Abstract

What Makes A Community Walkable?
Mapping Walkability Indicators in Central Indiana

Research has shown that there is a connection between the way our communities are planned and our health. This research paper looks at significant literature within the urban planning and public health fields which documents this relationship. In addition, health and built environment conditions found in Indianapolis are measured against findings of a walkability survey distributed to a health advocacy group based in central Indiana. Analysis provided by this paper shows that overweight and obesity are significant medical problems and that the built environment, characterized by urban sprawl, is a significant factor contributing to this trend. In addition, data shows that Indianapolis residents are significantly overweight and the city is behind other major cities in physical fitness and other walkability indicators. Finally, survey results suggest that the walkability of Indianapolis neighborhoods is correlated to its design, connectivity, and proximity to parks. As such, this research provides readers with a better understanding of the relationship between the built environment and physical activity, and how principles of urban planning can improve public health.

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