Healthy/Walkable Communities Initiative

Project Update

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Healthy/Walkable Communities Initiative

• Looking ahead – next steps
• Issue overview
• What has been done
• Interested?
Healthy Communities - Looking Ahead

• Working on a Healthy Communities Resource Guide covering:
  – Benefits of a walkable community
  – Municipal ordinances supporting walkability
  – Establishing support in your community
  – Finding funding
  – Planning/implementation

• Select two new communities to start Phase 1 in 2008.

• Continue to work with existing partner communities.
Why Healthy?

You’ll live longer!

Cumulative Mortality by Distance Walked per Day

![Graph showing cumulative mortality by distance walked per day.](image-url)
Why Healthy?

You’ll look better living longer

*What aerobic exercise does for your health:*
It keeps excess pounds at bay. Combined with a healthy diet, aerobic exercise can help you lose weight—and keep it off.

*Mayo Clinic, 2007*
A new study has concluded that American children are increasingly too fat to safely fit into child safety seats. The use of child safety seats in cars is required by law, but the researchers writing in the April issue of Pediatrics say there are too few seats available to handle the girth of obese children. According to study estimates, a total of 283,305 children one to six years of age in the United States would have a difficult, if not impossible, time fitting safely and appropriately into a child safety seat because of their age and weight.
It’s Not Just the Kids

Car weight limits are a big, fat problem

by Chris Woodyard, USA TODAY

Some motorists may be too big for their cars.

The growing girth of Americans is colliding with government-mandated warning labels on all 2006 or newer cars that list the maximum weight—passengers and cargo— that's safe to carry. Many two-seat sports cars, including Mazda MX-5 Miata and Chevrolet Corvette, aren't certified to carry two 200-pound adults, according to a government formula aimed at tire safety.

Many five-passenger vehicles are rated about 850 pounds, maxing out if their five occupants weigh more than 170 pounds each. Six 200-pounders would overload the seven-passenger Dodge Grand Caravan minivan.
Why Walkable?

Gas prices will NEVER go down.

Will Retail Gasoline Prices Rise Above On-Highway Diesel Prices This Summer?

Sources: U.S. Energy Information Administration
Why Walkable?

Traffic never has, and never will get better.
Why Walkable?

Because this is ridiculous.
Why Walkable?

- Given these historic, continuing trends, communities that want to be successful, desirable places to live will have to afford their residents transportation options.

- While transit holds promise, walking infrastructure is cheaper, healthier, and far more universally applicable.
Status

- Authored a healthy/walkable issue paper.
- Crafted an assessment report for the first-year partner communities.
Assessing Walkability

• Network
  – Sidewalks, bike paths
  – Crosswalks
  – Direct pedestrian routes

• Environment
  – Visually appealing & clean
  – Safe, secure, well-maintained
  – Setbacks

• Destinations
  – Is there anywhere to walk
  – Mix of uses
  – Density!
Network

- Continuous?
- Connected?
- Direct?
- Convenient?

Natural extension of connected streets

Disconnected “pod” growth

Ed McMahon, Better Models for Development in Delaware, p. 50.
Network

School
Trips to School by Distance and Mode: Youth Ages 5-15

Setbacks—Buildings fronting the street are far more appealing to pedestrians than those set back significantly from the street network. Swaths of surface parking are also a deterrent.
Environment

Both examples accommodate the pedestrian and cyclist, but which is more appealing?
Graffiti, trash, and general disrepair are signs that no one cares or is watching.

Photo Courtesy of gammablog.com/gammablablog/images/12-04/12-22/stuffed-trash-fence.jpg
Most of us walk to get somewhere, but is there anywhere to which we can walk that is both appealing and convenient?
People are more likely to walk or bicycle if they:

- Live close to a non-residential building
- Live very close to a grocery or drug store
- Have good access to public transportation
- Live in a town or city center
You’ll Be Surprised What You Find
Questions?

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