

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 6-year Goal: A sustainable funding system for pedestrian infrastructure, and a comprehensive "Vision Zero" strategy for eliminating pedestrian fatalities in Denver. The funding and strategy 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;
3. Ongoing assessment and maintenance of pedestrian infrastructure;
4. Engineering redesigns of Denver's most dangerous streets to increase safety for all users
5. Transparent and data-driven enforcement of traffic laws with a focus on the most dangerous behaviors, problematic locations and at-fault road users.

While WalkDenver's primary focus is on citywide policies and practices, the Colfax Corridor serves a strategic geographic focus area for research, quick implementation of pedestrian design concepts, and community engagement.

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. In 2015, 18 pedestrians were killed in traffic crashes on Denver's streets. 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.

WalkDenver's Previous Policy Wins

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. After more than 1,100 individuals signed the petition and nearly 50 organizations provided letters of support, Mayor Hancock gave the green light to forming the advisory committee, and City Council approved funding for Denver Moves Pedestrians. The Mayor's Pedestrian Advisory Committee (MPAC) began meeting in February 2015, and the Denver Moves Pedestrians planning process will commence in early 2016.

In fall of 2015, WalkDenver completed research on how pedestrian infrastructure is currently funded in Denver; how other cities fund pedestrian infrastructure; and how alternative-funding models might work in Denver. Based on this research, WalkDenver launched a new petition, "Denver Deserves Sidewalks," which calls upon the City to assume responsibility for building and repairing sidewalks (the responsibility currently falls on private property owners), and to establish a dedicated funding source for this purpose. As of January 2015, more than 2,300 individuals have signed the petition and nearly 30 organizations have provided letters of support. City Council has responded by establishing a Sidewalk Working Group that will meet for the first time in late January.

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 develop specific strategies for improving pedestrian safety, and allocate funding for implementation. The following activities are aimed at supporting a robust public dialogue about how Denver funds pedestrian infrastructure and designs our streets to be safe for all users, with the ultimate goal of adopting a new funding system and a "Vision Zero" strategy for eliminating traffic fatalities in Denver.

Activity 1. Policy

- **Research and Analysis - Understanding the Problem and Potential Solutions.** Developing a clear understanding of the primary causes of traffic crashes in Denver; the Denver streets that are most dangerous for pedestrians; and effective strategies for preventing traffic crashes that result in serious injuries or fatalities.
- **Coalition Building - Becoming Greater than the Sum of our Parts.** Collaborating with and increasing the collective impact of allied organizations working on active transportation, traffic safety, and related issues. In addition to meeting individually with allied organizations, WalkDenver will work with these organizations to establish a community-based Vision Zero Coalition. Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all. The Coalition will help inform and advocate for the swift, complete and equitable implementation of Vision Zero projects and policies in order to end all traffic deaths and serious injuries in Denver.



- **Campaign Development - Pushing for Policy Change.** WalkDenver will continue to build momentum behind the “Denver Deserves Sidewalks” campaign by collecting petition signatures and support letters, generating media attention, and engaging with the City Council Sidewalk Working Group to encourage the swift enactment of a sensible sidewalk policy and funding mechanism.
- **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, education related to Vision Zero, walking tours, the annual “I Walk Colfax” Gala, and other high-profile events such as ciclovias.
- **Neighborhood Engagement - Cultivating Walkability Champions.** 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 design and carry out a “citizens’ academy” that will arm participants with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to embrace the cultural shift toward healthy, active, “car-lite” lifestyles and to become champions for change at the individual, neighborhood, and citywide levels.
- **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 inspire visionary thinking and bold decision-making among policymakers, transportation professionals, and senior staff from the City of Denver. WalkDenver will work with our partners to organize events such as *Live.Ride.Share Denver* focused on innovations in mobility and community design that support public health, economic prosperity, and self-sufficiency for all residents.

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 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.