

Feature Article



NATIONAL
COMPLETE STREETS
COALITION



COMPLETE STREETSIT'S THE LAW! By Linscott, Law & Greenspan, Engineers (KC Yellapu, PE, PTOE) & National Complete Streets Coalition

What is "Complete Streets"?

Complete Streets is a national movement to ensure transportation planners and engineers consistently design and operate the entire right of way with all users in mind—including motorists, bicyclists, public transportation users, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities. In California it's not just a movement, but a requirement by law.



Governor Schwarzenegger signed the "**California Complete Streets Act of 2008**" (AB 1358) into law on September 30, 2008. Commencing January 1, 2011, the bill requires, "*that the legislative body of a city or county, upon any substantive revision of the circulation element of the general plan, modify the circulation element to plan for a balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users of streets, roads, and highways, defined to include motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, children, persons with disabilities, seniors, movers of commercial goods, and users of public transportation, in a manner that is suitable to the rural, suburban, or urban context of the general plan. By requiring new duties of local officials, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program*".

Caltrans has also adopted Complete Streets with Deputy Directive 64-R1 in October 2008. As part of this directive Caltrans is actively implementing its Complete Streets policy in all planning, programming, design, construction, operations, and maintenance activities and products on the State Highway System. Caltrans recently published the Complete Streets Implementation Action Plan to put this directive in motion.

Implementing Complete Streets also supports California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32) and Senate Bill 375.

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“Complete Streets” Benefits

In addition to compliance with AB 1358 and DD 64-R1, Complete streets can offer many benefits to the San Diego region. (The following information info was compiled from numerous sources available upon request)

Complete Streets improve safety by reducing crashes through safety improvements and encourage non-motorized travel. In San Diego 20.7% of all crash fatalities are pedestrians related and 4.3% of all crash fatalities are bicyclists related. However, only 1.2% of federal transportation dollars are spent on bicycling and walking. A recent study comparing the United States with Germany and the Netherlands, where Complete Streets are common, found that bicyclist and pedestrian death rates are two to six times higher in the United States.



Complete Streets provide transportation options. Approximately 1/3 of Americans do not drive and more than 50% of non-drivers stay at home because they lack transportation options. Complete Streets provide alternative safe transportation options.

Complete Streets encourage walking and bicycling.

In San Diego only 3.5% of commuters bike or walk to work. More importantly the number of people bicycling to work in San Diego has decreased by 13% and number of people walking to work has decreased by 22% from 1990 to 2007. Residents of highly walkable neighborhoods walk twice as often as those who live in communities with lower walkability.

Complete Streets promote healthy living. Public health experts are encouraging walking and bicycling as a response to the obesity epidemic. Per public health officials 61% of San Diego’s population is overweight. One study found that 43% of people with safe places to walk within 10 minutes of home met recommended activity levels, while just 27% of those without safe places to walk were active enough.

Complete Streets help children. Streets that provide room for bicycling and walking help children get physical activity and gain independence. More children walk to school where there are sidewalks, and children who have and use suggested walking and bicycling routes have a more positive view of their neighborhood.





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Complete Streets are good for air quality. Poor air quality in our urban areas is linked to increases in asthma and other illnesses. Yet if each resident of an American community of 100,000 replaced one car trip with one bike trip just once a month, it would cut carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by 3,764 tons of per year in the community.

Complete Streets make fiscal sense. Integrating sidewalks, bike lanes, transit amenities, and safe crossings into the initial design of a project prevents costly delays and spares the expense of retrofits later.



Complete Streets foster strong communities. Complete Streets play an important role in livable and sustainable communities, where all people regardless of age, ability or mode of transportation feel safe and welcome on the roadways. A safe walking and bicycling environment is an essential part of improving public transportation and creating friendly, livable communities.

Complete Streets ease traffic congestion. Complete Streets increase overall capacity and efficiency without negatively impacting auto travel. Paying attention to all modes create a more efficient system that responds better to travel demand. *Complete streets can move more people while using less space.*



200 people in 177 cars

=



200 people in 3 buses

=



200 people in 1 train

=



200 people on 200 bikes

Summary

Complete Streets makes common sense by providing communities with options to get out of their cars, cleaning our air, encouraging physical activity, and providing a more efficient and adaptable transportation system. Complete Streets need to be planned and implemented with the support of elected officials and the community and agency involvement. LLG and the National Complete Street Coalition encourage you to embrace the idea that complete streets are for everyone, whether they travel by car, bike, foot, or public transportation. Together we can lead the way to more complete communities, one street at a time.

- Kalyan (KC) Yellapu, PE, TE, PTOE