WALKABLE COMMUNITIES

NYS Department of State

Planning for pedestrians

Why plan for pedestrians?

- Benefits: environmental, health, and economic

- Walkable communities characteristics

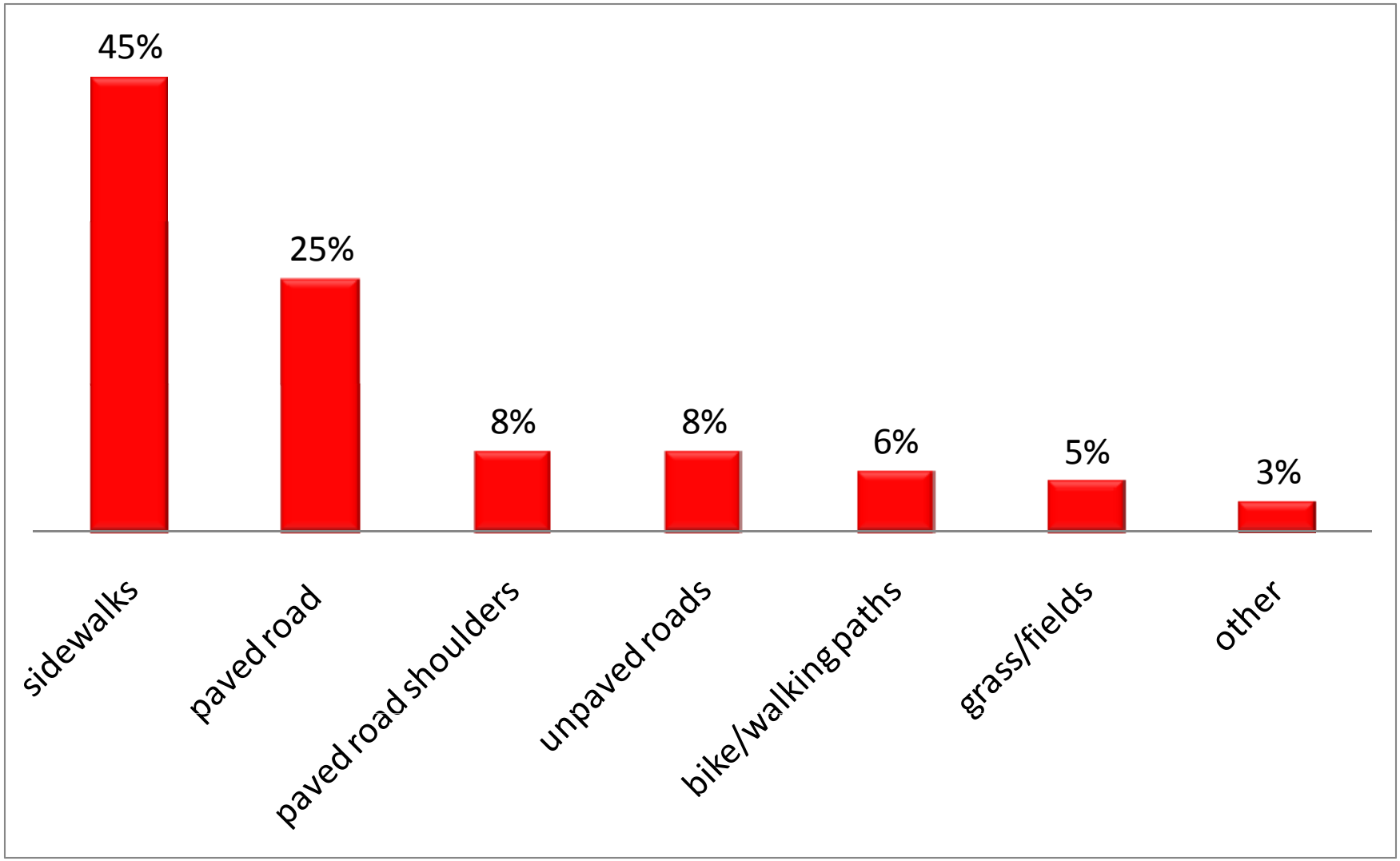
- Building and rediscovering walkable communities

Preferences

- 66% in 2011 National Association of Realtors survey said walkability is a factor in deciding where to live

- 80% prefer to live in single-family detached houses

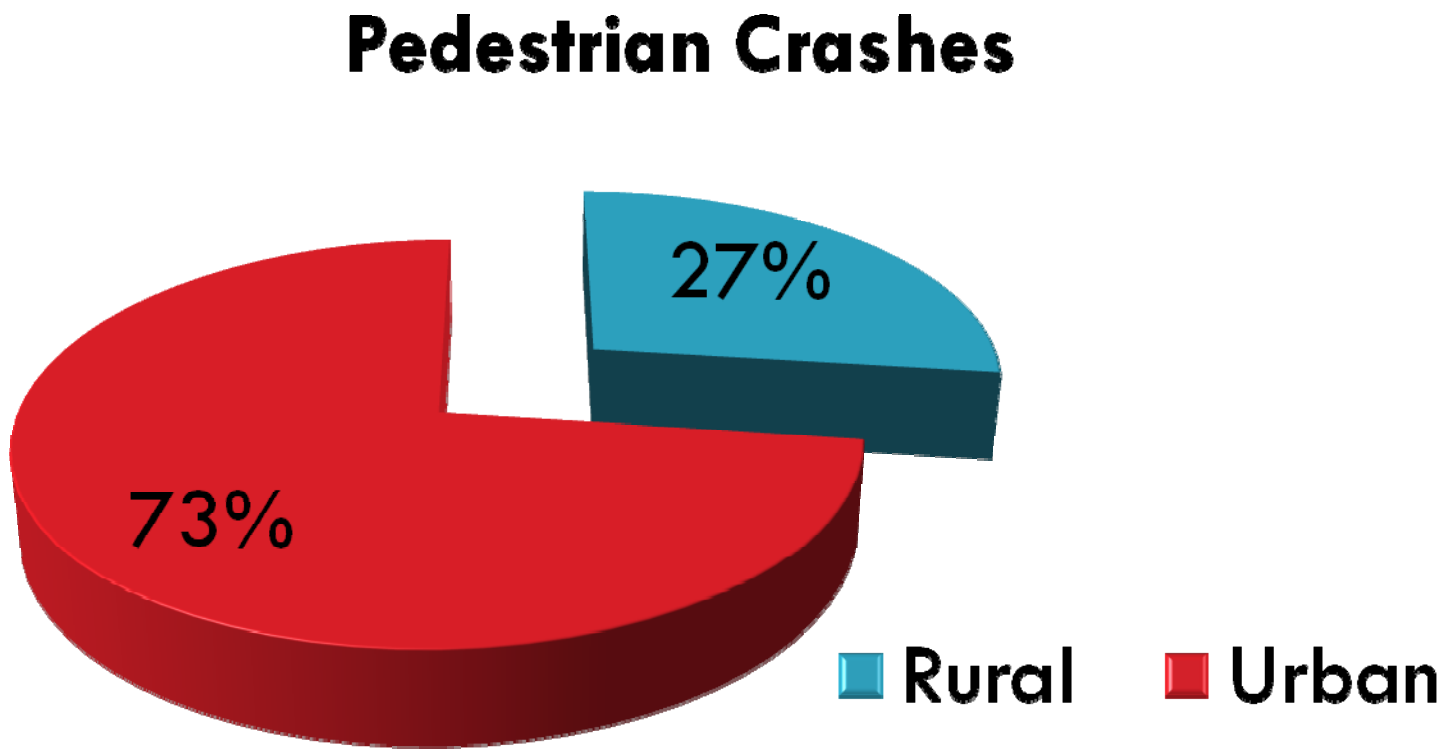
Walking facilities



Facility barriers

- High speed or heavy traffic
- No sidewalks
- Narrow walkways
- Surfaces poorly constructed or maintained
- Physical features (rivers, RR tracks, major arterials lacking crossings)

Rural vs. urban crashes



There are more crashes in urban areas, but more fatalities in rural areas.

Measuring your walkability

- Walkability audits

- **RateMyStreet**: uses Google Maps to actively score walkability; includes disability access, crime, safety, sidewalks, etc.

- **Walk Score**: scores your address based upon proximity to amenities, but does not include sidewalks, safety or topography

Walkable Community characteristics

- Intact centers
- Residential densities, mixed income, mixed use
- Public space
- Universal design
- Key streets that are speed controlled
- Well linked streets & trails
- Properly scaled design
- Many people walking

Source: Walkable.org

Intact centers

Have centrally located:

- Variety of stores/businesses (open 8+ hours daily)
- Library (open 10+ hours daily)
- Post office, civic buildings
- Youth and senior services

And avoid:

- Strip malls and leap frog development
- Office parks
- Public facilities outside municipal centers
- Isolated schools

Mixed uses and density near center

- Variety of building types and affordability
- Higher densities

Public space

- Lively places for gathering, playing, and associating like parks and plazas

- Easily accessed by all people, within ⅛ mile (700 feet) of all homes

Americans with Disabilities Act

- Chapter 11, 2010 Building Code of NYS: Accessibility
- Requires pedestrian facilities be planned, designed, constructed, and maintained to accommodate people with disabilities
- Applies to new construction and reconstruction (i.e. , barrier removals)
- About 70% of Americans will be temporarily or permanently disabled at some point in life

Well linked streets & trails

- Streets are block form, grid or other highly connected patterns
- Avoid cul-de-sac or other fractured patterns (or repair using trail connectors)
- Update official map and zoning to discourage long, disconnected streets

Properly scaled design

- Homes: within ½ mile walking radius of most services:
  - Elementary school: within ¼ mile
  - High school within: 1 mile
- Important features (parks): within ⅛ mile
- Public transit shelters: within ½ to ¼ mile

Where the cars are

Street design

Traffic calming

Parking standards

Complete Streets law

Public projects with federal and state funding subject to DOT oversight must consider Complete Streets design principles

Complete Streets design principles:

- sidewalks,
- bicycle lanes,
- crosswalks,
- pedestrian control signalization,
- bus pull outs,
- curb cuts,
- raised crosswalks,
- ramps, and
- traffic calming measures

Speed controlled streets

- Municipalities can design their streets for safety
- Speeds set for safe, courteous travel
  - Wider streets: accidents per mile per year increase
  - Safest streets: narrow, slow, 24' wide streets
  - Most dangerous streets: 36' wide streets (typical of conventional subdivisions)
- Avoid one way streets to hasten exits to suburbs

Pedestrian friendly street design

- Narrow streets: less conducive to higher speeds
- Lighting on shorter poles or lower fixtures
- Planting buffers with landscaping and trees provide shelter and shade without obstructing sight
- Street furniture: benches, drinking fountains
- Public art, banners, paving, cultural and historic elements to promote “sense of place”
- Signs and signals for both pedestrians and motorists

Traffic calming

Volume control

- Full closures
- Half closures
- Median barriers

Speed control

- Roundabouts
- Chicanes
- Center island narrowings
- Speed humps, raised crosswalks

Parking standards

- Decrease minimum parking standards
- Bicycle parking
- Valet parking
- Permeable parking lot surfaces

Design principles

Sidewalks

Shoulders

Intersections

Safe Routes to Schools

Trails

Problem sidewalks

Recommended sidewalk widths

- Central business district (CBD):
  - minimum 8’
- Commercial/industrial area outside CBD:
  - minimum 5’ with 2’ planting strip or 7’ without planting strip
  - 4’ or 5’ wide planting strip when possible
- Residential area outside CBD:
  - 5’ on arterial and collector streets with 2’ planting strip
  - 5’ on local streets with 2’ planting strip in R1 zones

Sidewalk setback/planting strip

- Space for utility and lighting poles, signs, fire hydrants, parking meters, etc.
- Allows for alignment of sidewalks with curb ramps and crosswalks at intersections
- Space for landscaping
- Space for seasonal leaf and snow removal

Trails and greenways

Safety:

- Proximate homes & businesses increase visibility & security
- multi-use paths should accommodate maintenance & emergency vehicles
- Routine maintenance is crucial

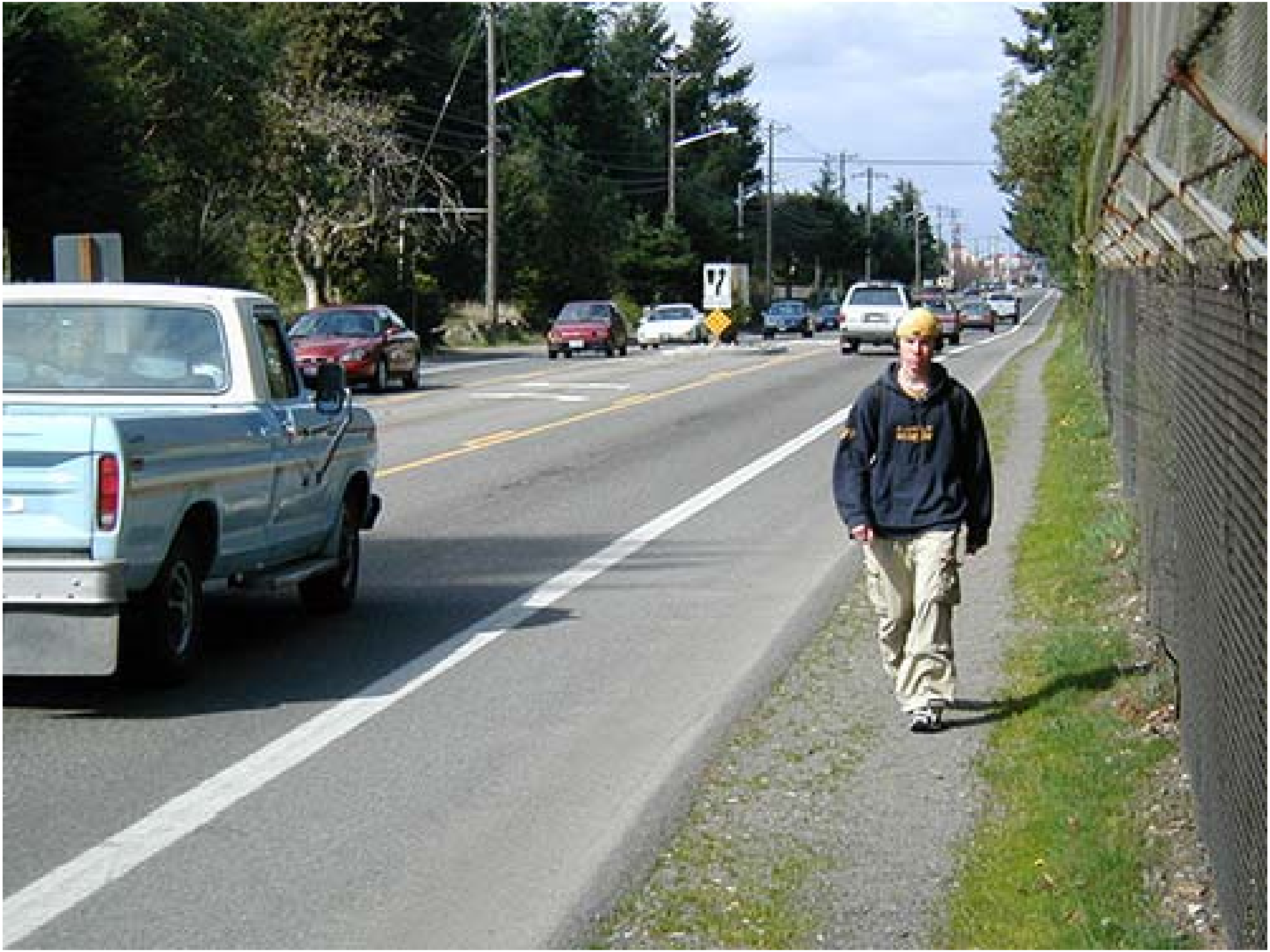
- Widths:
  - 10' for two-way multi-use path
- Clearance:
  - 3' on each side; 5' buffer on roadside
  - 8' minimum overhead
- Surface:
  - asphaltic concrete for most uses
  - Portland cement for pedestrians (not bikes or skaters)
- Maintenance:
  - Routine work ensures user safety; prolongs facility life
- Good signage:
  - Warning, directional, and informational

Intersections and crosswalks

- Short wait
- Adequate crossing time
- Appropriate intervals
- Clear space
- Visibility
- Legibility
- Accessibility
- Separation from traffic

School site selection

- Establish school as strong center of community
- Low traffic locations within neighborhoods best
- Trails/pathways for direct links to neighborhoods
- Sidewalks for streets leading to school
- Minimize parking to encourage walking or biking
- Use traffic calming
- Well designed, frequent intersections and crossings:
  - Good visibility, lighting, trees for shade and shelter

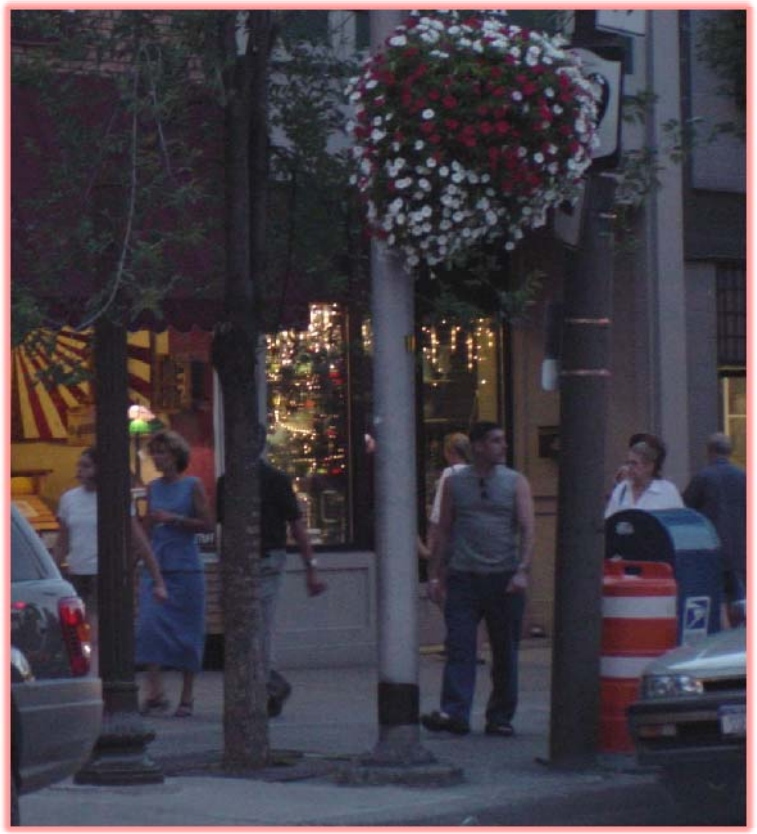


Safe Routes To School (SRTS)

- Federal, state, local effort
- Goal: develop and implement projects that encourage walking and biking to school
- Approach: engineering, enforcement, education, and encouragement

What can municipal officials do?

- Install sidewalks as part of capital projects, and/or automatic with any new development
- Adopt sidewalk construction standards
- Provide incentives for architectural design protecting pedestrians from the weather (canopies or arcades)
- Construct walkways within 1.5 miles of schools
- Incorporate policies to promote walkability in comprehensive plans
- Modify zoning, including reducing minimum parking



What municipal officials can do

- Comprehensive Plan
- Zoning and Land Regulations
- Consider walking and non-auto transportation in review

The comprehensive plan

- Include clear policy statements on pedestrian needs
- Encourage mixed uses, higher density with pedestrian access
- Emphasize pedestrian oriented neighborhoods and community centers over automobile ones
- Highlight street design standards that promote pedestrians and safety
- Use grid pattern roads to slow and to disburse traffic
- Require pedestrian facilities with all new development

Residential area zoning

Zoning should encourage

- Variety of housing and density
- Small-scale shops, schools, and offices near residential areas
- Narrow, grid pattern streets with alleys
- Sidewalks/walkways on both sides of streets

Residential area zoning

Zoning should discourage

- Gated access or walls around subdivisions
- Auto-oriented uses like drive-throughs
- Excessive parking requirements
- Cul-de-sacs, dead ends
- Front of lot garages
- Large retail outlets
- Large parking lots

Commercial area zoning

Zoning should encourage

- Office/retail mix; housing on upper floors
- Projects close to transit stops
- Awnings and overhangs
- Public spaces as part of projects
- Bicycle parking at front entrances
- Regularly spaced trees/benches
- Large parking lots cut into 300' blocks with curbs, sidewalks, and trees

Commercial area zoning

Zoning should discourage

- Building less than 2 stories high
- Subdivision for single family homes
- Buildings with side or rear entrances
- Front of lot parking and garages
- Perimeter walls around projects
- Cul-de-sacs and dead ends
- Minimum parking standards
- Wide streets

Office/industrial zoning

Zoning should encourage

- Core of retail and commercial services
- Any large parking lots have curbs, sidewalks, and trees
- Bike parking at front entrances
- Park-and-ride lots and transit centers

PUD/TND zoning

Zoning should encourage

- Central community center with park or square
- Retail/professional offices near community center
- All dwellings within 1000’ of park or greenway

TOD zoning

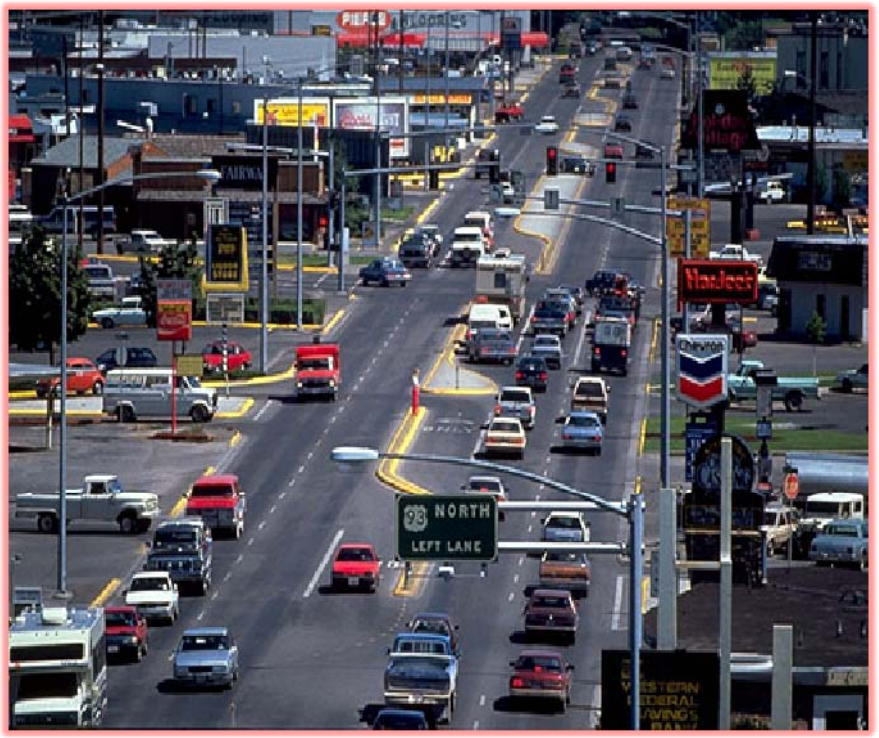
Zoning should encourage

- Sidewalks on both sides of streets
- Walkways between schools, homes, transit stations
- Front entrances no more than 10' from sidewalks
- Mixed use development; first floor retail/services
- On street parking, within or under buildings
- Regularly spaced trees, benches

Transit zone zoning

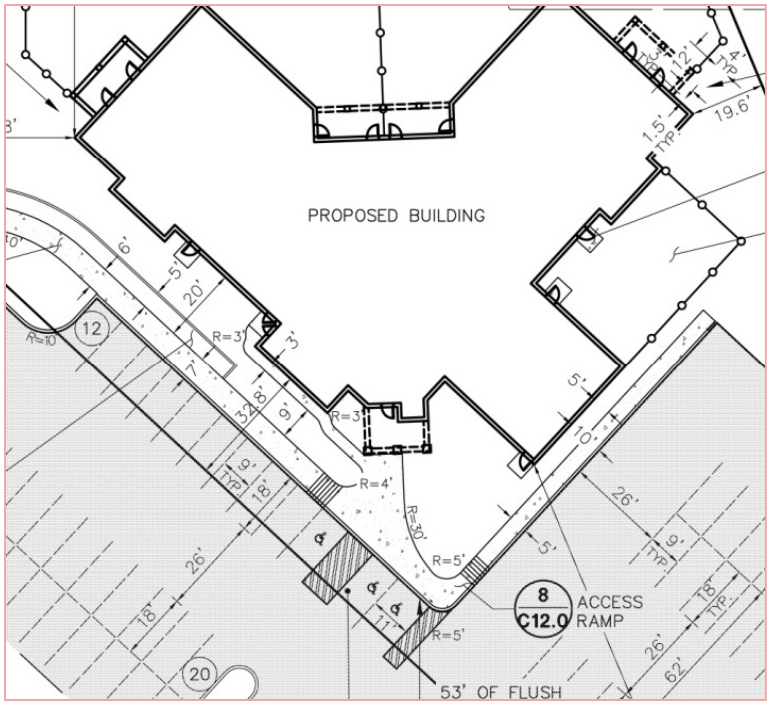
Zoning should discourage:

- Auto-uses and excessive curb cuts
- Superstores exceeding 50,000 sf
- Buildings less than 2 stories high
- Residential development with 1+ off street parking space per unit
- Office development with 1+ parking space per 600 sf of building floor area
- Dead ends, cul de sacs, walled perimeters



Site Plan Review

Rendering, drawing, or sketch showing the arrangement, layout and design of proposed use of a single parcel of land



Site Plan Review

- Designate review board, enforcement
- Submission requirements
- Review elements

- Build to street with parking in back
- Connected parking lots with pedestrian zones
- Pedestrian amenities (benches, trees, landscaping)
- Good lighting, clear sight lines
- ADA compliant sidewalks, ramps

Site Plan Review

- Review elements include pedestrian design
- Review board: Oversee approval of designs consistent with plans and regulations

In conclusion…

Solvitur ambulando

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