

Community Design and Public Health

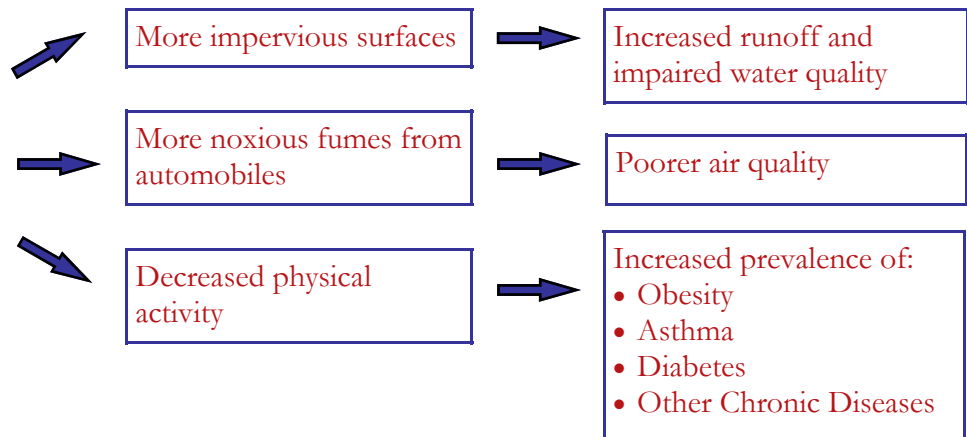
Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. ¹

The mission of ALRC is to create and promote environments that make it safe and convenient for people to integrate physical activity into their daily routines.

Adverse Health and Environmental Effects of Auto-oriented Community Design



Street with an auto-oriented design



Features Supporting Pedestrian-oriented Community Design



Neighborhood with a pedestrian-oriented design ⁴

- Maximum building set-backs
- Street and sidewalk design that enhances walkability and pedestrian safety
- Improved air and water quality
- Mixed land use zoning
- Improved access to parks and trails
- Increased density of development
- Improved connectivity
- Lowered perception of crime
- Increased perceptions of safety and convenience

Current Public Health Issues

- Physical activity is designed out of common activities
- Access to facilities with nutritious food may be limited
- Chronic diseases are increasing at alarming rates
- Air and water quality are decreasing as sprawl increases
- Need for integrated community planning

Almost 75% of Ramsey County residents regard obstacles to being physically active as key health issues in

Fewer than 15% of children K-8 walk or bike to school and nearly 50% of school aged children are regularly driven to school by their parents. ²

Ramsey County. ³

What Can Municipal Planners Do?



Encourage creative local policy such as traffic calming techniques

- Incorporate health principles within comprehensive planning
- Establish long-term partnerships between local public health and public works departments
- Develop creative and flexible local policy
- Implement strategies such as zoning and other ordinances, and form-based codes
- Create thoughtful corridor and site design
- Design public space and public building construction—Capital Improvement Programs (CIP)

Current Active Living Ramsey County Initiatives

- Comprehensive Planning
 - Working with municipalities to incorporate health in comprehensive plans
- Bench Corridors:
 - Providing a series of bench corridors to encourage walking
 - Partnership with Saint Paul—Ramsey County Department of Public Health: Environmental Health Section and Ramsey County Parks and Recreation.
- Bike/Pedestrian GIS Tools
 - Creating a comprehensive Bike/Pedestrian Facility layer within the Ramsey County GIS system
 - Promoting current bike/pedestrian systems
 - Identifying gaps, connections, and priorities for future development

Cited Resources

1. World Health Organization. www.who.int
2. Minnesota Department of Transportation. www.dot.state.mn.us
3. Ramsey County Healthy Communities Study. (2005) Residential Survey Overview. Decisions Resources, Ltd
4. Metropolitan Center for Design. designforhealth.net

Additional Resources

American Journal of Public Health, September 2003
American Journal of Health Promotion, Sept./Oct. 2003
American Planning Association PAS Report Number 539/540, Integrating Planning and Health
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota. www.preventionminnesota.com
Journal of American Planning Association, Winter Issue 2006
Land Use and Health in California. www.healthyplanning.org
NACCHO Land Use Planning site. www.naccho.org
Transit for Livable Communities. www.tlcminnesota.org
USDOT's Safe Routes to School Program. safety.fhwa.dot.gov



Creating environments that build physical activity into daily life

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