



In The News

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Transportation is a public health issue; DOT doing its part to keep kids moving

Earlier this year, First Lady Michelle Obama established Let's Move, a program with the ambitious and important goal of ending childhood obesity within a generation. And yesterday, a conference called "Keeping Kids Moving" examined the ways transportation policy can help America achieve that goal.

The sad truth is this: today, 32% of children in the US are overweight or obese. That means one in every three of our nation's children are at risk for serious health conditions like diabetes, asthma, heart disease, and stroke.

That's why Dwayne Proctor, Director of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Childhood Obesity Team, sounded the alarm in his opening remarks: "This could be the first generation in America to live sicker and die younger than their parents."

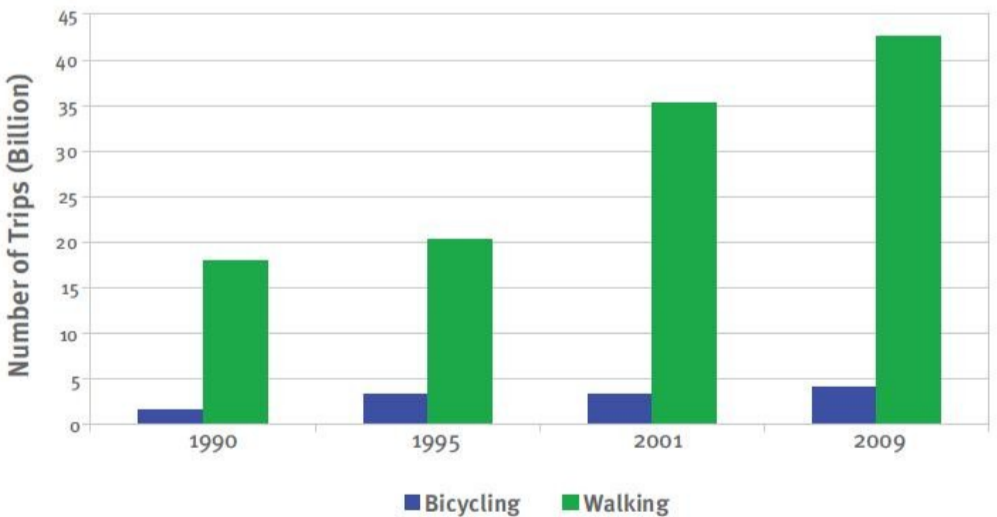
America is beginning to understand that childhood obesity is a national problem. And we need to look for solutions wherever we can find them.

At DOT, we know transportation can be part of the solution, because the way people travel shapes our communities and affects our levels of physical activity. We recognize that transportation is a public health issue.

Yesterday, DOT Undersecretary Roy Kienitz talked about how transportation decisions that value things like "vehicle throughput" instead of pedestrian safety affect America's communities. And about how transit decisions that emphasize "minutes-saved" pit outlying suburban commuters against their inner-lying urban neighbors. Recognizing that those policies have had an effect on public health, he said, "Transportation is about more than engineering."

People want options. They want to be able to be more physically active on streets that are friendlier to pedestrians and bicyclists. And when adults model physical activity, our kids see it, and they get it.

Number of Trips Taken by Bicycling and Walking, 1990–2009



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