

Our Vision: In 2040 Denver will be the most walkable city in the United States. As a result, its residents will be the country's healthiest and happiest, and its economy will be thriving.

Our Mission: WalkDenver advocates for policies and practices that lead to a more walkable Denver. We are the go-to resource for creating safe, comfortable, and fun places to walk.

Our 7-year Goal: A sustainable funding system for implementing the vision of a walkable city laid out in the to-be-developed Denver Moves Pedestrians Plan. The funding should cover:

1. New pedestrian infrastructure that fills critical gaps and addresses known pedestrian safety hot spots;
2. Prioritized improvements of existing infrastructure to bring it up to current standards; and
3. Ongoing assessment and maintenance of pedestrian infrastructure.

Why Walkability is Important

The walkability of a community relates to quality of life in a myriad of different ways. A walkable city is:

- **Interconnected**, with regular interaction among neighbors, vibrant public spaces, and enhanced community character
- **Healthy**, where residents experience lower stress, lowered levels of obesity, lower healthcare costs and increased life expectancy
- **Prosperous**, with a flourishing economic sector built on small businesses oriented to serve local, pedestrian-oriented markets
- **Environmentally sustainable**, with improved air quality, less reliance on fossil fuels, and a low carbon footprint
- **Inclusive**, with transportation options for people who can't drive because of age, income, or disability
- **Safe**, where children can play outside and no pedestrians are killed in traffic accidents

Despite all of the benefits of walkable communities, the City and County Denver has no comprehensive policies or funding mechanisms for pedestrian infrastructure. Denver's mobility plan, DenverMoves, focuses primarily on bicycling and does not identify any specific policies, standards, or implementation strategies for pedestrian facilities. Sidewalk construction and maintenance is the responsibility of private property owners, even though sidewalks are considered part of the public right-of-way. As a result, sidewalk conditions are very inconsistent throughout Denver and often inadequate. The poor quality of the pedestrian environment is reflected by the fact that only 4% of Denver commuters walk to work, yet 27% of all traffic fatalities are pedestrians. Pedestrian infrastructure is particularly inadequate in low-income communities where residents are most likely to commute on foot to access jobs, education, and basic services. Maintenance of sidewalks can present a financial hardship to adjacent property owners in these areas.

Our Current Policy Work

In the summer of 2014, WalkDenver launched a petition calling upon the city to establish a Pedestrian Advisory Committee and establish Denver Moves Pedestrians, a parallel implementation plan to the bicycle-focused Denver Moves plan, so the City has a clear path forward for improving the pedestrian environment in Denver.



With more than 1,000 signature and more than 40 letters of support, the petition has caught the attention of city officials, who are moving forward with the Advisory Committee and Denver Moves Pedestrians.

Next Steps - Moving from Planning to Implementation

To meaningfully improve walkability in Denver, the city must not only adopt a Denver Moves Pedestrians Plan, but also allocate funding for implementation. The current funding system, where the burden falls primarily on private property owners to pay for sidewalk improvements, is simply inadequate and impedes the creation of true pedestrian networks that connect key destinations within each neighborhood. The following activities are aimed at laying the groundwork for a robust public dialogue about how Denver funds pedestrian infrastructure, with the ultimate goal of adopting a new system that adequately funds the vision for a walkable city laid out in the to-be-developed Denver Moves Pedestrians Plan.

Activity 1. Policy

- **Research and Analysis - Understanding the Problem and Potential Solutions.** Developing a clear understanding of how pedestrian infrastructure is currently funded in Denver; how other cities fund pedestrian infrastructure; and how alternative-funding models might work in Denver.
- **Coalition Building - Becoming Greater than the Sum of our Parts.** Collaborating with and increasing the collective impact of allied organizations working on active transportation and related issues. In addition to meeting individually with allied organizations, WalkDenver will facilitate regular (quarterly?) convenings of a core working group to 1) share information, 2) coordinate strategic planning, and 3) identify opportunities for joint action such as fundraising, community engagement, or campaigns.
- **Campaign Development - Defining our “FasTracks.”** Building on Denver Moves Pedestrians and the work on this project, WalkDenver will identify the preferred, sustainable system for funding pedestrian infrastructure and develop a campaign and overarching “brand” that describes the inspiring vision that Denver can achieve with this funding. E.g., “Safe Routes to Everywhere” or “PeopleTracks” - a network of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure that allows people to travel throughout the city without a car.
- **Design Guidance – Giving the Implementers the Correct Tools.** WalkDenver will participate in the development/update of the City’s roadway design standards to help ensure that industry best practices are being used. A common hurdle to implementing complete streets is the lack of guidance available to practitioners charged with designing and maintaining the public right of way. The standards should include accommodations for pedestrians during construction projects to ensure safe, accessible, and efficient detour routes are provided at all times.

Activity 2. Programing

- **Public Outreach and Engagement - Building a Movement.** The purpose of this activity is to raise awareness of WalkDenver, our mission, and goals; to demonstrate the benefits of walkable communities; and to encourage a cultural shift that embraces walkability and the incorporation of



walking into daily life. This activity will encompass WalkDenver's work on Safe Routes to School, tactical urbanism efforts such as Better Block, support for the City's Heads Up campaign, and high-profile events such as ciclovias.

- **Neighborhood Engagement - Cultivating "Walk Ambassadors."** The purpose of this activity is to deepen understanding of the walkability challenges that Denver neighborhoods face, build neighborhood-level support for public policies and investments that increase walkability, and increase the capacity of neighborhoods to be effective advocates for walkability. WalkDenver will recruit and train representatives from each of Denver's neighborhoods to serve as "Walk Ambassadors," responsible for leading engagement and advocacy efforts in their neighborhood.
- **Communications - Telling the Story.** WalkDenver will communicate the findings of our research and analysis in a compelling manner to Denver residents, businesses, and city leaders. Communications materials may include videos, infographics, fact sheets, and blog posts.
- **Leadership Development - Inspiring Decision-Makers.** The purpose of this activity is to bring together policymakers, transportation professionals, and senior staff from the City of Denver to study, experience, and be inspired by the most advanced pedestrian environments in North America and the world. WalkDenver will work with national organizations such as America Walks to design intensive hands-on workshops, study tours, and peer exchanges focused on topics such as innovate pedestrian infrastructure design, building political and popular support, and employing walkability as a tool to promote public health, environmental sustainability, and economic prosperity.

Activity 3. Evaluation

- **Pedestrian Data Collection and Analysis - Making Informed Decisions.** Using the online crowdsourcing tool WALKscope (www.walkscope.org) as well as other sources, WalkDenver will collect data and conduct the analyses necessary to make informed decisions about pedestrian policy in Denver. This analysis will focus on pedestrian infrastructure, behavior, and safety, among other issues, and will support a future application for "Platinum" Walk Friendly Community certification. Our ultimate goal is for the City to take responsibility for long-term stewardship of pedestrian data, including city-wide data collection and analysis, updated annually, as well as in-depth neighborhood walk audits.
- **Application for "Platinum" Walk Friendly Community certification.** Denver was certified "Gold WFC" in April of 2014. WalkDenver will work with the City departments to submit evaluation documents to the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center for re-evaluation and re-certification with the goal of achieving the Platinum Level.