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COMPLETE STREETS POLICY PROGRESS

Hennepin County adopts Minnesota's first Complete Streets Policy; Rochester not Far Behind
Just yesterday, the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners unanimously adopted a complete streets resolution (draft). According to those in attendance, nearly every commissioner commented on how complete streets is an important evolution in thinking and would make a difference throughout the county. The adoption of this resolution marks the first complete streets policy in Minnesota. The Hennepin county seat is Minneapolis, and it is the state's most populous county. The National Complete Streets Coalition, through a grant from Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Minnesota, has been
working closely with the planning staff and other stakeholders in several Minnesota communities on policy development. We conducted Complete Streets Workshops in Hennepin and Ramsey County and Rochester in December.

The Rochester Planning & Zoning Commission is holding public hearings today (Wednesday February 11) on a series of 'Active Living' amendments, including a complete streets policy. The amendments are aimed at creating local development and infrastructure policies that support walking, biking and transit use to promote physical activity in daily routines. They can be viewed online and the draft complete streets policy is under items D-2, D-3, and D-4.

Interested in holding a workshop in your community? Check out our flyer (pdf)!

A First in Indiana
On January 9, the Bloomington/Monroe County Metropolitan Planning Organization adopted a complete streets policy (pdf) - the first in Indiana! Citizens of Bloomington and Monroe County spearheaded the effort through the Citizens Advisory Committee, with support and input from BMCMPO staff. The policy requires all new projects receiving federal funds through the BMCMPO to incorporate complete streets and requires transparency and measurable outcomes. "This policy will give the necessary flexibility [in standards], but it also provides the necessary design guidance to achieve the optimal end result," Scott Robinson, Long Range and Transportation Manager for the city of Bloomington said to the Indiana Daily Student.

Tacoma, WA Adopts Complete Streets
The City of Tacoma, WA amended its Comprehensive Plan to include a complete streets policy. New Complete Streets Guidelines have been developed for the City's Mixed Use Centers, with the ultimate objective of developing complete streets guidelines for the whole City. These guidelines will be followed by revisions to engineering standards, code changes, and other implementation steps. Progress in Tacoma compliments the complete streets goals adopted in a resolution by Pierce County last autumn, of which Tacoma is the seat.

Hawaiian Senate Committee Approves Bill
Hawai‘i is quickly moving toward a statewide complete streets policy. The new bill was introduced by State Senator Souki, the chair of the Senate Transportation Committee. That committee has approved the bill, and our Hawaiian contacts report the Hawai‘i Department of Transportation is on board as well. The bill is being pushed by a relatively new coalition, One Voice for Livable Islands, which includes AARP Hawai‘i, American Heart Association, American Planning Association, Hawai‘i Bicycling League, the Injury Prevention Advisory Committee, and other groups. Part of the bill's success has been connecting complete streets to strong Hawaiian culture, such as "The Law of the Splintered Paddle," a state statue derived from King Ka-meha-meha that ensures safety for all under government. The complete streets bill is currently under review in
the Hawaiian House of Representatives.

According to AARP Hawai’i’s director, Barbara Kim Stanton, Hawai’i has the highest number of both bicyclist fatalities and pedestrian fatalities for seniors over the age of 65.

Progress in Maine
A new Complete Streets statute in Maine will be introduced as part of a larger piece of legislation that deals with climate change, transportation and land use, which was developed by the Environmental Priorities Coalition, a group of environmental and public health organizations in Maine. The language is intended to be inserted in Maine's existing Sensible Transportation Policy Act. "Designing and developing communities and roads where we can safely bike and walk is an important first step in reducing Maine's carbon footprint," says Allison Vogt, the Executive Director of the Bicycle Coalition of Maine, which is taking a lead role in the effort.

Connecticut Introduces Law
Citizens in Connecticut are taking part in a lobby day today (Wednesday, Feb. 11th) to push for a statewide Complete Streets law. Introduced by State Representative Hennessey, the new law will require new or rebuilt arterial or other major roads to safely accommodate the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users regardless of age or ability. The Tri-State Transportation Campaign cited the bill during a news conference with elected officials and health and children's advocates to call for using stimulus package spending on bicycling and walking infrastructure. The Central Connecticut Bicycle Alliance has arranged shuttles to Hartford so residents may express their support for the bill in person at the lobby day.

Trouble in South Carolina?
Bicycle advocates in South Carolina are concerned that the state DOT Commission may be considering rescinding its complete streets policy. The DOT, under economic pressure, believes shelving its policy will save on costs. However, our research is showing that complete streets do not significantly raise costs, and are an investment in the community that provides low-cost transportation options to cash-strapped citizens. (See our benefits fact sheets on the economic benefits to communities and individuals [new!]). If you live in South Carolina, please join Charleston Moves and the Palmetto Cycling Coalition in sending a letter to your DOT Commissioner, emphasizing the value and importance of this policy. Charleston Moves has posted a sample letter that you can modify to include more on the economic sense of complete streets.

Federal Policy Update
The economic stimulus bill dominated conversations in Washington DC for the last few months, Congress was very focused on 'shovel ready' projects, and so resisted requests to direct the spending in any way - including by prioritizing complete streets. However, many Coalition partners are working to get the best package possible for transit,
bicycling and walking, in the final package. Check Transportation for America for more details.

As the project selection process moves quickly to the state and local level, we plan to provide state and local advocates and practitioners with some model language that can be used to try to direct the spending toward complete streets-type projects.

And the National Complete Streets Coalition is keeping our eyes on the prize of policy adoption and implementation. We are close to introduction of new complete streets bills in the House and Senate, and several Coalition partners are including a Complete Streets 'ask' in upcoming lobby days, including Smart Growth America, the American Society of Landscape Architects, and the League of American Bicyclists.

**COALITION NEWS**

**Staffing Up**
The National Complete Streets Coalition is excited to announce the hiring of our first full time employee: Stefanie Seskin, in the position of State and Local Policy Associate. Stefanie has been our Policy Fellow for the last six months, and has quickly become an expert on state and local policy issues, as well as on managing our website, writing the newsletter, and other duties. Stefanie has a master's degree in urban planning and policy from the University of Illinois at Chicago. The Executive Committee also gave Stephanie Potts the new title of Complete Streets Federal Policy Coordinator for her expanded role on our federal work; we share her time with Smart Growth America. And Barbara McCann of McCann Consulting, long-time Coordinator of the Coalition, received the title of Executive Director in recognition of her role growing and managing the Coalition. Her work will also remain part-time.

**Updated Partners Program**
The Coalition is excited to announce a newly revamped Complete Streets Partners Program, with opportunities at every level. Our program engages the private sector to support and accelerate the adoption of complete streets policies at every level, as they advance complete streets through their work with clients. See which firms have already joined and download information (pdf) on how to partner with the Coalition.

**AIA Recommends Complete Streets in Economic Recovery**
The American Institute of Architects released its recommendations for projects to be funded under the economic recovery bill, still under debate in Congress. America's architects believe this is an opportunity not only to build, but also to build better. Funding, therefore, should focus on projects with the greatest impact on sustainability, economic development and safety - including complete streets. The report concludes that designing and operating to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and bus riders, complete streets will create jobs and better communities.
**COMPLETE STREETS NEWS**

**Study: Connected Streets Are Safer**
A new research study finds that California cities with more connected street networks have traffic fatality rates almost three times lower than disconnected systems that feed most traffic onto high-speed arterials (roads that are often left incomplete for non-drivers). The research conducted for the Congress for New Urbanism is described in the article, *Key to safer roads is identified in California study*. Encouraging such connectivity is one of the important elements of an effective complete streets policy.

**AASHTO's Report to the President: Design Complete Streets**
The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials collected comments from America via its "I Told the President" campaign to solicit transportation requests for the new administration. The summary (pdf) highlights Americans desires for a safe, sustainable, multi-modal transportation system, with a specific request for complete streets improvements in communities nationwide.

**Death Results from Incomplete Street**
As he was crossing Route 202 near Ladentown Road in Pomona, NY, Ernest Stedge was fatally struck by an automobile. According to the *Journal News*, Stedge had taught mathematics for thirty years and was planning to retire this spring. The driver of the vehicle said he did not see Stedge in the street. There are no sidewalks or crosswalks in the commercial area where the victim was hit.

**Quick Takes: Complete Streets Talk Around the Country**

- **Los Angeles, CA:** The Los Angeles City Council has begun planning for implementation of California's Complete Streets Law (AB1358). The Planning Department and Transportation Department have been asked to prepare a report that delineates the City's plans to comply with AB1358.
- **Wichita, KS:** Mayor Carl Brewer advanced his ideas for a more walkable, bikeable community in his State of the City address late January, expressing hope that a complete streets workshop held a few days later would help the City achieve that goal. The workshop, offered by the National Complete Streets Coalition and the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals, was hosted by the County Health Department and was, by all accounts, very successful.
- **Issaquah, WA:** In the 2009 State of the City address, Mayor Ava Frisinger, Economic Development Manager Dan Trimble, and Public Works Engineering Director Bob Brock were confident the City would weather economic downturn well, thanks to smart investments like complete streets. (via the Issaquah Reporter)
- **Knox County, TN:** The Farragut Municipal Planning Committee attended a complete streets presentation recently to help them understand implementation
of Tennessee's complete streets policy. Knoxville has been working with Gresham, Smith & Partners on a Complete Streets Study. (via the Farragut Press)

RESOURCES

**New Fact Sheet on How Complete Streets Help People Save Money**
As automobile operation and maintenance costs and time lost in gridlock have grown, low-cost transportation is increasingly important for all Americans. A new fact sheet on how complete streets can help individuals with transportation costs is now posted on our benefits page.

**Report: How States Encourage Bicycling and Walking**
A new report published by the National Conference of State Legislators, *Encouraging Bicycling and Walking: The State Legislative Role*, provides information about and examples of how state legislatures can and have proactively supported bicycling and walking, especially as transportation choices, and includes discussion of Complete Streets measures considered and adopted in legislatures across the country. The report also looks at the related economic, public, and environmental health benefits of bicycling and walking. Discussions of funding stream mechanisms, planning, infrastructure design, and safety improvements are included as well. The report was published in partnership with Coalition members the League of American Bicyclists and Bikes Belong.

**Report: Smart Transportation Investment for Economic Stimulus**
The Victoria Transport Policy Institute has released a new report (pdf) on large long-term economic, social, and environmental impacts of transportation investments. The author investigates these issues and describes specific factors to consider when evaluating transportation investments, including changing future travel demands, and identifies best practices for selecting economic stimulation investments. The paper argues that increasing transportation system efficiency tends to create far more jobs than those created directly by infrastructure investments, such as highway expansion.

**Picturing Smart Growth**
NRDC unveiled a powerful new web feature that allows everyone to visualize how Smart Growth (and complete streets!) can be implemented across the country. The tool, "Picturing Smart Growth," pulls from a cross-section of American geography, existing site types, and envisioned smart growth ideas. The map can be searched by area, land use, site type, and conceived improvements. Common among most examples are improved transportation networks through accessible curb cuts, new sidewalks and crosswalks, improved bicycling facilities, and incorporation of public transportation.

**New Reports: Active Living Environments**
The Prevention Institute has issued two reports on strategies to improve health through the built environment. One features profiles of neighborhood-level successes in altering
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elements of the built environment to improve health behaviors and outcomes, including a profile of Seattle's work on non-motorized travel. The other, *Promising Strategies for Creating Healthy Eating and Active Living Environments*, discusses complete streets policies.

Download these two reports:

- *The Built Environment in Health*
- *Promising Strategies for Creating Healthy Eating and Active Living Environments* (pdf)

**QUOTES**

"*The adoption of the Complete Streets Policy is a major step community decision makers have taken towards a more inclusive, sensible, and sustainable transportation future.*"

- Andy Ruff, Bloomington, IN City Council President