The Benefits of Sidewalks

**Health Benefits**

- Sidewalks provide opportunities for walking, and studies have shown that people with access to sidewalks are more likely to walk\(^1\) and meet the Surgeon General’s recommendations for physical activity\(^2\).

- Physical inactivity contributes to the incidence of obesity, diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and certain cancers; and it carries a risk burden close to that of smoking.

- A study by the Marion County Health Department (MCHD) in 2005 found that 1 in 4 adults in Indiana was obese.

- Another study by the MCHD found that 22% of the Marion County elementary school children measured were overweight.

**Economic Benefits**

- A study by the Urban Land Institute shows home buyers are willing to pay more for homes in walkable neighborhoods.

- Real Estate Research Corp. analysis shows property values rise fastest in pedestrian friendly areas.

- Sidewalks improve access to business and industry for employees relying on public transportation.

- Sidewalks improve customer traffic for retail businesses.

**Other benefits of sidewalks include:**

- reduced crime risk through increased pedestrian traffic - “more eyes on the street” as promoted by the International Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Association ([www.cpted.net](http://www.cpted.net))

- improved access to buses. IndyGo has been working with the city to add sidewalks at transit stops. The sidewalk amendment will boost their efforts.

- enhanced sense of community through better connections to neighbors and businesses

- decreased use of cars for short trips, saving gas and lowering emissions
  - The 1995 National Personal Transportation Survey found that 40% of car trips in the U.S. are less than 2 miles, short enough to be accomplished on foot or by bicycle, if the infrastructure supports walking or biking.
  - Cars have their poorest efficiency and so burn more gas during the first few miles of travel.

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