

STRATEGY

Urban Design/Policy and Zoning to Facilitate Physical Activity



OVERVIEW

Both community-wide and neighborhood-specific urban planning and policy development interventions are effective in increasing physical activity. Urban policy and zoning strategies for increasing physical activity include both community-scale urban planning and policy approaches and street-scale urban design that change the environment to make physical activity easier. Examples of community-scale urban planning and policy development strategies include zoning regulations, building codes, permitting policies, land use regulations, and growth and development standards. Street-scale urban planning and policy development strategies generally focus on particular neighborhoods. Common components of street-scale urban design include traffic control measures, noise reduction, crime prevention, litter reduction, safety enforcement (e.g., improved lighting or street crossing signals), and sidewalk continuity.

Supported by:

- CDC's [Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the U.S.](#) (COCOMO)
- IOM's [Local Government Actions to Prevent Childhood Obesity](#)
- Convergence Partnership's [Promising Strategies for Creating Healthy Eating & Active Living](#)
- [The Community Guide](#) by the Community Prevention Services Task Force

Setting:

Community

EXAMPLES



A **street-scale** urban planning intervention identified poorly lit areas and improved street lighting accordingly.



A **community-scale** urban policy intervention demonstrated that traditional neighborhoods (e.g., grid street design, office sites within walking distance of residential areas, shorter building setbacks, and porches with seating) lead to increased physical activity.

TRT REVIEWED INTERVENTIONS

- [Trailnet: Healthy, Active, Vibrant Communities](#)
- [Hawai'i Complete Streets](#) for communities
- [Nashville MPO Active Transportation Funding Strategy](#) for communities

RESOURCES AND TOOLS



COMMUNITY

- [Community Design: A Toolkit for Building Physical Activity into Daily Life](#) (Metropolitan Design Center)
This toolkit is designed to help communities promote physical activity and addresses the importance of environment, application tools and resources, and community design elements (e.g., density, street pattern, mixed-use, and pedestrian infrastructure).
- [Active Living by Design Resources](#) (North Carolina Institute for Public Health)
This database of Active Living resources is searchable by resource type (e.g. fact sheets, toolkits, etc.), topic (e.g. bicycle, pedestrian, etc.), or the 5 P's (preparation, programs, policy, promotion, and physical projects). The resources help communities work towards access to Active Living, which is a way of life that integrates physical activity into daily routines.
- [Leadership for Healthy Communities Resources](#) (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation)
This resource compiles a wide variety of resources, including fact sheets, issue briefs, reports, presentations and other materials. These publications and materials are designed to underscore promising policies and programs dedicated to promoting healthy eating, active living and childhood obesity prevention. This Leadership for Healthy Communities organization also publishes regular newsletters that highlight leaders, promising policy approaches, and relevant research.
- [Complete the Streets Resources](#) (National Complete Streets Coalition)
This site has a variety of materials addressing many aspects of multi-use streets. The resources that help spread the word about complete streets policies include brochures, reports, presentations, fact sheets and design guidance.
- [Talking Points: Community Design for Healthy Living](#) (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)
These talking points highlight why state legislators should be concerned about the impact of community design on residents' mental and physical health.
- [Land Use Planning for Public Health](#) (National Association of Local Boards of Health)
This guide assists members of local boards of health and other public health professionals to understand their important role in protecting local environmental health and improving the health of their communities through land use planning.
- [Smart Talk for Growing Communities](#) (Congressional Exchange)
This series of five lessons addresses the "growing pains" of rapidly growing or sprawling communities. The toolkit helps community members move from an understanding of the issues to effective action with government leaders.

REFERENCES

- Committee on Childhood Obesity Prevention Actions for Local Governments, Food and Nutrition Board, Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice, Transportation Research Board, & Institute of Medicine (IOM). (2009). Local Government Actions to Prevent Childhood Obesity. Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press. Retrieved April 24, 2012, from http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12674.
- Khan, L., Sobush, K., Keener, D., Goodman, K., Lowry, A., Kakietek, J., & Zaro, S. (2009). Recommended Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the United States (COCOMO) Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) Recommendations and Reports (pp. 26). Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved April 24, 2012, from <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5807a1.htm>.
- Prevention Institute. (2008). Promising Strategies for Creating Healthy Eating and Active Living Environments (pp. 16). Retrieved April 24, 2012, from <http://www.convergencepartnership.org>.
- The Community Preventive Services Task Force. (29 March 2012). The Guide to Community Preventive Services (The Community Guide) Retrieved April 24, 2012, from <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/index.html>.