Streets

Safe for Pedestrians

Pedestrian deaths account for more than 20% of all traffic-related fatalities in California each year.

More than 600 people are killed and another 13,000 are injured every year as pedestrians in California.

Being hit by a car while walking is the 2nd leading cause of death for California children aged 5-12. Nearly 5,000 child pedestrians are injured annually.

sources: Surface Transportation Policy Project, "Dangerous by Design: Pedestrian Safety in California" and "Caught in the Crosswalk"

Are We People-Friendly?

The ability for people to walk to get to destinations has diminished significantly in recent decades. Today, in most communities, we need a car to get around. This is largely due to the design of communities that focus on allowing cars – not people – to get around. The irony is that by emphasizing motor vehicle transportation we've ended up creating more congested roadways that are unsafe for all users, including motorists.

Wide streets, poorly designed streets and intersections, lack of sidewalks and poor connectivity have resulted in physical environments that are dangerous to pedestrians. These conditions further discourage people from walking. When people do venture out to walk on these streets, they often face high-speed traffic and dangerous conditions that result in high rates of pedestrian injuries and fatalities.

In California, pedestrian deaths account for more than 20% of all traffic-related fatalities each year, according to a Surface Transportation Policy Project report.

Local Government Commission

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Solutions

A variety of solutions can be implemented in our cities to prevent pedestrian injuries. Some can range from community programs started at the grassroots level to citywide policies adopted by local governments to encourage new developments that pedestrian-friendly community design including streets that are safe for people to walk on.

Below is a list of community programs and local government policies that your community can use to encourage residents to walk and reduce pedestrian injuries and fatalities:

☐ Community Programs and Projects

- ➢ Organize "walking school buses."
- ➢ Initiate a traffic and safety education campaign.
- ➢ Work with community members to trim shrubs that limit sight distance and encroach on sidewalks.
- ➢ Work with community members to remove obstacles from sidewalks.
- ➢ Evaluate your community's streets by using a walkability checklist to identify deficiencies in your streets. (See attached walkability checklist.)

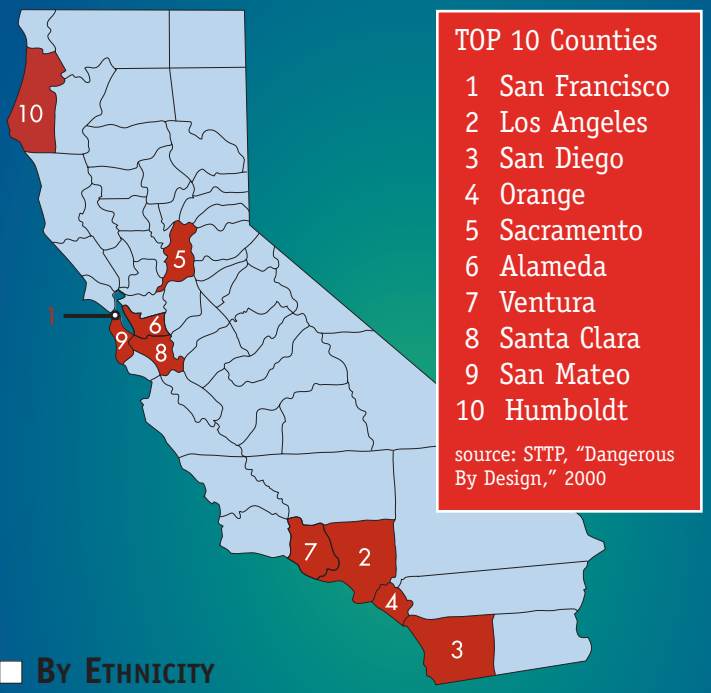
☐ Local Government Policies

- ➢ Talk to city leaders about adopting and implementing policies that ensure your streets are well-designed with short blocks, narrow, tree-lined streets with on-street parking, and sidewalks that are at least five feet wide.
- ➢ Talk to city leaders about retrofitting unsafe streets on which drivers travel at higher speeds than desirable, through exploring traffic-calming strategies that slow vehicles down and even out the flow of traffic.

Californians at Risk...

☐ Where You Live

California counties where pedestrians account for the highest share of all traffic-related deaths:



TOP 10 Counties

1 San Francisco
2 Los Angeles
3 San Diego
4 Orange
5 Sacramento
6 Alameda
7 Ventura
8 Santa Clara
9 San Mateo
10 Humboldt

source: STTP, "Dangerous By Design," 2000

☐ By Ethnicity

Current development patterns affect all Californians. However, of all the ethnic groups in the state, Latinos have the highest rate of pedestrian injuries and fatalities.

While 30% of California's population is Latino, 37% of all hospitalized pedestrian fatalities and injuries in 2000 were Latino.

source: "Dangerous By Design," Surface Transportation Policy Project

Resources

For more information about programs and projects that you can start in your community:

National Center for Bicycling and Walking
202-463-6622 ▪ www.bikewalk.org

AmericaWALKs
617-367-1170 ▪ www.americawalks.org

Healthy Transportation Network/ California Center for Physical Activity
916-552-9885 ▪ www.healthytransportation.net

This project was funded through an environmental justice grant from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Project support was provided by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG).

Health and Community Design

Obesity was linked to 300,000 deaths in 2000.

70% of adults do not get the recommended 30 minutes of daily physical activity.

Diabetes has increased by 67% among California adults – which is linked to a dramatic rise in obesity and physical inactivity in adults.

sources: National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, CDC; Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance, 1986-94; California Center for Public Health Advocacy

Many neighborhoods and communities are designed in such a way as to discourage routine physical activity.

What Shape Are We In?

How we shape growth in California is crucial to making our communities healthier, safer and more livable. An important measure of livability is how physically active and healthy people are. Walkable, bicycle-friendly communities provide opportunities for regular physical activity – which is important in preventing chronic health problems and improving quality of life.

According to a study by the California Center for Public Health Advocacy, diabetes has increased by 67% among California adults, which is linked to a dramatic rise in obesity and physical inactivity in adults.

Current land use patterns, such as large-lot or strip development, lack of through streets or walkways, dead wall space, lack of crosswalks, long blocks, unappealing walks, wide and unshaded streets, wide streets with no medians, and large auto-oriented uses all inhibit walking.

editing + design: dave davis

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Solutions

Good community design is one of the ways that we can encourage more Californians to be physically active. Healthy communities provide a physical environment that allows residents to incorporate physical activity into their daily life.

Below is a list of recommendations that you can work with suggest to your local elected officials to implement:

☐ What Your Community Can Do

1. Provide accommodations for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in transportation programs.
2. Ensure connectivity among pedestrian, bicycle, transit and road facilities.
3. Engage in local planning processes, such as planning meetings and urban planning workshops to design communities with a mix of uses and nearby destinations.
4. Coordinate a "Bike to Work Day."
5. Promote exercise that involves 30 minutes of physical activity, five days a week or more.
6. Start a traffic calming program in your neighborhood.

Californians at Risk...

☐ By Ethnicity

Although all Californians are affected by obesity and physical inactivity, Latinos are one of three ethnic groups that have one of the highest rates of diabetes-related deaths.

☐ Where You Live

Also, Californians living in the Central Valley, southwestern San Bernardino County and Los Angeles County are disproportionately affected.

Resources

For more information about programs and projects that you can start in your community:

Active Living by Design
919-843-2523 ▪ www.activelivingbydesign.org

Active Living Leadership
619-260-6336 ▪ www.activelivingleadership.org

Active Living Network
www.activeliving.org

Healthy Transportation Network/ California Center for Physical Activity
916-552-9885 ▪ www.healthytransportation.net

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Walkability Checklist

Getting started: Pick a place to walk, like the route to school, a friend's house, or just somewhere fun to go. Read over the checklist before you go, and as you walk, note the locations of things you would like to change. At the end of your walk, circle an overall rating for each question. Then add up the numbers to see how you rated you walk.

Rating Scale

1 = awful	4 = good
2 = many problems	5 = very good
3 = some problems	6 = excellent

1 • Did you have enough room to walk by?

❑ Yes ❑ Some Problems If so, rate each of the following on a scale of 1 to 6:

___ Sidewalks or paths started or stopped
___ Sidewalks were broken or cracked
___ Sidewalks were blocked with poles, signs, dumpsters, etc.
___ No Sidewalks, paths, or shoulders
___ Too much traffic
___ Something else? _____

Location of problems:

_____

_____

2 • Was it easy to cross streets?

❑ Yes ❑ Some Problems If so, rate each of the following on a scale of 1 to 6:

___ Road was too wide
___ Traffic signals made us wait too long or did not give us enough time to cross
___ Needed striped crosswalks or traffic signals
___ Parked cars blocked our view of traffic
___ Trees or plants blocked our view of traffic
___ Needed curb ramps or ramps needed repair
___ Something else? _____

Location of problems:

_____

_____

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3 • Did the drivers behave well?

❑ Yes ❑ Some Problems If so, rate each of the following on a scale of 1 to 6:

Drivers…

___ Backed out of driveways without looking
___ Did not yield to people crossing street
___ Turned into people crossing streets
___ Drove too fast
___ Sped up to make it through traffic lights or drove through red lights
___ Something else? _____

Location of problems:

_____

_____

4 • Was it easy to follow safety rules?

Could you and your child…

Yes	No	
☐	☐	Cross at crosswalks or where you could see and be seen by drivers?
☐	☐	Stop and look left, right, and left again before crossing streets?
☐	☐	Walk on sidewalks or shoulders (if no sidewalks), facing traffic?
☐	☐	Cross with the light?

Location of problems:

_____

_____

5 • Was your walk pleasant?

❑ Yes ❑ Some unpleasant things Rate each of the following on a scale of 1 to 6:

___ Needs more grass, flowers, or trees
___ Scary dogs
___ Suspicious activity
___ Not well lit
___ Dirty, lots of litter or trash
___ Something else? _____

Location of problems:

_____

_____

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Safety Tips for Walkers

1 Always walk on the sidewalk. If there is no sidewalk and you have to walk in the road, always walk FACING traffic, so you can see any car that might go out of control.

2 Dress to be seen. Brightly colored clothing makes it easier for drivers to see you during the daytime. At night, you need to wear special reflective material on your shoes, cap, or jacket to reflect the headlights of cars coming towards you.

☐ When Crossing The Street

3 Cross only at corners or marked crosswalks.

4 Stop at the curb, or the edge of the road.

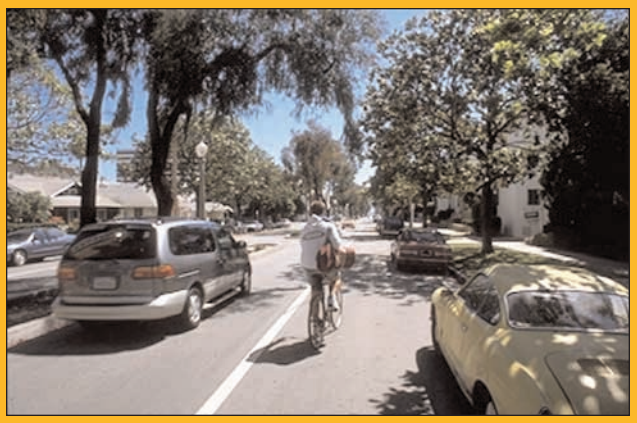
5 Stop and look left, then right, then left again, before you step into the street.

6 If you see a car, wait until it goes by. Then look left, right and left again until no cars are coming.

7 If a car is parked where you are crossing, make sure there is no driver in the car. Then go to the edge of the car and look left-right-left until no cars are coming. Keep looking for cars while you are crossing, and remember, walk. Don't run.

source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, www.nhtsa.dot.gov

Safety Tips for Bicyclists



1 Bikers should always stop and look for traffic when entering the road, especially from a driveway, alley or curb. Always stop at a stop sign or red light.

2 Go with the flow of traffic. Ride on the right, the same way as a car.

3 Avoid riding in dark conditions, on narrow roads, and on roads with cars traveling faster than 35 mph. If you ride at night, use reflectors, lights and retro-reflective clothing.

4 Be predictable. Ride in a straight line. Look behind you before changing lanes or turning, use your hand signal and proceed carefully.

5 Obey all traffic signs and signals. Walk your bicycle across busy intersections.

6 Be prepared to ride around obstacles like storm grates and railroad tracks, and avoid riding where you could be struck by an opening car door.

source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, www.nhtsa.dot.gov

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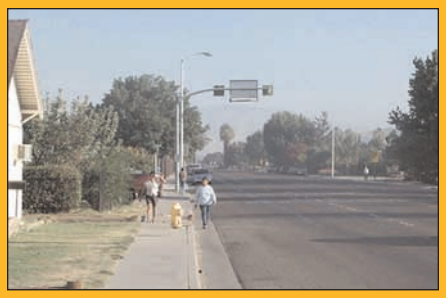
On long blocks, pedestrians often expose themselves to danger by crossing midblock instead of going to the nearest intersection.

When the pedestrian crossing is not clearly designated, people wanting to cross the street often put themselves in harm's way.



When sidewalks are missing, or are too narrow, pedestrians dangerously end up having to walk in the street.

A median and a well-marked crossing tells motorists to look for pedestrians and allows pedestrians to cross the street safely.

This crossing encourages pedestrians to cross at the intersection by providing a refuge to protect the pedestrian and slow the cars.

A wider sidewalk, with a planting strip next to it, provides a buffer between moving vehicles and pedestrians.

Designing for Bicycling

On residential streets with low traffic speeds and volumes, it is often possible for bicyclists to ride on the street. [top left]

However, on streets with higher volumes and traffic speeds it is necessary to provide a bicycle lane.

Trails that support bicycling, rollerblading and walking in residential neighborhoods are a great way for families to get around. [top right]

Ideally, all schools should be accessible through local trails.

▲ To encourage people to ride their bicycles, infrastructure, including bicycle parking, lockers and, at workplaces, lockers and showers is needed.

▲ For residents to bicycle to work and other regional destinations, consider ways to provide a larger network of trails that link up key destinations.

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