

Economic Benefits of Pedestrian Traffic

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As more and more people have forsaken city-center activities in favor of out-of-town shopping malls and business parks, many downtown areas in the United States have been allowed to fall into neglect. Will Central Business Districts (CBDs) or “Main Streets” survive these forces? Unless proper measures are taken and necessary investments made now, the future of Main Streets may be in danger. Is it worth investing in Main Streets in New York State? Or, is it fair to say that the economic impact of Main Streets with pedestrian access has been unfairly treated in the evaluation of transportation policies in New York State? Is there justification for increasing investments in pedestrian access and safety? The project's goal was to provide data to address these questions and determine what roles pedestrians can play and are playing in the economy of New York State.



In New York State, there are more than 180 CBDs located on the State Highway Touring Route System. However, very little data are available on the value of these downtown commercial centers to the economy of New York State. In the first part of this study, surveys were distributed to determine how much money is spent on pedestrian projects and how much revenue is generated in CBDs. When efforts to obtain the needed data proved unsuccessful, data from secondhand sources were analyzed. These data showed a clear link between investments in pedestrian infrastructure for access, mobility, and safety needs and increased economic activity.



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