



Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan

Advocates for Healthy Weight in Children

SEPTEMBER 2009

Complete Streets Making Progress

Implementing complete streets in communities across the state is a policy goal of HKHM. Complete streets, as a planning tool in active infrastructure, are an avenue to change behaviors in our communities and environment. The complete streets concept is about rebuilding our roadways to move people, not just cars. Complete streets means using tools like sidewalks, bike lanes, curb cuts for handicap accessibility, bus stops and shelters that are convenient and comfortable. This concept makes trying to get from point A to point B safer.

Local initiatives

The concept is gaining traction across the state. In the early summer, Walk and Bike Lansing!, a project of the Mid-Michigan Environmental Action Council, collected more than 5,000 signatures, sent letters and gave comments to city council. As a result, on August 17, the Lansing City Council adopted the Lansing Complete Streets Ordinance which states that that the city will have a non-motorized network plan, and will update it every 5 years.

In April, the first Grand Rapids Bike Summit attracted more than 200 attendees, including candidates for local elected office.

In Detroit, the Green Task Force assembled by former Mayor and now Councilman Ken Cockrel has convened a transportation subcommittee that is examining complete streets policies.

In Ann Arbor, the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study has a policy of spending 10 percent of their federal surface transportation funding on non-motorized facilities. Ann Arbor is also routinely adding bike lanes and making road conversions as they reconstruct and resurface.



The first Grand Rapids Bike Summit, held on April 24, 2009, attracted more than 200 attendees, including candidates for local elected office.

And in Flint, the Safe and Active Genesee for Everyone Coalition (SAGE) is also using active transportation advocacy as a lever to reshape and revitalize the urban core. In June, the Genesee Transportation Council added complete streets principles to the Genesee County Long Range Transportation Plan. SAGE hopes to see the adoption of an ordinance in the city of Flint later this fall.

State initiatives

The idea of complete streets is gaining momentum at the state level, too. In June, Rep. Jon Switalski (D-Warren) added substitute language to the House Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee bill

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stating, "The department (MDOT) and local road agencies that receive appropriations under this act shall adopt complete street policies."

Although mostly symbolic, the passage marks the first effort by the Michigan Legislature to recognize complete streets.

National attention

U.S. Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) and U.S. Rep. Doris Matsui (D-California) introduced the Complete Streets Act of 2009 in March to make streets and intersections both more accessible and safer for walking and biking. The law would require that states and city planning agencies tie transportation investments to policies that "meet the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders and vehicles, as well as the needs of people of all ages and abilities."

In July 2009, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a version of a climate change bill that included a complete streets component. It requires state and local agencies to encourage alternative forms of transportation (walk, bike, transit) through land use and transportation policies.

In short, the House climate bill officially sets complete streets principles as planning goals for state and local transportation officials.

HKHM and Complete Streets

The Complete Streets concept has become a year one priority for HKHM. HKHM's Community Policy Action Team believes that this concept can have a positive effect on childhood obesity and is working to make Michigan roads a safer place for people of all ages to bike and exercise.

-Original article written by Rory Neuner, published in the Michigan Environmental Report



Complete Streets by the numbers

- 3** -- Number of hours of biking per week that can cut a person's risk of heart disease and stroke in half
- 30** -- Percentage of carbon emissions attributed to transportation
- 39** -- Percent of trips that Americans make that are under two miles in length
- 90** -- Percent of those trips made by motor vehicle
- 101** -- Number of jurisdictions nationally that have adopted complete streets legislation
- 4,250** -- Number of signatures collected in Lansing to put a local complete streets ordinance on the November ballot
- 200 billion** -- Number of vehicle miles traveled that might be cut if walking and biking for short trips were encouraged and promoted, estimates the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy