



Creating Healthier Communities

Activity-Friendly Routes to Everyday Destinations

What are activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations?

Activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations are connections that let people safely and easily walk, bike, or move actively using an assistive device to reach key locations, such as homes, workplaces, parks, grocery stores, schools, and other community amenities. Activity-friendly routes look different in every community, but can include sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks, or access to transit stops.

Learn more about activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/activepeoplehealthynation/index.html>

Activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations have a critical role to play in addressing the dual and inequitable crises of traffic death and chronic disease.

First, activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations provide safer, more accessible connections to walk, bike, and move actively using assistive devices. This corrects traditional street design approaches that prioritize high speeds for drivers over safety for all people who use the street, which creates a crisis of pedestrian deaths. This crisis disproportionately impacts Black and Native American people due to centuries of inequities that have undermined their health, including discrimination, lack of healthcare access, substandard housing, wage gaps, and underinvestment in safe streets and other community resources.¹

Second, activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations create opportunities for physical activity to be a part of peoples' daily routines in the form of transportation. Daily physical activity is essential to prevent many leading causes of death including heart disease, diabetes, and stroke—chronic diseases that are most prevalent among Black and Indigenous communities due to the same inequities described above.² To alleviate rather than perpetuate these disparities, investments in activity-friendly routes must prioritize the well-being of Black communities, tribal communities, and traditionally underserved neighborhoods by creating connections between the places where these groups live, work, socialize, and recreate.

Physical inactivity & health



Only **1 in 4** adults in the United States meet physical activity recommendations.³



Similarly, only **1 in 5** high school students meet physical activity guidelines.³



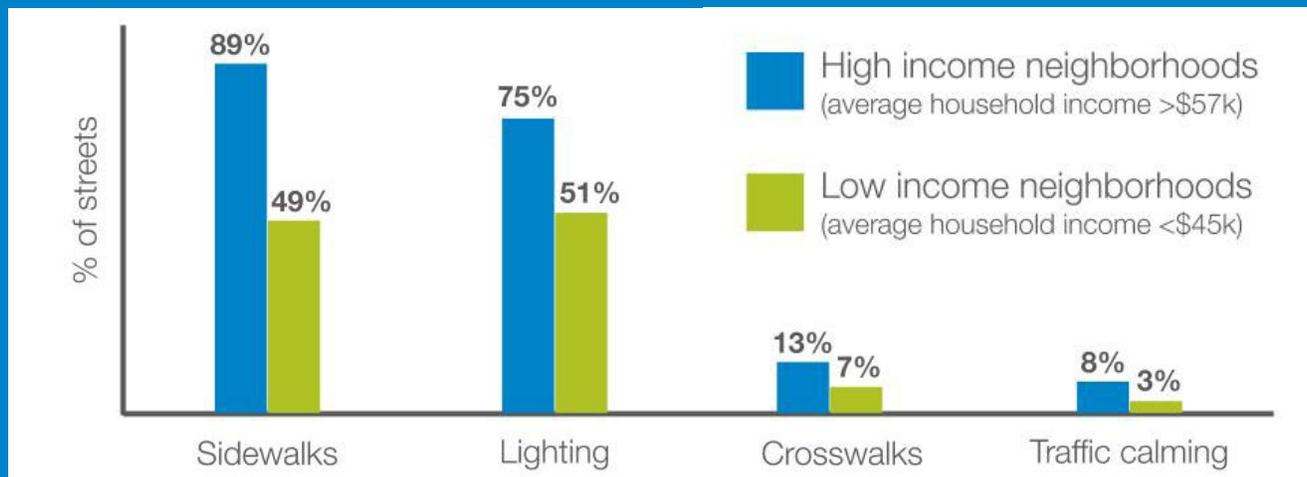
Insufficient physical activity is responsible for **1 in 10** premature deaths and \$117 Billion in annual healthcare costs.³



Of children who live within one mile of school, only **4 in 10** walk to school, partly due to the lack of safe, activity-friendly routes to school.³⁻⁴

Safety disparities by income

Unsafe streets are a major barrier to walking, biking, and other physically active modes of transportation. Low-income neighborhoods typically have fewer sidewalks, crosswalks, and other safety features compared to high-income neighborhoods.⁶ Due to this systemic underinvestment, people walking in low-income communities are more likely to be struck and killed by drivers compared to people walking in high-income neighborhoods.¹



The most effective strategy to support physical activity is through a combination of transportation and land use changes. People who live in neighborhoods that provide safe, separated places to walk, bike, or move actively are more likely to meet physical activity recommendations.⁵ Similarly, people who live in compact neighborhoods where destinations are close together are more likely to get sufficient physical activity compared to people who live in neighborhoods where destinations can only be reached by car.⁵

Activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations can help to overcome health disparities—rather than perpetuate or exacerbate them—by prioritizing culturally relevant investment in communities of color, low-income communities, and communities who rely on walking, biking, moving actively using assistive devices, and riding public transit to get around.

CALL TO ACTION

Adopt Complete Streets policies that create healthier, activity-friendly communities and that prioritize connections between historically underserved neighborhoods and jobs, grocery stores, parks, and other amenities. Adopt inclusive community engagement practices, to ensure decisions about where and how to implement activity-friendly routes are made in partnership with residents from historically underinvested and underrepresented communities.

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2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019) National Vital Statistics Report Vol. 68, No. 9. Available from: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr68/nvsr68_09-508.pdf.

3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020) Why Should People be Active? Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/activepeoplehealthynation/why-should-people-be-active.html>.

4. Lynott J (2018) Universal Mobility as a Service: A Bold Vision for Harnessing the Opportunity of Disruption. AARP. Available from: <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2018/08/universal-mobility-as-a-service-aarp-ppi.pdf>.

5. Community Preventive Services Task Force (2016) Physical Activity: Built Environment Approaches Combining Transportation System Interventions with Land Use and Environmental Design. Available from: <https://www.thecommunityguide.org/sites/default/files/assets/PA-Built-Environments.pdf>.

6. Gibbs K et al. (2012) Income Disparities in Street Features that Encourage Walking – A BTG Research Brief. Chicago, IL: Bridging the Gap Program, University of Illinois at Chicago.