



Bicycle and pedestrian plans (sometimes called active transportation plans) are official documents that lay out a community's vision and goals for future pedestrian and bicycle activity and identify actions required to achieve the goals. An effective bicycle and pedestrian plan guides the local jurisdiction's future investments in both changes to existing streets as well as new facilities that support walking and bicycling. Bicycle and pedestrian plans are implementation oriented and spell out detail regarding specific streets and routes where infrastructure improvements should occur. They also set out details regarding prioritization of improvements, education and encouragement programs, funding sources, responsible parties, and action steps and timelines.

Why Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans Matter

- Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements increase safety for people walking and bicycling.¹
- People with access to more and better-quality sidewalks, paths, and bike lanes are more likely to meet physical activity recommendations.²
- Low-income communities have poorer pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and require community centered infrastructure planning and investment.³

Bicycle and pedestrian plans are key documents adopted by a city or county that determine goals, objectives, and actions to improve street conditions and programs that support safe walking and bicycling.

References

1. "Complete Streets & Streetscape Design Initiatives." County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. November 16, 2017. Accessed October 04, 2018. <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health/policies/complete-streets-streetscape-design-initiatives>.
2. Sharpe P, Granner M, Hutto B, et al. "Association of Environmental Factors to Meeting Physical Activity Recommendations in Two South Carolina Counties." *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 18(3): 251–257, January/February 2004; Hoehner C, Ramirez L, Elliott M, et al. "Perceived and Objective Environmental Measures and Physical Activity Among Urban Adult." *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 28(2): 105–116, February 2005.
3. K. Gibbs, S. Slater, N. Nicholson, et al., *Income Disparities in Street Features that Encourage Walking – A BTG Research Brief*. Chicago, IL: Bridging the Gap Program, Health Policy Center, Institute for Health Research and Policy, University of Illinois at Chicago (2012), http://www.bridgingthegapresearch.org/asset/02ipi3/btg_street_walkability_FINAL_03-09-12.pdf.

Key Components of a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

A bicycle and pedestrian plan typically includes these key elements:

- Background including a community vision statement, goals, policies, and objectives, and a description of the planning process.
- Existing conditions and needs assessment including inventories, maps, and descriptions of existing facilities for walking and bicycling (bike lanes, sidewalks, etc.) and supportive facilities (bike parking, bike repair stations, etc.); descriptions of education, encouragement, and enforcement programs; and assessment of related plans and policies.
- Recommendations for new and improved facilities for walking and bicycling; new supportive facilities; education, encouragement and enforcement programs; and policy changes. Design guidelines that guide staff in improving facilities.
- Cost, Funding, and Implementation including planning level cost estimates, potential funding sources, prioritization and phasing (timelines) for implementation, implementation responsibilities, evaluation processes, and how updates to the plan will occur.

Community engagement should be included in every step of the plan development, from defining the scope of the plan through adoption, and beyond into implementation and evaluation.

Additional Resources:

- To learn more about bicycle and pedestrian plans and how health can be a key focus, read the National Partnership's [Complete Streets Policies and Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans: Key Tools for Supporting Healthy Active Communities](#).
- The [Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center](#) provides additional information about developing a bicycle or pedestrian plan as well as links to example plans from across the country.