

GreenStep Cities Best Practice # 12 **- final draft for comment through May 2010 -**

❖ **Mobility Options:** Promote active living and options to single-occupancy car travel.

Required for Category C cities

Category: Transportation

Summary

One quarter of U.S. trips are under 1 mile in length – a healthful, walkable distance for many people much of the year in Minnesota - yet most of these trips are taken by car. Cities – through what they directly administer and in what they influence – can help their residents, businesses and employees exercise options to the one car, one driver mode of travel. Other trip modes – walking, biking, transit, ridesharing – deliver and contribute to numerous benefits: improved health, fewer carbon emissions, more money in driver's pockets, safer streets, improved public transit. These options are essential for 40% of Minnesotans who do not have a driver's license: those who cannot afford a car and who are either too young or old or too disabled to drive a car.

This best practice focuses on developing community options to single-occupant car travel. Several other best practices in the transportation and land use categories focus on changing the physical environment of a city in ways to facilitate the actions below.

Best Practice Actions

- Category A and B cities must complete at least one Action if they choose to implement this best practice.
 - Category C cities must implement this best practice and complete at least two Actions to do so.
- (1) Promote walking, biking and transit use by one or more of the following means:
 - a. Produce/distribute a map(s) and/or signage and/or a web site that shows (by neighborhood if a larger city) key civic/commercial sites, best bike and pedestrian routes, and transit routes and schedules.
 - b. Increase the number of bike facilities: racks, bike stations, showers at city offices.
 - c. Increase the number of bus facilities: signage, benches, and shelters.
 - d. Increase the number of employers who offer qualified transportation fringe benefits instead of only a tax-free parking fringe benefit.
 - e. Launch an Active Living campaign in concert with your local community health board.
 - (2) Launch a Safe Routes to School program with educational, public health and other partners.
 - (3) Prominently identify on the city's web site mobility options for hire: transit services; paratransit/Dial-A-Ride; cab service(s); rental car agency(s).
 - (4) Promote carpooling or on-demand ridesharing among community members, city employees, businesses, high schools and institutions of higher education.
 - (5) Launch an eWorkPlace Minnesota campaign, working with business and transportation management organizations, or help bring telemedicine technology to a local health care provider.
 - (6) Accomplish at least one of the following, working with other units of local governments as needed:
 - a. Add/expand transit service.
 - b. Launch a car sharing or bike sharing business.

See related best practices *Complete Green Streets*, *Demand-Side Travel Planning*, *Green Infrastructure*, *Higher Density*, and *Efficient and Healthy Development Patterns*.

GreenStep Advisor

- Amber Dallman, Physical Activity Coordinator, MN Dept. of Health: 651/201-5494, amber.dallman@state.mn.us

Implementation Resources

(tied to the relevant Action by number)

- (1) *Sharing the Road: Encouraging Biking & Walking in Minnesota* (Transit for Livable Communities: 2003): http://www.tlcmnnesota.org/pdf/Sharing_the_Road.pdf
- (1a) Neighborhood maps: http://www.nextstep.state.mn.us/res_detail.cfm?id=566
- (1a) Bike-route finding tool: <http://cyclopath.org/>
- (1b) MN Dept. of Transportation bicycle resources: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/bike>
- (1c) MN Dept. of Transportation Office of Transit: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/transit>
- (1d) Qualified transportation fringe benefits: http://www.nextstep.state.mn.us/res_detail.cfm?id=454
- (1e) MN Dept. of Health physical activity program: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/physicalactivity>
- (1e) Rural Active Living Assessment Tools (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation: 2009): <http://www.activelivingresearch.org/node/11947>
- (1e) *Active Living Hennepin Communities Community Toolkit* (2009): <http://www.hennepin.us/activeliving>
- (1e) See, for example, Albert Lea's Blue Zone Active Living campaign and Active Living Bemidji: http://www.nextstep.state.mn.us/res_detail.cfm?id=4191 and <http://www.activelivingbemidji.com>
- (1e) State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) interventions: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/healthreform/ship/implementation/physicalactivityindex.html>
- (1e) Prevention Minnesota, an initiative to make Minnesota a healthier place to live and work during the next decade: <http://www.preventionminnesota.com>
- (1e) Communities for a Lifetime resources from the MN Board on Aging are available to cities to help "transform the physical infrastructures of communities, including housing, mobility options and accessible public space:" <http://www.mnaging.org/admin/cfl.htm>
- (2) MN Dept. of Transportation Safe Routes to Schools resources: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/completestreets>
- (4) Arrive Minnesota, and on-demand ride sharing (web- and iPhone-based): http://www.nextstep.state.mn.us/res_detail.cfm?id=3991
- (5) eWorkPlace Minnesota's Telework Toolkit: <http://www.eworkplace-mn.com>
- (5) Minnesota Broadband Coalition: <http://mnbroadbandcoalition.com>
- (6a) For thresholds to make transit viable (density, frequency, distance to stops) see <http://www.designforhealth.net/resources/accessibility.html>
- (6b) Car sharing resources (including St. Paul's HourCar): http://www.nextstep.state.mn.us/res_detail.cfm?id=1027
- (6b) Bike sharing in Minneapolis: <http://www.niceridemn.com>

Benefits

- The transportation potential of developing options to driving everywhere: 41% of U.S. auto trips are less than 2 miles; 28% are less than 1 mile; 75% of these trips are taken by car. 30% of U.S. citizens cannot drive because they are too young, too old, do not own a car, or are disabled.
- Vehicle traffic from cars and trucks is a large source of greenhouse gas emissions in cities, accounting for between 20 and 50 percent of the total, depending upon the city, its land use patterns and its relation to other cities.
- The school bus fuel savings of beginning a Safe Routes to School program in Minneapolis were projected at \$4 million/year in 2008: http://www.nextstep.state.mn.us/res_detail.cfm?id=4121
- Greenhouse gas emissions per household in Twin city metro area cities from household auto use: <http://htaindex.cnt.org>
- Parents driving their children to school are estimated to contribute, on average throughout the U.S., 20% - 25% of morning rush hour traffic.

- Health/economic benefits: The MN Dept. of Health estimates that \$495 million was spent in MN during 2000 treating medical conditions that could have been prevented by regular physical exercise. Two-thirds of Minnesotans are overweight. About 690,000 Minnesotans -- one-fifth of the state's adult population -- are at least 30 pounds overweight, which is considered obese. Taxpayers pay the medical costs of obesity. In Minnesota in 2003, that amounted to \$1.3 billion, or 5 percent of the state's annual medical expense, according to a January 2004 report in the Obesity Research Journal. Half those costs were borne by taxpayers through Medicare and Medicaid programs. Research predicts that if Minnesotans were more active, rates of serious diseases such as obesity would decline by as much as 30%.
- 60% of adult Minnesotans are overweight or obese and if left unchecked, obesity will add an additional \$3.7 billion in health care expenses for Minnesotans by 2020 (Blue Cross/Blue Shield of MN: 2010).
- Public health experts recommended that adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity each week, with some physical activity better than none at all.
- Traveling by bike 50 times a year on a 20-mile round-trip, as opposed to driving solo, cuts 1,000 lbs. of carbon (according to the Sierra Club). A four-mile round trip by bike keeps about 15 lbs. of pollutants out of the air according to the WorldWatch Institute).
- On average, people are willing to walk up to ¾ mile to access a transit stop with at least hourly transit service.
- U.S. vehicle miles traveled began to plateau in 2004 and dropped in 2007 for the first time since 1980. Per capita driving followed a similar pattern, with flat-lining growth after 2000 and falling rates since 2005. Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/8g8sco>
- *eWorkPlace Commute Tool*: a free, secure online service that helps commuters in the Twin Cities track their reduction of vehicle miles travelled, their reduction in vehicle emissions, and time and money saved by teleworking. Employers will be able to view, in aggregate form only, the time, money and fuel saved by its employees as well as the company's progress in reducing its carbon footprint through a reduction in emissions produced and vehicle miles travelled by its employees: <http://www.eworkplace-mn.com>
- Research by the International Teleworking Association & Council shows very high employee satisfaction and improved productivity (approx. \$685/teleworker/yr.). Savings of \$2,086 per employee per year from reduced absenteeism (i.e., being able to do some work at home even though sick) were documented. Retention of teleworkers who said that working from home is an important job consideration lead to documented replacement cost avoidance of \$7,920 per teleworker.

Connection to State Programs

- The Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/healthreform/ship/index.html>) distributes funding to Community Health Boards and tribal governments across Minnesota to create community action plans, assemble community leadership teams, and establish partnerships to improve the health of Minnesotans. Grantees utilize policy, systems, and environmental changes in four settings: schools, worksites, health care, and community. Relevant SHIP interventions are:
 - Active Schools (#C-PA-S1): Implement policies and practices that create active schools by increasing opportunities for non-motorized transportation (walking and biking to-and from school) and access to school recreation facilities.
 - Active Communities (#C-PA-C1): Implement policies and practices that create active communities by increasing opportunities for non-motorized transportation (walking and biking) and access to community recreation facilities.
 - Active Worksites (#C-PA-W1): Implement policies and practices that create active worksites by increasing opportunities for non-motorized transportation (walking and biking) and access to worksite recreation facilities.