Pedestrian & Bicycle Information Center FREE Webinars

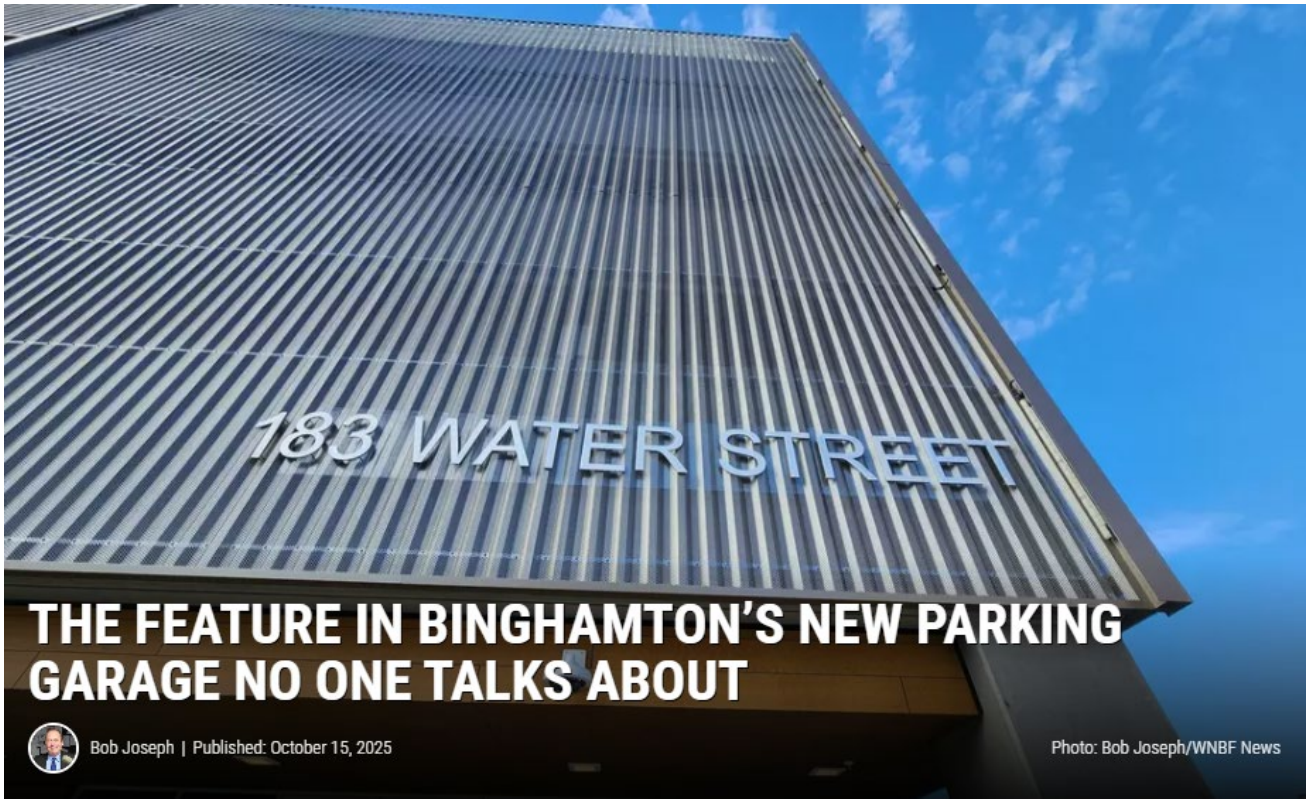
Go to https://www.pedbikeinfo.org/webinars/.

Come out and play in Broome County

Go All Out Broome County is your simple guide to hundreds of places and thousands of acres in your own backyard or just down the road. Easily locate hidden gems and local favorites then map your next outdoor adventure in Broome County. Go to **www.GoAllOutBroome.com**.

Go All Out
BROOME COUNTY

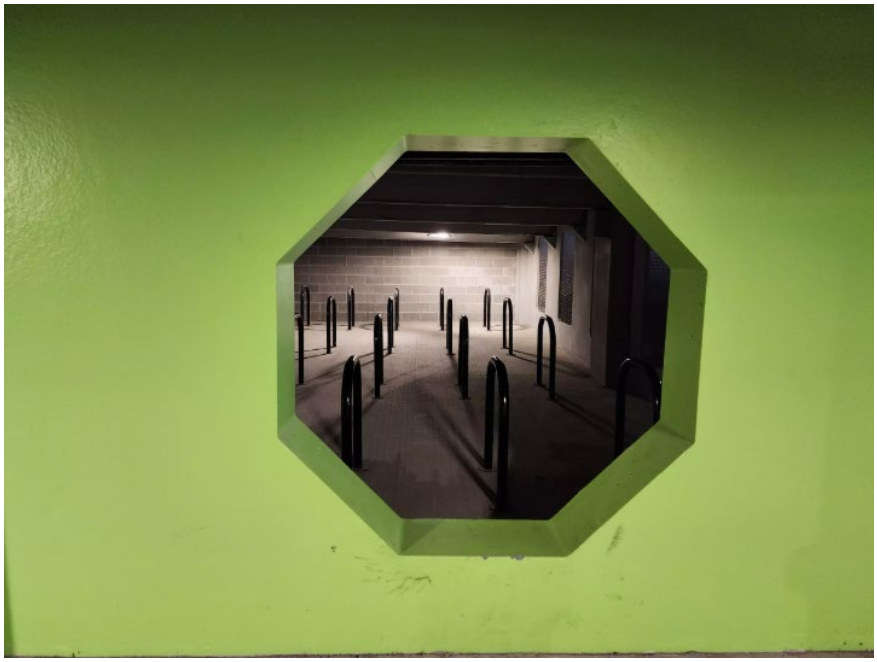
See the **Two Rivers Greenway Pedestrian & Bicycle Monthly Counting Reports** at http://bmtsonline.com/data/bikeped-counts.



Although the $25 million city-owned parking structure on Water Street in downtown Binghamton opened nearly one year ago, there's something in the garage that seems to be a secret.

Almost all of the attention given to the new parking ramp has been on the 500 spaces available for cars. But there's a section of the garage next to Boscov's department store that has received little, if any, publicity.

It's the small area on the first level that's been set aside for bicycle parking.



An unused bicycle parking section in the Water Street parking garage on October 15, 2025. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

No bikes were parked in the designated spaces during spot checks of the area in recent months.

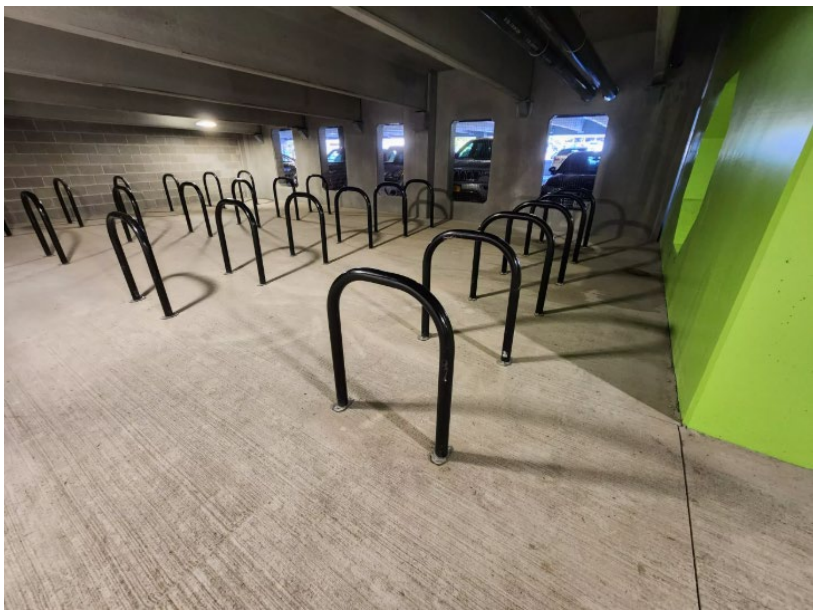
The bicycle parking section is generally dark although lights are turned on automatically when sensors detect activity around the spaces.

The Water Street bike parking area is designated by this small sign. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

It's the first time that a secure and protected bike parking area has been available in a city-owned garage in downtown Binghamton.

A 2016 parking study recommended that such parking features be included in the development of future garages.

The Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study planning organization also supported that move.



The bicycle parking facility in downtown Binghamton was unused on October 15, 2025. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

The Water Street garage has parking spaces to accommodate a couple of dozen bikes. It also has a bicycle repair stand equipped with basic tools.

The city's Hawley Street garage - which opened in 2021 - does not have a bike parking area.

Bicycle owners can do repair work using tools at the Water Street parking garage. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

Editor's Note: As of October 22, bike parking signage is being designed and will be installed by LAZ Parking in cooperation with the City of Binghamton and BMTS

PUBLIC SQUARE
A CNU Journal

I notice hidden surprises, like a tiny house tucked between two others behind a secret garden. These are details that would remain unnoticed by drivers traversing the same street. Photo courtesy of Robert Orr

A pedestrian's reckoning with a car-centric culture

Seeing the world through the eyes of a pedestrian who has to walk everywhere reveals perspectives that drivers never notice.

ROBERT ORR OCT. 14, 2025

Ten years ago, I experienced what felt like the worst punishment imaginable: my car keys were taken away. Not because of a ticket or illegal activity, but due to a medical condition that made driving unsafe. In a culture built around the automobile, losing access to a car was more than just a hassle—it felt like exile. I lost not only convenience but also the independence and freedom I had long taken for granted. Yet that forced transition—from the speed of driving to the slow rhythm of walking—has profoundly changed how I perceive the world.

Over the past decade, I've walked everywhere: to stores, appointments, social events, and work. Luckily, I live in a place where this is at least possible. Though the infrastructure isn't perfect, it supports a pedestrian lifestyle—most essentials are within walking distance, though often inconvenient.

Although one sees people most everywhere in the environment of streets, walking is a brief journey, usually from a parking spot as close as possible to the entrance of the destination to that entrance and back. Few go far on foot. During my longer walks, I've noticed I rarely see the same person twice—evidence of how unusual my way of traveling is. But walking immerses you in your surroundings in ways driving never can. At a slower pace, the differences between beauty and neglect become sharply clear.

I notice the care my neighbors invest in their homes; that care communicates a sense of “pride of place” and “eyes on the street,” which, in turn, sends a message about pedestrian safety.

But walking out of necessity, not choice, also means exposure—to weather, distance, and above all, to dangers posed by wheeled vehicles. Long walks reveal not just charm, but also the harsh truths of how our streets are designed: for cars, not people. I remember some close calls; fortunately, they have been limited to being knocked down by a few cyclists so far. The rise of e-bikes, scooters, and skateboards indicates that encounters may become more serious. Even on sidewalks, pedestrians rank lowest. Everything is reversed compared to the walkability messages we often hear. From the dedicated pedestrian’s perspective, what’s praised in the name of pedestrian safety is more likely to advance the well-being and safety of vehicle operators. For decades, traffic engineers’ training has been limited to a focus on vehicle safety, not walking. They use the same road design standards for both streets and highways, setting twelve feet as the minimum lane width. This makes vehicle operators feel safe at high speeds.

The perfect engineering-designed intersection of roadways carved out of what once were vibrant, if impoverished, neighborhoods within the city. The gash decapitates the remaining neighborhood on the “other side.” Photo courtesy of Robert Orr.

One of the few engineers who challenge this is Rick Hall, who advocates for maximum lane widths, not minimum, adjusted down based on pedestrian proximity. Narrower lanes slow traffic and enhance safety—but they are rarely adopted.

The reason for minimum widths is that lane width determines “design speed.” By setting “design speeds” higher than “posted speeds,” engineers make driving safer at the lower speeds mandated by “posted speeds.” Ironically, the safety provided by higher “design speeds” encourages drivers to exceed the “posted speed” limit, testing their skills at high speeds.

To update old streets to meet modern design standards, cities introduced one-way streets, eliminated curb parking, and added turn lanes. Roundabouts remove left turns altogether and promote continuous traffic flow. Just painting a line to separate lanes boosts “design speed” by nine miles an hour. All these measures aim for one goal: to reduce congestion through faster traffic movement.

It was no surprise that traffic engineers quickly embraced bike lanes. Like car lanes, they are wide, direct, and fast—designed with familiar goals, but separated from the driving lanes, boosting their “design speed”

as well. As a result, the lanes (not the bikes) are added measures to isolate pedestrians by increasing speeds for all types of vehicles.

Even features marketed as pedestrian safety improvements—like flashing lights, raised crosswalks, and curb bump-outs—often serve as visual cues for pedestrians to proceed cautiously, ironically giving another green light to vehicle operators.

These design choices come with a cost: over forty thousand people die each year in crashes. Unlike the tragedy of one death, forty thousand is just a statistic, minimizing resistance to minimum lane width standards. The cost of maintaining the same twelve-foot lane width on city streets results in an additional seven thousand pedestrian deaths.

Mechanization's dismissive attitude toward pedestrians is deeply ingrained. The term "jaywalking" was coined in the early 20th century to shame those uncouth enough to cross streets mid-block, instead of walking to the end of the block and back to reach something directly on the other side. However, from a pedestrian's perspective, crossing mid-block is often *safer*, offering clear sightlines and avoiding unpredictable vehicle turning movements at intersections.

Faced with hostile street designs, some walkers avoid busy streets and turn to fringe streets that escape modern "improvements." These sequestered streets are less direct, take more time to traverse, but feel much safer—even when you're walking in the middle of them.

Of course, the inconvenience of being pushed to fringe streets and the increased risk at busy cores can be frustrating, even causing anger. One shirtless cyclist, bristling with a "six-pack," dismounted and challenged me to a fistfight for not walking to the side of the sidewalk. However, this anger subsides when one comes to realize that almost everyone, whether pedestrians or vehicle operators, feels anger on roadways. AAA and other groups like The Zebra and Nextbase report that over 80% of Americans admit to engaging in road rage and aggressive driving, both inside and outside populated areas.

Yes, our collective anger has many causes—political division, media echo chambers, economic and ethnic segregation. But the most significant and often overlooked factor is the decline in the daily routine of human connection. When we replaced human connectivity within neighborhoods and streets, we lost more than just walkability—we lost the opportunity to regularly interact with people outside our immediate circle.

This isolation fosters unnecessary distrust and hostility. Without the daily routine of face-to-face encounters—shared space and those small moments of eye contact, the frequency from which familiarity and interactions grow—we lose our ability to empathize with strangers. The literal takeover of public streets, which removes their vital role in fostering social capital and turns them into speedways for car-dependent consumerism, has proven unhealthy. The U.S. Surgeon General cites social disconnection as having a mortality impact similar to smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day.

Kurt Braddock, an assistant professor of public communication at American University, highlights that it's impossible to overlook how polarization and the normalization of violence have become deeply rooted in the US. Referencing data from Princeton University's Bridging Divides Initiative, Braddock says, "We're moving in a very dangerous direction, and I think we have been moving in this direction for quite some time." Chuck Marohn, a self-proclaimed "recovering traffic engineer," strongly agrees.

Inside a car, one can pass through blight and despair, often the default aesthetic of traffic engineering itself, without any sense of danger. But this insulation—this "cocooning"—also prevents the kinds of chance encounters that form relationships and build community. Without them, strangers remain strangers, and divisions deepen. Now, try to imagine yourself in the shoes of a solitary pedestrian passing through.

If we want to lower suspicion, distrust, polarization, anger, and unspeakable violence, we can't continue to ignore the critical responsibility of street design. It's time to rethink the purpose of streets. Vehicles need access, but they should take a backseat to the more important goal: bringing people together.

Let's stop designing streets only as transportation corridors and begin reclaiming them as shared spaces focused mainly on people, connection, community, and humanity.

Note: This article was published on smartgo.network/.

Robert Orr, FAIA, FCNU, is principal and founder of Robert Orr & Associates, an architecture, landscape architecture and New Urbanism firm based in New Haven, Connecticut.

Health

Alzheimer's decline could slow dramatically with one simple daily habit, study finds

Between 5,000 and 7,500 steps daily slowed cognitive decline by about seven years

By **Khloe Quill** **Fox News**

Published November 5, 2025 11:00am EST

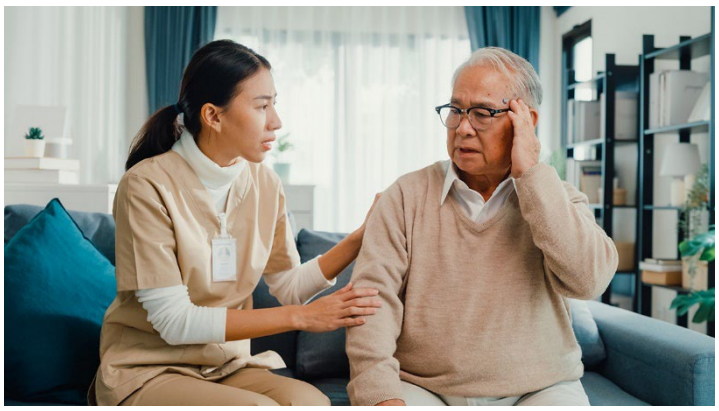
Even small amounts of walking could slow down the brain changes that lead to Alzheimer's, a new study shows. In fact, results point to a very specific window where benefits peak.

Researchers from Mass General Brigham followed nearly 300 older adults between the ages of 50 and 90 who showed no signs of dementia when the study began.

Over more than nine years, the team tracked the participants' daily steps and used brain scans to measure amyloid-beta and tau, two key proteins linked to Alzheimer's disease. High levels of these proteins can signal the earliest stages of the disease, long before memory problems appear.

Participants also completed yearly cognitive tests to monitor any changes in thinking or memory.

The scientists focused primarily on those who already had elevated amyloid levels, as that group faces a higher risk of developing Alzheimer's.



A new study finds that even small amounts of walking could slow down the brain changes that lead to Alzheimer's. (iStock)

People at higher risk who walked only 3,000 to 5,000 steps per day, or roughly one and a half to two miles, experienced a delay in cognitive decline of about three years compared to less active participants, a press release stated.

Those who averaged between 5,000 and 7,500 steps daily saw an even greater benefit, with cognitive decline delayed by about seven years.

The study, which was funded in part by the National Institutes of Health, was published in the journal Nature Medicine.

The researchers also found that more steps were linked to slower buildup of tau protein in the brain, suggesting that physical activity may directly influence one of the disease's most damaging processes.

People who had low amyloid levels to begin with didn't show much difference in cognitive outcomes based on how much they walked — the most dramatic effects were seen in those who were already experiencing early Alzheimer's-related changes.

Researchers found that walking between 3,000 and 7,500 steps a day may significantly delay cognitive decline. (iStock)

In contrast to the oft-cited 10,000-steps-a-day goal, the benefits in this study seemed to plateau at around 7,500 steps.

For older adults, simply going from very low activity to a few thousand steps daily appears to make a significant difference over time.

"This sheds light on why some people who appear to be on an Alzheimer's disease trajectory don't decline as quickly as others," said senior author Jasmeer Chhatwal, M.D., Ph.D., of the Mass General Brigham Department of Neurology, in the release.

"Lifestyle factors appear to impact the earliest stages of Alzheimer's disease, suggesting that lifestyle changes may slow the emergence of cognitive symptoms if we act early."

Because this study is observational, it only found strong associations but can't prove that walking directly caused the slower decline, according to the researchers.

People who walk more might also have other healthy habits, such as a better diet or social engagement, that contribute to the outcome.

The participants were also made up of mostly healthy, educated volunteers willing to undergo brain scans, so the results might not apply to everyone.

Walking may support brain health, but researchers caution that other factors like diet, fitness and social connection could also play a role. (iStock)

Courtney Kloske, Ph.D., director of scientific engagement at the Alzheimer's Association in Chicago, told Fox News Digital that this was a "very well-conducted study with intriguing results."

Kloske, who was not involved in the study, noted that in her recent research, modest amounts of exercise were just one component of a larger array of lifestyle factors that appeared to result in significant cognitive benefits.

"We don't yet know how much each of the individual components [such as healthy nutrition, physical exercise, cognitive and social engagement] may have specifically contributed," she added.

"Even small increases in daily activities can build over time to create sustained changes in habit and health."

For older adults, the National Institute on Aging recommends a few tips for safely implementing a walking regimen.

- Plan ahead and stay connected. Let someone know where you're going and when you'll return.
- Carry identification, emergency contact info and a charged phone, especially when exercising alone.
- Wear sturdy shoes with good traction and dress in layers that you can remove as you warm up.
- Keep music low, choose well-lit areas, and wear bright or reflective clothing.
- Walk on sidewalks or paths, facing oncoming traffic. Cross at crosswalks and never assume that drivers see you.

"We want to empower people to protect their brain and cognitive health by keeping physically active," said first-author Wai-Ying Wendy Yau, M.D., a cognitive neurologist in the Mass General Brigham Department of Neurology, in the release.

"Every step counts — and even small increases in daily activities can build over time to create sustained changes in habit and health."

Khloe Quill is a lifestyle production assistant with Fox News Digital. She and the lifestyle team cover a range of story topics including food and drink, travel, and health.