

# Complete Streets and Public Health

## South Jersey Complete Streets Implementation Workshop

January 20, 2016

Rowan College at Gloucester County

“Measuring Success and Building  
Healthy Communities”

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Sustainable Jersey and the Sustainability Institute



# Complete Streets and Public Health

How can we optimize Complete Streets plans and projects to foster improved physical and mental health?

And how do we know if we're successful?



# Complete Streets and Public Health



- Sustainable Jersey's certification program
- Health in All Policies (HiAP)
- Identifying opportunities to improve public health in Complete Streets
- Sustainable Jersey's revised Complete Streets "actions"



# Sustainable Jersey



Sustainable Jersey identifies actions to help towns and schools become more sustainable



Provides tools, resources, and guidance to make progress



Provides access to grants and funding for participating communities



# Municipal Certification Program



- Program started February 2009
- Incentive-based program
- Sustainable “actions” developed by 23 task forces
- “Green teams” drive municipal implementation of sustainable “actions”
- 432 (76%) NJ municipalities registered
- 193 municipalities certified:
  - 160 towns at bronze level
  - 33 towns at silver level
- 5,000+ actions completed and documented (since 2009)



# Health in All Policies (HiAP)

## Health in All Policies

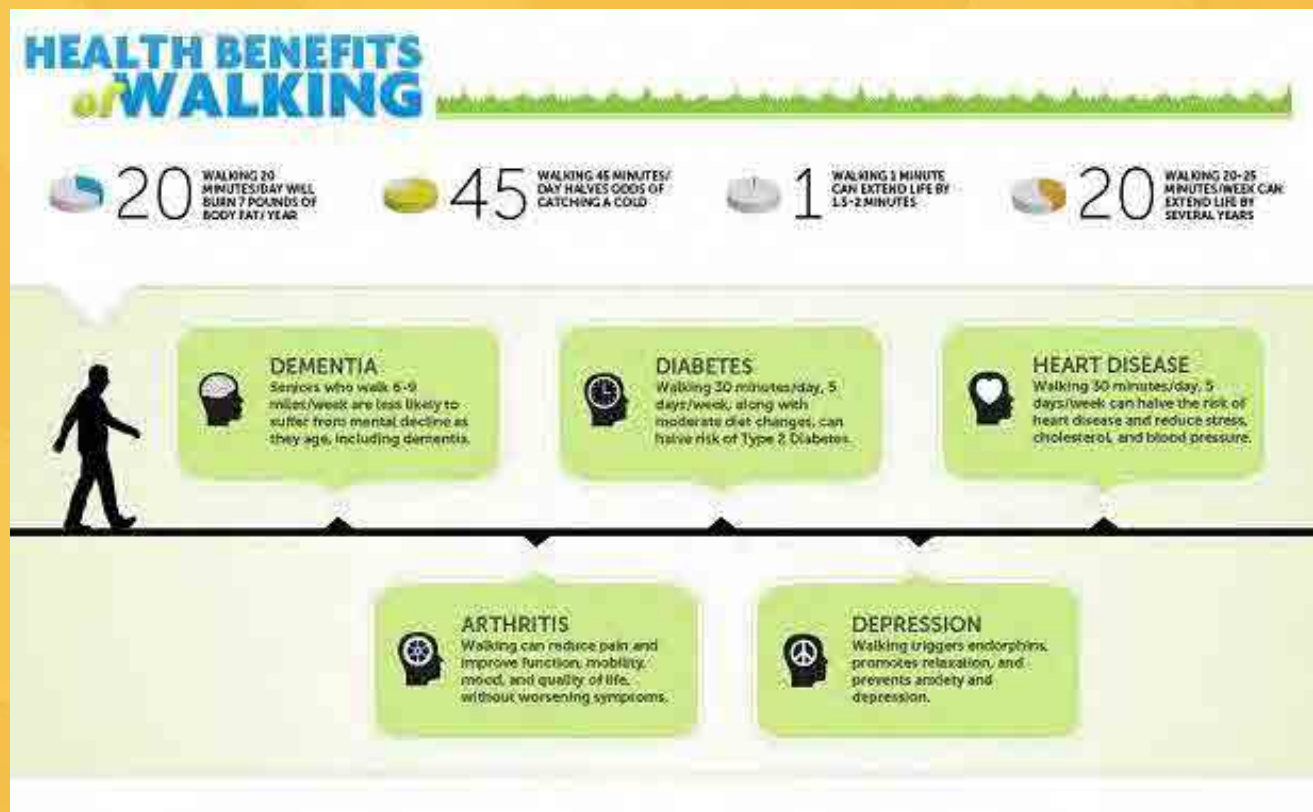
“a collaborative approach to improving the health of all people by ***incorporating health considerations into decision-making across sectors and policy areas.***”

Source: American Public Health Association



# Physical Activity is Key!

Studies show that walking promotes better physical and mental health



# Physical Activity is Key!

THE ROLE OF

## Transportation

IN PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



### SIDEWALKS

People who live in neighborhoods with sidewalks on most streets are

**47%**

more likely to be active at least 30 minutes a day.

### TRAFFIC CALMING

Medians, speed bumps and other traffic-calming efforts can reduce the number of automobile crashes with pedestrian injuries by up to

**15%**

### PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Public transit users take

**30%**

more steps per day than people who rely on cars.

### BIKE FACILITIES

In Portland, Ore., bicycle commuters ride

**49%** of their miles

on roads with bike facilities, even though these are only 8% of road miles.

Active Living Research

[www.activelivingresearch.org](http://www.activelivingresearch.org)





# Complete Streets and Public Health

*We're designing safer, friendlier streets with multi-modes of transportation.*



**BUT....**

*We need to be more deliberate in our Complete Street plans and projects to ensure healthy outcomes.*



# Complete Streets and Public Health

So.....how can we ensure more healthy outcomes with Complete Streets projects?



# Complete Streets and Public Health

1. Include **public health officials** on the complete streets team.



# Complete Streets and Public Health

## 2. Include potential health benefits of complete streets in the policy, for example:

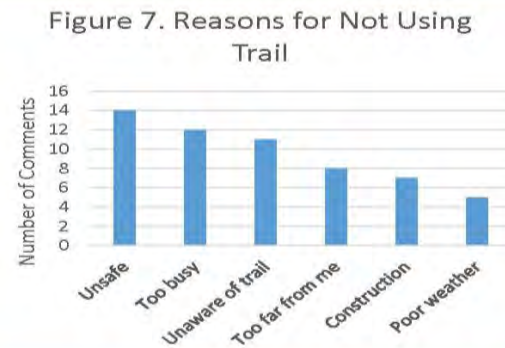
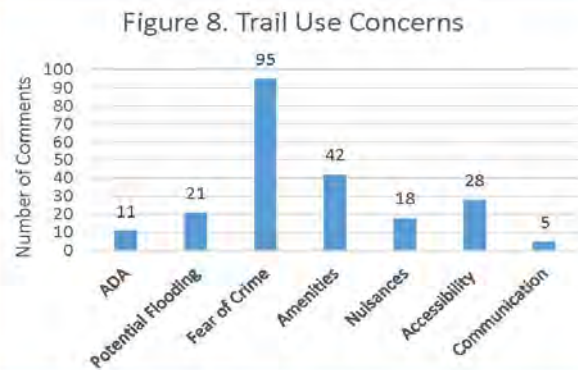
- **Reduced rates of several chronic diseases related to increases in physical activity from walking and bicycling.**
- **Reduced rates of asthma and other respiratory issues due to improved air quality through emissions reductions and vegetative air filtration.**
- **Multiple health and wellness benefits resulting from improved access necessary amenities for vulnerable populations.**

*Source (Smart Growth America, 2014)*



# Complete Streets and Public Health

## 3. Conduct a community needs assessment



# Complete Streets and Public Health

4. Screen all proposed projects for specific health determinants, for example:

- **Opportunities for physical activity**
- **Safety from traffic accidents**
- **Access to parks**
- **Maintaining water quality**
- **Exposure to air pollutants**
- **Opportunities for social cohesion**



# Complete Streets and Public Health

## 5. Target improvements to benefit the needs of vulnerable populations

**FACT:** Lower income neighborhoods, on average, have fewer physical activity resources than higher income neighborhoods, posing a risk factor for obesity and related diseases.



# Complete Streets and Public Health

## 6. Include health considerations in the development checklists (examples below)

- a. **Planning/Concept Development** – Have the opportunities for improving public health been taken into consideration with this project?
- b. **Design/Engineering** – Has the public – including at-risk/vulnerable populations been notified of conceptual project plans and offered an opportunity to share comments?
- c. **Construction** – Have necessary precautions been taken to prevent any deleterious impacts of construction on neighboring communities?





# Complete Streets and Public Health

7. Monitor and evaluate physical activity and socialization. Use indicators for outcomes (not output), e.g.

- Changes in pedestrian and bicycle activity over time
- Usage of new infrastructure for pedestrian and bicycle activity
- Community health statistics (and trends)
- Location and trends in air pollutants
- Percentage of tree canopy on areas of vulnerable populations
- Number of children walking and bicycling to school
- Crashes by mode and type
- Crime incidents by type and location



# Complete Streets and Public Health

**NCHRP**  
REPORT 797

NATIONAL  
COOPERATIVE  
HIGHWAY  
RESEARCH  
PROGRAM

**Guidebook on Pedestrian and  
Bicycle Volume Data Collection**

TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD  
OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES



# Sustainable Jersey - New/Revised Actions

## Updated Sustainable Jersey Complete Streets “actions” that address public health:

### Complete Streets Policy

- Must include health benefits of complete streets

### Institute Complete Streets

- Must include public health in development checklists
- Suggestion to include public health officials on complete streets team
- Suggested best practices include project criteria that prioritizes multimodal projects and complementary health benefits
- Complete streets training is now suggested for public health officials, in addition to other complete streets team members

### AND, a new HiAP action

Health in All Policies Training for local officials



# Complete Streets and Public Health

## Select Resources

*A Health in All Policies Approach to Complete Streets Ordinances*, NRPC  
(Nashua Regional Planning Commission, December 2014)

*Guidebook on Pedestrian and Bicycle Volume Data Collection*, National  
Cooperative Highway Research Program, Report 797, 2014.

National Complete Streets Coalition

<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets>

“Healthy Decisions – Healthy Community”, a Sustainable Jersey webinar,  
January 26, 2016, 10:00 a.m.



# Complete Streets and Public Health

## HEALTH **IMPACT** P R O J E C T

ADVANCING SMARTER POLICIES FOR HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

■ [www.healthimpactproject.org](http://www.healthimpactproject.org)

*This project is supported by a grant from the Health Impact Project, a collaboration of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts.*

