

**BMTS Article Digest
October - November 2015**

BMTS Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee Members:

The following is a compilation of articles that may be of interest to BMTS Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee members. This and past digests can also be accessed in the Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee page of www.bmtsonline.com.

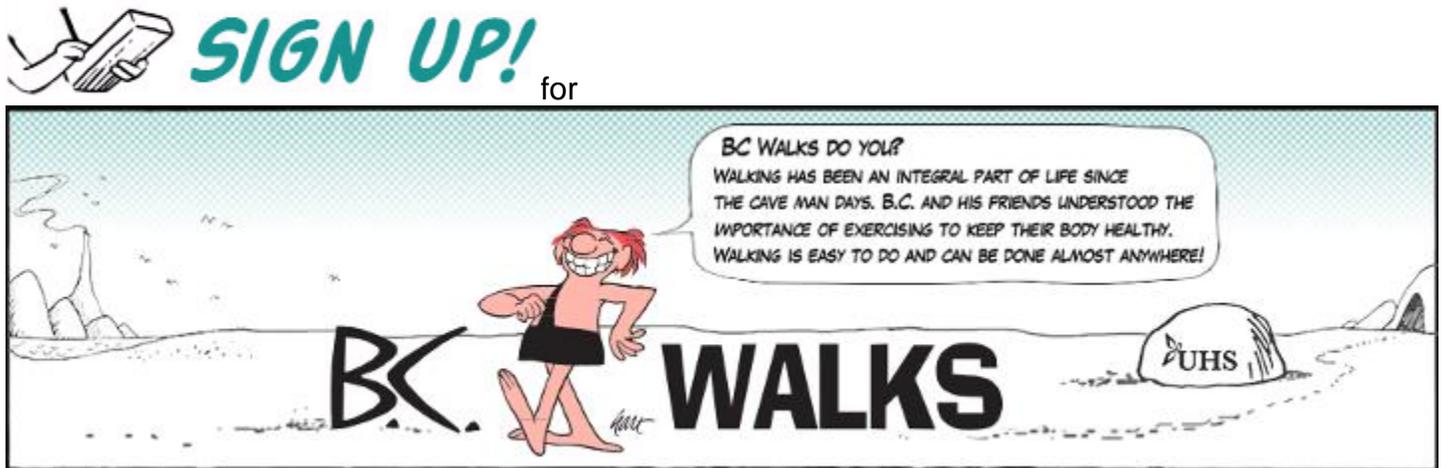
Scott



Take a look at the National Center for Bicycling & Walking's newsletter, **CenterLines**. You can also arrange to have it emailed directly to you.

See <http://www.bikewalk.org/newsletter.php>.

CenterLines is the bi-weekly electronic news bulletin of the National Center for Bicycling & Walking. **CenterLines** is our way of quickly delivering news and information you can use to create more walkable and bicycle-friendly communities.



Go to www.BCWalks.com!

Check out this website for Bike & Pedestrian Information!



www.coexistnys.org

In particular, view the interactive educational video clips.

Funding for kids' health - 4 Broome school districts share \$1.2M state grant

ANTHONY BORRELLI

A \$1.25 million state grant is being used to help children in four Broome County school districts get better access to healthy food and wellness activities inside their classrooms.

The Broome County Health Department secured the grant, and on Friday, officials said it will be used over the next five years toward strategies to help combat obesity in school districts that need help the most.

"It's a substantial amount of money to address the youth in our community," Health Department Director Claudia Edwards said at a news conference Friday.

Binghamton, Deposit, Harpursville and Johnson City school districts are being assisted by the grant.

More than half of children in Johnson City's district rely on free and reduced lunch benefits, so this grant is a big help, Superintendent of Schools Mary Kay Frys said.

She compared it to a previous successful initiative that funded professional development for teachers to add more physical activities, or "brain breaks," into their classes.

"This grant will help our children throughout their lives and in the classroom," she said Friday. "It's helping us creatively think of other ways we can use our campus and our classrooms."

Among the grant's targeted areas for schools:

- Ensuring schools are following the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act nutrition criteria for all food sold in schools, healthy classroom celebrations and fundraising.
- Adopting and implementing a comprehensive school physical activity program.
- Increase access to healthy and affordable foods that include fresh fruits and vegetables, low-sodium foods and healthier beverages Part of this process will also involve working with the school's to find ways to sustain these healthy policy changes once the grant runs out, said Mary McFadden, Broome's supervising public health educator.

The grant's programs are being conducted through a partnership of different local agencies that include the Binghamton Metropolitan Study, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Broome-Tioga BOCES Profession Service and the Food and Health Network of South Central New York.

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For D.C. Second-Graders, It's All About The Bikes

OCTOBER 03, 2015 8:09 AM ET

[ELISSA NADWORNÝ](#)

[Listen to the Story](#)

<http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2015/10/03/443108414/for-d-c-second-graders-its-all-about-the-bikes>



Lachae' Taylor gears up to ride in David Gesualdi's gym class at Walker-Jones Education Campus in Washington, D.C. - *Meg Anderson/NPR*

"What's the first thing we do when we get to our bike?" David Gesualdi asks his second-graders. "Check the air!" they yell back at him.

His 19 students are sitting in a semicircle in the gym at Walker-Jones Education Campus, not far from the U.S. Capitol.

Decked out in blue helmets, hair nets (for lice protection) and bright orange mesh vests, their eyes shift impatiently between their phys-ed teacher and the racks of shiny new BMX bikes behind him.

First, though, he walks them through the A-B-C's: "Air. Brake. Chain."

This is all part of the D.C. public schools' mission this year to teach every second-grader how to ride. In partnership with the city's transportation department and private donors, the district bought nearly 1,000 new bikes. Those bikes will rotate throughout the year to every elementary school in the city.

As Gesualdi finishes his safety lesson, the kids rush to get on the bikes, jostling for one that fits. In seconds, they're off — zooming in circles around the indoor gym.

"Excuse me!" yells one girl as she whizzes past me.



Second-graders ride in circles around the school's indoor gym. - *Meg Anderson/NPR*

There's a wide range of skills. Mehki House is fast, doing tricks and twisting sideways on the bike. Until ... he wipes out.

"I was driving too fast and I fell," he explains as he gets back up and takes off.

Others, though, are struggling. Like Walter Young. Walter has one foot on each side of his bike. He's waddling along, dragging the bike beneath him.

"This is a problem," he moans. "I bet everybody in the world knows how to drive a bike except for me."

This range in ability, it's a challenge for their teacher.

But Gesualdi says he's not about to slow the good riders down. "Even though it might not be new to them," he says, "having a chance to show off some of their skills is really exciting."

He mentions Mehki — the boy doing tricks: "It's something that I'm trying to channel and make him more of a model for the rest of his peers."



Gesualdi has set up a course in the gym — with stop and yield signs and arrows to mark the turns. - *Meg Anderson/NPR*

But this class is not just about how well you ride. It's about riding safely. To mimic a city street, Gesualdi has set up a course in the gym — with stop and yield signs and arrows to mark turns.

He gathers the bikers near one end of the gym and pulls out a few students to demonstrate the path. Gesualdi does the play-by-play as one boy navigates the course.

"Did he stop?" he asks.

Yes, the class answers. Gesualdi turns to the group: "What's really cool is he came off his bike to make sure he stopped."



Vicky Zou gets some pointers from Gesualdi. - *Meg Anderson/NPR*

Eventually all the 7- and 8-year-olds make their way through the course, Gesualdi nudging and cheering them on the whole time.

One student needs a reminder to follow the arrows on the ground; another wins praise for good safety skills: using hand signals as he turns.

And Gesualdi assures the new riders that he's there if they need him.

Even Walter is making a little progress — singing as he

tries to balance on two wheels. "Oh no!" he says. "I almost had it."

Gesualdi is confident Walter will be riding before he leaves second grade and says he's teaching these kids something they'll hold on to long after they graduate.

"It's a skill that's not only a good fitness skill, but its something that's really helpful as they get older," says Gesualdi.

When the class ends, the helmets come off and the bikes go back on the racks. Students compare notes: One kid says he "got air." Another didn't fall off. They look pooped.

"So was that hard?" I ask them.

A boy grins up at me: "It wasn't hard work. It was fun."

Man, 84 dies after being struck by car in Endicott

Anthony Borrelli, Press & Sun-Bulletin 10:45 a.m. EDT October 9, 2015

An 84-year-old Endicott man died after being struck by car Thursday night while crossing a roadway in the village.

Frederick Mott sustained serious head trauma and died at Wilson Hospital, Endicott police said Friday. The accident happened just before 8 p.m., in the vicinity of 204 N. Nanticoke Ave.

Police say Owego resident Andrew Coyne, 33, was driving southbound and he did not see Mott in the road until it was too late. An investigation remains ongoing, police said, but Coyne is not expected to face any criminal charges in connection with the accident.

A Broome County Sheriff's Department accident reconstruction team assisted Endicott police during their investigation at the scene Thursday.

WBNG-TV: News, Sports and Weather Binghamton, New York News, Sports, Weather Binghamton, New York

Pedestrian struck by car in Endicott

Originally printed at <http://www.wbng.com/news/local/Pedestrian-struck-by--331945711.html>

By Julianne Peixoto
October 11, 2015

Endicott, NY (WBNG Binghamton) One person was sent to the hospital after they were struck by a car while crossing the street in Endicott Sunday.

Endicott Police responded to the corner of Vestal Ave. and E. Main St. just before 6 p.m.

Police told Action News a pedestrian was crossing the street when they were struck by a car.

Police said the person's injuries were minor, and they were transported to Wilson Hospital by ambulance.

Police told Action News the driver was ticketed.

Action News will update this story as more information is made available.

WBNG-TV: News, Sports and Weather Binghamton, New York News, Sports, Weather Binghamton, New York

Rules of the road: Avoiding pedestrian vs. car accidents

Originally printed at <http://www.wbng.com/news/local/Rules-of-the-road-Avoiding-pedestrian-vs-car-accidents-332263742.html>

By Julianne Peixoto
October 12, 2015

(WBNG Binghamton) Two pedestrians have been hit by cars in Endicott in the last four days -- and one of the accidents was fatal. Now, law enforcement is reminding drivers and pedestrians to exercise extra caution.

"I don't really feel that safe," said Ryan Thogode, of Endicott. "I'm nervous even walking across the street when [the signal] says walk."

Thogode doesn't have a license, so she walks everywhere.

She told Action News she was almost hit by a car Friday in the Southside of Binghamton.

"The crosswalk said walk-- there were no cars. The car came out of nowhere around the corner and was probably going 60 to 70 miles per hour," said Thogode. "I literally had to jump, landing into a puddle, and she looks at me like I was in the wrong, and yells at me to stay out of the road."

New York State law requires vehicles to yield to pedestrians when at crosswalks -- but, if people are crossing the street outside of a crosswalk and an accident occurs, it's a different story.

"The pedestrian does have to obey the traffic control device," said Sgt. Charles Hoffman, with the Endicott Police Department. "Pedestrians can't just walk into a flow of traffic. They do have to monitor traffic prior to crossing."

According to the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles, more than 16,000 people were hit by cars in 2013.

More than 3,600 of those accidents occurred from "pedestrian error or confusion."

"Just be aware of your surroundings," said Hoffman. "Make sure you check both ways before you cross, even if you do have the right of way."

According to the NYSDMV, of the 16,000 pedestrians struck by cars in 2013, 71 of the accidents happened in Broome County.

FHWA prepares to knock down complete street barrier

Blog post by [Robert Steuteville](#) on 13 Oct 2015

Robert Steuteville, Better! Cities & Towns



A significant barrier to human-scale, complete streets appears ready to fall. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is proposing to drop 11 of 13 mandatory standards for streets under 50 miles per hour, which will help in the design of federally owned urban streets.

"It is definitely a step in the right direction that FHWA is finally responding to the overwhelming amount of research showing little safety benefit to most of their controlling criteria," says Wes Marshall, associate professor

in the Department of Civil Engineering at the University of Colorado.

Wider lane width is one of the crucial criteria for urban streets that has been shown to have no safety benefit. A series of studies ([link](#), [link](#)) have shown that in urban places 12-foot lanes—which have been used on arterial streets

since the middle of the 20th century, are less safe than narrower lanes because they encourage speeding. For comparison, Interstate lanes are 12 feet wide.

“We have made great strides in recognizing that urban conditions require more flexibility in design guidance, and the ITE/CNU manual as well as the NACTO guides have certainly given engineers the ability to design for context and walkability,” says Wade Walker, an engineer with Alta Planning + Design. “This proposal by FHWA can make the process much simpler by eliminating the need for design exceptions on many design proposals for these type streets.”

New urbanist engineers have long argued for “decision-making that encourages engineered solutions rather than relying on minimum, maximum, or limiting values found in design criteria,” notes Peter Swift, an engineer in Gold Hill, Colorado. “This, in itself, is a *remarkable* admission that competent engineers are finally taken seriously!”

But dropping these standards is no panacea. “It is also worth pointing out that they still expect design speed to be a controlling criterion for streets under 50 mph,” says Marshall. “Given that the selection of a design speed is often left to the discretion of an engineer, you could still theoretically end up with streets signed for 25 mph being designed for 45 mph design speeds.”

State DOTs, which determine design on key arterials, and local DOTs and engineers, will not be directly affected by this proposal. “Until the direction is embraced by not only the state DOT’s and local staffs we will continue to run into resistance for creating truly walkable urban streets,” Walker says. Yet state and local engineers may take their cues for the federal authorities. “I can definitely envision these benefits eventually extending to state DOT and local guidelines,” says Marshall.

This proposal is part of a culture shift that is taking place at FHWA, which long supported highway standards applied to urban places. A little over a year ago, the administration gave the seal of approval for engineers to use the National Association of City Transportation Officials’ [Urban Street Design Guide](#), which shows dimensions and standards for tighter urban streets with bike lanes and pedestrian facilities. The proposed changes can be thought of as another domino that is falling.

As of yet, the changes are just a proposal. They must go through a comment period that ends December 7. Supporters of complete streets can read the details of the changes [here](#) and support them with a comment [here](#).

Robert Steuteville is editor of Better Cities & Towns and senior communications advisor for the Congress for the New Urbanism.

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Sunday, 18 October 2015

Guest Viewpoint - Chris Rounds

A Great Place for Retirees to Get Outside

So, I’ve got some good news and some bad news. The bad news is that we’re all going to die. The good news is that, for most of us, we’re not there yet. The question then becomes: How should we live, pending the inevitable conclusion? What I’ll be arguing here is that Binghamton is a great place to do that living.

A number of people I know seem to equate retirement with death. One colleague, when asked what his retirement plans were, said: “I plan to die at my desk.” I’ve heard another person respond to that question with: “I’m not ready for the hammock.”

That's not the way I thought about it when I confronted retirement three years ago. What I saw was a chance for a "reboot," a fresh start. I took the advice of the sage who pointed out: "Nobody ever died wishing he'd spent more time in the office."

I looked at retirement as an opportunity. The question was, how do I want to live? The answer was easy: I wanted to do the things having to work kept me from doing. I wanted to "get out." Getting out in nature to begin with, to walk, to watch birds, to reacquaint myself with the place I call home.

Getting out into the community was another. My community had, for decades, been my work, and I was eager to get to know the folks in my physical community. Taking time for reflection was another goal. I'd been too busy doing to have time for thinking.

And it turned out that Binghamton was the perfect place for all of this. They tell us that simply walking outside is about as good as any exercise you can get. Whether in town or out in the country, what better place than Binghamton is there for that?

They also inform us that being connected with others, in community, is key to a happy and long life. Isolation kills. Binghamton's civic and volunteer organizations, its hiking, biking and nature clubs offer points of connection to suit every taste. And for those among us who choose to keep thinking after retirement, there is always Lyceum, my personal favorite.

We can get better at supporting wellness in retirement. We need to work, as a community, to improve accessibility and mobility throughout the community. We need to work, conscientiously, to reduce our reliance on the personal car. We need to make it easy to get out and around in winter, and to be sure nobody is isolated by the winter snow the way folks in Florida are isolated by the summer heat. We need to make sure that good, healthy, real food is available, close by, in every part of our community. We need health care that is universally available. With planning and leadership, we can make Binghamton an even better place to retire.

More to come on food, health care and resilience.

Chris Rounds is a Johnson City resident.

Otsiningo Park in the Town of Dickinson. - JEFF KELLAM PHOTO



A tale of two stadia: 19,000 parking spaces vs a city full of people

Lloyd Alter

Design / Urban Design

October 19, 2015



© Google Earth/ Kauffman stadium and Rogers Centre

While watching the Blue Jays get trounced by the Kansas City Royals the other night, I was shocked when they showed a blimp's eye view of the stadium, sitting in the middle of the biggest sea of parking I had ever seen. In fact, there is parking for 19,000 cars and 400 buses. You can take a city bus there if you live in the right part of town, but it appears that almost everyone drives, given that with 38,000 seats that is a parking ratio of one space for every two seats.

In Toronto, the Rogers Centre is located right downtown and there isn't much parking anymore, as almost every surface lot has gone to condos. In the Google Earth image that I shot at the same scale as Kauffman Stadium, I think there may be more parking for boats than there is for cars. There is probably a stadium full of people actually living within the area of the Kauffman parking lot. Most people come to the game by subway or Go transit rail. The hundreds of restaurants within walking distance of the stadium are doing a booming business. According to the **Globe and Mail**, the great season for the Jays has been a huge boon.

“People are coming from farther [away], and they are making a whole day out of it,” said Rojna Miripour, manager at the Lone Star Texas Grill, just a block away from the stadium. Even in the middle of a recent Jays game, the restaurant was buzzing with customers – and a hostess in a cowboy hat was just arriving for a later shift to help handle the postgame crowd.

twitter/ Jose Bautista after game 5 with Texas/via



Some, like star batter Jose Bautista, hero of the 5th game against Texas, go multi-modal; here he is seen riding a scooter home after the big game last week. Perhaps he is not setting a good example by wearing black jacket and red headphones, but he certainly is a role model when it comes to transportation and he knows how to get around a city efficiently. Jose demonstrates that even with a \$15 million annual salary and the money to travel any way he wants, it's still quicker to scooter than drive.

Back in Kansas City, the announcers tell us that it's a great stadium with wonderful tailgate parties. But it's no way to build a city.

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Tuesday, 20 October 2015

Woman struck by vehicle, killed in Dryden

LOIS WILSON

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A Dryden woman had died after being struck by a motor vehicle on Oct. 13 on state Route 13 in the Town of Dryden, according to New York State Police.

Michelle D. Drake, 47, of Dryden, was struck around 11:40 p.m. near Kirk Road by a 2011 Chevrolet Malibu driven by Mark C. O'Malley, 66, of Freeville.

Police said Drake had left her home and was attempting to walk from the west shoulder to the east shoulder of Route 13.

O'Malley was headed southbound along Route 13. Drake was found unconscious and severely injured in the roadway. She was transported by ambulance to Cayuga Medical Center and then by medical helicopter to Robert Packer Hospital in Sayre, Pennsylvania.

She died of her injuries on Oct. 16, police said.

The Bradford County coroner will perform an autopsy.

State police said no charges are pending against O'Malley.

The investigation is continuing.

Roads Are Getting a Redesign

The 'complete streets' movement is reshaping urban boulevards, small-town main streets and even rural highways. But there are still plenty of bumps in the road.

BY: [Daniel C. Vock](#) | October 2015



(Flickr/NYC_NYCDOT)

The first time Dean Ledbetter heard about “complete streets,” he thought it was a crazy idea. Ledbetter, a North Carolina traffic engineer, had devoted his career to creating roads that allowed cars to move faster. Complete streets would slow cars down, reworking roads to accommodate bicyclists, transit users and pedestrians, including people pushing baby strollers and riding in wheelchairs. Ledbetter’s first reaction, he says, was, “Why would you want to ruin a perfectly good road?”

But the federal government, worried about North Carolina’s stubbornly high pedestrian fatality rate, started offering state traffic engineers like Ledbetter free classes on complete streets. He took the classes three times. The first time, he wrote off the idea. The second time, he figured it might be feasible in big cities like Charlotte and Raleigh. The third time, he started thinking about how he could use it in his own work.

The opportunity came when leaders from West Jefferson, a town of 1,300 people, approached him about improving its main downtown strip. Ledbetter suggested getting rid of two stoplights and replacing them with all-way stop signs. That would save the state money and make the downtown easier to walk through. He also recommended repainting the road to make it look friendlier to pedestrians. If West Jefferson implemented these streetscape improvements, the town would get \$250,000 in state money. Its board approved the deal on a 3-2 vote on a Monday night; by Thursday, the street was repainted and the traffic lights were gone.

The more attractive -- and more walkable -- downtown started bringing in more businesses. A wine shop and a brewery opened up, along with stores selling jewelry, kitchen gadgets and antiques. The number of vacant downtown storefronts dropped from 33 to three. Tourism increased dramatically. Of course, the street design was not the only factor in play. West Jefferson benefited from a decade-old plan to revitalize downtown, not to mention a

wealth of local artistic talent that helped with the transformation. But promoting foot traffic was a catalyst for bigger changes.

West Jefferson may be a very small place, but its new approach reflects a movement that has gained strength quickly. The notion that roads should not be built just for cars and trucks is having profound effects on public spaces. Most famously, New York City has closed -- for now -- much of the area around Times Square to autos. Indianapolis has gone on a sidewalk-building spree. During a single week this August, Los Angeles adopted a new pedestrian-friendly master plan and San Francisco created a [walkers' enclave on Market Street](#), its busy downtown thoroughfare.

Protected bike lanes, virtually nonexistent in the United States a decade ago, are cropping up all over the country. The roster of local governments that have officially committed to complete streets now numbers more than 700. Still, even the most ambitious jurisdictions are a long way from seeing their vision fully realized. And elements of a backlash are starting to emerge.

There is no definitive template for what makes a complete street, but there are many common elements.

Bike lanes, especially ones separated from automobile traffic, are the most obvious. The prototype for complete streets, the 2007 overhaul of Ninth Avenue in New York City, included a protected bike lane among its many new features. The revamped street showed other cities that bike lanes could be physically separated from vehicle traffic by more than painted lines. It is now almost common to see bike lanes cordoned off from cars using curbs, planters and other barriers, which increase safety and comfort for cyclists while discouraging drivers from illegally parking in the lanes. Protected bike lanes are now found in 24 states and 53 U.S. cities.

Improvements aimed at pedestrians are an equally familiar feature of complete streets. Wide sidewalks make it easier for walkers to pass one another. Bigger sidewalks in commercial areas also encourage passersby to window-shop and allow restaurants to offer outdoor seating. Designing the sidewalks to bulge into intersections in bulb shapes or stick into the street with sharp corners means pedestrians have less pavement to cross before getting to the other side. The sharper angles make it harder for drivers to whip around corners at high speeds, reducing the risk to pedestrians and bicyclists. And pedestrian islands ensure walkers aren't stranded halfway through the street when the light turns red.

But complete streets features don't just favor pedestrians and bicyclists. Some features make travel smoother for motorists and transit users. One of the most common changes is to convert a four-lane road, with two lanes in each direction, into a three-lane road, with one lane in each direction and a central turn lane. Such "road diets," advocates say, clear the travel lanes of turning cars that block traffic. Other features include bus shelters that keep riders out of the middle of the sidewalk, and bus bays that make it easier for bus drivers by letting them pull out of traffic when picking up fares.

Many of the complete streets ideas are borrowed from European cities where they have been successful, including Amsterdam, Copenhagen and Stockholm. Groups such as People for Bikes take U.S. public officials on European tours to build excitement. But what works well for dense cities filled with medieval architecture and pint-sized diesel hatchbacks does not always translate directly into solutions for American cityscapes. More and more, U.S. transportation and planning agencies are looking to each other for templates and practical experience in constructing complete streets.

One group encouraging experts to trade ideas is the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), which has released design guides specifically for bike infrastructure and urban street design. NACTO began developing those guides because traffic engineers were using templates that didn't address many of the situations they faced, says Corinne Kisner, the group's director of policy and special projects. "Existing guidance on street design was clearly heavily skewed toward highways, not local, urban streets," she says. "NACTO saw that gap [and created] a document by cities and for cities that put people as the highest priority in a city street. The main principle of the urban street design guide is that streets are public spaces. They belong to the people. They should be designed with people in mind. That was fairly new in U.S. guidance."



The National Association of City Transportation Officials has released design guides specifically for bike infrastructure and urban street design. This template shows protected bikes lanes, as well as sidewalk bump-outs and islands that are meant to protect pedestrians by slowing down traffic and giving walkers a safe place to stop when the light turns red. (Flickr/NACTO)

The hyperlocal focus of street design sometimes pits adventurous urban planners against veteran state engineers who have spent decades helping cars move faster. But Malcolm Dougherty, the director of the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans), says state agencies are increasingly incorporating complete streets principles into their playbooks too. Seventeen states now have complete streets policies. CalTrans, for example, includes NACTO's standards in its own design guidelines. It is working through a detailed plan -- its second -- to absorb complete streets ideas in its everyday work. To facilitate the process, the agency is awarding \$300 million in grants over two years. "Some cities we're trying to keep up with. Some cities we're trying to push and encourage," Dougherty says.

Complete streets won major victories in California this summer with the adoption of the new Los Angeles transportation plan and San Francisco's decision to close off portions of Market Street to private vehicles. But Dougherty admits that other California municipalities need considerable prodding to incorporate complete streets into their designs. "We're trying to work with local communities to find out what they're trying to accomplish," Dougherty says. "How can our portion of the transportation system match what they're trying to accomplish?"

Wisconsin's experience with complete streets shows why matching those interests is so important. The state's complete streets law attracted a determined core of critics who claimed that the state was trying to tell local governments how to plan for their own communities -- sometimes forcing cities to make impractical decisions.

The Wisconsin law, passed in 2009, required all road projects using state or federal money to incorporate sidewalks and bike lanes, although the law included exceptions for, among other things, excessive cost or damage to the environment. In West Allis, a working-class Milwaukee suburb, the state proposed adding bike lanes to a six-lane highway that is one of the biggest commercial corridors in town. Many of the stores, fast-food restaurants and hotels either run right up to the street or rely on a single row of parking there. To accommodate the new bike lanes, the state would have had to widen the road by 10 feet. Some designs called for even more land to be taken. The city estimated the expansions would require the conversion of \$10 million to \$30 million of real estate into the highway right of way. "When we saw this, we were horrified," says Peter Daniels, the city's principal design engineer.

Daniels also worried about the safety of cyclists on the road. If a neighboring town's bike lanes on the same road are any indication, the lanes would not have been protected by anything more than stripes on asphalt, on a road with a 45 mph speed limit.

It was just one of many examples, according to Daniels, of the state overzealously promoting complete streets with projects that did not make sense. He fought another proposal that would have required the city to remove more than 80 trees to make way for bike lanes. Meanwhile, West Allis has been building bike lanes and bike paths elsewhere in the city. To Daniels, the decision of where a city should put bike lanes and sidewalks should be based on how much use they will get and how much they would cost. "We can't put bike lanes on every single road, because we can't afford it and we can't maintain it," he says.

Daniels shared his frustrations with state Rep. Joe Sanfelippo, who represents West Allis in the Assembly. The lawmaker started pushing for changes through legislation, and Gov. Scott Walker eventually included a repeal of the state's complete streets policy in his budget, claiming it would save money. In the end, legislators drastically scaled back the law so that the state would only have to "consider" whether to add bike lanes and sidewalks. Affected localities can now veto those proposals as well.

Dave Cieslewicz, a former Madison mayor who heads the Wisconsin Bike Federation, worries that the change will prevent the state from building networks of bike lanes. It could hinder the development of small-town commercial districts and block the construction of paved shoulders in rural areas, which benefit both cyclists and motorists. Repealing complete streets, he says, may discourage cyclists from riding their bikes and could lead to more cyclist injuries and deaths.

In North Carolina, traffic engineer Ledbetter has not wavered in his commitment to the complete streets idea. One of his most ambitious efforts was a proposed road diet for a four-lane highway near West Jefferson, which would allow the state to add bike lanes and a center turn lane. "There was no selling that to the town," he says. It was the only four-lane road in the county, and local residents worried they would get stuck behind trucks with no way to pass them for miles.



West Jefferson's complete streets makeover involved improving its main downtown strip. The town got rid of two stoplights and replaced them with all-way stop signs and repainted the road to make it look friendlier to pedestrians. The transformation has reinvigorated the area. (Town of West Jefferson)

But Ledbetter has had better luck convincing other towns to get rid of their traffic lights, even though they can be a point of pride in small communities. Leaders in nearby towns have seen the improvements in West Jefferson that came from pedestrian-friendly streets, and they want to try something similar. In the last four years, Ledbetter's

office has convinced towns to retire 5 percent of the 250 stoplights in their eight-county region, and more are coming down.

That frees up Ledbetter's maintenance crews to focus on areas with more congestion. "In most places in North Carolina, it's the towns that are pushing the [Department of Transportation] to do these things," Ledbetter says. "But in the mountain areas, it's very much the DOT leading the charge in trying to improve pedestrian safety, which is really ironic. Most of my colleagues at the state can't believe I'm out trying to sell complete streets projects to small towns."

But whichever level of government supplies the momentum, the ideas seem to be taking hold. As some of the missteps in Wisconsin show, overhauling decades of street design is no easy task. But proponents of the new ideas are confident that the idea of complete streets will gradually evolve into an urban design pattern that might just as easily be called "complete networks."

"We're seeing the start of networks being built out, but it's a big challenge," says Zach Vanderkooy, the international programs manager for People for Bikes. Take bike lanes. Many cities, he notes, start by building one bike lane at a time, because every project, especially the first one, takes energy, time and political capital. When a project is complete, it may only cover part of a cyclist's trip. But as more protected lanes are added, all of the parts of the bike network become more useful. "It takes a generation, really, to do this. We need patience to see how all of this connects," he says. "That said, we're fairly impatient."

In the end, predicts Gabe Klein, a former city transportation director for Chicago and Washington, D.C., redesigned streets will allow city planners to build a new type of urban community. "We're trying to create places where you use as little transportation as possible," he says. Ideally residents would walk for less than five minutes to take care of most of their day-to-day tasks, from going to work to buying groceries to visiting the doctor. Good bike networks make it easy for residents to travel within three miles of their home; transit can serve them for trips longer than that. "The cities that are doing it right," Klein says, "create this mesh of walkable, bikable, transit-oriented places."

This article was printed from: <http://www.governing.com/topics/transportation-infrastructure/gov-complete-streets-roads-bikes-pedestrians.html>

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Broome finishes upgrades to Otsiningo Park trail

JOHN R. ROBY

Broome County officials announced the completion Friday of a project to widen and improve the riverside trail in Otsiningo Park.

The trail, which runs from the Bevier Street entrance along the Chenango River, was widened from 8 feet to 12 feet and was transformed from a walking only path into a multi-modal trail. Drainage problems that caused water to pool were also corrected.

"Thousands of people enjoy the use of these trails for exercise on a weekly basis, and now these improvements will allow for even more people to use that trail at the same time," Broome County Executive Debbie Preston said.

The work, which cost about \$500,000, was largely funded by a \$406,000 grant from the Federal Highway Administration.

Otsiningo Park is the busiest in the county's park system, and is host to the Spiedie Fest and Balloon Rally, charity run/walks and the Broome Bands Together concert series, among other events. Director of Parks, Recreation and Youth Services Art Garrison said more than 1 million people pass through the gates every year.

"These improvements make the trail safer, more handicapped-friendly and easier to maintain," he said.

Construction began in September after Spiedie Fest.



The trail at Otsiningo Park was widened from 8 feet to 12 feet.

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