



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

Complete Streets Make for a Good Ride!

Just outside of Boston, new apartments were recently built across the street from the Dedham commuter rail station. However, residents are forced to scramble across a busy road and squeeze through a hole in a fence in order to access the station. The only alternatives are to take a shuttle bus on a three-mile detour or to drive to the station and pay to park.¹



Neither of the bus stops pictured above provide adequate access and shelter for transit users.

Right: www.pedikemages.com
Left: photo courtesy of United States Access Board

Incomplete streets a barrier for riders, good service

In too many cases, road design is out of sync with the needs of the people who are riding buses, trains, and trolleys. Poor design slows transit service and discourages people from using public transportation.

Even in communities served by public transportation, incomplete streets may discourage residents from fully using the service. Many users are unable to get to transit stops in a safe and convenient manner.

Nearly every transit trip begins as a walking trip – but the disconnect between transit and road planning means transit riders are often left to wait at bus stops marked by a lone post in the grass – no sidewalk, curb ramp or bench. Crossing the street to catch the bus may be hazardous. Even where sidewalks and safe roadway crossings exist, often the placement of driveways or other barriers force bus stops to be located some distance from the intersection, increasing walk times and encouraging unsafe jay walking. A study in Houston found that 3 out of 5 disabled and elderly citizens do not have sidewalks between their home and the nearest bus stop. Fewer than 10 percent of them use public transportation, even though 50 percent live within two blocks of a bus stop.² A lack of sidewalks or pedestrian paths linking the entire catchment area of a transit stop form a barrier to transit use by all members of the community – young and old, with or without disabilities.

Buses get stuck in traffic, and their progress is further slowed by the constant need to merge back into the flow of traffic after pulling over to pick up passengers. Stop-and-go bus service discourages use, increasing traffic congestion by those who choose to drive instead. While solutions exist that can help speed service, transit agencies often don't have much say in tweaking road design for bus use.

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The Benefits of Complete Streets 5



Complete Streets Steering Committee Organizations

AARP
Alliance for Biking and Walking
America Bikes
America Walks
American Council of the Blind
American Planning Association
American Public Transportation Association
American Society of Landscape Architects
Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals
City of Boulder
Institute of Transportation Engineers
Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.
League of America Bicyclists
McCann Consulting
National Center for Bicycling and Walking
Safe Routes to School National Partnership
Smart Growth America

National Complete Streets Coalition

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Complete Streets Make for a Good Ride!



Right photo courtesy John LaPlante
Left photo courtesy of John LaPlante

The bus stops pictured above provide a safe, comfortable environment for transit users without impeding pedestrian traffic.

Complete streets make transit safe and convenient

Some communities have begun to prioritize creating streets that work well for public transit vehicles and their riders.

Streets that are well designed for transit can encourage more people to get out of their cars and onto the bus. Such streets provide accessible bus stops and assist buses in moving through traffic. Since 2000, rapid bus service in Los Angeles has used a priority signal system that allows buses to extend green lights or shorten red ones. Within the first year of operation, travel time decreased by 25% and ridership increased by more than 30%.³

Improving access to transit also reduces dependence on more costly alternatives, such as paratransit or private transportation services. The Maryland Transit Administration found that providing paratransit for a daily commuter costs about \$38,500 a year. Basic improvements to a transit stop costs \$7,000, the equivalent of just two months' worth of that service for a single rider. More extensive improvements, such as adding a lighted shelter and bench and replacing the sidewalk leading to the stop, costs about \$58,000 – just 33% more than providing a single year of paratransit service for one person.

Transit systems have also discovered that bicycling and transit go well together. Most transit agencies now provide bicycle parking at bus and rail stops, and more than 100 transit systems in the US now carry passengers' bicycles on buses and trains. This extends the range that customers can travel to reach public transportation – assuming the roads to the transit stop are bicycle-friendly.⁴

A community with a complete streets policy ensures safe and convenient access to public transportation for all users. Complete streets policies help create the safe and comfortable bus stops and smooth predictable transit trips that help make public transportation an attractive option.

¹ Boston Globe, September 21, 2006

² Gilderbloom JI, Markham JP. Housing quality among the elderly: A decade of changes. *Int J Aging Hum Dev* 1998; 46(1). Also available at http://www.louisville.edu/org/sun/housing/cd_v2/Bookarticles/Ch1.htm

³ Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority. *Metro Rapid Demonstration Program, Final Report*. March 2002.

⁴ Schneider, Robert. *Integration of Bicycles and Transit, TCRP Synthesis 62*

