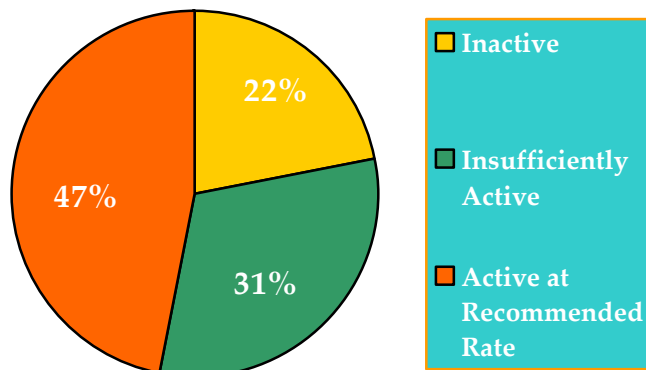


# Communities Supporting Active Living

## Design Your Community to Support Biking and Walking

The design of a community can profoundly affect the health of its residents. Communities that make it easy and safe to walk and ride bikes are opening the door to a wide range of health benefits for their residents. They are reducing barriers to being physically active and helping individuals integrate physical activity into their daily lives. For health, the goal is at least 30 minutes a day of physical activity on five or more days a week. People are more likely to build 30 minutes of physical activity into daily routines when it is easy to walk and bike for transportation, exercise, or pleasure.

### Leisure-Time Physical Activity, Michigan Adults 2003



Source: MI BRFS 2003

**Over half of Michigan adults do not get enough exercise to experience health benefits.**

#### Communities can take action by:

- ✓ Developing a Community Health Coalition or using an existing community group with representation from local government, schools, businesses, places of worship, and health departments.
- ✓ Completing the Promoting Active Communities Assessment to assist with developing a plan to increase the walkable and bikeable supports in the community ([www.mihealthtools.org](http://www.mihealthtools.org)).
- ✓ Completing a walkable audit or bikeable audit in specific areas of the community.
- ✓ Connecting the community with sidewalks and trails.
- ✓ Supporting and adding bike lanes and signage to transportation routes.
- ✓ Working with law enforcement to enforce traffic laws.
- ✓ Partnering with media to support changes and promote physical activity.

### Walkable & Bikeable Communities: Fast Facts

- 🚲 Recent national polls found that 55% of Americans would like to walk more instead of driving; 52% would like to bicycle more.
- 🚲 A 1999 study by the Urban Land Institute of four new pedestrian-friendly communities determined that homebuyers were willing to pay a \$20,000 premium for homes in walkable communities. Design features included systems of interconnected, narrow streets, sidewalks, a mix of residential, retail and office land uses, and features such as street trees, short front yard set-backs, front porches and rear garages.<sup>1</sup>
- 🚲 People who report having access to sidewalks are 28% more likely to be physically active.<sup>2</sup>
- 🚲 Walking trips increase with good connectivity of the street network, a greater number of intersections and blocks, and streets with low speeds that are narrow and visually interesting.<sup>3</sup>
- 🚲 Walking trips tend to substitute for automobile trips in dense urban neighborhoods.<sup>3</sup>
- 🚲 Mixing retail and residential land increases the number and percentage of walking and biking trips; for trips less than one mile, mixed-use communities generate up to four times as many walking trips.<sup>4</sup>

**A more compact and mixed land use pattern that offers short distances to interesting destinations combined with pedestrian friendly design features can: encourage walking and biking and make healthy levels of physical activity attainable for more people during their daily routine.<sup>5</sup>**

### **Walkable and bikeable communities increase active living.**

#### **Active living can improve health by:**

- Reducing the risk of dying prematurely.
- Reducing the risk of dying from heart disease.
- Reducing the risk of developing diabetes, colon cancer and high blood pressure.
- Reducing feelings of depression and anxiety.
- Helping control weight.
- Helping build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints.
- Promoting psychological well being.

### **Health Challenges**

- 62 percent of Michigan adults report being either overweight or obese.<sup>6</sup>
- Overweight and obese individuals can incur up to \$1,500 more in annual medical costs than adults with a healthy weight.<sup>6</sup>
- Obesity-related medical costs in Michigan totaled \$2.9 billion in 2002.<sup>7</sup>
- Physical inactivity is responsible for over 300,000 deaths annually in the United States.
- Physical inactivity cost Michigan \$8.9 billion in medical costs, lost productivity and workers' compensation in 2002.<sup>8</sup>

### **Resources for Communities**

MI Health Tools and Promoting Active Communities Assessment: [www.mihealthtools.org/communities](http://www.mihealthtools.org/communities)

Active Community Environments: [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/aces.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/aces.htm)

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Active Living By Design: [www.activelivingbydesign.org](http://www.activelivingbydesign.org)

Smart Growth America: [www.smartgrowthamerica.org](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org)

Walkable Communities, Inc.: [www.walkable.org/index.htm](http://www.walkable.org/index.htm)

National Center for Bicycling and Walking: [www.bikewalk.org](http://www.bikewalk.org)

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center: [www.bicyclinginfo.org](http://www.bicyclinginfo.org)



**Contact Us:** Several State of Michigan departments are collaborating to help communities design themselves to support active living. For more information, contact:  
Cardiovascular Health, Nutrition & Physical Activity Section, 517/335-8374

<sup>1</sup> Eppli, M. & Tu, C. *Valuing the New Urbanism. The Impact of the New Urbanism on Prices of Single Family Homes.* Urban Land Institute, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Brownson, R. et al. *Environmental Determinants of Physical Activity in the United States.* American Journal of Public Health. 2001: 91:12.

<sup>3</sup> Ewing, R. & Cervero, R. *Transportation and Built Environment A Synthesis.* 2001.

<sup>4</sup> Holtzclaw, J. *Using Residential Patterns and Transit to Decrease Auto Dependence and Costs.* Natural Resources Defense Council, San Francisco: 1994.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. *Active Living By Design: Increasing Physical Activity Through Community Design* [On-line]. Available: [www.activelivingbydesign.org](http://www.activelivingbydesign.org).

<sup>6</sup> Michigan Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Improving Nutrition and Increasing Physical Activity* [On-line]. Available: [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/bb\\_nutrition](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/bb_nutrition).

<sup>8</sup> Chenoweth, D. *The Economic Cost of Physical Inactivity in Michigan.* Michigan Fitness Foundation, 2003.