Active Community Environments (ACEs) planning promotes a holistic approach to address our nation’s public health issues by planning active transportation systems that connect to key destinations, including healthy food hubs that eliminate food deserts and support local business. In doing so, we can simultaneously encourage physical activity and healthy eating--while also revitalizing our streets, parks and gathering spaces, which serves the large purpose of strengthening entire communities and regions.

**Elected Official: Pleasant, healthy living environments and job creation and retention**
It is in a politician’s best interest to be involved in ACE planning to make a community more inviting to new companies and young professionals. Additionally, emphasis on ACE planning provides a tangible record demonstrating elected officials are making positive impacts in their community, and it comes with several earned media opportunities. Having a key decision-maker on an ACEs planning team can really help when it comes time to pass policy.

**Health Department: Help create opportunities to be healthy**
The United States is in the midst of a health crisis due to high obesity, diabetes and heart disease rates. Research shows that this public health crisis has been largely caused by auto-centric development and lifestyles that limit physical activity, and the lack of access to healthy and affordable food for all socio-economic groups. ACE planning can shift health efforts to prevention rather than treatment of disease.

**School Administration: Schools can provide students with a daily dose of activity**
Public schools have a vital role to play in childhood health and obesity. The location of public schools and the provision of sidewalks have been shown to have an impact on student travel. Students with shorter walk and bike times to school are more likely to walk and bike. School facility planners can encourage active commuting by children through a variety of improvements and programs.

“If you plan cities for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic. If you plan for people and places, you get people and places.”

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**Planning Department: Design matters**
Because land use and design affect options available for physical activity, planners can have a substantial impact on the health of their communities. Well-designed active communities foster benefits of public safety, environmental sustainability, and high levels of physical activity.

**Economic Development: Local retail hubs benefit from walking and biking access**
To develop a flourishing local economy, it is important that shopping communities are walkable and accessible. For instance, if shopping communities are planned to provide the necessary variety of stores used on a daily and weekly basis (i.e. grocers, restaurants, retail stores) within a 20-square-block area that accommodates populations that do not drive (i.e. seniors, students, disabled), the flow of money will stay in the community.

**Transit: Incorporate “Complete Streets” for alternative modes of transportation**
A Complete Streets approach takes into account all modes of transportation and has the ability to improve the safety of our streets, increase walking, biking and transit use, reduce fuel consumption, enhance sustainability, and make local and regional communities more resilient. By using innovative approaches that connect transportation and land use, transportation programs can develop active transportation plans for urban, suburban, or rural communities at a scale that is right for them.

**Safety/Law Enforcement: Safe neighborhoods and traffic “calming” increase activity**
Safe, pleasant neighborhoods encourage people to be more active, which promotes more positive street activity, making everyone safer. Combined with traffic calming and regulation of automobile speeds through school zones and high pedestrian and bicycle corridors makes a neighborhood a better place to live.

**Parks and Recreation: It meets the “mission”**
Parks and recreation must be involved in the ACEs planning process because the theme of parks is changing as communities become more active. As population density increases and greenspace decreases, the functionality of a park becomes more important. Parks and recreation must be accessible, inclusive, and useful.

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