



The Active People, Healthy NationSM Active Communities Tool Action Planning Guide

An Action Planning Guide and Assessment Modules to Improve Community Built
Environments to Promote Physical Activity

Updated May 2025



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Background and Purpose

One of the most important steps that people of all ages and abilities can take to improve their health is to increase their physical activity.¹ Physical activity can reduce the risk of at least 20 chronic diseases and conditions, effectively treat many of those conditions, and support positive mental health and healthy aging.² It can also have immediate impacts like reduced blood pressure and feelings of anxiety and improved sleep, as well as reduce the risk for serious outcomes from some infectious diseases (for example, COVID-19, influenza, and pneumonia).^{2,3,4}

While the nation has experienced modest increases in physical activity levels,⁵ overall levels still remain low with only 1 in 4 U.S. adults meeting recommended levels.^{6,7}

Many factors impact a person's ability to be physically active beyond personal choice. Commonly reported barriers are insufficient time and safety concerns.¹ Furthermore, access to places to be active like parks and recreation centers, and proximity to walkable everyday destinations often do not exist.^{1,8,9} People who have reduced access are less likely to meet physical activity recommendations.¹⁰

[Active People, Healthy Nation](#), is an initiative supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and others to help 27 million Americans become more physically active by 2027. This multisector approach promotes the recommendations from the [Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition](#) and effective strategies recommended by the [Community Preventive Services Task Force](#) (Task Force) to improve physical activity.¹² To increase physical activity, the Active People, Healthy Nation initiative translated the Task Force recommendations into [seven strategies for increasing physical activity](#).

CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity (DNPAO) priority strategy is community design for physical activity because it has the potential to get a large number of people more physically active.^{10, 11} Community design includes strategies to implement policies and activities to connect pedestrian, bicycle, or transportation networks (called activity-friendly routes) to everyday destinations including workplaces, parks, places of worship, shopping, and more.



PURPOSE

The purpose of the Active People, Healthy Nation Active Communities Tool Action Planning Guide (Guide) is to help community-engaged, cross-sector teams create an Action Plan for improving community design to promote physical activity.

The Guide includes different assessment modules called the *Active People, Healthy Nation Active Communities Tool Assessment Modules (Assessment Modules)*, to help teams better understand their community contexts and needs. The Guide briefly describes how to use the Assessment Modules to develop an Action Plan.



What is community engagement?

Community engagement is the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the wellbeing of those people. It often involves partnerships and coalitions that help mobilize resources and influence systems, change relationships among partners, and serve as catalysts for changing policies, programs, and practices.

Building a Cross-Sector Team

Commitment from people and organizations across multiple sectors and purposeful engagement and input from community members is important to creating a community that is designed to promote physical activity. It is important for this work to be a collaboration between technical experts who have the information at their fingertips, community members with experience of active transportation needs, and a broader group of decision-makers to discuss the results, identify priorities, and develop an Active People, Healthy Nation Action Plan (Action Plan).

The following list provides examples of disciplines and expertise to consider including on a community-engaged cross-sector team or as an addition to an existing community coalition.

Partners that might be particularly important members of a cross-sector team include:

- public health;
- planning;
- transportation;
- public works;
- elected official;
- parks and recreation; and,
- community members with experience of active transportation needs, such as individuals with disabilities, older adults, and those facing barriers to safe activity, and/or community-based organizations representing or supporting key populations such as youth.

Other partners to consider depending on your focus include:

- other local government representation (for example, city manager, public safety, housing authority, economic development);
- public transit systems;
- housing, development, real estate professionals;

- major community employers (for example, healthcare systems, private employers, etc);
- school district;
- sports and fitness;
- healthcare;
- arts and culture; and,
- mass media.

It is important to create a shared understanding of why increasing physical activity is important and how improving the design of a community can help promote physical activity while supporting other important community benefits. It is also important to create a shared understanding of why access to physical activity opportunities is important.



RESOURCES

[Benefits of Physical Activity and Community Design for Physical Activity](#)





Understanding Community Contexts and Needs to Inform the Selection of Actionable Areas

Below are some key steps to understanding community contexts to create an Action Plan. These steps are consistent across many planning processes and only the key ones are captured here.

- **Learn about past, recent, and future physical activity-related community design plans and projects.** Identify current, recently completed, and upcoming plans and projects including those that may be updated soon (for example, road repaving, updates to transportation plan). This review will help you build upon work that is in the planning phases, currently underway, or already established. Identifying these plans and projects will help to avoid any duplication of efforts and may identify existing opportunities where it will be faster and easier to demonstrate success.
- **Learn local histories.** Understanding the history of transportation, land use, and housing policies in your community can increase your understanding of investments were made (or not made) in safe places to be active in certain areas. Understanding historical context can help shift the perspective to include strategies that address barriers that make the healthy choice the easy choice for all.
- **Engage the community early and often.** Engaging members of the community who experience barriers to physical activity leads to greater community support and buy-in for a project. Engaging people at the start of the process provides an opportunity for them to share their vision for community design

changes and to share their priorities for the actions or issues they would like to see addressed and/or adjusted for the project. It is also important to understand whether anyone opposes the project and their reasons so you can address their concerns.

Compile relevant information and data

- **Gather existing data and information.** Many organizations and agencies collect data and other information that may be useful in developing an Action Plan. Using existing data and information can help improve the community’s plans and policies to create community designs that support physical activity. This includes:
 - information from previous community health needs assessments;
 - reports or data collected by transportation, parks and recreation, and other sectors;
 - demographic data (for example, disability status and type) through existing surveys like the [American Community Survey](#);
 - qualitative data;
 - community members’ experience through intentional engagement strategies; and;
 - housing data including revenue and vacancies; crash or injury data, and more.These [Active People, Healthy Nation Resources](#) to Increase Physical Activity through Community Design may help you think about what information to collect and how to gather it.
- **Conduct an audit of walking, rolling, and biking conditions.** Organizing an audit that includes team members and community members is a way to gather additional relevant data to inform the Action Plan. An audit can help the team visualize proximity to everyday destinations, barriers to walking and other active travel, and identify possible solutions. Opening the audit to the community can also help add perspectives and experiences of active travel and allow the team to recognize more barriers that may need to be addressed, including for people with disabilities.
- **Complete the *Active People, Healthy Nation Active Communities Tool Assessment Modules* ([Appendix A](#)).** *The Active People, Healthy Nation Active Communities Tool Assessment Modules* is a self-assessment tool designed to help cross-sector teams create an Action Plan for community design that promotes physical activity consistent with their community contexts. It guides consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of your community’s existing plans, policies, and resources.



RESOURCES

[Audits of Walking and Biking Conditions](#)



Complete the Active People, Healthy Nation Active Communities Tool Assessment Modules

The [tool](#) has six modules:

Activity-Friendly Routes

- **Module 1:** Street Design and Connectivity
- **Module 2:** Infrastructure to Accommodate Pedestrians and Bicyclists
 - Module A: Infrastructure to Accommodate Pedestrians and Bicyclists
 - Module B: Infrastructure to Accommodate Pedestrians
 - Module C: Infrastructure to Accommodate Bicyclists
- **Module 3:** Public Transportation

Everyday Destinations

- **Module 4:** Land Use Planning
- **Module 5:** Parks and Recreational Facilities
- **Module 6:** Schools

The general layout of assessment modules are as follows:

1. Each module is divided into plans, policies, resources, and environments, as applicable.
2. Broad, general questions at the beginning of each module ask whether plans, policies, resources, and environments exist to address a particular topic or a related topic.
3. A series of detailed sub-questions follow to assess the quality (for example, strength and comprehensiveness) of existing plans or policies, including specified planning and implementation processes.

In general, the more items marked by the cross-sector team in the assessment module pertaining to an existing plan or policy, the stronger and more comprehensive it is. The items that remain unmarked represent potential opportunities for including in the Action Plan.

For a brief description of each module, see [Appendix B](#).



Key points to remember when completing the Active People, Healthy Nation Active Communities Tool Assessment Modules:

1. **Complete the modules selected by the cross-sectoral team.** A benefit to looking at all the modules is to have a full picture of the opportunities potentially available for your community to improve the community design to promote physical activity. See [page 4](#) for examples of sectors to engage for a cross-sector team.
2. **Complete the Active People, Healthy Nation Active Communities Tool Assessment Modules as a group effort** involving the technical experts who know the answers to the questions (or have the information readily available) relevant to the modules selected. Public health practitioners may need to contact technical experts in other sectors and engage community members to complete the modules.
3. Answer each question in each module **selecting the answer that best describes your community.** If a question does not apply to your community, then mark it as not applicable.
4. **Use data collaboratively.** Invite community members into the planning and assessment processes as equal decisionmakers, and to help determine what information is to be collected and why. When completing the modules, consider how each item improves or takes away from outcomes for all community members.

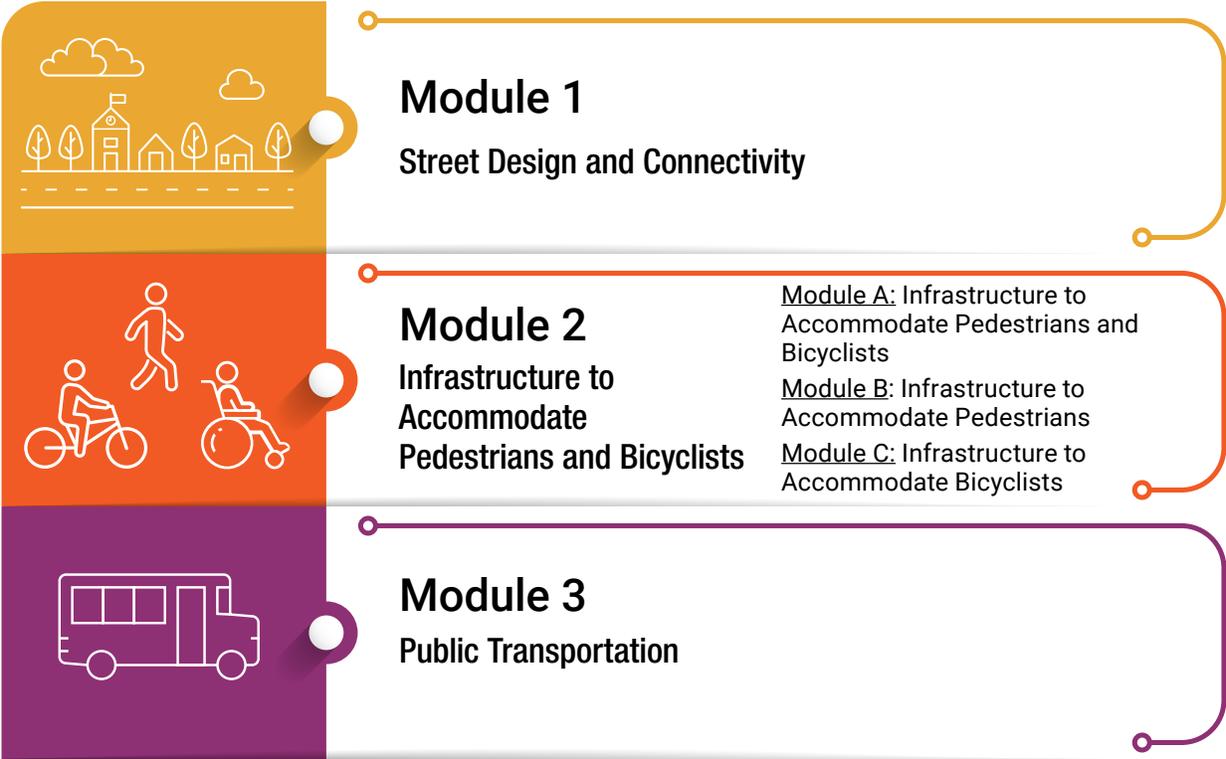
The *Active People, Healthy Nation Active Communities Tool* Assessment Modules are not intended to:

- **Assess street level community design infrastructure** (for example, timing of traffic signals or lights, existence of benches, width of sidewalks). Data from street level audits can provide important and complementary information about community design features related to physical activity. However, other tools such as the [CDC Built Environment Assessment Tool](#), and the [Benefits of Complete Streets Assessment Tool](#) support these efforts.
- **Assess social support and school programs.** Social support and school programs are important components of a comprehensive strategy to promote and increase physical activity within the community, but they are beyond the scope of this tool.
- **Assess the quality of community facilities** (for example, parks, schools, and infrastructure for safe walking and bicycling) or programs.
- **Compare one community to another.** A community can assess their own results over time to understand progress and areas that may need continued improvement. However, the assessment tool is not a scorecard or external benchmarking tool and is not intended for making cross-community comparisons.



Assessment Modules

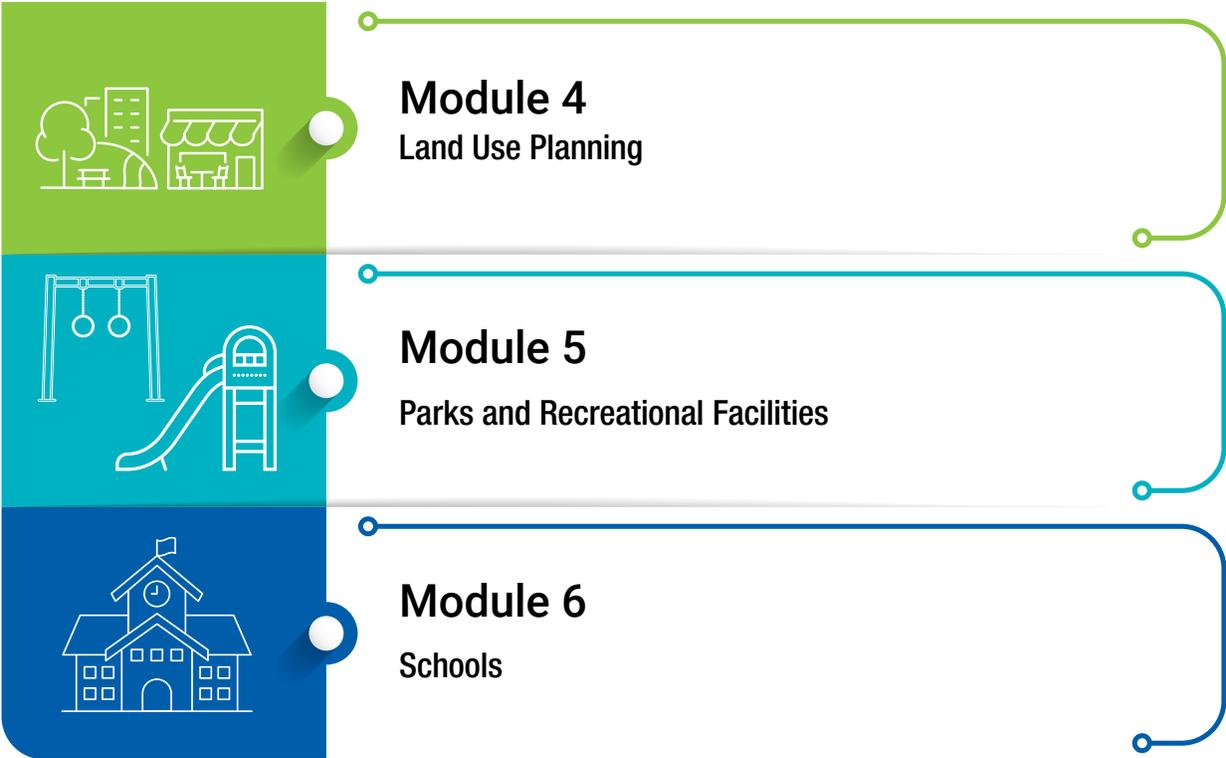
Activity-Friendly Routes



The graphic consists of three vertical colored bars on the left, each with a white icon. The top bar is orange and shows a street scene with trees, a church, and houses. The middle bar is red and shows icons of a person walking, a person on a bicycle, and a person in a wheelchair. The bottom bar is purple and shows a bus icon. To the right of each bar is a white box with a colored border and a rounded corner, containing the module title and description. The boxes are connected to the bars by thin lines.

- Module 1**
Street Design and Connectivity
- Module 2**
Infrastructure to Accommodate Pedestrians and Bicyclists
 - Module A: Infrastructure to Accommodate Pedestrians and Bicyclists
 - Module B: Infrastructure to Accommodate Pedestrians
 - Module C: Infrastructure to Accommodate Bicyclists
- Module 3**
Public Transportation

Everyday Destinations



The graphic consists of three vertical colored bars on the left, each with a white icon. The top bar is green and shows a city street scene with buildings and trees. The middle bar is teal and shows a playground with a slide and a climbing structure. The bottom bar is blue and shows a school building icon. To the right of each bar is a white box with a colored border and a rounded corner, containing the module title and description. The boxes are connected to the bars by thin lines.

- Module 4**
Land Use Planning
- Module 5**
Parks and Recreational Facilities
- Module 6**
Schools

Developing an Action Plan

An Action Plan is a way to make sure your community's vision for a community designed to promote physical activity is concrete. It describes the ways in which your team can take action based on the opportunities identified through the assessment modules and the other data collected. An Action Plan is intended to be complete, clear, and current. It is important to engage a broader group of decision-makers (for example, a cross-sectoral coalition), organizational leadership, and community members, such as young people, older adults, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes in the development of the plan.

- **Step 1:** *Review the information gathered.* This includes the community's priorities from engagement efforts, the list of recent and ongoing physical activity-related community design policy, system, and environmental interventions, and any other data or information collected, such as:
 - plans;
 - community health needs assessments;
 - health status indicators;
 - state report cards;
 - health and safety risk and protective factors;
 - current land use; and,
 - rates of active transportation.
 - ◆ Review the responses for each module completed in the *Active Communities Tool Assessment Modules*. In general, the more items marked for a plan or policy, the stronger and more comprehensive it is. The items that remain unmarked represent potential opportunities for action.
- **Step 2:** *Brainstorm about potential gaps in your information. Consider the following questions.*
 - What additional data or information are needed?
 - What opportunities may exist for improvement?
 - ◆ What projects are being planned soon that could be potentially modified to address identified priorities from the



“Quick Builds” or Demonstration Projects

Quick Builds are temporary street modifications that improve conditions for active transportation and recreational physical activity.

Communities often want to invest in safe places for physical activity, but the perceived expense and timeframe may appear overwhelming. [“Quick Builds”](#) are a way to overcome these challenges because they provide a way to create safe places for physical activity in a reasonable timeframe at low cost.

Several features make them attractive for communities. Compared to permanent infrastructure modifications (for example, building a sidewalk) they have several advantages:

- Quick installation and easy removal, if needed;
- Street improvements that do not require expensive infrastructure changes like moving storm drains or utility poles;
- Use of existing rights-of-way on streets and public spaces, which does not require land acquisition; and,
- Often become permanent when built with the right materials and properly maintained.

Quick Builds could take the form of a temporary bike lane, a community plaza, or a walking path.



Tip

Unlike quick builds, pop-ups are short-lived demonstration projects designed to get community input and other data over days to weeks and are made with less permanent materials than quick builds. Both are removable.

ACT modules and Action Plan?

- Where else can I engage community members and involve them in decision making processes?
- **Step 3:** Create a list of all the potential opportunities for action or engagement based on all of the information gathered.
- **Step 4:** Decide on which opportunities to focus on or to prioritize from the list of potential opportunities identified. Consider the following questions:
 - Where could the biggest improvements be made?
 - What actions are likely to get support from decisionmakers and champions?
 - What actions are likely to get community support?
 - What actions are feasible?
 - What actions best align with the relevant transportation and other planning cycle(s) (for example, year 5 of a 20-year plan)?
 - What actions best align with addressing community needs and preferences?
- **Step 5:** Develop your Action Plan based on those opportunities you prioritized.

Consider including the following elements in your Action Plan:

- Identify the issue(s) to be addressed and include a rationale for why the team selected this issue;
- Develop SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely) objectives;
- Indicate the activities necessary to achieve each of the objectives;
- Indicate the timeline for each activity;
- Establish accountability for each objective and activity by identifying the responsible parties;
- Indicate the measure of success for each activity; and,
- Indicate how the team will work to reduce barriers to physical activity for all community members.

Once your team has drafted the Action Plan, consider how you will present it to the leadership of partnering organizations and agencies as well as to the community.

As part of any good cross-sectoral project, evaluation, planning for sustainability, and



Understanding Scope and Timeline for Strategic Action

Transportation and land use planning processes occur frequently at various geographic scales (for example, single street corridors, neighborhood-wide, city-wide) and on various timeframes within your community. Understanding the planning cycles, processes, and timelines is key to identifying appropriate opportunities for action. For example, modifying a zoning ordinance adopted in the last six months may not offer the best opportunity for action, even if improvements would be beneficial for physical activity, because it was recently adopted. However, the regional planning authority may be in the process of revising their 30-year Comprehensive Plan which could offer an opportunity to incorporate language and concepts promoting activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations.



Tip

Consider including the [Active People, Healthy Nation design element](#) on your Action Plan, or language that indicates your Action Plan supports Active People, Healthy Nation, as a way to highlight your community's role in the national initiative to help Americans become more physically active.

monitoring progress can benefit your action planning process. We encourage you to consider integrating these processes into your action planning process from the beginning. However, these components can be integrated into the Action Plan and addressed in the future if all components cannot be addressed at once.



RESOURCES

[Developing an Action Plan](#)

Evaluating Progress

Evaluating progress can help communities improve their abilities to take action and better understand the amount and specific type of changes needed to help their members become more physically active. Evaluation is important to a data-informed community planning process.

The [CDC Framework for Program Evaluation](#) is a tool designed to summarize and organize essential elements of program evaluation. It encourages an approach to evaluation integrated with routine program operations. The emphasis is on practical, ongoing evaluation strategies that involve all program partners and community members, not just evaluation experts. This website also includes a variety of tools, resources, and self-guided training to support implementing the CDC Framework for Program Evaluation.



Why is evaluation important?

It is important for communities to track measures of progress, such as changes in public engagement or improvements in sidewalk quality or connections, as outcomes along the way to guide their progress. This helps to ensure activities are getting done as designed and allows for mid-course correction. Evaluation can also provide partners with information they need to continue supporting or allocating resources to the activity.



Tip

Be sure to evaluate your quick build! Quick builds provide valuable opportunities for gathering timely community feedback and input. For example, assessing vehicle speeds and pedestrian and bicyclist numbers and experiences before and after a modifiable change can allow your team to test the impact of the proposed change, helps identify what worked well or could be improved, and build awareness or support for the proposed change.

Integrating Improvements into a Lasting Community-Wide Effort

Sustainability is a community’s ongoing ability and determination to establish, advance, and maintain effective strategies and infrastructure that continuously improve health and quality of life for all.⁹ Sustainability is important because it creates and builds momentum to maintain community-wide changes by leveraging community assets and resources. Coalitions and community partners can be prepared to manage changes and challenges that arise during and after implementation to build foundations for long-term sustainability.



RESOURCES

[Sustaining the Effort](#)





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Appendices



Appendix A: The Active People, Healthy Nation Active Communities Tool Assessment Modules

The [Active People, Healthy Nation Active Communities Tool Assessment Modules](#) [entire tool]

Activity-Friendly Routes

- **Module 1:** Street Design and Connectivity
- **Module 2:** Infrastructure to Accommodate Pedestrians and Bicyclists
 - **Module A:** Infrastructure to Accommodate Pedestrians and Bicyclists
 - **Module B:** Infrastructure to Accommodate Pedestrians
 - **Module C:** Infrastructure to Accommodate Bicyclists
- **Module 3:** Public Transportation

Everyday Destinations

- **Module 4:** Land Use Planning
- **Module 5:** Parks and Recreational Facilities
- **Module 6:** Schools



Appendix B:

Brief Overviews of Each Module in the Active Communities Tool Assessment Modules

ACTIVITY-FRIENDLY ROUTES

Module 1: Street Design and Connectivity

- **Context**—Communities can create or modify street networks (for example, the ways in which everyday destinations connect) to influence how people choose to travel (for example, walking, bicycling, driving) and the frequency of trips.
- **Type of information**—assesses the plans, policies, and resources your community uses to design the physical roadway network. For example, regulations or zoning codes, street connectivity, and plans for existing and future streets constructed by the community and through future development.
- **Who to involve**—technical experts with knowledge of the community’s zoning policies and codes and subdivision regulations; specifically experts in planning, transportation, and public works. Community members.
- **Approximate time to complete**—30 minutes.

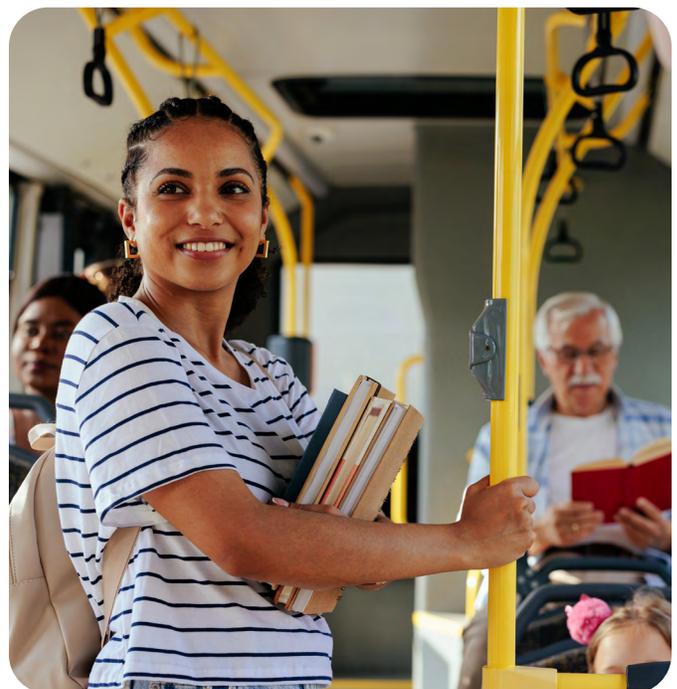
Module 2: Infrastructure to Accommodate Pedestrians and Bicyclists

- **Context**—Communities can increase walking and bicycling through separate, dedicated bicycle and pedestrian facilities such as bicycle paths and walking trails.
- **Type of information**—assesses the plans, policies, environments, and resources for infrastructure to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists, including shared-use paths, both paved (for example, sidewalks) and unpaved (for example, trails), bicycle lanes, wide paved shoulders, bicycle routes, and sidewalks.
- **Who to involve**—technical experts with knowledge of the community’s pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure plans, policies, and resources; specifically experts in planning, transportation, and public works. Community members.

- **Approximate time to complete**—150 minutes (if all sections of Module 2 are completed).

Module 3: Public Transportation

- **Context**—Public transportation systems provide opportunities for increased physical activity in the form of walking or bicycling on either end of the trip (for example, from home to bus stop or from train stop to office).
- **Type of information**—assesses the plans, policies, environments, and resources devoted to public transportation, including public transit infrastructure and access.
- **Who to involve**—technical experts with knowledge of the community’s planning, transportation, and public transit plans, policies, and resources; specifically experts in planning, transportation, and public transit. Community members.
- **Approximate time to complete**—30 minutes.



EVERYDAY DESTINATIONS

Module 4: Land Use Planning

- **Context**—Land use refers to how land is used and what is built on it. Mixed-use and compact development (i.e., combining restaurants, offices, or shops with varied housing options) creates shorter distances for walking and biking.
- **Type of information**—assesses the plans, policies, and resources that specify and determine development and future land use; for example, mixed land use, proximity to destinations, residential density.
- **Who to involve**—technical experts with knowledge of the community’s planning, transportation, and engineering plans, policies, and processes (for example, comprehensive/master plans, subdivision regulations, and zoning codes); specifically experts in land use and transportation planning and engineers. Community members.
- **Approximate time to complete**—60 minutes.

Module 5: Parks and Recreational Facilities

- **Context**—Public parks and recreation facilities play an important role in increasing physical activity. They provide places for individuals to walk or bicycle, and many have specific facilities for sports and other types of physical

activities. Having access to places for physical activity, such as parks and trails, encourages community residents to participate in physical activity and do so more often. Park proximity plays an important role in promoting higher levels of park use and physical activity particularly for youth.

- **Type of information**—assess the plans, policies, environments, and resources for park and recreational facility access.
- **Note:** Due to the focus of the Guide, this module covers the plans, policies, environments, and resources for park and recreational facility access. The quality of the park or programming available in the park and recreational facility are not addressed. These are important factors to consider but are beyond the scope of this tool.
 - Additional Parks and Recreation resources:
 - ♦ [Community Guide Recommendations for Parks, Trails, and Greenways](#)
 - ♦ [National Recreation and Park Association’s Active Parks! Implementation Guide](#)



- **Who to involve**—technical experts with knowledge of the community’s parks and recreation and planning policies, plans, and resources; specifically experts in parks and recreation and planning. Community members.
- **Approximate time to complete**—40 minutes.

Module 6: Schools

- **Context**—Schools are important destinations to consider when trying to increase physical activity among children. Active travel to school interventions and programs make it easier for children to commute to school actively (for example, walking or bicycling). These interventions improve the physical and social safety of common routes to school or by promoting safe pedestrian behaviors. In the United States, the most used active travel to school intervention is [Safe Routes to School](#) (SRTS). SRTS encourages increased student physical activity through safe and active transport to and from school.
- **Type of information**—assesses the plans, policies, environments, and resources specific to school siting; the community design outside of the school; and connecting the school with other places.

- **Special notes on this module:**
 - Due to the focus of the Guide, this module covers plans, policies, environments, and resources specific to school location or siting, and connecting the school with other places. Physical activity or physical education policies, or the quality of the programming within the school are not addressed.
 - For engineering-related plans, policies, and resources for improving the community design around schools to promote walking and bicycling, consult Module 2: Infrastructure to Accommodate Pedestrians and Bicyclists.
 - Responses should be based on one school district. If more than one school district is of interest, consider completing the module separately for each district.
- **Who to involve**—technical experts with knowledge of the school district’s plans and policies; specifically experts in the school district, planning, facilities management, and transportation. Community members.
- **Approximate time to complete**—30 minutes.



Appendix C:

Glossary

Active transportation: transportation such as walking or using a bicycle, tri-cycle, velomobile, wheelchair, scooter, skates, skateboard, push scooter, stroller, trailer, hand cart, shopping car, or similar electrical devices. For the purposes of this report, active transportation will generally refer to walking, bicycling, and wheelchair rolling, the three most common methods.

Activity-friendly route: a route that is a direct and convenient connection with everyday destinations, offering physical protection from cars, and making it easy to cross the street.

Bicycle facility: A general transportation term to describe improvements and provisions to accommodate or encourage bicycling, including parking and storage facilities, and shared roadways specifically designated for bicycle use.

Community design: The buildings, roads, utilities, homes, fixtures, parks and all other man-made entities that form the physical characteristics of a community.

Community engagement: Community engagement is an ongoing and proactive process of working collaboratively with groups of people in a community to build relationships and capacity, create solutions and foster a sense of ownership of the actions being taken.

Comprehensive plan: The adopted official statement of a governing body of a local government that sets forth (in words, maps, illustrations, and/or tables) goals, policies, and guidelines intended to direct the present and future physical, social, and economic development that occurs within its planning jurisdiction and that includes a unified physical design for the public and private development of land.

Everyday destination: places people can get to by walking, bicycling, or public transit. This can include their home, grocery stores, schools, worksites, libraries, parks, restaurants, cultural and natural landmarks, or health care facilities.

Land use: regulation about how the land can be used, specifically the occupation or use of land or water area for any human activity or purpose.

Mixed land use: Development that blends residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, or entertainment uses, where those functions are physically and functionally integrated, and that provides pedestrian and bicycle connections.

Pedestrian facility: A general transportation term to describe infrastructure and support equipment that accommodates pedestrians, such as sidewalks, curb ramps, shared use paths, crosswalk, signals, and signs.

Residential density: the number of dwelling units in any given area.

Street connectivity: Refers to the directness of links and the density of connections in a street network. A well-connected network has many short links, numerous intersections, and minimal dead ends.

Zoning: Local codes regulating the use and development of property within specific categories.



Appendix D: Resources

Additional resources by subject area can be found on the [Increasing Physical Activity Through Community Design strategy page](#).

Disclaimer: The views and recommendations expressed in this report, as well as on the hosting website, do not necessarily reflect the official policies and views of the Department of Health and Human Services.

GENERAL RESOURCES

Benefits of Physical Activity and Community Design for Physical Activity

[Create Thriving, Activity-Friendly Communities](#)

This site provides a collection of resources and research to help public health practitioners, decision makers, and community members make the business case for improving the built environment.

[Fact Sheets & Infographics | Physical Activity](#)

This site provides information and resources about the benefits of physical activity and walking.

[Improving Social Connectedness in Communities](#)

This site provides information for public health and other organizations to encourage/foster/increase social connection within a community through public education, evidence-based programs and services, research, and the promotion of healthy lifestyles.

[Physical Activity Guidelines for American, 2nd Edition](#)

This resource provides evidence-based guidance to help Americans maintain or improve their health through physical activity.



[Step it Up! The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking & Walkable Communities](#)

This resource recognizes the importance of physical activity for people of all ages and abilities and calls for improved access to safe and convenient places to walk and wheelchair roll through five strategic goals that promote walking and walkable communities in the United States.

Resources for Auditing Walking and Bicycling Conditions

[Community Walking and Bicycling Audit Tool \(wisconsin.gov\)](#)

This is a tool community members and organizations can use to conduct community walking and biking audits.

[How to Conduct a Walk Audit in Your Community—Quick Video Guide for Assessing Your Neighborhood Walkability](#)

This site provides a video and some helpful tools for planning and conducting walk audits.

[Let's Go For A Walk: A Toolkit for Planning and Conducting a Walk Audit](#)

This is a toolkit for planning and conducting a walk audit. It provides the tools to hold walk audits that will help community members and organizations understand the safety and walkability of their community.

[Pedestrian & Bicycle Information Center \(pedbikeinfo.org\)](#)

This site provides a variety of tools used to assess the safety of bicycle or pedestrian facilities.

[Walk Audit Tool Kit](#)

This toolkit is designed to help community members and organizations learn how to assess and report on the safety and walkability of a street, intersection or neighborhood.

Resources for Developing an Action Plan

[Creating Walkable and Bikeable Communities](#)

This resource provides an in-depth review of context, strategies, and relevant policies to implement and promote in local community contexts to increase active transportation and physical activity. It also includes additional resources from federal agencies and non-governmental organizations as well as frameworks for assessing and evaluating community-level impacts.



MAPP Action Plan Resources

Phase 6 of the MAPP strategic planning tool describes an action cycle that links planning, implementation, and evaluation of a community's strategic plan. It includes a section on creating an Action Plan, including templates and worksheets, that offer guidance on developing and implementing an Action Plan for addressing priority goals and objectives.

Resources for Sustaining the Effort

CDC Sustainability Planning Guide for Healthy Communities

This guide is a synthesis of science- and practice-based evidence designed to help coalitions, public health professionals, and other community partners develop, implement, and evaluate a successful sustainability plan. The guide provides a process for sustaining policy strategies and related activities; introduces various approaches to sustainability; and demonstrates sustainability planning in action with real-life examples.

STREET PATTERN DESIGN AND CONNECTIVITY

Low-Stress Cycling and Network Connectivity

This report proposes a set of criteria for classifying road segments by levels of traffic stress. Stress classification and stress mapping can help communities target limited resources to areas in need to the widest possible segment of the population with safe and direct routes between origins and destinations.



Urban Street Design Guide

This guide outlines a clear vision for Complete Streets and guidance for their implementation. It includes a toolbox and tactics that cities can use to make streets safer.

PEDESTRIAN-ONLY INFRASTRUCTURE

Improving the Pedestrian Environment Through Innovative Transportation Design

This report contains a sample of ways transportation professionals and citizens have brought walking back into focus, not only in the capital budgets of government agencies, but also in the lives of citizens in communities large and small. The real-world case studies may be of particular interest.

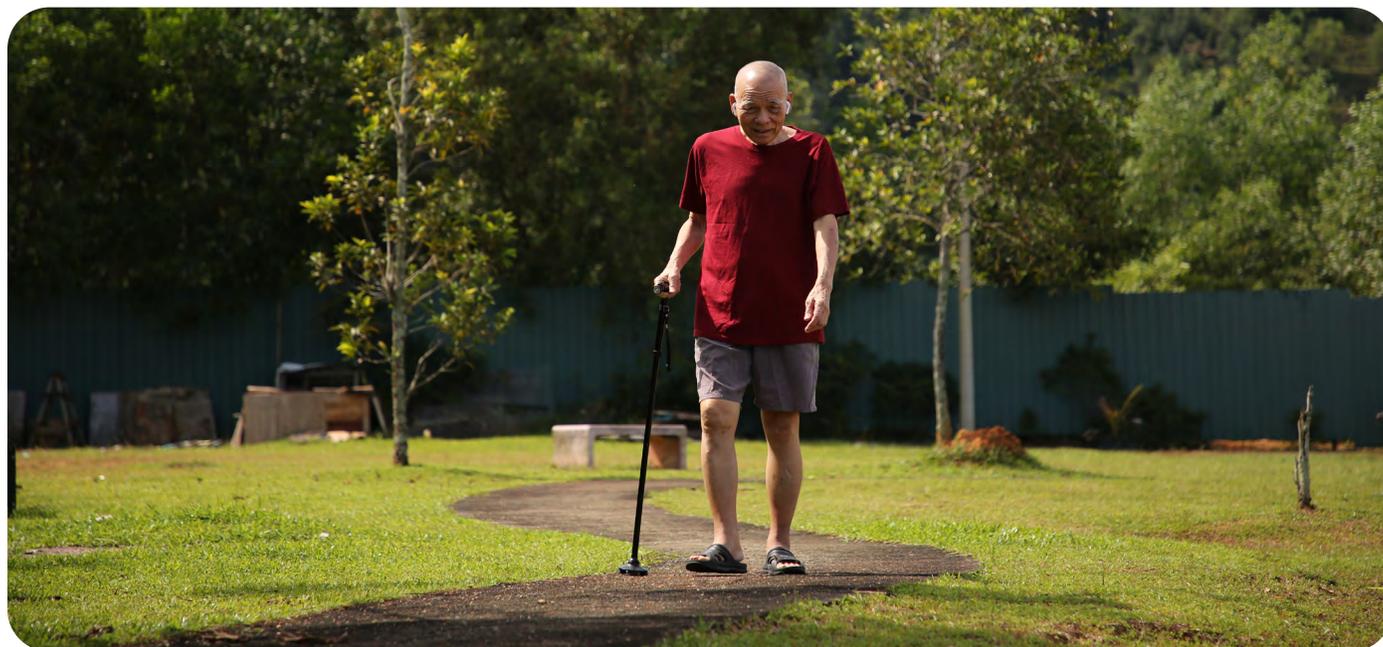
Local Policies and Practices That Support Safe Pedestrian Environments

This document contains tools and strategies to improve the safety, and convenience of the pedestrian experience for a range of contexts (for example, geography, community size, weather, demographics, and regulatory requirements) and development conditions (for example, new and infill development, street reconstruction, and retrofitting). The Implementation Section in Chapter 2, the specific Case Studies in Chapter 3, and the summary of Implementation Challenges and Strategies in Chapter 4 may be of value.

BICYCLE-ONLY INFRASTRUCTURE

Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide

This guide is a resource for project planners and designers who are considering, evaluating, and designing separated bike lanes as part of a [Complete Streets](#) approach. It also includes a menu of design recommendations for several key components of safe, comfortable, and connected bike networks that can attract people of all ages and abilities to bicycling.



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

[Linking Transit Agencies and Land Use Decision Making: Guidebook for Transit Agencies](#)

This guide outlines the process for building a transit-supportive community and includes related case studies. It can help transit agencies better address connections among transit, land use planning, and development decisions. It addresses improved transit and land use by providing transit agencies with tools for better communication at the decision-making table.

[Planning for Transit-Supportive Development: A Practitioner's Guide](#)

This toolkit provides guidance for integrating transit planning with local land use planning that can help metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), regional planners, transit agencies, and local government elected officials, staff, land use planners, and transit planners. The best practices and success stories provide useful real-world examples for consideration and offer ideas for planners at every level on how to integrate transit-supportive development and investments.

[Transit Street Design Guide](#)

This document provides design guidance for developing transit facilities on city streets and designing and engineering streets to prioritize transit, improve transit service quality, and support other transit-related goals. It also provides transportation departments, transit agencies, leaders, and practitioners with tools to prioritize transit. The guide includes case studies from a variety of communities.

LAND USE, DENSITY, AND DESTINATION

[Tools and Practices for Land Use Integration—Linking Planning and Public Health](#)

This document offers examples of collaboration to develop effective planning tools, policies, and incentives. Land use, transportation, and health-related decisions involve a range of factors and agencies at different organizational levels.





PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITY ACCESS

[Improving Public Health through Public Parks and Trails—Eight Common Measures](#)

This summary presents eight common measures that connect park and trail planning to public health goals. Communities can apply these measures to plan, evaluate, monitor, manage, and promote public parks and trail systems at all levels.

CROSS-CUTTING

[A Resident's Guide for Creating Safer Communities for Walking and Biking](#)

This guide includes information on identifying problems, taking action to address concerns, and finding solutions to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. It also contains community success stories and tips for replicating efforts to help residents, parents, community association members, and others get involved in making communities safer.

[Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Along Existing Roads—ActiveTrans Priority Tool Guidebook](#)

This guide presents a tool that may be used to help prioritize improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities, either separately or together, as part of a Complete Streets evaluation approach.

SELECT DATA SOURCES FOR ACTION

[CDC—Data & Benchmarks—Community Health Assessment](#)

This site contains data that can help state, tribal, local, and territorial health departments and other organizations as they develop community health assessments and health improvement plans.

[National Walkability Index](#)

This index is a nationwide geographic data resource that ranks block groups according to their relative walkability.



US Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity