

# Walkable Communities, Healthy Communities

—

Genesee  
Transportation  
Council

Rochester, NY  
April 2015





**Prosperity**



**Planet**



**People**





# Our flow today:

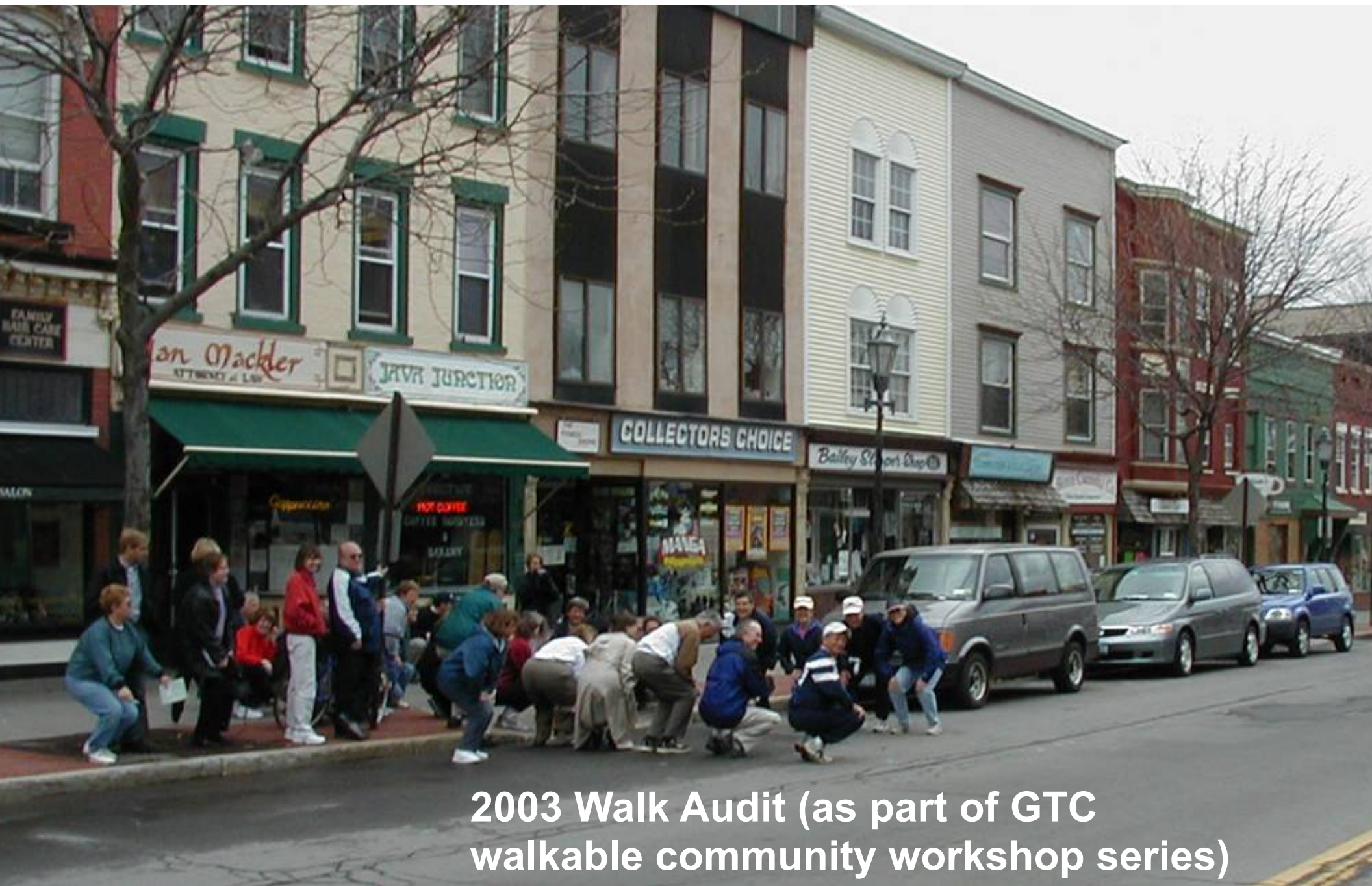
- Presentation: Why & how of **healthy design**.
- Walk: experience **what works** & what doesn't.
- Plan: How to create **what you want**?
- Commit: What will **you do** to make it happen?





Brockport  
May 7, 2003 walk audit.





**2003 Walk Audit (as part of GTC  
walkable community workshop series)**





2011 Construction





2013 final  
product







**Focus on safety.**





## Main St (Rt 19) redesign





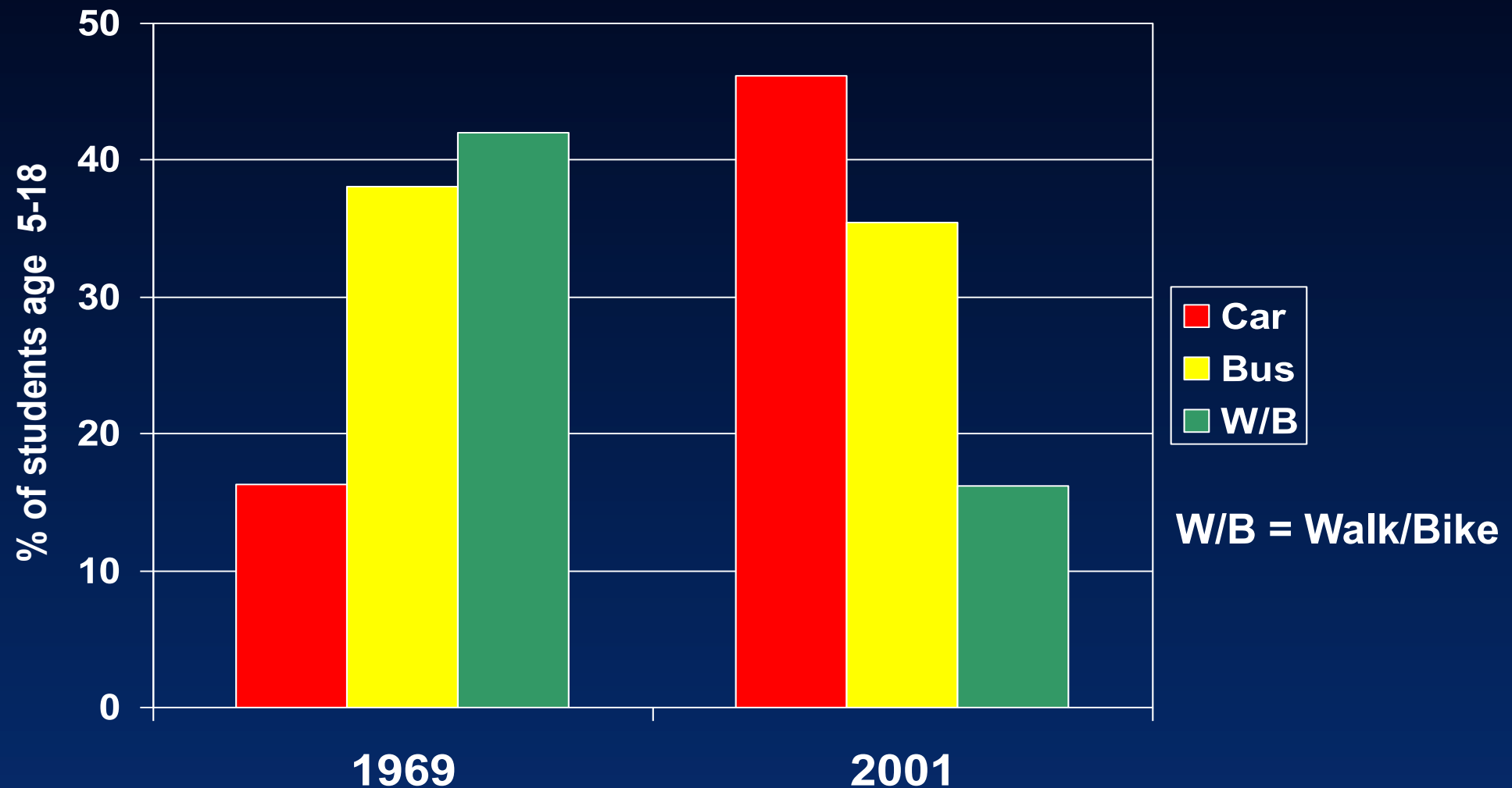


# Youthful recollections



# Changes in Walking & Cycling to School, 1969 to 2001

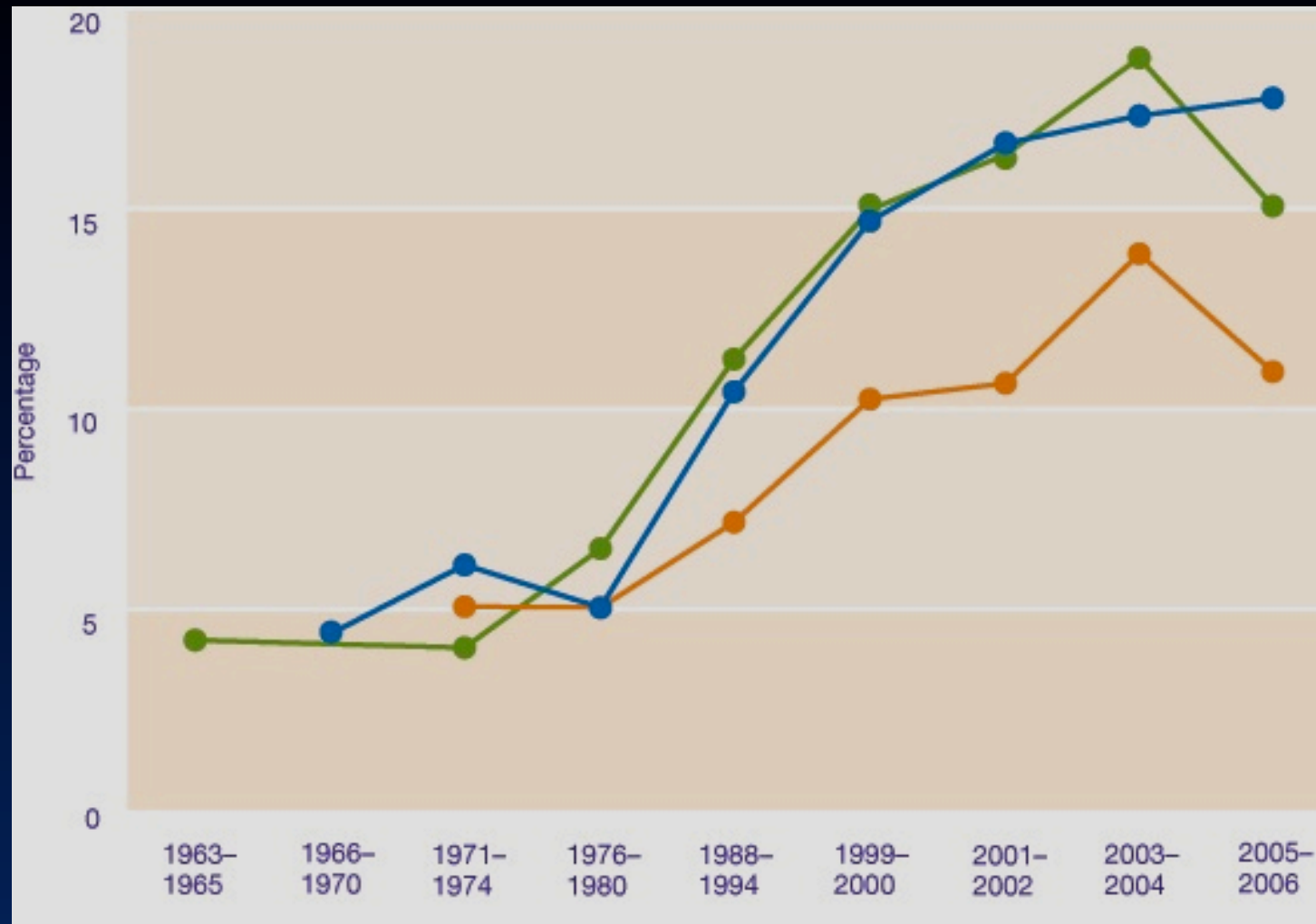
Ham et.al., *Jour. of Physical Activity & Health*, 2008, 5, 205-215





# Trends in Childhood Obesity & Overweight

- 2–5 Years of Age
- 6–11 Years of Age
- 12–19 Years of Age



CDC, National Center for Health Statistics. *National Health & Nutrition Examination Surveys (NHANES)*.

[www.rwjf.org/files/publications/annual/2008/year-in-review/](http://www.rwjf.org/files/publications/annual/2008/year-in-review/)



# The real risk . . .





## The Rant:

Change our thinking. It's *not* just an obesity epidemic. It's twin epidemics of **physical inactivity** and poor nutrition.\*

\* Two of the three biggest drivers of skyrocketing healthcare costs.

# The bad news in just three numbers:

**30** minutes of daily physical activity recommended (**60** min. for youth)

**<20** % of Americans actually meet these recommendations (maybe **5%**!).

**365,000** Estimated annual deaths in America due to physical inactivity & poor nutrition. (2<sup>nd</sup> only to tobacco.)



**Necessary and  
valuable,  
but not enough. >**



**< We must build  
communities  
where people are  
*intrinsically*  
more active.**

**If we build it, will they come?**



# YES! Four elements:

1. **Variety** of uses within walk, bike, & transit distance.
2. **Network** of facilities: trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, transit.
3. **Functional** & inviting designs for pedestrians, bicyclists, & transit users.
4. **Safe** & accessible for all ages, incomes, abilities

[www.thecommunityguide.org](http://www.thecommunityguide.org)

CDC Guide to Community Preventive Services



[www.markfenton.com](http://www.markfenton.com)

# 1. Land use.

Live, work, shop, play, learn, pray.



Compact neighborhoods  
& shared open space.



E.g. Ryan Center  
(school, library,  
rec center . . .



Housing  
above,  
retail  
below.





## 2. Network of facilities:



Highline Tr., Eagan, MN

- Presence of bike lanes sidewalks, pathways.
- Shorter blocks, fewer cul-de-sacs.
- Access to parks, trails.
- Affordable *transit*.





### 3. Site Design:



**Which setting is more inviting for travel on foot & by bicycle?**



# Site design? Research & practice suggest:

- Buildings near the sidewalk, not set back; parking on street or behind.
- Trees, benches, lighting, awnings, “human” scale.
- Details: bike parking, open space, plants, art, materials.



## Planning, zoning:

- Decrease, share parking (include bike racks).
- Build-to, not set-back requirements.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> story residential.
- Expedite permits.



Neenah WI



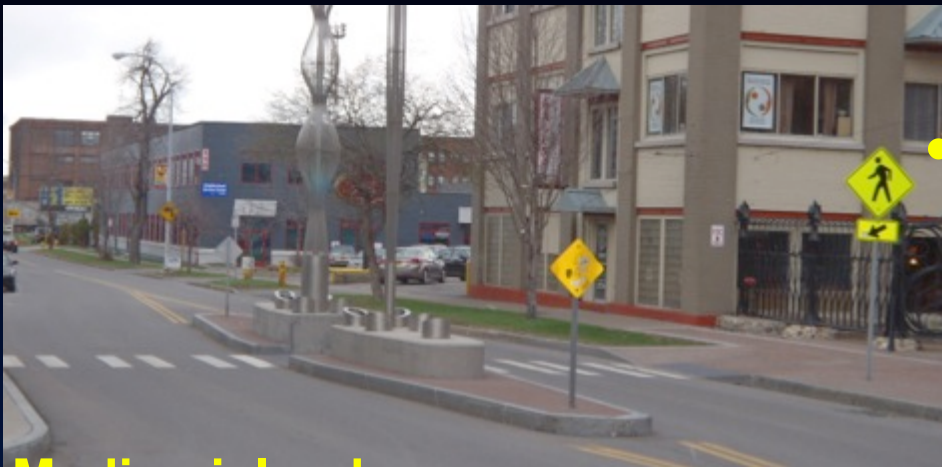
Appleton WI

**Your elected & appointed officials must hear from constituents if they are to act courageously!**



## 4. Safety & access.

- Engineering can markedly improve safety.
- Increasing pedestrian and bike trips *decreases* overall accident & fatality rates.



Median islands



Roundabouts



Curb extensions

(Jacobsen P, *Injury Prevention*, 2003; 9:205-209.)

[www.markfenton.com](http://www.markfenton.com)





# **Bicycle Collisions.**

**From the  
Rochester  
Bicycle  
Master Plan**

# Four Elements of Walkable Designs:



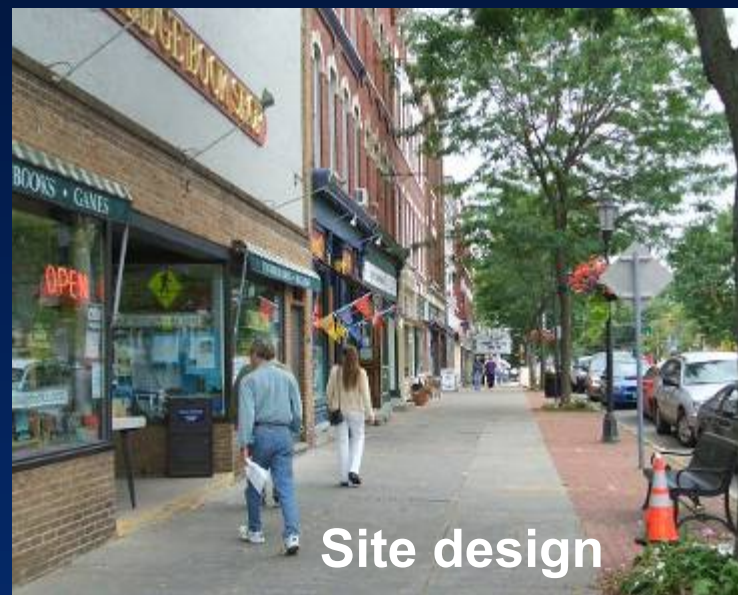
Mix of destinations



Ped, bike, & transit network.



Safety & access



Site design



**Shouldn't the free market  
dictate how we build our  
cities & towns?**

# Economics. *Walking the Walk:* *How Walkability Raises Housing Values in* *U.S. Cities* (CEOs for Cities report)\*

walkscore = 10



walkscore = 78



Higher score = ↑ \$4,000-\$34,000 home value

\*[www.ceosforcities.org/work/walkingthewalk](http://www.ceosforcities.org/work/walkingthewalk)  
[www.walkscore.com](http://www.walkscore.com)

[www.markfenton.com](http://www.markfenton.com)



# ***On Common Ground*** Nat'l Assoc. of Realtors Summer 2010; [www.realtor.org](http://www.realtor.org)

## **The Next Generation of Home Buyers:**

- **Taste for in-town living.**
- **Appetite for public transportation.**
- **Strong green streak.**
- **Plus, Americans are driving less overall!**



# Housing is moving back into our cities!

## USA Today May 16, 2012



Photo by Stephanie Daniel for USA TODAY

**Best of both worlds:** Maurice Turner and Preet Bassi wanted urban amenities with a homey feel.

## The new look — and location — of housing

Neighborhoods with suburban feel spring up in unused city sites

By Haya El Nasser  
USA TODAY

Townhouses and single-family homes are sprouting on old industrial sites in the heart of Southern California cities. In Florida, developers are coveting foreclosed golf courses in urban centers to put up new subdivisions. Builders in Texas are going after available land even near landfills for residential and retail development.

Who are the giants of the building industry



**Colony Parc** Has more than 500 homes in Anaheim's Historic District on a site that once housed industrial warehouses.

verse 60-year-old trends. They're shifting from giant communities on wide-open "greenfields" to compact "infill" housing in already-developed

- Home Buyers looking for:
- Easy access to schools, shopping, amenities.
- Quality transit! Don't want to be forced to drive for everything.
- Dead malls, brown-fields redeveloping with *residential component.*











SMART BUILDING STARTS HERE

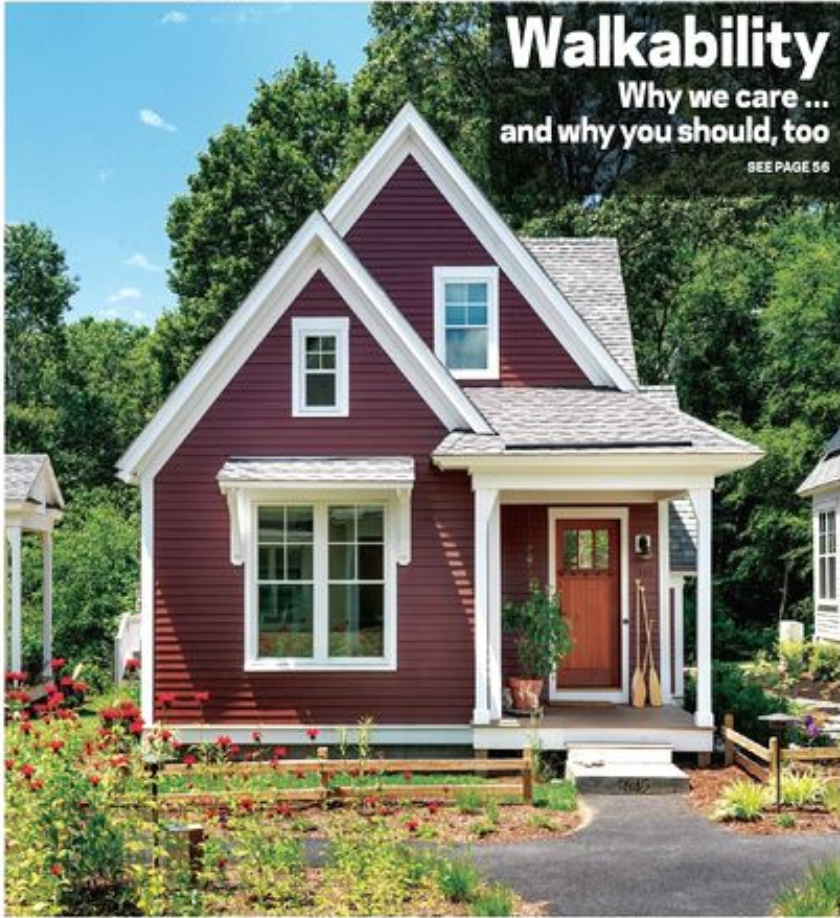
THE MAGAZINE  
OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
OF HOME BUILDERS

# Builder

## Walkability

Why we care ...  
and why you should, too

SEE PAGE 56



MARCH 2014 WWW.BUILDERONLINE.COM

# Walkability. Why we care & why you should too!

Builder Magazine,  
Mar. 2014

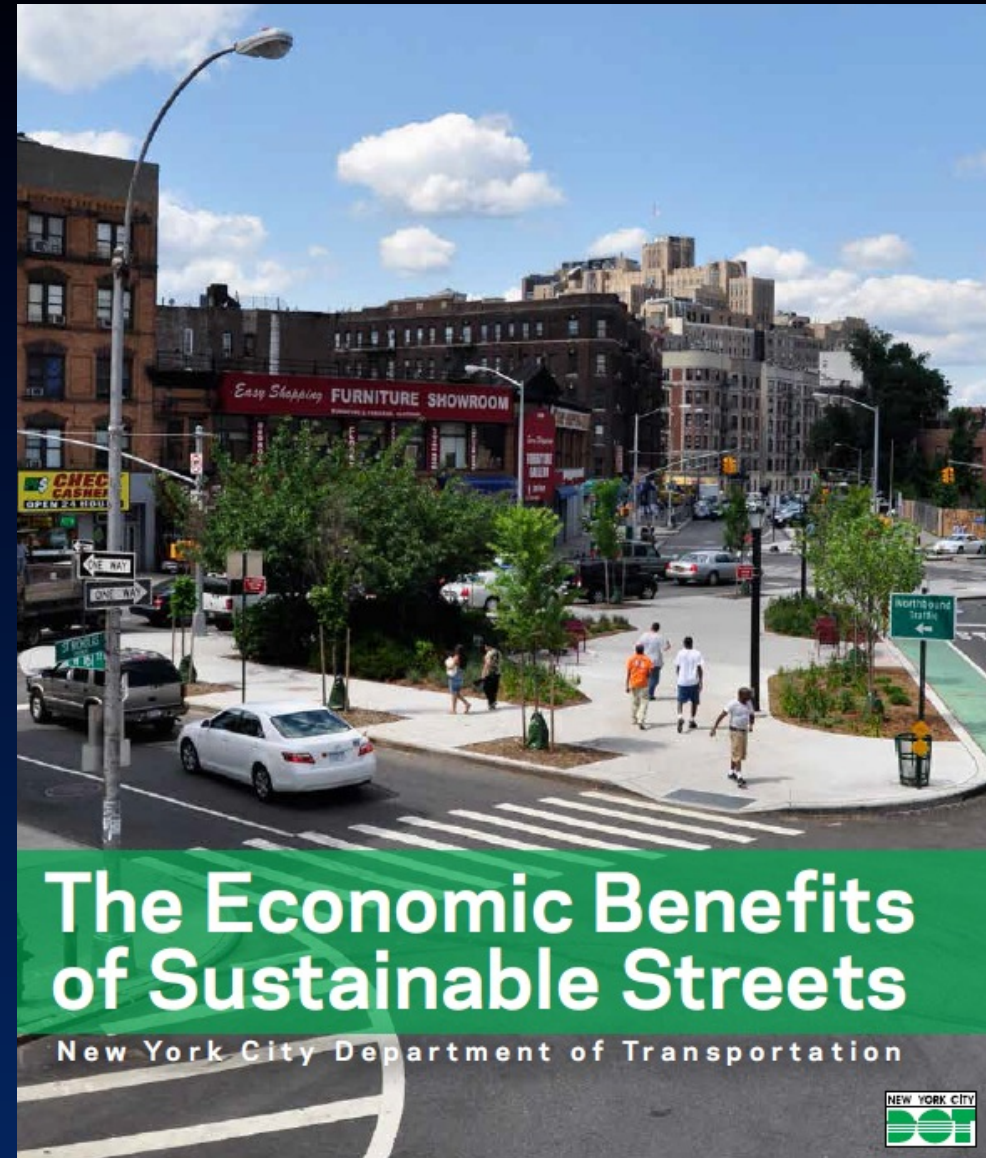
- Consumer desire
- Flexibility in design
- Lower development costs . . .

[www.markfenton.com](http://www.markfenton.com)

# Study of street redesigns in NYC:

- Pre- and post-project measurement of retail revenue.
- E.g. pedestrian plazas, bike paths, redesigned intersections, BRT . . .
- Improvement areas *exceeded* borough & control area averages.

[www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/dot-economic-benefits-of-sustainable-streets.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/dot-economic-benefits-of-sustainable-streets.pdf)





# What's happening?

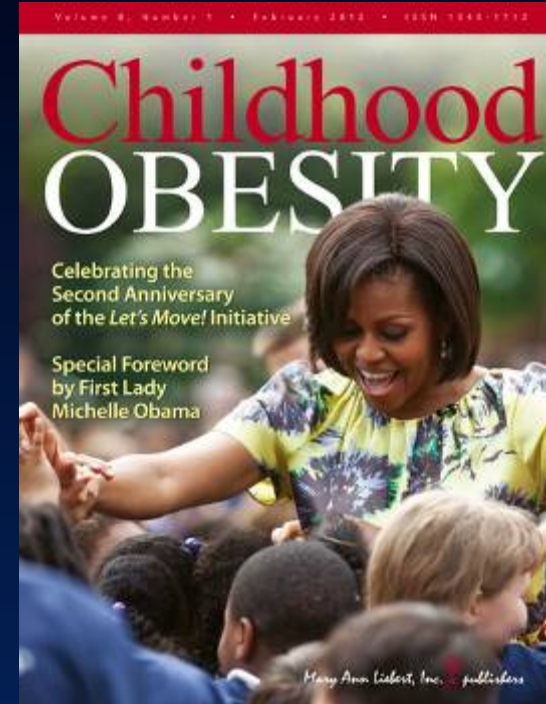
- 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> generation strip malls & box stores are struggling.



- Employers seek vibrant, livable communities, where employee health, satisfaction, & retention are high!

# Utilize five national movements changing the landscape.

(Fenton, Community Design & Policies for Free  
Range Children, *Childhood Obesity* 8(1), Feb 2012)



1. Healthy planning & zoning.
2. Complete Streets.
3. Transportation trail networks.
4. Transit- & bicycle-friendly policies.
5. Comprehensive Safe Routes to School.



# Build a mixed leadership team



# 1. Formalize plan, ordinance & process to assure urban village designs.





**Yes, the big  
guys will  
play . . .**

Terre Haute



Reading MA



# On new development, redevelopment . . .

- Multi-modal Transportation Analysis instead of Traffic Impact Analysis (MMTA vs TIA).
- Maximize **active** trip generation.



- Bus pull-out, transit shelter.
- Bike lane, sharrows, parking.
- Sidewalk link, trees, benches.





## 2. Build only Complete Streets

- Pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, & drivers of all ages & abilities considered in every road project (new, repair, maintenance).



**Create high  
visibility  
crosswalks.**



**Ladder style**



**Artistic**



# Curb extensions



St. Louis



Queens NY



Billings





Park City

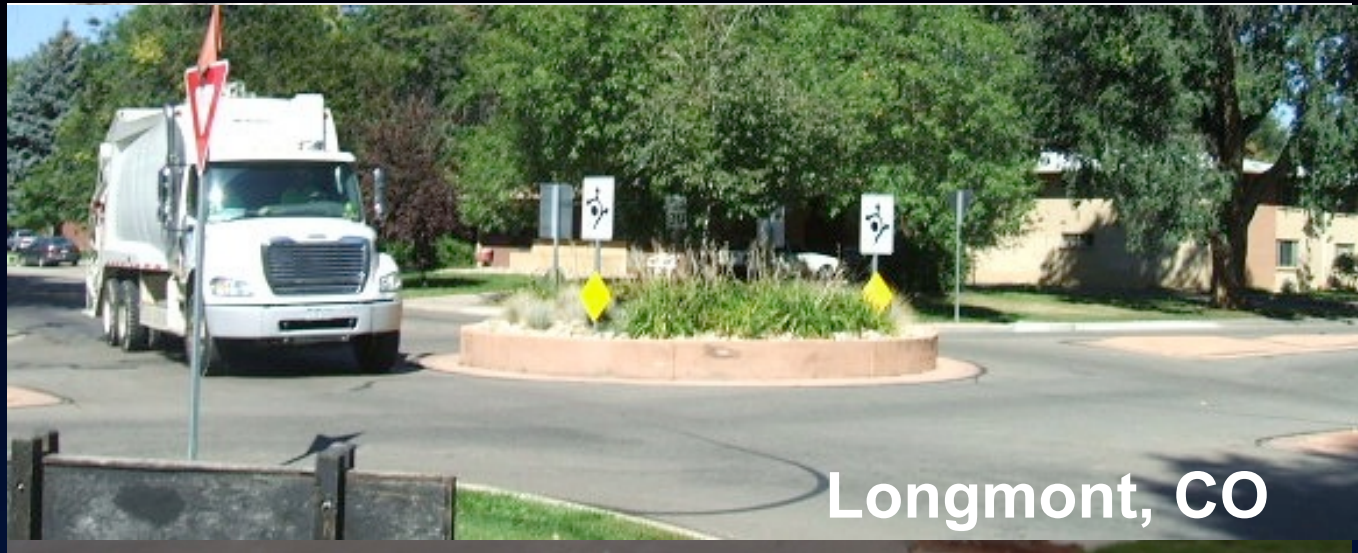


Montpelier

**Build a parklet (or a few of them).**



**Calm traffic:**  
roundabouts,  
mini-circles;  
often to replace  
4-way stop.



Longmont, CO



Seattle

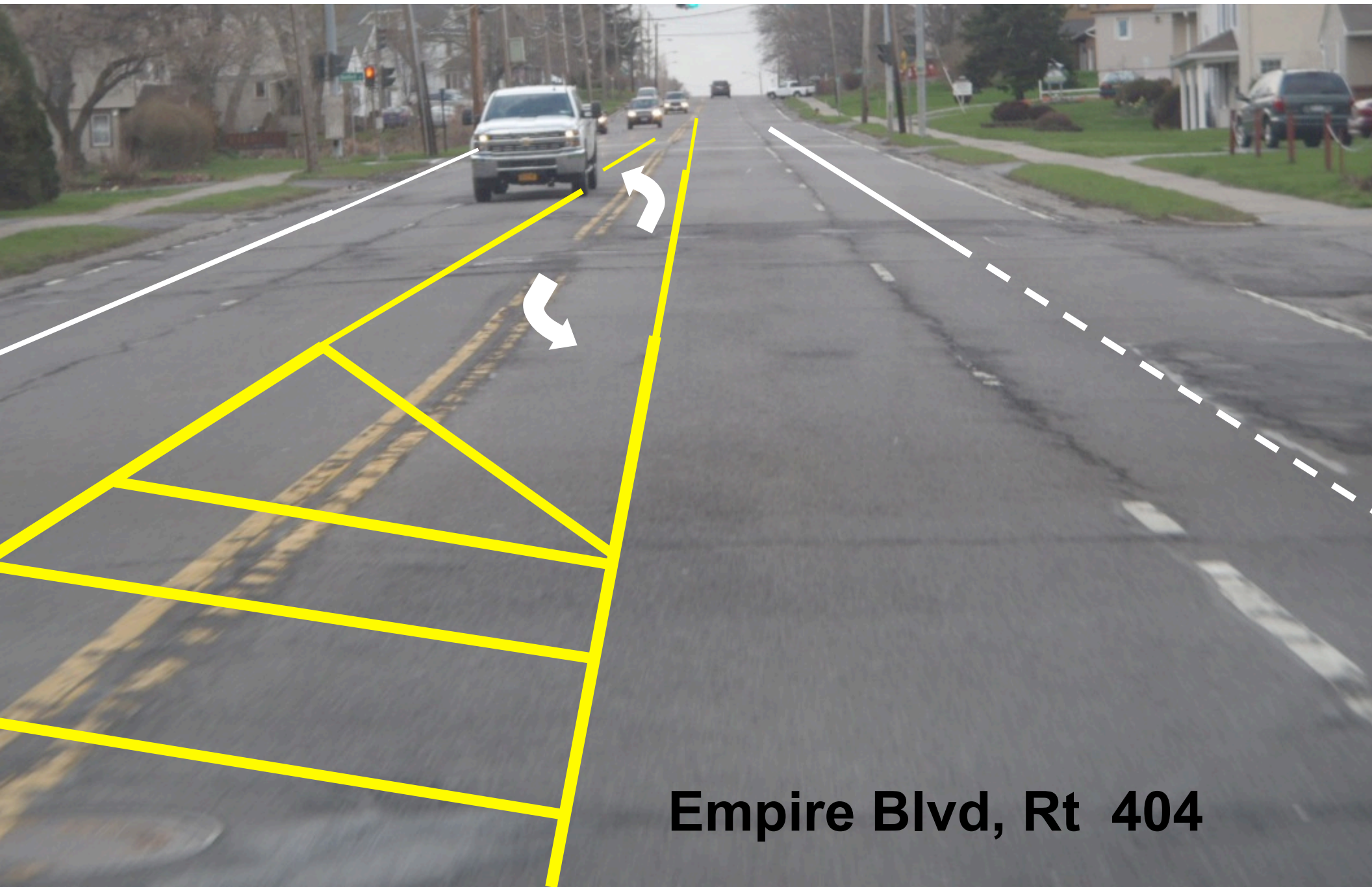


Madison, WI









**Empire Blvd, Rt 404**



**Rt. 5**



**Rt. 63**



**Rt. 5  
Avon**



### 3. Build a network of linked *transportation* trails.

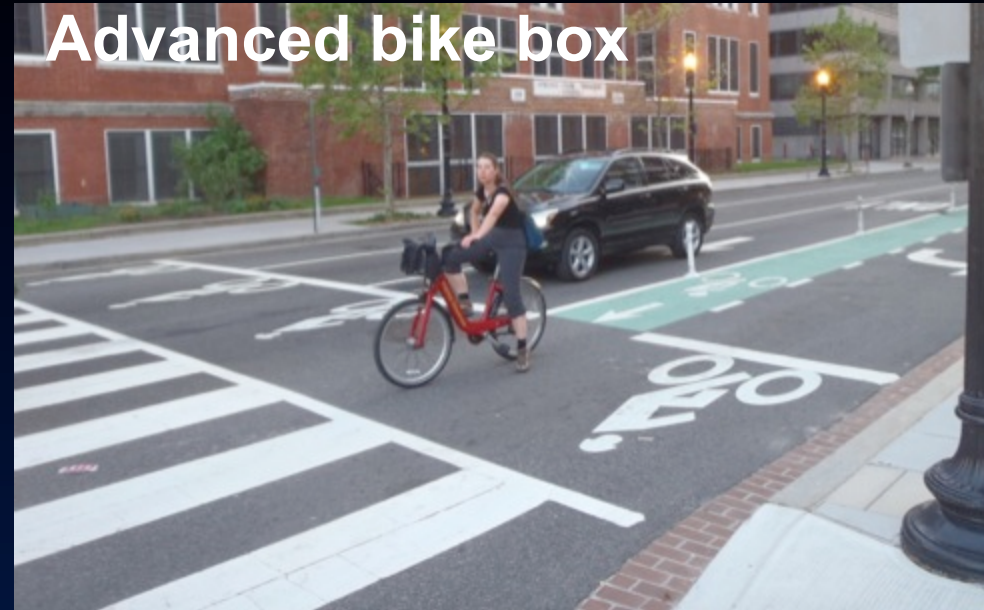
- **Connect** to other parts of network (sidewalks, bike lanes, shoulders).
- Focus on **destinations** (schools, shopping, parks, senior housing)
- Balance the **NIMBY**, **BANANA**, & **CAVE** men.





# Connect to a network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Advanced bike box



Sharrow



Protected bike lane

[www.markfenton.com](http://www.markfenton.com)

## 4. Make it bicycle- & transit-friendly.

- **Bike Friendly Community, Business, or Campus** rating (bronze to platinum).
- Community bike sharing program.
- Teach bike skills, safety, repair in your school. **v**

Blue  
Island, IL.



Grinnell, IA



No. Adams, MA



[www.bikeleague.org](http://www.bikeleague.org)

[www.markfenton.com](http://www.markfenton.com)



# Successful communities build walkability with all three P's!

- **Programs:** Build awareness, support, skills, & encourage behavior change.
- **Projects:** Alter the built environment for more walking, (cycling & transit).
- **Policies:** Rewrite rules & standards so *stickier* environments & practices are norm!

## E.g. program:

- Buy a bench program.
- Buy a bike-rack program (e.g. design contest).
- Wayfinding signs







**Blue Island, IL  
Bicycle Club**

**[www.bibc.us/](http://www.bibc.us/)**

**[www.markfenton.com](http://www.markfenton.com)**

**Project:** Improve specific crosswalks, calm traffic.

**Policy:** Require buildings at the street, pedestrian access, bike racks; reduce parking requirements





# Why care about walkable designs?

- The **inactivity** epidemic; **our kids may pay!**
- Preserving our most valuable, **historic assets.**
- **Quality of life;** safety & comfort; **social equity.**
- **~4,000** pedestrian, **~40,000** motor vehicle, **~400,000** sedentary-related deaths/year.
- **Greenhouse gasses**, traffic congestion & costs.
- Dependence on **foreign oil; wars** in Mid-east.
- More eyes on the street, **less crime.**
- Shopping locally, healthier **housing values.**
- Higher employee retention, higher productivity, **lower health care costs.**



**Olshansky et.al., “A  
Potential Decline in  
Life Expectancy . . .”  
*New Eng. J. of Med.*,  
March 17, 2005**

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# Lead a community walk audit

1. Learn
2. Walk
3. Work
4. Plan to act!



**Launch an interdisciplinary stealth team.**