess costs and better understand how public and private partners can implement the vision.⁶

■ “Hybrid or rezoning is better.”

It's not, if design is simply added into conventional zoning. In such a case the focus will likely remain limited to controlling an area's density and uses. However, communities can experience the best of both worlds by using a hybrid system that adopts form-based code for small areas, such as in distinct neighborhoods or corridors, and carefully integrates the use of such form-based code area into the citywide zoning platform.⁷

■ “Developers will resist form-based code.”

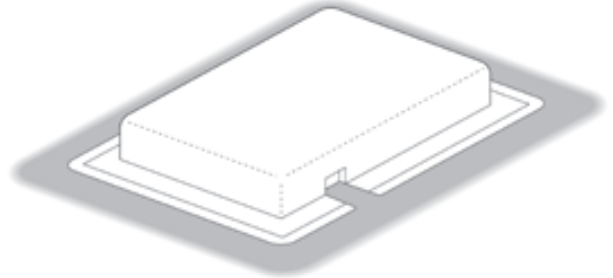
Developer resistance has been a problem in many communities, especially in smaller towns where developers accustomed to building the same product year after year have had trouble adjusting to new codes. However, many developers welcome form-based code because it enables them to build a higher quality, more aesthetic product.

Codes adopted as the result of a proactive public process are far more successful than those produced without engaging the public in defining the community's vision. When code was applied with little public input, developer pushback has been the strongest.⁸

HOW IT WORKS

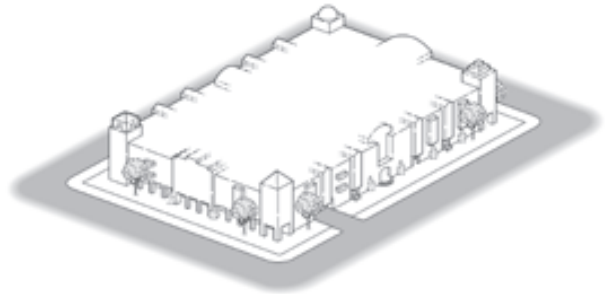
How zoning defines a one-block parcel

Density, use, FAR (floor-area-ratio), setbacks, parking requirements and maximum building height(s) specified.



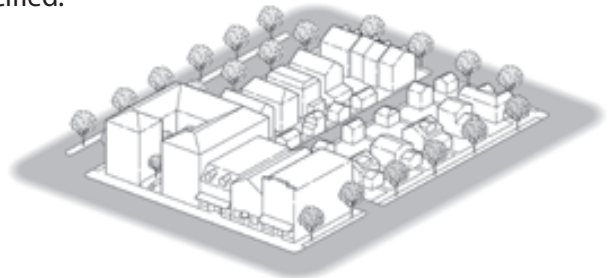
How design guidelines define a one-block parcel

Density, use, FAR (floor-area-ratio), setbacks, parking requirements, maximum building height(s), frequency of openings and surface articulation specified.



How form-based codes define a one-block parcel

Streets and building types (or mix of types), build-to lines, number of floors and percentage of built site frontage specified.



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How To Get It Right

A BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTO VISION OF CHINCOTEAGUE ISLAND, VIRGINIA



BEFORE: Buildings set back from the street, inadequate walking and bicycling safety, poorly-defined parking and minimal appeal.



AFTER: Buildings close to the street, good walking and bicycling safety, well-defined parking and very strong destination appeal.

■ Embrace a public process and build support

Develop an education and awareness campaign prior to implementation, and reach out to developers, community members, elected officials and municipal staff. Government leaders may need to see public support before acting. Developers may need to see political support and funding first.

To build support community advocates can share this fact sheet and meet with decision makers, news outlets, experts and others to discuss the benefits of form-based codes. To build public acceptance and understanding, agency staff should host community-wide or neighborhood visioning or design workshops and provide regular updates.

■ Provide municipal funding first

Developers may want to wait for someone else to test the first project with the new code. According to a survey of 35 communities, cities that invested their own funds found that developers followed, but those that put the responsibility solely on developers didn't do as well. A community has to show support politically and financially. Those that do typically get a good return.

■ Make the code mandatory

Mandatory codes provide more predictability to the urban form and help direct development to the code area. If a community has done the right amount of due diligence, held public brainstorming and design sessions and worked toward public buy-in of a common vision, the legal issues should be minimized and the public will already know what to expect.

■ Demonstrate existing successes

Help educate developers to get them comfortable with the new code and goals. Provide existing examples of similar, successful designs.

■ Replace the existing zoning code

The form-based code should replace the existing conventional zoning code for all or part of the community, and all development within the area should abide by the form-based code. This approach generally offers the widest range of opportunities for transforming a targeted area of a community while maintaining established character in others. It also offers the advantage of consistency in regulatory vocabulary and procedures throughout the code.

■ Tailor the code to the place or neighborhood

Personalize the code to its specific geography, politics and culture in order to be successful. Take the time to identify each neighborhood's character and vision. Periodically review and update the code.

■ Include regulatory plans and standards

A regulating plan is a master plan or zoning map in which different building forms, public streets and spaces are defined based on clear community intentions about the physical character of a designated area, such as a neighborhood or community. Building form standards define the configuration, design features and functions of buildings that frame the public realm.

Success Stories

■ Redwood City, California: Downtown Precise Plan

Since a new form-based code was adopted in January 2011, there's been more downtown housing development than in the previous five decades combined. All of the development in the two years following the code's enactment was privately constructed. Between 1980 and 2010 most development required assistance from the city's redevelopment agency.

Under the updated Downtown Precise Plan, 421 residential units were under construction by August 2013, 280 more units were approved and 471 more were under review — for a total of 1,172 downtown units. In addition, 300,000 square feet of office space was under way. All projects received planning approvals in six months or less without opposition.

Downtown Redwood City is now more active than it has been in decades, retail vacancies have fallen and an eclectic dining and pub scene has materialized.



As part of the "Downtown Precise Plan" in Redwood City, Calif., El Camino Boulevard is being transformed from commercial to mixed-use zoning.

■ Cincinnati, Ohio: Citywide Code

In 2010 Cincinnati's vice mayor, Roxanne Qualls, introduced a motion to adopt zoning in support of mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly development around transit stations.

A report released after a five-day urban design workshop (which was attended by more than 700 public participants) explained why Cincinnati needed the change: "The city has lost 40 percent of its population since 1950, leaving suburban densities in the city's formerly urban neighborhoods. Many residential buildings and lots sit vacant."

The effort grew into citywide form-based code, adopted in May 2013 and achieved with the help of a \$2.4 million federal grant. The plan calls for every Cincinnati neighborhood to be mapped and have regulating plans approved. The code has been applied to business districts and key vacant parcels. The city hopes the new form-based code will spur redevelopment of neighborhoods that have been in decline or stagnating for a long time.

■ Nashville, Tennessee: Community Character

Nashville replaced its conventional zoning with a "Community Character" approach to policy that is based on the look and feel of neighborhoods, centers, corridors and open spaces. The change has resulted in a 75 percent increase in taxable value in the districts where the approach is used, compared to a 28 percent increase in the county over the same time period.

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Modern Roundabouts

A LIVABILITY FACT SHEET

Every day in the U.S. more than 20 people are killed at traffic intersections, and many more are seriously injured.¹

Roundabouts — circular intersections that move traffic counterclockwise around a central island — can help reduce these deaths and injuries. Modern roundabouts are calmer and safer than conventional intersections and have been deemed a “proven safety counter-measure” by the U.S. Department of Transportation.²

Roughly the size of a baseball field, modern roundabouts differ from rotaries or traffic circles, which can be as big as the stadium itself. Roundabouts feature lower, safer vehicle speeds. They can be 80 feet across with single lanes carrying 25,000 vehicles a day or larger at 200 feet, with double lanes and 45,000 vehicles a day.³

Personal injuries and fatalities plummet as much as 90 percent in modern roundabouts when compared to conventional intersections.⁴ Roundabouts cause drivers to slow down, ideally to less than 20 mph, which reduces the risks to both pedestrians and drivers.

Because roundabouts can handle 30 to 50 percent more traffic than conventional intersections, they reduce travel delays.⁵ Since roundabouts can be designed to be aesthetically pleasing, they help create a sense of place.

By January 2014, roundabouts graced more than 2,000 intersections in the U.S., with more planned.⁶ Given their safety and placemaking benefits, roundabouts should be considered for many more of the three million intersections in the U.S.

Modern roundabouts are calmer and safer than conventional intersections and have been deemed a “proven safety counter-measure” by the U.S. Department of Transportation.



Vehicle speeds on Grandview Drive in University Place, Wash., often reached or exceeded 50 mph. After the installation of modern roundabouts, vehicle crashes dropped from one every nine months to zero in 14 years.

Myth-Busting!

■ “Roundabouts require too much land.”

Roundabouts, which can be installed on virtually any size street, range from single-lane mini-roundabouts to two lanes or more.⁷ A single-lane roundabout can be as narrow as 80 feet in diameter, measuring across the circle from the outside edges of the vehicle lanes.

Also, a well-placed roundabout can keep a road from needing to be widened, saving up to 10 million dollars per mile in land and construction costs.⁸

■ “The public will object to using a roundabout.”

Before several two-lane modern roundabouts were installed in Bellingham, Wash., only one in three people surveyed by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety supported the creation of a roundabout.

Once the roundabout was built, the numbers reversed, and 70 percent of respondents became supportive.⁹ In another study conducted by the Institute, support for six different roundabouts went from a low of 22 percent to a high of 87 percent five years after installation.¹⁰ Building one roundabout in a community is usually all it takes to convince most people of their benefits.

■ “Fire trucks, snowplows, buses and semis can’t use roundabouts.”

A “truck apron” in the center of a roundabout can accommodate emergency vehicles, buses, snow equipment and large trucks, including those with wheel-base lengths of 50 or more feet.

■ “Roundabouts aren’t safe for bicyclists and pedestrians.”

By using space to pause on the “splitter island,” pedestrians need to watch only one direction of traffic at a time, which simplifies the task of crossing the street. The low vehicle speeds through a roundabout — which can be

as low as 15 mph — also allow more time for drivers and pedestrians to react to one another, which reduces the chance and consequences of error. A bicyclist can be given the option of riding in the lane of slow-moving cars or crossing as a pedestrian.¹¹

■ “Roundabouts hurt business.”

The lower the speed of traffic through an area, the easier it is to park a car, walk, bicycle and locate and approach a business. Since roundabouts are also quieter than conventional intersections, any outdoor seating nearby is more enjoyable.

In Golden, Colo., retail sales increased 60 percent after the addition of a string of roundabouts — and that was during the 1989 recession. Sales in Golden outpaced those of all other cities in the state.¹²

■ “Roundabouts aren’t good for older adults.”

By 2025, about 25 percent of all drivers in the United States will be over the age of 65. Forty percent of all car crashes that involve drivers over the age of 65 occur at intersections.¹³

As we age, we lose our ability as drivers to judge left-turn gaps.¹⁴ Roundabouts don’t require those decisions, and they eliminate head-on and right-angle crashes. When collisions do occur, they are generally at lower speeds and less harmful.

■ “Pedestrians with limited vision can’t cross roundabouts.”

A known issue with roundabouts and other street crossings — such as mid-block crossings and right-turn slip lanes — is that it’s difficult for pedestrians with limited vision to determine when traffic has stopped and it is safe to cross. Solutions are being sought to address this problem.^{15, 16}

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How To Get It Right



In Hamburg, N.Y., a series of roundabouts on Route 62 helps calm traffic and create a sense of place.



This roadway approaching a roundabout in San Diego, Calif., reduces the distance people must cross.

For modern traffic roundabouts to be effective, it's important they're done right:

■ Adopt a roundabout-first policy

Whenever a roadway project includes reconstructing or constructing an intersection, analyze the feasibility of using a roundabout instead. This approach is recommended by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration and backed by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.¹⁷

■ Embrace a public process and build support

Since roundabouts can be a new idea, elected leaders and agency staff may need to seek public support first, to inspire approval and navigate implementation.

For example, community advocates can print this fact sheet, talk to neighbors, build community support and then meet with decision makers, news outlets, experts and others to discuss the benefits of roundabouts. Agency staff can engage the public in a meaningful process, hosting interactive design workshops to build public acceptance and understanding.

■ Design for speeds lower than 20 mph

Fast-moving vehicles kill people and divide places. A pedestrian hit by a vehicle at 20 mph has a 90 percent chance of survival while the odds of surviving a 40 mph impact are only 10 percent.¹⁸

Good roundabout design ensures that drivers slow down to 15 or 20 mph. This protects pedestrians, reduces pollution and noise and creates a more pleasant neighborhood.

■ Keep dimensions tight

To keep traffic calm and therefore safe for all roadway users, roundabouts should feature context-appropriate design elements that reduce speed. Examples include tight entry and exit turn radii, narrow entry and circulatory lanes, appealing but non-distracting landscaping, a truck apron for large vehicles and splitter lanes to help pedestrians cross two or more traffic lanes.

■ Make it beautiful

An aesthetically pleasing roundabout can create a sense of place, frame a neighborhood, establish an entry point into a business district or neighborhood and serve as a canvas for public art or a garden.

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Success Stories

■ San Diego, California: La Jolla Boulevard

A string of five roundabouts has allowed the city to reduce the road from five vehicle lanes to two, while also cutting travel time, adding on-street parking, attracting new businesses and still moving 23,000 vehicles a day.

The number of people walking went up, noise pollution plummeted and the increase in walking, bicycling and street life is bringing new business to retailers.

■ Hamburg, New York: Route 62

By the 1990s, business had declined along the Route 62 commercial district. Empty storefronts pushed shoppers away to malls and big box stores. The road was generally congested and hazardous for cyclists and pedestrians.

A state plan emphasized wider roads and signalized intersections. But a group of residents banded together as the "Route 62 Committee" and created a new vision for Route 62 based on walkability and calmer traffic. Roundabouts have reduced the number and severity of crashes, congestion has been eased and emissions from idling cars have been reduced.

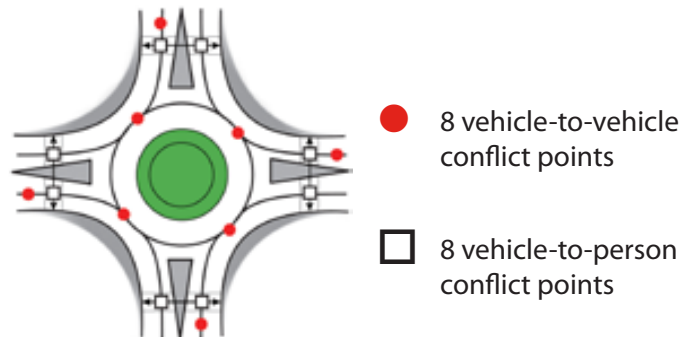
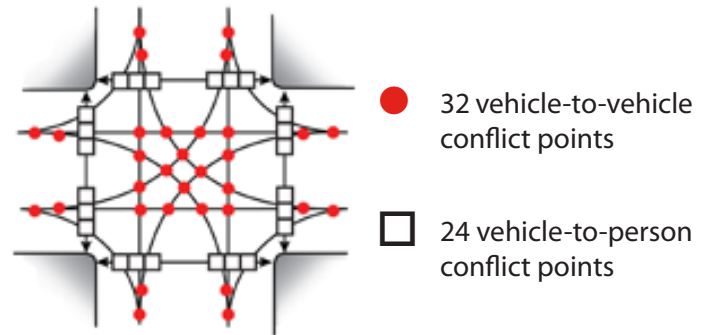
■ Bradenton Beach, Florida: Bridge Street

One pedestrian was being killed every year at the intersection of Bridge Street and North Gulf Drive. With 18,000 cars and trucks moving daily, the traffic separated residents and visitors from the beach. People could see the beach, but they could not walk to it without taking severe risks.

A roundabout was built and the police chief reports there hasn't been a recorded crash of any type since. With many more people walking to the beach, parking eased, and the roundabout became one of the nation's first to kick-start downtown reinvestment, which is now bustling with pedestrians, new homes and retail activity.

HOW IT WORKS

As these illustrations demonstrate, roundabouts harbor far fewer potential conflict points than conventional intersections, making streets safer for all users.



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Parking | A LIVABILITY FACT SHEET

Parking a car in the United States is pricey however you choose to look at it.

Cars sit unused 95 percent of the time, and although motorists park for free in 99 percent of the places they go, the costs for the parking is being incurred by businesses and government. In three out of 10 car rides to nearby destinations, studies show that drivers spend three to eight minutes looking for a parking spot. ¹

Since the average American household has 1.9 automobiles,² many municipalities require two covered parking spaces for each single- and two-family dwelling. Most cities also require off-street parking spaces — up to four parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of office space.³ In low-density settings with no transit options, parking can take up more than 50 percent of the land used in a development.⁴

“The cost of all parking spaces in the United States exceeds the value of all cars and may even exceed the value of all roads,” says UCLA urban planning researcher

Donald Shoup.⁵ The opportunity cost can be high as well, since each parking space can reduce the number of new housing units, businesses and social, recreational or other activities by 25 percent.⁶

About 96 percent of the financial cost of parking is bundled into rents and housing costs, higher prices in stores, and myriad other charges. Only about 4 percent of the cost is covered by pay-as-you-go parking, such as metered parking. In fact, if drivers paid for parking as they used it, the total expense of operating a vehicle would roughly double.⁷

Off-street parking is the most expensive type of parking. Each space typically uses 300 to 350 square feet, costs between \$3,000 and \$27,000 to build and about \$500 a year to maintain and manage.⁸

On-street parking is more efficient and can be a revenue generator. If a single on-street parking space turns over frequently — about 12 to 15 uses a day — it brings in as much as \$300,000 in revenues to nearby businesses.⁹

“The cost of all parking spaces in the United States exceeds the value of all cars and may even exceed the value of all roads.”



On-street parking, such as the kind seen on this Seattle block, is the most beneficial type. Head-out angled parking is the safest and easiest method since drivers have stopped traffic before backing into a spot and can see oncoming traffic when pulling out. In addition, loading is more convenient and separated from moving traffic.

Myth-Busting!

■ “There isn’t enough parking in busy areas.”

In Raleigh, N.C., there are about 40,000 parking spots downtown, of which approximately 9,000 are in parking decks managed by the city. The use of these decks is below 60 percent on most days and the city carries more than \$100 million in debt for them.¹⁰

A study of office buildings in 10 California cities found that the peak parking demand averaged only 56 percent of capacity. In another study, peak-parking demand at nine suburban office parks near Philadelphia and San Francisco averaged only 47 percent of capacity and no office park had a peak parking demand greater than 60 percent of capacity.¹¹

■ “We need parking minimums.”

Most cities in the U.S. include parking minimums in their zoning codes, but minimum requirements are causing more off-street parking to be built than needed.



Spaces can be more available if regulated and priced to prioritize short stays instead of all-day parking.

This causes excessive development costs. Where excess parking is not used, empty spaces can be a blight within a shopping area or a neighborhood.

Eliminating or reducing off-street parking requirements allows developers more flexibility in the amount of parking they provide and how they provide it. This change removes a barrier to new investments, especially in downtowns and transit centers, and potentially makes the final product more affordable.¹²

■ “Free parking brings customers to our store.”

Given a choice, consumers usually prefer free parking, but they ultimately pay for parking through higher taxes and retail prices and reduced wages and benefits.

The choice is actually between paying for parking directly or indirectly.¹³

In Portland, Ore., property values and customer volume in parking-restricted areas near transit stations are higher than in other areas.



In Seattle, Wash., head-out angled parking provides motorists with a clear view before proceeding.

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How To Get It Right

Parking policies and programs can come in many shapes and sizes. Try the following:

■ Unbundled parking

When selling a townhouse, condo or other living unit, a developer can be given permission to rent or sell parking spaces separately. This arrangement often reduces the number of cars a homeowner chooses to own and store. For a parking deck, this can amount to more than \$27,000 per space.¹⁴

■ Parking in-lieu fees

Consider allowing developers to pay a fee in lieu of providing parking. For example, Palo Alto, Calif., allows developers to pay the city \$17,848 for each parking space that's not provided. The city then uses the fee revenue to provide publicly owned parking spaces nearby.

■ Shared parking

Public parking spaces can allow shared use among different private and/or public sites that have peak parking demands at different times. Shared public parking is more efficient than single-use private parking because fewer spaces are needed to meet the total peak parking demand in the vicinity. Large numbers of peak parking spaces are no longer needed for every site.

■ Appropriate variances

A community should work with developers to encourage on-street parking in lieu of off-street parking. For example, parking variances can be granted in exchange for developer- or business-installed bicycle parking, which is a beneficial trade-off since 12 bicycles can fit into one vehicle parking space.

■ Incentives to reduce demand

Policies should allow the developer to reduce the demand for parking rather than increase its supply. When good transit services are available, a program allowing employees to trade in their parking passes for cash is a means to reduce demand. Another tool is "location-efficient housing." Residents and employees in such areas tend to drive less, rely more on alternative forms of transportation and enjoy better transportation options

than those who live or work in less accessible areas.¹⁵ This can be calculated to reduce parking demand. Other practices to reduce demand for parking include using existing spaces more efficiently, targeting different types of users, sharing parking between uses with different peak demands, and shifting the cost of parking from the general public onto the users.¹⁶

■ Public/private partnerships

Investments made jointly by the public and private sectors can be used to help pay for parking. These partnerships can reduce the public sector's direct debt burden while also providing needed infrastructure. ParkIndy, a for-profit corporation, manages parking in Indianapolis, saving the city \$3 million per year and eliminating its financial risk. Indianapolis hopes to net around \$600 million over the life of the contract.

■ The ideal parking garage

Mixed-use garages that provide ground-level retail, then two or three stories of parking, and condos or apartments on the top floor, can provide an immediate supply, then permit reductions over time. As the need for parking declines some or many of the parking spaces can be converted into offices or living units.

■ Reduced impact of surface parking lots

Reduce parking stalls to 8 feet wide for low-turnover spaces and dedicate a certain percentage to compact cars. With careful design it's possible to get in two rows of 90-degree parking plus service lanes within a 54-foot-wide parking area. Consider minimum landscaping requirements of 15 percent, a lot of tree canopy, rain gardens, bioswales, pavers or other pervious materials when practicable, and treat all water on site. Green space should be edges separating the lot from adjacent streets or landscaped sections that break up the lot.

■ Better building design

To improve the streetscape consider dedicating the first floor of public parking structures to retail use. Developers can undertake infill projects without assembling large sites to accommodate on-site parking, and architects have greater freedom to design better buildings in a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

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Success Stories

■ Oakland, California: Fruitvale Transit Village

A large mixed-use mixed-income development grew out of community resistance to the Bay Area Rapid Transit system's plan to build a parking garage between the Fruitvale BART station and the Latino neighborhood's commercial center.

The local Unity Council worried the structure would hasten the decline of the already distressed neighborhood. BART withdrew the plan and agreed to work with the neighborhood on an alternative, so the parking garage was built nearby on Union Pacific Railroad property. The Fruitvale Transit Village now links the neighborhood and BART station with a pedestrian corridor and plazas lined with shops, offices, apartments and community services. The village includes a clinic, child development center, senior center and library, all within walking distance.

■ Calgary, Alberta, Canada: Downtown

The city of Calgary has determined that 24 parking spaces per 100 jobs is the right ratio.

Calgary charges market prices for its downtown parking spots, which range from a pricey \$700 to \$900 per month. Rates are adjusted each year to assure balanced supply and use. This pricing practice has helped fuel a resurgence of more compact living, growing the economy in and around the downtown and resulting in miles of new trails, world class pedestrian and bicycle bridges, and rebuilt transit platforms that move trains more efficiently.

■ A Tale of Three Cities: Less is More

Since 1980, Berkeley, Calif., as well as the Massachusetts town of Arlington and city of Cambridge, began limiting their surface parking spaces. Research shows that the number of people and jobs has climbed, as have incomes.

Less parking has enabled the urban fabric to stitch back together with more room for shops, restaurants, jobs and other things that make cities great. The extra parking isn't needed since people are driving less, living close to the urban core where nearly 30 percent walk or bike to work.¹⁷

WHY IT MATTERS

BIG MONEY FOR FREE PARKING

\$105 billion to \$310 billion*

NASA budget: \$18.56 billion

National defense budget: \$705.6 billion

Federal education spending: \$65.5 billion

PARKING IS WORTH MORE THAN CARS

Estimated annual average value of parking for one vehicle: \$12,000

Average depreciated construction value of roads, per vehicle: \$6,542

Approximate average value of one U.S. vehicle: \$5,507

*The indirect costs to Americans based on assumptions about the number of parking spots nationwide and those spots' building and operating costs in 2011 dollars. Those figures equaled to 1.2 to 3.7 percent of total U.S. economic output. Source: myparkingsign.com/blog/free-parking, citing "Changing the Future" by Donald Shoup, The High Cost of Free Parking (2nd Ed) pp. 589-605, American Planning Association.

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Revitalization

Without Displacement

A LIVABILITY FACT SHEET

As communities throughout the United States are redeveloped to become more walkable and livable, the efforts risk displacing an area's current, often longtime residents and businesses.

Displacement is of particular concern in places that have suffered years of disinvestment. Mixed-use revitalization — and its potential to restore health and prosperity to a community — also carries with it the potential to increase property values and, therefore, real estate prices. While many in the community will profit from the improvements and rising values, others may not.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention explains that "displacement happens when longtime or original neighborhood residents move from a gentrified area because of higher rents, mortgages and property taxes." The community health risks due to this type of displacement are so significant that the agency offers strategies for mitigating

the potential impact of gentrification, which "is often defined as the transformation of neighborhoods from low value to high value."¹

It behooves all redeveloping communities to ensure that revitalization increases community health and stability by providing such features as affordable housing, robust transit services and access to transit, as well as a range of needed services and shops within walking and bicycling distance. It's important that improvements come without displacement,² especially of lower-income and older residents and families.

The AARP Public Policy Institute underscores the mobility impact to older residents who are displaced into areas that are not as livable or walkable: "In areas far from transit, areas with few community features and services nearby and areas with poor transit service, losing mobility can mean losing independence."³

Displacement is of particular concern in places that have suffered years of disinvestment ... It's important that improvements come without displacement, especially of lower-income and older residents and families.



In Macon, Ga., a revitalization effort has been underway for several years. Community leaders are seeking to reduce the risk of displacement by developing mixed-income housing, promoting neighborhood stabilization policies, restoring an historic park, building sidewalks and improving transportation connections.

Myth-Busting!

■ “Mixed-use revitalization displaces longtime, lower-income or older residents.”

Displacement due to revitalization (one potential impact of gentrification) is a concern. However, some studies suggest that positive socioeconomic and racial diversity is an enduring feature of gentrifying neighborhoods.⁴

Long-time residents can benefit when their housing options are preserved and the community improves.⁵ Ensuring a mix of housing helps make that happen. It’s recommended that longtime residents be supported in their efforts to stay in the neighborhood and in their homes and that the wealth created by gentrification also be used for the benefit of lower-income residents.⁶

In some places, revitalization may actually make the community more supportive of all residents. Since the mix of housing options provided in livable neighborhoods is supportive of people with differing housing needs (be the needs specific to a home’s size, cost, amenities, etc.), more residents are able to remain in a neighborhood even if their income, health or housing requirements change.⁷

■ “Better housing and jobs prevent displacement, not walkability.”

Housing and jobs are indeed critical factors. But very low income American families spend 55 percent of their household budget on transportation costs, and the average household spends more than \$8,000 a year on automobile costs.⁸ Revitalized places made walkable and accessible to transit can reduce these expenses, which makes the community more supportive of all people.⁹

■ “Rent controls are the single best solution.”

Studies indicate that over time, rent controls increase disparities and don’t provide a long-term solution to affordable housing.¹⁰

According to the AARP Policy Book, “although rent control does not effectively solve the affordable housing problem in many parts of the country, it may be desirable for states and localities to retain existing rent control ordinances for a limited time in areas with severe housing shortages or where development pressures result in the significant loss of affordable units.”



Affordable housing can be integrated into a compact, mixed-use development, such as in the 50-unit Tower Apartments in suburban Rohnert Park, Calif. Built in 1993, this urban design development has raised the community’s opinion of affordable housing. The style reflects the older architecture in the area.

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How To Get It Right

Mixed-use revitalization without displacement is best achieved when a municipality plans for and financially supports affordable housing for all income levels in the community.

The following strategies come from guidance documents produced by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, PolicyLink and the AARP Public Policy Institute.

■ Preserve, promote and support housing that is affordable for people of all income levels

Subsidized housing that currently exists, particularly in areas near transit, should be preserved.¹¹ In addition, communities can develop housing, increase other funding for affordable housing and establish warning systems for properties with expiring federal subsidies so resources can be allocated to protect the housing.

States can administer housing trust funds and development banks for low-income housing services (such as repair, rehabilitation, rental assistance and the construction of affordable housing).¹² These funds should promote housing options in livable communities, including locations near transit options. In addition, new or renovated housing should include universal design features so residences can be broadly accessible, including to older adults and individuals with disabilities.

■ Develop mixed-income communities and adopt inclusionary zoning

Mixed-income neighborhoods or developments can be mixed-use and include single-family and multi-family units.¹³ Such development is often supported by inclusionary zoning.

According to PolicyLink, “most inclusionary zoning programs require external comparability between affordable and market-rate units so that lower-income families can purchase homes indistinguishable from the rest of the development. This has helped eliminate the harmful stigma that is so often attached to affordable housing.”

Mandatory inclusionary zoning requires developers to build affordable units, usually in exchange for increased development rights or subsidies. Voluntary inclusionary zoning may provide an incentive to developers. However, PolicyLink does warn: “While voluntary programs receive less opposition from developers, mandatory policies have produced far more affordable units.”

■ Increase individuals’ assets to reduce dependence on subsidized housing

Create home-ownership programs and prioritize job-creation strategies through community development corporations and resident-owned financial institutions that help low-income people build assets. Support local hiring and livable-wage provisions.¹⁴

■ Encourage employer-assisted housing

In these housing programs an employee purchases a residence with some financial assistance from his or her employer. Such programs often help first-time home buyers, and home ownership has the added benefit of enabling people to build both equity and financial assets.

Employer-assisted housing is especially helpful to working families by enabling them to secure affordable housing near the workplace. Employers benefit by retaining qualified workers, improving community relations and helping to revitalize neighborhoods.

■ Explore strategies geared toward ensuring that communities revitalize without displacement

- Integrate housing, transportation and land-use planning
- Adopt local and regional zoning practices (such as form-based code) that encourage compact, mixed-income, mixed-use development
- Design “Complete Streets” that accommodate drivers as well as pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users of all ages and abilities
- Reduce parking requirements
- Conduct studies and health impact assessments to ensure that new developments benefit existing residents
- Minimize tax burdens on older lower-income property owners as well as on renters (renters pay property taxes indirectly)
- Engage community members in the development processes

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Success Stories

■ Macon, Georgia: Tattall Place

This 97-unit, mixed-income development opened in March 2006. Financed with tax credit equity, HOPE VI funds and a grant from the city of Macon, it is the centerpiece of the Beall's Hill redevelopment.

Sixty-five units are for households at or below 60 percent of the area median income. Floor plans include two- and three-story units with large front porches. Community amenities include a swimming pool and a computer center.

The project won the 2006 Magnolia Award for Superior Design. Local leaders have preserved housing and re-activated a public park in the area.



Preserved housing in Tattall Place, Macon, Ga., is part of a mixed-income redevelopment project.

■ Denver, Colorado: Inclusionary Zoning

To address a growing affordable-housing crisis as real-estate values grew faster than incomes, Denver adopted an inclusionary housing ordinance in 2002.

Developments of more than 30 for-sale units must set aside 10 percent as affordable for households earning 50 to 95 percent of the area's median income, depending on household size. Offsets to make the set-asides feasible to developers include a 10 percent density bonus, a \$5,600

subsidy per unit for up to 50 units, parking requirement reductions and expedited permits. A total of 3,395 affordable homes were built within three years of the policy's inception.

■ Portland, Oregon: New Columbia

New Columbia is a diverse 82-acre neighborhood built on the site of what had been World War II-era worker barracks and then public housing. Completed in 2007 with HOPE VI and other funds, New Columbia is a walkable community with front porches, two community gardens, a Main Street and "Village Market," several parks and public spaces, a public elementary school, a Boys & Girls Club and a recreation center.

The development contains 854 housing units, including 622 rental homes and 232 resident-owned homes. Of the rentals, 297 units have a public housing operating subsidy, 73 units have a project-based Section 8 subsidy, 66 units are for seniors and 186 additional units are for households earning less than 60 percent of the area median family income. Of the resident-owned properties, 128 were sold at market rate, 98 were developed by non-profit builders such as Habitat for Humanity and eight were developed using a cohousing model.

RESOURCES

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Road Diets | A LIVABILITY FACT SHEET

Most drivers base their travel speed on what feels comfortable given the street design. The wider the road, the faster people tend to drive and, the faster the car, the more severe the injuries resulting from a crash.¹

Research suggests that injuries from vehicle crashes rise as the width of a road increases.

To protect both pedestrians and drivers, many communities are putting their roads on “diets” by reducing street widths and vehicle lanes. The gained space is being reallocated toward other ways of getting around — such as walking, bicycling and public transit.

The most common road diet involves converting an undivided four-lane road into three vehicle lanes (one lane in each direction and a center two-way left-turn lane).² The remaining fourth lane space can be used to create such features as bicycle lanes, pedestrian crossing islands, bus stops, sidewalks and on-street parking.³

Road diets work best on streets that have daily traffic

volumes of 8,000 to 20,000 vehicles. When done properly, a road diet improves the performance and efficiency of the street and makes it safer for all users.

For instance, by enabling pedestrians to cross only one lane of traffic at a time — rather than up to four or more lanes — a road diet reduces the risk of crashes and serious injuries. At the same time, motorists experience a shorter delay while waiting at traffic lights and other crossings.⁴

A road diet can help a neighborhood become a more desirable place to live, work and shop, which in turn can be a boost to businesses and property values.

Wider sidewalks lined by trees and dotted with benches, bicycle racks, streetlights and other useful additions help create a lively, attractive streetscape.

Bike lanes, on-street vehicle parking, curb extensions and “parklets” (tiny parks created from former parking spots) can be used to provide a buffer between people who are walking and motor vehicles on the move.

By enabling pedestrians to cross only one lane of traffic at a time — rather than up to four or more lanes — a road diet reduces the risk of crashes and serious injuries.



In addition to making East Boulevard in Charlotte, N.C., more attractive, a road diet reduced travel speeds, bicycle and pedestrian injury rates and the number of rear-end and left-turn collisions. Photo courtesy city of Charlotte

Myth-Busting!

■ “Road diets divert traffic.”

Drivers tend to use primary roads that provide the most direct and efficient route to a destination.

Well-designed road diets do not divert drivers onto other roads. While traffic often drops during construction, it typically returns to normal or increases within six months of completion. Many roads actually experience an increase in vehicle traffic after a successful diet.⁵

■ “Road diets increase congestion.”

On roads used by fewer than 20,000 vehicles per day, road diets have a minimal or positive impact on vehicle capacity. Left-turning vehicles, delivery trucks, police enforcement and stranded vehicles can move into a center lane or bike lane, which eliminates double-parking and reduces crash risks.⁶

■ “Road diets increase crashes.”

Road diets actually reduce rear-end collisions and sideswipe crashes by slowing vehicle speeds by 3 to 5 mph. Road diets decrease by 70 percent the frequency of people driving more than 5 mph over the speed limit.

Data collected on road diets in two very different settings (several small towns in Iowa and a group of larger cities and suburbs in California and Washington state) confirmed that road diets improve safety. The research showed a 47 percent reduction in crashes in the Iowa towns and a 19 percent drop in crashes in the more heavily traveled corridors of California and Washington.⁷

■ “Road diets aren’t good for public transit.”

Transit conflicts can be avoided with planning, such as by incorporating a center lane so motorists can move around stopped buses and adding side pull-out bays for buses.^{8,9}

■ “Road diets are bad for business.”

Road diets increase and enhance business activity by reducing traffic speeds (which helps motorists notice the shops, eateries and businesses they’re driving alongside) and by accommodating pedestrians and bicyclists (who, by the way, tend to spend more money at local businesses than drivers do).¹⁰

Road diets often create more street parking spaces, which is helpful to businesses. In addition, the slower speeds, better sight lines and narrower lanes are safer for both drivers and non-drivers (aka customers), and center-turn lanes provide motorists with an easier and safer way to make right and left turns, including for entering and exiting driveways.¹¹

■ “Road diets are being reversed.”

With thousands of road diets completed nationwide, there are few reports of any being reversed. On the contrary, road diets are proving to be effective, safe and popular. Interest among transportation engineers and planners is booming as handbooks, guidelines and other resources become available.¹²

■ “Road diets slow down emergency responders.”

By not using short speed humps and stop signs, a road diet can accommodate emergency vehicles without increasing response times.¹² Drivers can pull into bicycle lanes to move out of the way, and a center-turn lane can be used by responders needing to pass other vehicles.¹³

■ “People don’t like road diets.”

The Electric Avenue road diet in Lewistown, Pa., was opposed by 95 percent of residents when it was first proposed; after completion, nearly 95 percent of residents are supportive of the changes.¹⁴

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How To Get It Right



This four-lane road in Redondo Beach, Calif., is not pedestrian or bicycle friendly and the road's traffic volumes doesn't justify having four vehicle lanes.



A transformation like the one illustrated here increases safety, parking, pedestrian and bicyclist access and creates a people-friendly sense of place.

When advocating and planning for road diets, try the following:

■ Engage the public

Since road diets are a new concept in many communities, it's important to involve the public as soon as possible during the discussions and planning. Doing so can minimize any anxiety about the unknowns and give residents ownership of the road diet goals.

■ Embrace a public process and build support

Develop an education and awareness campaign prior to implementation, and reach out broadly to community members, elected officials and municipal leaders. Government officials may need to see public support before acting.

Toward that end, advocates can share this fact sheet, talk to neighbors, build community support and then meet with decision makers, the media, experts and others to discuss the benefits of road diets. Agency staff can engage the public by hosting workshops to build public acceptance and understanding.

■ Start with a pilot project

Consider launching a pilot road diet in an area that has light traffic. This will give drivers a chance to get

comfortable with the concept and allow municipal staff to document what works and what doesn't.

■ Target areas that are ripe for reinvestment

Locate a pilot project on a road that carries no more than 15,000 vehicles a day and that ideally serves a downtown neighborhood or historic district with potential for reinvestment and/or economic development.

■ Document the change

Before, during and after the road diet project is built, observe and record what's happening. The information can make it easier to conduct future road diets at higher traffic counts. In addition to traffic flow monitoring, document any increases in walking, bicycling, transit use and retail activity.

■ Utilize clear signage

During and even after completing a road diet project continue to use signage and markings to highlight and explain any features that might be unfamiliar.

■ Design it well

There is no one-size-fits-all design for a road diet. Make sure what you create fits the traffic volume, the road's physical location and the community's shared goals.

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Success Stories

Orlando, Florida: Edgewater Drive

A 1.5-mile section of Edgewater Drive was put on a road diet in 2000, converting four lanes to two.

The results: 34 percent fewer crashes and 68 percent fewer injuries. Speeds decreased by up to 10 percent. Property values increased 8 to 10 percent in residential areas and 1 to 2 percent for commercial areas. Travel times through the corridor sped up by 25 seconds even with an increase in traffic volume. There was a nearly 40 percent increase of on-street parking, and walking and bicycling rates rose by 56 and 48 percent, respectively.

Seattle, Washington: Stone Way North

In 2008, a road diet was completed on a 1.2-mile section of Seattle's Stone Way North. The four-lane roadway carrying 13,000 vehicles per day was turned into a two-lane roadway with a center-turn lane, bicycle lanes and parking on both sides. Speeds on the road decreased, but drivers did not divert to other areas in search of alternate routes.

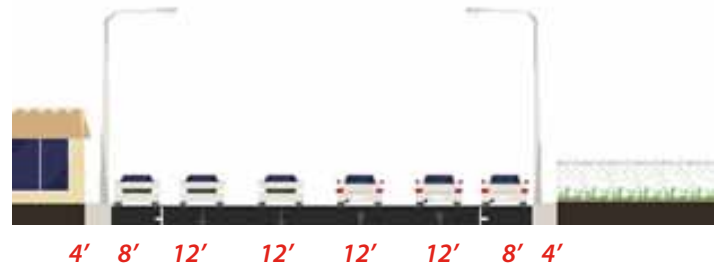
Two years of crash data showed an overall decrease of 14 percent, injury crashes dropped by 33 percent and angle crashes dropped by 56 percent. Bicycle volume increased 35 percent (to almost 15 percent of the peak hour traffic volume), yet the bicycle collision rate showed no increase. Pedestrian collisions decreased 80 percent.

Athens, Georgia: Baxter Street

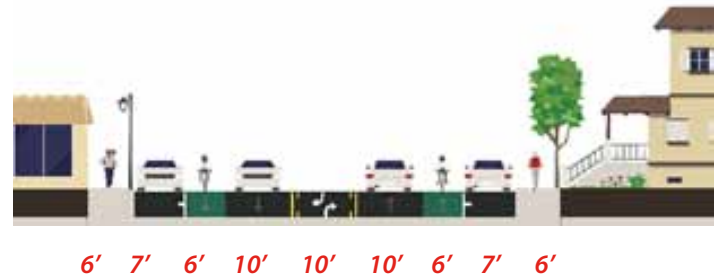
A road diet conversion on an arterial with 20,000 vehicles daily resulted in crashes dropping 53 percent in general and 60 percent at unsignalized locations. Traffic diversion was less than 4 percent, and 47 percent of the road's users perceived the number of lanes and street width as being "just right." (One-third were unsure and 20 percent were unhappy.) Baxter Street was converted from four lanes to two with a center lane and bicycle lanes on both sides.

HOW IT WORKS

The most common type of road diet converts four lanes of traffic into three lanes consisting of two travel lanes and a center left-turn lane. The configuration opens up space for adding such features as bicycle lanes, on-street parking, pedestrian buffers and sidewalks.



BEFORE: This roadway is designed primarily for motor vehicles. Wide, multiple travel lanes encourage faster speeds. The likelihood of drivers making lane changes increases the risk of crashes.



AFTER: A road diet opens up space for bike lanes, wider sidewalks, landscaping and pedestrian-scale lighting, all of which increase a community's ability to attract new development along the roadway. Narrower, single travel lanes encourage moderate and slower speeds that reduce crash risks.

RESOURCES

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7. **"Moving Beyond the Automobile."** Streetfilms, road diet video featuring Dan Burden on Vimeo: <http://vimeo.com/21903160>



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Sidewalks | A LIVABILITY FACT SHEET

Eight in 10 Americans prefer being in a community that offers sidewalks and good places to walk. Six in 10 prefer a neighborhood that features a mix of houses, shops and services within an easy walk versus a neighborhood that requires a car for every errand.¹

People who live in neighborhoods with sidewalks are 47 percent more likely than residents of areas without sidewalks to be active at least 39 minutes a day.²

Sidewalks play a vital role in community life. As conduits for pedestrian movement and access, they enhance connectivity and promote walking. As public spaces, sidewalks are the front steps to the community, activating streets socially and economically.

Safe, accessible, well-maintained sidewalks are a fundamental community investment that enhances public health and maximizes social capital.³

Sidewalks increase foot traffic in retail centers, delivering the customers that local shops and restaurants need in order to thrive. Retail properties with a Walk Score ranking of 80 out of 100 were valued 54 percent higher than those with a Walk Score⁴ of 20 and had an increase in net operating income of 42 percent.⁵

Interest in sidewalks is so keen that they've become a factor in home prices. For example, in a scenario where two houses are nearly identical, the one with a five-foot-wide sidewalk and two street trees not only sells for \$4,000 to \$34,000 more but it also sells in less time.

A well-constructed sidewalk for a typical 50-foot-wide residential property might cost a builder \$2,000, but it can return 15 times that investment in resale value. According to a 2009 CEOs for Cities report, even a one-point increase in a community's Walk Score could increase home values by \$700 to \$3,000.⁶

People who live in neighborhoods with sidewalks are 47 percent more likely than residents of areas without sidewalks to be active for at least 39 minutes a day.



Good downtown sidewalks have enough room for people to walk, stop and talk, or even sit for a bit. This wide sidewalk in State College, Pa., is made of visually appealing paver stones. Care must be taken when installing paver and similar surfaces so wheelchairs and other wheeled devices can roll smoothly over them.

Myth-Busting!

■ “No one will use the sidewalk.”

This might have been true in the past, but research published in 2012 by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention⁷ (CDC) and in 2013 by the National Center for Safe Routes to School⁸ shows that a growing number of people are walking, and that many are children and adults age 65 and older.

People just need safe, convenient and pleasant places near their homes, schools and workplaces to make walking routine, says the CDC study.

■ “Americans prefer to drive.”

Perhaps, or maybe they’re driving so much because there are no sidewalks! Federal data on vehicle miles traveled and a recent national study show a decline in driving and car ownership during the 2000s in an overwhelming majority of metro areas.

At the same time, the number of people commuting by bicycle and transit increased.⁹ A survey by the Surface Transportation Policy Partnership found that 55 percent of Americans would prefer to walk more and drive less.¹⁰

■ “Trees will be destroyed.”

Not necessarily. Sidewalks can be curved to avoid trees. In fact, protecting a tree is one of the few reasons for a sidewalk to deviate from a direct route.¹¹

■ “A sidewalk will take land from my lawn.”

Many homeowners don’t realize how far from the curb their private property line actually extends. There’s often enough of a public right-of-way easement in place to create a sidewalk without infringing in any way on a property owner’s land.¹²

■ “People will walk too close to my house.”

There’s little difference between what passersby can see from a sidewalk versus what they can already see from their cars or by walking along the edge of the street. Any nearness added by a sidewalk would likely be as little as a just a few feet.¹³

■ “Sidewalks increase crime.”

Actually, increased pedestrian activity puts more eyes on the street and creates safety in numbers, which deters and reduces criminal activity.¹⁴

■ “Tax dollars are better spent on other needs.”

Since sidewalks increase property values and tax revenues, they serve as an economic engine. Plus, sidewalk maintenance costs are real estate tax-deductible (IRS Publication 530). Sidewalks are also safety investments (by bringing more eyes and ears to the street) and an integral part of a balanced transportation budget.¹⁵

■ “I’ll be liable if someone gets hurt on a sidewalk near my property.”

It depends. Liability is determined by state and local law, but either government or private owner negligence concerning an “unreasonably safe” or “defective condition” (such as a wide crack or raised section) has to be proven in court in order to win a lawsuit.¹⁶

■ “Sidewalks ruin the character of rural neighborhoods.”

It’s only in recent decades that sidewalks have been phased out of developments. There are many ways to build a sidewalk or path to match the design and feel of a community.

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How To Get It Right



The ideal sidewalk widths: seven feet in residential areas, eight to 12 feet in downtown settings.



Sidewalks that are properly built can last 25 years or more with little more than minimal care.

When advocating and planning for sidewalks, consider the following:

■ Engage neighbors and the community

Expect some opposition and use this fact sheet to help make the case for the sidewalks. Mobilize like-minded people and work together as a neighborhood or community. Meet with your neighbors to raise awareness and address any resistance.

■ Make the sidewalk wide enough

Sidewalks are critical in downtown neighborhoods and busy retail areas, both of which have lots of people, destinations and potential conflicts with vehicles. In these areas it's important to install sidewalks that are wide enough to handle foot traffic and features such as cafe seating, benches and other spots for socializing.

■ Use a site-appropriate design

A sidewalk should fit its setting. Even rural communities can benefit from a tastefully designed walkway. Make sure sidewalks are well-maintained and appealing, with safe and convenient street crossings and enough width to accommodate two or three people walking side by side.

The ideal setback for a sidewalk is four to 10 feet from the street. Planter strips, trees and on-street parking can extend the buffer, increasing comfort and slowing traffic.

■ Prioritize high-use areas and connectivity

At the outset of a sidewalk construction program, prioritize where to build first by focusing on a quarter-mile circle around schools, parks, transit stops and key commercial destinations. Everything within that circle should be a priority for sidewalk construction. Be sure to map sidewalks so they're connected between the primary areas where people work, shop and play.

■ Consider driveways

In many neighborhoods and retail areas, driveways are full of both moving and parked cars. Since driveways interrupt a sidewalk's flow and safety, they should be kept to a minimum in commercial areas.

Carefully plan the best way to treat sidewalks that will cross driveways, especially in high-use areas. Alleys are a good tool for separating people from traffic, especially in retail areas.

■ Build and maintain with municipal funds

Many communities require property owners to pay for and clear sidewalks (snow, ice, etc.). Since sidewalks are a public benefit, a better policy would be to install and maintain sidewalks with public funds.

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Success Stories

■ Decatur, Georgia: Citywide Sidewalk Program

Decatur has been dubbed the most walkable city in Georgia, with more than 60 miles of sidewalks in its 4.2 square miles. The ongoing, citywide sidewalk improvement program began in 2004 with a Health Impact Assessment and funding from annual appropriations by the Decatur City Commission.

The program's goal is to have a sidewalk on at least one side of every street in town. More than four miles of new and replacement sidewalks had been built by 2014.

■ Austin, Texas: Sidewalk Prioritization

The City of Austin has built almost 100 miles of new sidewalks since 2005 to encourage walking as a viable mode of transportation and to improve safety, accessibility and pedestrian mobility.

Austin completed a detailed sidewalk inventory, documented current conditions, obtained public input on sidewalk needs and issues, and established city sidewalk priorities that were organized into a downloadable Sidewalk Prioritization Map. The city prioritizes compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, sidewalks that allow children to walk safely to school, a connected network of sidewalks, trails and bikeway, and sidewalks that serve bus stops. More than 300 bus stop sidewalks have been completed since 2011.

■ Calloway County, Kentucky: School Sidewalks

Walking or bicycling to school was prohibited in and around the small city of Murray because there were no sidewalks and it wasn't a safe way to travel. The local government offered to build sidewalks if the school system would change the policy. The effort resulted in 15,960 feet of sidewalks, including from the county middle school to a low-income housing area. Hundreds

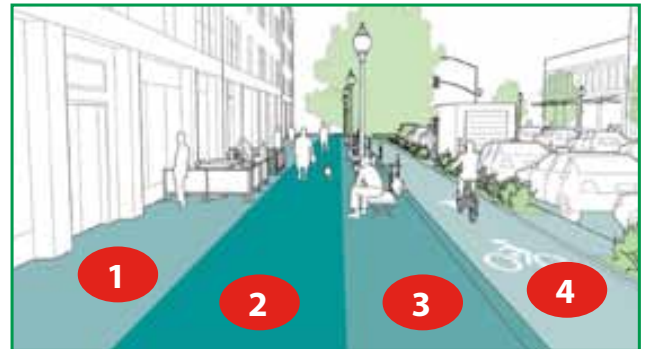
of students now regularly walk to school.

"Every time I look down the street, there are people on the sidewalks, people pulling wagons, people walking their dogs," said a school district administrator.

HOW IT WORKS

Design guidelines recommend a minimum sidewalk cross section of five feet, exclusive of other amenities and large enough for at least two people to walk side by side. Here's a guide to the potential spaces alongside a property.

- 1. Frontage Zone:** an extension of the building
- 2. Pedestrian Through Zone:** safe and adequate place for walking, five to seven feet wide in residential areas, eight to 12 feet in downtown or commercial settings
- 3. Street Furniture/Curb Zone:** plants, trees, benches, lighting and bike parking to provide a protective barrier from motorized traffic
- 4. Enhancement/Buffer Zone:** curb extensions, parklets, parking, bike riding, bike e-racks and bike stations



National Association of City Transportation Officials, Urban Street Design Guide, nacto.org

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Street Trees

A LIVABILITY FACT SHEET

“The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now,” says a wise Chinese proverb. In a neighborhood setting, street trees provide shade, safety, greenery, storm mitigation, energy savings, fresh air and a haven for songbirds and squirrels. Trees visually screen concrete and utility poles and quiet street noise.¹

The U.S. Forest Service estimates that the presence of street trees increases adjacent home values by an average of \$13,000.² That premium boosts a city’s tax base and can help cover the operating costs of street tree maintenance.

The National Main Street Center reports that a good tree canopy can increase retail sales by 12 cents on the dollar in large cities and 9 cents on the dollar in small ones.³

Trees are also good for our health. Vehicle exhaust increases ozone and causes asthma and other medical problems. Trees convert these harmful gasses into oxygen. In fact, a single urban street tree converts enough carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide into oxygen to meet the oxygen needs of two people for a full year.⁴

Trees planted in roadway divider strips or tree wells physically separate vehicles from pedestrians and help drivers distinguish the boundary between the street and adjacent areas where people walk. In addition, a well-developed tree canopy can reduce traffic speeds by 5 to 15 mph, which improves safety for all road users.⁵

Street trees reduce storm water runoff and flooding. (Here’s an interesting fact: Trees absorb 30 percent of the precipitation through their leaves and another 30 percent through their roots.)⁶

Pavement can cause temperatures to rise 3 to 7 degrees, which increases energy costs and the presence of harmful ozone and other gases. Tree shade can lower energy bills by up to 35 percent.⁷

Studies conducted in California found that tree shade can improve the lifespan of street surfaces by up to 60 percent. Since daily temperature fluctuations between heating and cooling are reduced, the damaging expansion and contraction of asphalt and concrete decline as well.⁸

“The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The second best time is now.”



Trees were planted as part of a downtown revitalization project in suburban Lake Oswego, Ore., that included sidewalks, new lighting, art installations, a pedestrian plaza, water fountain and traffic circle.

Myth-Busting!

■ “Street trees are dangerous.”

Studies document that motorists respond to vertical walls of greenery by driving more slowly, which makes pedestrians and motorists safer.⁹ Street safety comparisons show a reduction of run-off-the-road crashes and overall crash severity when stretches of a road with street trees are compared with similar segments that have no trees.

Trees also buffer pedestrians from moving vehicles. One Texas study found a 46 percent decrease in crash rates across urban arterial and highway sites after landscape improvements were installed.¹⁰ The presence of trees in a suburban landscape reduced the cruising speed of drivers by an average of 3 mph.¹¹

■ “Planting a tree anywhere produces the same health benefits.”

U.S. Forest Service research suggests that urban trees may be 10 times as effective as forest trees for lowering carbon dioxide. Urban pollutants such as ozone, chlorine, fluorine, peroxyacetylnitrate and sulphur dioxide are all absorbed by trees.¹²

■ “Trees are expensive.”

For a planting and three-year maintenance cost of \$250 to \$600, a single street tree returns more than \$90,000 of direct benefits, not even including the aesthetic, social and natural benefits provided during the tree’s lifetime.

A well-planted and cared-for tree can thrive for 60 years or more.¹³ The real estate premium from street trees boosts a city’s tax base and can cover the operating costs of street tree maintenance.

For instance, New York City’s 2006 tree census found that its 592,130 street trees provided an estimated \$122 million in benefits annually. A goal of the city’s 2007 PlaNYC initiative is to plant another 220,000 street trees by 2017.¹⁴

Washington, D.C., estimates the benefit of its street trees at \$10.7 million annually.¹⁵ A University of California at Davis study found that 20 percent shade on a street improves pavement conditions by 11 percent, which provides a 60 percent resurfacing savings over 30 years.¹⁶

When streets have no shade, the sun’s heat breaks down the paving binder and produces more heating and shrinking, which wears out the pavement. Shade increases pavement life by up to 60 percent, far offsetting the cost of tree maintenance¹⁷ and the occasional cost of repairing damage caused by tree root growth.

■ “Trees are the cause of damage by storms.”

Proper selection, spacing and trimming of trees, along with well-planned utilities, will reduce the impact of major storms. A line of mature trees can provide protection from fragile or isolated trees that fall.¹⁸

■ “Trees create a mess.”

Trees can be selected that produce minimal autumn leaf droppings and other annoyances. (However, municipal policies should include procedures for efficient leaf removal.) Some species of trees attract songbirds, which can be a pleasant addition to an area.

Although rare, some trees can attract such large congregations of birds that they become an annoyance. Thoughtful tree selection and management can limit specific bird populations or keep large groupings away.¹⁹

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How To Get It Right



A mature tree canopy provides shade and elegance to this residential street in Fargo, N.D.



Tree wells, such as this one in Valencia Town Center, Calif., add greenery to urban and Main Street settings.

When advocating and planning for street trees, try the following:

■ Engage the public and build support

Due to the many misperceptions about street trees, it's important to involve the public at the earliest possible point of discussions to minimize anxiety about the unknowns and give citizens ownership of the goals.

Print this fact sheet, talk to neighbors, build community support and then meet with decision makers, news media, experts and others to discuss the benefits of street trees.

■ Choose the right trees

There are street tree varieties for all climate zones, from semi-arid and arid conditions to mountain communities above 9,000 feet. The proper selection and planting of trees in boxes reduces sidewalk repair costs and potential damage to utilities in urban neighborhoods.

■ Place trees correctly

When properly positioned and maintained, a backdrop of street trees can draw a motorist's eye to traffic signals and signs. However, the trees must be carefully positioned to allow adequate sight lines at intersections and driveways.

Street trees should be placed 15 to 30 feet apart, or as far apart as 50 feet apart in urban locations. Trees should be spaced to allow for illumination from street lights and so not to interfere with above- or below-ground utility lines.

■ Maintain trees properly

Tree maintenance is an added cost but one that's more than offset by the positive impact trees have on a community's tax base.

It's important to properly maintain trees, including repairing occasional sidewalk damage from growing tree roots. It's also important to keep the majority of leaves cleared from the street since fallen leaves can clog drains. In some climates piles of leaves that are left unattended over time can produce airborne spores that cause problems for allergy sufferers.

■ Plant in tree wells if sidewalk space is limited

If there's insufficient space for trees alongside a sidewalk, use a tree well instead. Depending on the amount of parking needed, desired visual pattern and tree density, wells can be placed 40 to 60 feet apart, which allows two to four parking spaces in between. The wells must be wide enough to prevent vehicles from backing into trees.

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Success Stories

■ Shreveport, Louisiana: NeighborWoods

Despite Shreveport's location in a wooded part of the state, many community members were unaware of the benefits and value of a good tree canopy. Due to sustained tornado and ice storm damage in the years 2010 to 2013, and severe droughts during the summers of 1999 to 2005, many neighborhoods were practically devoid of trees.

Help came from the nonprofit organization Shreveport Green and their work with NeighborWoods, a national program dedicated to reforesting city greenspaces. Beginning in 2006 student-led volunteers planted more than 20,000 trees in Shreveport, with a particular focus on three at-risk neighborhoods that had moderate to severe crime rates and a lack of community cohesion.

By increasing the canopy cover, Shreveport Green offered residents a cooler and more attractive environment, which encouraged them to mingle outside and positively interact with their neighbors. The effort produced a cost benefit to Shreveport of \$7.28 for every dollar spent.

■ Charlotte, North Carolina: Stately Trees

In 1985 Charlotte planned major renovations of downtown thoroughfares, including 10 blocks of Tryon Street and two blocks of Trade Street.

Since the city wanted large, stately trees in the downtown, it installed a suspended precast concrete pavement system supported by earthen trench sidewalks and topped with non-permeable pavers. A total of 170 willow oak trees were planted and by 2009 they had grown to an average height of 44 feet, resulting in a 10 percent reduction in peak storm flows to the storm water system. Once famous for cotton mills and gold mines, Charlotte is now known for its a spectacular tree canopy.

WHY IT MATTERS

THE VALUE OF Urban Forests

urban forest = the trees, plants and natural resources within a town or city

12-1/2 trees can intercept an Olympic-sized swimming pool worth of stormwater annually.

Trees in urban forests support 60,000 California jobs annually.

177 million trees shading homes and buildings reduce air conditioning energy use by 6.4 billion kilowatt hours. (It takes 73 100-megawatt power plants to produce that much energy.)

Homes, goods and services sell for 12 percent more in **communities with trees** than in those without trees.

Source: California ReLEAF (californiareleaf.org/whytrees)

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Traffic Calming | A LIVABILITY FACT SHEET

Since the advent of the automobile, most streets in the U.S. have been designed primarily for cars — fast-moving cars. Streets and parking now take up 25 to 50 percent of all public space in cities.¹

Unfortunately, roadways designed to move traffic at high speeds undermine the historic functions of streets to help people interact and get around, regardless of their mode of transit. Smarter transportation design moves traffic while keeping communities safe and connected.²

For instance, when vehicles traveling at 20 mph collide with pedestrians, fewer than 10 percent of those struck are killed, most injuries are minor and 30 percent suffer no injuries at all. However, when a vehicle is moving at 30 mph, 45 percent of pedestrians hit are killed and many are seriously injured; at 40 mph, more than 80 percent of the pedestrians are killed and all are severely injured.³

According to the 2014 “Dangerous by Design” report, our roads are especially hazardous for children, low-income people and older adults. Even though older adults are 13

percent of the U.S. population, they were 20 percent of pedestrian fatalities in 2011.⁴

Traffic calming is a system of design and management strategies that include narrowed roads, modern roundabouts, chicanes (intentionally added turns in the road), median islands, speed humps, diverters, speed tables and other engineering tools or interventions.⁵ These measures are used with the intent of slowing motor-vehicle traffic, often without reducing overall traffic volumes. The efforts increase safety and create a balanced urban environment for all users, including pedestrians and bicyclists.⁶

Another benefit of traffic calming is that it can give a street a transformative sense of place, thus boosting social interactions, housing and retail businesses.⁷ The changes help reduce pollution, noise and even crime,^{8,9} as it has in communities including Dayton, Ohio, where speed reductions and the closing of streets and alleys to motor vehicles lowered violent crime by 50 percent.¹⁰

When vehicles traveling at 20 mph collide with pedestrians, fewer than 10 percent of those struck are killed ... at 40 mph, more than 80 percent of the pedestrians are killed and all are severely injured.



Soon after West Palm Beach, Fla., removed 17 travel lanes in its downtown, new street life and investment followed, revitalizing the city's town center. Traffic calming is also credited with helping reduce crime rates.

Myth-Busting!

■ “Traffic calming will divert cars onto my street.”

Drivers tend to use primary streets and roads because they provide the most direct and efficient route to their destinations. Traffic-calmed streets, when designed with certain measures that slow traffic without causing much diversion, can have little to no effect on overall traffic volume, except perhaps during the construction period. The Institute of Transportation Engineers recommends using traffic circles and long speed humps instead of street closures and standard speed humps as a way to avoid diversion.¹¹

■ “Traffic calming creates traffic jams.”

On roads with less than 20,000 vehicles per day, traffic calming techniques such as “road diets”¹² have minimal or even positive effects on vehicle capacity. One reason: Left-turning vehicles are moved into a center lane. When necessary, bike lanes and center turn lanes can be used for police enforcement and stranded vehicles in order to avoid disrupting the normal traffic flow.¹³

■ “Traffic calming is bad for transit.”

Transit conflicts can be avoided with good planning, such as incorporating a center lane so motorists can swerve around stopped buses or by adding side pull-out bays for buses.

■ “Traffic calming slows down emergency responders.”

By not using short speed humps and stop signs, a traffic-calmed street, even with offset speed tables, can accommodate emergency vehicles without reducing

emergency response times.¹⁴ Drivers can use bicycle lanes to move out of the way, and a center turn lane can be used by responders to efficiently pass other vehicles.

■ “People don’t like traffic calming measures.”

Neighborhood traffic calming projects have gained broad acceptance and support in cities that use an effective and meaningful public engagement process. The redesign of Brooklyn’s Prospect Park West reduced vehicle speeds, increased bicycle use and improved the street’s overall capacity, all while maintaining motorized vehicle travel times. The project provoked a small amount of opposition, but the city, the community board and 70 percent of residents supported the project¹⁵ and succeeded in getting the speed limit reduced even further, to 25 mph.¹⁶

■ “Traffic calming measures are being reversed.”

Traffic calming is proving to be effective, safe and popular. With the exception of short speed humps, of the more than 20,000 road segments calmed nationwide few have been converted back to their original configuration.

■ “The city or community will be held liable for damages.”

Communities seeking traffic calming measures often hear that legal liability is a concern. Nationwide, thousands of traffic calming measures have been installed since the 1970s with less than a dozen liability verdicts. Compared to the stream of liability cases that cities face from simple road maintenance and construction projects, traffic calming has a minimal liability risk.¹⁷ On the major plus side, slower traffic speeds reduce the chance of crashes, and the damage, injuries and fatalities that can result.¹⁸

-
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How To Get It Right



Atlanta's Cascade Avenue, with up to 17,900 vehicles per day, is a challenge to walk, bicycle or shop.



Cascade Avenue after traffic calming could inspire redevelopment that transforms the neighborhood.

The success of any tool requires using it right, and this is certainly true of traffic calming. Try the following:

■ Embrace a public process and build support

Develop an education and awareness campaign prior to implementation and reach out to community members, elected officials and municipal leaders.

Elected leaders and agency staff may need to see public support first, to inspire their approval and help navigate the implementation. Community advocates can print this fact sheet, talk to neighbors, build community support and then meet with decision makers, news outlets, experts and others to discuss the benefits of traffic calming. Agency staff can engage the public in a meaningful process, such as by hosting charrettes or interactive design workshops to build public acceptance and understanding.

■ Start with a pilot project

Consider doing a pilot project first in an area with light traffic to give drivers a chance to get comfortable with the concept and to allow municipal staff to document what works and what doesn't.

Temporary and portable measures, such as paint, signage and parking changes, can allow for low cost traffic

calming that is also easily removed or converted into permanent structures once the project is shown to be successful.

■ Incorporate traffic calming into larger efforts

Traffic calming is best done in conjunction with another project, such as development, revitalization, utility or maintenance work; a downtown, corridor or transit plan or a new street design. That way the traffic-calming element can simply be incorporated into the larger project's processes.

■ Traffic calming should benefit transit

Transit can help provide the convenient and safe connections that improve public spaces and enhance walking and bicycling trips, but slowing down traffic could interfere with transit functions. Because of that it's necessary to design and coordinate traffic-calming measures to ensure efficient transit movements.

■ Embrace proactive design and use target speeds, not operating speeds

A proactive approach uses design elements to affect behavior and lower speeds. This may be the single most consequential intervention in reducing pedestrian injury and fatality.¹⁹

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Success Stories

■ Hendersonville, North Carolina: Main Street

Main Street is a former state highway that was narrowed to two traffic lanes with widened sidewalks to make downtown more pedestrian-friendly, especially for the one out of four town residents who are retired.

Alternating blocks of diagonal and parallel parking were added to create a serpentine traffic flow that tames traffic even more. After the highway was rerouted to adjacent streets and the Main Street improvements were completed, Hendersonville's retail vacancies dropped from 14 to one.

■ San Francisco, California: Octavia Boulevard

After the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake rendered the freeway through the Hayes Valley neighborhood unsafe for driving, residents called for the road's removal.

The city built Octavia Boulevard in its place during the 1992 recession with a median, four through lanes, boulevard-style parking lanes, tree-lined walkways, side lanes for local traffic and parking and aesthetic details including special light fixtures. A new park was developed, housing increased, home values went up, employment rose 23 percent, transit trips increased 75 percent, gridlock never materialized and new restaurants and retail shops opened for business.

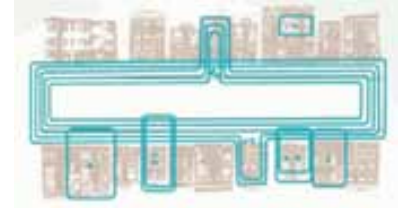
■ West Palm Beach, Florida: Downtown

Traffic calming was initially used as a response to resident complaints about speeding and cut-through motor vehicle traffic. The city found that driver behavior improved, which led to an increase of pedestrians, cyclists and skaters, which led to a substantial crime reduction. Residents and businesses invested more than \$300 million for improvements, increasing property values and business receipts, neighborhood pride and tourism.

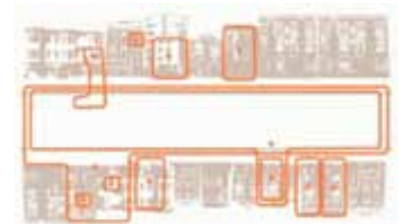
WHY IT MATTERS

In 1981, researcher Donald Appleyard studied traffic on three San Francisco streets and discovered that as traffic increases, the area people consider to be their "territory" shrinks. The image below depicts the relationship between traffic volumes and how connected residents felt to their neighbors.

LIGHT TRAFFIC
2,000 vehicles per day
3 friends per person
6.3 acquaintances



MEDIUM TRAFFIC
8,000 vehicles per day
1.3 friends per person
4.1 acquaintances



HEAVY TRAFFIC
16,000 vehicles per day
0.9 friends per person
3.1 acquaintances



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Bicycling | A LIVABILITY FACT SHEET

Half of all trips taken in the United States are made on bicycles. The number of bicycle commuters has increased 100 percent since 1990. The number of bicycle commuters has increased 100 percent since 1990. The number of bicycle commuters has increased 100 percent since 1990.

Building bike infrastructure creates an average of 11.4 jobs for every \$1 million spent. Road-only projects create 7.0 jobs per \$1 million.



Density | A LIVABILITY FACT SHEET

When the city is located in the "best" density, it generally attracts the most investment. The number of jobs per worker is higher in the city than in the suburbs. The number of jobs per worker is higher in the city than in the suburbs.

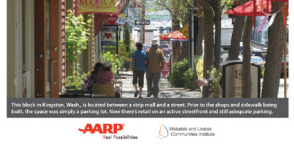
The nation's declining birth and aging population will continue to boost the demand for smaller homes and more compact communities.



Economic Development | A LIVABILITY FACT SHEET

For many years, public transit, bicycle lanes, trails and sidewalks have suffered from lack of investment. The number of jobs per worker is higher in the city than in the suburbs. The number of jobs per worker is higher in the city than in the suburbs.

Places with above-average levels of walkability command a premium of about \$4,000 to \$34,000 more than homes with average levels of walkability.



Form-Based Code | A LIVABILITY FACT SHEET

Smart zoning and land-use codes are the foundation upon which a great community is built. The number of jobs per worker is higher in the city than in the suburbs. The number of jobs per worker is higher in the city than in the suburbs.

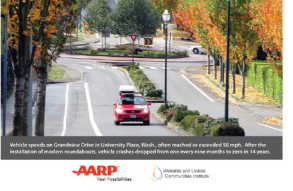
By using the physical form rather than the separation of uses as an organizing principle, form-based codes offer a powerful alternative to conventional zoning.



Modern Roundabouts | A LIVABILITY FACT SHEET

Every day in the U.S. more than 20 people are killed in traffic accidents. The number of traffic accidents is higher in the city than in the suburbs. The number of traffic accidents is higher in the city than in the suburbs.

Modern roundabouts are safer and cost less than conventional intersections and have been deemed a "proven safety measure" by the U.S. Department of Transportation.



Parking | A LIVABILITY FACT SHEET

Parking in the United States is expensive because it is a scarce resource. The number of parking spaces is higher in the city than in the suburbs. The number of parking spaces is higher in the city than in the suburbs.

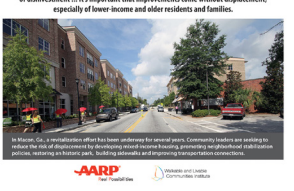
The cost of all parking spaces in the United States exceeds the value of all cars and may even exceed the value of all roads.



Revitalization | A LIVABILITY FACT SHEET

As communities in the United States are redeveloped, the number of jobs per worker is higher in the city than in the suburbs. The number of jobs per worker is higher in the city than in the suburbs.

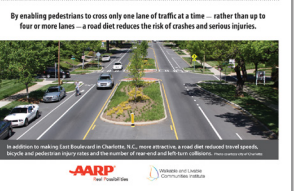
The displacement of particular corners in places that have suffered years of disinvestment... it's important that improvements come without displacement, especially of lower-income and older residents and families.



Road Diets | A LIVABILITY FACT SHEET

Most drivers don't know that road diets can be a cost-effective way to improve road safety. The number of traffic accidents is higher in the city than in the suburbs. The number of traffic accidents is higher in the city than in the suburbs.

By enabling pedestrians to cross only one lane of traffic at a time... rather than two to four or more lanes... a road diet reduces the risk of crashes and serious injuries.



Sidewalks | A LIVABILITY FACT SHEET

Eight in 10 Americans prefer being in a community that offers sidewalks and other amenities. The number of sidewalks is higher in the city than in the suburbs. The number of sidewalks is higher in the city than in the suburbs.

People who live in neighborhoods with sidewalks are 47 percent more likely than residents of areas without sidewalks to be active for at least 30 minutes a day.



Street Trees | A LIVABILITY FACT SHEET

The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The second best time is now. The number of street trees is higher in the city than in the suburbs. The number of street trees is higher in the city than in the suburbs.

The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The second best time is now.



Traffic Calming | A LIVABILITY FACT SHEET

When the speed of the automobile, most streets in the U.S. are too fast for the people who live on them. The number of traffic accidents is higher in the city than in the suburbs. The number of traffic accidents is higher in the city than in the suburbs.

When vehicles traveling at 20 mph collide with pedestrians, fewer than 10 percent of those struck are killed... at 40 mph, more than 80 percent of the pedestrians are killed and all are severely injured.

