

Walkability

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Abstract

The reasons for the epidemic levels of obesity and overweight are numerous and varied. Suburban sprawl, technology, and stresses of daily life in today's world all contribute to the trend toward obesity and inactivity. The benefits of physical activity have been thoroughly explored and established as a means to enhance the health and well-being of individuals. Further, physical activity is an effective tool in the establishment and maintenance of a healthy weight and can provide some level of protection from the development of certain non-communicable diseases.

Walking has been identified as one of the most commonly utilized forms of physical activity and significant attention has been directed towards examining aspects of the environment that promote walking for leisure and transport (Joh, Nguyen & Boarnet 2012). The construct of walkability refers to the perception individuals hold regarding the design and features of the environment that facilitate and promote walking (Litman, 2014). Just as there are elements such as social capital and aesthetics that may enhance walkability, there are factors that may inhibit walkability such as the availability of walkways and proximity to destinations.

The purpose of the present work is to establish an understanding of walkability as a component of further study from a leisure perspective regarding the interrelationship between walkability, social capital and the built environment in selected U.S. communities.

Keywords

walkability, social capital, built environment