

Infrastructure improvements like more visible crosswalks and protected bike lanes can make St. Pete's streets safer and encourage more people to walk and bike.



Photo credit: Flickr user Tom Jackson

Complete Streets for St. Pete

Building a Healthier, Safer City through Better Street Design

Complete Streets – streets designed for all road users, including people on foot, on bike or taking transit – can help address transportation and public health problems in St. Petersburg.

What Are Complete Streets?

Complete Streets are streets designed for everyone, whether young or old, able-bodied or using a wheelchair, traveling by car, bus, bike, or on foot. While the layout and approach varies by context, Complete Streets may include a wide range of elements to make streets safer, more accessible and more pleasant. On a Complete Street, cars may move a little more slowly, sidewalks are wider and there are safe places for pedestrians to cross the street; and cars and bikes don't have to fight for space because the street can accommodate both. These are the type of streets that would invite you on an evening stroll or let you choose to run an errand on foot or by bike.

Complete Streets Mean a Healthier St. Petersburg

Properly implemented, Complete Streets can make St. Petersburg streets safer for all users and improve public health by reducing air pollution and encouraging people to be active.

- **Complete Streets make streets safer by reducing all crashes** on the roadway by an average of 19 percent.
- Improving infrastructure for biking and walking through Complete Streets **encourages people to get out and moving** as part of their daily routine.
- When people shift to walking, biking and public transportation, they often leave their cars behind, **reducing air pollution.**

The Design of Many of Our Streets Poses Barriers to Healthy Living

Many streets in St. Petersburg were designed for the fast movement of cars, not the safe movement of people. Parts of the city lack adequate infrastructure for people on foot or bike, while unsafe street design leads to frequent crashes.

- The vast majority of workers in St. Petersburg commute to work by driving alone (80 percent), while only 2.4 percent take public transit and just over 3 percent walk or bike.
- Compared to other urbanized counties, Pinellas County's pedestrian fatality rate is the highest in Florida and was 80 percent higher than the national average.
- The parts of St. Petersburg where people are more likely to walk or bike are also those where the streets and neighborhoods are designed to give people more choices for how to safely get around.



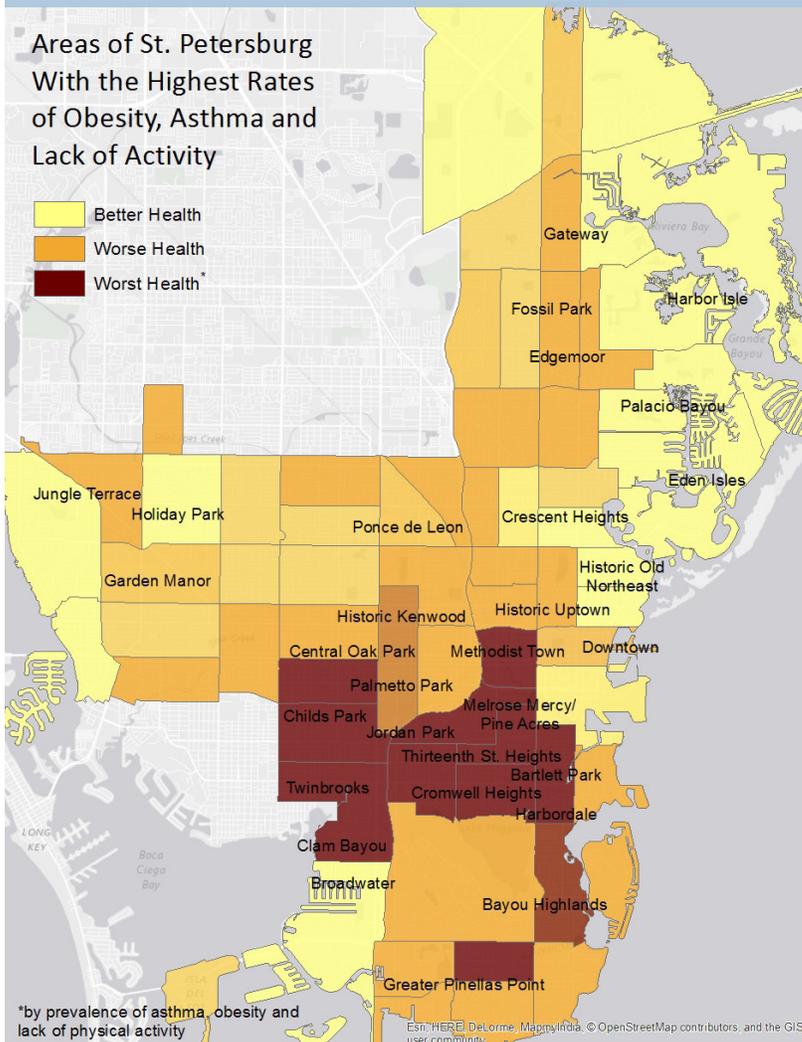
Some sections of Central Avenue are dangerous and intimidating for people on foot or bike.

St. Petersburg Faces Transportation-Related Health Problems

Complete Streets can address the real health problems caused or exacerbated by the design of our streets. Streets designed solely to move cars discourage people from walking and biking and reinforce sedentary lifestyles, contributing to chronic health problems. At the same time, street designs that reinforce dependence on motor vehicles result in the creation of air pollution that exacerbates respiratory illnesses.

- In 2016, 31 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes in St. Petersburg, nearly half of them pedestrians.
- Nearly two-thirds of all adults in Pinellas County were either overweight or obese in 2013. Meanwhile, nearly half of the county's adults don't get the amount of daily physical activity recommended for good health.
- Transportation is responsible for the vast majority of air pollution that occurs within Pinellas County.
- Heart disease, exacerbated by inactivity and air pollution, causes nearly a quarter of all deaths in Pinellas County.

In the map below, the darkest areas show the neighborhoods that suffer from the most asthma, obesity and insufficient exercise, including Childs Park, Jordan Park, Melrose-Mercy/Pine Acres, Thirteenth St. Heights, Harbordale and Methodist Town.



Recommendations

By building a broad network of Complete Streets in all neighborhoods, we can create a healthier St. Petersburg. The stronger the plan, the greater the public health impact will be. Specifically, the City of St. Petersburg should:

- **Make protected bike lanes standard.** Since separated bike lanes improve safety and attract more riders over paint-only lanes, buffered or protected lanes should be the rule – not the exception – on streets with three or more lanes or heavy traffic.
- **Complete sidewalks and crosswalks around schools.** The City should expand and maintain pedestrian infrastructure like sidewalks and crosswalks to ensure that all children in St. Petersburg have a safe route to school.
- **Create a city-wide system of neighborhood greenways.** St. Petersburg's neighborhood streets should be considered for a connected greenway system for walking and biking.
- **Prioritize safety over speed.** To reduce serious crashes and improve community health, the City should encourage slower vehicle speeds with street design and lower speed limits.
- **Implement road diets.** Where appropriate, the City should consider converting four- or five-lane streets to three lanes to calm traffic and create space for other infrastructure, like bike lanes, bus lanes, wider sidewalks, and on-street parking.
- **Continue to seek additional resources so Complete Streets are fully funded.** The City should consider increasing Complete Streets funding so that the streets can be improved and maintained reliably in the future.

For more information and the full report, please visit www.fcan.org/foundation

FLORIDA
Consumer Action
NETWORK FOUNDATION

FRONTIER GROUP

This report was made possible thanks to the generous support of the Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg.