

Pedestrian and Bicycle Oriented Spaces

arielle r. farina clark

Streets and Trails



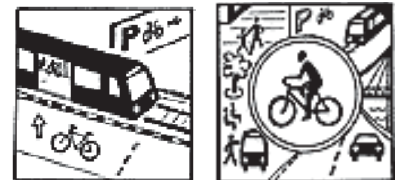
Cat Street in Tokyo, Japan. A popular pedestrian oriented space that is closed off to automobile traffic. It connects two vibrant, artistic neighborhoods and intersects with Omotesando-Dori. The street is flanked with interesting shops and filled with vendors and artists and has a reputation as a place where local color shines through.

Project for Public Spaces

Pedestrian and bicycle oriented spaces are spaces in urban areas that are designed for use predominantly by pedestrians and bicycles, rather than automobiles. These spaces can be a sidewalk, bike lane, bike path, path, walking street, or woonerf and are used for gathering or transportation. Each of these spaces are easily incorporated into the urban fabric through streetscape, greenway or greenbelt design.

The vibrancy and livability of a community are enhanced by pedestrian and bicycle oriented spaces. Spaces designed for pedestrians and bicycles create dynamic places where people interact on a human and personal scale. Most of the memorable, special places in urban areas are pedestrian and bicycle oriented.

Pedestrian and bicycle oriented spaces also combat urban sprawl by providing opportunities for modes of transportation other than car. These spaces allow people to walk or bike from destination to destination. This contributes to the health of the person by providing exercise and the health of the ecosystem by decreasing pollution from automobiles.



“In healthy communities, walking and bicycling are a normal, routine part of daily life.”

-National Center for Bicycling and Walking



Boston, MA



New York City, New York



Kungsporsavenyn
Göteborg, Sweden



Las Ramblas, Barcelona, Spain



Champs-Elysees, Paris, France

Context

Pedestrian and bicycle oriented spaces are especially vibrant in the context of dense, urban areas. In a city, walking and biking is a welcomed and utilized form of transportation when an area is designed for a pedestrian and bicycling experience.

In the context of sidewalks and bike lanes, people will choose to walk the mile or two or bike ten miles if the streetscape is an interesting place that feels safe. In Seattle, people already choose to walk to the grocery store in areas like Capitol Hill where housing, markets and streets flanked with shops are all located in close proximity and parking lots are often full. In areas such as this, sidewalks are separated from the road, are wide, often tree lined, and the street level is bustling with shops and people. Some people will choose to bicycle up to 15 miles to get work or to run errands if bike lanes are an integral part of the streetscape and feel safely separated from automobile traffic.

In the context of paths and bikepaths, people have the option to run, bike or stroll along a long segment of path dedicated to that purpose. Paths and bikepaths can also be a part of a greenway or greenbelt such as the Burke-Gillman Trail in Seattle, WA, or the Emerald Necklace in Boston, MA. Paths such as these offer a linear park environment to exercise or commute in. The ecological function of the greenway can be enhanced with plantings and an environment that also provides habitat.

Bustling walkable streets and bikepaths are not needed on every road. They merely need to link to one another or be located close to one another, lead to a destination, and feel safe.

Some successful pedestrian and bicycle oriented spaces

In Seattle, there are a number of pedestrian and bicycle oriented spaces that are acknowledged by the community as great places. Post Alley is a pedestrian oriented area that draws local people as well as tourists with activities such as shopping, people watching and eating. The area connected by transit and road, bikelane and sidewalk. Pedestrians and bicycles will fill the cobble alley at all times of the day and night. The Burke-Gillman Trail is a popular bike path in Seattle that is used daily by countless bicycle commuters and people exercising. It is pleasantly lined with greenery, connects many of Seattle's Parks and feel safe. More paths such as the Burke-Gillman would facilitate a higher number of people biking, running and walking to work, school or for exercise. Although Seattle has some pedestrian and bicycle oriented spaces, more will improve the health, vibrancy and livability of the city and reduce further urban sprawl.

Other well known pedestrian and bicycle oriented spaces are Downtown Crossing in Boston, MA, the Pearl District of Portland, Oregon, St. Marks Place in New York City, Kungsporsavenyn Göteborg, Sweden, Las Ramblas in Barcelona, Spain, and the Champs-Elysees in Paris, France. Most of these major cities also have bike lanes and wide sidewalks.

Essential Elements

Are there certain qualities that make a space successful? Yes. It should have activities, be accessible, comfortable, and sociable.

Activities

Shopping, people watching, strolling, biking, running, talking, meeting, and eating are all common activities that will draw people to a public space.

Accessibility

Spaces that can be gotten to are places that people will go. The places should not be completely isolated. Pedestrian and bicycle oriented spaces that are especially popular tend to connect places that people need or want to go.

Comfort

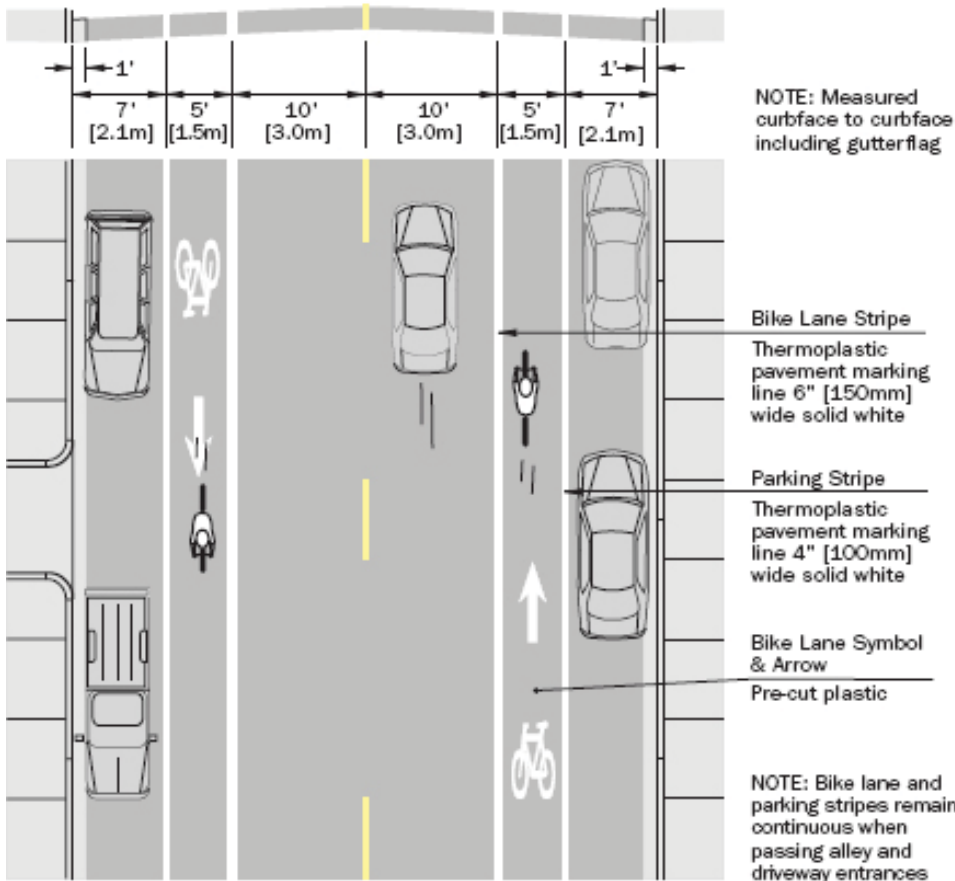
A successful pedestrian and bicycle oriented space will be comfortable and safe to be in. People will avoid places that make them feel scares or uncomfortable.

Sociability

A successful pedestrian and bicycle oriented space will also have opportunities for people to be actively or passively social. Whether it be people watching, or meeting, a place with other people in it will often draw more people.



Bikes Belong Coalition

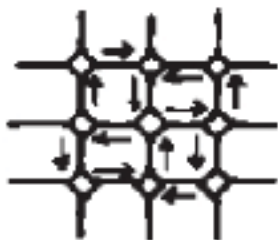
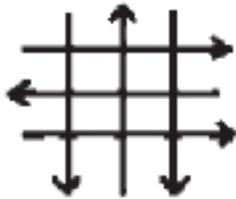
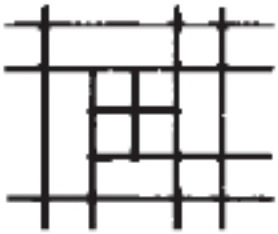


Chicago Bike lane Design Guide Standard Road Striping

"We should all be able to walk or bicycle to school, to work, to the bus stop, or simply to explore our neighborhoods."

-National Center for Bicycling and Walking

Examples of Linkages



Pattern

- Provide Continuously linked walkways and bike paths
- Pedestrianize Intersections
- Accommodate People with Disabilities
- Place signals in visible areas
- Illuminate area for safe nighttime usage
- Simplify median crossing
- Provide a safe approach for children walking or biking to school
- Eliminate the need for automobiles to reverse
- Provide safe pedestrian access to commercial areas
- Include auto Restricted Zones and Parking Restricted Zones
- Combine walking and bicycling with transit
- Develop walkable and bikable land use planning

Acquisition / Implementation Mechanisms

Acquisition and implementation of pedestrian and bicycle oriented spaces is a simple process that requires a redistribution of space on streets. Most roads are far wider than they need to be. They generally have the ability to accommodate parking and multiple lanes of automobile traffic. On roads where there is already ample room for the appropriate lanes of traffic, edge space can be repainted as bike lanes and sidewalks can be widened. Other streets or alleys that are not arterials and have little car traffic can be converted to pedestrian streets or car free areas.

Paths and bike paths in greenblets or greenways are a bit more difficult. In an urban area, land must be acquired and designated as a greenspace. Conservation efforts and programs such as Rails-To-Trails provide a great opportunity for the implementation of paths and bikepaths.

Resources

National Center for Bicycling and Walking – An organization that promotes the development of healthy living communities through bicycling and walking.

8120 Woodmont Ave, Suite 650, Bethesda, MD 20814,

Phone: 301.656.4220 Fax: 301.656.4225 Email: info@bikewalk.org

Web: <http://www.bikewalk.org>

Loudoun County, Virginia Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Glossary – Familiarizes users with terminology associated with planning for bicycle and pedestrian oriented spaces.

<http://www.loudoun.gov/compplan/bikegloss.htm>

Urban Ecology – An San Francisco, CA based organization that uses urban design, land use planning, and policy reform to help communities plan and build neighborhoods that are ecologically healthy, socially just, and economically fair.

<http://www.urbanecology.org/index.htm>

Project for Public Spaces: 30 Years of Placemaking. – An organization that

<http://www.pps.org/>

Walkable Communities: Twelve Steps for an Efficient Program. Florida Department of Transportation. Safety Office. Pedestrian / Bicycle Program. April 1995. <http://www.smartcommunities.ncat.org/pdf/walkable.pdf>

<http://www.smartcommunities.ncat.org/pdf/walkable.pdf>

Bike Lane Design Guide

http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/pdf/bike_lane.pdf

Bikes Belong Coalition - A national coalition of bicycle suppliers and retailers working together to put more people on bicycles more often.

<http://bikesbelong.org/site/intro.cfm>

Streets Without Cars: The Urban Experiment of State Street

<http://www.streetswithoutcars.com/>

Answers. com: Segregated Cycle Facilities

<http://www.answers.com/topic/segregated-cycle-facilities>

Walking and Cycling Encouragement

Strategies That Encourage People To Use Nonmotorized Transportation

<http://www.vtpi.org/tdm/tdm3.htm>

T.A. Magazine Article. Fall 2003, p.18

<http://www.transalt.org/press/magazine/034Fall/18europe.html>

"In... 'active community environments' the community leaders and citizens recognize that providing active living through community design is a health issue as well as a quality of life issue."

-National Center for Bicycling and Walking