



Community Guide *to creating* Great Places

How do we get bike racks?

I'd feel safer with a crosswalk!

Who do we call about bike lanes?

Can my kids walk to school safely?

Knoxville Regional
Transportation
Planning Organization
TPO

Produced by the Knoxville Regional Bicycle Program www.knoxtrans.org

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About this Guide

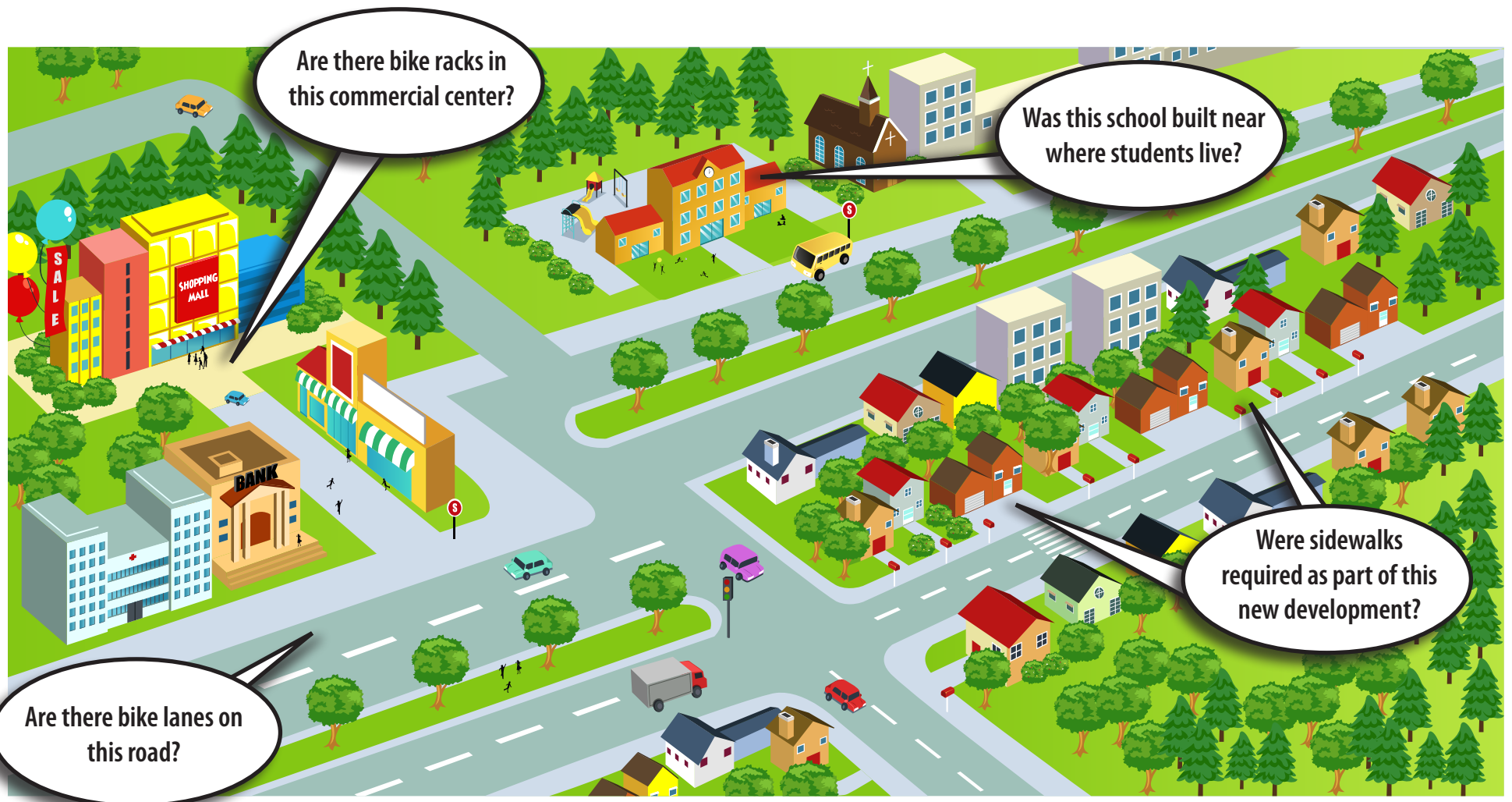
Have you wondered how you would go about requesting bike lanes on a road near your house?

Or why there aren't more sidewalks in your city?

Or just how you would help guide your community to be more bike-friendly?

This guide is a resource for individuals, local organizations, community coalitions, neighborhood groups, the faith community and others interested in promoting and creating bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods and communities.

Bikeable and walkable communities are places where people of all ages and abilities can easily enjoy walking, bicycling or using a wheelchair for both pleasure and purpose. Our communities can be healthier places to live and work, where walking and biking are easy, everyday activities. Bicycling and walking are also referred to as "active transportation." This guide explains how public policy is made in your community. It introduces you to the local officials who design and maintain your neighborhoods and communities. With tips on how to work with your local elected and appointed officials, and pointers on building relationships with media, you can lead your community to become more bikeable and walkable.



The Players

First, it is important to understand the four levels of government.

LOCAL

Municipalities and Counties

Local government in Tennessee comprises counties and municipalities (e.g. towns and cities). These units of local government provide most local governmental services. Municipalities are governed by a legislative body under several options provided by state statutes or charter, called variously city council, city commission, or board of mayor and aldermen. In some options, a city manager plays a key administrative leadership role, in others the mayor plays the key role, or there may be a combination of the two. For counties, mayors generally play the key administrative role, sometimes with assistance of an appointed administrator, while a county commission plays the legislative role.

Local governments are broken up into departments. There may be a Fire Department, Police Department, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Schools, etc.

“City council members, mayors, and other elected officials represent the citizens. Staff—such as engineers, waste management specialists, planners and others—are the experts who make government run. Elected officials are responsible for setting the priorities for the city or county; staff have the know-how to make those priorities into realities.



The fact that the professional staff, unlike many elected officials, are not subject to term limits means that they have an institutional history, which is very beneficial in developing the concrete plans to put policy decisions into practice. They also often have advanced degrees in engineering, finance, and other technical areas, a knowledge base they can bring to bear in devising solutions to local problems.”

<https://www.scu.edu/ethics/focus-areas/government-ethics/resources/what-is-government-ethics/relationships-between-elected-officials-and-staff/>

Agencies often have citizens’ advisory boards or councils that address specific issues. For example, the City of Knoxville has a [Knoxville Greenways Commission](#) with members appointed by the Mayor and Knox County has a [Parks Citizen Advisory Board](#).

Many municipalities and counties have an appointed planning commission. Planning commissions are responsible for planning for the overall physical development of the jurisdiction, including transportation facilities. The planning commission is directly responsible for setting and adopting development standards in subdivision regulations. The planning commission plays a role in recommending standards for development and land use in zoning regulations, but it is the responsibility of the local legislative body to adopt zoning regulations.

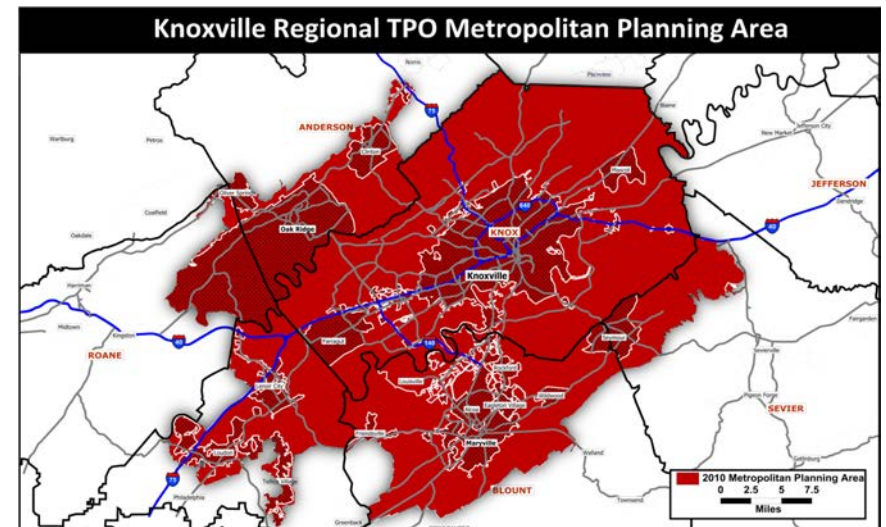
REGIONAL

Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization

The [Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization](#) (TPO) serves as the federally required [Metropolitan Planning Organization](#) (MPO) for our area. An MPO is a transportation policy-making organization composed of representatives of local government, known as the [Executive Board](#), as well as local engineers and planners who form a [Technical Committee](#).

All urbanized areas with more than 50,000 residents are required to have an MPO to ensure that federal transportation funding is spent based on a planning process that meets goals set by the federal government. The MPO approves the use of these funds within its planning area for highways, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian projects.

The [TPO planning area](#) includes Anderson, Blount, and Knox counties, and the cities of Knoxville, Maryville, Oak Ridge, Alcoa, Lenoir City, the Town of Farragut, and the urbanized portions of Sevier and Loudon Counties.





Be aware that the TPO is a planning agency and does not design or implement projects. Projects are managed by the jurisdiction that the project is located within.

The TPO's work plan is set each year by a [Transportation Planning Work Program](#) (TPWP). The TPWP details the planning activities and work products the TPO and the public transit providers will conduct or complete in the upcoming year. It is updated annually, and may be amended, as needed, over the course of the year.

Air Quality

Portions of the Knoxville region were designated as "non-attainment" in the past because they exceeded national air quality standards for ozone and fine particulate matter 2.5 (PM2.5). PM 2.5 are very small particles (under 2.5 microns). Through recent improvements in air quality, the entire region is now meeting all standards and is considered a "maintenance area" for both ozone and PM2.5.

As a maintenance area there is still a requirement to demonstrate "transportation conformity" for the TPO's plans and programs. This means we have to show that federal funds will not be spent on projects that cause or contribute to violations of the air standards.

Our air quality status (previously of non-attainment and now of maintenance area) also means that our region receives grant funding called CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement) that must be used to improve air quality. CMAQ funds have been used for projects such as traffic signal synchronization, low emission buses, new sidewalks, and intersection improvements. Since 2003, the TPO has used CMAQ funds for the [Smart Trips program](#). This program promotes alternatives to driving alone and prevents more than 1 million pounds of air pollutants from being released each year.



STATE

Legislative Branch

The [Tennessee General Assembly](#) consists of the 33-member Senate and the 99-member House of Representatives. Senators serve four-year terms, and House members serve two-year terms. The speaker of the state Senate also holds the title of lieutenant governor.

Executive Branch

The executive branch is responsible for the daily administration of the state. While in theory, the legislature makes the laws and the executive branch administers them; in reality, the legislative and executive branches often work together on shaping proposed legislation. This is true partially because a plan is likely to succeed only with the cooperation and consent of both branches, but also because experience of the executive branch in implementing past legislation and coping with new problems provides legislators with information and ideas not available elsewhere.

Many program ideas originate within the agencies and departments of the executive branch. Though a final decision may be made by the department director or the governor, staff usually prepare information and position papers, and in many cases the higher official need only approve or disapprove.

[Tennessee's governor](#) is the only official who is elected statewide. Unlike most states, the state does not elect the lieutenant governor directly; the Tennessee Senate elects its Speaker, who serves as lieutenant governor. To assist the governor in supervising the activities of state government, there are departments, including the Department of Safety, Department of Transportation, etc. The Governor appoints a Commissioner for each department to provide leadership and policy guidance, serve as links between the governor and the departments, and review department budgets and legislative and administrative programs.

Here are descriptions of some of the departments relevant to this guide:

Department of Environment and Conservation

[Greenways and Trails Program](#) The Greenways and Trails program works to preserve and conserve natural and cultural resources, and works with the Commissioner's Council on Greenways and Trails.

Department of Health

The [TN Department of Health](#) works to promote, protect and improve the health and well-being of Tennesseans.

Department of Safety and Homeland Security

The [Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security](#) is responsible for law enforcement, safety education, motorist services, and disaster preparedness and prevention.

Department of Transportation

The [Tennessee Department of Transportation](#) is organized into four regions of the state: Knoxville (Region 1), Chattanooga (Region 2), Nashville (Region 3), and Jackson (Region 4). Several administrative offices, including the commissioner and staff, operate from the TDOT headquarters in downtown Nashville.

FEDERAL

Legislative Branch

The U.S. Congress is the legislative branch. It considers two types of legislation: authorization bills that create or modify government programs, and appropriations bills that fund those programs.

Congress consists of two bodies. One is the House of Representatives, whose 435 voting members each represent a Congressional district. The other is the Senate, whose 100 members each represent a state (two per state). [Tennessee Senators and Representatives](#)

Executive Branch

The executive branch of the government is responsible for enforcing the laws. The executive branch of the federal government consists of departments (e.g., Department of Transportation), agencies (e.g., Environmental Protection Agency), and other entities (e.g., Consumer Product Safety Commission).

Legislatures rely on rulemaking by the executive branch to add more detailed scientific, economic, or industry expertise to a policy—fleshing out the broader mandates of authorizing legislation. For example, typically a legislature would pass a law mandating the establishment of safe drinking water standards, and then assign an agency to develop the list of contaminants and safe levels through rulemaking. ([A Citizen's Guide to Influencing Agency Action](#))

Here are descriptions of some of the departments and agencies that are relevant to this guide:

Department of Health and Human Services

The mission of the [Department of Health and Human Services](#) (DHHS) is to provide the building blocks for people to live healthy and successful lives. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is a component of the DHHS, and seeks to create tools and



disseminate information to help the population protect their health.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[CDC's](#) mission is to collaborate to create the resources that people and communities need to protect their health. CDC's [Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity](#) is working to implement policy and environmental strategies to make healthy eating and active living accessible and affordable for everyone.

Department of Housing and Urban Development

The [Department of Housing and Urban Development](#) is the Federal agency responsible for national policy and programs that address housing needs that improve and develop communities, and enforce fair housing laws.

Department of Transportation

The [U.S. DOT](#) consists of the Office of the Secretary and 11 Operating Administrations, including: the Federal Aviation Administration, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and the Surface Transportation Board.

Federal Highway Administration

The main role of the [FHWA](#) is to provide federal transportation funding and the guidelines for use of that funding. In general, the federal government does not own, maintain or operate any facilities. They instead distribute revenues to the states to use and/or distribute to MPOs.

Federal Transit Administration

The [FTA](#) is responsible for transit funding. FTA must ensure that recipients of the funds follow all applicable federal laws and regulations.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[NHTSA](#) directs the highway safety and consumer programs established by federal laws. NHTSA works to prevent crashes and their related costs, both human and financial.



The Process

How does our community get developed? Who chooses what kinds of developments happen and where? How does a road project go from an idea to reality? There are three major areas that guide how our communities are shaped: policies, projects and programs. This section will go through each of the three areas and discuss who makes the decisions, implementation, funding, best practices (ideas that could be implemented here), and opportunities for input from the public.

The intent of this section is to give an overview of the variety of policies, programs and projects that are common ways in which cities and counties have encouraged bicycling and walking, or active transportation. The following chapter is by no means exhaustive, but does provide an introduction to ways our communities can become more bikeable and walkable.

While this guide gives some ideas for solutions, you should always approach decision-makers with an open mind. If you ask for a school safety program, it's easy for a school superintendent to say, "Sorry, we don't have the money for that." Instead, you might say, "I am concerned about the safety of the children walking and biking to school and think that lack of awareness is a key problem. How can I help you to address this?" That's a much harder request to decline.

There are [several groups/organizations](#) you may want to check with to talk over your ideas and concerns. They may already be working on that issue or project, or can assist you in finding the correct department or person to contact.

A Brief History of Your Neighborhood

By Community Builders, a project of the Sonoran Institute

How did our communities become what they are today? Our community's design reflects years of decisions, policies, and layers of investment and reinvestment. We may think our communities were sculpted from an unfettered free market based upon pure consumer demand, but the real story is quite different. The market has played a role, but it was under the influence of many forces. These forces collectively influence the shape of our communities.

"A brief history of your neighborhood," is a series of illustrated essays that examines some of these issues, and identifies the key public policies – such as land-use regulations and infrastructure investments – that shape the location and type of development we see in our communities. These policies impact the decisions we make about where to live, shop, and work. Ultimately, they determine the range of choices we have about where we put down roots and how we live our lives.



POLICIES AND PLANS

To improve the overall environment for walking and bicycling, or active transportation, the stage must be set for good things to happen. Generally, this means that policies and plans must be made and in place to provide proof of a community's commitment to making bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

As city officials, employees, and residents change, plans and policies endure so long as they are supported and can inform and guide decision-makers of the priorities of the community.

Policies include laws, regulations, and rules. Examples include

1. Plans, such as Comprehensive Plans, Downtown Plans, and Bicycle and/or Pedestrian Plans
2. A policy that requires the use of a portion of locally controlled funds for bike/pedestrian facilities
3. An ordinance that requires sidewalks as part of new development
4. Zoning ordinances, building codes, subdivision regulations and approval processes that encourage compact community design that makes it possible to work, shop and go to school within walking distance of people's homes

Local

The goal of community planning is to guide the development of a city or county to benefit its current and future residents by creating convenient, equitable, healthy, efficient and attractive environments. A city, county or region usually has a master or comprehensive plan to guide development. A typical master plan addresses the following: transportation and traffic, community facilities, parks and open space, neighborhoods and housing, economic development and land use. Some jurisdictions may have small area or sector plans as well.

MPC develops sector plans for different areas of Knox County and Knoxville. These are 15-year plans that look at land use, transportation, facilities, and policies. A lot of the active transportation recommendations are based on the Park, Recreation and Greenways Plan. [Sector plans](#) also are referenced during Development Review. For instance, if someone requests a zoning change, the zoning must be consistent with future land use plans.



Once a plan is adopted, implementation begins. Communities generally implement plans in three ways: zoning codes or ordinances, subdivision regulations, and capital improvements. Capital improvements are addressed in the ["Projects" section](#).

Zoning

The purpose of zoning is to locate particular land uses where they are most appropriate, considering public utilities, road access, and the established development pattern. In addition to categorizing land by uses such as residential, commercial, and industrial, a zoning ordinance also specifies such details as building setback lines, the height of buildings, the size of open spaces, and the intensity to which the land may be developed. Local governments adopt zoning regulations as a part of their police powers in the interest of promoting and protecting the health, welfare, and safety of the community.

Zoning is the method most commonly used by local governments to achieve master plan goals. Goals as diverse as farmland preservation, the creation of more housing choices, and water quality protection can be achieved in part through zoning requirements.

When a property owner wants to use land in a way that is not permitted by the zoning of his or her property, the owner must request to rezone the property to a classification which permits the desired use. A rezoning is a legislative action which is considered through a complex process. Rezoning is allowed only in certain conditions, including if the requested zoning is consistent with long-range plans that have been adopted, or if there have been changes in the surrounding area that make it difficult to use the property as it is zoned.

Property owners can request a “variance,” a change from current regulations, if the owner can show the regulation is creating a hardship. A Board of Zoning Appeals considers requests for variances, and decides if the variance will result in harm to the community’s health, safety or welfare.

Subdivision Regulations

Subdivision regulations create an accurate map of the area and set standards for streets, drainage ways, sewage disposal, water systems, etc. These regulations ensure adequate lot size, public access, and the availability of public services to each lot created. They also help to conserve natural, scenic, historic, and recreational areas. Subdivision regulations make the developer responsible for the installation of basic public facilities before the recording and sale of lots. According to Tennessee State Law, any time a property owner converts a tract of land into a subdivision, whether dividing it into two or 200 lots, a subdivision plat must be recorded (if the jurisdiction has adopted subdivision regulations; a few in the region have not).

The 2017 [National Community and Transportation Preference Survey](#) found that 62% of millennials and 55% of the silent generation prefer walkable communities and short commutes. The majority of Americans, 53%, would prefer to live in communities containing houses with small yards but within easy walking distance of the community’s amenities, as opposed to living in communities with houses that have large yards but they have to drive to all amenities. This was up from 48% in 2015. And 60% said that they would be willing to pay a little or a lot more to live within walking distance of parks, shops and restaurants.

Development Review

Many jurisdictions have a Development Services or Current Planning department that reviews proposed development projects to ensure they comply with development regulations. The department staff would look at the layout of a proposed subdivision, the roadway system, and sidewalks, among other things. Larger developments would include a traffic study. Staff makes recommendations, and then the Planning Commission (the appointed body) decides whether to follow staff recommendations or not.

Planning Commissions have limited authority to make developers do more than their fair share related to the road system—staff or the commission have to show a direct correlation between the proposed development and a resulting negative impact of roadway/intersection level of service. Sometimes the appointed commission doesn’t follow staff recommendations. Representatives of nearby neighborhoods may fight a requirement to connect adjacent subdivisions out of fear that their streets will get too much traffic, or that “undesirables” will be able to access their houses because of the connections. But connections are very important for bicycling and walking, because it helps disperse traffic among many streets instead of concentrating all traffic on one or two roads. Developers may argue against including sidewalks in a development because of the added cost, or may say that “no one will use them.” Public support is needed at commission meetings to support staff recommendations that are bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly.

Other Policies

In addition to development regulations, cities and counties can adopt policies that seek to address specific problems or issues.

Complete Streets

By adopting a [Complete Streets](#) policy, communities 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 means that every transportation project will make the street network better and safer for drivers, transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists— making your town a better place to live.

For example, the Knoxville City Council passed a resolution endorsing the creation, adoption and adherence to a [‘Complete Streets Policy’](#) on August 11, 2009.

Complete Streets in the Southeast: A Toolkit

Of the more than 600 Complete Streets projects in place across the U.S., almost 20 percent can be found in the Southeast states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and, Tennessee. [This tool kit](#) is a partnership between AARP Government Affairs, Smart Growth America and the National Complete Streets Coalition. The website provides resources for achieving the adoption and implementation of Complete Streets.

Regional

Under a federal law that governs planning for highways and transit (which includes walking and bicycling), the [Knoxville Regional TPO](#) is responsible for creating a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) every four years. The MTP lays out a vision of what the transportation system will look like in the future. It includes all of the transportation projects that will be funded and scheduled over the next 20 years. The most recent MTP is the [Mobility Plan 2040: Connecting People and Places](#) and was adopted in 2017.

The most recent [TPO Regional Bicycle Plan](#) was adopted in 2009. As part of the Bicycle Plan, the TPO adopted a [Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Policy](#) that requires facilities for bicycles and pedestrians in road designs for projects funded with federal transportation dollars. This policy has been in place since 2002.

[Plan East Tennessee](#) (PlanET) is a regional partnership of communities building a shared direction for our future. The partnership resulted in the PlanET Playbook, a high-level roadmap to ensure our region remains beautiful, becomes healthier and offers pathways to success for our residents. The Playbook is the result of several years of work and the efforts of over 30 organizations and thousands of people from the five-county PlanET region. The playbook includes implementation strategies that connect the shared vision to specific actions. These strategies can be used by any community to create more prosperous places. [Implementation strategies for Transportation Choices](#)

State

TDOT is responsible for developing and updating a [Long-Range Transportation Plan](#) (LRTP) to meet Tennessee's future community and commerce needs for moving goods, services and people.

TDOT's [Multimodal Access Policy](#) encourages safe access and mobility for users of all ages and abilities through the planning, design, construction, maintenance, and operation of new construction, reconstruction and retrofit transportation facilities.

Federal

[United States Department of Transportation Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Regulations and Recommendations](#)

Best Practices

Here are some things communities are doing to improve conditions for bicycling and walking.

Revise Development Regulations

Many times, outdated regulations make it harder to create a bikeable and walkable development than to maintain the status quo of car-centric development. Development regulations all over the country are being revised to change this.

[Toward Healthier Living: Strategies to Make Active Living and Healthy Eating a Part of Life in Knoxville and Knox County](#) (2011 report)

This report is an excellent analysis of what changes could be made to development regulations to encourage bicycling and walking. It is specific to Knoxville and Knox County, but could be easily applied to other cities and counties in the region.

Bikeable and walkable communities have several advantages:

- **More vibrant:** People who shop by bicycle or foot spend more than motorists according to [several studies](#).
- **Improved sense of community and belonging:** People traveling on foot and by bike have more opportunities to talk to neighbors, make spontaneous stops at stores, and wander through parks on their route.
- **Safer and more active lifestyle for children, parents, and grandparents:** Making space on the street for people on foot and on bike reduces crashes for [everyone](#), even people driving. With safer streets, people who cannot, or do not want to, drive, have more options for getting to school, work, stores, or wherever they may need to go.



Health Impact Assessment

A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a process that helps evaluate the potential health effects of a plan, project or policy before it is built or implemented. An HIA can provide recommendations to increase positive health outcomes and minimize adverse ones. HIA brings potential public health impacts and considerations to the decision-making process for plans, projects, and policies that fall outside the traditional public health arenas, such as transportation and land use. The [CDC offers resources and assistance to communities](#) wanting to include HIAs in their planning and decision-making processes. The Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) is testing an HIA process by documenting some key active living criteria on new concept plans and development plans, including a street connectivity index, and distances of proposed development from existing schools, parks, and shopping areas.

School Siting

Community growth places greater demands on school systems, creating the need for more or expanded schools. Similarly, new schools bring about increases in traffic congestion, along with residential development surrounding new school sites. In school siting, the decisions of multiple entities are at play; it's therefore increasingly important that school districts, local governments, developers, and all involved parties work together to site schools.

Community decisions on school construction must meet multiple goals – educational, fiscal, and environmental. But we are also challenged to confront the ways in which school location affects how children get to school – walking, biking, busing or driving. Families' travel choices have a major impact on traffic congestion, air pollution, school district budgets, and quality-of-life in our region. Through collaboration on school siting, we have an opportunity to build schools that better serve & support students, educators, parents, and communities. The EPA has guidelines available on [school siting for new facilities](#).

The Nashville Area MPO in 2010 hosted a [regional symposium dedicated to offering strategies for locating schools in ways that benefit entire communities](#)—moving beyond the “big box” method of acquiring land and facilities. Working together, and identifying creative solutions, school districts, cities & counties can locate schools that take advantage of existing resources, are easily and safely accessible, and genuine community anchors.

More than 90 political leaders, school board members, transportation and land use planners, school facility planners, architects, engineers, and academia from across Middle Tennessee came together to discuss the importance of working together to plan for future schools and to make the communities around those already built more walkable and bikeable for students.

Getting the Wheels Rolling:

A Guide to Using Policy to Create Bicycle Friendly Communities

This guide from ChangeLab Solutions provides a roadmap for changes and additions to laws and policies. Policies can remove obstacles to bicycling, create incentives for bicycling infrastructure, and make it easier and safer to bicycle. This document helps policymakers figure out where to start, and spells out how to effectively use policy to promote bicycling. Using policy to make bicycling part of daily life is a win for everyone, as individuals become active and healthy, neighborhoods grow more vibrant and sustainable, and local economies and the environment benefit.



Opportunities for Input

See the section on [Engaging Decision-Makers](#) for more details on public participation. For big picture or policy issues, you'll want to contact your elected officials. You may want to reach out to local organizations like the [Bike Walk Knoxville](#) or [Together! Healthy Knox](#) first, to see if they are already working on the issue you are interested in.

Local

Generally, the meeting agendas and minutes for council and commission meetings are posted online, and you can ask to be added to the e-mail list to receive them. There is often a short window of opportunity to provide public input.

[List of local planning commissions and city/town/county councils/commissions.](#)

- Stay informed about what's happening in your community. (Attend meetings, keep up with the news, ask to be included on email lists. See [Section 4](#) for details.)
- Work with a local bicycle or pedestrian group.
- Ensure that bicycle and pedestrian issues, especially related to public health, are included in the development of any transportation and land use plans and key projects.
- Remember to check the Board of Zoning Appeals agendas. For example, if a developer is requesting to have more driveways than the current zoning allows, that would have a negative impact on the bicycle- and pedestrian-friendliness of that street. Driveways are potential conflict areas for people on foot and on bicycle. Another example would be a request to reduce the required front yard setback (distance from the property line). This could potentially increase the pedestrian- and bicycle-friendliness of a development because it means there isn't a parking lot in front of the building, making it easier to access by foot or bicycle. There may also be requests to reduce the amount of motor vehicle parking required. This could be a good thing, but the BZA may want to require a certain amount of bicycle parking, a transit stop, or other elements that would ensure people can walk or bicycle to the business instead of driving.
- KGIS maintains an [interactive map](#) of Knox County with many helpful data layers including land use, zoning, sector plan, neighborhood groups (for City of Knoxville), and greenways.
- MPC has an [interactive map](#) that shows current and past MPC Cases, including development plans, rezoning requests, and subdivision proposals.
 - View “All MPC Cases” to access all recent filings for an area
 - Click cases on the map to access documents including staff reports, case summaries and site plans

Participation in Planning Commission Process

Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission created [this guide](#) for input into the MPC meetings and processes.



Regional

All TPO meetings of the [Technical Committee and Executive Board](#) are open to the public and include the opportunity for public comment (a signup sheet to speak is located with agendas on a table when you enter the room). You may also contact TPO staff to discuss your ideas for a TPO policy.

- Attend committee meetings at your MPO to get educated on the issues and to build relationships with the TPO staff and members.
- Work with other interested parties or organizations to ensure routine representation at TPO meetings on key projects and planning processes; this will keep you informed and will provide representation at these events.

State

The State Legislature is generally the best contact for policy issues, but there may be a department you should work with, depending on the issue. Contact [Bike Walk Tennessee](#) or the [Jeff Roth Cycling Foundation](#) to see if they are working on a similar issue already, or if they can help you figure out who to talk with.

- Get educated about state-scale planning processes and how plans can include bicycling and walking components.
- Encourage health impact assessments — conducted by state or county public health organizations — on transportation projects.

Federal

For federal issues, it's best to work through a national organization set up to monitor federal legislation and identify where and when residents can have influence. You can see a list of national organizations working on various bicycle and pedestrian issues in the [appendix](#).

- Inform your elected officials about the importance of active transportation options (bicycling and walking) in your community.

[How to Monitor and Influence Policy at the Federal Level
A Citizen's Guide to Influencing Agency Action](#)



PROGRAMS

Programs are organized, on-going activities that engage individuals in physical activity either directly or indirectly. Programs require funding, including for staff. Programs and promotions can be resource-intensive and are most effective when offered in conjunction with other programs, projects and policies. Programs can help make people aware of opportunities (like community centers, parks and greenways) in order to increase bicycling and walking.

Local

Safe Routes to School

The Knox County Safe Routes to School Partnership works to make it safer, easier and more fun for kids to get to and from school under their own power. The Partnership is coordinated by the Knox County Health Department, with assistance from the Knoxville Regional TPO. Contact Liliana Burbano-Bonilla at the Knox County Health Department: liliana.burbano@knoxcounty.org or 215-5546.

Knox County Sheriff, Child Safety Unit

Conducts in-school safety education for kindergarten through third grade, including bicycle safety

Safety City, Knoxville Police Department

Conducts safety education, including bicycle safety, on site for second-graders in Knox County Schools during the school year, and the public and organizations in the summer.

Regional

TPO Bicycle Program

The [Knoxville Regional Bicycle Program](#) strives to integrate bicycling into the transportation system. The program works with residents and governments within Knox, Blount, Anderson, Roane, Sevier and Loudon counties to implement the 2009 Regional Bicycle Plan.

Drivers Education

Staff and volunteers present on "sharing the road with bicyclists" to every high school drivers education class each semester, in Knox and Blount counties. Some schools have dropped their driver's ed programs, but this still reaches more than 900 students a year.

Bicycle education

Bike safety information is included online, in brochures at each bike shop, via a Bicycling Ambassadors booth at various community events, and in classes offered throughout the year.

Smart Trips Program

Smart Trips promotes alternatives to driving alone to reduce traffic congestion and improve our region's air quality and quality of life. The free online system helps people find carpool partners in the Knoxville region. Participants log trips made by carpool, transit, biking or walking, as well as telework and compressed work weeks, to be eligible for monthly and quarterly prizes. Smart Trips also offers an Emergency Ride Home program in case of illness or unexpected overtime.

State

TDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Program

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Program staff help implement a Complete Streets approach to transportation infrastructure and foster partnerships between TDOT, other state agencies, non-profits, the private sector, and the public in order to promote active transportation in Tennessee.

Federal

Bicycle and Pedestrian Program

The FHWA Bicycle & Pedestrian Program issues guidance and is responsible for seeing that requirements in legislation are understood and met by the States and other implementing agencies.

FHWA also sponsors resources such as the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center to provide information on a wide variety of engineering, encouragement, education, and enforcement topics. The Center was established with funding from the US DOT and is operated by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center.

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

The CDC has a [Community Preventive Services Task Force](#), which specializes in studying the relationship between the built environment and health. Their recommendations are used by policymakers, practitioners, program planners, and

other decision makers in communities. This task force has developed a [Guide to Community Preventive Services](#) as a free resource to help choose programs and policies to improve health and prevent disease.

The [CDC's Healthy Community Design](#) initiative attempts to improve public health through linking public health surveillance with community design decisions, improving community design decisions through tools, educating decision makers on the health impacts of community design, building partnerships with community design decision makers, conducting research to identify the links between health and community design, and translating research into best practices.

Distracted Driving Campaign

The U.S. Department of Transportation is leading the effort to stop texting and cell phone use behind the wheel. Since 2009, they have held two national distracted driving summits, banned texting and cell phone use for commercial drivers, encouraged states to adopt tough laws, and launched several campaigns to raise public awareness about the issue.

The [Partnership for Sustainable Communities](#) works to coordinate federal housing, transportation, water, and other infrastructure investments to make neighborhoods more prosperous, allow people to live closer to jobs, save households time and money, and reduce pollution. This is a partnership of The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Best Practices

Enforcement Programs

One way to make conditions better in your community is to work with law enforcement to have programs targeted at improving street safety. This could be concentrated during a few specific days, or could be a season-long program. A key to success for these kinds of programs is evenhanded enforcement for bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists.

Case Studies

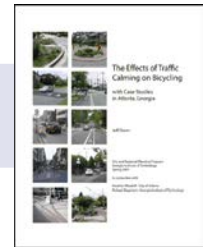
Bike Safety Education

Unlike the driver education process, there is no education requirement or test before a person can ride a bike. This makes bike safety education programs one avenue of improving biking conditions in your community. There are some educational efforts already set up in our region (see above for examples from local and regional agencies), but there is always more to be done.

Traffic Calming

Traffic calming is a general term for redesigning or retrofitting existing streets to slow traffic speeds and/or cut-through volumes in the interest of safety and livability. Traffic calming measures improve safety and convenience for pedestrians and bicyclists, and often motorists as well. Traffic calming measures do need to take bicyclists into account. A traffic calming program would result in transportation projects, but usually have a specific application and approval process separate from standard projects. Traffic calming programs are managed by many local jurisdictions: [Knox County](#), [Knoxville](#), [Maryville](#), and [Oak Ridge](#)

[The Effects of Traffic Calming on Bicyclists, with Case Studies in Atlanta, GA](#)



Opportunities for Input

If you have an idea for a new program that would be managed by a government agency, you would need to contact your elected officials to ask that staff and funding for the program be provided in the next annual operating budget. You should probably start by contacting the government agency and discussing your idea with them, before contacting elected officials, to be sure of where the appropriate "home" for such a program would be, and if they have tried such a program in the past, and if they are already interested in starting one.

PROJECTS

Policies and programs can only take a community so far. Changes in the built environment also need to take place. Keep in mind, however, that there are many other considerations when thinking about infrastructure projects, like right-of-way, funding availability, etc. Remember to be flexible when looking at potential solutions.

Local

There are three ways projects get done on a local level: maintenance, capital improvement, and private development.

Maintenance

Crosswalk installation, bike lane striping, sidewalk repair, and minor construction, such as curb ramps, can often be done as maintenance projects. Few maintenance departments have an adequate budget for everything they need to do, so the public has to demonstrate strong support for a project request to get it implemented this way.

How you would submit project requests depends on your county or municipality. In some cases, you would contact the director of the public services or maintenance department. In others, you may have to go through city council and the mayor.

Small bicycle and pedestrian improvements can sometimes get included on larger maintenance projects, such as street repaving. The TPO Bicycle Program strives to work with all of its member agencies to look at resurfacing lists to see if there is potential to add bike lanes as part of the project. If there is a specific street you are interested in, you can contact the agency's maintenance department to find out if any projects are scheduled to happen in the near future on that street.

Capital Improvements

Capital improvement projects, such as rebuilding a road or constructing a long segment of new sidewalk, are more expensive and more formal than maintenance projects. Before funding is even considered, the [project may need to be evaluated, studied, conceptually designed and scoped](#). Some local jurisdictions have a Capital Improvements Plan or Program (CIP), or may include a list of capital projects in the annual budget. The annual CIP/Budget process is the mechanism for getting projects (including roads, sidewalks, greenways, parks, community centers, etc.) approved and implemented. In many cases, the majority of the CIP budget funds ongoing projects and only a small portion are available for new projects. Government budgets operate based on a fiscal year, not the calendar year; typically July 1 through June 30, so planning for the next CIP starts as early as the previous fall.

While much of the focus of bicycle and pedestrian advocates is on road projects, it is important to ensure that other projects include bicycle and pedestrian facilities and connections. For example, do the plans for the new library or community center include bicycle racks close to the main entrance and easily accessible by bicyclists?

Local Examples of CIPs

[City of Knoxville's CIP](#)

[Knox County's budget](#) which includes the CIP on p. 29



Private Development

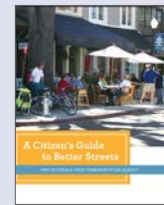
Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are also built and paid for by private developers as part of their projects. This might involve improving streets on property frontage or building entirely new public streets and intersections. Your local government can require facilities as part of project approval and review the site design for compliance with adopted standards. But exceptions are often made during the review and approval process if the council or commission doesn't hear public support for the bicycle and pedestrian facilities and connections.

See [Policies and Plans](#) for more details on this process and how you can be involved.

Regional

The [Knoxville Regional TPO](#) is responsible for developing and updating the [Transportation Improvement Program](#) (TIP). The TIP is a short-term spending program. The program identifies, prioritizes and allocates funding for transportation projects

over a four-year period. All TIP projects must be first identified in the [Mobility Plan](#) and then included in the TIP to receive federal transportation funding. The TIP is updated annually, and amended as needed throughout the year.



[A Citizen's Guide to Better Streets:](#)

How to Engage Your Transportation Agency Project for Public Spaces

This guide is intended to help individuals influence transportation decisions to improve communities. It discusses how to get a project started, understanding the planning process, influencing the final outcome of projects, traffic calming, understanding engineers, and taking the issue to the next level.

State

As a condition to receiving Federal project funds, TDOT must list all highway and public transit or transportation projects that will use federal transportation funds in a [State Transportation Improvement Program](#) (STIP). The STIP must also contain projects from the State Long Range Plan and state and locally funded projects that are considered "regionally significant," regardless of funding source. The STIP includes state and local roadway, bridge, bicycle, pedestrian, safety and public transportation (transit) projects. The STIP covers a four-year period and is based on funds that are reasonably expected to be available. It must be submitted to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for approval. Each year the Tennessee Department of Transportation prepares a [3-Year Comprehensive Multimodal Program](#) (CMP) which is sent to the Tennessee Legislature in support of the annual highway budget. This program includes a list of projects which have a reasonable chance of being implemented during the fiscal year in which they are listed. The CMP includes projects for the next three fiscal years, but the legislature only approves the projects in the upcoming year. This allows flexibility for the remaining two years of the program, with the opportunity to review the projects for schedule shifts and funding fluctuations. The CMP contains projects listed in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and those that will need to be amended into the STIP.

Federal

In general, the federal government provides funding for transportation projects, but doesn't manage them. See "Funding" explanation below.

Funding for Transportation Projects

Federal Funding

A large amount of transportation funding is derived from the Federal government. Federal funding for transportation is authorized through the [FAST Act](#) (Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act) which provides long-term funding certainty for transportation projects. Federal transportation funding comes from the Highway Trust

Fund which is supported by the national gas tax. In recent years, gas tax revenue has had to be supplemented with General Fund revenues. Federal funding typically must be matched by funds from other sources – in most cases, state and local governments, at a ratio of 80% federal and 20% state or local.

The US DOT developed the [Every Place Counts Leadership Academy: Transportation Toolkit](#). The toolkit is a plain language explanation of the transportation decision-making process.

[overview of how federal transportation funding works](#)

This [funding chart](#) indicates potential eligibility for pedestrian and bicycle projects under federal highway and transit programs. In each case there are specific requirements that must be met within eligibility criteria and eligibility will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

State Funding

The transportation program in Tennessee is funded by state highway user taxes and fees and federal funding. No money from the state's general fund, which relies on the sales tax, is used in any of the programs of the Tennessee Department of Transportation.

Tennessee's process of funding its highway program is often referred to as a "pay as you go" program. The agency only spends the funds that are available through its dedicated revenues, the highway user taxes and fees, and federal funding.

[TDOT's current annual budget](#) is \$2,075,941,900, of which \$995,782,800 is from federal sources.

Local Funding

Local governments use their revenues to leverage federal transportation dollars (pay the required 20% local match), as well as to pay for smaller transportation projects. Federal transportation funding comes with many requirements, and if a project costs less than about \$1 million, it is often seen as easier and more cost-effective to use local funding only.



How much does a transportation project cost?

The cost of sidewalks or greenways varies depending on how much property and/or easements need to be purchased, issues like drainage and utilities, but a good average is \$600,000 to \$1 million per mile. This can be less if local funding is used instead of federal funding.

To widen a roadway from two lanes to four lanes (e.g., to add bike lanes to an existing road) can cost about \$4.4 million in urban areas and \$3 million in rural areas, per mile.

Stages of a Project

Projects start by identifying a problem or an opportunity. Through many steps, decisions are made about how to address that problem. These steps vary depending on the scale of the project and whether funding uses federal transportation dollars. How detailed each of the steps is depends on how large and complicated the project is. Adding a turn lane at an intersection may go from planning to construction within two years, with little public input; whereas widening a two-lane road to a five-lane road may take 20 years and have several opportunities for input.

Projects are managed by either a local agency (e.g. city or county) or by TDOT.

1. Planning

Defining problems and opportunities and planning a course of action.

General Tasks:

- Agencies identify needs
- Decide what projects to fund (and which phase of each project)

Opportunities for Input:

- Submit requests for long-term plans or budgets
- Request specific facilities and funding for bicycling
- Attend public meetings on annual budgets and capital improvement programs
- Meet with local officials
- Volunteer on advisory committees

2. Project Development/Transportation Planning Report

Starting a project

General Tasks:

- Collect data and perform field surveys
- Establish design assumptions
- Consider and select design alternatives

Opportunities for input:

- Get to know the project manager and ask to be added to notification/ mailing list
- Provide input on alternatives and recommend inclusion of bicycling and pedestrian accommodations
- Question assumptions and check for incorrect data
- Consider the context of the project and what bicycle and pedestrian facilities and destinations are nearby (e.g. schools, greenways)
- TDOT lists all of its public hearings, meetings and notices at: <https://www.tn.gov/tdot/transportation-quick-links/upcoming-events.2018-02.html>
- TPO lists all public meetings held in its planning area (that it receives notice of) at <https://knoxtrans.org/calendar>

3. Environmental Assessment

For projects using federal funds.

General tasks:

- Archaeological, historic resources, noise, air and water impacts, and endangered species

Opportunities for input:

- Depends on the scale of the project. For large projects, an Environmental Impact Statement is required, so there would be public meetings when the Draft EIS is released and comments accepted for 30 days.
- Smaller projects, for example greenways and sidewalks, would have more of an internal assessment, asking for comments from agencies like the State Historic Preservation Office and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

4. Preliminary Engineering (PE)

Preparing initial engineering plans

General tasks:

- Determine project size, type and location.
- Prepare design based on available right-of-way, existing facilities, safety, obstacles and funding.
- Prepare design in accordance with standards and adopted policies.
- Prepare detailed plans and studies to 30-40% completion.

Opportunities for input:

- Find out what is proposed for bicycle and pedestrian accommodation/facilities
- Insist that locally adopted policies and plans be followed.
- Visit site with plans to look for missed details and unaddressed concerns or opportunities.
- Watch for public meeting announcements on agency's website, or on TPO's website.
- Make suggestions now, because it gets harder to make changes as plans get further developed.

5. Final Design

Prepare final detailed engineering plans to construct the project.

General tasks:

- Finalize plans for construction.
- Plans can vary from PE.
- Some projects may become "Design/Build" and move through a compressed schedule.

Opportunities for input:

- Monitor for changes from PE plans. Were your comments addressed?
- Stay in touch with the project manager.
- Once in final design, plans are much harder to change.
- Review and comment on items that are prepared late in the process, like detailed striping plans, and construction detour plans.

6. Right-of-way Acquisition (ROW)

Agency or its agents enter negotiations with property owners.

General tasks:

- Negotiate and purchase ROW from adjacent property owners.
- Purchase offers determined based on fair market value.
- Contact utility companies about relocations

- Obtain permits and authorizations.
- Issue notice to proceed.

Opportunities:

- Monitor plans for any late-stage design changes.
- Check for utility relocation impact on bicycling or walking.

7. Construction

Project is awarded and built

General tasks:

- Invite bids and award project.
- Agree on cost and time to completion.
- Hand over day-to-day management from project manager to construction manager.
- Supervise and inspect project for quality and conformity to plans.
- Manage traffic flow and access.
- Change plans when unexpected situations arise in the field.
- Construction delays can be expected due to weather, delivery problems, and unforeseen discoveries.

Opportunities:

- Monitor to ensure unexpected changes do not impact bicycle or pedestrian facilities.
- Check for safe ongoing access for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Take photos to document problems.

8. Final Inspection

Road or facility is opened

General tasks:

- Conduct final inspection of new facility.
- Open new facility after final approval.
- Plans available on file at agency.

Opportunities:

- Check for any problems – occasionally, what is built did not follow the plans exactly.
- Publicize the project, with its new bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- Recognize and thank officials.



[Guide for Reviewing Public Road Design and Bicycling Accommodations for Virginia Bicycling Advocates](#)

Planning, approving, and constructing road projects is a long process that presents many opportunities for input. This guide provides tips for speaking at public hearings and meeting with engineers, and covers the basics of understanding engineering plans. Design standards and guidelines, design and safety issues, and a checklist for each of these features help advocates review and comment on road design plans. While some information is specific to Virginia, most of it is applicable anywhere.

So how do we get more bike lanes?

There are basically three ways bike lanes get added:

1. The [TPO and TDOT bicycle accommodation policies](#) ensure that road projects include bicycle facilities (for example, bike lanes were included on the recently widened section of Lovell Road, and on the new section of Hall of Fame Boulevard) when the projects use federal or state transportation dollars.
2. When roads are resurfaced, usually every 10-20 years, the TPO Bicycle Program, in conjunction with the city or county managing the road, looks for opportunities to add bike lanes by reducing the width of travel or center turn lanes, or even reducing the number of travel lanes (for example, Central Avenue got a “road diet” that added bike lanes).
3. A capital project specifically to add bike lanes to a road. The City of Knoxville Bicycle Facilities Plan was developed in 2015 and has a prioritized list of bicycle projects. The City allocates funding each year to implement bicycle projects.



Placemaking

[Tactical Urbanism](#) refers to short-term, community-based projects that have become a powerful tool for activists, planners, and policy-makers who wish to implement lasting improvements in their cities. The projects – ranging from pop-up parks to open streets events and everything in-between – are quick, low-cost projects and provide a way to gain public and government support for investing in permanent projects. They inspire residents and civic leaders to experience and shape public spaces in a new way.

People for Bikes has released [Quick Builds for Better Streets: A New Project Delivery Model for U.S. Cities](#). Quick-build project delivery is part of the “tactical urbanism” spectrum of ways that streets can change, ranging from the most temporary changes to the most permanent ones. Quick-build projects fall on the middle parts of this spectrum. Like larger capital projects (which are mostly asphalt and concrete), quick-build projects are meant to be used by the public for years. But many other things about them—materials, process, funding—are new and developing rapidly.

Burlington, Vermont published [Community-Led Demonstration Project Policy + Guide](#). The guide helps residents understand the city’s permit process for pilot/ demonstration projects.

Pop-Up traffic calming is another form of tactical urbanism. These creative solutions, which often include planters, paint, traffic cones, and plants, allow neighborhoods and community members to take ownership of their public spaces. These short-term demonstrations create buy-in for more permanent projects by starting discussion and problem-solving from the bottom up.

[Slow Your Street: A How-To Guide for Pop-Up Traffic Calming](#) has resources to help you better understand the movement and how you can bring it to your neighborhood.

The [Rapid Urban Revitalization Toolkit](#) is set of flashcards with practical ideas on how to design and implement projects that can quickly and cheaply transform your neighborhood.

Guide to Providing Input

ENGAGING DECISION-MAKERS

Elected officials often say they wish there had been vocal proponents of biking and walking at meetings, backing them up in wanting to design for all users of the road. Having just a few voices of reason at a public meeting can result in designs that benefit bicyclists and pedestrians (which means all of us!).

Working with local officials is a lot easier than you may think. Once you know the basics, you might be surprised at what you can accomplish. Do you know who has the authority to make transportation plans, land use policies and school site selection in your community or region? This guide gives you the groundwork, and you can go further to find the right person to talk to.

Investigate and understand the most important issue to them (e.g. schools, transportation, or the economy). To convince decision makers of what is important to you, you must understand what is important to them. This can be done through a bit of research—either directly with them, or by asking others who know them. Most cities and towns have a website. Check there first for information on local officials, boards, ordinances and regulations. If the town does not have an up to date website, visit your local library and ask the reference specialist. You can also go to your city or town hall and ask the city or town clerk or their staff.

When and How Decisions Are Made

Once you know who the decision makers are, find out what goes on by attending board or other committee meetings (many Knoxville and Knox County meetings are shown on [CTV](#) so you don't even have to leave your house to attend!). Watch and learn how their decisions are made. Observe officials' voting patterns and reactions to issues. Just attending these meetings can be a first step toward achieving your goals.

Be Informed

Read your local paper. You learn a great deal about what is going on with local issues and how your local officials respond to those issues. The editorial page is especially helpful in determining the climate of public support and decision maker response. If you are up to date on what is appearing in print, you are able to anticipate, and answer, related questions from your local officials or decision makers. They will come to rely upon your opinion. But be careful to separate editorial bias from the facts. In addition to reading the paper, request meeting agendas and minutes. Agendas and minutes are available for public review and often are posted online. By reading them, you increase your knowledge of the issues.

Develop Key Relationships

Working with local officials takes planning, "people skills" and effective communication. Start where they are, not where you are. To do that, first find out more about them. Decision makers want to do the right thing for their communities, but

sometimes they need more information. They want the support of their constituents and they rely on trusted friends and colleagues for their information and guidance. They welcome information from reliable sources. They have special interests, (e.g. schools, recreation, affordable housing).

Familiarize yourself with the timelines and process for the project, program or policy you are interested in influencing.

Build partnerships with stakeholders who are already engaged. Many stakeholders are already involved in these issues.

Don't be overwhelmed by the thought of attending endless meetings or reading confusing minutes. Establish allies in your community who will let you know when an important meeting will be held or when there are key minutes that need to be read. These allies will also help you identify which decision makers you need to know and which ones are better left alone.

Local officials and decision makers are people just like you. Think about how you would start a relationship with a neighbor or co-worker. If you don't know the person at all, ask someone who does to introduce you or mention that you will be calling. You might send an introductory email. The key is to start slowly by asking some initial questions — not the hard-hitting kind, but those that help you establish rapport. Local officials and decision makers have jobs outside of politics. Ask about them. They will appreciate the effort. Face-to-face relationships are more valuable than letter-writing, and not difficult to establish with local elected officials.

Written Materials

If you want to send written materials, we recommend email because it is a more rapid means of communication than a sending a handwritten letter. The advantage of sending written materials is that you can devote as much time as you want to prepare your writing so that it's ready for public scrutiny.

There are four main points to remember:

1. Introduce yourself as a resident or constituent
2. Address only one topic at a time
3. Explain why this issue is of importance to you
4. Request a response to your correspondence

Public officials will respond to either supported statistics or a personal appeal (e.g. a story of how the issue affects you). Emphasize facts and figures that support your cause and recognize the supporting role that emotional appeals can play. Thoroughly look over your email before hitting the send button. Keep in mind that just because emails are delivered instantaneously, this does not mean you should expect a quick response from the elected official or municipal employee.

Telephone Calls

A phone call is a good next step because it allows you to engage in conversation with an influential decision-maker. This gives you an opportunity to explain your position in an even-keeled manner. Make sure you are speaking clearly and using professional language with proper introductions and salutations.

A simple way to prepare for this conversation is to compose a script of talking points and questions and practice this out loud a few times. Keep this script available when you make your phone call and have a pen and paper at hand to take notes and write down new questions as they arise during the phone call. Be sure to thank the person for his/her time and, if need be, request an opportunity to discuss issues in the future. Be prompt with any follow-up.

In-person Meetings

Another option is to schedule a face-to-face meeting with the staff person or elected official dealing with the issue. Let the person you are trying to talk with make the decision for either scheduling a phone call or in-person meeting and roll with the punches. If you do have an in-person meeting, then there are a few things to keep in mind:

1. Dress professionally and address everyone at the meeting in a professional way.
2. Bring any materials you have relating to the issue and something to take notes on. Leave information for their records.
3. Stay positive and on point. Don't let technicalities or details distract from the larger issue.
4. Be sure to discuss next steps before leaving.

Keep in mind that municipal staff work for the elected leadership; no matter what their personal opinions might be, their job is to execute elected officials' decisions. Elected officials answer to the voters, so you can influence staff decisions by talking to your elected officials.

Always send a thank you note to someone who took the time to have a face-to-face meeting with you. If you are asked questions you don't know the answer for, don't be afraid to say, "I don't know off the top of my head, but I will make sure to send you the correct information after our meeting." Then, follow up in a reasonable amount of time with the relevant information.

Public Meetings

There are many opportunities for public comment on specific projects or general policies. City council and county commission meetings have an open comment period. Major infrastructure projects are required to have multiple public hearings to gather comments. No matter what kind of public meeting you are attending, there are a few keys to using this time as an opportunity to successfully push forward whatever change you would like to see.

In many cases, residents may not become involved in an issue until or unless they are outraged; and public comment may as a result become emotional and confrontational. A confrontational approach to public comment is ineffective in terms of negotiating—with either the local government or a developer—for the best possible outcome. A factual, focused approach to public comment will provide constructive direction.

Remember:

- Present your comments clearly and concisely, with specific suggestions relevant to the proposal.
- Focus on the issues. If the topic is a development proposal, focus on whether or not the proposal meets the standards of the ordinance. For rezonings or changes to the zoning ordinance, address whether or not the changes meet the goals and intent of the comprehensive plan or sector plan.
- Encourage participation from other residents that share the same position. A large audience that supports a particular position can be very influential.
- Remember, once you have submitted a public statement, your comments are out in the public sphere. Make sure your issue is not better handled by working behind-the-scenes with staff.

At meetings, the time allotted for comments may be limited, so get right to the point. If speaking in front of large crowds is a challenge to you, write down a statement beforehand and practice it a few times. You may also submit a written statement to be added to the public record after the meeting.

Media

The media plays an important role in land use decisions. Community involvement can have a huge impact on decisions about an issue; but for residents to become involved in an issue, they need to know how it affects them. Many residents rely on newspaper, television or radio coverage for information about local news. If land use and planning stories are not covered by the local media, many residents may not be aware of plans or proposals that could affect them. In-depth media coverage can encourage public interest and participation, which can subsequently impact the outcome.

In many cases, media coverage of an issue is a result of community activism. Residents often raise awareness through letters to the editor, and may work directly with the local media to encourage stories on an issue and make sure that their perspective is covered. Individuals and local governments alike should communicate regularly with the media, through letters, phone calls, press releases, and meetings with editorial staff, to be sure that issues are being covered regularly and fairly.

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

Community participation in the process is essential for success. Involvement builds support. When your neighbors and other city or town residents participate in implementing specific projects, your bicycling or walking project will more likely get built.

Convincing a decision-maker that the public is behind a proposed policy change, such as requiring sidewalks or funding more bike lanes, because it's good for the community is a challenge. To do that, you must build relationships with key decision-makers and the community. While that may be the most difficult aspect of working toward your goal, it may also be the most rewarding.

Your role as change agent and facilitator not only includes engaging the community and providing knowledge about the benefits of bicycling and walking, but also letting residents educate you on how to do it, and working with them every step of the way. It is important to convince the decision-makers that a proposed policy change is in the best interest of the municipality as a whole, and the individuals within it. As with elected officials and other decision makers, nurturing and maintaining relationships with residents are keys to success.

There are three avenues for successful community participation: neighborhoods, established community groups or organizations, and advisory boards and commissions.

Neighborhoods

The neighborhood is a gold mine. In many neighborhoods residents are voicing concern over "cut-through" traffic, speeding cars, limited places to walk, or a lack of safe places for children to play. It doesn't take much to encourage neighborhood groups to voice their concerns and to take action. Many neighborhood design elements solve bicycle- or pedestrian-related issues by implementing traffic calming techniques such as sidewalks, on-street parking, street trees, and narrowing of lanes. Here are some points to consider when working with neighborhood groups.

1. Approach the group before issues arise. Clearly explain why creating active community environments benefit their neighborhood.
2. Know your audience. Use appropriate language, technical vs. non-technical depending on the group, and offer a realistic plan that uses the resources in your community in order to accomplish its objectives.
3. Be prepared to explain how creating policies can help effect sustained change. Bring examples of what other successful communities have done.
4. Keep your ear to the ground for opportunities. When an issue arises, contact the neighborhood and offer to share your expertise as a bicycling and walking advocate.

Sometimes formal neighborhood organizations or associations exist. A hot issue can rekindle a dwindling neighborhood association. Other times you may need to identify or cultivate leadership within the neighborhood, perhaps someone who believes in this issue and will join your efforts.

Follow the same suggestions for working with elected officials. Identify leaders, arrange for a meeting, and learn more about their issues. Think about how your interests may apply to their issues, then offer to be a resource to work together to find solutions.

Community Groups and Organizations Working for Change

Established community groups and organizations offer another rich resource for community involvement that can help impact policy change. If one of the existing community groups, like Bike Walk Knoxville or Together! Healthy Knox, are not already working on the issue you are interested in, you may want to create a group yourself. Here are suggestions for establishing a successful "friends of" group (e.g. "Sidewalks for Green Street").

The friends group should consist of motivated and passionate people. You will need to identify about 25 people who are committed to the goal. Surprisingly, what you will be asking of them is not overly time-consuming or demanding. To keep the mission fresh in the minds of elected officials and decision makers, the 25 friends must be consistent and persistent in the message. The approach is simple. Over the course of a year, get 25 people who are interested in an issue to commit to do the following five tasks.

1. Write two letters per year.
2. Make two phone calls per year.
3. Send two emails per year.
4. Attend and speak at two public meetings per year.
5. Make two visits with policy- or decision-makers per year.

To be successful, their message needs to be consistent but different enough not to appear to be using a form letter. The real work will come in coordinating the timing of this effort. The person leading this effort must be well organized. Use a large calendar to write in each volunteer's name, task, and date. It also helps to provide some volunteer training to the friends group. Training could include an overview of the local political process and bicycle and pedestrian design elements. Design the training toward the skill level of the group, keeping the ultimate goal in mind. This approach requires minimal work for volunteers, but it can create an avalanche of voices, sustained momentum, and, ultimately, accomplishment.

Here's a tip. The success of this approach rests in the simple truth that elected officials and decision-makers rarely hear the same message from this many people over an extended length of time. This approach creates the effect of an "avalanche." That's the beauty of a friends group; they are essentially friends of your cause who want to make their voices heard.



Open Streets Knoxville brings together community groups and local businesses, giving people of all ages and abilities the opportunity to walk, ride bikes, skateboard (and more) on streets that are free from motorized vehicles. Open Streets encourages the use of active transportation and healthy living, and has a goal of giving residents an opportunity to rethink our streets as public space. The event is hosted by Bike Walk Knoxville, with significant support from the City of Knoxville.

Advisory Boards and Commissions

One way to move toward bikeable and walkable communities is to create a government-appointed advisory board or commission that focuses on bicycle or pedestrian issues, or both. As a general rule, it is best for the advisory board to limit its work to either bicycle or pedestrian interests. The experience of numerous communities shows the importance of having separate bicycle and pedestrian advisory boards. One interest dominates the other when the two exist as one.

Here's a tip. The creation of a full-time or even part-time coordinator position within local government that focuses on bicycle and pedestrian needs as they relate to all other transportation modes, planning, and city operations is ideal. A typical job description would include both bicycle and pedestrian responsibilities, serving as staff to both Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Boards.

In creating a board, it is vital that there is municipal support. In other words, make it the "Mayor's Pedestrian Advisory Board" or the "City/Town Bicycle Advisory Committee." Such an advisory board will carry more weight and potentially have more influence over local policy decisions than a board created by an advocacy group that has not been endorsed by the local government. Additionally, an advisory board will likely outlast individual politicians, making it a sustainable entity that addresses bicycle/pedestrian needs.

MAKING THE CASE FOR BICYCLING AND WALKING

Infrastructure that is designed to suit all users—regardless of how they choose to get around—is becoming mainstream. Still, there's a need for active involvement to ensure the best outcome. When encountering influential decision-makers who may not yet be supportive of bicycling, it's important to remember these things:

Think Differently

At times you may feel the need to ask for a bike lane on a specific road, but you should also recognize the training and experience of planners and engineers managing these efforts. It is important to remain goal-oriented and not get fixated on a specific piece of infrastructure or program. Sometimes there is only one solution to a problem, but often there are many options.

Livability Fact Sheets

AARP Livable Communities has partnered with the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute to create the [Livability Fact Sheet series](#). A package of comprehensive, easy-to-read livability resources, the fact sheets can be used by community leaders, policy makers, and advocates to learn about and explain what makes a city, town or neighborhood a great place for people of all ages.

Each fact sheet, in what will be an 11-part series, is a four-page PDF document that can be read online or printed and distributed.



Still, there are times when public employees may not know much about bike-friendly measures and require some education about the options. And there are other times when they are dead-set on certain solutions based on bad information. It is always important to do your best to have a productive working relationship with other stakeholders and staff so that everyone can understand the pros and cons to specific options.

In the end, we want safe streets that are comfortable for all users. Staying goal-oriented and open-minded is the best way to realize this vision.

Consider Your Audience

As a community leader, you'll be successful if you can frame bicycling as a positive with various members of the community: taxpayers, business owners, pedestrians, etc. Putting a positive spin on possible negatives requires preparation, research, and quick-thinking—all of which will come with experience. Some common arguments in favor of biking include:

- Economy—Bicycling instead of driving can save households money, and reduce the need for public investments in road expansions and parking structures.
- Health—In addition to being a great way to work exercise into your daily routine, the obesity crisis in America costs us billions of dollars annually in medical expenses.
- Environment—Replacing some car trips with bicycle trips improves our air quality.

Remember that being a proponent of bicycling is not about demonizing cars. Emphasize making positive change, and be sure to tailor your argument to the interests of those you are trying to convince.

Anticipate

Address potential arguments that opponents could raise against bicycling and be prepared to address those issues.

STAYING ENGAGED

Getting the ball rolling is tough. But the hardest and most important job is to follow up and remain on task. One trick is to designate a single issue that will take priority over the others. There are many projects that will come up as an opportunity to improve bicycling conditions in your local community and it's easy to put your energy into these things that pop up. But these can very easily become distractions and get in the way of any significant accomplishments. Focus on what is most helpful to your efforts and shepherd your project through from start to finish.

There is always the possibility that bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly projects or policies may be deemed unnecessary, even if it's not so. You will have to be vigilant and work hard to maintain enthusiasm for the project. It's a long road, but the potential rewards are worth the effort.

Prioritize

It's easy to want to tackle everything at once, but that is setting yourself up for failure. The key to being effective is to take on manageable, achievable projects. The benefit of this, in addition to being much less stressful, is that successes bring attention and

breed more successes. Thus, especially at first, it is important to prioritize the smaller efforts first and leave the large, long-term projects for a time when you and your allies are better equipped to handle them. Not only will you build a reputation of success, but you will also build the relationships necessary to take your efforts to the next level.

Following Up

It's important to stay engaged for the duration of the project's implementation. Projects and programs, especially complicated ones, can take a significant portion of time—multiple years in some cases! If you have created a partnership or shared alliance, be sure to meet on a regular basis (quarterly at the minimum). This will go a long way toward maintaining relationships, updating members on the status, and keeping people involved.

Adding some political clout through expertise can only help your cause. Consider reaching out to public figures like politicians or experts or trusted figures like local or industry celebrities. Established success stories can contribute invaluable legitimacy to your project. Work with people who have accomplished in other areas what you want to accomplish in your area.

Mailing Lists

To stay in touch and on top of issues, you can ask to be added to email or mailing lists for your neighborhood group/association, local advocacy groups, city council, etc. Check the Resources (link) section for organizations and agencies.

The Role of Social Media

Social media can be a useful tool for communicating. Many needs—publicity, outreach, and communication—can be met. Social media is not a replacement for a telephone call, meeting, email, or hand-written letter (all of which are best suited for contact with public officials), but it can keep people engaged and spread the word.

Seeking Elected or Appointed Office

Perhaps the most effective way for citizens to shape local plans and land use decisions is to commit to serving as elected or appointed officials. Almost any citizen over the age of 18 can run for local office or apply for a commission or committee. In some cases, even those under 18 may be appointed to a planning commission.

Citizens may want to consider running for elected office or seeking an appointment to the planning commission, zoning board of appeals, or other committees, which are often created to address specific issues like the creation of a plan or ordinance. Or, those not interested in serving on a public body themselves may instead campaign for candidates that they believe will represent their opinions and interests.

Resources

Local Elected and Appointed Officials

[List of local planning commissions, city and county councils and commissions, and mayors](#)

Road Design Guides

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials "Green Book"—A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets—for purchase at https://bookstore.transportation.org/collection_detail.aspx?id=110

[Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices](#)

Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, 2012 for purchase at https://bookstore.transportation.org/collection_detail.aspx?ID=116

[National Association of City Transportation Officials Urban Bikeway Design Guide](#)

[Greenway Guidelines for the East Tennessee Region: Recommendations for Water, Rail and Roadside Trails in Regional Landscapes](#)

Provides a brief introduction to greenway design; illustrates a variety of conditions typical to East Tennessee; and offers before-and-after visualizations in urban, suburban and rural landscapes. The guide also provides easy-to-use visual indexes to assist in the selection and design of trail crossings, surface materials, signage, buffers, barriers, borders, lighting, and trailside amenities.

Resources for Elected Officials

[Increasing Active Living: A Guide for Policy Makers](#)

[Local Leaders: Healthier Communities Through Design](#)

[AARP Livable Communities](#) support the efforts of neighborhoods, towns, cities and rural areas to be great places for people of all ages. We believe that communities should provide safe, walkable streets; age-friendly housing and transportation options; access to needed services; and opportunities for residents of all ages to participate in community life.

Organizations/Campaigns

Local

[Bicycle Program](#)

Program of the Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization, working to implement the Regional Bicycle Plan.

[Bike Walk Knoxville](#)

Advocacy organization promoting bicycling and walking as mainstream and enjoyable forms of transportation and recreation and working to create safe thoroughfares and vibrant communities in the Knoxville region.

[Safe Routes to School](#)

The Knox County Safe Routes to School Partnership works to make it safer, easier and more fun for kids to get to and from school under their own power. The Partnership is coordinated by the Knox County Health Department, with assistance from the Knoxville Regional TPO. Contact Liliana Burbano-Bonilla at the Knox County Health Department: liliana.burbano@knoxcounty.org or 215-5546.

[Together! Healthy Knox](#)

A community strategic planning initiative for health improvement focusing on three strategic issues: equity, partnerships, and policy. An initiative of the Community Health Council serving Knox County, Knoxville, and the Town of Farragut, with support from the Knox County Health Department.

[Knoxville Greenways Commission](#)

The Greenways Commission was created to study the needs and desires of city residents and to promote the development of new greenways and the maintenance of existing ones. Members are appointed by the Mayor of Knoxville.

[Great Smoky Mountain Regional Greenways Council](#)

A coalition of local governments, agencies and individuals working together to coordinate, plan and promote greenway construction in the greater Knoxville region.

[Safe Kids of the Greater Knox Area](#)

A coalition working to reduce unintentional injuries in children up to age 14 in the East Tennessee region by promoting awareness and implementing prevention initiatives.

Statewide

[Bike Walk Tennessee](#)

Statewide advocacy organization promoting cycling and walking in Tennessee for the benefit of health, recreation, tourism and a cleaner environment for all.

[Jeff Roth Cycling Foundation](#)

Statewide advocacy and education non-profit, promoting cycling as a safe and healthy form of transportation, and to provide financial assistance to families that have been touched by cycling tragedies.

National

[Association of Pedestrian & Bicycle Professionals](#)

Members include planners, engineers, landscape architects, and other professionals working to make communities more walkable and bicycle-friendly. APBP offers an active and valuable listserv and monthly webinars. (Note: the Knoxville Regional TPO often hosts these webinars so anyone can attend in person. Email to find out when the next webinar is scheduled: ambassadors@knoxtrans.org.)

[League of American Bicyclists](#)

With a current membership of 300,000 affiliated cyclists, including 20,000 individuals and 800 affiliated organizations, the League works to create a more bicycle-friendly America. The League's mission is to promote bicycling for fun, fitness, and transportation and work through advocacy and education to represent the interests of the nation's 57 million cyclists.

[National Center for Biking & Walking](#)

NCBW's mission is to create bicycle-friendly and walkable communities. NCBW aims to change the way communities are planned, designed and managed to ensure that people of all ages and abilities can walk and bike easily, safely and regularly.

[National Complete Streets Coalition](#)

The Complete Streets Coalition's goal is to help with the adoption and implementation of complete streets policies at all levels. Instead of fighting for better streets block by block, the National Complete Streets Coalition seeks to fundamentally transform the look, feel, and function of the roads and streets in our communities by changing the way most roads are planned, designed, and constructed.

[People for Bikes](#)

A national coalition of bicycle retailers and suppliers working to put more people on bikes more often. From helping create safe places to ride to promoting bicycling, People for Bikes carefully selects projects and partnerships that have the capacity to make a difference

[Safe Routes to School National Partnership](#)

A network of organizations, agencies, and groups working to share best practices, leverage infrastructure and program funding, and advance policy change to help agencies that implement Safe Routes to School programs. The Partnership's mission is to advocate for safe walking and bicycling to and from schools, and in daily life, to improve the health and well-being of America's children and to foster the creation of livable, sustainable communities.

[Transportation for America](#)

A coalition working to reform how transportation dollars are spent at the federal, state and local level to create a safer, cleaner and smarter transportation system that works for everyone.

Planning Commissions

[Alcoa Regional/Municipal Planning Commission](#)

[Blount County Planning Commission](#)

[Farragut Municipal Planning Commission](#)

[Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission](#)

[Lenoir City Regional Planning Commission](#)

[Loudon County Regional Planning Commission](#)

[Maryville Regional Planning Commission](#)

[Oak Ridge Municipal Planning Commission](#)

[Sevier County Regional Planning Commission](#)

Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA)

[Alcoa](#)
[Anderson County](#)
[Blount County](#)
[Farragut](#)
[Knox County](#)
[Knoxville](#)
[Lenoir City](#)
[Loudon \(City\)](#)
[Loudon \(County\)](#)
[Maryville](#)
[Oak Ridge](#)
[Sevier County](#)

City Councils/Commissions

[Alcoa Board of Commissioners](#)
[Farragut Board of Mayor and Aldermen](#)
[Knoxville City Council](#)
[Lenoir City Board of Mayor and Aldermen](#)
[Loudon City Council](#)
[Maryville City Council](#)
[Oak Ridge City Council](#)

County Commissions

[Anderson County Commission](#)
[Blount County Commission](#)
[Knox County Commission](#)
[Loudon County Commission](#)
[Sevier County Commission](#)

Mayors

[Alcoa](#)
[Anderson County](#)
[Blount County](#)
[Farragut](#)
[Knox County](#)
[Knoxville](#)
[Lenoir City](#)
[Loudon](#)
[Loudon County](#)
[Oak Ridge](#)
[Sevier County](#)

Key Connections between Transportation, Health and Sustainability

The way we invest in transportation is essential to the welfare of all people in our region. Transportation investments and policies have a major impact on physical activity, traffic injuries and fatalities, environmental quality, and access to services and jobs. Below are some of the direct and indirect health effects of transportation projects and policies:

DIRECT EFFECTS

Physical Activity and Active Transportation

Active transportation (walking, biking, and wheeling to destinations) has a direct health benefit, and can reduce the risk of heart disease, improve mental health, lower blood pressure, and reduce the risk of chronic disease such as Type 2 Diabetes.

A [recent study](#) found that 43% of people with safe places to walk within 10 minutes of home met recommended activity levels, while only 27% of people without safe places to walk met the recommendation. Other research shows that 65% of residents are more likely to walk in a community with sidewalks.

Public transit is considered active transportation because it generally involves an active mode at the beginning or the end of the trip.



Collision Injuries and Fatalities

Motor vehicle collisions are a major cause of death and injury, and are the leading cause of death among those ages 5-34. Road design, speed reduction, and other strategies can all reduce the toll of motor vehicle collisions.

Air Pollution

Auto emissions impact air quality and contribute to impaired lung development, lung cancer, asthma and other chronic respiratory problems, and heart disease.

Cleaner fuels and more efficient vehicles can reduce emissions, but strategies that reduce driving are also important for air quality because some pollutants are directly related to how much people drive.

INDIRECT EFFECTS

Access to Jobs

For low-income families who cannot afford a car, public transit can be a lifeline to jobs. Social service agencies have found that inadequate transportation is one of the top three barriers to the transition from welfare to work.

Access to Services and Medical Care

When getting to health care or other essential services is difficult – and this is especially true for lower-income residents who don't have access to a car or effective

public transportation – patients often miss appointments or delay care until a condition deteriorates and requires emergency attention.

Household Expenses

Families may feel strapped when housing and transportation expenses consume more than 45 percent of their household income. Much of our region exceeds this threshold. Areas with lower transportation costs are generally concentrated in community centers, both large and small. Low-income families are hit the hardest because transportation expenses account for a larger proportion of their income.

Social Cohesion and Social Networks

Transportation planning and community design that facilitates active transportation, including public transportation, tends to increase social interaction and community cohesion. Increased neighborly interactions can help reduce crime, depression, and poverty, provide support and safety, and increase property values. Community cohesion and supportive transportation services are particularly important for vulnerable populations, including the elderly and disabled.

Physical inactivity contributes to the rising levels of chronic disease in our country. Chronic diseases—such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes—are among the most prevalent, costly, and preventable of all health problems. Leading a healthy lifestyle (avoiding tobacco use, being physically active, and eating well) greatly reduces a person's risk for developing chronic disease. Chronic disease accounts for over 75 percent of all deaths and 75 percent of all U.S. health care expenditures. In the past 30 years, the prevalence of being overweight and obesity has increased sharply for both adults and children. Physical inactivity and unhealthy eating contribute to overweight and obesity and a number of chronic diseases, including some cancers, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes.

Tennessee has the sixth highest adult [obesity rate](#) in the nation, according to *The State of Obesity: Better Policies for a Healthier America* released August 2017. Tennessee's adult obesity rate is currently 34.8 percent, up from 20.9 percent in 2000 and from 11.1 percent in 1990.

According to a [2017 Health Brief](#)

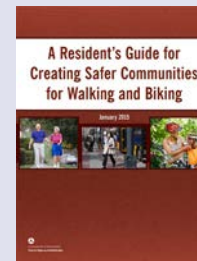
- 38.5% of Tennessee students are overweight or obese.
- Tennessee is one of only three states where preschool-age obesity is increasing rather than decreasing.
- Teenage obesity has risen more than 30% from 2001 to 2015 according to the 2017 BCBS Health Index Report.
- Growing rates of obesity among adults 18-24 suggest that this growth will continue for adults 18-34 going forward.

Selecting transportation plans, programs, and projects that support multimodal modes (walking, cycling, and transit use) is integral to creating safe, sustainable, and active communities, and can:

- Allow sufficient opportunities for daily physical activity;
- Reduce preventable injury and death;
- Provide affordable access for all users;
- Enhance community economic viability by improving feasibility of less expensive multimodal trips and by linking residents to job centers.

[A Resident's Guide for Creating Safer Communities for Walking and Bicycling](#)

FHWA recently developed a similar guide to this one. The sections are:



- What's the problem here?
- Who can help me?
- What can be done?
- I need more information!
- Community success stories
- Resource materials

While it doesn't have the Knoxville region-specific information that ours does, it is still a great resource. Check it out!

Memphis Complete Streets Project Delivery Manual

Complete Streets is an approach to transportation planning, design, operations, and maintenance, which provides safe and accessible transportation options for people of all ages and abilities, whether walking, bicycling, riding public transportation, or driving.

Realization of this vision depends on the routine application of Complete Streets principles in decision making, the establishment of performance metrics and evaluation, and a commitment to a coordinated project delivery process. [This manual](#) presents a structure for understanding and applying these concepts on an everyday basis, folding policy into practice.

