



Fact Sheet

Why are the priority goals of Health by Design important?

Increase Walking, Biking, and Other Public Transit Options

- Recent Studies have found that people with access to sidewalks are more likely to walk and meet the Surgeon General's recommendations for physical activity.^{1,2}
- People who report having access to walking/jogging trails are 55% more likely to be physically active.³
- Lack of adequate transportation resources was the single greatest reason children did not have timely pediatric care.⁴

Reduce Automobile Dependency

- Over 51% of the American population lives in an area where air quality does not meet standards – toxics emitted from cars cause 1,500 cases of cancer in the United States per year.^{5,6}
- The cost of health care due to motor vehicle pollution is estimated to be between \$29 and \$530 billion per year.⁷
- Vehicle accidents cost the country \$200 billion per year due to cost of care, and lost income and productivity – exposure to roadway accidents and injury is linked directly to continued increases in vehicle-miles traveled.^{8,9}
- Urban residents living at 12 units per acre generate approximately 1/3 less emissions than residents living at 3 units per acre, due to automobile travel needed for lower density.¹⁰

Encourage Land Use Decision-Making that Promotes Public Health

- A high level of mixed land use in a neighborhood predicts more walking: when different types of destinations are nearby, shopping and work for example, people are more likely to walk.¹¹
- Communities with accessible walking and biking paths promote daily physical activity, which brings better health; the risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke and all-cause mortality is greatly increased by a sedentary lifestyle.^{12, 13, 14}
- Better neighborhood planning makes a difference for public health – walkable neighborhoods are characterized by high density, high land use mix, high connectivity, good walking infrastructure, pleasing aesthetics and safety.¹⁵
- People in highly walkable neighborhoods report four to five times more walking for utilitarian purposes than those in low walkable neighborhoods.¹⁶

Increase Neighborhood, City, and Regional Connectivity

- On a neighborhood and even city scale, connectivity is a key factor of walkability and bikability. Increased walkability and bikability have a positive impact on public health through increased ability to include physical activity in everyday activities, such as traveling to work or school.^{17, 18}
- The connectivity of transportation options – walking, biking, bus, and rail – on the city and regional scale is important and can decrease commute time and air pollution. Reducing commute time and air pollution will have a positive effect on health.¹⁹

Citations

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