

Executive Summary

What is Active Transportation and Why is it Important?

Active transportation is any nonmotorized mode of transportation, such as walking, bicycling, or wheeling. Transportation policies and engineering designs that support Active Transportation provide high quality, connected facilities that enable people of all races, ethnicities ages, abilities, and skill levels to safely engage in physical activity. These same efforts also support improved community health outcomes, contribute to the local economy, and promote sustainable, equitable transportation options.

Photo Credit: Bike Pittsburgh

Active Transportation in Pennsylvania

Citizens across Pennsylvania walk and bike every day out of necessity or choice and they depend upon existing transportation infrastructure to do so safely and efficiently. However, results from a 2018 public survey – undertaken as part of the Active Transportation Plan – showed that 30% of respondents found it challenging or very challenging to walk in their communities and 58% found it challenging or very challenging to ride a bike. Additionally, most respondents indicated physical infrastructure such as separated bike lanes, sidewalks, and a connected non-motorized network was needed for them to consider walking or biking more frequently.

The results of the survey are reflected in a range of real-world outcomes. For example, statewide, 25.9% of residents are physically inactive and nearly 32% are considered obese¹ – rates very similar to the number of people who found walking challenging in their communities – partially contributing to an estimated \$12.9 billion in annual medical costs related to diabetes in Pennsylvania.²

Similarly, identified infrastructure and education needs are mirrored in statistics on traffic violence.



In 2018, pedestrians were involved in only 3.3% of traffic crashes in Pennsylvania; however, they represented 16.9% of the fatalities at an estimated economic loss of \$2.5 billion.²

Moving forward, PennDOT and its state, regional, and local partners must coordinate efforts and leverage existing and new resources to improve the current policies, legislation, funding, and infrastructure intended to support active transportation in the commonwealth.

Purpose of This Plan

The Pennsylvania Active Transportation Plan outlines a vision and framework for improving conditions for walking and biking across the Commonwealth.

Vision Statement

“Biking and walking are integral elements of Pennsylvania’s transportation system that contribute to community health, economic mobility, and quality of life.”

¹State of Obesity, 2017

²PennDOT Crash Facts and Statistics, 2018

Themes at a Glance



ENHANCE SAFETY

S1: Increase PennDOT capacity to plan, design, construct, and maintain active transportation facilities that support and encourage users of all ages, skills, and abilities.

S2: Improve PennDOT processes to ensure the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians are adequately identified during scoping and included in design for all project types.

S3: Implement additional education and enforcement programs to reduce crashes and provide a better sense of security for people who walk and bicycle.

S4: Improve policies and practices for maintaining access for people who walk and bicycle during construction and maintenance projects.



PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION EQUITY

E1: Integrate equity criteria into decision-making and prioritize walking and bicycling investments in underserved areas with transportation disadvantaged populations.

E2: Improve active transportation engagement as part of project-specific transportation planning/design and create specialized outreach for people with disabilities and people from minority groups.

E3: Improve non-motorized access to transit and other modal connections.

E4: Provide ongoing outreach and education to partners with a focus on partners that focus on underserved communities.



CONNECT WALKING AND BICYCLING NETWORKS

C1: Support the development of regional and local plans that identify bicycle and pedestrian needs and priority projects with a focus on closing gaps and building complete, comfortable networks.

C2: Improve connectivity by addressing bicycling and pedestrian network gaps through the transportation project development process.

C3: Improve access to parks, trails, and other recreational amenities.



LEVERAGE PARTNERSHIPS

P1: Strengthen ongoing coordination, cooperation, and collaboration between federal, state, regional, local, and private partners to facilitate a seamless pedestrian and bicycle system.

P2: Coordinate PennDOT planning and policy with all levels of government to encourage mode shifts, reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, and provide a flexible and resilient transportation network.

P3: Improve the quality and availability of data on bicycle and pedestrian travel and infrastructure.

P4: Engage in proactive evaluations and discussions on emerging technologies and mobility solutions.



IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH

H1: Continue and enhance ongoing state agency coordination to improve public health outcomes through active transportation.

H2: Engage health policy practitioners in policy development, comprehensive transportation planning, and early project development.

H3: Link state grant program criteria to community projects designed to strengthen health and active transportation.

H4: Address health disparities through active transportation policies, plans, and project selection.

H5: Improve data collection and sharing between transportation and public health agencies.

H6: Improve access to community health resources.



INCREASE ECONOMIC MOBILITY

M1: Promote local land use policies and practices that support increased bicycling and walking and add to the overall livability and vitality of communities.

M2: Build partnerships between PennDOT, other state agencies, visitors, and convention bureaus, chambers of commerce, local governments, and private sector to support bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to enhance economic initiatives within communities.

M3: Identify pre-construction and post-construction assessment methodology to determine the economic vitality of completed pedestrian and bicycle projects.

M4: Improve access to job centers and downtown districts.