

Creating Safe, Healthy, and Active Transportation

How State Transportation Agencies Can Design for Health



Health is a Transportation Issue

A healthy transportation system allows for pedestrians, cyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages to travel safely and easily to every destination. State transportation agencies can play an essential and unique role in protecting community health. By incorporating public health strategies into plans, policies, and projects, state transportation agencies can ensure that all roadways are designed safely and effectively.

Over a 20-year period, a \$30 million investment in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and education will have a return on investment of over \$353 million – a cumulative return of nearly 1200%!ⁱ

Designing for Health and Safety Works

- > Sidewalks prevent 88% of “walking along roadway crashes.”ⁱⁱ
- > Children living on a street with speed bumps have a 53% to 60% lower chance of being injured or killed by motorists.ⁱⁱⁱ
- > Narrowing wide roads reduces crash rates by 47% on major arterials.ⁱⁱⁱ
- > One mile of reduced automobile travel provides 12.2¢ worth of crash reductions and 5.6¢ worth of reduced air, noise, and water pollution.^{iv}
- > There’s safety in numbers: As the number of people walking and bicycling in a community increases, bicycle and pedestrian injuries and deaths decrease.^v

Strategies for Safer Streets

Bicycle & Pedestrian Infrastructure

- Sidewalks
- Clear, visible traffic signs
- Bike lanes

Safe & Visible Crossings

- Marked crosswalks
- Pedestrian medians

Reduced Driving Speeds

- Roundabouts
- Speed humps
- Lower speed limits

Narrowed Roads

- Fewer lanes
- Reduced lane widths

What State Transportation Agencies Can Do

State transportation policies and plans that support healthy community design can provide positive dividends and enhance the health of the entire state. States can provide leadership by adopting policies and plans that guide regional and local transportation agencies and motivate other states to take action. Below are three actions state transportation agencies can take to improve safety and promote health:

☆ Integrate Safe and Active Transportation into the State Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP)

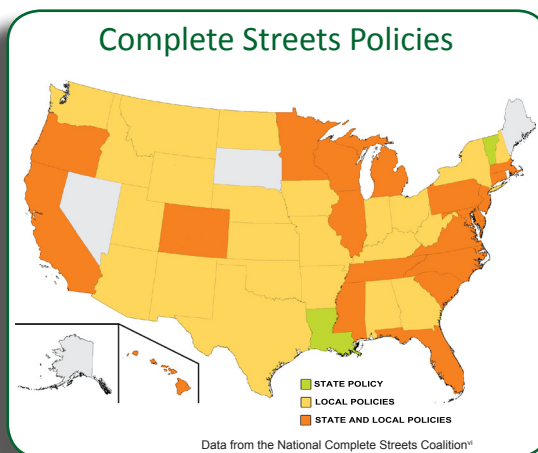
State transportation agencies should prioritize vulnerable and non-motorized road users in the SHSP. This can be accomplished by including recommendations for policies, programs, and engineering efforts that support active transportation and reduce traffic injuries and deaths. To address active transportation in the SHSP, states should:

- Include fatal and non-fatal pedestrian and bicycle injuries in SHSP data analyses.
- Invite public health professionals in injury prevention and other areas to join the plan steering committee.
- Consider examples of successful policies and engineering enhancements that other states have implemented to improve pedestrian safety.

☆ Adopt a Complete Streets Policy

To date, 24 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia have adopted Complete Streets policies. Complete Streets policies require that streets are designed and operated to provide safe access for users of all ages and abilities, including pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, and transit riders. An ideal state Complete Streets policy:

- Ensures that, for projects under state control, the entire right of way is planned, designed, and operated to provide safe access for all users.
- Provides guidance on Complete Streets to local transportation agencies.
- Encourages municipalities to adopt their own Complete Streets policy.



☆ Implement a Comprehensive State Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program

SRTS programs maximize both safety and physical activity for children and exemplify a successful public health and transportation collaboration. To best facilitate SRTS programs, a state should:

- Expand and improve the non-infrastructure activities in SRTS, making full use of the 30% of funds allowed for these efforts.
- Provide local agencies with the information and support needed to plan and implement programs, as well as collaborate with public health and community organizations.



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