

Environmental Strategies to Promote Physical Activity

Quick Start Resource

This resource is intended to provide key references, tools, and components for the planning, implementation, evaluation, and maintenance of environmental interventions to promote physical activity. Nonfederal Web site addresses are provided for informational purposes only, and this listing does not imply CDC endorsement of these programs.

Where can I find evidence on the link between physical activity and the environment?

- **Does the Built Environment Influence Physical Activity? Examining the Evidence.**
http://gulliver.trb.org/news/blurbs_detail.asp?id=4536
Transportation Research Board's Special Report 282, published March-April 2005 reviews the broad trends affecting the relationships among physical activity, health, transportation, and land use and magnitude of any causal connections; examines implications for policy; and recommends priorities for future research.
- **Designing for Active Recreation**
<http://www.activelivingresearch.org/alr/files/recreationrevised021105.pdf>
*Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Active Living Research Brief, February 2005.
This fact sheet summarizes the current state of scientific research into what constitutes an "activity-friendly" environment for recreation.*
- **Physical Activity and the Built Environment**
<http://www.fitness.gov/digests/December2006Digest.pdf>
*President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, December 2006.
This Research Digest discusses research in the field of physical activity and the built environment.*

What resources are available for planning & implementing environmental interventions?

- **National Trails Training Partnership:** www.americantrails.org/resources/index.html
This organization provides news, research, training, and policy resources on all aspects of trails including: trail building, planning, management, advocacy, and impacts. National trail directory and trail contact organizations are provided by state.
- **Robert Wood Johnson Active Living By Design:** <http://www.activelivingbydesign.org/>
This program provides research and case studies of innovative approaches to increase physical activity through community design, public policies and communications strategies.
- **National Center for Bicycling & Walking: Increasing Physical Activity Through Community Design, A Guide for Public Health Practitioners, May 2002.**
http://www.bikewalk.org/pdfs/IPA_full.pdf
This publication provides guidance on how to help create places for walking and bicycling including the improving existing conditions, developing a strategy, funding, advocacy organizations, and resources for different types of projects.
- **Pedestrian and Bicycling Information Center:** <http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/> *Information is provided on health and safety, engineering, advocacy, education, enforcement, access, and mobility*
- **North Carolina's Active Community Environments (ACEs) Page:**
http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/programs_tools/community/aces.html
This site provides policy guidance and community planning and assessment tools.

Where can I find survey tools and data for environmental interventions?

- **Surface Transportation Policy Project- State-specific statistics:**
<http://www.transact.org/states/default.asp>
STPP analyzes federal transportation data. Fact sheets and state-specific data are available.
- **Pedestrian and Bicycle Data Collection in United States Communities Quantifying Use, Surveying Users, and Documenting Facility Extent: (01/05)**
http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/pdf/casestudies/PBIC_Data_Collection_Case_Studies.pdf
Information is provided from this study, including data collection, results, and case studies.



- **Environmental Supports for Physical Activity Questionnaire:**
<http://prevention.sph.sc.edu/tools/environmental.htm>
The goal of the project was to develop and test questions for a future Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) module to assess individual perceptions of physical activity supports in the social and physical environment.
- **The Path Environment Audit Tool (PEAT)**
<http://www.activelivingresearch.org/node/10652>
This tool is available for download and use to determine how physical characteristics of trails may influence use, reliable and valid audit tools are needed. Also see Journal of Physical Activity and Health 2006, 3, Suppl 1, S158-S175. article: Development and Reliability and Validity Testing of an Audit Tool for Trail/Path Characteristics: The Path Environment Audit Tool (PEAT).
- **Active Community Environments-Community Assessment Tool:**
<http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/NutritionPA/Documents/ACEs-Checklist-09-07-final.doc>
Department of Health, Washington State Nutrition and Physical Activity Program developed this checklist as a tool for communities to do a self-assessment of strengths and weaknesses in supporting physically active lifestyles.

How are others implementing environmental changes?

- **Models for Change: Lessons for Creating Active Living Communities**
http://www.activelivingresearch.org/files/ALR%20Planning%20Magazine_Case%20Studies_0.pdf
These case studies prepared under the Active Living Research program provide case studies of eleven communities creating policy change for more active communities. Each case study covers the community's story, the lessons learned and the steps for replication if adopted at another site.
- **Active Living by Design-Community Partnership Profiles:**
<http://www.activelivingbydesign.org/index.php?id=6#CPPages>
This site provides case studies of 25 funded Active Living by Design community partnerships that are developing and demonstrating promising practices to increase active living and healthy eating, profiles highlight their stories and accomplishments to date.
- **Fix it First:**
<http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0408FIXINGFIRST.pdf>
This National Governor's Association initiative provides state examples and links to policy and program efforts under this concept.
- **Pedestrian & Bicycle Information Center's Sample Pedestrian Plans :**
<http://www.walkinginfo.org/develop/sample-plans.cfm>
This list of exemplary pedestrian plans was compiled to provide easy access to numerous models of pedestrian planning.
- **From the Field: Four Communities Implement Active Aging Programs**
http://www.prevent.org/images/stories/Files/publications/CCFAA_case_studies.pdf
This Partnership for Prevention publication provides examples of community programs and guidance on how communities can evaluate these efforts.

Where can I find help with assessing and evaluating the environmental initiatives?

- **Active Community Environments Virtual Backpack**
http://www.doh.wa.gov/CFH/NutritionPA/our_communities/active_community_environments/toolkit/default.htm
This toolkit from the Washington State Department of Health Nutrition and Physical Activity Program is designed to provide local coordinators with the steps needed to create successful Active Community Environments. It provides basic information, resources, planning and assessment tools.

- **Healthy Communities Projects Toolkit**
http://www.doh.wa.gov/CFH/NutritionPA/our_communities/healthy_communities_projects_toolkit/default.htm
This toolkit from the Washington State Department of Health Nutrition and Physical Activity Program provides lessons learned, community assessments, action planning, and evaluating community interventions for increasing activity. Also see Preventing Chronic Disease article: "A Framework for Developing Evaluation Tools Used in Washington State's Healthy Communities Projects":
http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2006/apr/05_0097.htm
- **Denver's Thriving Communities Planning and Evaluation document**
http://xnet.kp.org/communitybenefit/chi/tools/docs/heal_regional/TCPlanningEvaluation%20.doc
This guidance takes intervention planning through the RE-AIM (Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation and Maintenance) process.

How do I maintain an active living culture in the community?

Promotion:

- **Promoting Active Living Communities:**
http://www.activelivingbydesign.org/fileadmin/template/documents/rwjf_toolkit.pdf
This publication provides a step-by-step approach to planning, marketing and communicating active living at the community level using tools, resources, and examples of other communication programs.

Coalitions:

- **Developing Effective Coalitions- An Eight Step Guide:**
http://xnet.kp.org/communitybenefit/chi/tools/docs/other_resources/EffectiveCoalitions.pdf
This publication from Prevention Institute provides general guidance to establish a structure to the process of coalition-building when applied to a variety of health-related issues.
- **Local Physical Activity and Nutrition (LPAN) Coalition Manual, Guide for Community Action**
http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/programs_tools/community/docs/lpans/070317_lpan_manual.pdf
This manual from North Carolina's LPAN program involves initiating and/or coordinating local programs and interventions for community members to become physically active and practice healthier nutritional habits.

Policy/Leadership:

- **Getting to Smart Growth:** <http://www.smartgrowth.org/pdf/gettosg.pdf>
The policies and guidelines presented in this primer have proven successful in communities across the United States, and range from formal legislative or regulatory efforts to informal approaches, plans, and programs.
- **Healthy Community Design, Success Stories from State and Local Leaders**
http://www.activeliving.org/files/HealthyCommunityDesign_ALL.pdf
This Active Living Leadership report provides efforts of elected and appointed government leaders who are supporting healthy community design across the nation.
- **Working with Elected Officials to Promote Healthy Land Use Planning & Community Design.**
<http://www.planning.org/research/pdf/healthycommfactsheet2.pdf>
This fact sheet from the National Association of County & City Health Officials provides guidance on partners, strategies and roles when working with elected officials.
- **CDC's Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Legislative Database:**
<http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/DNPALeg>
Search legislation on nutrition and physical activity from 2001 to present.
- **CDC's Physical Activity Policy Research Network:** <http://prc.slu.edu/paprn.htm>
This network conducts research on physical activity policies, determinants of the policies, process of implementing policies and determining the outcomes of physical activity policies.



Other organizations who may partner for environmental change for physical activity:

National organizations:

- Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center- <http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/>
- International City/County Management Association- www.icma.org
- Local Government Commission- <http://www.lgc.org/>
- Congress for New Urbanism- <http://www.cnu.org/>
- National Association for County & City Health Officials:
http://www.naccho.org/topics/hpdp/land_use_planning/LUP_Toolbox.cfm
- American Planning Association- <http://www.planning.org/>

State organizations:

- Governor's Bike Council or Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Board
- Dept of Transportation (bike and pedestrian project coordinator)
- Legislator Subcommittee Staff (study groups or assist health chair)