Why a Pedestrian & Bicycle Plan?

There are a number of benefits for communities that offer safe means of transportation and/or recreation via pedestrian and bicycle.

- **Economic benefits.** Property values tend to go up. Businesses actually have more traffic with slower speeds, bicycle facilities, and wide sidewalks.
- **Health benefits.** As more people take walks or ride bikes, their health improves. This is a benefit for employers who save on healthcare, as well as the public health of communities.
- **Equity.** Children have the ability to walk to school rather than depend on a driver. People can age in place, as more walkable communities as preferred by the elderly. The disabled and impoverished are also able to take advantage of communities that facilitate walking and bicycling.
- **Safety.** Whether in rural or urban areas, the most dangerous area is mid-block, where drivers may be less alert to the presence of pedestrians and bicyclists. Recent data indicates that residents of low-income and minority neighborhoods are disproportionately represented in bike and pedestrian injuries and fatalities, and low-income neighborhoods often have fewer sidewalks and other safe infrastructure.

According to the AARP

Facts

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]

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 Score of 20 and had an increase in net operating income of 42 percent.

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.

Safe, accessible, well-maintained sidewalks are a fundamental community investment that **enhances public health and maximizes social capital.**[2]

People who live in neighborhoods with sidewalks are **47 percent more likely** than residents of areas with outside walks to be active at least 39 minutes a day.[3]

Myths

"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 Prevention[4] (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.[5] A survey by the Surface Transportation Policy Partnership found that 55 percent of Americans would prefer to walk more and drive less.[6]

"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.[7]

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[1] National Association of Realtors. (November 2013) National Community Preference Survey. http://www.realtor.org/articles/nar-2013-community-preference-survey
[2] National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO). (October 2012) Urban Street Design Guide pp 24-25. http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/ pdf/2012-nacto-urban-street-design-guide.pdf
[3] Sallis J., et al. "Neighborhood Environments and Physical Activity among Adults in 11 countries." American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Vol. 36, No.2

[4] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (August 2012) Vital Signs. http://www.nmhc.org/files/ContentFiles/Brochures/Myth%20and%20Fact%20FINAL.pdf
[5] U.S. PIRG Educational Fund. (December 2013) Transportation in Transition: A Look at Changing Travel Patterns in America's Biggest Cities. http://www.uspirg.org/news/usp/study-shows-driving-decline-america%E2%80%99s-cities
[6] Surface Transportation Policy Project, Belden Russonello & Stewart. (April 2003) Americans' Attitudes Toward Walking and Creating Better Walking Communities. http:// www.transact.org/library/reports_pdfs/pedpoll.pdf.Whetmore. J.Z. "Retrofit Sidewalks." Perils for Pedestrians Public Affairs Series (November 2012) Retrieved March 3, 2014 http://www.pedestrians.org/retrofit/retrofit15.htm
[7] Rails to Trails Conservancy, National Park Service. (January 1998) Rail-trails and Safe Communities: The Experience on 372 Trails. http://www.railstotrails.org/resources/ documents/resource_docs/Safe%20Communities_F_lr.pdf

CAMPO
Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization