Five Things Not to Do to Increase Physical Activity

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Five things . . .

• Don’t tell people to exercise.
• Stop doing health fairs.
• Never beg for physical activity infrastructure.
• Don’t create a big coalition w/ monthly meetings.
• Do not be happy unless you’ve put stuff on the ground and changed the rules.
#1 Don’t just promote exercise.

How we often depict PA . . .

Anchorage AK

Kingsport TN
National Physical Activity Plan

humankinetics.com
The Stickiness Problem
Effect of Short Bouts, Home Treadmills
(Jakicic et al., J. Amer. Med. Assoc., 282, 16)
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Effect of Short Bouts, Home Treadmills
(Jakicic et.al., J. Amer. Med. Assoc., 282, 16)
Energy Expenditure
Structured vs. Lifestyle Activity
(Dunn et.al., JAMA 281, 4)
Self-help vs. Commercial Weight Loss Programs

(Heshka et.al., JAMA 289, 14; April 9, 2003)
The point:
Simply teaching, promoting, cajoling, urging, & bribing people to “exercise” is not enough. The focus must be on increases in routine, daily physical activity for everyone.
The story in just three numbers:

30 minutes of daily physical activity recommended (60 min. for youth).
(www.health.gov/paguidelines)

< 20% of Americans actually meet these recommendations (thru LTPA).

365,000 estimated annual deaths in America due to physical inactivity & poor nutrition. (2nd only to tobacco.)
(Mokdad et.al., JAMA. 2005 Jan 19;293(3):298)

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Social Ecology Model


Determinants of behavior change

- **Public Policy** - laws, ordinances, permitting practices & procedures
- **Community** - networks, facilities
- **Institutional** - school, work, health care & service providers
- **Interpersonal** - family, friends, colleagues
- **Individual** - motivation, skills
#2 No more health fairs.

- Only reaches those who choose to show up!
- Doesn’t necessarily change behavior.
- Doesn’t change the context.
Can our day-to-day environment be made sticky?

1. Varied destinations within walk, bike, & transit distance.
2. Network of sidewalks, trails, bike lanes, transit.
3. Functional inviting designs for pedestrians, bicyclists, & transit users.
4. Safe & accessible for all ages, incomes, abilities

www.activelivingresearch.org
Four Elements of Healthy Design:

- Functional site design
- Safety & access for all
- Ped, bike, & transit network
- Mix of destinations

www.activelivingresearch.org

www.markfenton.com
The US Surgeon General concurs:

1. Promote more walking.
2. Build a more walkable world.

www.surgeongeneral.gov/StepItUp
Low cost options & demonstration projects. E.g. Inexpensive, reversible curb extensions.

St. Louis

Billings

Queens NY
Walkyourcity.org

Street furnishings, wayfinding, parklets.

Montpelier

www.markfenton.com
Anaconda, MT “pop-up” curb extension.

But can the biggest truck make the turn? Try it!!
Better Block demonstration
Youngstown OH
betterblock.org
Diagonal parking increases on-street capacity, but . . .

Reverse angle:
- Less severe & costly collisions.
- Safer for bikes.
- Pedestrians out of the road.

Akron OH

www.markfenton.com
Hutchinson, KS reverse angle parking “tryout”
Trial - Villa Rica, GA
#3 No begging for infrastructure.
Bicycle network elements:

- Sharrow
- Bike lane
- American River Trail, Sacramento
- Protected bike lane
Selling it: Make the economic case.

*Walking the Walk: How Walkability Raises Housing Values in U.S. Cities* (CEOs for Cities)*

Higher score = $4,000-$34,000 home value

walkscore = 12

walkscore = 67

*www.ceosforcities.org/work/walkingthewalk

www.walkscore.com
The Next Generation of Home Buyers:

- Taste for in-town living.
- Appetite for public transportation.
- Strong green streak.
- Plus, Americans are driving less overall!
Walkability.
Why we care & why you should too!

National Association of Home Builders, Mar. 2014

• Consumer desire
• Flexibility in design
• Lower development costs . . .

www.markfenton.com
Homes abutting trails sell in 1/3 to 1/2 the time, and at a larger % of asking price, than non-abutters.

Counter the NIMBYs & CAVEs.

Trails & Greenways: Advancing the Smart Growth Agenda
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

www.markfenton.com
Smart Growth & Economic Success

www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/economic_success.htm

Environmental & economic sustainability
www.epa.gov/smartgrowth

- Support, protect the rural landscape
  - Economic development
  - Protecting agriculture
- Help existing places, downtowns thrive.
- Create great new places
  - Designate growth areas
  - Constrain road costs
Benefits of protected bike facilities

BikeWalkAlliance.org
GreenLaneProject.org

• Healthier, more productive workers.
• Support real estate values.
• Increased retail revenue.
• Recruiting & retaining skilled employees.
#4 Don’t just create a giant coalition w/ monthly meetings.

- Schools & education
- Planning & Zoning
- Engineering, DPW
- Parks & recreation
- Historical Society
- Public Health & Safety
- Chamber of Commerce
- Economic Development, employers
- Neighborhood Assoc., church & service groups
- Environment, Conservation . . .
Not so organized chart:
Build a “stealth” team:

- Vision
- Jobs
- Reach
- Planning
- Parks
- Elected
- DPW
- Health
- Agriculture
- Development
- Developers
- Schools
- YMCA
- Transport
- Elected
- Neighborhoods
- Rec.
- Trails
- Bike/Ped
- Advocate
- Enviro.
- Employers
- Hospitals
- Insurer
- NAR
- NAHB
- Vision
- Jobs
- Reach
- PTOs
- Service Orgs.
- Churches
- Found.
Focused action teams:

- Small, strong, well-connected leadership team.
- Tight, focused action teams on specific topics.
- No monthly meetings, just functionally targeted work.
#5 Don’t bother unless you’re working to change infrastructure & policies!

(Fenton, Community Design & Policies for Free Range Children, *Childhood Obesity* 8(1), Feb 2012)

1. Healthy planning & zoning.
2. Complete Streets.
3. Transportation trail networks.
5. Comprehensive Safe Routes to School.
5a Best practices in zoning.

• Narrow streets, sidewalks both sides, required links to trail system (existing & planned).
• Compact design, shared open space.
• Mix housing types, sizes (& incomes).
Steer residential & retail development back into cities and towns.

E.g. Naperville, IL

Greenfield IN
Policy – Multi-modal Transportation Analysis vs. Traffic Impact Analysis (MMTA vs TIA)

- Typical: Turn lanes, signal . . .
- Sidewalk link? Benches? Bike lane, sharrows?
- Transit shelter, pathway?
5b Policy:
Complete Streets

1. Pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, & drivers of all ages & abilities considered whenever we touch a corridor.
2. Limited, specific exemptions.
3. Update design guidelines

www.completestreets.org
Update guidelines, design requirements.

• Don’t reinvent the wheel! Nat’l Association of City Transportation Officials have compiled the evidence base and best practices.
Complete Streets for a complete network

- 5 or 4 lanes reduced to 3, “road diets.”
- Reduces collisions & severity.
- Improves performance for pedestrians, bikes.

Urbana, IL; before & after.
Hutchinson, KS.

E. Avenue A; other four-lane roads.
E. Avenue A, Hutchinson, KS – they did it!

www.markfenton.com
5c A comprehensive network of transportation trails.

- **Connect** to other parts of network (sidewalks, bike lanes, transit).
- **Focus on destinations** (schools, shopping, parks, senior housing)
- **Plan for & fund maintenance**!
Eisenbahn State Trail, West Bend, WI

Decorah Elem.
E.g. Nashville, TN Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

- Scoring for Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) includes impacts to pedestrian, bicycle, & transit travel, not just motor vehicle Level of Service (LOS).
  - 60% depends on active modes!
  - Result: auto-only projects don’t get funded.
Go do tomorrow . . .

• Form a truly mixed stealth team.
• Organize some pop-up, demonstration, & pilot projects.

Big goals:
• Adopt routine MMTA (instead of TIA)
• Adopt Complete Streets & NACTO.
• Change your MPO’s project scoring.
• Update zoning for compact, healthy growth.
Resources for demonstration, pilot projects

Effective, . . . but generally inexpensive, simple, & reversible.

americawalks.org

Every Body WALK!
everybodywalk.org

Getting Started
EveryBody Walk Practice Briefs

Summary

Many communities aspire to make themselves more walkable and livable, embracing the idea that it can improve health, the environment, even the economy. But often public officials feel they lack the technical knowledge or the finances to actually make desired improvements, such as building sidewalks or features to slow traffic. In some cases there are specific concerns about whether a measure will work or lead to unintended consequences. For example, bumping out or extending the sidewalks at an intersection—called a curb extension—certainly makes pedestrians more visible and shortens the crossing distance. But will it also impede traffic or be a problem for snow plowing?

This brief describes a number of pilot or gateway projects that are ideal "starter” activities because they do three things.

- They demonstrate that even modest changes can make the environment more safe and inviting for walking.
- They show that many measures are not technically complex, and good technical support is readily available when needed (see Additional Resources).
- Many measures can be undertaken for very modest cost, and are even reversible, so that they can be tested and adjusted without a huge investment.

The Goal

Building miles of sidewalks or non-motorized trail or installing measures to slow traffic in neighborhoods and downtowns can seem a daunting proposition, especially to smaller communities or those lacking large public works budgets. Yet there is low hanging fruit — starter projects that help communities test the ideas of walkability, while learning how to work through the process and engage partners.

The good news is that we have a very good idea of what it takes to make a community more walkable. Research has examined cities, towns, and neighborhoods where people tend to walk more, and it appears four key elements characterize more walkable settings:

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Companion pieces . . .

• Institutional shift.
• Getting the community on board.
• Resources.

Policy change, routine accommodation, paying for the infrastructure.

Every Body WALK!
everybodywalk.org

Making Walking Routine: Building Walkability Through Policies and Market Forces

Summary
To build a walkable community, it’s not enough to simply make spot improvements where walking is currently dangerous or unappealing. A truly walkable community has a variety of destinations close together and a comprehensive network of facilities that invites safe, accessible walking everywhere, all the time, by people of all ages and abilities. And although small first steps can be a great start, comprehensive networks are most likely to occur when “walkability” is an express priority and institutionalized into the routine policies and decisions a community makes. It should even be woven into the economic forces that guide both development and behavior. This brief summarizes some of the most promising ways to “normalize” walking and walkability. It suggests three broad approaches:

• Make walking a priority. Change transportation and land use professions, performance measures, and funding to assure that planning, design, and implementation give pedestrians the priority.
• Plan and zone for walkability. Comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, and permitting practices must institutionalize walkability at every step of the development and redevelopment process.
• Engage the marketplace. The growing field of Transportation Demand Management and rising demand for walkable places can harness market forces to shift behavior toward walking and help pay for walkable infrastructure.

Shift Priorities
Perhaps you’ve gotten some crosswalks improved, slowed a neighborhood’s traffic with a mini-circle, or had some benches installed in your downtown. But you realize that winning one improvement at a time isn’t enough. How do you move from getting just one subdivision to include sidewalks and a trail connection, to making that the norm in all development work? This takes a systematic embrace of walkability, and every transportation and land use decision in the community must work toward creating great places to walk—not just to drive. Here are three ways to make that a reality.

Begin to Change the Job Description
Engineers and planners have the challenging task of designing a transportation system that is safe and functional for very different users, from pedestrians and bicyclists, to cars and trucks, to buses, trolleys, and rail. Over recent decades the focus of transportation departments has been on building roads to move cars quickly and safely, in part because that’s what many communities and leaders have asked for. So if we now want more walkable places, we must make it a priority. A simple first step would be to make all transportation planners’ and engineers’ job descriptions clarify that their job is the creation of a balanced, safe, and efficient system for all users, from people on foot to those driving cars. For example, the following types of language could be used in describing positions in planning, transportation, public works, even economic and community development.

Walk audits, inventory, events & short-term trials, Complete Streets resolution.

Getting Started
Getting The Community on Board

Some members of your community will immediately embrace the idea of creating a more walkable environment. But others may have never given it a thought, and won’t even know what it really means, let alone why it’s a good thing or how to get there. Here are four things a community can do to build understanding, interest, and support for walkability initiatives.

Host Some Walk Audits

A walk audit is simply a facilitated walk of an area designed to get folks thinking about and experiencing how the environment works for all users, not just cars, and discussing how to make it better.

One goal of a walk audit can be to identify locations for some of the pilot improvements described in this brief.

For more, go to:
www.markfenton.com/resources/
TipsLeadingWalkAuditFenton.pdf

For a video on leading walk audits, see:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-Xnltq90c

Elements of Successful Walk Audits

• Walk a route where there is or could be pedestrian demand — say, from a neighborhood to a school or park; in a retail district; near senior housing.
• Recruit facilitators with expertise in planning and design, transportation, or public health; it’s best to have a team with different backgrounds leading the walk jointly.
• Invite public officials, city staff, local residents, people of all ages and physical abilities to take part.
• During the walk, have people score the “walkability” on a 1 to 10 scale in their minds, and stop occasionally to discuss their scores and what would make it better. No blaming, just open, honest discussion.
• Follow the walk with a planning session over maps of the area so people can note their recommended improvements (“repair sidewalk,” “paint crosswalk”) while fresh in their minds.

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Summary:

• Sell leaders on the environmental, economic, & public health benefits.
• Start w/ demonstrations & pilots.
• Operate on 3 levels: land use, active network, site design/place making.
• Change the rules: policies, procedures, & market incentives.
Olshansky et.al., “A Potential Decline in Life Expectancy . . .”

*New Eng. J. of Med.*, March 17, 2005
Go do tomorrow . . .

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