

The Economic Benefits of Complete Streets

Creating Desirable Communities with Complete Streets

Communities want safe, accessible streets that people of all ages and abilities can use and enjoy. Such streets support local businesses, encourage economic development and promote healthy communities. Cities and communities have found that creating Complete Streets that foster walking, bicycling and transit usage can provide a wide range of benefits to their residents and can make their communities desirable places to live.

Local Communities and Job Creation

When determining how to spend our transportation dollars, we must consider the benefits of each project from both a transportation standpoint and in terms of its effects on the local economy.

- Studies have shown that bicyclists and pedestrians shop more often and **spend more money in their communities** than people who drive.¹
- Investments in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure **create more jobs per million dollars spent** than highway projects. Bicycle and pedestrian projects produce 9.6 -11.4 jobs per million dollars spent compared to only 7.8 jobs created by road only projects.²

EXAMPLE: Lancaster, CA added pedestrian safety features as part of a downtown revitalization effort, including a pedestrian-only plaza, wider sidewalks, landscaping and traffic calming. The project spurred \$130 million in private investment, 50 new businesses, a 9.5 percent increase in property values, a 96 percent increase in revenue, 800 permanent new jobs and a decrease in traffic collisions by 85 percent, after a public investment of \$10.6 million.³



Improving the Local Economy

Cities and business districts that include walkable, bikeable and transit friendly streets see strong returns on their investments.

- Studies have shown that neighborhoods that invest in trails and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure have **higher property values and increased sales tax revenues**.⁴
- Fuel and transportation savings allow residents to **spend more in their local economies**. Studies have shown that the total savings across metropolitan areas can be in the billions.⁵

EXAMPLE: The total savings from biking, walking, or taking transit instead of driving can add up across a city, ranging from \$2.3 billion in Chicago to an astounding \$19 billion a year in NY City.^{6,7}

Saving Time and Money

Complete Streets requirements can improve the scope of projects and cities/regions that invest in Complete Streets infrastructure can reduce spending on health care.

- In an era of tight fiscal budgets every dollar spent must result in **smart investments**. The inclusion of Complete Streets elements in projects from the outset can reduce the need to revise projects and reduce delays and often requires no additional costs while bringing significant co-benefits.⁸
- **Health care savings** from increased rates of bicycling and walking can save residents, health care providers, and businesses billions of dollars annually by increasing rates of physical activity.⁹

EXAMPLE: The Brown County, WI Highway Department built a three-lane street with two bike lanes on the existing four-lane roadway, and replaced expensive traffic signals with roundabouts. These changes saved the County \$347,515 – 16.5 percent below the original project estimate.¹⁰

1) <http://ppms.otrec.us/media/1361999891512c7813bfa6d.pdf>

2) <http://www.peri.umass.edu/236/hash/64a34bab6a183a2fc06fdc212875a3ad/publication/467/>

3) <http://www.mparchitects.com/site/projects/lancaster-boulevard-transformation>

4) http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org/site/images/uploads/Protected_Bike_Lanes_Mean_Business.pdf

5) <http://www.ceoslorcities.org/city-dividends/green/>

6) <http://documents.scribd.com/s3.amazonaws.com/docs/80xolairls1hnr2b.pdf?e=1332875496>

7) <http://documents.scribd.com/s3.amazonaws.com/docs/1jvss5myo1hnqg3.pdf?e=1332885151>

8) <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/cs/factsheets/cs-costs-2.pdf>

9) http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/CCDPHP/Documents/ITHIM_Technical_Report11-21-11rev3-6-12.pdf

10) <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets/implementation/factsheets/costs>