Active Communities Guidebook
Approaches to Increasing Physical Activity
in Central Puget Sound
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Puget Sound Regional Council

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Purpose

The *Active Communities Guidebook* is a resource that provides information and practical examples to assist local jurisdictions in planning for healthy communities. Specifically, the guidebook describes land use and transportation approaches to promote physical activity, with a focus on bicycle and pedestrian planning. The guidebook is intended to help jurisdictions in incorporating health provisions into both the land use and transportation elements of their local comprehensive plans. This includes practices and examples for promoting active living, especially increasing opportunities for walking and bicycling.

This guidebook responds to an implementation action in VISION 2040, the long-range strategy for growth management, environment, economic development, and transportation planning for King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. VISION 2040 calls for a *Land Use, Mobility and Health Toolkit* that “explores land use and planning practices and tools that promote and improve physical, social, and mental health” (DP-Action-11, VISION 2040). It complements other resource materials designed to assist jurisdictions with implementation of VISION 2040, including PSRC’s *Policy and Plan Review Manual*. The intent is to further advance policy, planning, and implementation efforts both regionally and locally as they relate to active living.

The guidebook is a working document which can be expanded and amended with additional information on more tools and best practices. Over time, more examples and details on planning and implementation will be incorporated into the guidebook.

Organization of the Guidebook

The guidebook begins with a discussion of health and well-being and provides the context for addressing health when planning for communities and neighborhoods. Guiding legislation and policies are cited, including Washington’s Growth Management Act and the multicounty planning policies for the four-county region. Approaches to planning for active communities are then presented, beginning with the issue of equity. This section is designed to be a lens for considering social aspects and personal well-being as they relate to the built environment, comprehensive planning, and mobility.

The guidebook then profiles a number of planning practices that contribute to physical activity and wellness, including health impact assessment, land use practices, and transportation practices. In each profile, a brief description of the practice is provided, followed by examples from jurisdictions in the region. At the end of each profile is a listing of resources for additional information.

About the Project

This *Active Communities Guidebook* was funded by Public Health – Seattle & King County (PHSKC) through its *Communities Putting Prevention to Work* (CPPW) grant program. The grant is part of a national initiative through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to prevent chronic disease and promote health through policy, systems and environment changes.

PSRC collaborated with several local jurisdictions in King County which received grants through the CPPW program — including the cities of Burien, Des Moines, Federal Way, Kent, Redmond, SeaTac, and Snoqualmie. While the initial development of the guidebook focused on King County jurisdictions, it has been designed as a resource for all four counties and their cities in the central Puget Sound region.
Human health and well-being are affected by the health of the natural environment, by how communities are built, and by how people get around. Increasingly, communities around the country are taking steps to address health issues through local, county and regional planning efforts.

Approaches vary and can include (a) creating a stand-alone planning strategy for health and wellness, (b) crafting a health element in a comprehensive plan, or (c) integrating health-related goals and policies into existing plan elements. During the process for updating a comprehensive plan, various planning tools can be used to consider impacts and recommend changes to respond to health issues in the community.

Adopting an explicit health element in a comprehensive plan can demonstrate a community’s values and commitment to improving public health. Health issues lend themselves to being easily connected with other community issues, such as pedestrian safety, walkable communities, and reduction in air pollution.

**Growth Management and Health in Washington State**

In Washington state, and throughout the United States, there is a growing awareness of the connection between health, how communities are built. Washington’s Growth Management Act now includes provisions directing cities and counties to address physical activity in the land use elements of local comprehensive plans, as well as to ensure that transportation elements in plans include pedestrian and bicycle facilities that “address and encourage enhanced community access and promote healthy lifestyles” (Chapter 36.70A.070(6) (a)(vii), Revised Code of Washington).

**Growth Management and Health in Regional Planning**

VISION 2040, the long-range growth management, environment, economic development, and transportation strategy for the central Puget Sound region, provides a regional policy framework which also addresses the relationship between the built environment, transportation, and public health. VISION 2040 recognizes that healthy communities have a healthy natural environment, including clean water and air, have good facilities for walking and bicycling, and are safer for all residents.
VISION 2040 addresses numerous ways that human health can be impacted, such as through exposure to air and water pollution, noise, automobile-related injuries and deaths, chronic diseases related to physical inactivity, and lack of fresh and healthy foods.

The multicounty planning policies in VISION 2040 provide a framework for addressing health considerations in regional and local planning and decision-making processes. To be consistent with requirements in the Growth Management Act, as well as with regionally adopted planning policies, cities and counties should incorporate health provisions in their local comprehensive plans. These provisions should address improving the safety of their local transportation systems and making investment decisions that support opportunities to walk or bicycle for recreation and for transportation. Improvement programs should invest in building and upgrading sidewalks and trails to link neighborhoods with commercial districts and community facilities. Local regulations should encourage the construction of healthy buildings and promote compact, mixed-use, and walkable land use patterns.

**Planning for Growth Management and Health at the Local Level**

**HealthScape — Integrating Research into Policy**

**KING COUNTY** has engaged in an effort for more than a decade to understand better the relationship of health to how we live and travel. The county’s program, titled *HealthScape*, concludes that low-density, separated land uses and disconnected street networks are associated with:

- Increased automobile use, per capita air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and energy consumption.
- Reduced transit ridership and physical activity.
- Increased obesity and likelihood of cardiovascular disease, type II diabetes, and colorectal cancer.

Obesity’s role in diabetes and heart disease make it one of the two leading causes of preventable death in King County. (See: [http://www.kingcounty.gov/transportation/HealthScape.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/transportation/HealthScape.aspx))

**Incorporating Health into Existing Planning Goals**

**BELLEVUE** has incorporated health-related objectives into broader planning goals that address multiple issues. The city has highlighted benefits for health, accessibility, and the built environment that have resulted in policy changes that support physical activity. For example, a major pedestrian corridor—which connects the main transit station to public plazas, major retailers, offices, and civic buildings — improves opportunities for walking and bicycling in the city’s core. Also, the city’s zoning code now requires bicycle and pedestrian facilities and provides development incentives for active recreation areas near proposed light rail stations.

**BURIEN** has revised its planning and design terminology to include health-related provisions. The city’s comprehensive plan addresses safety and includes statements about building a healthy community. Updates to major planning documents happen in tandem with a broader citywide visioning effort. This allows Burien to address goals for advancing a “healthy, active, and peaceful community” through a broad spectrum of projects and programs. Improvement in health outcomes has becoming a “selling point” for related forms of community development.

**FEDERAL WAY** is integrating health into various comprehensive plan elements where there is a complementary fit. The city is also considering integrating health into internal processes for assessing and prioritizing transportation projects.
KENT is working with residents and local businesses on the Kent4Health initiative. The project contains objectives set out by the city’s elected officials to become one of the healthiest communities in the region. Health is defined broadly to incorporate spiritual, environmental, and emotional wellness in addition to physical well-being. This effort involves a significant commitment to community engagement, with opportunities for residents to be part of a committee working on health promotion, and healthy activities. These include a community health fair, multiple outdoor walks, the Cruzin’ Passport program to encourage kids to engage in physical activity during summer months, and indoor walking at a local sports arena.

KENMORE has general statements in its comprehensive plan in support of health, safety and welfare for all the city’s citizens. Policies call for the consideration of health issues, resources, and needs in planning, design and development. The prioritization of transportation investments and the allocation of resources include criteria that address “public health and safety.”

Creating a Health Element in the Plan

DES MOINES adopted a Healthy Des Moines Element into the city’s comprehensive plan and wove additional goals, policies, and strategies that promote health into other plan elements, including Land Use, Transportation, and Parks, Recreation and Open Space. New policies and actions relating to land use, food access, and the transportation system provide a framework for making necessary changes to build a healthy and vibrant community. As a result, both nutrition and active living are fostered in the city’s neighborhoods. The Healthy Des Moines Element is one of the first such elements in a city’s comprehensive plan to address the link between health and the built environment. The city was recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as a “health champion” for its efforts to address health inequities and to improve the well-being of the community.

KENT is considering the inclusion of an overall sustainability element in its comprehensive plan. The result would be an expanded treatment of environment, health, and food access in the city’s comprehensive planning efforts.

SNOQUALMIE is considering developing a sustainability element that would include a major component dedicated to health. The city is interested in integrating health objectives and policies into other elements of the comprehensive plan in order to ensure different areas of responsibility are clearly outlined. Snoqualmie is also interested in acquiring tools to link land use and transportation decisions to health impacts as it engages in planning for newly annexed areas.

Resources

American Planning Association Planning and Community Health Research Center  
http://www.planning.org/nationalcenters/health/

Puget Sound Regional Council — VISION 2040  
http://psrc.org/growth/vision2040

King County Board of Health — Planning for Healthy Communities Guidelines  

Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington — Healthy Communities  
http://www.mrsc.org/subjects/humanservices/healthymain.aspx
Equity is a key factor to address when planning for improved health and well-being — ensuring that all residents of a community or region have full access to opportunities that allow them to attain their full potential. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention addresses three primary strategies for ensuring equity, including establishing: (1) political structures and institutional practices that assure fairness and opportunity for all, (2) actual adjustments to the conditions that allow people to reach their full potential, and (3) services for individuals and families to treat problems.

Different populations can be affected by inequities, including minority or low-income population groups (referred to as environmental justice populations in federal legislation), or for special needs population groups, such as persons with disabilities, older adults, and children. These groups frequently experience health-related disparities.

**Addressing Equity in Regional Planning**

VISION 2040 calls for planning and decision-making that supports a healthy environment, addresses economic prosperity, and achieves social equity. The strategy calls for providing mobility choices for people with special needs, including persons with disabilities, older adults, youth, and low-income populations. Transportation 2040, the metropolitan transportation plan for the central Puget Sound region, also commits to ensuring that all residents of the region benefit from improved mobility, and that low-income, minority and other vulnerable populations are not adversely impacted.

**Addressing Equity in Local Planning**

**Collaboration in the Planning Process**

Through the local planning process, jurisdictions can work directly to improve environmental conditions that support health equity. For example, local governments can collaborate with representatives from diverse communities to assess mobility and accessibility needs and develop solutions and opportunities that provide benefits for the entire community.

**PolicyLink Equitable Development Toolkit**

PolicyLink is a national research and action institute dedicated to social equity. The organization has helped ensure that equity considerations are incorporated into the Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities, an interagency partnership between the Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD), Department of Transportation (DOT), and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

PolicyLink has developed an Equitable Development Toolkit that contains a broad set of 27 tools for integrating equity into planning and development activities. The Health and Place Tool Group highlights how to adjust transit-oriented development to improve transportation equity and accessibility for disadvantaged groups.


**Regional Equity Network**

PSRC has engaged in an ambitious Growing Transit Communities program funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Making sure that transit investments and the changes that come with them are as balanced and fair as possible, the program mobilizes residents and community groups representing diverse populations to participate in local planning and decision-making.

A Regional Equity Network has been established as a part of PSRC’s program. It focuses on ensuring that current residents, businesses and other community members benefit as their communities change and grow.

Training sessions for grantees to build capacity and understanding of planning and permitting processes are available, along with peer-learning and other knowledge-sharing opportunities.

[http://impactcapital.org/equity.html](http://impactcapital.org/equity.html)
KING COUNTY’s Strategic Plan has developed an integrated approach to equity and social justice. Decision-making must consider equity and social justice impacts to increase fairness and opportunity for all people, particularly for people of color, low-income communities and people with limited English proficiency. The county has established the Inter-Branch Team to ensure annually updated equity and social justice objectives are integrated among all county departments. Work plan objectives include: (1) considering equity impacts in all decision-making, (2) building community trust and capacity through improved customer services and more robust civic engagement, and (3) promoting fairness and opportunity in county practices. An annual Equity Report tracks implementation of these objectives.

DES MOINES coordinates some of its outreach activities by working with schools, court translators for people whose first language is not English, and senior centers that have participants from communities of color. The city also works with SeaMar Community Health Centers in coordinating some of its outreach efforts.

LAKE FOREST PARK supports after-school youth programs, day camps and creative activities for youth. There is a recognized need for additional mobility options for youth and seniors. The city sees value in working with neighboring jurisdictions to supplement its recreation needs.

Establishing Partnerships

Establishing partnerships with non-profits, faith-based organizations, and private businesses is a way of providing for unmet needs in communities with few financial resources.

BURIEN has worked to build relationships with diverse communities through faith-based organizations and non-profit groups. Perhaps more importantly, the city has coordinated public outreach and engagement across departments and provides community organizations and leaders in underserved communities with a more direct line to the broad spectrum of planning activities.

Public Outreach

BELLEVUE uses various types of public outreach to ensure its process for the prioritization of bicycle and pedestrian improvements addresses social equity issues. For example, the city’s Public Involvement Plan developed for the Eastgate / I 90 Land Use and Transportation Project specifically called for participation consistent with the diverse population of the study area and nearby neighborhoods through community workshops and other events.

The city reached out to target communities by facilitating more than 30 community events and by providing interpretation and translation services. A significant diversity outreach

Community Mapping

Community mapping is one approach to use for identifying key deficiencies and establishing objectives to improve mobility and accessibility in underserved areas. Although jurisdictions do not have direct control over transit service distribution, it is important for cities and counties to work with transit agencies to ensure that transit is targeted to areas with populations that cannot or choose not to access a vehicle. Such coordination will help to address key deficiencies and needed on-site improvements, and identify how to align the bicycle and pedestrian travel corridors with transit, for example, by improving accessibility and forming targets for bike storage and other amenities at transit stops and stations.

http://www.centerforcommunitymapping.org/

Sound Steps

The Sound Steps program organizes walks in the ethnically diverse communities of south Seattle. The program has the added benefit of providing an opportunity for people to express pride in doing something positive and “reclaiming” their neighborhood, in addition to achieving improved health outcomes.

http://www.seattle.gov/parks/seniors/soundsteps.htm
component is integrated into the city’s recreation programs. The Cultural Conversations program provides a forum for women from diverse backgrounds to engage in cross-cultural dialogue and improve connections between diverse communities in Bellevue.

FEDERAL WAY has an online public outreach program — Engage Federal Way — with information that can be translated into languages spoken by the city’s citizens. A dropdown menu on the website allows interested parties to provide input on community development issues, including personal visions for subareas of the city, and on where active transportation improvements are needed, particularly in school zones. Bicycle and pedestrian access to transit in underserved areas was addressed in the Transportation Master Plan update.

Resources

CDC Office of Minority Health & Health Disparities (OMHD)
http://www.cdc.gov/omhd/

Washington State Department of Health — Nutrition & Physical Activity Plan — Cultural Competence (p. 4, 31)
http://depts.washington.edu/waaction/plan/index.html

Trust for Public Land — Healthy Parks, Healthy Communities (HPHC)
http://www.lchc.org/documents/HealthyParksHealthyCommunities.pdf

King County — Equity & Social Justice Initiative: Tools & Resources

King County — Racial & Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH)
PLANNING FOR ACTIVE COMMUNITIES:

Health Impact Assessment

Embarking on a comprehensive plan update provides communities an opportunity to raise awareness about and address health issues, such as the relationship of built environment on public health. An emerging practice in the United States, called health impact assessment (HIA), can inform the plan update process and identify decision alternatives that (1) decrease health risks, (2) lessen adverse impacts for vulnerable populations, and (3) ensure equitable distribution of benefits. Using a detailed and transparent approach, both adverse and beneficial effects can be assessed. The process can engage stakeholders in identifying health-promoting decision alternatives. There are strong similarities to an environmental impact assessment, and the HIA process can supplement or link to other types of evaluations.

Steps in a Health Impact Assessment

Standard steps for health impact assessments include:

**Screening** — Identify projects/policies where an HIA would be useful.

**Scoping** — Identify which impacts to address.

**Risk Assessment** — Identify who will be affected and how.

**Recommendations** — Identify changes to promote positive or mitigate harmful health effects.

**Reporting** — Report results to decision-makers.

**Evaluation** — Evaluate the impact of the HIA on the decision-making process.

Health Impact Assessment — an Overview

A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) involves a combination of procedures, methods and tools used to evaluate a policy, program or project as to its potential effects on the health of a population, and how these effects will affect different members of a population. HIA can help identify and consider the potential — or actual — health and equity impacts of a proposal on a given population.

HIA can inform and enhance equitable, health-aware decision-making at all levels. The purpose of the HIA is to inform, influence, and support decision-making. Many factors will influence decision-making, and it is important to acknowledge that HIA is just one of these.

A HIA’s primary output is a set of recommendations based on the best evidence available. The recommendations should highlight practical ways to enhance the positive impacts of a proposal, and to remove or minimize any negative impacts on health.

Benefits of Using HIA

- Addressing multiple factors affecting health and inequality
- Demonstrating health gain as added value
- Using a multidisciplinary and participatory approach
- Contributing to sustainable development
- Responding to public concerns about health

Excerpted from King County’s HIA webpage:
Resources

American Planning Association: Zoning Practice (October 2011) — The Effective Use of HIA in Land-Use Decision Making

APA Washington Chapter — HIA: Applications for Local Government Planning
http://www.washington-apa.org/conferences/2010/program

Public Health – Seattle & King County

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/hia.htm

Health Impact Project
http://www.healthimpactproject.org/hia

Example:
Health Impact Assessment for State Route 520

In 2007, the Washington State Legislature established a mediation process to develop a project impact plan for the State Route 520 Replacement Bridge and high-occupancy vehicle project (Chapter 47.01.380, Revised Code of Washington). The legislation includes language directing the process to incorporate recommendations from a health impact assessment (HIA), to be conducted by Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) and Public Health – Seattle & King County.

Statutory Goals

• Assess the State Route 520 project’s impact on “air quality, carbon emissions and other public health issues.”

• Protect the health of the public by raising awareness among decision makers of the relationship between health and the physical, social and economic environment, thereby ensuring that they include a consideration of health consequences in their deliberations.

• Make recommendations to enhance the positive impacts and to remove or minimize any negative impacts on health.
PLANNING FOR ACTIVE COMMUNITIES:
Land Use Approaches

The Growth Management Act calls for a consideration of planning approaches that promote physical activity in the Land Use Element. This portion of the guidebook offers information on a variety of land use practices that can help to increase opportunities for walking and bicycling. The practices addressed include: open space and recreation planning, shared use agreements, zoning and design, and compact development.

Open Space and Recreation Planning

Easy, affordable access to parks, playgrounds, open space, and trails greatly expands opportunities for physical activity, especially for community members with financial, mobility, and time constraints. When designing recreational activity programs, it is beneficial both in planning and programming to get input from people representing different cultural backgrounds. In many cultures, family-based physical activity for adults and children together is important, and programming should reflect this preference. Trails can also play an important role as safe corridors for walking and bicycling.

Many jurisdictions utilize National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) facility development standards as a guideline for the number of facilities needed per capita or the percentage of land that should be dedicated to recreation and open space. NRPA recommends using a process to develop standards that is rooted in local goals, priorities, and conditions. To plan for active recreation, it is important to establish standards based on a classification system for parks and recreation facilities that identifies different scales of facilities (e.g., mini-park, sports complex, or greenway) and the geographic reach they will have within the community, as well as the quality of park facilities.

Open Space and Recreational Planning in Washington State

The Growth Management Act directs local governments to identify lands useful for public purposes, as well as open space corridors within the urban growth area useful for recreation (Chapter 36.70A.160, Revised Code of Washington). The Department of Commerce has recommended the addition of street trees, the formation of neighborhood centers, infill development, and careful siting of public facilities to transform communities into areas that support physical activity. The department has produced Planning for Parks, Recreation, and Open Space to provide detailed guidance regarding planning for recreation in comprehensive plans. Level-of-service (LOS) standards for recreation facilities can and should be utilized to identify locations that are in need of recreation space or better quality facilities, while contributing to the equitable distribution of recreation resources.

The Washington State Department of Health has collaborated with underserved population groups to develop and encourage approaches emphasizing the health of the entire family. Instead of individual exercise programs, facilities can develop activities that attract adults, children and youth.
Open Space and Recreational Planning at the Regional Level

VISION 2040 recognizes that parks and recreational areas create opportunities for physical activity. VISION 2040 encourages co-locating facilities that could be used in different capacities during different times of the day. It speaks to ensuring that the benefits of regional capital facilities, such as parks and recreational services, are shared by residents of communities throughout the region.

Open Space and Recreational Planning at the Local Level

Monitoring and Assessment

KING COUNTY has established performance standards based on proximity to regional trails and providing recreation services through community partnerships. The county’s Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) developed a set of community and environmental indicators that show trends in recreation facility and program use. These indicators are overlaid with demographic data to understand better trends in recreation. This analysis results in the redevelopment or update of sports programs, facility improvements, and assigning capital resources to geographic areas with deficits in recreation facilities.

King County conducts an equity assessment to evaluate and implement a fair distribution of benefits and burdens regarding parks and recreation programs with the goal of reducing racial or income-based inequity. This includes maps that illustrate regional trail access, open space, and park distribution for various race and income levels. [http://your.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/measures/equity.aspx](http://your.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/measures/equity.aspx)

REDMOND monitors recreation programs for enrollment by age group, as well as evaluates human service provisions to immigrant and refugee communities, as part of its Community Indicators program. The city’s 50 Plus recreation program includes wellness programs to assist older adults in living actively.

Recreation

FEDERAL WAY has established a recreation inclusion program for all residents, including those with disabilities. Some of the activities include life skills classes, social clubs, trips and tours, Special Olympics, theater, and special events. Scholarships and fee reductions for other recreation programs are available for low-income families. Coordination with the non-profit Federal Way Soccer Association has also resulted in targeted programming for youth in the community.

KENT has a Senior Activity Center that provides programs, activities and services to men and women over the age of 50 living in the Kent area. The city also has an adaptive recreation program that offers a full range of programs, services and classes for all citizens, including those with disabilities. The program includes health and nutrition classes, as well as a variety of teen and individual sports programs.

BURIEN operates a unique community art center that serves a wide region. As part of its overall recreation program offerings, the art center provides programming that serves special populations and those with...
disabilities. The city also offers late night recreation programs in partnership with SeaTac, Des Moines and Tukwila. Burien also partners with the local school district to promote the program to special needs students.

Coordinating with Other Providers

KENMORE’s comprehensive plan addresses recreational opportunities for people of different ages, health, family status, and financial ability. The city also works with other providers — the Northshore Parks and Recreation Service Area and the Northshore Senior Center — to support activities for youths and seniors.

SNOQUALMIE relies on the YMCA to provide programs to reach a variety of community members of differing ages. Operated through the Mt. Si Senior Center, Snoqualmie Valley Transit provides transportation to recreation opportunities for a discounted fare.

Resources

National Recreation and Parks Association — Classification System for Parks and Recreation
http://www.nrpa.org/

Department of Commerce — Planning for Parks, Recreation, and Open Space in Your Community
http://www.commerce.wa.gov/site/408/default.aspx

Shared Use Agreements

Agreements for sharing use of facilities or space can increase opportunities for free and low-cost physical activity by “unlocking” schools, colleges, gymnasiums, and other publicly-funded facilities for afterhours use. Such agreements typically spell out guidelines on how districts share maintenance costs and liability risks. Shared use can also result in more efficient use of public resources.

Shared Use Agreements in Washington State

Examples in Washington state include elements as basic as: allowing community events or programs to occur in school facilities, opening school facilities to the public during non-school hours, opening a portion of school property for public use during school and non-school hours, and sharing the funding, ownership, and programming of facilities on school grounds with outside entities.

Basic guidance for developing shared use agreements includes:

- Assess baseline needs and conditions at target properties.
- Identify partners and target resources.
- Inform/educate decision-makers and seek concept approval.
- Negotiate with risk management, labor, and legal experts.
- Acquire formal approval.
Shared Use Agreements in Local Planning

Agreements Between Cities and School Districts

BURIEN has developed a shared use agreement with adjacent cities and the local school district. This was done as part of the Healthy Highline Communities Coalition’s work through a grant from Public Health Seattle-King County. Although the agreement itself has not yet been adopted, the cities continue to explore reciprocal access without increasing costs for either the city or the school district. In the meantime, the city and school district are using each other’s facilities for programs and events on a regular basis.

The city has conducted an inventory of school facilities as a component of their recreation system. As the city’s Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan is updated, Burien is taking into consideration whether school facilities can be counted as part of the city’s level-of-service standards for parks if they provide additional access to recreation for the surrounding community.

DES MOINES is a member of the Healthy Highline Communities Coalition (HHCC), along with Burien, Normandy Park, SeaTac, and the Highline School District. Together they are working toward a shared use agreement to maximize resources and services to support thriving families, schools, and communities. Des Moines is advancing a policy to support shared use agreements in its 2012 comprehensive plan amendments.

FEDERAL WAY has inventoried school facilities and other potential recreational facilities not owned by the city as possible resources for recreational facilities. The city has a shared use agreement with one of its schools and has established an interlocal agreement with a utility company to develop a walking and bicycling trail in a utility right-of-way.

KENT has a shared use agreement with the Kent School District going back to 1983 that allows access to indoor and outdoor facilities. School facilities are used for after-school and late-night programs, as well as for sports leagues. The city is currently working with local school districts to further consider how shared use of school recreational facilities can help fulfill recreation needs in the planning area.

Agreements with Schools and Other Agencies

BELLEVUE planning policies call for partnering with school districts to use school sites for public access to recreation and cultural facilities. Policies also call for developing reciprocal access between city, school, and non-profit facilities. The city has utilized shared use agreements extensively. Such partnerships are helping to meet community needs by focusing on schools as community resource centers, efficiently using public resources, establishing joint athletic field scheduling and development, and providing specific sites for additional recreational opportunities.

REDMOND has adopted comprehensive plan policies to increase community use of school fields, expand agreements for park space at school sites, co-develop sports facilities, increase shared use of county parks, and avoid duplication by sharing resources. The city has been able to establish a shared use agreement with the Lake Washington School District that ensures city-sponsored youth activities are given priority when school-based activities are not occurring. City-sponsored adult programs are allowed on school grounds and renewed on an annual basis.

KENMORE has a lease agreement with Bastyr University to upgrade and retain existing ball fields on university property for use by the general public.
Resources

Public Health Law & Policy (PHLP) — Opening School Grounds to the Community After Hours

Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction — Analysis of the Joint Use of Public School Facilities: Report to the Legislature

UC Berkeley Center for Cities & Schools — School Facilities Joint Use Cost Calculator
http://citiesandschools.berkeley.edu/joint-use.html

National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities — Community Use of Schools
http://www.ncef.org/rl/joint_use.cfm

Community Schools Collaboration — Schools As Hubs
http://www.cscwa.org/what/schools-as-hubs

Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition — “Shared Use for Washington State: A Toolkit to Guide Community Partners in Forming Successful Agreements”
http://copcwa.org/

Physical Design

Physical design can support active communities through increased densities, mixed use, and improved street connectivity. These are key ways to improve opportunities for walking, bicycling, and using transit.

Site planning and design review practices that support active communities can be grouped into three primary categories:

1. Promoting Density and Mixed-Use Development — Simplify regulations to encourage growth in dense, mixed-use centers and transit station areas. Provide incentives and regulations for ground-floor retail uses. Work with partners, such as school districts and other service providers, to locate or relocate facilities in centers.

2. Improving Site and Streetscape Characteristics — Improve exterior building characteristics and require the provision of street trees, landscaping, and street furniture.

3. Diversifying Travel Options — Develop and implement incentives and regulations for walkways and bikeways as retrofits or a condition of land use development. Reduce parking requirements and otherwise manage pedestrian access, location, and design for parking facilities. Institute traffic calming measures in centers and transit station areas and require street connectivity and open space linkages.

Physical Design Guidelines in Transportation 2040

1. Encourage a mix of complementary land uses, particularly uses that generate pedestrian activity and transit ridership.
2. Encourage compact growth by addressing planned density.
3. Link neighborhoods; connect streets, sidewalks, and trails.
4. Integrate activity areas with surrounding neighborhoods.
5. Locate public and semipublic uses near high-capacity transit stations in designated urban centers and activity centers.
6. Design for pedestrians and bicyclists.
7. Provide usable open spaces for the public.
8. Manage the supply of parking.
9. Promote the benefits of on-street parking.
10. Reduce and mitigate the effects of parking.
Physical Design in Regional Planning

Transportation 2040, the region’s long-range transportation plan, includes a set of Physical Design Guidelines to support coordinating active community investments and focusing these activities in centers.

Guidance specific to designing for pedestrians and bicyclists calls for a design review program and standards regarding the location of buildings, entrances, landscaping, weather protection, bike storage, street furniture, lighting, and other amenities. Minimum standards for pedestrian and bicycle amenities are encouraged alongside traffic calming and other network improvements. (See PSRC’s Physical Design Guidelines Manual: http://psrc.org/assets/254/designmanual.pdf.)

Physical Design in Local Planning

Design Guidelines

BURIEN has established design guidelines especially for the downtown area, resulting in newly built streets with multiple pedestrian amenities, bike lanes, and green space on a former superblock site.

FEDERAL WAY utilizes community design guidelines to expand pedestrian circulation, public space, and pedestrian amenities. All zoning districts require developments to include accessible building entrances that are linked via pathways to all on-site properties, adjacent development, as well as transit and parking. Pathways are to be delineated by buffers and pavement texture/color variations. The guidelines indicate that bicycle racks should be provided for all commercial developments.

KENT has established design guidelines for the downtown that encourage pedestrian-oriented development. Parking standards provide for on-site parking reductions and shared parking. The city has established a parking cap in the downtown to encourage higher intensity of development and a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere.

The city is also working on improving coordination between transportation and recreation planning for pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The result will be a more integrated system, with improved connections between recreation trails, sidewalks, and bike paths. Better coordination should also lead to wider use, as facilities will be more accessible to a broader range of users.

LAKE FOREST PARK has established a set of Town Center Framework Design Guidelines, which call for accessible public walking routes every 200-250 feet, traffic calming in areas noted to have high levels of pedestrian travel, and other pedestrian-oriented design elements. Additional guidance calls for the Town Center to be the focus of the city’s activities in bringing facilities into compliance for disability access and make them more accessible to people of all abilities. (The city’s Legacy Plan calls for creating a trail network throughout the city.)

Resources

American Planning Association — Zoning Practice: Zoning for Universal Design and Visitability

Context-Sensitive Design

Context-sensitive design is a practice within transportation planning that addresses the physical setting of the project in a specific community or location. A primary focus is on the preservation of scenic, aesthetic, historic, and/or environmental resources of the setting.

For information on highways and context sensitive solutions, see: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/context/.
Compact Development

Focusing active community investments in centers is important because a larger share of nonmotorized trips occurs in these areas. While driving alone remains the largest proportion for work trips for travel outside of centers, work trips in and to centers include a high proportion of walking, transit, and bicycling trips. Investments in active communities in centers and other concentrated areas, such as high-capacity transit station areas, help reinforce these uses and improve safety.

Compact Development in Regional Planning

VISION 2040 indicates that designated regional growth centers, as well as countywide and local centers, should be developed in a manner to encourage walking, biking, and transit use.

Centers and other compact urban areas are characterized by pedestrian-friendly and transit-oriented development with a mix of uses. They provide an opportunity to bring shopping, recreation, offices, and housing closer together. These central places create environments that are more accessible — especially for walking, bicycling, and using transit.

Compact Development in Local Planning

Creating a Grid

BELLEVUE began to break up superblocks in its downtown area with the creation of a major pedestrian corridor that connects the main transit station to public plazas, major retailers, offices, civic buildings, museums, and a large downtown park. The city is now continuing that approach and is establishing a gridded street network.

Bellevue is finding ways to provide direct pedestrian and bicycle connections through existing blocks by working closely with property owners and developers in fulfilling nonmotorized planning objectives. In particular, additional master planning initiatives are exploring pedestrian and bicycle connections to link the downtown with Lake Washington and ensure connections to the wider trail system.
BURIEN has an existing grid network in its downtown and created several new streets to break up a super-block in the heart of the downtown. The city purchased the superblock with the goal of creating a dense, mixed-use vibrant center. The block has become the city’s Town Square development.

REDMOND has a grid network in the historic downtown core and plans to utilize bike boulevards to form connections to trails. The city’s elected officials have committed to maintain the downtown as a functional environment in which to live, work, and play, allowing the city to focus development. Redmond has also established a business tax dedicated to transportation, allowing the city to construct new connections that support pedestrian-oriented development.

FEDERAL WAY has developed a more detailed inventory of existing and proposed active transportation facility improvements, as well as targets to support pedestrian-oriented streetscapes in the city center. Newly planned streets will create more of a grid network. Guidelines call for pedestrian and bicycle features, such as wider sidewalks.

The city understands that public and private investment should be targeted in the city center to encourage pedestrian-oriented development. A planned action environmental impact statement, multifamily tax abatement, opportunities for public-private partnerships, and a program to establish the center as a foreign investment receiving area are all being advanced to accommodate increased densities and more pedestrian-oriented development.

Sitting Civic Facilities

BURIEN relocated its city hall in the downtown area and has combined services with the library (operated by the King County Library System) on this central site. The downtown has attracted some private development and contributed to the retention and creation of small-scale retail businesses. These projects represent an early step in the city’s transformation into a pedestrian-oriented community.

Planning for Pedestrian-Friendly Development

KENMORE is committed to developing a pedestrian-oriented city center that provides more opportunities for people to walk, bike, and use transit. The city has established downtown pedestrian and trail linkages, as well as provided detailed guidance in its Downtown Plan, for incorporating pedestrian and bicycle system improvements, including crosswalks, on a number of primary streets. Additional goals and objectives call for a nonmotorized circulation system that links to the downtown from other destinations in the community.

LAKE FOREST PARK intends to support its Town Center by expanding the sidewalk network, landscaping parking areas, and improving pedestrian access between the center, adjacent bus stops, and access points to surrounding neighborhoods. Policies for the Town Center call for pedestrian-oriented land uses, siting improvements that enhance pedestrian facilities (to support street level retail and services), visually interesting building facades, and design review to support these objectives.

Finally, Lake Forest Park has engaged with a Human Services Commission to establish a senior housing overlay that increases opportunities for affordable senior housing in areas that have better access to supportive services and areas targeted for traffic calming treatments.

DES MOINES is making a significant commitment to redevelopment and recognizes that this can attract transit service at reliable levels. The city recently eased restrictions on building heights in the downtown Marina District. In addition, infrastructure improvements to the water system to support future growth in this district are nearly complete.
KENT recently adopted a subarea plan for the Midway Subarea, which is close to planned high-capacity transit investments adjacent to Pacific Highway South. The plan includes development regulations and design guidelines which support more intense mixed-use development around transit stations. Blocks are to be small and walkable with pedestrian and bicycle amenities.

SNOQUALMIE has planned for pedestrian-friendly development in its historic downtown core, as well as in newer neighborhood center commercial areas at Snoqualmie Ridge. The city’s Downtown Master Plan provides direction for pedestrian improvements in downtown. Completion of the first phase has resulted in widened sidewalks, improved crossings, pedestrian-scale lighting, benches, bicycle racks, and streetscaping. The next phase will extend the pedestrian improvements, along with a shared-use path, to connect with existing and planned local and regional trails. The city also plans to revise its zoning regulations for an area adjacent to the downtown to allow for higher-density housing.

In the Snoqualmie Ridge neighborhood center, the city’s development standards require short blocks with commercial buildings abutting wide sidewalks with street trees, pedestrian-scaled lights, and other urban design elements.
PLANNING FOR ACTIVE COMMUNITIES:
Transportation Approaches

This portion of the guidebook offers information on a number of transportation planning practices that can help to increase opportunities for walking and biking. The practices addressed include bicycle and pedestrian planning, complete streets, multimodal concurrency, and safe routes to school.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning

Incorporating specific bicycle and pedestrian provisions in a comprehensive plan is an important aspect of providing more mobility choices for residents of a community. Having specific policies and implementation actions can help to sustain initiatives and achieve strategic investments that support increased physical activity and health.

Establishing level-of-service standards or performance standards for walking and bicycling can also be a meaningful and valuable planning tool. For example, such standards are often used to prioritize projects and investments.

Monitoring pedestrian and bicycle travel is also a useful planning tool. For example, performance evaluations can be designed to track network miles added, percentage of the network completed, and the number of bicycle racks added.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning in Washington State

Washington state has earned the title of “Most Bicycle Friendly State” from the League of American Bicyclists for four years in a row. Yet the 2008 State Bicycle Facilities and Pedestrian Walkways Plan conducted a review of local and state highway plans and identified a need for $1.6 billion in investments to pedestrian and bicycle safety and mobility, including gaps and school-related safety improvements.

The Growth Management Act requires transportation elements in local comprehensive plans to include a pedestrian and bicycle component (Chapter 36.70A.070(6)(a)(vii), Revised Code of Washington). The element should identify and designate planned improvements and corridors collaboratively with other jurisdictions and agencies.

Washington State Department of Commerce has identified the provisions that should be included in an active transportation plan:

- Inventories of facilities, travel patterns, and safety data.
- Goals and policies that clarify how the jurisdiction is planning to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian travel.
- Adopted facility typology and associated guidelines.
- Benchmarks of success regarding system development and programmatic commitments for education, encouragement, and enforcement (including transportation demand management and commute trip reduction strategies).

Bike-Housing Balance

Arlington County in Virginia has set the goal of ensuring that all residents live within a quarter-mile of a bicycle facility and has currently achieved 90 percent coverage.

• Public engagement and input from school districts, local and regional advocacy groups, enforcement agencies and other city, county, and state departments.
• A review of associated development regulations and proposed street improvements (such as traffic circles, speed signs, speed bumps and other traffic calming measures).
• Identified deficiencies and a prioritized list of improvements based on community-driven criteria.
• An implementation strategy that identifies annual funding options and sets a framework to monitor established benchmarks.

Benchmarks identified by the department include:
• Adoption of dedicated funding for active transportation.
• Targeted improvements to law enforcement.
• Number of safe routes to school projects
• Sidewalk or bike facility completion.
• Accessibility or equity measures such as the number of residents within a quarter mile of bicycle facility.
• Improvements around schools and senior centers.
• Inventories and installation of amenities (street furniture, pedestrian- or bicycle-activated signals, lighting, bike storage, showers, and lockers).
• Maintenance objectives such as removal of hazards along bicycle and pedestrian routes (drainage grates or debris).

Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning for the Region

The Regional Council’s 2003 Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Implementation Strategy (currently being updated) identifies a set of objectives and associated actions. It outlines the division of responsibilities between the state, region, counties, cities, ports, transit agencies, private developers, and non-profit organizations. The strategy also includes a summary of capital facility development guidance, examples of successful projects, supportive regional policies, and an assessment of implementation challenges.

The strategy highlights the following key constraints:
• A piecemeal system of sidewalks and pedestrian environments with disparate conditions and requirements.
• Few non-motorized connections to employment, retail, and dense residential concentrations or other common origins and destinations.

The strategy also calls for complementing the existing efforts to capitalize on opportunities to develop a contiguous, user-friendly system that:
• Creates connections to, and improves circulation within, urban centers.
• Links to regional transit stations, creating seamless intermodal connections.
• Fills gaps in the regional network and in systems within, and connecting to, urban centers and transit station areas.
• Provides travel opportunities parallel to highway and major arterial corridors.

Transportation 2040 emphasizes the preservation and maintenance of existing transportation facilities. Bicycle and pedestrian investments can often be comparatively modest — such as regional way-finding and online bike route planning — while increasing overall benefits. It is also important to minimize conflicts
between nonmotorized and other modes supporting safe routes to school, and to develop bicycle and pedestrian trails as amenities that can help spur economic development and promote physical activity.

Transportation 2040 advances the development of a regional bicycle and pedestrian network oriented to designated regional centers and transit station areas as a framework for regional and local nonmotorized transportation planning. A key goal is to improve pedestrian and cyclist access to transit.

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning by Local Jurisdictions**

Among jurisdictions in the central Puget Sound region, location prioritization criteria for bicycle and pedestrian investments most commonly include improved access to transit, access to schools and other centers of activity, system connectivity, and safety issues. Other criteria may include recreational value, lack of alternative routes, community feedback, estimated costs, and potential for other funding sources.

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Planning**

**FEDERAL WAY** is developing a bicycle pedestrian master plan that will establish active transportation linkages between various neighborhoods and districts in the city, as well as between activity centers, such as parks and schools. Federal Way wants to ensure that its efforts to inventory and establish active transport can be sustained. For example, the city may consider an inventory of bike storage and amenities in a manner that can be easily updated and advanced into future implementation.

**SNOQUALMIE** is in the process of preparing a master bicycle and pedestrian plan. Recent growth highlights the need for more direct bicycle commute options, and the city wants to address such needs.

**Prioritizing Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects**

**BELLEVUE** has established policies that support prioritization for future nonmotorized facilities in the comprehensive plan. There are five primary categories of priority:

- Safety
- Access to schools, parks, commercial areas
- Access to transit
- System connectivity
- Type of road (based on the city’s roadway hierarchy)

Maps of prioritized projects are included as part of the city’s Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Facility Plan. The plan includes a summary of deficiencies, such as sidewalk completion and/or conditions. It establishes targeted corridors/projects that complete the system and align transit with bicycle and pedestrian modes.

Bellevue worked with its transportation commission to establish priority rankings for each project using analysis of surrounding density, land use mix, proximity to major destinations, input from the city’s sidewalk program, and the priority bicycle corridors.

**BURIEN** is currently in the process of establishing new priorities for bicycle and pedestrian planning as it updates a variety of plans. The recently adopted Transportation Master Plan includes criteria for transportation project prioritization, such as multimodal mobility and healthy and active lifestyles. These criteria are intended to make bicycle, pedestrian, and transit projects more competitive against more traditional motorized projects.
FEDERAL WAY prioritizes transportation investments to address safety considerations based on rates and severity of collisions. Locations of nonmotorized collisions are flagged and looked at individually. The result may be a redesign of the road or other treatments. The city uses transit boardings as a proxy for levels of walking activity to target pedestrian investments.

KENT utilizes a citizens’ advisory committee to make recommendations for its transportation improvement program. The program includes ongoing support for pedestrian and bicycle system projects. The city also has a bicycle advisory board which works with elected officials and city staff to promote nonmotorized travel. Kent publishes a Cycle and Walking Guide to inform residents about walking and bicycling opportunities in the city.

REDMOND identifies existing conditions for bicycle and pedestrian facilities, prioritizing multimodal corridors, and links transit and nonmotorized investments. Priorities are based on type of roadway, community feedback in neighborhood planning, and access to schools, parks, and commercial areas. Additional attention is given to pedestrian and bicycle collisions.

DES MOINES has established priority pedestrian and bicycle improvements that are part of a larger network planned for the city. The city is in the process of updating the bicycle and pedestrian portions of its master plans. Des Moines is considering health indicators as a benefit along with other factors as it folds related policies into the comprehensive plan.

Recent comprehensive plan amendments included policies to: (1) encourage mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly, and transit-oriented development along major transit corridors and near transit nodes to enable residents to be more physically active as part of their daily routine, and (2) consider transportation options for walking and bicycling by enhancing roadways with sidewalks and trails that connect to civic facilities, recreation areas, educational institutions, employment locations, and shopping.

KENMORE has policies that call for an explicit sidewalk, trail, and bicycle plan to create a network of facilities. The city has identified existing and priority pedestrian and bicycle corridors. Kenmore worked with transit agencies to relocate a park-and-ride lot to support design improvements that promote nonmotorized travel to and from the relocated lot.

SNOQUALMIE is using a method to prioritize locations and types of bicycle and pedestrian improvements based on the ability of these facilities to link specific activity centers, such as schools, parks, and other locations. Current project priorities focus on improving deficient conditions with a particular emphasis on projects that can be combined with utility improvements. The city is considering expanding this approach by reserving a portion of its transportation budget for nonmotorized improvements.

Funding Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

SEATTLE’s Bridging the Gap funding package (2006) dedicates $60 million to pedestrian improvements, and the Seattle Bicycle Master Plan calls for $240 million on a 450-mile network of bicycle facilities by 2016. (Seattle currently has 139 miles of on-street bicycle facilities.)

Over a three-year period (2007 to 2010) the city installed 39 miles of bike lanes and 75 miles of sharrows (that is, shared lanes that are marked on roadways). A 2010 survey of Seattleites shows that 3.6 percent of commuters were getting to work by bicycle. This represents close to double the mode share estimated in 2000 (1.9 percent).
Collaborative Planning for Biking and Walking

BELLEVUE works collaboratively with multiple stakeholders to align its bicycle and pedestrian facilities to address varying needs across the city. The Eastside Bikeway Collaborative has aided in establishing links to the regional system alongside other jurisdictions. Bellevue is also establishing an annual report that monitors progress on bicycle and pedestrian facility investments, safety, and other components established in the 2009 Plan.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Monitoring

REDMOND’s annual Mobility Report Card, provides a process for monitoring: (1) collisions involving pedestrians and bicyclists, (2) the percentage of commuters travelling by alternatives to driving alone, and (3) the percentage of the proposed 2022 bicycle system that is completed. The city has organized walking audits with Feet First to refine priorities, engage in a broader public education effort, and ensure that departments collaborate more effectively in supporting active community development.

Redmond utilizes community indicators that measure active transportation, parks equity, and other benchmarks, including: (1) parks and convenience goods and/or services within one half-mile of all dwelling units, (2) the percentage of units within one quarter-mile of transit stops, (3) park acreage and trail miles per one thousand people, and (4) the concentration of investment and growth in centers and citywide. Additional measures monitor transit service and ridership, collisions involving pedestrians and bicyclists, bicycle system completion, and the percentage of area meeting the city’s pedestrian-supportive standards in specified districts.

Resources

Washington State Departments of Commerce, Transportation, & Health — Planning for Bicycling and Walking: 2005 Amendments to the GMA

Puget Sound Regional Council — DRAFT Regional Bike Map Standards
http://psrc.org/assets/3615/BPAC_regional_bike_map_standards_white_paper.pdf

Bicycle Planning, Best Practices and Count Methodology (UW Studio Project)
http://psrc.org/assets/5430/UDP_Bicycle_Studio_Final_20110111.pdf

City of Redmond — Community Indicators
http://www.redmond.gov/PlansProjects/ComprehensivePlanning/RedmondCommunityIndicators/

Portland’s Bicycle Plan (Oregon)
The Portland Bicycle Plan for 2030 establishes a prioritized project list for building an active travel system. The city used surveys to evaluate the relative importance of different factors. Minimal distance, the avoidance of streets with heavy vehicle traffic, and the presence of bike lanes were deemed most important in route selection. Additional factors included wait time at signals, opportunities to ride on signed bike routes, presence of separated paths, and the avoidance of hills.

Recommendations to develop the system included the formation of (1) a well-connected network of low-traffic neighborhood streets, (2) bike lanes linked to paths and bike boulevards, and (3) supportive mixed-use zoning.

http://www.portlandonline.com/transportation/index.cfm?c=44597
Complete Streets

Planning and creating complete streets involves a commitment by transportation agencies to ensure that facilities for biking, walking, and getting around by wheelchair are incorporated into roadway improvements as new streets are installed or old streets reconstructed. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has developed guidance that specifically calls for the adoption of complete streets measures to improve health through transportation policy.

Seattle-King County and Tacoma-Pierce County Boards of Health have also adopted resolutions urging decision makers to implement complete streets policies. Such policies can advance the installation of a more diverse set of facilities with the potential to support increased physical activity.

Across the United States, more than 200 jurisdictions have adopted complete streets policies over the past several years. The various tools that have been implemented by these jurisdictions include resolutions, legislation or ordinances, internal policies, plans, design manuals, tax ordinances, and executive orders. Approximately a dozen jurisdictions have adopted complete streets policies in the central Puget Sound region.

The most comprehensive complete streets policies cover and balance between all modes and users, apply to public and private roadways, and confront new and reconstructed roadway projects (including repaving and retrofit). The policies provide detailed guidance on any exceptions, link to plans with specific steps for policy enactment, and outline quantifiable results that fulfill a vision for complete streets networks using context-sensitive design.

Complete Streets in Washington State

In 2011, the Legislature established a complete streets grant program that provides cities with incentives to adopt complete streets ordinances once funding is secured in future legislative sessions (Chapter 47.04, Revised Code of Washington).

Complete Streets in Regional Planning

VISION 2040 supports complete streets that provide for improved mobility for all users: pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit users, as well as for the movement of freight, goods, and information.

Complete Streets in Local Planning

Complete Streets Ordinances and Policies

BURIEN recently adopted a complete streets ordinance and the city has had success in securing on-site pedestrian and bicycle treatments through its project review process. The ordinance includes a health rationale for this approach and it builds upon policies and ordinance language established in Edmonds, Kirkland, and Redmond.

With its recently adopted Transportation Master Plan, Burien has helped the community to understand complete streets better. The result is a system of layered networks, in which individual travel modes are assigned to different segments of the overall network. This approach has reduced conflicts inherent in trying to design all roadways to serve all users.

SNOQUALMIE adopted a complete streets ordinance that serves as interim guidance — pending the update to the comprehensive plan and revision of street design requirements in the municipal code. Snoqualmie’s approach to complete streets ensures that sidewalks and sharrows (along specific corridors) are provided.
KENMORE has developed policies that require that bicycle lanes be included in roadway projects along identified bicycle corridors. The city has established a sidewalk fund which enables roadway projects to include the construction of sidewalks (along both sides or, in some circumstances, one side of the roadway).

Street Design Standards for Complete Streets

BELLEVUE found that translating planning objectives for pedestrian and bicycle supportive street design at the project level was impaired by cookie cutter approaches to road construction utilized by engineering firms. To respond, the city is developing an integrated design approach that will guide engineers to ensure that planning objectives for street design are reflected in engineering level implementation. The city is developing a process that clearly translates plans for bicycle and pedestrian facilities for use on the roadway or site level.

Bellevue’s commitment to developing complete streets emphasizes positive outcomes for all modes in all areas. The city is committed to utilizing street space for active transportation on a project level. New streets are designed to incorporate complete streets approaches.

FEDERAL WAY includes pedestrian facilities as a component of most roadway improvements as these elements are written into street design standards. Improvements to pedestrian facilities on existing roadways include the installation of flashing beacons at pedestrian crossings and sidewalk construction.

REDMOND has established a Bicycle Facilities Design Manual, which includes a flowchart for street retrofit considerations prior to developing preferred design alternatives. The flowchart specifies engineering treatments that should be implemented given different conditions (street widths, intersections, turn lanes, signalization, traffic calming features, parking arrangements, topographic conditions, and stormwater system needs). The city incorporates bicycle and pedestrian facilities, along with stormwater system treatments and other utilities, in its roadway design.

Redmond has also passed a complete streets ordinance to codify commitments more clearly in its planning documents.

DES MOINES adopted a complete streets ordinance and has added policies to guide development of multi-modal level-of-service standards. These standards will be used to measure service performance and to select transportation projects by mode during the city’s next update of its comprehensive transportation plan.

Resources

Cascade Bicycle Club — A Guide to Complete Streets

National Complete Streets Coalition (NCSC) — Complete Streets Policy Analysis 2010

Additional NCSC Resources on Complete Streets
http://www.completestreets.org/complete-streets-fundamentals/resources/

Public Health Law & Policy (PHLP) — Model Comprehensive Plan Language on Complete Streets
http://publichealthlawcenter.org/topics/active-living/complete-streets

Burien Ordinance No. 556
Multimodal Concurrency

Transportation concurrency serves as a performance measure to ensure transportation facilities are available to serve new development. Concurrency is traditionally based on level-of-service (LOS) calculations using a rating system from A-to-F that relates to vehicular congestion. Multimodal concurrency involves calculating alternatives to driving alone and providing opportunities for mitigation through transit, bicycle, and pedestrian improvements.

Designing a concurrency program that incorporates other modes can change how cities approach congestion by establishing a value for active transportation mobility and by redirecting mitigation for development to constructing transit, bicycle, and/or pedestrian facilities. Pedestrian level-of-service and bicycle level-of-service address a number of characteristics, such as the presence of sidewalks, sidewalk or bike lane width, time to destination, pavement quality, presence of heavy vehicles, presence of parking, level of separation from automobiles, conflicts with driveway access, and crossing difficulties. Transit service standards or performance standards address accessibility, amenities, and service characteristics. All of these factors influence an individual’s ability to walk, bike or access transit. More targeted programs also should be coordinated with adjacent jurisdictions.

Multimodal Concurrency in Washington State

State transportation planning statutes encourage handling transportation-related concurrency problems with solutions such as transit, walking or biking, system efficiencies, and transportation demand management.

Multimodal Concurrency in Regional Planning

VISION 2040 contains policies that support multimodal concurrency and calls for developing concurrency programs and methods that fully consider growth targets, service needs, and level-of-service standards, as well as focusing on the movement of people and goods instead of only on the movement of vehicles. Guidance to jurisdictions addresses nonmotorized, pedestrian, and other multimodal types of transportation options in concurrency programs — both in assessment and mitigation. In particular, VISION 2040 calls for tailoring concurrency programs for centers and other subareas to encourage development that can be supported by transit.

PSRC has initiated an effort to further the implementation of multimodal concurrency practice through a transit service overlay zone implemented at the local level. This approach improves the linkage of land use and transportation investment decisions, improves the efficiency of transit service by encouraging transit-supportive development, provides incentives for developers, and supports integrated regional planning. Multiple cities and counties, developers, transit agencies, and other interested stakeholders are involved in the process.

Multimodal Concurrency in Local Planning

Plan-Based Concurrency

REDMOND has replaced the traditional approach to level-of-service standards with a plan-based concurrency program that calculates the impact of developments on “mobility units.” (One mobility unit equals one person-mile of travel on existing facilities and/or transit service.) The program compares the demand for mobility units generated by development to the supply of mobility units included among committed transportation projects in the city’s 20-year Transportation Facility Plan. The comparison demonstrates whether induced mobility units (i.e., demand) exceed capacity from committed planned transportation facilities (i.e., supply).
KENMORE has a concurrency program that requires developers to provide additional sidewalks along local streets to complete missing links, increase pedestrian safety, and provide linkages to key destinations. Other policies direct the city to utilize a wide spectrum of resources in aligning transportation and land use actions to support pedestrians by:

- Requiring new developments to provide frontage improvements (curb, gutter, and sidewalks).
- Requiring system-wide sidewalk links by developers that increase vehicle or pedestrian traffic.
- Forming local improvement districts (LIDs).
- Pursue grant funding for improvements.
- Pursuing special mitigation fees for development to fund a sidewalk fund in less developed areas.
- Maintaining a dedicated revenue source for sidewalk maintenance and installation.
- Requiring all roadway projects to include construction of sidewalks along both sides of the roadway, or requiring sidewalks on one side of the roadway in return for contribution to sidewalk fund.
- Requiring major utility and other work in the roadway to provide alternative walkways (where feasible) when sidewalks are closed.

SNOQUALMIE is exploring the potential to utilize multimodal concurrency in its level-of-service standards. The city’s comprehensive plan Annexation Element policies and mixed-use zoning requirements call for advanced master planning to assist the city in planning for adequate multimodal infrastructure prior to annexation. Pre-annexation development agreements and project specific development standards ensure that newly developing neighborhoods are supported by complete streets, as well as by a system of connecting walkways and recreation trails.

Concurrency and Impact Fees

FEDERAL WAY has an approach to concurrency designed “not to say no” to development, but accepts roadways operating at a low level-of-service standard. High crash locations tend to be in congested locations and the city recognizes the challenges for prioritizing options for walking and biking in such locations. Road diets are considered a first step in making the transformation.

A transportation impact fee was recently established with links to nonmotorized trips, but the primary emphasis of the city is to evaluate associated deficiencies and have developers address them. For instance, if there is a gap in a sidewalk that links a proposed retirement home to the nearest transit stop, Federal Way will ensure that the developer fills the gap. In addition, the city has considered evaluating bicycle amenities and linking this more directly with concurrency.

KENT has established transportation impact fees to cover a specific list of road investments, as well as adding sidewalks and bike lanes.

DES MOINES has established a transportation impact fee with specific project lists that can be utilized to help support planning objectives in the city. The most common approach is for non-motorized improvements to be folded into mitigation for major roadways in the city.

Resources

Cascade Bicycle Club (CBC) — Multimodal Level of Service in King County
http://www.cascade.org/Advocacy/pdf/MultimodalLOSGuide_CBC.pdf
Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School is a term used to address active and safe travel by school children and families. At the intersection of public health, public safety, education, and transportation, such programs help communities to develop choices to driving alone and allow school funding resources to be used more efficiently. The goal of Safe Routes to School programs is to encourage kids to walk and bike safely to school where it is safe — and, where it is not safe, to make it safer.

Connection to Health

Increasing kids’ physical activity lowers obesity rates, improves overall health, and enhances readiness to learn. However, over the past generation activity levels have dropped and obesity rates have risen; the share of students who walk or bike to school has fallen from 48 percent to 13 percent, while childhood obesity rates have tripled.

Jurisdictions can help establish Safe Routes to School programs and projects by integrating language into their comprehensive plans that supports such projects, including the five E’s:

- Education
- Encouragement
- Engineering
- Enforcement
- Evaluation

The most basic programs are dedicated to improving sidewalk and bikeway facility design, as well as strengthening traffic enforcement to improve safety for pedestrians in school zones.

Walking audits are a way to leverage the skills of local groups that have expertise in working with parents, students, schools, enforcement agencies and city agencies to improve safety and promote active commuting. Cities and school districts utilize walking audits to achieve the following:

- Identify safe and unsafe areas for biking and walking.
- Identify safety improvements.

Other Types of Safe Routes

In addition to Safe Routes to School, a number of communities across the country have expanded the concept and are also planning for Safe Routes to Parks and Safe Routes to Transit.
• Prioritize desired improvements to acquire future funding.
• Train physical education teachers to deliver a safe walking and biking curriculum.
• Educate students on safe walking and biking practices.
• Hold events to encourage children to walk and bike.

Safe Routes to School in Washington State

The State of Washington established a Safe Routes to Schools program in 2005. The program provides technical assistance and resources to cities, counties, schools, school districts, and state agencies for improvements that get more children walking and bicycling to school safely, reduce congestion around schools, and improve air quality. The state provides both services and funding to make walking and biking conditions safer. Since its inception the number of children biking and walking has increased by more than 20 percent statewide.

Safe Routes to School in Local Planning

Collaborative and Coordination Efforts

SOUTH KING COUNTY CITIES have joined forces as part of the Healthy Highline Community Coalition for a promotion campaign that communicates the importance of improving safe routes to school. Stories, photos, and information are shared with elected officials and the general public through short videos and other promotional materials.

BELLEVUE calls for interdepartmental coordination to administer programs, evaluate progress, and conduct public outreach. A number of policies address programs that promote active transportation. The city collaborates with Cascade Bicycle Club and Optimistic Club on an annual Bike Safety Fair, video promotion, and safety skills development for kids. Schools are closely tied to the prioritization of projects and the city is engaged in developing walking routes. Public safety agencies have active enforcement of pedestrian and bicycle safety laws.

KENT works with school districts directly on safe routes activities. The city considers routes to school as an important part of nonmotorized travel. The police department operates as a component of city government and it is able to access additional funds from the Washington Traffic Safety Commission to fund two full-time employees dedicated to traffic safety education. Kent is working alongside the school district and Feet First to conduct walking audits that identify school walk routes and safe routes activities that are needed. The city and the school district hope to broaden these efforts for wider application at other schools.

SNOQUALMIE prioritizes safe pedestrian routes around schools and works with the YMCA and the Tanner Jeans Memorial Foundation to highlight safe riding techniques as part of its Bike Rodeo and Safety Fair.

Safe Routes and Comprehensive Planning

BURIEN places emphasis on safe routes by linking the initiative to a Quality Schools component in the update to the comprehensive plan. The city has extended the work of a consultant providing crosswalk inventories and assessments to ensure that these evaluations contain more detail for areas near schools.

KENMORE planning policies guide the city to establish a neighborhood traffic management program that improves education and enforcement through traffic control signs, speed limit education, enforcement, narrower streets, curves, traffic circles, and other features. For existing streets, nonstructural treatments are considered prior to structural improvements. Newsletters are utilized to inform residents of associated safety
and enforcement activities. The city conducted an extensive study in one part of the city to assess the best traffic calming treatments, signage, sidewalk improvements, and other recommendations in the neighborhood surrounding the school.

**FEDERAL WAY** is aggressive in ensuring that proposed developments close to schools will support safe walk routes. Challenges include crossing multiple travel lanes, as well as neighborhood concerns about creating new connections to adjacent streets. The city is conducting study sessions to educate the community on more flexible approaches. Road safety education is provided when requested by community members or educators. An ad hoc bicycle and pedestrian advisory committee supported the development of non-motorized provisions in the last update of the city’s comprehensive plan.

**Pedestrian Safety Audit**

**DES MOINES’** comprehensive transportation plan outlines conducting a pedestrian safety audit. Technical assistance by non-profit organizations, public health agencies, and consultants associated with the Communities Putting Prevention to Work grant has brought attention to safe routes needs, and has identified facility improvement opportunities through walking audits. The city council has been on walking tours to identify specific streets that make the most sense for improvements and study sessions have been arranged with the council to consider both safe routes and complete streets applications.

Des Moines works directly with school districts on safe routes activities. Several of the city’s departments — including police, planning, and parks — participated in a walking audit with Feet First. The audit, conducted at an elementary school, identified school walking routes and safety improvements that are needed.

Des Moines comprehensive plan was recently amended to include a policy to support safe routes to school programs and education campaigns on traffic, bicycle and pedestrian safety. Des Moines worked with two consulting firms — SvR Design Company and ALTA Planning & Design — to create a Safe Routes to School Project Report that provides a summary of priority projects for the five elementary schools in the city. The city also collaborates with the Highline School District to implement safe routes to school programs.

**REDMOND’s** city councilmembers have participated in walking audits to highlight specific problems experienced in crossing major roadways on foot. The city prioritizes active transportation projects around schools. Redmond’s use of the R-TRIP system to support commute trip reduction (CTR) choices has resulted in a more strategic and consistent approach that encourages active transportation, including walking to school.

**Resources**

- [National Center for Safe Routes to School](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org)