

## Built Environment and Complete Streets

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### The Basics:

- “The [built environment](#) includes all parts of the environment that are changed by people, including homes, schools, workplaces, parks, industrial areas, and highways.”<sup>6</sup>
- Well designed built environments improve the level of physical activity, environmental health, and decrease injuries. One component of the built environment is [complete streets](#).<sup>2</sup>
- A [complete street](#) is for the safe, easy and comfortable travel for people of all ages and abilities by foot, bicycle, transit, car and truck.<sup>1</sup>

### Make Active Living Easy:

- “Complete streets can increase physical activity by providing safe places for regular walking, and cycling.”<sup>1</sup>
  - A study found that 43% of people who had a safe place to walk within 10 minutes of their homes, were more physically active than those who did not; only 27% of those people met the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommendation<sup>1</sup> of [150 minutes](#) of moderate physical activity per week.<sup>7</sup>
  - Another study showed that 65% of residents in a neighborhood that had sidewalks were more likely to walk and meet the physical activity recommendations than residents in neighborhoods without sidewalks.<sup>2</sup>
- Complete streets allow children to walk and bicycle safely to and from school.
  - When schools are located within walking distance of neighborhoods, more children walk to school and meet physical activity [recommendations](#) (60 minutes per day for children).<sup>4</sup>
  - Pedestrian accidents are 2.5 times less likely on streets with sidewalks than similar streets without sidewalks.<sup>3</sup>
- Nearby parts increase children’s access to fresh air and physical activity.
  - A study done in California found that people who lived within walking distance of parks were 25% more likely to meet physical activity recommendations.<sup>4</sup>

### Health Effects:

- [Overweight/obesity](#) is linked with neighborhoods near highways or that are not “walkable”. Well designed built environments, with complete streets, close walking destinations and parks, may lower the average weight of residents.<sup>5</sup>
- A study of 11,000 residents in Atlanta found that for “every 30 extra minutes spent in a car, there was a 3% increased risk of obesity”.<sup>6</sup>
- Children living near roads with heavy traffic tend to have higher rates of [asthma](#) and decreased lung function compared to children living near roads with little traffic.<sup>3</sup>

1) Complete Streets. *Complete Streets Promote Good health!* Retrieved from <http://www.completestreets.org/webdocs/factsheets/cs-health.pdf>

2) Complete Streets. *Benefits of Complete Streets*. Retrieved from <http://www.completestreets.org/complete-streets-fundamentals/factsheets/>

3) *Built Environment as Determinants of Health*. Retrieved from [http://74.125.93.132/search?q=cache:bQeQr2CYMykJ:www.wkkf.org/DesktopModules/WKF.00\\_DmaSupport/ViewDoc.aspx%3FLanguageID%3D0%26CID%3D6%26ListID%3D28%26ItemID%3D5000569%26fld%3DPDFFile+Built+Environments+as+Determinants+of+Health&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us](http://74.125.93.132/search?q=cache:bQeQr2CYMykJ:www.wkkf.org/DesktopModules/WKF.00_DmaSupport/ViewDoc.aspx%3FLanguageID%3D0%26CID%3D6%26ListID%3D28%26ItemID%3D5000569%26fld%3DPDFFile+Built+Environments+as+Determinants+of+Health&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us)

4) CDC. (2009) *Children’s Health and the Built Environment*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/children.htm>

5) Alberg, A.J., Ewing, R., Gary, T.L., Heizisouer K.J, Klassen, A.C, Papas, M.A., (2007) Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. *The Built Environment and Obesity*. Retrieved from <http://epirev.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/reprint/29/1/129>

6) Wakefield, Julie. (2004) *Fighting Obesity through the Built Environment*. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1247493/>

7) CDC (2009). *How much physical activity do adults need*. Retrieved Nov 30 from <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/adults.html>