

# The Health Issues: Obesity and Asthma

## Solution: Complete Streets & Walkable Neighborhoods

### Quick Facts

Fact: Obesity rates in the United States have increased dramatically in the last thirty years. Approximately two-thirds of U.S. adults and one-fifth of children are either obese or overweight. Overweight people are at risk of many chronic diseases including heart disease and diabetes. (source U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Fact: More than half of Americans would like to walk more and drive less. Poor community design and lack of pedestrian facilities are the primary reasons people cite for not walking more. An overwhelming percentage support policies intended to make their communities more livable by reducing traffic speed and creating a safer pedestrian environment. (source: Surface Transportation Policy Partnership)

### Key Messages

Message: “Communities must be designed around people and not cars. Walkable neighborhoods that have a mix of homes, shops and jobs give people a choice to leave their cars parked and walk or bike instead. This is good for our health and good for the planet.”

Message: “Nearly half of the Bay Area’s greenhouse gas pollution comes from driving. At the same time, many of the trips we make are less than three miles - the equivalent of a 15-minute bike ride. If we make our streets safer for cyclists and pedestrians, we can improve air quality, reduce carbon emissions and engage in a more active lifestyle.”

### Policy Suggestions

- Ensure that pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders of all ages and abilities can safely share the street network.
- Identify barriers to pedestrian and bicycle access, especially at transit stations, and prioritize completion of these gaps.
- Plan and implement a continuous network of walkways and bikeways and ensure they connect people with primary destinations (transit stations, job centers, shops, offices, libraries, parks).

### Performance Standards and Measurable Outcomes

Communities with complete streets policies can measure success through a number of ways: the miles of on-street bicycle routes created; new linear feet of pedestrian accommodation; changes in the number of people using public transportation, bicycling, or walking (mode shift); and number of new street trees.

### Resources & References

How walkable is your neighborhood? Check out [www.walkscore.com](http://www.walkscore.com)