

Why Should We Create Walkable Communities?

Community Benefits

- Walkable communities are more equitable: Many Minnesotans rely on walking and cannot drive due to age, disability, immigration status, poverty, and other factors.
- People prefer walking: While people prefer walking to driving, most say they drive because they have no other options (National Association of Realtors CTPS, 2017).
- Walking is key to securing a low-carbon future: Transportation is the biggest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Minnesota. To avoid the worst effects of climate change, and to achieve the MN Next Generation Energy Act targets, Minnesota must reduce transportation energy use by 80% by 2050. Encouraging more Minnesotans to walk, bike, and take public transit is key to meeting state emissions goals and fighting climate change. Ways to encourage walking include building sidewalks, improving crossings, lowering speed limits, expanding public transit service, creating incentives for active modes such as parking fees, and designing car-free streets (MPCA, 2019; IPCC, 2018; Active Living Research, 2016).
- Walkability enhances quality of life: 88% of those who agree that there are places to walk to nearby also report that they are more satisfied with their quality of life (National Association of Realtors CTPS, 2017).

Health & Safety Benefits

- Replacing time sitting with walking boosts health outcomes: Time spent sitting in a motor vehicle is associated with chronic diseases like cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and type 2 diabetes as well as increased stress (McKormack, 2014; Martin, 2014).
- Less driving means cleaner air: Cars emit CO₂, nitrous oxide, sulfur oxide, and other gases that are associated with asthma attacks and cardiovascular disease. Pregnant people, newborns, children, and people with chronic illnesses are especially vulnerable to air pollution (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018; WHO).
- Slower speeds save lives: A pedestrian hit by a vehicle at 30MPH has a 96% chance of survival. A pedestrian hit by a vehicle at 40MPH has a 62% chance of survival (Rosen and Sander, 2009).
- Less traffic = safer streets: A 30% reduction in traffic volume at a signalized intersection may reduce the total number of injured pedestrians by 35% and the average risk of pedestrian collision by 50% (Miranda-Moreno, 2011).

Economic Benefits

- Reducing car dependency benefits family budgets: Living in a walkable community can allow families to go car-lite or car-free. The average cost to own and operate one car is \$8,500/YEAR. Rural households are especially cost-burdened: they earn less than urban families, but own more cars, and spend 19% more on gasoline and motor oil (AAA 2017; BLS, 2011).
- Reducing car dependency benefits community budgets: Walkable communities developed according to smart growth principles are more efficient, and cheaper to administer. Walkable neighborhoods generate far greater tax revenue per square foot than all other types of

development (National Association of Realtors Smart Growth Program; Smart Growth America, 2013).

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