3 Planning, Policy and Implementation

A comprehensive plan’s goals and policies provide overall direction for a community’s future. They articulate the ideal outcomes that would result if the plan were fully realized and set the preferred courses of action to achieve your community’s vision. Having strong policies that support active transportation will help a community meet its goals in the areas of mobility, environmental protection, economic development, and access to jobs and services.

3.1 Comprehensive Planning

Many Washington communities amend their comprehensive plans annually and regularly adopt changes to the development regulations that guide their implementation. In addition to these regular amendments, the state Growth Management Act (GMA) requires counties and cities to periodically conduct a thorough review of their plans and regulations to bring them up to date with any relevant changes in the GMA and to respond to changes in land use and population growth (the “periodic update” requirements are found in RCW 36.70A.130). This mandatory “periodic update” takes place for most communities at least once every eight years. For King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties, the next deadline for this “periodic update” is June 30, 2015. For Kitsap County, the deadline is June 30, 2016. Local comprehensive plan updates are an excellent opportunity to ensure that active transportation plan components are current and integrated into the comprehensive planning process.

In 2005, the legislature added a new requirement for transportation planning under the GMA with the goal of increasing access to safe opportunities for exercise in all communities around the state. This bill (SSB 5186) requires local jurisdictions to include within their transportation element, a “pedestrian and bicycle component to include collaborative efforts to identify and designate planned improvements for pedestrian and bicycle facilities and corridors that address and encourage enhanced community access and promote healthy lifestyles” (36.70A.070(6)(a)(vi)).

The Washington Administrative Code provides some additional recommendations for meeting the pedestrian/bicycle component in WAC 3656-430 (2)(j). Recommendations include planning for a network that connects residential and employment areas with community and regional destinations, schools, and public transportation services, including maps of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including identification of state and local designated bicycle routes, major transit routes, and route plans designated by school districts under WAC 392-151-025, and reviewing existing pedestrian and bicycle collision data to plan facilities that improve safety.


The Puget Sound Regional Council works with countywide planning groups, local jurisdictions, transit agencies and others, to ensure that regional and local planning efforts are coordinated and that regional policies and provisions are addressed in local plans. The PSRC Policy and Plan Review Process 34 is designed to further this coordination and to satisfy requirements in the Growth Management Act. Certification of local plans by PSRC is a requirement for jurisdictions and agencies that intend to apply for PSRC funding 35.

In April 2013, the Puget Sound Regional Council collaborated with the Department of Commerce to offer workshops to support the implementation of VISION 2040, provide resources to help local jurisdictions prepare their 2015/16 major comprehensive plan updates, and increase local understanding of PSRC’s plan review and certification program. Resources and presentation materials from the workshops can be found on the PSRC website 36.

Additional resources for comprehensive plan updates are provided by the Washington State Department of Commerce 37.

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Federal, State and local plans, best practices and initiatives

In 2010, the US DOT issued a United States Department of Transportation Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Regulations and Recommendations\(^\text{38}\) which encourages transportation agencies and local communities to adopt similar policy statements on bicycle and pedestrian accommodations (stated in chapter 1.4). This document identifies bicyclists and pedestrians as integral elements of the transportation system. In addition, USDOT policies state communities should go beyond minimum design standards and requirements to create safe, attractive, sustainable, accessible, and convenient bicycling and walking networks. The US DOT recommended actions include:

- **Considering walking and bicycling as equals with other transportation modes:**
  The primary goal of a transportation system is to safely and efficiently move people and goods. Because of the benefits they provide, transportation agencies should give the same priority to walking and bicycling as is given to other transportation modes. Walking and bicycling should not be an afterthought in roadway design.

- **Ensuring that there are transportation choices for people of all ages and abilities, especially children:**
  Pedestrian and bicycle facilities should meet accessibility requirements and provide safe, convenient, and interconnected transportation networks. For example, children should have safe and convenient options for walking or bicycling to school and parks. People who cannot or prefer not to drive should have safe and efficient transportation choices.

- **Going beyond minimum design standards:**
  Transportation agencies are encouraged, when possible, to avoid designing walking and bicycling facilities to the minimum standards. For example, shared-use paths that have been designed to minimum width requirements will need retrofits as more people use them. It is more effective to plan for increased usage than to retrofit an older facility. Planning projects for the long-term should anticipate likely future demand for bicycling and walking facilities and not preclude the provision of future improvements.

- **Integrating bicycle and pedestrian accommodation on new, rehabilitated, and limited-access bridges:**
  DOT encourages bicycle and pedestrian accommodation on bridge projects including facilities on limited-access bridges with connections to streets or paths.

- **Collecting data on walking and biking trips:**
  The best way to improve transportation networks for any mode is to collect and analyze trip data to optimize investments. Walking and bicycling trip data for many communities are lacking. This data gap can be overcome by establishing routine collection of nonmotorized trip information. Communities that routinely collect walking and bicycling data are able to track trends and prioritize investments to ensure the success of new facilities. These data are also valuable in linking walking and bicycling with transit.

- **Setting mode share targets for walking and bicycling and tracking them over time:**
  A byproduct of improved data collection is that communities can establish targets for increasing the percentage of trips made by walking and bicycling.

- **Removing snow from sidewalks and shared-use paths:**

Current maintenance provisions require pedestrian facilities built with Federal funds to be maintained in the same manner as other roadway assets. State Agencies have generally established levels of service on various routes especially as related to snow and ice events.

- **Improving nonmotorized facilities during maintenance projects:**
  Many transportation agencies spend most of their transportation funding on maintenance rather than on constructing new facilities. Transportation agencies should find ways to make facility improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists during resurfacing and other maintenance projects.

**Additional Guidance**
Among the best examples of planning guidance for active transportation is the recently released Portland State University’s [Master Planning Guidebook](http://otrec.us/project/465). It is intended to serve as a guide for planners, engineers and elected officials who will be creating new or updated bicycle and/or pedestrian master plans. Included in this guidebook is data from literature reviews, case study interviews, and input from staff at Alta Planning + Design. This project was also supported by Oregon Transportation Research and Education Consortium (OTREC).

According to the Master Planning Guidebook, outcomes of a typical pedestrian and/or bicycle mode specific planning process include:

- A bikeway network, bicycle parking, and/or pedestrian network
- Policies that support walking and/or bicycling
- Education of bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists
- Encouragement programs
- Enforcement programs
- Evaluation and monitoring programs
- Design guidelines and/or engineering standards that recognize the needs of bicyclists and/or pedestrians
- Increased public and financial support for walking and/or bicycling
- Increased levels of walking and/or bicycling for transportation and recreation

When developing local active transportation plans or mode specific bicycle and pedestrian plans, the needs of pedestrians should be considered independently than those of bicyclists, as they are quite different. However, local jurisdictions should evaluate whether mode-specific plans for pedestrian and bicyclists would be the most appropriate, or whether a combined shared plan would suffice. There are advantages and disadvantages to both strategies that are outlined in detail in the Master Planning Guidebook.

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Taking a Comprehensive Approach

A 2009 international review of infrastructure, programs and policies to increase bicycling noted that a comprehensive approach produces a much greater impact on bicycling than individual measures that are not coordinated. Actions to promote walking and bicycling revealed that communities with the most success in increasing the mode share of walking and bicycling consistently deploy a coordinated package of projects, policies, and programs to support active transportation.

Policy and program examples that support Active Transportation

Many policy and program examples that support active transportation are included throughout this report and can be used to support the development of pedestrian and/or bicycle elements of comprehensive plans, separate active transportation master plans, smaller subarea plans or with project development.

The beginning of chapter 3 outlines various elements that are recommended for inclusion in active transportation plans. The next few sections discuss in more detail policy and program examples that are often included in local transportation plans such as Complete Streets, Safe Routes to School and education and encouragement programs. This section provides some additional examples of overarching policies that support active transportation.

The following are good examples of policies at various scales:

Larger regional area: Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) in the San Francisco Bay Area: Regional Bicycle Plan goals and policies (chapter 2)

Mode specific plan: City of Seattle’s Policy Framework for the Bicycle Master Plan, Pedestrian Master Plan Objectives

Combined plan: City of Bellevue’s Goals/Vision Policies – Pedestrian and Bicycle transportation plan

And probably the most comprehensive new visioning for the public right of way in the U.S. New York City’s DOT’s Sustainable Streets Strategic Plan


3.2 Planning for Pedestrians and Walkable Communities
While some people may never make a trip by transit or bicycle, almost everyone is, at one point or another, a pedestrian. Encouraging more people to get where they need to go on foot is a key component of this active transportation plan. In order to encourage people to take more walking trips, an emphasis on safety, walkable communities, and connectivity should be a priority. This section will discuss walkable communities as well as pedestrian safety. Pedestrian connectivity and networks are discussed in more detail in section 4.3 and infrastructure in section 6.4 of this report.

Walkable Communities
Pedestrian scale environments, including small block size, sidewalk completeness, and contiguity, can help create walkable communities. These and other factors, such as the location and orientation of commercial buildings, lighting and availability of open space has a significant impact on whether an area is primarily automobile-oriented or more suited to walking and taking transit. In places where larger block sizes exist or large parking lots, communities should evaluate options for pedestrian paths that cut through large blocks in order to increase the walkability of a community.

Pedestrian Priority Zones are another tool to help communities identify places that may attract high numbers of pedestrians and provide for vibrant streetscapes that create a high quality of life. These zones are often located within local or regional centers and near transit. Signage, art, wayfinding and safe infrastructure help to facilitate a pedestrian zone.

Cities can play an important role for providing pedestrian friendly environments. Safe and friendly, inviting environments play a significant role when a person chooses to take a walking trip. Good lighting, reduced speed limits and compact density with more residents often provides for safer environments. Additionally, aesthetics such as street trees and public art attract pedestrians and enhance the experience walking. These elements (also referred to as the ‘streetscape’) should be considered when crafting comprehensive and local area plans.
**Awareness and Safety**

One explanation for why some people choose not to walk more is because of real or perceived issues of safety. Pedestrians are much more vulnerable to incidents involving motor vehicles than almost all other modes of transportation. Safety issues stem not only from conflicts with motor vehicles, but also from places that may pose a crime risk such as poorly lit areas. Enforcement strategies—aimed at specific locations or at specific behaviors that put pedestrians at risk—are crucial at overcoming these barriers.

There are a number of strategies that communities can utilize when planning for safer walking environments. One way is to reduce speed limits. In 2013, the Washington State Legislature passed the Neighborhood Safe Streets\(^\text{45}\) bill, which allows more flexibility for local communities to reduce speed limits to 20 miles per hour. This provides communities another option for creating safer environments for all users. More information about safety can be found in chapter 5 of this report.

Engineering solutions, such as improving visibility at crossings, refuge islands and increased crossing times that accommodate people with slower mobility can improve safety in walking environments. Curb extensions (also called bulb-outs) extend the sidewalk into the parking lane in order to narrow the roadway which shortens crossing distances, slows traffic speeds and provides additional pedestrian space and visibility. It is critical that public works engineers are highly trained in pedestrian design issues and kept up to date on best practices. More information regarding engineering solutions can be found in chapter 6.4

**Tools:**

City of Seattle Pedestrian Toolbox: provides information about appropriate tools to solve common pedestrian issues around the following topics: design, engineering, and universal access; enforcement; encouragement; education; planning, land use, and zoning; equity, health, and environment; and funding.

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The Walkability Index is a tool developed by the University of British Columbia’s Health and Community Design Lab to determine what qualities of the physical environment make places walkable. The Walkability Index consists of four components: residential density; commercial density; land use mix; and street connectivity. Indicators of these components are combined to create an overall measure of the walkability of specific places.

Walking Audits are a great way to collect information for pedestrian-savvy project planning. Feet First, a local non-profit organization that works to ensure all communities in Washington are walkable, collaborates with community members, elected officials, and city staff to assess the community's infrastructure, identifying barriers and opportunities for walking, so that measures for improving walkability can be made.

More than 20% of trips in the region are less than one mile and about 38% of vehicle trips in the region are less than three miles. For these short trips, walking or bicycling can be the most efficient way to travel. Furthermore, 14% of trips less than one mile are completed by driving alone, while 18% of these trips are completed by two people driving together, which suggests that there are opportunities to shift some number of these trips to active modes.

While the region can't correct the inherent limitations like weather and topography, it can affect other aspects of the physical environment that could make walking an attractive alternative and a more viable choice in certain situations. Jurisdictions can help increase the numbers walking by marketing the many benefits of walking: improved personal health, lower Greenhouse Gas emissions, and lower cost (not paying for parking).

Additional Walking Resources:
A Resident’s Guide for Creating Safe and Walkable Communities (FHWA, 2008)
Walkability Checklist, US DOT
Feet First

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3.3 Planning to Support Bicycling

Planning for bicycling includes planning for complete networks and also the specific infrastructure that makes bicycling safe and more desirable. This section discusses various strategies that support bicycling within communities beyond the networks. Further information about bicycling connectivity can be found in Chapter 4.4 and additional information about best practices for infrastructure design can be found in chapter 6.4.

Bicycle transportation facilities should be designed to accommodate all ages and abilities in order to be considered a viable option for most people. The safest bicycle facilities are those that have some physical barrier from motor vehicle traffic or those routes with slow speeds. These facilities are referred to as ‘high comfort’ facilities and include shared use paths, separated bicycle lanes, neighborhood greenways and buffered bicycle lanes. Network connectivity to and from local and regional destinations should be evaluated with considerations around barriers such as steep hills or roadways with high speeds that are dangerous for cyclists to cross.

In addition to safe facilities and complete networks, other amenities are essential to increase the number of people who choose to bike. Examples include way-finding, adequate bike parking and accommodations that allow for linkages with transit such as bike racks on busses and lockers at transit stations.

Transit agencies in the Puget Sound region are accommodating people who access transit by bike. 100% of the bus fleet within the Puget Sound region is equipped with bicycle racks on the busses, and transit stations are more commonly including bicycle storage and other amenities for bicycles. Transit agencies understand the bike/bus connection, and are marketing to bike users. This image was created by Sound Transit to encourage bicycling and transit trips.

End-of-Trip Facilities

Safe bicycle and other end-of-trip facilities are important for making bicycle trips possible for many people. These facilities include bicycle storage, shower, and bathroom facilities, as well as places for bicycle repair. Shower facilities are often less influenced by local planners, but jurisdictions can work with employers to create incentives for Commute Trip Reduction49 (CTR) programs to encourage more people to bike to work. Employers and property owners can influence bike commuting by offering end of trip facilities at places of work such as lockers for personal items, shower facilities and safe bicycle storage such as bike cages. Covered bicycle parking for all-day bicycle parking is also an end-of trip necessity for bicycle commuters in the Puget Sound region due to the precipitation common in the Puget Sound region.

region. Another type of bike storage for larger volumes - **bike corrals** - provide for bike parking in busy areas where limited sidewalk cannot meet the demand for bike parking. Corrals usually take up the length of one or two car parking spaces, and are generally located in denser retail areas. The City of Portland has had many businesses willing to give up on-street car spaces in return for the benefits businesses are seeing from bicycling customers. Portland has seen **increased interest**\(^{50}\) from businesses since they launched their bike corral program in 2004. In 2011 alone they had 72 requests for corrals.

An excellent example for how to assess end of trip facilities is Commute Seattle’s **Bicycle Amenity Inventory**\(^{51}\) conducted in fall of 2010. Commute Seattle is a partnership of the Downtown Seattle Association (DSA), City of Seattle and King County Metro. The report assessed privately-provided bicycle amenities (bike racks, lockers, showers, etc.) in office buildings in downtown Seattle. The report also includes a qualitative assessment of the barriers property managers face when providing bicycle amenities to tenants, recommendations for increasing office building bicycle parking supply, and methodology and assessment tools used to inventory existing conditions.

In Downtown Seattle’s McGraw Square, the ‘Fixtation’ (bike maintenance) stand was installed by a partnership between the DSA, Metropolitan Improvement District (MID) and Commute Seattle. The ‘Fixtation’ will provide people bicycling with a free public space to inflate tires, fix flats, and make other minor repairs and adjustments. It includes eight common bicycle tools such as tire levers, wrenches, and hex keys which are permanently secured to the stand via aircraft-grade cables. The rugged design is built to withstand the elements, misuse, and vandalism and the design will prohibit bicycles from locking to the stand, ensuring availability for all users. They are useful in areas of high bicycle travel.

> “With the growing number of bike commuters in Seattle, this bike repair station is a long-awaited and welcome service,” said Wright Runstad President and DSA Board member Greg Johnson. “The convenience will be a great way to support the current bike commuters and make Downtown a safer and more accommodating place for cyclists.”\(^{52}\)

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**Bike Sharing**

Bike share is a system of publicly available, easy-to-use bikes that are rented at a small fee for short trips. It is an innovative approach to urban mobility, combining the convenience and flexibility of a bicycle with the accessibility of public transportation. Bike share systems consist of a fleet of bikes provided at a network of stations and are available on-demand to provide fast and easy access for short trips. Bike share also increases opportunities to complete the ‘first and last mile’ between transit and final destinations.

Puget Sound Bike Share is a nonprofit organization of public and private partners working to bring bike sharing to the central Puget Sound. The vision is to provide the region’s residents and visitors’ access to a low-cost, fast, flexible, and convenient transportation alternative with economic, social, health and environmental benefits. Other regions have had considerable success with bike sharing programs. In 2011, Washington D.C.’s Capital Bikeshare’s 22,000 members have reduced the number of miles driven per year by nearly 4.4 million ([ITDP Bicycle Sharing Planning Guide 2013](http://www.itdp.org/documents/ITDP_Bike_Share_Planning_Guide.pdf)).

**Additional Resources**

- Bikeability Checklist
- Washington Bikes
- League of American Bicyclists
- Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals

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3.4 Complete Streets

Washington’s Complete Streets Bill (RCW 47.04.257)

Urban main streets should be designed to provide safe access to all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, motorists, and public transportation users. It is the intent of the legislature to encourage street designs that safely meet the needs of all users and also protect and preserve a community’s environment and character.

Generally, Complete Streets are defined as streets that safely accommodate all users. There is no one definition and no singular design for Complete Streets that fits all types of roads and communities. A ‘complete’ street in a rural area may be fundamentally different than one in urban areas but both are designed to balance the safety and mobility needs of all users. According to Smart Growth America\textsuperscript{54}, adopting a Complete Streets policy enables communities to “direct their transportation planners and engineers to routinely design and operate the entire right of way to enable safe access for all users, regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation”. This statement is also reiterated in Washington’s Complete Streets and Main Street Highways Case Study Resource.\textsuperscript{55}

The National Complete Streets Coalition\textsuperscript{56} has identified elements that make ideal complete streets policies with clear and direct statements that focus on the complete transportation system rather than focusing on ‘complete streets elements’. Jurisdictions can adopt Complete Streets policies, resolutions and ordinances. The National Complete Streets Coalition cites the City of Seattle’s Complete Streets ordinance as a good example of a strong Complete Streets Policy:

“SDOT will plan for, design and construct all new City transportation improvement projects to provide appropriate accommodation for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and persons of all abilities, while promoting safe operation for all users, as provided for below.”

Washington State Department of Transportation’s (WSDOT’s) Complete Streets Program encourages local governments to adopt arterial retrofit street ordinances based on safe access for all users: pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, public transportation users, and truck drivers.


According to WSDOT’s Bikeways and Walkways Plan, a **Complete Streets** design policy is defined by several elements:

- Language that specifies ‘all users’. This includes pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicles and users, and motorists of all ages and abilities;
- A primary initiative of creating a comprehensive, integrated, connected network;
- Recognition of the need for flexibility: that all streets are different and user needs will be balanced;
- Applicability to all roads;
- Applicability to both new and retrofit projects, including design, planning, maintenance, and operations for the entire right of way;
- Description of any exceptions and establishment of a clear procedure for executive or elected official(s) approval;
- Direction that **Complete Streets** solutions fit in with the context of the community; and
- Performance standards with measurable outcomes.

Many jurisdictions in the central Puget Sound region have adopted Complete Streets policies and ordinances. The National Complete Streets Coalition provides an interactive map demonstrating the various types of complete streets policies.

Complete streets policies are just one piece of the framework of policies and programs that support active transportation and complete networks. Having a complete streets policy should guide the planning of a comprehensive transportation system for all people and for all transportation choices. Full connectivity of the bicycle and pedestrian systems should be the goal of local communities. As local communities assess pedestrian and bicycle networks, this provides an opportunity to make local decisions as to the scale of complete streets along a roadway. Some roadways may be more suitable for providing neighborhood greenways on local roads that parallel busy arterials. In other cases, all users may need to be accommodated within the right-of-way of the road. Both of these examples implement complete streets policies.
This image (right) of a NYC Complete Street shows a street with a two-way separated bicycle path buffered by parking spaces, sidewalks buffered by a treeline and additional pedestrian crossings with pavement marking indicating a school while still allowing for two lanes of traffic.

**Additional Resources:**

- Complete Streets Local Policy Workbook\(^{57}\)
- Complete Streets Policy Analysis\(^{58}\)
- Complete Streets in Underserved Communities\(^{59}\)

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3.5 The Six E’s
Education, encouragement, enforcement, equity, engineering, and evaluation are the common elements used when planning projects, programs, sub-area and comprehensive plans. The six E’s can be used as a guide to ensure that communities are covering all aspects needed to create safe walking and bicycling environments.

Education
The importance of education cannot be understated. This includes educating adults and children about how to walk and bicycle safely and to navigate the transportation system, but also includes drivers so all users of the road can safely navigate within shared space.

One of the best ways to begin educating community members about active transportation is to begin with local agency staff. Local planners, engineers and program managers all play a significant role in how active transportation is implemented locally. The City of Everett is a good example of a local agency that recognizes this. The city states explicitly in its bicycle master plan that “bicycle related education should be targeted to city staff with a focus on planners, engineers and safety officers.”

In order to expand education to adults and children alike, communities should develop and implement education programs that include bicycle safety, hazard identification skills and safe navigation, rules of the road and building overall confidence. In addition, education programs aimed at drivers in terms of speed, safety and sharing of the roadways is another aspect of planning education programs.

Communities should also consider the following when planning for pedestrian and bicycle education programs:

- Increase the use of media and public agency websites to educate the public about the beneficial role of bicycle and pedestrian transportation
- Produce materials on basic pedestrian and bicyclist safety laws and distribute in a wide variety of venues
- Integrate pedestrian and bicycle safety laws and regulations into driver’s education classes and driver’s license testing
- Produce, regularly update, and distribute maps of bicycle and pedestrian routes
- Encourage increased levels of biking and walking through more focused coordination and implementation of travel demand management (TDM) programs as well as through community engagement and events

Examples and Resources
There are many resources locally and nationally that offer information for education programs:

• The National Center for Safe Routes to School offers tips\(^{61}\) and a SRTS guide\(^{62}\) that provides a wealth of resources for planning SRTS education programs.

• The League of American Bicyclists\(^{63}\) (LAB) offers a wealth of information for bicycling education. This includes tips, videos, classes, and other resources for those seeking information and for communities planning education programs.

• The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration\(^{64}\) offers a series of guidelines, materials and tips focused on research, education and enforcement of bicyclists' and motorists' behavior to enhance roadway safety and reduce bicycle injuries and fatalities.

• Go By Bike\(^{65}\) is a bicycling safety education program run by Washington Bikes\(^{66}\) in collaboration with Olympic College, Pierce College, Bellevue College and North Seattle Community College. Students are offered a 1-credit physical education course at each of the colleges where the course is tailored to student experience, interests and abilities, by providing loaner bikes and helmets available to students who do not have bikes, or whose bikes are in disrepair. This program is funded by a grant from the Federal Highway Administration, locally administered by the Washington State Department of Transportation.

• The Major Taylor Project (MTP)\(^{67}\) is a year-round, youth development

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bicycling program of the Cascade Bicycle Club. This program is focused on introducing youth from diverse communities in low-income and disadvantaged neighborhoods to bicycling, and creating an inclusive culture of bicycling that will continue to future generations. The program was named after Marshall "Major" Taylor who was the first African American professional cyclist. The MTP provides young people with the means to explore their neighborhoods and promotes integrating bicycling, healthy living, bicycle maintenance, road safety awareness, and the importance of working toward individual goals, along with bicycling as a form of exercise, recreation, and transportation.

Other Resources
Portland State University Initiative for Bicycle and Pedestrian Innovation
Walk, Bike to School Curricula
Washington State Bicycle Commute Guide
Sound Transit Bicycle Page
National Center for Safe Routes to School Education Tips
Walk Bike Schools – How to Start a School Active Transportation Program

Encouragement
Encouragement is an integral part of increasing the number of people who walk and bike. Already discussed throughout this report are the many reasons to promote bicycling and walking such as the health benefits of increased exercise, and the environmental benefits of fewer greenhouse gas emissions along with many others. Encouragement activities often foster community engagement which is another important benefit from increased bicycling and walking.

Safe Infrastructure
Safe infrastructure is an important aspect to encouragement. Many people consider themselves willing to walk or bike more, but are wary of traffic. These people may be encouraged to walk or bike when they experience safe facilities that are separate from motor vehicle traffic. Families with children, and people with varying levels of mobility, are often more willing when safety is less of a concern. More on engineering solutions are noted in chapter 6.4.

Encouragement Programs and Events
Neighborhood Street Stories⁶⁸ is a great example of a project designed to merge storytelling, technology, and neighborhood culture to creatively engage youth in understanding how a place for all people to walk contributes to the health, safety and vibrancy of a community. Street Stories are created about public places and the walking routes people take to get to these destinations. The stories are captured

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on video by students and while creating these videos, people who live or spend time in the neighborhood learn new things about their environment

**Neighborhood Walking Ambassadors**⁶⁹ are volunteers trained to lead walks that inspire, connect, and inform the community. These walks provide people an opportunity to explore their communities together while meeting new neighbors. By leading group walks, Neighborhood Walking Ambassadors:

- Engage with neighborhood residents about the importance of walkable communities
- Build local support for pedestrian advocacy
- Increase the rate of walking
- Foster stronger, healthier, and more vibrant communities

Neighborhood Walking Ambassadors in the Puget Sound region led 100 walks brought out over 1,400 people.

A **walking school bus**⁷⁰ is a group of children walking to school with one or more adults. It can be as informal as two families taking turns walking their children to school or as structured as a planned route with meeting points, a timetable and a schedule of trained volunteers.

A variation on the walking school bus is a bicycle train where a group of children and adult leaders ride together to school.

The **Safe Routes to Schools Guide**⁷¹ outlines the benefits of starting a walking school bus as well as points to consider before launching it.

**Kidical Mass**⁷² is a fun and safe family bike ride event for kids of all ages. It started in Eugene, OR in 2008, and has spread across the country. There are many communities in the central Puget Sound region that have Kidical Mass rides.

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Bike Rodeos are a fun experience that encourages kids to bike while teaching them skills on safety and navigation. There are a lot of examples and resources for creating a bicycle rodeo from the National Center for Safe Routes to Schools\textsuperscript{73} including a rodeo manual. This image above is from a local bicycle rodeo at Loyal Heights elementary.

Reclaiming of Alleys
Alley reclamation is a movement that has been growing in the Puget Sound region that promises to better utilize these public spaces to be more accessible, to preserve historic resources, to shorten walking distances and therefore making communities more walkable and increasing connectivity to transit. These places provide for unique pedestrian environments that increase safety and even provide for event space which is a boon to local businesses.

Car Free Days
The City of Tacoma, Metro Parks Tacoma, and the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department teamed up to host “Downtown to Defiance Sunday Parkways” on September 22, 2013. This human-powered transportation event designated approximately seven miles of waterfront streets for use by cyclists and pedestrians.

Enforcement
Greater enforcement of existing traffic laws is necessary to improve the mutual respect between motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians and can change the behavior of bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists who sometimes flagrantly and dangerously ignore traffic regulations, creating unsafe conditions for all parties.

One way to begin to enforce laws is to make sure people know about them. Incorporating bicycle and pedestrian education in driver education programs and making bicycle laws easily accessible are ways to ensure people understand the laws. Second, partnerships between police, schools, public health and jurisdiction planners can increase potential for

collaboration which can maximize resources toward the greatest need when funds and staff are limited. One important aspect of this is to train local law enforcement on the unique experiences of pedestrians and bicyclists to ensure greater understanding when implementing traffic laws.

The City of Seattle has a Community Oriented Traffic Calming Program⁷⁴ which includes a variety of resources for community members to raise awareness and to educate drivers. The following are examples for how communities can help encourage people to behave safely while on the road:

- **Traffic Calming Brochure** - distributed to residents along a block that creates an opportunity to share concerns with neighbors and educate them on traffic calming
- **Neighborhood Speed Watch Sign** – Once a neighborhood enrolls in the traffic calming program, SDOT will install a Speed Watch Area sign at both ends of the block.
- **Speed Watch Trailer** – The speed watch trailer detects and displays the speed of oncoming vehicles
- **Yard Signs** - Yard signs are intended to inform drivers that they are travelling on a neighborhood street and remind drivers to slow down.
- **Painted Intersection** - Also called “intersection repair,” this consists of a mural painted by community groups on the pavement at the intersection of residential streets. This measure can help give communities a sense of place and is a great way to organize neighborhoods around a common goal. They may also have indirect effects on helping to slow traffic by awareness of other users of the street.

Areas with high pedestrian use and locations with desired increase walkability can benefit from enhanced enforcement and increased security to help prevent crime and other non-traffic related safety concerns.

**Resources**
- Washington Bikes – Bike Laws in Washington State
- The Role of Law Enforcement – Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center
- Training Law Enforcers – Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center

**The Other E’s**
- **Equity** – see chapter 5.6
- **Engineering** – see chapter 6.4
- **Evaluation** – chapters 6.1 and 6.3