



Fact Sheet

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 walk¹ and meet the Surgeon General's recommendations for physical activity².
- 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)
- 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.

1. Eyler, A.A., Brownson, R.C., Bacak, S.J., & Housemann, R.A. (2003). The epidemiology of walking for physical activity in the United States. *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*, 35(9), 1529-1536.

2. Brownson, R. C., Baker, E. A., Housemann, R. A., Brennan, L. K., & Bacak, S. J. (2001). Environmental and policy determinants of physical activity in the United States. *American Journal of Public Health*, 91(12), 1995-2003.