



# Health by Design: Creating Communities that Support Active Aging

**Kim Irwin, MPH**  
**Executive Director**  
**Alliance for Health Promotion**



## Mid-America Institute on Aging Friday, August 15, 2014

This presentation will cover:

- The intersection of the built environment and public health;
- How that impacts older adults' abilities to be safe, active and engaged in their communities; and
- How we can use policy, systems and environmental change to improve our communities for people of all ages and abilities.



## Mid-America Institute on Aging Friday, August 15, 2014

### Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will understand the links between the built environment and public health and how this impacts older adults' abilities to be safe, active and engaged in their communities.
2. Participants will take away three policy, systems and/or environmental changes that can be pursued to help ensure older adults can remain safe, active and engaged in their communities.



Health by Design is a coalition of diverse partners working to ensure that communities throughout Indiana have neighborhoods, public spaces and transportation infrastructure that promote physical activity and healthy living.



## Our priority goals:

- Increase walking, biking, and other public transit options.
- Increase neighborhood, city, and regional connectivity.
- Encourage land use decision making that promotes public health.
- Reduce dependency on automobiles.



**ALLIANCE**  
FOR HEALTH PROMOTION

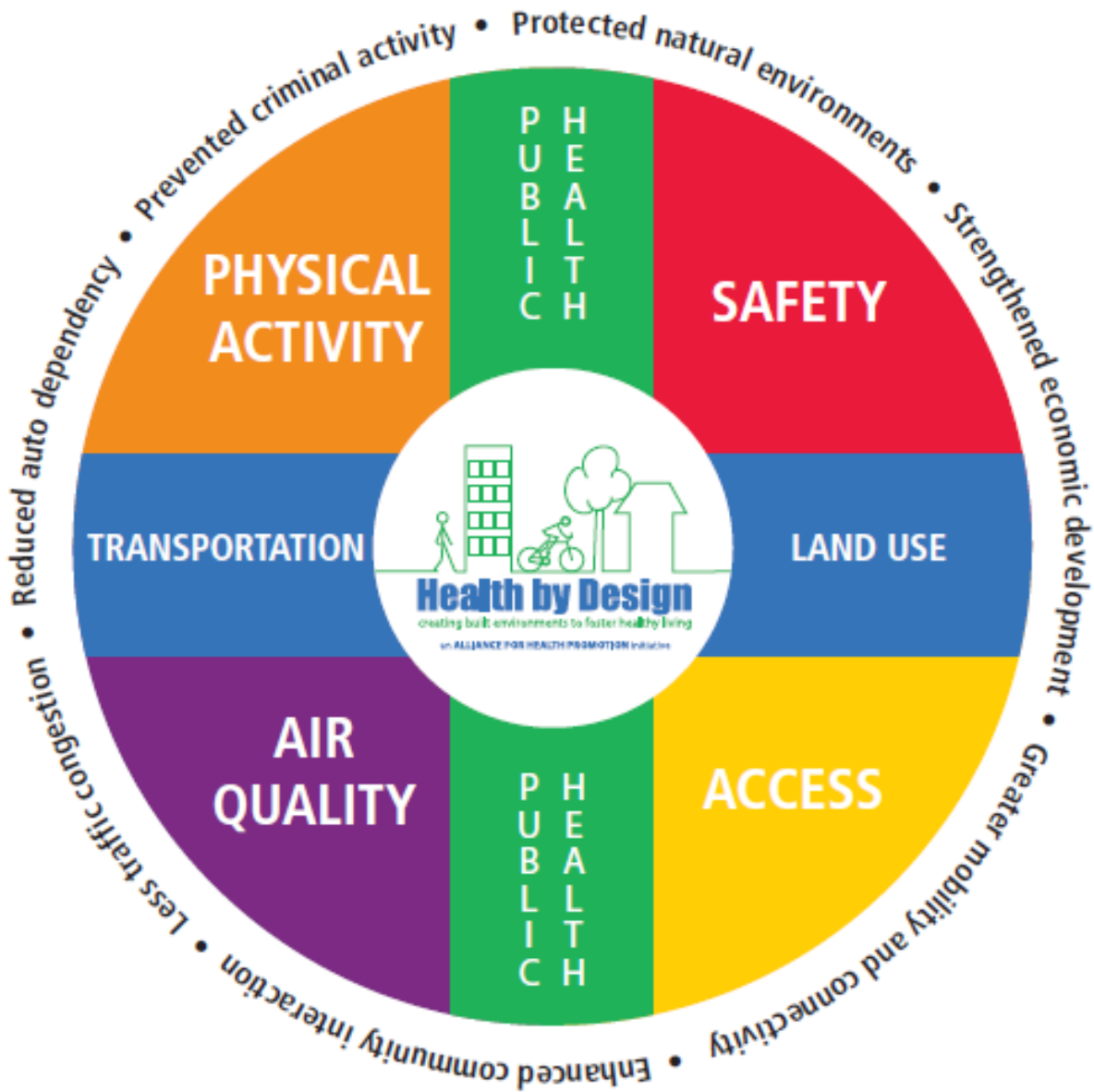


**Health by Design**  
creating built environments to foster healthy living  
an ALLIANCE FOR HEALTH PROMOTION initiative



# INDIANA WALKS







# Physical Activity and Older Adults

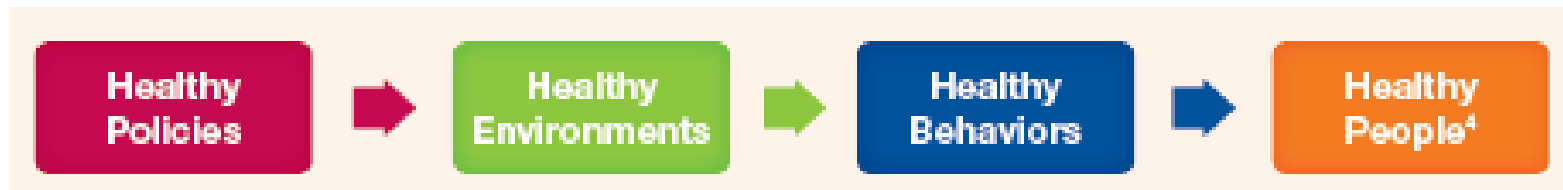
Benefits to physical, cognitive and emotional health:

- Reduced morbidity and mortality
- Prevention and treatment of chronic diseases
- Reduced risk of falls
- Improved well-being and quality of life
- Independence and self-care





# A Policy, Systems, Environmental Change Model



Knowledge and skills (traditional PH approach)  
+ Environments  
= Sustainable behavior change



## Health by Design's Approach

For improved public health, we must also become engaged in discussions about transportation & land use.





## Active Living

A way of life that integrates physical activity into daily routines

*“When communities organize themselves around the automobile as the primary mode of transportation, they effectively engineer physical activity right out of the equation.”*

*Neil Caudle*



## Place Matters

- Where you live determines how well you live.
- Tell me your zip code, I'll tell you your life expectancy.





*“The built environment is social policy in concrete.”*

Dr. Richard Jackson, UCLA

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

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)



We know how to build complete streets



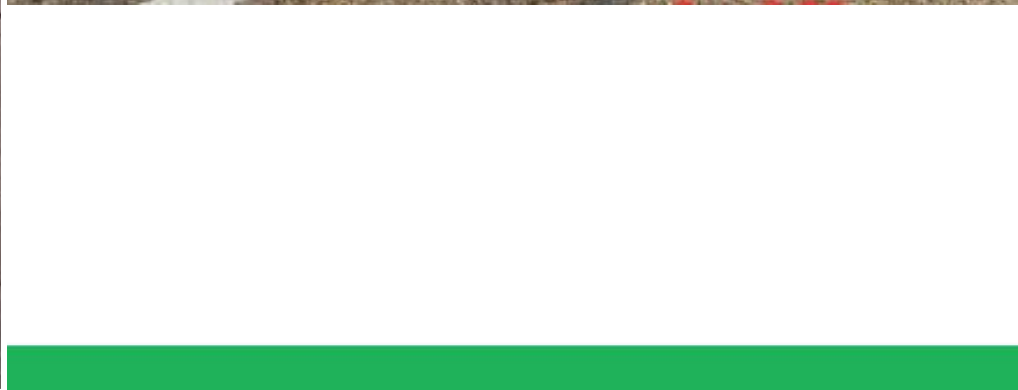
Yet too often we end up with this...







...and this...



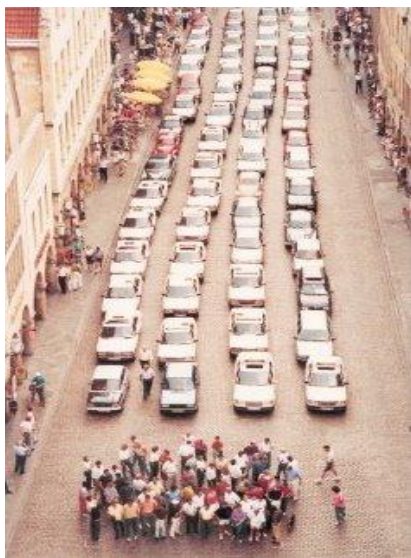


## We Need Options

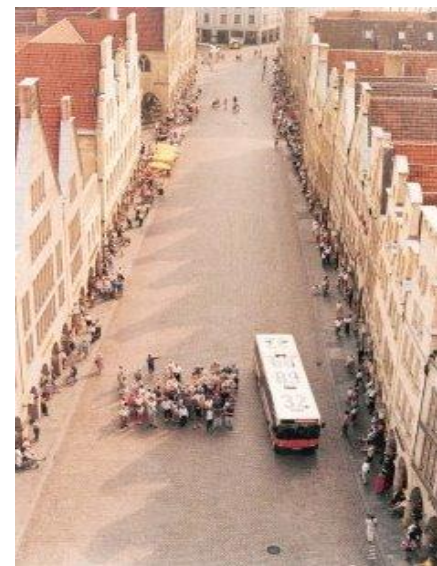
- Nearly one-third of Americans don't drive
- 55% of Americans would rather drive less & walk more.
- 57% would like to spend less time in the car
- 73% currently feel they have no choice but to drive as much as they do



50% of all trips are shorter than 3 miles  
28% of trips are one mile or less  
72% of these trips are made by auto



*Widening roads  
to reduce  
congestion is like  
loosening your  
belt to lose  
weight.*





## We Need Options

- 47% of older Americans say it is unsafe to cross a major street near their home.
- 54% of older Americans living in inhospitable neighborhoods say they would walk and bike more often if the built environment improved.





## We Need Options

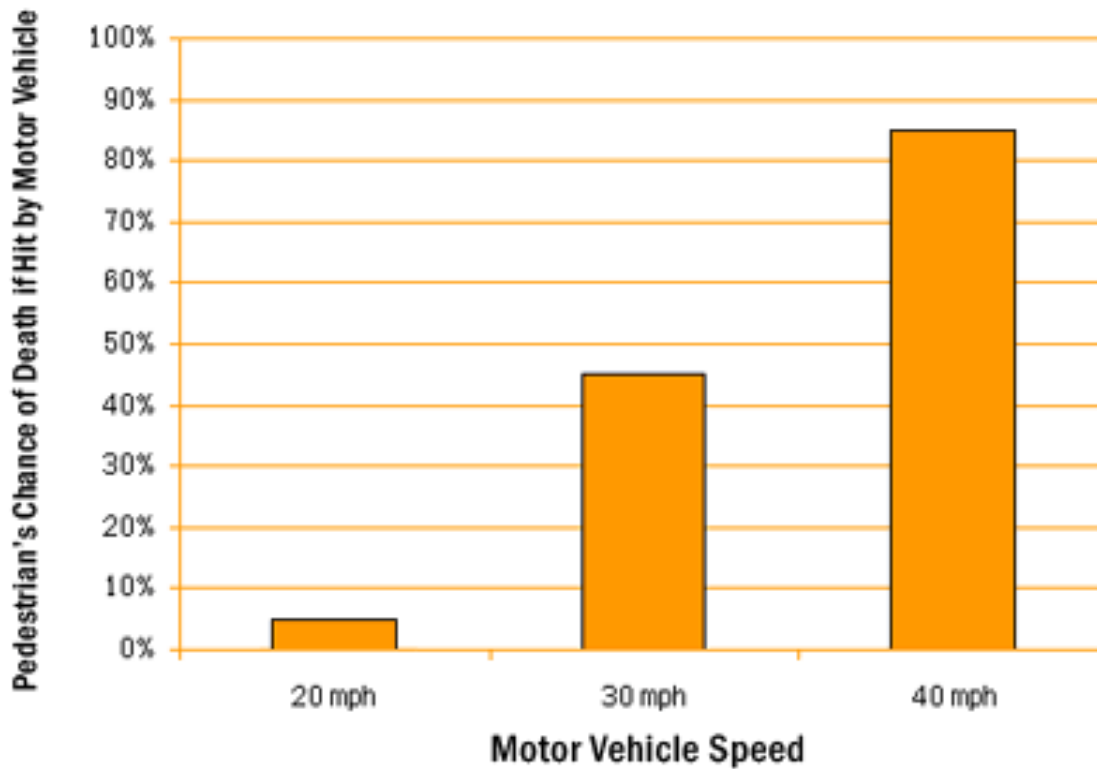
- 31% of adults with disabilities lack adequate transportation
- Older adults account for 18% of pedestrian fatalities but only 13% of the population





# Speed Kills

## Pedestrian Fatalities Based on Speed of Vehicle





## Dangerous by Design

- Pedestrian deaths are preventable through better policy, design, practice and regulation.



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





# Designing & Building Healthy Places



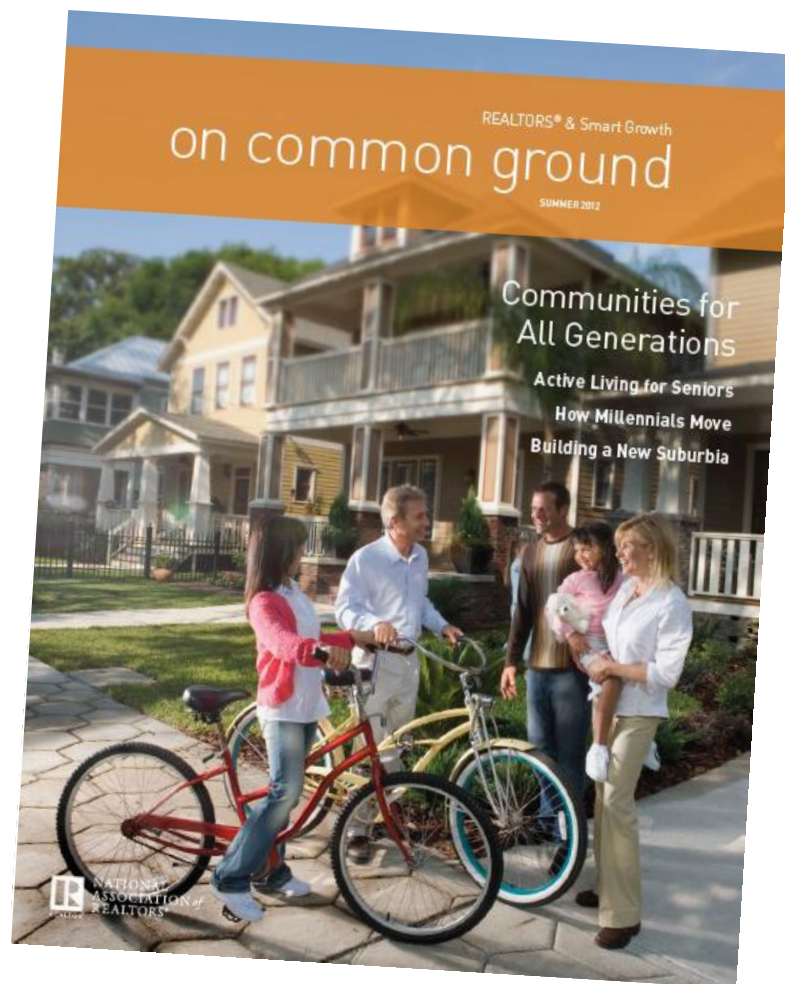
[www.pedbikeimages.org](http://www.pedbikeimages.org) / Dan Burden

- Start with a Vision
- Integrate Land Use and Transportation Planning
- Institutionalize What Works



## Partnerships

- AARP
- REALTOR® associations
- YMCAs
- American Heart Association
- Economic development organizations & businesses
- American Planning Association
- Environmental organizations
- Local health coalitions
- Bicycle and pedestrian advocacy groups





## Lifelong Indiana Coalition

**The Lifelong Indiana Coalition seeks broad support for more attractive, livable, and competitive Hoosier communities that residents of all ages and abilities can make their lifelong homes.**

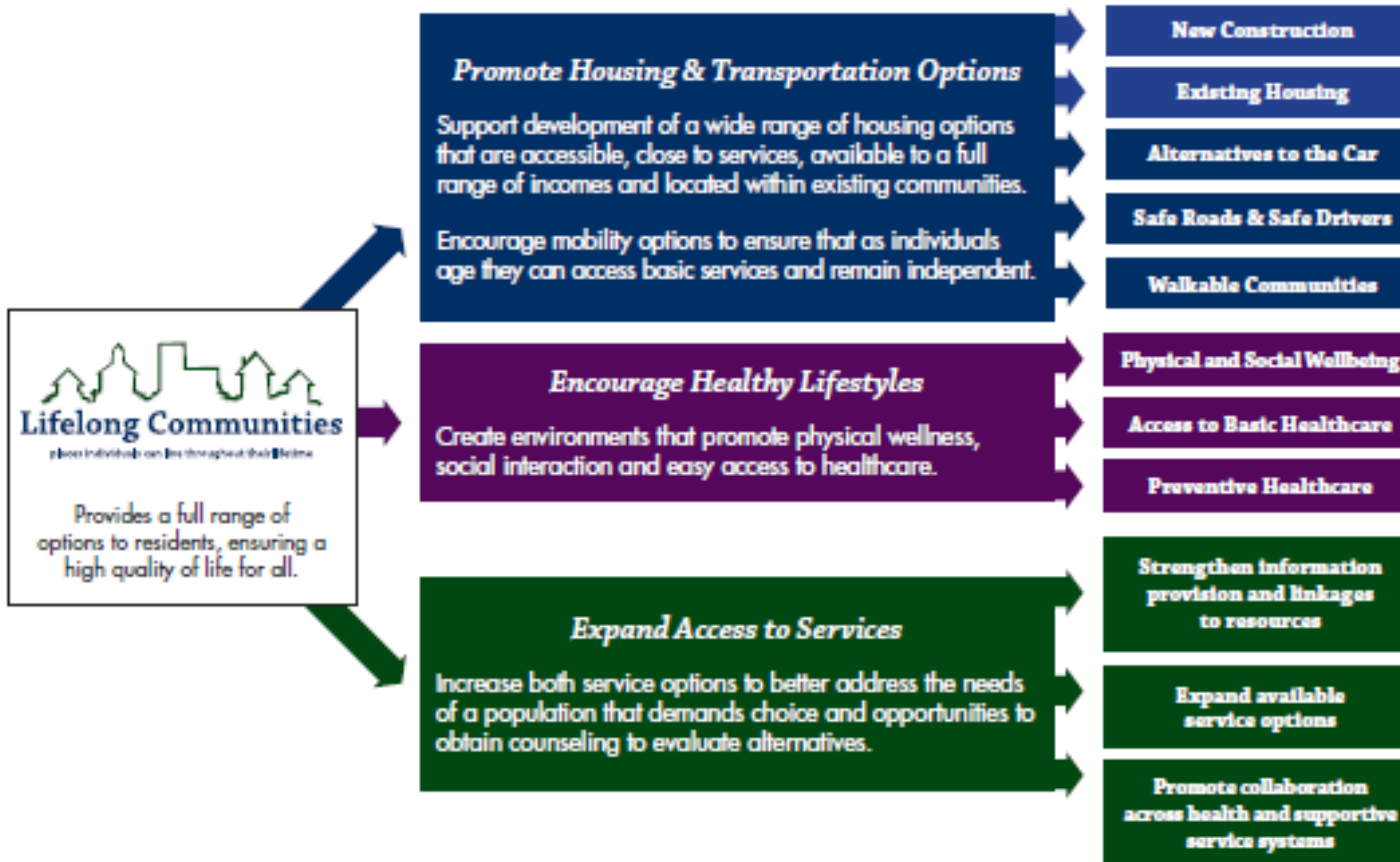
**Follow on Twitter @LifelongIndiana**



## Lifelong Indiana Coalition:

- Engage seniors in the planning process
- Ensure a range of affordable housing options for all stages of life
- Ensure access to transportation options
- Use land-use and zoning tools to create welcoming communities
- Support the economic well-being of adults and caregivers
- Strengthen community assets, amenities and supports





Lifelong Communities Handbook: Creating Opportunities for Lifelong Living  
 Atlanta Regional Commission  
[www.atlantaregional.com/lc](http://www.atlantaregional.com/lc)



# Designing & Building Healthy Places

- **Policies**-that support and encourage active communities
- **Plans**-that create a vision of what could be
- **Programs**-that promote active living environments
- **Projects**-that implement community change
- **Performance measures**-to make sure it all works



# Designing & Building Healthy Places

- Prioritize Walking
  - Implement Complete Streets policies
  - Support programs and activities to promote safety
  - Adopt design guidelines
  - Ensure access and connections to transit
  - Require participation of private development



# Designing & Building Healthy Places

To be favored, a walk must be:

- Useful
- Safe
- Comfortable
- Interesting



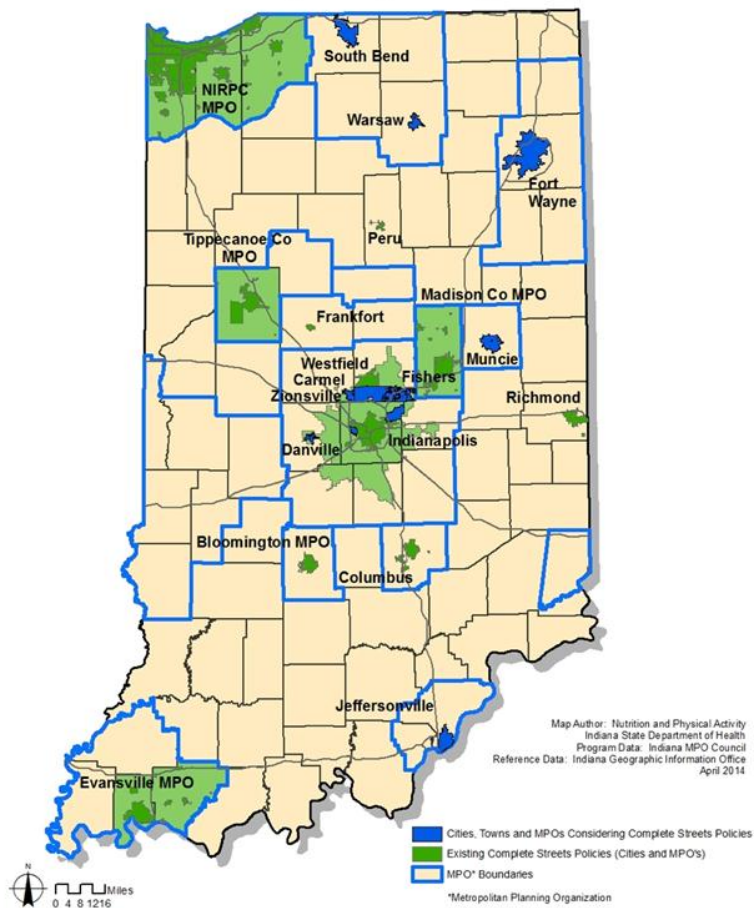




## Complete Streets

- Complete Streets are streets for everyone. They are designed, built, maintained and operated to enable safe access for all users.
- For everyone: 2 – 102
- Twelve Complete Streets policies now cover over 46% of Hoosiers

Indiana Complete Streets  
Where Policy Change is Happening





# What's more inviting?





# Public Transportation, Access and Health

- Numerous health benefits
- Significant unmet demand for transit service, as it's been historically underfunded
- Need additional dedicated funding





# Designing & Building Healthy Places

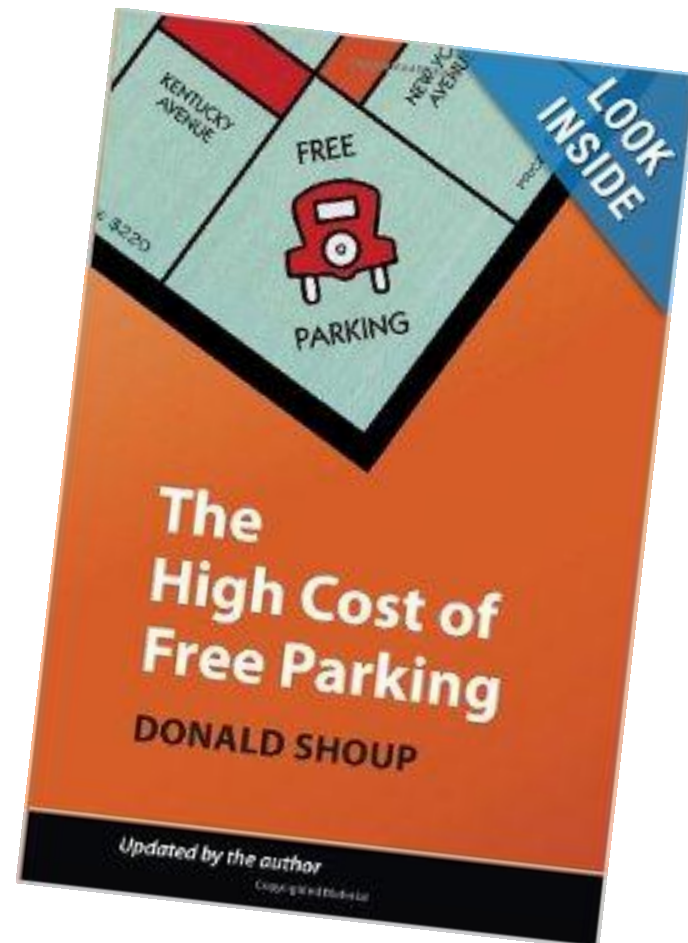
- Comprehensive Land Use Planning
- Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)
- Mixed-income Housing
- Infill Development
- Rehab of Blighted Areas





## Parking Policies

- A parking 'problem' is actually a good thing!
- Repeal parking minimums
- #BlackFridayParking  
[www.strongtowns.org](http://www.strongtowns.org)





# Designing & Building Healthy Places

- Open Spaces, Parks, and Recreation
  - Greenfield & farmland preservation
  - Plan for connectivity and access
  - Use out-of-service rail corridors
  - Convert vacant lots into community gardens, parks and other green spaces
  - Use joint-use agreements to increase activity options



# Designing & Building Healthy Places

- Include Healthy Food Access in Comprehensive Plans
- Promote, Expand and Protect Sites for Community Gardens and Farmers' Markets
- Zone to Limit/Restrict Fast Food Establishments
- Restrict Mobile Vending of Calorie-Dense, Nutrient-Poor Foods
- Provide Permits/Licenses and Incentives





## So What Can You Do?

- Learn and get involved in the process
- Lead or participate in an advocacy group
- Examine the environment and policies in your community
- Invite others to get involved
- Take action!





# Questions?

**Health by Design**  
401 W. Michigan Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3233  
317.352.3844

[info@healthbydesignonline.org](mailto:info@healthbydesignonline.org)

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

an **Alliance for Health Promotion** initiative