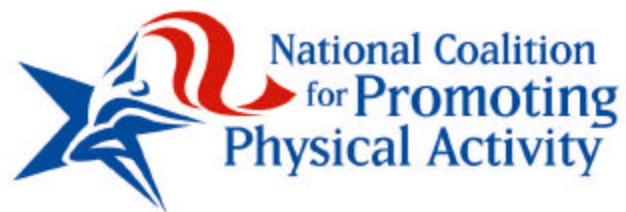


Physical Activity for Youth Policy Initiative

Presented by the



on behalf of the Physical Activity for Youth Steering Committee.

COMMUNITY DESIGN: COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTS THAT SUPPORT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

RATIONALE:

The physical environment strongly affects whether individuals can choose to be active. Sidewalks, bike paths, community recreation facilities, and safe pedestrian crossings are instrumental in encouraging physical activity. A community infrastructure that supports physical activity includes connected, accessible, well-lit, and safe sidewalks, bicycle lanes, crosswalks, and trails linked to destinations of interest to facilitate walking and bicycling; sports and recreation facilities that are close to the homes of most residents, well-maintained, and safe; and programs in place to motivate community members to walk and bicycle.

RECOMMENDED POLICY OPTIONS:

1. Implement programs and incentives to create, improve, and promote access to and use of transportation options that enhance physical activity, such as walking and bicycling.
2. Require that zoning regulations support the creation and maintenance of green space and public parks.
3. Provide access to schools and school owned facilities by students, staff, and community members during non-school hours.
4. Require that public facilities be fully accessible as delineated in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board.

POLICIES IN ACTION:

The following examples provide some examples of how the above policy initiatives regarding community design/environment have worked in action:

Oregon Bike Bill

The Oregon Bike Bill became law 31 years ago. At the time, the law was the first of its kind to assist communities in becoming more bicycle and pedestrian friendly. The law requires the inclusion of sidewalks and/or bike facilities any time a road or highway is built or rebuilt.

The Matthew Brown Act: Texas Safe Routes to School

The Matthew Brown Act became law in 2001. The Act includes the Safe Routes to School program, which is designed to create safe ways for children to reach school. The program adds new crosswalks, trails, and bike lanes to the existing infrastructure as well as promoting traffic calming measures.

California Safe Routes to School

Section 2333.5 of the California Code establishes a Safe Routes to School construction program and includes local grant programs designed to fund construction projects to eliminate pedestrian and bicycle hazards and identify safe walking and bicycling routes.

Use of School Facilities

The state of Massachusetts (General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 71) permits the use of school property by individuals and associations for “educational, recreational, social, civic, philanthropic and like purposes deemed in the interest in the interest of the community.” A separate section permits adult physical fitness programs in school gyms any time the facilities are not being used for school purposes.

National Program for Playground Safety

In 1995, the University of Northern Iowa established the National Program for Playground Safety (NPPS) under a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Injury Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta. NPPS provides evaluation criteria to use in determining risk of injury on playgrounds.

Dirty Dozen: 12 Critical Factors in Playground Safety

The National Recreation and Park Association, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the National Playground Safety Institute collaborated to create a checklist of twelve critical safety factors in playground design, including protective surfacing, equipment spacing, and supervision among others.

Critical Land Conservation Committee

Established by Executive Order of the Utah Governor, the Critical Land Conservation Committee is intended to assist localities and organizations by providing technical assistance, creating an information clearinghouse for land-use and conservation issues, and facilitating the relationship among the multiple jurisdictions and agencies often involved in open-space conservation efforts and decisions.