Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Advisory Board

May 5, 2016

Agenda Packet

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL RESOURCES ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 5, 2016, 7 P.M.
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
231 W. EVERGREEN AVENUE, PALMER
www.cityofpalmer.org

CHAIR	Helene Antel
VICE CHAIR	Jan Newman
BOARD MEMBER	Stephanie Allen
BOARD MEMBER	Jo Ehmann
BOARD MEMBER	Dot Helm
BOARD MEMBER	Meggie Aube-Trammell
BOARD MEMBER	Fran Seager-Boss

AGENDA

A. Call to Order

B. Roll Call

C. Pledge of Allegiance

D. Approval of Agenda

E. Minutes of Previous Meetings
   1. Regular Meeting of April 7, 2016

F. Audience Participation

G. Reports

H. Unfinished Business

I. New Business - Committee of the Whole (note: action may be taken by the Board following the committee of the whole)
   1. Presentation by Frankie Barker, MSB Environmental Planner on *Economic Benefits of Trails, Parks and Open Space* Report and MSB Walkability project

J. Board Member Comments

K. Adjournment

Minutes

April 7, 2016

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL RESOURCES ADVISORY BOARD
CITY OF PALMER, ALASKA
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 2016
7:00 P.M. - COUNCIL CHAMBERS

A. CALL TO ORDER:
The regular meeting of the City of Palmer Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Advisory Board was called to order by Vice Chair Jan Newman at 7:21 p.m. The meeting was delayed to be able to complete a quorum.

B. ROLL CALL:
Present and constituting a quorum were Board Members:
- Jan Newman, Vice Chair
- Dot Helm
- Jo Ehmann
- Fran Seager-Boss (arriving at 7:21 p.m.)

Excused absence(s):
- Helene Antel, Chair
- Meggie Aube-Trammell
- Stephanie Allen

Also present were:
- Sandra Garley, Community Development Director
- Nathan Wallace, City Manager
- Pam Whitehead, Recording Secretary

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: led by Director Garley.

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda was approved as presented.

E. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:
The minutes of the **March 3, 2016** Regular Meeting were approved as amended to reflect Roll Call to include attendance by Mayor Johnson.

F. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:

Diana Zitmanis, Palmer resident who lives on Rempel Avenue, addressed the Board concerning the open green space at the end of her street and adjacent to the Arboretum. She would like to see it remain the way it is in its natural state, other than perhaps a gravel pathway, but not a manicured park which the city would have to maintain. It is an open area but somewhat hidden and protected. Kids in the neighborhood play there and she walks her dogs there every day. Rempel is a dead-end dirt road. She voiced concerns about added traffic and dust if a parking lot is placed at the end, in addition to it becoming a hangout for teens leaving behind trash, which she is constantly picking up. She suggested maybe paving Rempel to cut down on the dust. Brief discussion followed. The Board thanked Diana and made note of her concerns.

Andrea Fuller, as a community member, thanked the Board for the Arboretum open house and making the project available for the community to comment. She found it wonderful to be able to be a part of the project and hopes that the City of Palmer will continue to do more of such community meetings. Speaking to Ms. Zitmanis' concern about littering, she suggested perhaps this is an opportunity to incorporate Job Corps into helping with maintenance and cleanup of the area as an ongoing part of its own program.

G. REPORTS:

Ms. Garley reported:

- Arboretum – community meeting at the Depot on 3/29/16 was well attended (29+); received many good comments at the meeting and continues to receive comments in the mail, which will be made available for the Board's consideration at its next meeting;
- Donation & Memorial Policy – the policy is ready for presentation to the City Council which is scheduled for its May 10 agenda. See finalized policy in the packet. It would be helpful if one or two members of the board attend the meeting should the Council have questions.
- Changes to Resolution No. 16-001, Wayfinding, have been incorporated and the document is ready for signature.
- Board-recommended additions to the Proclamation for Arbor Day have been incorporated and it is ready to send for the Council May 10 agenda.

H. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Plans for Arbor Day.

Ms. Garley:

- Updated re plans for Arbor Day, noting she was contacted by NeighborWorks who are teaming together with United Way to assemble volunteers to also help clean up the Arboretum on Saturday, May 14. Cleanup is May 14-15. More information will be forthcoming at the next meeting.
- Reported that the State Community Forestry Council is very pleased that Palmer is celebrating Arbor Day and will be adding/advertising Palmer's event to the State Arbor Day Celebration Schedule.

I. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Park located in Fairfield Park Subdivision – clean-up and improvements.

Ms. Garley reported plans for the park clean-up and improvements, calling attention to an aerial photo and park site schematic in the packet. The park located at 340 E. Dolphin Avenue has never been developed and is overgrown with trees and vegetation. Ed Erickson of Keller Williams Realty nominated it as a Keller Williams Community Service project and it was approved. A crew of volunteers from Keller Williams proposed to clear and/or prune the vegetation and perhaps level a play area for seeding with grass. The city will notify surrounding property owners and ask for their input.

Brief questions and further discussion ensued.

J. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

Board Member Ehmann commented that she contacted the principal at Colony High School concerning the Dedication of the Soccer Field in reference to ROTC attending as an Honor Guard. He does not see a problem, but needs to confirm a date as soon as possible so as not to conflict graduation.

Board Member Helm announced the Crevasse Moraine Trail cleanup sponsored by the Borough Landfill is scheduled for Saturday, April 30. Volunteers are encouraged to participate.

Vice Chair Newman welcomed new Board member, Fran Seager-Boss, and thanked her for coming.

K. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

_____
Jan Newman, Vice Chair

_____
Sandra Garley, Community Development Director

Reports

Unfinished Business

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL RESOURCES ADVISORY BOARD

2016 Annual Work Plan – May Meeting

2016 Activity/Project	Date Added to Work Plan	Budget Required	Staff Support Required	Project Team	Council Action Required	Status
Adopt-A-Park	01/07/16		SG, Public Works	SA		
Arboretum	01/07/16		SG, Public Works	JN, DH, HA		Community clean-up Day for Arboretum is May 14 from 10 AM to 2 PM; on May 12 MEA Tree crew will be there to chip and trim dead limbs. .
Comprehensive signs (wayfinding, gateways, parks, trails &Interpretive)	01/07/16			DH, JN		Resolution 16-001 drafted for 3/3/16 mtg
Complete Donation & Memorial Policy		-	SG	JN & MA-T	Yes	May 24 Council Agenda.
Bicycle rack competition	12/3/15		SG	MA, SA solicit interest from community businesses & organizations		Present idea to city council
Recreational trails & parks maps	12/3/15		SG	DH, SA		Work with new digital map BED is producing; Should consider being part of MSB walkability

SA – Stephanie Allen HA - Helene Antel MA-T Meggie Aube-Trammell JE – Jo Ehmann DH – Dot Helm JN – Jan Newman F-SB Fran Seager-Boss

			project - a May 5 agenda item.
Find partners for forum on economic impacts of recreational facilities and trails		SG	Palmer Board of Economic Development has agreed to support concept;
Potential new park near to MTA Events Center		SG working with PJMS to find Saturday date for a community mtg	Schedule neighborhood meeting at PJMS this spring
Dedication ceremony for Sgt. Kurtis Arcala-Berberich Soccer fields	9/10/15	SG back on agenda MARCH 2016	Scheduled on May 14 at 2 PM
Margie L. Gabrielle memorial bench/table along Shane Woods trail	9/10/15		Staci Manier (donor) is waiting for standards & policy criteria

Ongoing Responsibilities:

The Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Advisory Board was created to develop, support and advise the city council on all matters pertaining to city parks, recreation and cultural programs and projects, to provide input and recommendations on issues relating to placement of memorials and plaques on city property and on the annual budget for city parks, recreation and cultural programs and projects.

Other Work Plan ideas considered for current year or future years:

Expand existing skateboard park or create additional skateboard park

SA – Stephanie Allen HA - Helene Antel MA-T Meggie Aube-Trammell JE – Jo Ehmann DH – Dot Helm JN – Jan Newman F-SB Fran Seager-Boss

From: Lewis, Darrell [mailto:darrell_lewis@nps.gov]
Sent: Monday, April 18, 2016 12:37 PM
Subject: Matanuska Colony Historic District National Historic Landmark nomination submitted to Washington, DC office

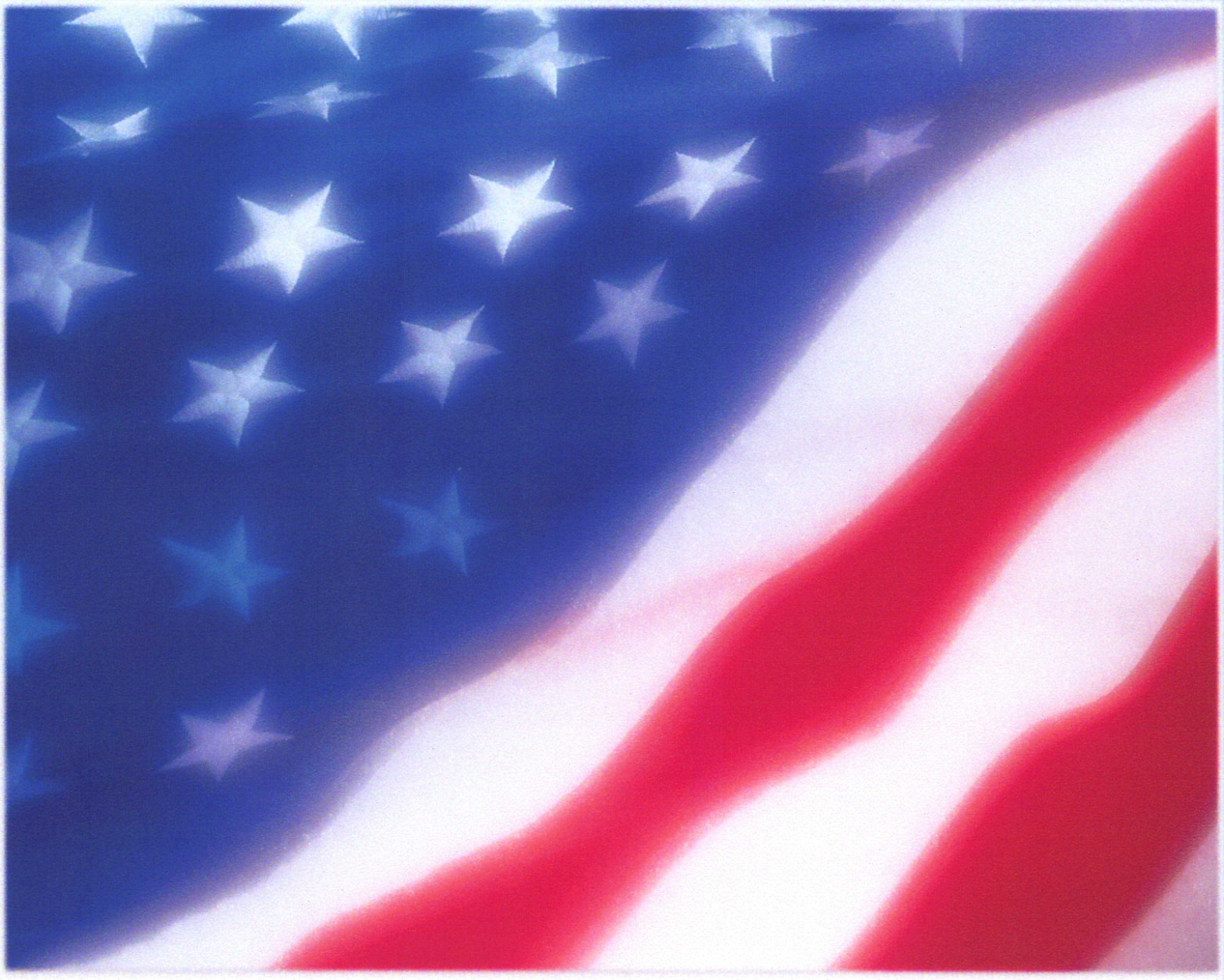
Hello Folks,

It gives me great pleasure to inform you that the Matanuska Colony Historic District National Historic Landmark (NHL) nomination has been submitted to the National Historic Landmarks Program office in Washington, D.C. for review. After NHL Program staff complete their review it will be submitted to the NHL Advisory Board for review and consideration. The NHL Advisory Board will then decide whether to recommend, to the Secretary of the Interior, that the Matanuska Colony Historic District be designated a National Historic Landmark.

The next NHL Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for this fall and I anticipate that it will go before the Board at this time. I will keep you updated on the progress the nomination as it moves forward.

In closing I would like to thank you all of you for your support and assistance in getting this nomination completed.

--
Darrell Lewis
Historian
National Park Service
Alaska Regional Office
240 W. 5th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
Ph. (907) 644-3470
Fax (907) 644-3811



The City of Palmer invites you to attend the

Dedication of the

Sgt. Kurtis Arcala-Berberich

Memorial Soccer Fields

Date: Saturday, May 14, 2016

Time: 2 PM

Where: 1317 S. Kerry Weiland Ct.

Soccer Fields are located behind the MTA Events Center and across the street from the Palmer Junior Middle School fields.

New Business

Focus on Livable Communities

The Economic Benefits of Walkable Communities

People Pay A Premium to Live Where It's Walkable.

A 1999 study by the Urban Land Institute of four new pedestrian-friendly communities determined that homebuyers were willing to pay a $20,000 premium for homes in them compared to similar houses in surrounding areas.[1]

Each of the four communities, including Kentlands (right), in Gaithersburg, Maryland, promoted transit and pedestrian access. Design features included systems of interconnected, often narrow streets, sidewalks, a mix of residential, retail and office land uses, and features such as street trees, short front yard set-backs, front porches, and rear garages accessed by alleys.

"First fix the streets, then the people and business will follow."

—Dan Burden, Walkable Communities, Inc.

City and county leaders in California are most motivated to push for pedestrian-oriented infrastructure and land uses when there is a clear economic benefit to their communities.[2] There are solid connections between walkable environments and economic viability. This brochure highlights some aspects of that nexus.

Walkability Is A Good Investment.

According to a 1998 analysis by ERE Yarmouth and Real Estate Research Corporation,[3] real estate values over the next 25 years will rise fastest in "smart communities" that incorporate traditional characteristics of successful cities including a mix of residential and commercial districts and a "pedestrian-friendly configuration."

Walkability Increases Property Values.

Reducing traffic noise, traffic speeds, and vehicle-generated air pollution can increase property values. One study found that a 5 to 10 mph reduction in traffic speeds increased adjacent residential property values by roughly 20%. Another study found that traffic restraints that reduced volumes on residential streets by several hundred cars per day increased home values by an average of 18%.[4]

Local Government Commission
Center for Livable Communities
1414 K St., Suite 250
Sacramento, CA 95814-3966
tel (916) 448-1198
fax (916) 448-8246
web www.lgc.org

Walkable Communities Will Attract "New Economy" Workers.

In a 1998 report, Collaborative Economics, a Silicon Valley think tank, profiled the connections between the physical design of communities and dynamic elements of the new knowledge-driven, service-oriented economy.[5]

The contemporary economy – with its smaller, decentralized firms – thrives on land use patterns that harken back to the towns of early industrial years, with city centers, corner stores and streetcar suburbs.

Walkable downtowns with a mix of restaurants, offices and housing promote interaction. Interaction is key since the new economy thrives on accessibility, networking and creativity.

Businesses Are Beginning to Leave Gridlocked, Auto-Dependent Cities.

The automobile has offered mobility and convenience for decades, but booming business centers like Atlanta and the Silicon Valley are showing how an overdependence on the car can gridlock economic development. As a result, major firms around the country are advocating for pedestrian- and transit-friendly development patterns, according to a 1999 report by the National Association of Local Government Environmental Professionals. Businesses are increasingly concerned with gridlock, lack of transportation choices, air pollution and the overall decline in quality of life that can make recruiting and retaining skilled workers difficult.[6]

- Hewlett Packard halted its planned expansion in Atlanta's Perimeter Center area, according to the report, because it did not want to subject 1,000 new employees to the area's serious traffic problems.

- Regional and national business leaders say that low-density, discontinuous and automobile-dependent land use patterns can cause higher direct business costs and taxes. The federal Office of Technology Assessment estimates that a single house built on the urban fringe requires $10,000 more in public services than one built in the urban core.[7]

- The California State Department of Transportation, cited in another source, estimated in 1990 that more than 197,000 hours per day were

being lost due to traffic congestion, costing California businesses more than $2 million a day. San Francisco's Bay Area Economic Forum estimates that area businesses lose $2 billion per year while their employees sit in traffic.[8]

- The American Highway Users Alliance estimates that commuters waste $1.1 billion a year idling in the Los Angeles region's four most congested interchanges. Their cost estimates account for lost time, spent fuel, cost to employers, traffic accidents, and environmental damage.[9]

- The Southern California region is expected to spend more than a trillion public and private dollars on roads and freeways, including more than $81 billion in public capital investment between 2000 and 2020. Yet, a report by the Southern California Association of Governments projects that those expenditures will result in a 330% *increase* in rush hour congestion because much of the new growth is expected to occur in outlying areas.[10]

Walkability Is A Tourist Magnet.

Tourists coming to Vermont to walk and bicycle in the scenic, human-scale towns and compact, pedestrian-friendly town centers have proved to be an economic boon. In 1992, an estimated 32,500 visiting cyclists spent $13.1 million in Vermont – about twice the amount of money generated by Vermont's maple syrup producers in a good year.[11]

Down on the Farm

Dependence on Cars Is Bad for Agriculture.

Agribusiness in California's San Joaquin Valley – a primary source of fruits and vegetables for the entire nation – is a multi-billion-dollar industry. The region's growers complain that vehicle-generated smog reduces crop yields by 20 to 25%.[11] In the Valley's Fresno County – the country's top agricultural producing county – a landmark public-private alliance of farm leaders and representatives from the region's development, conservation, business and local government sectors, has signed a compact for handling the stunning amount of projected growth, while conserving prime land. Two of the alliance's three guiding principles are to "develop livable communities that emphasize pedestrian or transit-oriented design."[12]

Walkability – It's Good for Retail Sales.

There are many models around the country that show clear economic benefits to improving the environment for walking in residential and commercial districts. The cities of Lodi and Mountain View in California and West Palm Beach, Florida, offer three examples of successful strategies for making communities simultaneously more walkable, livable, and prosperous.

CASE STUDY: PEDESTRIAN RETROFIT FOR DOWNTOWN LODI

Downtown Lodi launched a $4.5 million public-private pedestrian-oriented project, including a retrofit of five main street blocks from building face to building face.

On the main School Street, sidewalks were widened, curbs bulbed out at intersections and colored paving stones laid in the new sidewalks and street. A striking gateway was installed, as well as 140 street trees, lighting, benches, and other streetscape amenities.

The city credits the pedestrian improvements, as well as economic development incentives, with the 60 new businesses, the drop in the vacancy rate from 18% to 6%, and the 30% increase in downtown sales tax revenues since work was completed in 1997.

For more information:
Tony Goehring, Lodi Economic Development Director, (209) 333-6700
e-mail tgoehring@lodi.gov web www.lodi.gov

CASE STUDY: CASTRO STREET – THE HEART OF MOUNTAIN VIEW

Like central West Palm Beach (see back page), downtown Mountain View, in Northern California, was left behind by a glut of new automobile-oriented retail development on the suburban fringe. As a result, one 10-story building on Castro Street sat empty and unfinished throughout the 1980s, with guard dogs visible through the smoked-glass windows on the first floor.

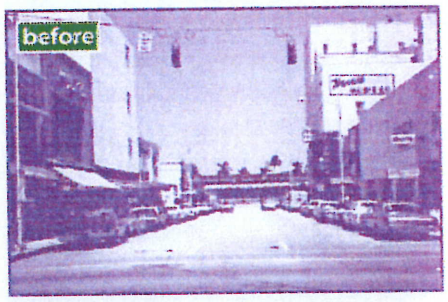
In the late 1980s, the city resolved to turn Castro Street into the heart of the city by redesigning it to include, among features, a flexible zone where sidewalk café tables would replace parked cars in the summer. The city located a pedestrian-oriented civic jewel on Castro Street – a new city hall and performing arts center complex with an outdoor plaza.

What followed was $150 million in adjacent private investment including an office-over-retail development flanked by hundreds of attractive homes built at 47 units per acre, and interspersed with pedestrian passages that link Castro Street to a city park.

Today, downtown Mountain View is a regional draw, with bookstores, brew pubs, restaurants – and pedestrians.

For more information:
Barney Burke,
City of Mountain View,
(650) 903-6454
e-mail
barney.burke@ci.mtnview.ca.us

CASE STUDY: TRAFFIC CALMING IN WEST PALM BEACH



Traffic calming projects helped West Palm Beach spur a stunning turn-around in a downtown left behind by new growth on the suburban fringe and increasingly perceived as dangerous, dirty and empty.

The city's first traffic calming retrofit was along 4,500-foot-long Clematis Street, a once-lively main street anchored by a plaza, library and waterfront on one end and a historic train station on the other. By 1993, only 30% of the building space on the one-way street was occupied. Property values ranged from $10-$40/sq. ft, with commercial rents at $6/sq. ft.

The city opened Clematis Street (above) to two-way traffic, narrowed the street at points, raised intersections, and bulbed out the curbs at intervals in a slalom-like pattern to slow traffic. The $10 million project also rebuilt an interactive fountain, restored key buildings, and provided for event spaces.

Property values more than doubled on the street. In 1998, they ranged from $50-$100/sq. ft., with commercial rents at $30/sq. ft., and with more than 80% of building space occupied. The project attracted some $350 million in private investment to the area.

In two nearby neighborhoods (below), the city installed mini-traffic circles in some spots, narrowed the streets and added speed humps. As traffic slowed, social links between neighbors increased. Trash along the streets disappeared, and the area lost its abandoned look. Between 1994 and 1997, the average sale price for homes there increased from $65,000 to $106,000.

"The city is thriving with an intensity and energy that seems limitless," said city transportation planner Ian Lockwood. "It's about reducing speeds and safety, but it's really economic-development driven. It has paid for itself easily."

- For more information:
  Ian Lockwood, West Palm Beach Transportation Planner, (561) 659-8031
  e-mail: ilockwoo@ci.west-palm-beach.fl.us

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Focus on Livable Communities

Notes

- *Valuing The New Urbanism: The Impact of the New Urbanism on Prices of Single-Family Homes*, Mark J. Eppli and Charles C. Tu, 1999, Urban Land Institute.
- "7 Questions for Your Community's Health," statewide survey, 1998, Local Government Commission (LGC), California Department of Health Services.
- *Defining New Limits: Emerging Trends in Real Estate*, ERE Yarmouth and Real Estate Research Corporation, 1998.
- *Evaluating Traffic Calming Benefits, Costs, and Equity Impacts*, Todd Litman, Victoria Transport Policy Institute, 1999.
- *Linking the New Economy to the Livable Community*, Collaborative Economics, 1998.
- *Profiles of Business Leadership on Smart Growth: New Partnerships Demonstrate the Economic Benefits of Reducing Sprawl*, National Association of Local Government Environmental Professionals (NALGEP), 1999.
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- "Freeway Tie-Ups Cost $11 Billion, Study Says," *Los Angeles Times*, 4/13/00.
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- Ibid.
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- *Bicycle Touring in Vermont and Vermont's Scenic Byways Program*, Bruce Burgess for the Vermont Agency of Transportation, 1995.

This project is funded by the Physical Activity and Health Initiative, California Department of Health Services under a Preventive Health Services Block Grant from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Work performed as part of a UC San Francisco contract.

Return On Investment in Mat-Su Lands

Economic benefits of trails, parks, and open space

Growing The Valley, Naturally

To make good decisions about the future and to sustain the character of the valley, we need to understand what our lands do for us and how valuable they are to our communities. In addition to typical stresses that come with industrial, commercial, and residential development, rapid population growth in the Mat-Su has placed added pressure on the region's open spaces. This report, *Economic Benefits of Trails, Parks and Open Space in the Mat-Su Borough*, shows that investing in trails, parks and public open space provides significant goods and services with a high return on investment.

Two Birds, One Stone

What can a trail contribute to the economy of the Mat-Su and the health of its residents? Investing in access to outdoor activities attracts visitors that contribute to the local economy through the purchase of goods and services which in turn supports local jobs. Think of it this way: trails create access to salmon streams, which leads to fishing, which requires the purchase of licenses, gear, and services, like food, gas, and lodging, and local guiding businesses.

Walking, hiking and other physical activity helps prevent obesity, type 2 diabetes, and promotes a healthy outlook. Access to public outdoor spaces can decrease stress, aid in mental fatigue recovery, and reduce levels of depression and anxiety. Call it exercise or call it going fishing, the end result is revenue for the valley and healthier living for residents.

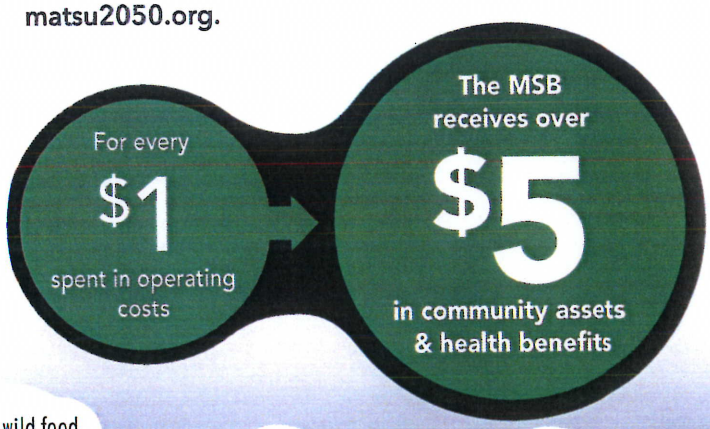
And That's Not All

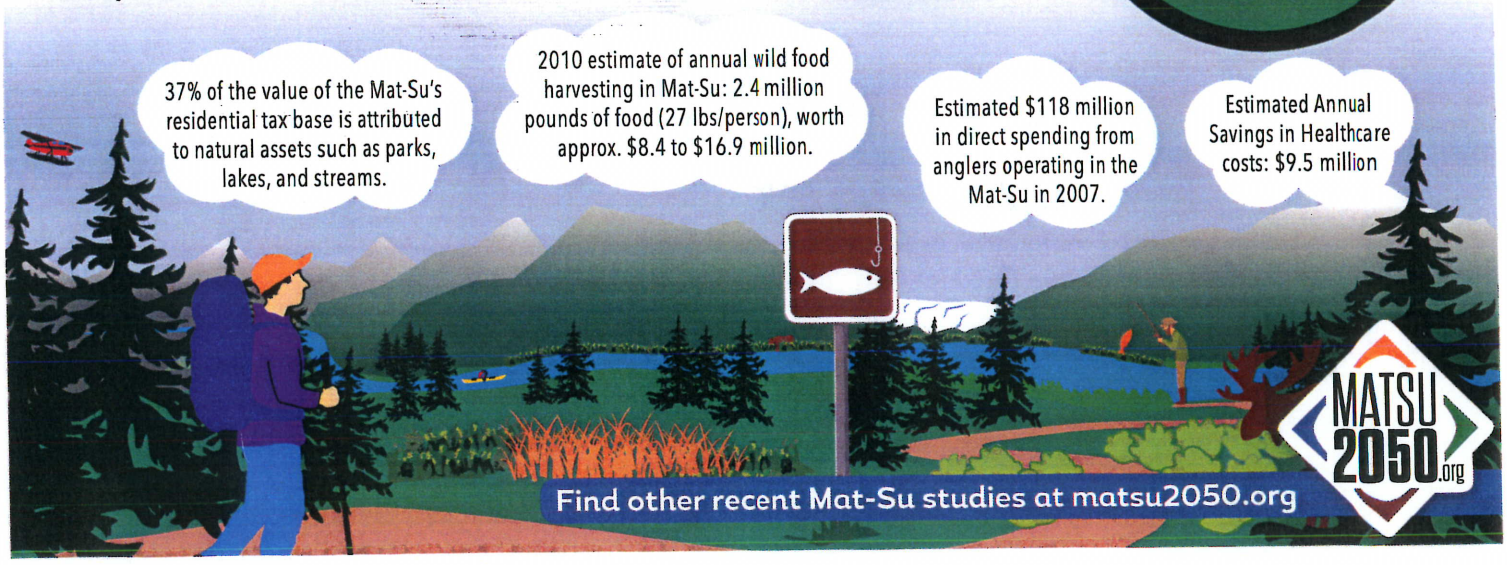
Agriculture and wild food harvests fill the larder of the locals while also adding to health benefits through the gathering as well as the eating. Open spaces such as fields act as fire buffers. Marshes provide flood protection. Proximity to open spaces, streams and lakes increases property values. Visitors attracted to the great outdoors of the Mat-Su stay the night and pay a bed tax. All of these add up to direct and indirect benefits to the Mat-Su Borough.

Healthy, Wealthy & Wise

So, what do we get back from our trails, parks and open spaces for every dollar we put in? This report estimates that when we spend $1 on the trail to that salmon stream, we can look forward to $5 in return. And that's being conservative. It's something to think about the next time funding for trails, parks and public open spaces shows up on the ballot.

Read the complete report at eartheconomics.org or matsu2050.org.





A RETURN ON INVESTMENT ANALYSIS

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF TRAILS, PARKS, AND OPEN SPACE IN THE MAT-SU BOROUGH

EARTH ECONOMICS

Economic Benefits of Trails, Parks, and Open Space in the Mat-Su Borough

REPORT VERSION 1.0

DATE

December 11, 2015

AUTHORS

Maya Kocian

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Earth Economics would like to thank all who supported this project, including Frankie Barker of the Mat-Su Borough, Kim Sollien of the Great Land Trust, Corinne Smith and James DePasquale of The Nature Conservancy, Louisa Yanes of the Alaska Farmland Trust, and Kim Ryals of the Mat-Su Trails & Parks Foundation.

The Earth Economics team members who contributed to this report include Jessica Hanson, Lola Flores, Nathan Cutler, Aaron Schwartz, Peter Casey, and Gwenael Podesta.

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The author is fully responsible for the content of this report.

PREPARED BY

EARTH ECONOMICS

107 N. Tacoma Avenue
Tacoma, WA 98403
(253) 539-4801
www.eartheconomics.org
info@eartheconomics.org

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ABSTRACT

Community assets such as trails, parks and public open space provide numerous benefits of both economic and social value. These assets provide recreational opportunities for residents, helping people to stay healthy and happy as access to spaces for exercise increases physical activity and reduces medical expenses. Recreation also stimulates the economy through the purchase of gear for activities, services and guided tours. This economic activity creates jobs in recreational sales, the hotel industry, tourism, and more. Public spaces enable all of these benefits to happen. Without access to trails, parks and open space, these benefits would be greatly diminished. This report summarizes the return on investment for these community assets in the Matanuska-Susitna (Mat-Su) Basin of south-central Alaska. Both social and economic benefits are covered in this report. Social benefits encompass recreation, tourism, human health, public safety, subsistence, and cultural and historical benefits. Economic benefits include those from businesses, tax revenues, and taxpayer savings.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Investing in public open spaces is a wise choice for the people of the Matanuska-Susitna (Mat-Su) Basin. This report finds that for every $1 spent on public open space in the Mat-Su, there is a $5.31 return on investment. Not only is investment in open spaces a fiscally responsible decision; it is also necessary for the survival of ecosystems and all of the Alaskan communities they support.

In 2013, Earth Economics conducted a study of the value of the natural assets, also called natural capital, of the Mat-Su. The study used an analysis of land cover types to identify ecosystem services that natural assets provide, such as water supply, raw materials, and recreational value. In all, the natural assets of the Mat-Su totaled at least $20 billion in annual benefits to the regional economy.

At the same time the ecosystem services study was commissioned, there was a desire from the public for more specific information about the value of public open spaces from the perspective of local people. A 2014 survey revealed that residents prioritize, in order: 1) protecting and restoring healthy salmon runs, 2) retaining and conserving farmland, and 3) expanding access to non-motorized recreation.[1] All three priorities reflect the importance that residents place on protecting the integrity of the lands where their communities are located.

This report, *Economic Benefits of Trails, Parks and Open Space in the Mat-Su Borough*, is the first comprehensive return on investment analysis of the Mat-Su's open space that includes natural capital and health benefits. Using novel techniques and case studies for calculating value and rates of return on investment in natural capital, this report shows that *investing in trails, parks and public open space provides significant goods and services with a high return on investment.*

INTRODUCTION

The Matanuska-Susitna (Mat-Su) region is a diverse and majestic landscape located north of Alaska's largest city and surrounded on all sides by massive mountain ranges, including the renowned Alaska Range. At 24,300 square miles, the Mat-Su contains dense forests, mountain glaciers, rivers full of salmon, and some of the best agricultural land in the state. It is also the fastest growing region of the state, having increased by at least 49.5% each decade beginning with a population of 6,509 in 1970 up to almost 100,000 today.[2]

There are several sectors of the economy that are directly dependent upon healthy open spaces, and there are many other instances where such spaces indirectly impact economic and social well-being. Supporting anything from the Mat-Su's robust tourism industry to the savings of reduced healthcare costs, public open spaces are a crucial component of life and productivity in south-central Alaska. This report specifically examines the benefits to tourism, health, public safety, agriculture, and tax implications of public open spaces.

In addition to the typical stresses that come with industrial, commercial, and residential development, rapid population growth in the Mat-Su places added pressure on the region's open spaces. Since the turn of the century, high migration rates into the Mat-Su have drastically changed the interplay between people and the physical environment. This study is intended to assist residents, communities and local governments as they face the challenges of population growth and land use development in the Mat-Su.

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this paper, there are several terms that should be understood to have a specific definition:

- **Public open spaces** refer to parks, trails, and other non-privately owned areas.
- **Natural capital** refers to stocks of natural assets including land, air, water, and all living things.[3]
- **Ecosystem goods and services** are the flow of benefits that people receive from natural capital.

CHAPTER 1

TOURISM AND THE OUTDOOR RECREATION INDUSTRY

Rich with beautiful landscapes and diverse natural spaces, the Mat-Su Borough provides ample resources to fuel the tourism industry. Tourism is a significant contributor to the region's economy because the Mat-Su offers numerous free or low-cost outdoor activities that appeal to a variety of users. Fishing, hiking, and hunting are just a few examples of activities that draw year-round visitors who contribute to the local economy. In 2013, the leisure and hospitality sector alone accounted for 9.3% of all jobs in the Borough.[4]

One 2008 study estimated that **roughly 780,000 visitors spend $201.1 million per year in the Mat-Su Borough and support nearly 3,100 jobs**.[5] Both in- and out-of-state visitors support the local economy through food and lodging-related expenditures, recreational expenses, and more.[6] Table 1 shows the distribution of these direct expenditures between in- and out-of-state visitors. Overall, direct expenditures from tourism have a significant impact on the Mat-Su economy. Spending on food and accommodations alone accounts for over half of this revenue, bringing income to restaurants and hotels and providing jobs throughout the community.

TABLE 1 ESTIMATED ANNUAL VISITOR EXPENDITURES, MAT-SU BOROUGH, 2008[7]

OUT-OF-STATE VS IN-STATE VISITORS	US DOLLARS
Out-of-State Visitors	$ 79.8 million
In-State Visitors	$121.3 million
TOTAL TOURISM INDUSTRY SPENDING	$201.1 million

Indirect and induced revenues from tourism also impact the Mat-Su economy. Indirect revenue is generated through intermediate sales made from industry to industry within the supply chain. For example, a grocery store that buys produce grown in the Mat-Su creates an indirect contribution to the economy. Induced revenue, on the other hand, is generated when workers spend their wages in local businesses.

Table 2 illustrates the total impact of all direct, indirect, and induced visitor-related spending. Taken as a whole, these three spending areas provide nearly 4,000 jobs and $282 million each year as a result of tourism. The Mat-Su is also expected to see an increase to about 1,200,000 visitors annually by 2017.[8] This increase will most likely lead to more tourism-related jobs and revenue for businesses.

TABLE 2 ESTIMATED IMPACTS OF TOTAL DIRECT, INDIRECT AND INDUCED VISITOR-RELATED SPENDING, MAT-SU BOROUGH, 2006-2007[9]

	DIRECT	INDIRECT	INDUCED	TOTAL
Employment	3,100	390	430	3,920
Labor Income	$78 million	$12 million	$13 million	$103 million
Output (spending)	$201 million	$38 million	$43 million	$282 million

While in the Mat-Su, visitors engage in a variety of activities, several of which generate additional revenue for the region. Outdoor activities such as wildlife watching, hiking, camping, and fishing are some of the strongest draws for visitors. Hikers can explore 2,117 miles of trail within the Mat-Su, and anglers can fish for the renowned King salmon in the Borough's numerous rivers and streams. Fishing is one activity that generates substantial revenue for the Mat-Su economy. In 2013 alone, 227,000 fishing licenses and 55,000 King salmon stamps (required for fishing King salmon) were issued in south-central Alaska, generating $9.6 million for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The market for hunting is smaller; however, the 51,500 licenses sold still generated almost $2 million in revenue.[10]

In addition to the license revenue that goes to the state, the economic impact of recreational fishing can be seen on a local scale. Sport fishing represents a huge portion of total tourism-related revenue, with an estimated $118 million in direct spending from anglers operating in the Mat-Su during 2007.[11] This figure represents the middle estimate of expenditures for guides, equipment, food, lodging, and other associated costs. For the same year, sport fishing also contributed to 1,180 jobs and over $40 million of income for residents.[12]

CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL VALUE

The cultural and historical value of public open spaces is an aspect that is frequently overlooked, yet the Mat-Su hosts a wealth of this type of resource. The Borough boasts many units of the national, state, and local park systems, as well as spaces marking important sites or historical periods such as the Independence Mine Historical Park and the Iditarod National Historical Trail.

The Iditarod National Historical Trail runs through the heart of the Mat-Su Basin and is possibly the greatest example of the rich cultural and historical heritage of the area. This 1,000-mile historic route is well known for the sled dog races that take place along its course; however, the trail originally served as a trading route for Alaska natives in past centuries. Both the annual race and various stretches of the historic trail continue to contribute to the rich cultural legacy of Alaska and attract tourists, hikers, and backpackers.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The input of local and out-of-state visitors to the Mat-Su is incredibly valuable. Resident population growth has been followed by an increase in the number of both in-state and out-of-state visitors. A 2008 study predicted an increase in visitors of more than 50% by 2017 and encouraged investment in the recreational trail system in order to attract outdoor-enthusiast travelers.[13] The return on this type of investment is significant: a $300,000 to $500,000 annual investment in trails enhancement was estimated to spur spending of up to $2 million to $3.9 million annually.[14] With strategic investments, the Mat-Su will not only continue to exert itself as a must-stop destination for cruise-package passengers and independent travelers who want to experience a piece of Alaska's natural wonder, but it may also see new untapped economic gains for residents.

The protection of the Mat-Su's valuable open space for tourism and recreation also results in a great deal of co-benefits that arise from the natural capital of those open spaces. When land is conserved, so too are all of the community assets derived from the land, which in turn magnifies the return on investment in land protection. The value of this investment is analyzed in Chapter 5.

So What Can We Do? (& How Much Will It Cost?)

$10,000 - Getting Started

- Localized grass-roots educational campaign
- Create awareness in our community through presentations and media
- Stakeholder coordination
- 2 hour Community Forum by walkability experts
- Walkability Audit for a popular community street and/or intersection

$20,000 - Getting Trained

- Education and discussion for a broad audience on what is walkability.
- 2 day Training on Walkability in Your Community (Looking Glass Academy*)
- Hands-on Walkability Audit with participants in Palmer & Wasilla
- Planning & Design Review training on characteristics of walkability
- Includes all efforts in **Getting Started**

$50,000 - Getting Serious

- **Getting Started & Getting Trained Efforts**
- AARP Livability Evaluation
- High-level presentations from experts to decision-makers
- Activity Connection Plans that identify improvements to physical activity sites and the streets connecting to them
- Long range walkability planning report for Mat- Su
- Planning & Design Review including General/Comprehensive Plan review
- Subdivision/zoning ordinance review

$100,000+ Getting Results

- **All of the above!**
- Looking GLass Acadamy training
- Acitivity Connection Plans for each borough community
- Active Living College Event*
- Health Impact Assessment- on an existing Comprehensive/General Plan, Corridor Plan, or significant policy being considered within the Mat-Su area.

*Looking Glass Academy: A program that trains participants from all backgrounds on how to do their own walkability assessments to support planning and design projects, or school and civic sites. Please visit **http://tinyurl.com/ntblexn** for a short informational video.

*A two day expert (not familiar to the region) laden event that contains 8-10 sessions tthat are interactive, educational, and identify action steps. Sessions can be inside or "on the ground" and are intended for planners, engineers, school districts, etc.

Mat-Su , Alaska

An AARP Community of Focus

The Mat-Su is the fastest growing Borough in the State of Alaska. With nearly 100,000 residents and an urban core that houses 50% of the population, the Mat-Su is home to people of all ages and abilities. According to AARP's 2014 Home and Community Preferences Survey, 8 out of 10 people want to stay in their local community.

Here in the Mat-Su, we believe our **population boom** includes people of all ages and abilities who have moved to here for the quality of life offered and want to make this their home for life. **It's time to make this a possibility.** Still need convincing? Look at what's happening in Mat-Su.

Our community has grown by 3-5% annually for 10 years.

Our 46 schools enrolled over 18,000 students in 2015 and continue to grow at +4% each year.

The Borough's Housing Study predicts that seniors are quickly becoming 1/3 of our population.

AARP Livable Communities: Great Places for All Ages

We have seen our population grow and know that Mat Su is a great place to live. AARP Alaska wants to make sure we stay a great place for all ages as our community continues to grow. To do this, we've got to address some issues such as:

- Affordable and accessible housing
- Walkability
- Transit
- Density
- Traffic Safety
- ADA Compliant Facilities
- Revitalization without displacement
- Placemaking
- Efficient Streets
- Aging Population/Aging in Place

Looking Glass Academy

Creating a new vision for mobility in your community

Are you seeking ways for your organization or community to better view the built environment through the lens of walking and bicycling?

Do you want to build capacity to effectively engage designers, planners and engineers to improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists?

The Looking Glass Academy merges popular techniques for evaluating active transportation needs from both the community development and design fields to build capacity among advocates and others to be change agents in their community. The Academy promotes a balance of the popular "feel good" walkability checklists and more "technical" road safety audits to allow participants to view the built environment through a different lens.

Why is the Academy a fit for your community?

◊ The Academy builds a sustainable local program to conduct walking and bicycling assessments, not just arouse interest.

◊ The Academy provides contextual training and analysis of a community to transcend positive messaging.

◊ The Academy's instructors lead participants through various modules that not only rally advocates but also prepare them on how to converse with designers to change a community's look and feel.

Highlights of the Looking Glass Academy

Looking Glass Academy Training Modules

1. Walking (& Bicycling): Where we thrive and what we avoid.
2. People: The technical specifications of the human being.
3. The tools of effective mobility and safety.
4. Limitations and possibilities of city planning and policy.
5. Expectations and intent of organizating your own event.
6. Practical event planning: Tricks of the trade/lessons learned.
7. How to conduct a preliminary field assessment.
8. Participation techniques and strategies.
9. Conducting your own Walkability Event.
10. Inspiring change and reporting conclusions.

Optional additional modules are available for bicycling, public transportation and law enforcement.

The Looking Glass Academy comprises two full days of training for participants, but begin with the instructors talking to local Academy organizers to gain an understanding of your community and its conditions.

We identify places that are ideal for walking and bicycling and a location where it is a challenge to achieve. We then assess local policies and design parameters to contextualize the training and prepare for the actual training session.

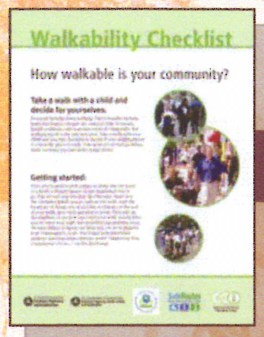
A half-day walkabout with Academy organizers occurs the day before the training to further refine the training approach and identify opportunities for success.

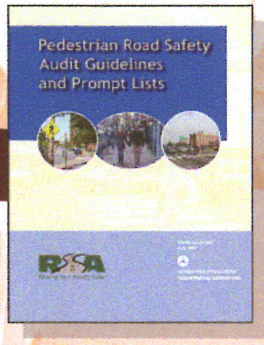
Participants become fully immersed in the world of walking and bicycling through a series of training modules aimed at educating while expanding aptitude to replicate the modules with other community members, designers and public agencies.

Several variations on the Looking Glass Academy can be developed to fit your community and budget.

Advantages of the Looking Glass Academy

Strikes a balance between more qualitative Walkability/Bikability Checklists and more quantitative Road Safety Audits by building capacity for participants in each realm.





Builds capacity among community members for promoting and conducting assessments through local context analysis, "training the trainer" modules and "lessons learned."

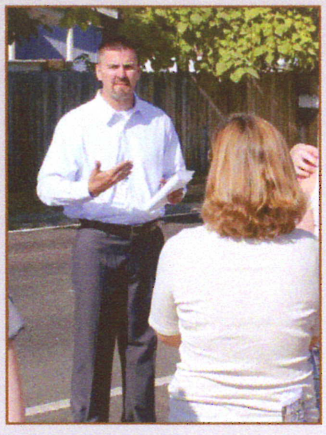
Participants learn how to view the built environment through the lens of a design professional to more effectively engage planners, engineers and architects to improve conditions for walking and bicycling.

"My walk home will never look the same again!"

- Nampa, Idaho Looking Glass participant

Academy Instructors

Chris Danley



Chris is an active living planning consultant specializing in pedestrian and bicycling facilities and integration of health themes into planning and design efforts. A 9-year veteran of planning for walkability in the public and private sector, Chris developed physical activity programs while in the United States Navy, is a Safe Routes to School certified instructor, and develops training modules for health impact assessment (HIA), walkability assessments and education bicycle rides for elected officials, planners, engineers and community advocates. Chris' work in integrating health and planning has garnered attention from the CDC, state health departments and various planning agencies. He is based in Boise, Idaho and is owner of Vitruvian Planning.

Don Kostelec, AICP

Don is a planning consultant that blends seven years of private consulting with more than seven years working in the public sector for various public agencies. He has led the planning and design of more than 30 active transportation plans and 50 pedestrian and bicycle design projects during his career and led projects for five different state DOTs. Don worked in the public sector designing bus routes, evaluating accessibility and managed a $2 million per year investment program in pedestrian and bicycle facilities. He has led HIA training, advocacy workshops, and transportation education curriculum for numerous clients. He is an adjunct professor at Western Carolina University and is the owner of Kostelec Planning, based in Asheville, NC.

Contact us for information, pricing options, and scheduling

Chris Danley - cdanley@vitruvianplanning.com
Boise, Idaho 208-570-3561

Don Kostelec - don@kostelecplanning.com
Asheville, NC 828-989-5811

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AARP LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Street Trees | A LIVABILITY FACT SHEET

"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now," says a wise Chinese proverb. In a neighborhood setting, street trees provide shade, safety, greenery, storm mitigation, energy savings, fresh air and a haven for songbirds and squirrels. Trees visually screen concrete and utility poles and quiet street noise.[1]

The U.S. Forest Service estimates that the presence of street trees increases adjacent home values by an average of $13,000.[2] That premium boosts a city's tax base and can help cover the operating costs of street tree maintenance.

The National Main Street Center reports that a good tree canopy can increase retail sales by 12 cents on the dollar in large cities and 9 cents on the dollar in small ones.[3]

Trees are also good for our health. Vehicle exhaust increases ozone and causes asthma and other medical problems. Trees convert these harmful gasses into oxygen. In fact, a single urban street tree converts enough carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide into oxygen to meet the oxygen needs of two people for a full year.[4]

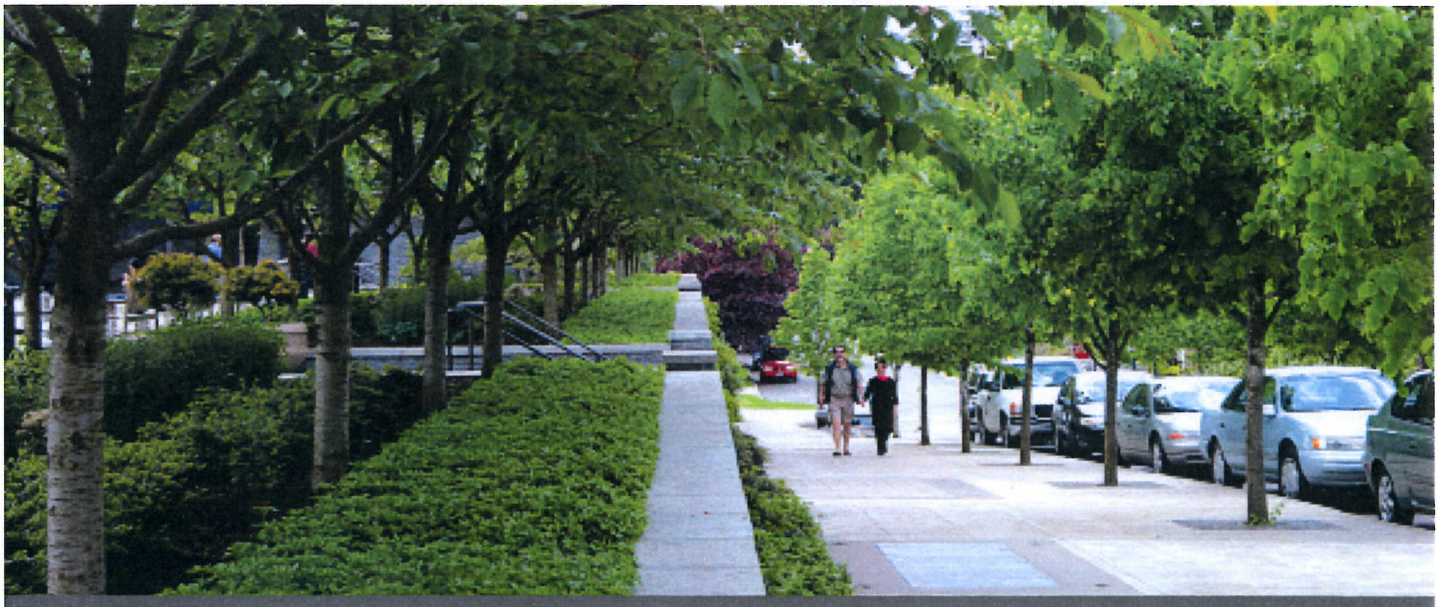
Trees planted in roadway divider strips or tree wells physically separate vehicles from pedestrians and help drivers distinguish the boundary between the street and adjacent areas where people walk. In addition, a well-developed tree canopy can reduce traffic speeds by 5 to 15 mph, which improves safety for all road users.[5]

Street trees reduce storm water runoff and flooding. (Here's an interesting fact: Trees absorb 30 percent of the precipitation through their leaves and another 30 percent through their roots.)[6]

Pavement can cause temperatures to rise 3 to 7 degrees, which increases energy costs and the presence of harmful ozone and other gases. Tree shade can lower energy bills by up to 35 percent.[7]

Studies conducted in California found that tree shade can improve the lifespan of street surfaces by up to 60 percent. Since daily temperature fluctuations between heating and cooling are reduced, the damaging expansion and contraction of asphalt and concrete decline as well.[8]

"The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The second best time is now."



Trees were planted as part of a downtown revitalization project in suburban Lake Oswego, Ore., that included sidewalks, new lighting, art installations, a pedestrian plaza, water fountain and traffic circle.

AARP® Real Possibilities

Walkable and Livable Communities Institute

Myth-Busting!

"Street trees are dangerous."

Studies document that motorists respond to vertical walls of greenery by driving more slowly, which makes pedestrians and motorists safer.[9] Street safety comparisons show a reduction of run-off-the-road crashes and overall crash severity when stretches of a road with street trees are compared with similar segments that have no trees.

Trees also buffer pedestrians from moving vehicles. One Texas study found a 46 percent decrease in crash rates across urban arterial and highway sites after landscape improvements were installed.[10] The presence of trees in a suburban landscape reduced the cruising speed of drivers by an average of 3 mph.[11]

"Planting a tree anywhere produces the same health benefits."

U.S. Forest Service research suggests that urban trees may be 10 times as effective as forest trees for lowering carbon dioxide. Urban pollutants such as ozone, chlorine, fluorine, peroxyacetylnitrate and sulphur dioxide are all absorbed by trees.[12]

"Trees are expensive."

For a planting and three-year maintenance cost of $250 to $600, a single street tree returns more than $90,000 of direct benefits, not even including the aesthetic, social and natural benefits provided during the tree's lifetime.

A well-planted and cared-for tree can thrive for 60 years or more.[13] The real estate premium from street trees boosts a city's tax base and can cover the operating costs of street tree maintenance.

For instance, New York City's 2006 tree census found that its 592,130 street trees provided an estimated $122 million in benefits annually. A goal of the city's 2007 PlaNYC initiative is to plant another 220,000 street trees by 2017.[14]

Washington, D.C., estimates the benefit of its street trees at $10.7 million annually.[15] A University of California at Davis study found that 20 percent shade on a street improves pavement conditions by 11 percent, which provides a 60 percent resurfacing savings over 30 years.[16]

When streets have no shade, the sun's heat breaks down the paving binder and produces more heating and shrinking, which wears out the pavement. Shade increases pavement life by up to 60 percent, far offsetting the cost of tree maintainance[17] and the occasional cost of repairing damage caused by tree root growth.

"Trees are the cause of damage by storms."

Proper selection, spacing and trimming of trees, along with well-planned utilities, will reduce the impact of major storms. A line of mature trees can provide protection from fragile or isolated trees that fall.[18]

"Trees create a mess."

Trees can be selected that produce minimal autumn leaf droppings and other annoyances. (However, municipal policies should include procedures for efficient leaf removal.) Some species of trees attract songbirds, which can be a pleasant addition to an area.

Although rare, some trees can attract such large congregations of birds that they become an annoyance. Thoughtful tree selection and management can limit specific bird populations or keep large groupings away.[19]

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How To Get It Right

A mature tree canopy provides shade and elegance to this residential street in Fargo, N.D.

Tree wells, such as this one in Valencia Town Center, Calif., add greenery to urban and Main Street settings.

When advocating and planning for street trees, try the following:

Engage the public and build support

Due to the many misperceptions about street trees, it's important to involve the public at the earliest possible point of discussions to minimize anxiety about the unknowns and give citizens ownership of the goals.

Print this fact sheet, talk to neighbors, build community support and then meet with decision makers, news media, experts and others to discuss the benefits of street trees.

Choose the right trees

There are street tree varieties for all climate zones, from semi-arid and arid conditions to mountain communities above 9,000 feet. The proper selection and planting of trees in boxes reduces sidewalk repair costs and potential damage to utilities in urban neighborhoods.

Place trees correctly

When properly positioned and maintained, a backdrop of street trees can draw a motorist's eye to traffic signals and signs. However, the trees must be carefully positioned to allow adequate sight lines at intersections and driveways. Street trees should be placed 15 to 30 feet apart, or as far apart as 50 feet apart in urban locations. Trees should be spaced to allow for illumination from street lights and so not to interfere with above- or below-ground utility lines.

Maintain trees properly

Tree maintenance is an added cost but one that's more than offset by the positive impact trees have on a community's tax base.

It's important to properly maintain trees, including repairing occasional sidewalk damage from growing tree roots. It's also important to keep the majority of leaves cleared from the street since fallen leaves can clog drains. In some climates piles of leaves that are left unattended over time can produce airborne spores that cause problems for allergy sufferers.

Plant in tree wells if sidewalk space is limited

If there's insufficient space for trees alongside a sidewalk, use a tree well instead. Depending on the amount of parking needed, desired visual pattern and tree density, wells can be placed 40 to 60 feet apart, which allows two to four parking spaces in between.The wells must be wide enough to prevent vehicles from backing into trees.

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Success Stories

Shreveport, Louisiana: NeighborWoods

Despite Shreveport's location in a wooded part of the state, many community members were unaware of the benefits and value of a good tree canopy. Due to sustained tornado and ice storm damage in the years 2010 to 2013, and severe droughts during the summers of 1999 to 2005, many neighborhoods were practically devoid of trees.

Help came from the nonprofit organization Shreveport Green and their work with NeighborWoods, a national program dedicated to reforesting city greenspaces. Beginning in 2006 student-led volunteers planted more than 20,000 trees in Shreveport, with a particular focus on three at-risk neighborhoods that had moderate to severe crime rates and a lack of community cohesion.

By increasing the canopy cover, Shreveport Green offered residents a cooler and more attractive environment, which encouraged them to mingle outside and positively interact with their neighbors. The effort produced a cost benefit to Shreveport of $7.28 for every dollar spent.

Charlotte, North Carolina: Stately Trees

In 1985 Charlotte planned major renovations of downtown thoroughfares, including 10 blocks of Tryon Street and two blocks of Trade Street.

Since the city wanted large, stately trees in the downtown, it installed a suspended precast concrete pavement system supported by earthen trench sidewalks and topped with non-permeable pavers. A total of 170 willow oak trees were planted and by 2009 they had grown to an average height of 44 feet, resulting in a 10 percent reduction in peak storm flows to the storm water system. Once famous for cotton mills and gold mines, Charlotte is now known for its a spectacular tree canopy.

WHY IT MATTERS

THE VALUE OF Urban Forests

urban forest = the trees, plants and natural resources within a town or city

12-1/2 trees can intercept an Olympic-sized swimming pool worth of stormwater annually.

Trees in urban forests support 60,000 California jobs annually.

177 million trees shading homes and buildings reduce air conditioning energy use by 6.4 billion kilowatt hours. (It takes 73 100-megawatt power plants to produce that much energy.)

Homes, goods and services sell for 12 percent more in communities with trees than in those without trees.

Source: California ReLEAF (californiareleaf.org/whytrees)

RESOURCES

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AARP LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Mail: 601 E Street NW, Washington, DC 20049
Email: livable@aarp.org
Online: aarp.org/livable

WALKABLE AND LIVABLE COMMUNITIES INSTITUTE

Mail: 2023 E. Sims Way #121, Port Townsend, WA 98368
Email: community@walklive.org
Online: walklive.org

Bicycling | A LIVABILITY FACT SHEET

Half of all trips taken in the United States are three miles or less, yet most Americans drive — even to the closest destinations. Only 3 percent of commuting trips in the U.S. are by bicycle, compared to up to 60 percent in The Netherlands.

Still, it's not unreasonable to believe we can improve our numbers. The popularity of bicycling has been on the rise. The number of bike trips doubled between 1990 and 2009, and many communities and the federal government are embracing the bicycle as a transportation solution for a healthy and viable future.[1]

Surveys show that 60 percent of Americans would ride a bicycle if they felt safe doing so, and eight out of 10 agree that bicycling is a healthy, positive activity.

Although issues related to bicycling continue to be debated, experience shows that bicycle-friendly features increase safety for all road users, including motor vehicles.[2]

In 2010, New York City removed a traffic lane and painted a two-way bicycle path with a three-foot parking lane buffer alongside Brooklyn's Prospect Park. Weekday bicycling traffic tripled, speeding by all vehicles dropped from 74 to 20 percent, crashes for all road users dropped 16 percent and injuries went down 21 percent, all without a change in corridor travel time.[3] Throughout New York City, deaths and serious crashes are down 40 percent where there are bike lanes.[4]

Bicycling also provides economic benefits: Two-thirds of merchants surveyed on San Francisco's Valencia Street say that bike lanes have improved business. In North Carolina's Outer Banks, bicycle tourism has already generated $60 million in annual economic activity on its $6.7 million bicycle infrastructure investment. In 2009, people using bicycles spent $261 million on goods and services in Minnesota, supporting more than 5,000 jobs and generating $35 million in taxes.[5]

Building bike infrastructure creates an average of 11.4 jobs for every $1 million spent. Road-only projects create 7.8 jobs per $1 million.[6] The average American household spends more than $8,000 a year on its cars; the cost to maintain a bicycle is about $300 a year.[7]

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This path in New Smyrna Beach, Fla., is part of a Volusia County plan to link schools, parks and businesses through interconnected paths. Fifteen miles were completed by 2012 with overwhelming public support. (Image: bikefloridanet.)

AARP Real Possibilities

Walkable and Livable Communities Institute

Myth-Busting!

"Bicyclists don't follow rules."

While there are bicyclists who do break the law, a large Federal Highway Administration study found that motorists failed to yield the right of way in 43 percent of crashes; bicyclists were at fault 36 percent of the time.[8] Since the 1982 passage of Idaho's "stop as yield" law, which allows cyclists to treat stop signs as yield signs, there has been "no discernible increase in injuries or fatalities," according to the Idaho Department of Transportation.[9]

"Bicyclists don't pay their fair share."

All road users — cars, trucks, bicycles, pedestrians, buses, light rail — are subsidized to some extent by society at large. Funding for U.S. roadways comes partly from vehicle taxes, fuel taxes and tolls, which together account for up to 60 percent of direct costs. General taxes and fees pay the remaining 40 percent. The federal gas tax of 18.4 cents per gallon has not been raised since 1992.

Cars, buses and trucks impose much higher maintenance and capital costs on roads than bicycles do, and they benefit from subsidies that are not directly paid by motorists.[10] In 2009, the Seattle Department of Transportation paid only 4 percent of its road expenses with the gas tax while non-motor vehicle funds paid for the rest.[11]

Motor vehicle crash injuries cost society $99 billion in 2010 due to medical expenses and lost productivity.[12] Pedestrians and bicyclists bear a larger share of costs than they impose.[13]

"Bicycling is for fit middle-class white guys."

Six in 10 young bicycle owners are women, eight out of 10 American women have a positive view of bicycling and two out of three believe their community would be a better place to live if biking were safer and more comfortable. Between 2001 and 2009, the fastest growth in bicycle use in the U.S., from 16 to 23 percent, occurred among self-identified Hispanics, African-Americans and Asian-Americans, 86 percent of whom have a positive view of bicyclists.[14]

"Bicycling is too dangerous."

Bicycling does tend to have higher fatality rates per mile than motorized travel, but a typical motorist drives five to 10 times more miles than a typical cyclist.

Bicycling risk can be significantly reduced through improved infrastructure and a greater number of bicycles on the road.[15] Bicycling also imposes a minimal risk to other road users and provides significant health benefits that can offset crash risks.[16]

There were no bicycling fatalities in bicycle-friendly Portland, Ore., in 2013 even though bicycling accounts for at least six percent of all trips. By comparison, 21 people were killed inside motor vehicles that year.[17]

"Bicyclists slow down cars and create congestion."

Average traffic speeds in Manhattan increased nearly seven percent since the installation of bicycle lanes south of 60th Street in 2008.[18] Bicycles take up way less road space than motor vehicles and cyclists tend to avoid congested roads that don't have bike lanes.[19]

"Bicycle lanes hurt business."

After the installation of protected bike lanes on Manhattan's 8th and 9th avenues in 2007, retail sales increased 49 percent in those areas compared to 3 percent in the rest of the borough.[19]

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How To Get It Right

Bicycle parking promotes bicycle riding. Bike racks can be placed on or off the street. Fun Fact: One vehicle parking space can accommodate 12 bicycles.

Grade-separated, protected bike lanes (like this raised cycle track in Missoula, Montana) provide separate, defined spaces for riders and drivers.

To encourage bicycling and bicycle-friendly streets and communities, try the following:

Embrace a public process and build support

Develop an education and awareness campaign prior to implementation, and reach out broadly to community members, elected officials and municipal leaders. Government officials may need to see public support before acting. Toward that end, advocates can share this fact sheet, talk to neighbors, build community support and then meet with decision makers, the media, experts and others to discuss the benefits of bicycling. Agency staff can engage residents by hosting workshops to build acceptance and understanding.

Start with a pilot project

Do a simple, low-cost project, such as striping a bike lane in an area with high bicycling potential and an existing right of way. This can help residents become comfortable with bicycling and enable municipal staff to document what works and what doesn't. Promote the pilot as a road improvement project rather than only as a bicycle project.

Provide adequate bicycle parking

Bicycle racks encourage bicycling. Well-placed racks provide a secure place for parking bikes while shopping, working or playing. Racks can be located inside buildings or bolted into sidewalks or even the street. A single parking space can hold up to 12 bicycles on staple racks (they look like an inverted "U" shape) mounted in a row.

Create routes and wayfaring signs

Develop a system of routes cyclists can follow to get around town safely. Install highly-visible wayfaring signs that indicate distances, destinations and street names and install signs at all important crossings.

Establish a bike share

More than 500 communities worldwide, including at least 50 in the U.S., have a short-term bicycle rental or bike share program.[20] (New York City and Washington, D.C., feature popular bike share networks.) People can join a share program for the day or a full year by paying a nominal fee. To participate, a rider checks out a bicycle from a computerized kiosk and then returns the bike at a share program rack near his or her destination.

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Success Stories

Palo Alto, California: Bicycle Boulevards

Bicycle boulevards are low-volume, low-speed streets that have been optomized for bicycle travel. Palo Alto has an extensive network of paths, bike lanes and boulevards, including connections to schools throughout town.

Data from the 2010 Census showed 7.1 percent of residents commuted to work by bicycle, an increase from 5.6 percent in 2000. The city continues to provide facilities, services and programs to promote travel by bicycle.

Indianapolis, Indiana: Cultural Trail

The eight-mile, $63 million walk-bike trail was completed in May 2013, having been financed by both public and private dollars.

The trail winds through the downtown of this auto-oriented city (home of the Indy 500), connecting a half-dozen emerging cultural districts, a 1.5 mile section of the historic Indianapolis Canal and to White River State Park, a former industrial wasteland that's now filled with museums, lawns and attractions. By April 2014 the trail had added more than $864 million to the local economy.

Memphis, Tennessee: Broad Avenue

The Broad Avenue Arts District initiative revitalized a struggling commercial and residential area. The project's popularity exploded when the focus was expanded to include bicycles.

"The lanes slowed down traffic and people started noticing the businesses more," says Pat Brown, co-owner of T Clifton Art Gallery. "Our revenues have grown on average 30 percent per year. Yes, that's for an art-related business in a tough economy." The district has seen more than 15 new businesses and nearly 30 property renovations. Restaurants report a growth in business due to bicyclists.

WHY IT WORKS

Protected Bike Lanes provide a barrier between motor vehicles and cyclists. (This barrier can be installed and permanent, or as simple as a row of parked cars, planters or plastic posts.) They're good for …

Business: A Portland study found that bike riders will go out of their way to use a street that has good bicycling infrastructure. That's more business exposure.

Safety: Drivers don't have to worry about unexpected maneuvers by cyclists and pedestrians don't need to dodge bike riders on sidewalks.

Lawfulness: Protected bike lanes in Chicago resulted in a more than 150 percent increase in the number of bike riders obeying traffic lights.

Everyone: Bicycles don't pollute, they cause less wear and tear on roadways than cars do, they help people stay healthy!

Source: Adapted from the Tranitized.com infographic "Why Build Protected Bike Lanes?"

RESOURCES

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AARP LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Mail: 601 E Street NW, Washington, DC 20049
Email: livable@aarp.org
Online: aarp.org/livable

WALKABLE AND LIVABLE COMMUNITIES INSTITUTE

Mail: 2023 E. Sims Way #121, Port Townsend, WA 98368
Email: community@walklive.org
Online: walklive.org

2016 Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Advisory Board Meetings

Meeting Date	Meeting Type	Meeting Time	Notes
June 2, 2016	Regular	7:00 PM	
July 7, 2016	Regular	7:00 PM	
August 4, 2016	Regular	7:00 PM	
September 1, 2016	Regular	7:00 PM	
October 6, 2016	Regular	7:00 PM	
November 3, 2016	Regular	7:00 PM	
December 1, 2016	Regular	7:00 PM	