



Planning for walkable communities

This factsheet is intended to assist cities and counties in the region in updating their local transportation system plans to align with the Regional Transportation Plan.



Walkable downtown centers prioritize safe, convenient and comfortable pedestrian access for all ages and abilities.

Walking contributes to a healthy lifestyle and supports vibrant local economies. However, walking is not always a safe or convenient option. Many streets are not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

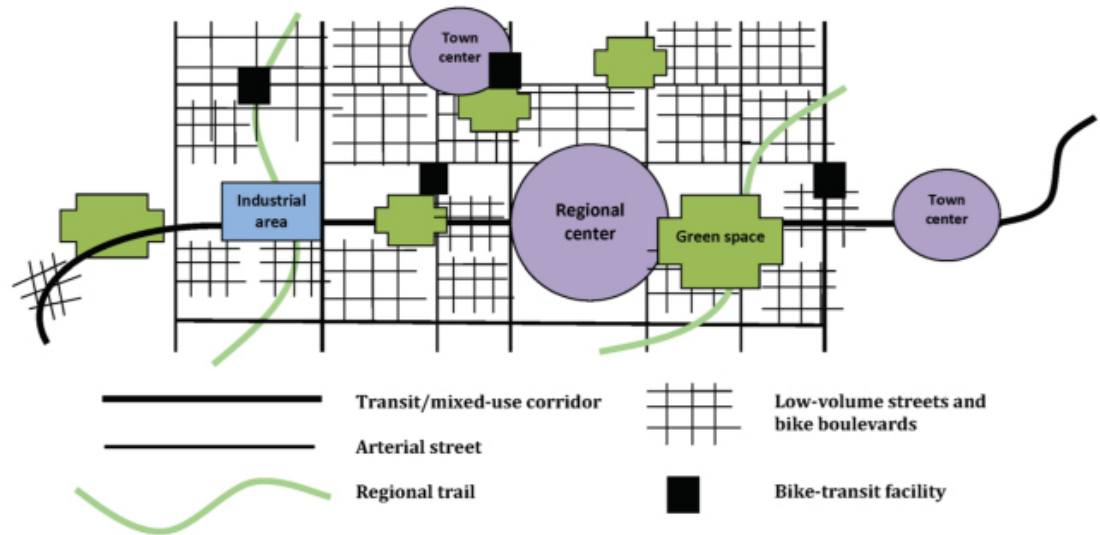
Streets with high traffic volumes and speeds, missing or narrow sidewalks, infrequent protected crossings, and lack of street lighting, shade and places to sit and rest are uncomfortable, dangerous and difficult to walk, especially for older adults, children and people with disabilities.

These problems can be more prevalent in marginalized communities, and most pedestrian traffic deaths occur on roadways with these gaps and deficiencies.

Regional Transportation Plan pedestrian policies

RTP section 3.3.9.2

- Policy 1** Make walking the most convenient, safe and enjoyable transportation choice for short trips of less than one mile.
- Policy 2** Complete a well-connected network of pedestrian routes and safe street crossings that is integrated with transit and nature that prioritize seamless, safe, convenient and comfortable access to urban centers and community places, including schools and jobs, for all ages and abilities.
- Policy 3** Create walkable downtowns, centers, main streets and station communities that prioritize safe, convenient and comfortable pedestrian access for all ages and abilities.
- Policy 4** Improve pedestrian access to transit and community places for people of all ages and abilities.
- Policy 5** Ensure that the regional pedestrian network equitably serves all people.



[Regional Transportation Plan \(RTP\)](#) Figure 3.35: The regional pedestrian network concept. This graphic shows pedestrian routes connecting key regional destinations and centers.

Regional pedestrian network classifications

Figure 3.36 of the [RTP](#) regional pedestrian network identifies the regional pedestrian network functional classifications. The regional pedestrian network (pictured above) mirrors the regional transit network reflecting the important relationship of a complete walking network and access to transit.

Frequent transit routes and regional arterials comprise regional pedestrian streets. Regional trails are also part of the regional pedestrian network. Centers and station communities are identified as regional pedestrian districts.

Functional classifications in local transportation system plans (TSPs) must be consistent with the regional classifications.

Pedestrian parkway designations are applied to major urban streets that provide existing and planned frequent and almost frequent transit service, and to most regional trails.

Local pedestrian connector designations apply to all streets and trails not included on the regional pedestrian network.

Pedestrian districts correspond with the 2040 centers and station communities. Pedestrian districts are well served by transit, and have commercial, cultural, institutional and recreational destinations.

Regional pedestrian corridor designations are applied to arterial roadways with no or less frequent transit service and to some regional trails.

Designing streets for people

Pedestrian access and mobility are prioritized on the regional network. Walking routes are designed to be attractive, comfortable and safe, consistent with design guidance in the [Designing Livable Streets and Trails Guide](#).

Pedestrian access to places, streets and transit stops should be safe and comfortable. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility standards must be met, and universal design treatments should be used. Street crossing opportunities should be provided frequently, planned and designed for pedestrian safety and made accessible to people with varying abilities.

Streets and trails should also provide people with enjoyable pedestrian access to public space and public places in all weather conditions. Building overhangs, shelters and street trees provide protection from rain, snow or extreme heat. Benches, plazas and viewing points provide spaces to pause and rest.

Continuous sidewalks, wide enough to serve all the people using them and buffered from vehicle traffic, provide the primary infrastructure for pedestrians. When appropriate, trails should separate people walking and riding bicycles.

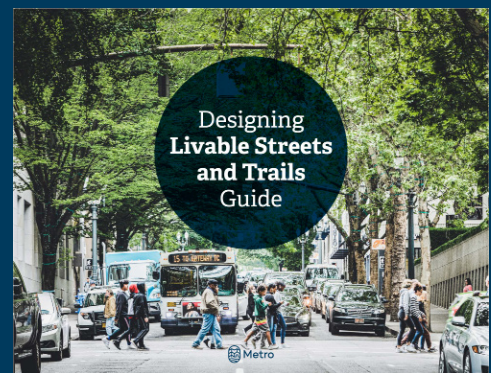
Pedestrian mobility is best served by direct routes because walking is a relatively slow means of traveling. At intersections, pedestrian crossings should be provided on all sides of the intersection, with few exceptions, to avoid undue out-of-direction travel. Signs and other wayfinding elements along streets and trails support navigation.

Overview of local pedestrian plan requirements

Local transportation system plans shall include a pedestrian plan and the following actions and investments:

- Sidewalks along all arterials, collectors and most local streets
- Direct and safe pedestrian routes to transit and other essential destinations
- Provision of safe crossings of streets and controlled pedestrian crossings on major arterials
- Safe, direct and logical pedestrian crossings at all transit stops where practicable
- Crossings over barriers such as throughways, active rail-lines and rivers provided at regular intervals following regional connectivity standards
- Regional multi-use trails and walking paths are completed

For complete language, refer to the [Regional Transportation Functional Plan](#) section 3.08.130 Pedestrian System Design.



The [Designing Livable Streets and Trails Guide](#) includes specific design guidance on best practices in pedestrian network planning.