Promoting Safe Walking and Cycling to Improve Public Health

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Walking and Cycling: the **MOST** sustainable transport modes

- **MOST environmentally friendly:**
  > Virtually no pollution at all
  > Almost no nonrenewable resources used

- **MOST equitable:**
  > Financially affordable by virtually everyone
  > Physically possible by all but the severely disabled

- **MOST economical:**
  > Minimal private and public costs
  > Although they take more time, they provide exercise that reduces medical costs and greatly extends our healthy life expectancy
YET, walking and cycling are woefully neglected modes of transport in most countries!

- Least funding of all travel modes
- Least roadway space
- Least priority in roadway use
- Least education and training efforts
- Inadequate rights vis-a-vis motorists
Cycling and walking can provide valuable physical activity for almost everyone

- Both for daily travel and for recreation
- Cheaper, easier, and more dependable than formal exercise routines
- Can be integrated into daily lifestyle to achieve practical travel needs
Crucial importance of regular physical exercise:

- Obviously, the daily physical exercise of walking and cycling for practical travel helps burn up calories and helps avoid the problems of **overweight and obesity**

- Moreover:

  "**Whether normal-weight, overweight, or obese, physically inactive persons are 2 to 3 times more likely to die prematurely.**"

Huge Health Benefits of Even Small Increases in Physical Activity

Physical inactivity is second leading cause of disease.

Percent of total burden of disease attributed to selected risk factors

- Physical inactivity is the second leading cause of disease.
- Tobacco is the leading cause of disease.

Burden of Disease study, AIHW 1999
Obesity Rate by Country (Body Mass Index ≥ 30) (percentage of adults)


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Obesity Trends* Among U.S. Adults
BRFSS, 1990, 1995, 2005
(*BMI ≥30, or about 30 lbs overweight for 5’4” person)
Worsening Obesity Epidemic among American Children and Adolescents, 1963-2002 (% with body mass index of 30+)

**NOTE:** Excludes pregnant women starting with 1971-74. Pregnancy status not available for 1963-65 and 1966-70. Data for 1963-65 are for children 6-11 years of age; data for 1966-70 are for adolescents 12-17 years of age, not 12-19 years.

**SOURCE:** CDC/NCHS, NHES and NHANES
Does auto-dependency make us fat? Obesity falls sharply with increased walking, cycling, and transit use!

Cycling and Walking Shares of Urban Trips in Europe and the USA, 1995

Bike Share of Trips in Europe, North America, and Australia
Portland has highest bike share of any large U.S. city!
Oregon has highest bike share of any state!
Percentage of Short Trips Made by Walking and Cycling in Germany and the USA

Source: Ralph Buehler, "Travel Behavior in Germany and the USA"
Average Weekly Levels of Physical Exercise in the USA, 2002 (% of adults getting CDC’s recommended levels of exercise)

Public transport encourages walking!

90% of all transit trips in the USA include walk trips to access transit stops, and those walk trips are longer than other kinds of walk trips!

Note: CDC sets minimum standard as at least 5 days a week of moderately intense activity (small rise in breathing or heart rate) for 30 minutes a day OR at least 3 days a week of vigorous exercise (large rise in breathing or heart rate) for 20 minutes a day.

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Cycling can start at a very young age
And we can keep cycling all life long!!!
Guided Bicycle Tours for Seniors

Troels Andersen, “Cycling in Odense, Denmark”

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Walking and Bicycling Shares of Urban Travel by Age Group in the USA, Germany and The Netherlands, 1995

![Bar chart showing walking and bicycle shares by age group in the USA, Germany, and The Netherlands, 1995.](chart.png)


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Make Cycling and Walking Safe for Everyone!

- Cycling and walking safety is important for everyone, but especially crucial for the young, the old, for anyone with disabilities, for the timid or risk-averse.

- Women generally are more sensitive to safety than men.

- Improving safety would greatly enhance the attractiveness of cycling and walking to a broad spectrum of society.

- The much greater safety of cycling and walking in Northern Europe might explain why so many children, elderly, and women cycle.
Walking and Cycling **CAN** be made very safe, as in the Netherlands

Fatality Rates and Non-Fatal Injury Rates in the USA, Germany and the Netherlands, 2000


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SAFETY IN NUMBERS

• As levels of cycling and walking increase, injury and fatality rates per trip and per km traveled fall dramatically

• Fatality rates per trip and per km are much lower for countries and cities with high bicycling and walking shares of total travel, and fatality rates fall for any given country or city as cycling and walking levels rise

• THUS, it is quite likely that increased cycling and walking in Australia, Canada, and the USA would be safer than they are today.

We CAN increase walking and cycling!

• The necessary measures are known and proven

• Many successful policies and programs in cities around the world that have greatly increased walking and cycling

• Northern Europe has been at the forefront of best policies, but there have been isolated successes in North America and Australia as well

• The SAME policies that make cycling and walking more convenient, faster, more pleasant, and more attractive ALSO make cycling and walking safer for everyone

• Rest of talk will explain and illustrate the most important measures

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How to Encourage More Cycling and Walking while Improving Safety

• Better cycling and walking facilities
• Integration of walk/bike with public transport
• Traffic calming of residential neighborhoods
• Mixed-use zoning and improved urban design
• Restrictions on motor vehicle use
• Traffic education and Safe Routes to School
• Traffic regulations and enforcement
Better cycling and walking facilities

- **Bike paths and lanes** with exclusive rights of way, providing a **connected, integrated, comprehensive bike route** network that serves all parts of the metro area

- Wide, well-lit **sidewalks** with benches and plants

- Clearly marked, well-lit **crosswalks**, often raised and with curb extensions and pedestrian-activated traffic signals

- **Auto-free zones and special bicycling streets** covering much of city center

- **Make all streets more bikeable** to enhance route network

- **Extensive, secure, sheltered bike parking** at appropriate locations

- **Intersection modifications** that minimize dangers for cyclists making turns and crossing roads

- **Advance green lights** for cyclists (to cross intersections before motor vehicles)
Most European cities have extensive car-free districts ideal for walking and cycling, such as here in Muenster, Germany.
Extensive car-free zone includes most of Muenster’s center, providing ideal walking and cycling conditions.
Bikes and buses take up much less space than cars!!

Demonstration on main street of Muenster how much space cars take compared to buses or bikes to transport the same number of people

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Lively, safe, pleasant car-free zone in central Copenhagen
**Fahrradstrassen** in Germany, bicycle streets where cyclists have absolute priority over cars for entire width of roadway
Bicycle expressway-beltway in Muenster, Germany

This 6 km beltway encircles central city and connects 16 major bike paths radiating outward toward the suburbs and 26 bike paths and lanes leading to Cathedral Square.

Note exclusive cycle path in middle and completely separate pedestrian walkways on both sides.
Special contraflow lanes in Toronto and Melbourne that permit cyclists to travel in both directions.
Relaxing traffic restrictions for cyclists by permitting bi-directional travel on one-way streets, turns, and thru-travel for bikes where prohibited for cars.
Car-free zones in the USA: Davis, California

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Peaceful co-existence of trams, bicyclists, and pedestrians in Freiburg’s center
## German Cycling Boom Engineered by Explicit Shifts in Transport Policy in 1970s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Change in Bicycle Modal Split Share</th>
<th>Percentage Increase in Bicycle Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Munich</td>
<td>1976 to 1996</td>
<td>6% to 13%</td>
<td>+117%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuremberg</td>
<td>1976 to 2001</td>
<td>4% to 9%</td>
<td>+125%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cologne</td>
<td>1976 to 1998</td>
<td>6% to 12%</td>
<td>+100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freiburg</td>
<td>1976 to 1998</td>
<td>12% to 19%</td>
<td>+58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuttgart</td>
<td>1976 to 2000</td>
<td>2% to 6%</td>
<td>+200%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bremen</td>
<td>1976 to 1997</td>
<td>16% to 21%</td>
<td>+31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muenster</td>
<td>1976 to 2001</td>
<td>29% to 35%</td>
<td>+21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average for all urban areas in Western Germany</strong></td>
<td><strong>1972 to 2002</strong></td>
<td><strong>8% to 10%</strong></td>
<td><strong>+25%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bicycling facilities in Berlin, Germany’s capital and largest city

- 860 km of completely separate bike paths
- 60 km of bike lanes on streets
- 70 km of combined bike/bus lanes on streets
- 100 km of combined pedestrian/bike paths
- 3,800 km of city streets (72%) are traffic calmed, with speed limit of 30km/hr or less, and thus ideal for cycling on street, without any special lanes or paths

10% of all trips in Berlin are by bike

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Muenster offers 280 km of separate bike lanes and paths, and shared bus-bike lanes.
Bike facilities that encourage EVERYONE to cycle: young and old, men and women

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Bike lanes and paths in Amsterdam designed to reduce traffic conflicts with other modes.
Extensive, fully-integrated bikeway network in Freiburg, Germany

CRUCIAL to have full connectivity of cycling facilities! Usually lacking in North America
Convenient bike cut-thru for cyclists in Melbourne
Some Australian successes: Extensive ped-bike cut-throughs and dead-ends for cars in Newtown (Sydney)
Bikeable European suburbs!

Every new suburban development around Muenster has sidewalks and cycle paths.

This new design further separates cyclists from motor vehicles.

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Convenient, safe, and attractive cycling facilities such as the Goodwill Bridge in Brisbane encourage all age groups to cycle.
Brisbane’s floating bikeway
Floating Bike Path in Portland, Oregon

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Special traffic signals and signs give priority to cyclists.
Giving cyclists the green light in Canada

Toronto, Vancouver, and Victoria have been installing bike-activated sensors in road surfaces at intersections to trigger green lights for cyclists.
Green wave for cyclists in Odense, Denmark: Traffic lights synchronizced for *cyclist* speeds!!
Highly visible red bike lanes for intersection crossings on all four sides, connected with red brick sidepaths on both sides of every road.

Muenster, Germany
Denmark: Ubiquitous short-cuts for right-hand turns and full-speed ahead for cyclists at red lights at T-intersections

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Three lanes for cyclists, two for cars

It’s all a matter of priorities !!!
Bike lane, advance stop line, and priority signal for cyclists in Muenster
Traffic Calming of Residential Neighborhoods

- Speed limited *by law* to 30km per hour (19mph) or less

- *Physical measures* that force cars to slow down:
  - Road narrowing, zigzag routing, chicanes
  - Raised intersections and crosswalks
  - Traffic circles
  - Speed humps and bumps
  - Mid-block closures and artificial dead-ends
  - Bulb-outs at intersections and crosswalks, with sidewalk widening
Traffic-calmed neighborhood in Amsterdam
Home zones in the Netherlands and Germany (7km/hr speed limit)
Bike and Ride in Germany for metros, trams, and suburban rail.
Extensive bike parking facilities at all train stations, including state-of-the-art bike parking garages with bike rentals, bike repairs, and direct access to train platforms

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Radstation: Bike parking facility in Muenster, Germany (3,500 bikes) immediately adjacent to main train station and bus terminal.
Millennium Park Bike Station, Chicago

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Extensive bike parking at bus stops, tram stops, and suburban rail stations
Simple but convenient bike parking even at bus stops

Bike and Ride
Over 50,000 buses in the USA now come equipped with bike racks, as here in Seattle.
On-street car parking in German and Dutch cities often replaced by bike parking
Conversion of car parking to bike parking in San Francisco!

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• **Every year**, the City of Toronto installs 1,000 of its famous post-and-ring bike stands as part of its long-range bicycling plan.

• **Over 15,000 such bike stands** so far, the most bike parking in North America
Ubiquitous air pumps for cyclists in Odense, Denmark
Police are friendlier and more effective on bikes!

NSW Police patrolling coastal path from Bondi to Coogee

Foto by John Pucher who nagged these bike police to pose several times for the perfect shot! And they are still smiling!!

Foto by Damon Rao

Melbourne Bike Police

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Postal deliveries by bike in Germany and Denmark

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For Employees: Company bicycles provided by firms for free for commute to work

The perfect zero emissions vehicles!!

Troels Andersen, “Cycling in Odense, Denmark”
Free internet bike trip planning in Berlin

• Cyclists enter origin, intermediate stops and final destination of their intended bike trips

• Cyclists can indicate preferences for route speeds, whether main streets or side roads, type of pavement, whether on separate bikeways, light or heavy traffic, through parks, etc.

• Program determines optimal route, shows route on map, and provides exact directions, segment by segment

• For recommended route, program calculates the total trip length, total trip time, and number of traffic lights encountered

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Recommended route appears **in red** on computer screen, as shown below, along with trip details shown at top of screen.
Bike Route Planning by Mobile Phone, with suggested route shown on LCD display
• Improved motorist training, with *much* more emphasis on how to avoid endangering pedestrians and cyclists

• Compulsory traffic safety lessons for all school children by the age of 10, with testing by traffic police on actual traffic test courses, to ensure safe and defensive walking and cycling by an early age (as in the Netherlands and Germany)
German traffic laws generally favor cyclists and pedestrians over motorists.
All German and Dutch children take cycling lessons by the 3rd or 4th grade and must pass a police-administered cycling safety test!

Cycling training and testing course in Berlin
Safe Routes to School: Enable Children to Walk or Bike to Schools!

• Two thirds of American children that live within a mile of their school still travel there by car

• Only 13 percent of children in the USA walked or biked to school in 2001, compared to 60 percent in 1974

• Partly due to lack of walking and cycling facilities and dangerous conflicts with motor vehicles, especially at crossings and intersections—a problem for all age groups, but especially for children

• Most European children walk or bike to school, some ride transit, virtually none get chauffered by their parents or drive themselves

• Much better provisions for walking and cycling in Europe

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Good crosswalks crucial near schools!
Mixed-Use Zoning and Better Urban Design

• Inclusion of *sidewalks and bikeways or bike lanes* in all new suburban developments and retrofitting of existing developments, where possible.

• *Mixed land use zoning* so that residential units are within easy walking or cycling distance of cultural facilities, shopping, and service establishments.

• Encouragement of *compact, mixed-use development around transit stops* to facilitate walking/bicycling communities (transit-oriented development) through subsidies, mortgage bonuses, and zoning.

• *Restrict parking lots* to locations behind buildings rather than between buildings and the street (as with most strip mall development in USA).
Traffic Regulations and Enforcement

• *Revise traffic laws to place burden of proof on motorists*, with the assumption that motorist is guilty unless it can be shown otherwise, especially when children or elderly are involved in crashes (forcing motorists to be extra careful to avoid crashes with pedestrians and cyclists)

• *Enforce existing legal rights of pedestrians and cyclists*, with strict penalties and fines for motorist violations of ped/bike rights of way in crosswalks, bike lanes, intersection crossings.

• *Traffic cameras at intersections to photograph motorists* failing to stop or yield when required to do so, with automatic ticketing for violations
CONCLUSIONS:

• Broad range of public health benefits of walking and cycling have potential to provide widespread political support for more sustainable transport policies

• Almost everyone could walk and cycle more on a daily basis, and thus reap these health benefits

• Many local trips in American cities are short enough to cover by walking or cycling

• Crucial to design ped-bike facilities and programs for everyone! Be as inclusive as possible!

• Must cater to huge range of cycling preferences and meet the diverse needs of different groups

• Huge public information campaign needed to emphasize both direct and indirect public health benefits of walking and cycling
For any questions or further information, please contact:

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