

What is the built environment?

There are things that play a part in how well a neighborhood impacts the health and safety of its residents. Just the way the neighborhood is set up can have a big influence on health, such as its streets, sidewalks, trees, traffic flow, and if you can walk to work or to the store from home. All of these things and more play a role in Healthy Places.



Healthy places have...

... safe sidewalks and bike trails.

Lots of sidewalks and bike trails encourage more walking and bicycling. Sidewalks help connect places, like your home and the grocery store. Having sidewalks that pass by locations you go to often help promote walking instead of driving. If your child's school is in your neighborhood, good sidewalks or trails will help them to walk to school or ride their bike.

... safer streets.

Well-marked crosswalks and street medians (center) help people walking to feel safer when they cross the street. Narrow streets, medians, and speed bumps can slow down passing cars. Cars going too fast are a great risk to people walking or biking. Safe streets have enough police to enforce the speed limit.

... plenty of trees and landscaping.

Nice trees and flowers encourage people to walk in the neighborhood. Shaded streets and sidewalks can make the area up to 10 degrees cooler. This helps to make walking and biking more comfortable. Shaded streets increase the value of homes. Trees help make the air cleaner. The green space provided by trees and landscaping helps draw people outside. Having a lot of people outside watching the neighborhood helps protect it against crime.

... parks, stores, and workplaces that are nearby.

If your workplace is near your home, you are more likely to walk to and from work. If you have a neighborhood grocery store close to your home, you are more likely to walk to the store for your loaf of bread, instead of getting in your car. A park in the neighborhood allow for kids to be more active, and gives them a social area to meet and play with friends.

... good access for the elderly and disabled.

Sidewalks have ramps and lowered curbs for people in wheelchairs. Local buildings have wide doorways so that people using walkers or wheelchairs can go inside easily. Buses stop often and have covered shelter.