Peggy Edwards and Agis D. Tsouros

A healthy city is an active city:

a physical activity planning guide

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
EUROPE

A HEALTHY CITY IS AN ACTIVE CITY: A PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PLANNING GUIDE

Healthy Cities 21ST Century

Abstract

This planning guide provides a range of ideas, information and tools for developing a comprehensive plan for creating a healthy, active city by enhancing physical activity in the urban environment. By developing, improving and supporting opportunities in the built and social environments, city leaders and their partners can enable all citizens to be physically active in day-to-day life.

Keywords

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The information in this publication is informed by many resources (listed in Chapter 9) and especially by *Community physical activity planning: a resource manual*. Toronto, Ministry of Health Promotion, Ontario, 2006 (www.mhp.gov.on.ca/english/sportandrec/PlanningResrceManual_FINAL.pdf).

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1. Introduction

Improving participation in health-enhancing physical activity is a public health issue of urgent concern. It is also about the well-being of communities, protection of the environment and investments in future generations.

Purpose of this guide

This guide is designed to help city leaders create a plan for physical activity, active living and sport in their city or community. It can be used by local governments alone; however, efforts to develop and maintain active cities will be more successful if they take an integrated approach and involve a range of groups, including city departments, nongovernmental organizations, schools and educators, the health sector, the private sector and residents themselves. It is important that elected officials and neighbourhood leaders champion and endorse the plan.

Part 1 summarizes the kind of approach that is needed and how it relates to the Healthy Cities movement; why opportunities for active living need to be provided in the urban environment; and who needs to be involved.

Part 2 describes how to create, implement and evaluate a plan for healthy active living in the urban setting.

Part 3 provides useful tools, brief descriptions of some innovative plans, programmes and policies underway in selected cities and a list of key resources for further information.

This guide provides a comprehensive approach that can be tailored to the requirements of each unique city or community. How you use the guide and its various parts depends on your local conditions, the needs of your population and the scale of your initiative.

Building on other key publications

Since 2006, several excellent documents on physical activity, health and obesity in Europe have been published (see Chapter 9). In particular, users of this publication should access and use two other complementary publications side by side with this planning guide.

Promoting physical activity and active living in urban environments: the role of local governments. The solid facts (1) provides a concise overview of the best available evidence on physical activity in the urban environment (including references) and makes suggestions for policy and practice based on that evidence.

Physical activity and health in Europe: evidence for action (2) sets out the facts about health-enhancing physical activity, provides examples of approaches already being taken, highlights the contributions that can be made by health systems and other sectors and makes the case for concerted action across the European Region. It contains a complete set of references.

Moving about: what should this be called?

The human body was meant to move, but several terms are used for encouraging and enabling people to move about. Depending on your situation, you may want to create a plan for "physical activity", "active living" or "sport" or any combination of these three. For the purpose of this guide, these terms are defined as follows.

Active living is a way of life that integrates physical activity into daily routines. The goal is to accumulate at least 30 minutes of activity each day. Individuals may do this in a variety of ways, such as walking or bicycling for transport, performing fitness exercises, participating in sports (both organized and informal), playing in the park, working in the garden, taking the stairs and using recreational facilities.

Physical activity is any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that results in energy expenditure above resting level. This includes walking or cycling for transport, dance, traditional games and pastimes, gardening and housework as well as sport or deliberate exercise.

All forms of physical activity can be beneficial, but the goal is to enjoy health-enhancing physical activity, defined as any form of physical activity that benefits health and functional capacity without undue harm or risk. This is best achieved by incorporating physical activity of at least a moderate intensity (such as brisk walking and other activities that make you breathe harder and feel warmer) into daily life.

Sport usually involves some form of competition, although this guide is mainly concerned with the sport for all movement, which stresses participation, fun and skill development rather than winning and elite performance. Organized sport is an integral part of European societies, with millions of participants and volunteers in leadership roles.

Physical activity and health in Europe: evidence for action provides more information and references on definitions, health-enhancing physical activity and recommended guidelines for physical activity for various population groups.

The healthy city approach

The WHO European Healthy Cities programme was established in 1986 to provide a local basis for implementing the principles of the WHO strategy for Health for All and the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion. It has since evolved into a global movement with a strong European-wide involvement.

The WHO European Healthy Cities Network engages local governments in developing health through a process of political commitment, institutional change, capacity-building, partnership-based planning and innovative projects. It promotes comprehensive and systematic policy and planning with a special emphasis on inequality in health and urban poverty, the needs of vulnerable groups, participatory governance and the social, economic and environmental determinants of health. It strives to include health considerations in urban economic, regeneration and development efforts.

More than 1000 cities and towns from more than 30 countries in the WHO European Region are linked through national, regional, metropolitan and thematic networks as well as the WHO European Healthy Cities Network.

The WHO European Healthy Cities Network is now completing its fourth phase (2003–2008). Cities are working on three core themes: healthy ageing, healthy urban planning and health impact assessment. In addition, all participating cities focus on physical activity and active living (Box 1).

The *Journal of Urban Health* will publish an evaluation and analysis of the work in physical activity soon. An article "Active living in healthy cities" by Johan Faskunger summarizes feedback from 56 cities in the WHO European Healthy Cities Network (Box 2).

Successful implementation of the Healthy Cities approach requires innovative actions addressing all aspects of health and living conditions and extensive networking between cities across Europe and beyond. This entails four essential elements for action: explicit political commitment, leadership, institutional change and intersectoral partnerships.

Box 1. What is a healthy, active city?

A healthy city is not one that has achieved a particular health status.

Rather, it is a city that is conscious of health and striving to improve it. What is required is a commitment to health and a process and structure to achieve it.

A healthy, active city is one that is continually creating and improving opportunities in the built and social environments and expanding community resources to enable all its citizens to be physically active in day-to-day life.

Box 2. Some key findings from an analysis of active living in cities in the WHO European Healthy Cities Network

- Most member cities viewed active living as an important issue for urban planning, such as improving visual appeal, enhancing social cohesion, creating a more sustainable transport system and reducing inequality in public health.
- Most member cities reported action initiated to promote active living, with an emphasis on actions targeting the built and social environment to promote walking and cycling.
- Many efforts to promote active living are nested in programmes to prevent obesity among adults and children.
- Only eight cities mentioned an integrated framework specific for active living.
- The health care sector was clearly involved in 25 actions, predominantly as an arena to identify and reach sedentary individuals and to initiate disease prevention programmes.
- Frequently mentioned barriers to promoting active living included lack of funding and lack of commitment from decision-makers.
- Better evaluation methods are needed to improve the evidence base on which actions are effective to promote different types of active living among different groups, since evaluation strategies appeared to be insufficient.
- Future challenges include establishing integrated policy specific for active living, introducing a larger range of actions and increasing funding and capacity to make a difference at the population level.

Source: Faskunger JT. Active living in healthy cities. *Journal of Urban Health* (in press).

Why is a plan needed for physical activity?

The health benefits of physical activity are well known. Regular moderate physical activity promotes mental, physical and social well-being and helps to prevent illness, disability and obesity (Box 3).

In addition to improving health, cities that invest in physical activity policies and programmes (including active transport) can:

- save money on health care and transport services;
- have more productive citizens and workers;
- be more liveable and attractive to residents, employers and visitors;

- have less air and noise pollution and better access to green spaces;
- enhance neighbourhood revitalization, social cohesion and community identity; and
- expand social networks.

Physical activity and health in Europe: evidence for action (2) provides more information on physical activity, sedentary living and health.

Promoting physical activity and active living in urban environments: the role of local governments. The solid facts (1) provides more information on the benefits of investing in active living in the urban environment.

Relationship to other planning processes in a healthy city

Local plans for physical activity and active living should be linked to and integrated with broader planning processes. For example, active living plans, policies and programmes can complement other urban planning initiatives related to transport, environment, energy, public health and economic development.

Box 3. The inactivity problem

Despite the clear benefits of active living to both individuals and communities, Europe is facing a huge inactivity problem, which is a critical factor in increased rates of chronic diseases and obesity.

- Two thirds of the people older than 15 years in the European Union are not physically active at recommended levels for health *(2)*.
- Europe-wide, less than one third of schoolchildren appear to meet recognized physical activity guidelines *(3)*.
- Physical inactivity increases the risk of many chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and cancer *(4)*.
- Overweight affects 30–80% of adults in the countries of the WHO European Region. About 20% of the children in the European Region are overweight, and one third of these are obese *(5)*.
- Physical inactivity causes an estimated 600 000 deaths per year in the WHO European Region and leads to a loss of 5.3 million years of healthy life expectancy per year *(6)*.
- The economic consequences of physical inactivity have been shown to be substantial for health care costs but even greater on indirect costs, which include the value of economic output lost because of illness, disease-related work disability and premature death *(7,8)*.

2. A comprehensive approach to active living in the city

> … physical and social environments play major roles in the health of communities … urban planning can and does serve as a form of primary prevention and contributor to health outcomes.

Duhl & Sanchez *(9)*

A framework for creating a healthy, active city

This guide suggests a comprehensive framework for developing and implementing an active living plan in your city (Fig. 1).

A healthy, active city recognizes the value of active living, physical activity and sport. It provides opportunities for physical activity and active living for all.

The built and social environments are key focal points. The built environment includes land-use patterns, transport systems, urban design, green spaces and all buildings and spaces that are created by people (including schools, homes, workplaces and recreation areas). Elements in the social environment that influence participation in physical activity include income, equity, culture and social support.

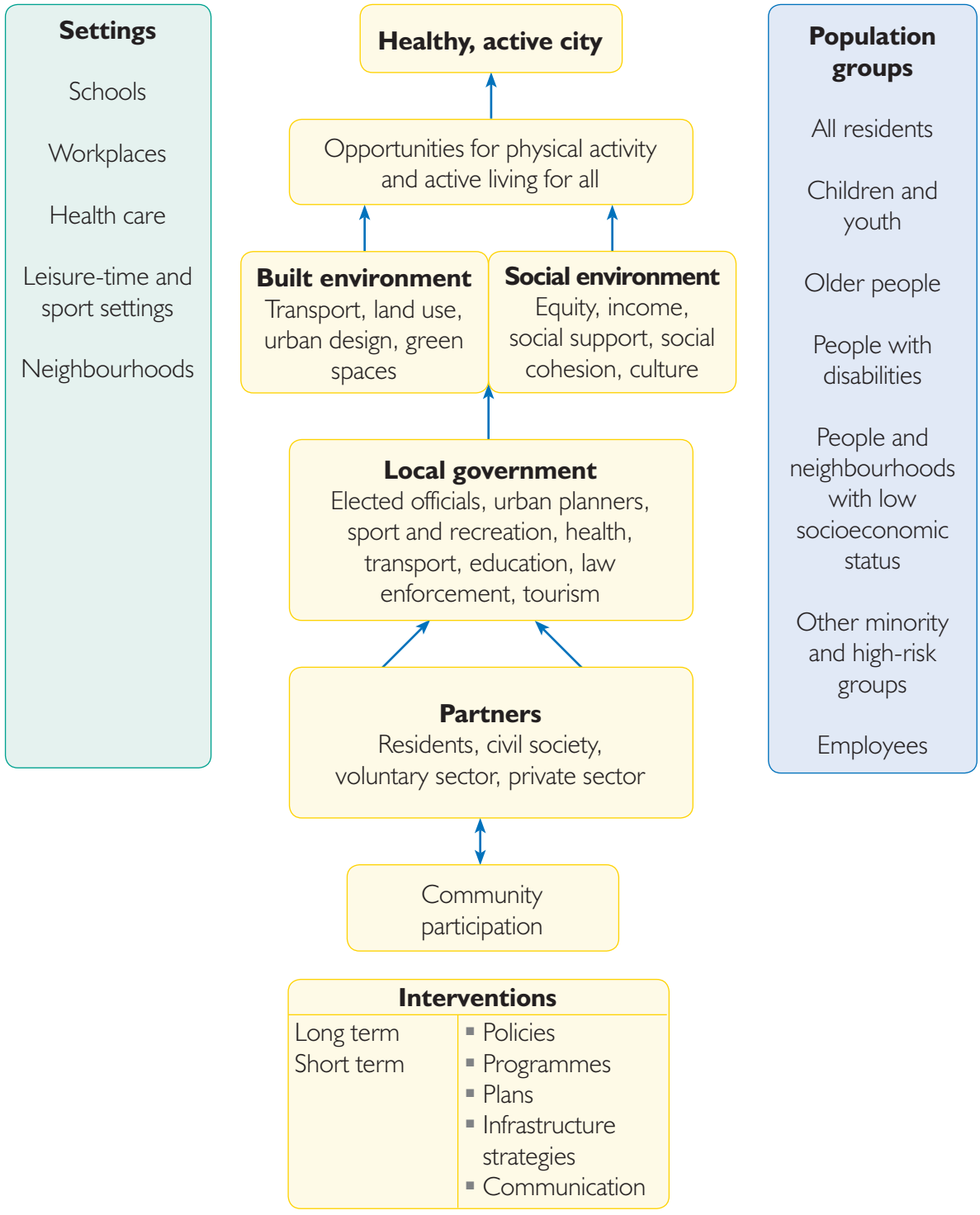
Local government officials and departments need to take a leading role; however, the voluntary and private sectors need to be partners in the planning and implementation of an active living strategy. In some cases, these groups or a coalition of groups may take the leadership or coordinating function (see Chapter 4 for further discussion). Community participation is essential for success.

Interventions – which may be short or long term – target the built or social environment or both. They include policies, plans, programmes, infrastructure strategies and communications. Subsequent chapters discuss these elements.

A comprehensive active living strategy aims to enhance opportunities for all population groups (box to the right in Fig. 1), paying special attention to children and youth, older people, people and neighbourhoods with low socioeconomic status, employees, people with disabilities and other ethnic minority and at-risk groups.

The promotion of active living in the city also needs to focus on a variety of settings (box to the left in Fig. 1), including schools, workplaces, health care settings, neighbourhoods and homes and recreation and sport facilities (Box 4).

Fig. 1. A framework for creating a healthy, active city



Box 4. Key influences on physical activity in the built and social environments

- People walk and cycle more when destinations such as shops and schools are close by and are connected by pedestrian-friendly streets *(10,11)*.
- Policies that improve walkability and mixed land use also increase community cohesion and perceptions of personal security *(10)*.
- Traffic-calming measures and policy changes at the local level increase pedestrian and bicycle travel *(12)*.
- Disadvantaged populations are less likely to have easy access to the places that encourage a healthy lifestyle, such as safe streets and sidewalks, playgrounds, parks, trails and community gardens *(13)*.
- Even high-income countries have steep social class gradients in pedestrian injury rates, and the relationship between lower social class and more injuries among child pedestrians is well established *(14)*.
- Participation in physical activity differs by sex. Across all countries and regions in Europe, girls are less active than boys and the gender gap increases with age *(3)*.
- Social support interventions in community settings (such as neighbourhoods, workplaces and universities) can result in a 44% increase in the duration of time spent being physically active and a 20% increase in the frequency of physical activity *(15)*.

Promoting physical activity and active living in urban environments: the role of local governments. The solid facts (1) summarizes the research on factors in the built and social environments that influence physical activity and findings related to specific population groups and settings.

A three-stage planning process

This guide describes a three-stage planning process for developing, implementing and evaluating an active living strategy in cities (Box 5):

- stage 1: building commitment and getting started – building commitment with key stakeholders, forming a leadership group, creating a vision, collecting information, identifying opportunities and constraints and setting goals and objectives;
- stage 2: preparing a plan – identifying and setting priorities among options for policies, plans, programmes, infrastructure development and communications in both the built and social environment; and
- stage 3: implementing the plan and measuring success – implementing activities and interventions, evaluating and sharing results.

This planning process is a general guide that describes important tasks in a logical sequence. However, you may wish to adapt the process to better suit your circumstances and to dovetail with other planning processes in your city.

Box 5. A three-stage planning process

Stage 1. Getting started

1. Build commitment
2. Form a leadership group
3. Create a vision
4. Profile the city, neighbourhoods and target population groups
5. Consult with residents and stakeholders
6. Identify opportunities and constraints
7. Identify funds and resources
8. Set goals and objectives

Stage 2. Preparing a plan

1. Develop key interventions
   - Policies
   - Programmes
   - Plans
   - Infrastructure strategy
   - Communication
2. Set priorities for intervention options in the built environment
3. Set priorities for intervention options in the social environment
4. Set priorities for intervention options in specific settings
5. Strengthen individual intentions

Stage 3. Implementing the plan and measuring success

1. Stage implementation
2. Evaluate your progress
3. Share your results
4. Review and update your plan

Source: adapted from *Community physical activity planning: a resource manual (16).*

3. Who does what?

Partners for active living

An active living strategy should encourage community participation, partnerships and shared power and decision-making. One of the selling points for active living is that many people from a variety of sectors are already involved and eager to contribute. Strong physical activity plans draw on these supports by creating partnerships among the public and private sectors and civil society (Box 6).

Public sector

Elected officials need to take a leadership role in developing and championing an active living strategy, not only with the public but also with their colleagues. Everyday decisions related to priorities in funding, urban design, recreation, transport and regeneration priorities all influence people's activity levels – and ultimately their health and well-being.

Municipal sport and/or recreation services usually manage city programmes related to physical activity, parks, playgrounds and facilities such as swimming pools, playing fields, arenas and community centres.

In some cities, public health departments lead community efforts to increase physical activity for special populations and in certain settings in partnership with communities, schools, local businesses and health care facilities. As large employers, hospitals can lead by providing employees with opportunities for exercise and active transport. Long-term care residences and seniors' homes have a key role (that is often overlooked) in encouraging active living among older people. Primary care physicians and nurses are in an ideal position to counsel on physical activity and refer people to community programmes and facilities.

Municipal transport planners and staff are key to developing and maintaining opportunities for active transport (walking and cycling), discouraging car use and improving road safety. Officials involved in regional and national transport issues (such as intercity trails, national programmes to support public transport and clean air) can also provide resources and technical support for active transport strategies.

Urban planners have a leadership role to play in designing and maintaining the built environment in ways that promote active living. Urban planners become effective champions of active living when they consider enhanced physical activity as a worthwhile goal in plans to enhance the physical and social environments and act as catalysts in discussing options among broad groups of stakeholders.

Schools (from child care to university) are key settings for physical activity (see Chapter 5), and educators are key in advocating the benefits of active living, counselling on an active lifestyle and teaching skills. Researchers in a university or college can develop pilot projects and evaluations of community-based initiatives in collaboration with residents and sponsor programmes for special groups.

Municipal police forces are important partners both in promoting road safety and preventing crime. For example, community police can help establish safe and active routes to school and are responsible for keeping parks safe from crime and vandalism.

Government officials and business leaders who promote tourism can be important actors in a physical activity planning process. People like to visit cities that are walkable, attractive, sociable and activity-friendly. Municipal carnivals and special events that feature physical activity attract tourists and bring substantial resources to the city. Holiday destinations on the periphery of the city such as ski hills and national parks are also important to tourism.

Civil society

An urban active living strategy mainly focuses on sport for all. This movement, which emphasizes participation and developing skills, is well organized in all European countries and has a rich history of public participation at the local level. In keeping with the International Charter of Physical Education and Sport and the Council of Europe Charter, proponents of sport for all believe that the practice of physical education and sport is a fundamental right and essential element in lifelong education for every citizen. In recent years, sport organizations have broadened their mandate beyond competitive sport to include various forms of everyday physical activity in a variety of settings. Volunteer leaders and coaches in sport tend to hold leadership positions in their communities and can serve as key advocates and mentors for active living in the city. Some specific organizations such as cycling and gymnastics and those representing disabled sport participants can be very effective at encouraging and enabling policy and infrastructure changes that support physical activity for all. Elite sporting events (such as national games and the Olympics) provide opportunities to build spirit, but city hosts need to carefully consider how elite facilities can be effectively used later for active living for ordinary citizens.

Cultural organizations can enrich a plan for active living by providing input and opportunities for active participation in dance and other forms of traditional physical activity. This may be an effective way to engage minority populations and build social networks.

Many voluntary health and patient organizations provide information, programmes, leadership and support for active living. They often sponsor popular events such as walks or runs for diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer.

Voluntary groups working in nature and the environment are natural allies for developing and implementing plans and programmes related to green spaces, parks, woodlands, rivers and waterfronts.

Representatives from resident committees (especially in low-income neighbourhoods), services and organizations dedicated to children and youth, ethnic groups, older people and people with disabilities provide a voice for these population groups. Representation of people with disabilities (both physical and mental) may be particularly important since they are often overlooked in plans to enhance physical activity.

Informal groups often form in neighbourhoods: for example, a walking group for young mothers and their babies or weekly pick-up games at a local school, church, mosque or synagogue.

Private sector

Employers can support and sponsor programmes, policies and services that encourage active living among their employees and families (see Chapter 5). Most workplace programmes for physical activity are initiated by employees or are jointly developed by employees and employers (Boxes 6 and 7).

Fitness clubs and schools of dance are in the business of physical activity. They promote physical activity and will often partner in or lead special events.

Private businesses can provide funds, equipment and/or expertise for special events, building projects, facility and trail construction. Business leaders who are well respected in the community can serve as personal ambassadors for active living.

Mass media (such as radio, television, print and the Internet) are important partners for creating awareness and disseminating physical activity messages, campaigns and events.

Physical activity and health in Europe: evidence for action (2) provides more information on the roles of various stakeholders in promoting active living.

Box 6. Partners in physical activity planning: the public sector, civil society and the voluntary sector and the private sector

Public sector

- Elected officials
- Sport and recreation
- Health
- Transport
- Urban planning
- Education
- Law enforcement
- Tourism

Civil society and the voluntary sector

- Voluntary organizations in sport, culture, nature and health
- Representatives of residents and special groups
- Informal groups

Private sector

- Employers
- Employees
- Fitness clubs and dance schools
- Corporate sponsors
- Mass media

Box 7. The social and economic benefits of sport and physical activity

- The provision of recreation and sport activities for children, as part of a package to help sole-support parents on social assistance, can contribute to moving more families off social assistance *(17)*.
- Involvement in sport and physical activity can result in greater community ownership and care of local facilities and resources and can build capacity, skills and confidence in communities, enabling them to tackle wider community issues *(18)*.
- A United States study showed that physically active people have lower annual direct health care costs than inactive people and that increasing regular moderate physical activity among inactive adults might reduce the annual national direct health care costs by many billions of dollars *(19)*.
- Employers also benefit, since having a physically active workforce can lead to reductions in absenteeism and increased productivity *(20)*.
- Sport can be useful in reducing crime and antisocial behaviour if programmes are designed to address specific factors *(21)*.
- Medium- or high-density towns and cities in which trips are already being made mainly using public transport, walking and cycling spend the least on providing transport for their inhabitants *(22)*.
- The economic benefits of hosting major sporting events such as the Olympics have been shown to be negligible, but political, development and sociocultural benefits can occur *(23)*. Events such as marathon running and cycling attract participants and tourists and increase the prestige and recognition of the host city.
- Cities can also devise urban regeneration strategies around sporting events. For example, development for the 2012 Olympics will centre in Stratford, Borough of Newham, East London – one of the capital's most diverse and economically deprived areas. The redevelopment of brownfield sites and a transport hub will significantly improve the face of this neighbourhood *(24)*.

4. Stage 1: getting started

A vision without a plan is just a dream.

A plan without a vision is just drudgery.

But a vision with a plan can change the world.

Proverb

Stage 1

Getting started

1. Build commitment
2. Form a leadership group
3. Create a vision
4. Profile the city, neighbourhoods and target population groups
5. Consult with residents and stakeholders
6. Identify opportunities and constraints
7. Identify funds and resources
8. Set goals and objectives

This chapter describes eight steps in stage 1 for preparing a physical activity plan.

Build commitment

The healthy city approach suggests that success requires explicit political commitment at the highest level. Mayors, elected officials and senior city staff can provide the political legitimacy and technical support that is needed to integrate urban planning and public health policies in a way that supports active living for all citizens. In several European cities, mayors champion active living through personal example (such as cycling to work or meetings), high-profile communication (such as building city pride and identity about active living initiatives at a variety of public events) and specific support through assigned long-term budgets and resources for special initiatives and community-based projects.

City governments can also lead by example. For example, local government can provide fitness facilities and/or programmes for city employees and their families; locate city facilities and offices in settings that deter car dependence and encourage the use of active transport; and support on-the-job cycling by city employees in policing, traffic control, etc.

A coordinated plan for active living, sport and physical activity requires a commitment to action in the public sector, civil society and the voluntary and private sectors. To build this commitment, schedule one-on-one and group meetings with key leaders in all sectors. Be prepared to demonstrate the problem and to sell the benefits of an active city in a win-win way. For example, show education and transport officials how support for active transport (walking and cycling) serves both their goals and yours. Listen well to leaders in sport-for-all, cultural and environmental organizations to find ways to collaborate and to build their enthusiasm for a coordinated approach. Provide employers with statistics on the cost savings associated with an active, productive workforce.

This stage is not always easy. It helps to recruit champions for active living, such as athletes, entertainers and leaders in business and religious, educational and voluntary communities. These people serve as important role models for active living and attract others to participate.

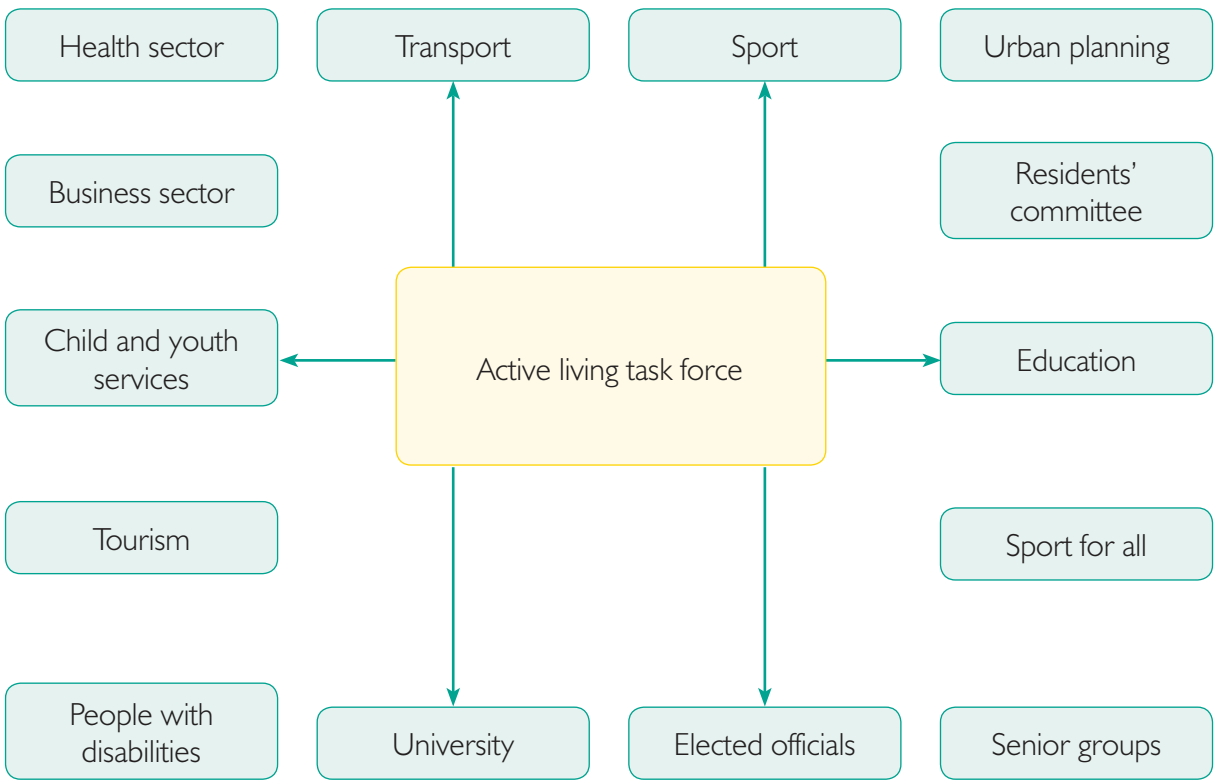
Form a leadership group

Once you have built commitment among leaders in local government (public sector), the private sector and civil society and nongovernmental organizations, you can form an intersectoral task force or leadership group (Fig. 2). Their job is to direct the development and implementation of the plan. They make decisions related to priorities and activities and act as champions for active living in their sectors. They also bring resources to the process – sometimes financial, but also in other ways: for example, credibility, expertise, contacts in the community, representation of special population groups and control of facilities and existing programmes. You can use Tool 1 (Part 3) to help you identify potential participants for your physical activity task force or leadership group.

At the same time, a clear manager or coordinator should be appointed for the day-to-day activities and overall progress. Some cities assign the government department responsible for sport and recreation or health promotion to the coordinating and management function; others are led by non-governmental organizations in sport, active living or disease prevention or by the healthy city office. Whoever takes on the coordinating role needs to be supported with financial resources, expertise and voluntary help with communication.

Depending on the scope of the plan, additional committees or working groups with different functions and areas of concentration may be needed. Group members usually include volunteers from the community and staff recruited from city government and community agencies and groups.

Fig. 2. Sample physical activity task force or leadership group



Create a vision

A plan for active living should start with a sense of where you want to go and towards what you want to work. Creating this shared vision for the future is the first task of your leadership group, in consultation with community residents and stakeholder groups.

Creating a vision begins with a group of diverse people who share interests in a project, resource or community. They are asked to state what they value about physical activity in their neighbourhood or city and what they would like to see improved in the next 5–10 years. The final vision can be any length – a single sentence or a few bullet points – as long as it is clear, focused and easily understood.

Creating a vision is the first step in planning for the future. Visioning involves describing what you want to see in the future, creating a picture of your ideal or preferred future as though you were seeing it right now. There are several techniques for creating a vision (Box 8).

Most visions of a healthy, active city share some common factors or themes:

- a wide range of accessible and attractive routes for active transport such as cycling and walking and access by foot or bicycle to efficient public transport;
- mixed-use, high-density communities with easy access to destinations such as shops, parks, schools and recreation facilities;
- walkable, attractive neighbourhoods and trail connections between neighbourhoods;
- planning decisions related to the built environment consider public health and physical activity concerns;
- schools, workplaces and health care facilities support active living choices;
- ample green and open spaces for physical activity, sport and enjoying nature;
- accessible facilities and equipment for physical activity;
- streets and neighbourhoods that are safe in terms of road safety and crime;
- programming and services for special groups that enable active living for all ages and abilities;
- champions in local government and other sectors;
- strong involvement by a variety of stakeholders and citizens; and
- social norms and expectations that support and encourage active living as a way of life in the city.

Box 8. Ideas for creating a shared vision for active living

1. Look into the future

"It is 10 years from now and our city has just won a national award for being a healthy, active city that enables all its citizens to be physically active on a daily basis."

"Imagine you are in a hot-air balloon floating over our city 15 years from today. Our city is known to be an ideal place for active living by all."

2. Describe what you see.

Observe the total scene – people, places and happenings. Cruise down streets and visit parks, work-places, health care facilities and schools. Check out modes of transport and city council meetings. Listen to what the mass media are covering. Observe what older people and people with disabilities are doing. Smell the air, plants and green spaces; listen for laughter and road traffic noises. Draw what you see or write it down in short descriptive sentences.

3. Look backwards.

"If this were the future, and this vision has happened, what was done?"

"How did we get this outcome?"

Profile your city, neighbourhoods and target population groups

City planners and people involved in creating a healthy city are well equipped to carry out city assessments. The key is to make sure that active living considerations become part of these assessments (Box 9).

Tool 2 (Part 3) is an example of a community assessment tool specific to active living. Geographical information systems can also be used to assist in assessing land use and potential locations for trails and park links.

Walk audits can enable decision-makers, residents, planners and other stakeholders to experience a pedestrian environment together. The audit may focus on general walkability, specific problems or access to key destinations and can include a written evaluation. Several walkability audits have been developed. Tool 3 (Part 3) is a sample of one. Tool 4 (Part 3) assesses and rates the degree to which a community is cycling-friendly.

Healthy, active cities also need to plan for different life stages and to understand the attitudes, beliefs, needs and strengths of special groups including children and young people, older people, girls and women, people with disabilities, minority groups and people with low socioeconomic status. The first step is to clarify the communities in the city in which these populations live, study, worship, move and work.

Clearly defining and understanding the target populations you wish to reach is essential to good planning. For example, while creating a pedestrian or cycling path in a particular neighbourhood may seem to benefit all the residents, older people may not use it if it is designed for fast cycling and has no separate areas for walking. Similarly, girls and women are less likely to go to a recreation facility that is not well lit and in an unsafe setting. Young people are more likely to spend time in a place that encourages interaction, for example by combining basketball and tennis courts with a skateboarding area and a meeting place with picnic tables and bicycle parking.

Consult with residents and stakeholders

A participatory approach is a key principle of health for all and a healthy city principle. However, as numerous healthy cities have learned, broad consultations with the public are not enough. Community participation requires reaching out to specific groups, including those who may be socially excluded or isolated. Empowering people to tackle inequality in access to opportunities for physical activity and health often requires capacity-building – helping community members build the skills and confidence needed to fully participate. Fortunately, active living and community empowerment can feed on each other. For example, young people learn communication and team-building skills and develop confidence when they master a sport or recreational activity. This, in turn, better prepares them to speak up in consultations related to the physical activity plan.

Facilitating meaningful community participation is a long-term process involving the creation of mutual trust, shared goals and realistic expectations. One of the ways of doing this is to give priority to community participation at all stages of the planning process.

Engaging stakeholders and community members early in the planning process is essential to: identifying and accommodating their ideas and needs; identifying strengths, resources and local champions; strengthening awareness of the benefits of active living and a physical activity strategy; and building commitment to the implementation of a physical activity strategy.

Consultations are best held at several different levels:

- city-wide with special population groups and key stakeholders in sport, recreation, education, transport and other sectors;

Box 9. Information to consider when profiling target populations and neighbourhoods

Demographics: age, sex, race and ethnicity, marital status, presence of children in the home

Socioeconomic status: income status, social status, education level, housing status, employment status and occupation level, social exclusion and inclusion

Geographical information: clustered or scattered, characteristics of neighbourhoods: what places are shared: schools, workplaces, shops, community health centres places of worship, etc.?

Current behaviours and lifestyle: how physically active are they? What competes with being physically active? What kinds of activities do they like to do? What are their current modes of transport?

Awareness and knowledge: how much do they know about the benefits of physical activity and the risks associated with sedentary living?

Values, beliefs and attitudes: how important is a healthy, active lifestyle to them? Do they view physical activity as valuable and important? What do they perceive are the major barriers to being active? How ready are they to change (that is, become more physically active)? What would make physical activity more fun and attractive to them?

Health, ability and confidence levels: do they have health conditions that limit their ability to participate? Do they have the skills they need to be physically active? How confident are they in their ability to be active?

Cultural norms and social networks: do cultural customs, beliefs and traditions hinder or support participation by women, men and children? Who would support them in being physically active? Who is in their key informal networks? To what organizations do they belong?

Access and use: are existing sport and physical programmes, natural resources (such as trails and rivers), activity facilities (such as playing fields, playgrounds and schools) and options for active transport available, accessible and affordable to this population? Do they make use of these? If no, why not?

- the neighbourhood level; and
- small meetings with people who are socially excluded and tend to be underrepresented at open community consultations.

There are many techniques for conducting consultations, including stakeholder meetings, public forums, workshops, focus groups, key informant interviews and charrettes (Box 10).

Box 10. What is a charrette?

Charrettes bring together experts and local residents to develop ideas on how to improve the built environment (such as making it more conducive to active living). Solutions are usually presented as maps, diagrams or descriptions. Charrettes can involve a few or many people; they can last a couple of hours or extend over several days. It all depends on the purpose of the charrette and people's interest. An example of a charrette schedule is participants gathering on a Friday, touring the area and hearing presentations from local experts and citizens. On Saturday, participants are divided into teams and asked to create plans, drawings, and descriptions of proposed changes to the built and social environments. Later that night, or the next day, participants present their recommendations to each other and community members. This is followed by debate and consensus-building with the help of a professional facilitator.

Charrette means cart in French. In the early 20th century, professors from the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris would send a cart to pick up students' work at the submission deadline. Some students, frantic to complete their drawings, would ride on the cart and continue working as it rolled down the street, hence, working *en charrette*.

Identify opportunities and constraints

Planners often comprehensively analyse strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). Here is an example of a SWOT analysis of a city developed by active living planners and stakeholders.

Strengths

- Proximity to seashore
- Revitalization project underway in inner city
- Effective public transport infrastructure
- Motivated partners in education, sport and day nurseries
- Committed leadership in mayor and health sectors
- Two universities with degree programmes in kinesiology and health promotion
- Public support for building a multipurpose cultural park at the waterfront

Weaknesses

- The waterfront is run down and unattractive
- Poor public transport to the waterfront
- Crowded inner city, with little space for parks and greenery

- Parking prohibits the development of potential green spaces
- Heavy road traffic in the inner city – unsafe for cyclists and pedestrians
- Limited support for active transport
- Few opportunities for active play by children and young people in the inner city
- Poor communication about opportunities for active living: families unaware of what is available
- Young people in the inner city getting into trouble, with vandalism and graffiti

Opportunities

- Develop "pocket" parks connected with pedestrian trails and play areas as part of inner-city regeneration
- Build cycling lanes (tracks) as part of road repair in the inner city
- Provide parking for bicycles at public transport stations
- Involve the cycling association
- Invite the mayor to champion active living through active transport
- Invite city councillors to champion active play for children and work with day nurseries and schools, parents and the city recreation department to provide safe, interesting play areas and active safe routes to school
- Replace some above-ground parking with underground parking and create green spaces in these areas
- Charge higher parking fees and implement an inner-city congestion charge
- Work with partners to improve communication about active living: benefits and opportunities
- Work with the universities, police and social services in selected neighbourhoods to introduce and evaluate youth-driven physical activity and sport programmes
- Build support for a long-term project to reclaim waterfront and build parklands there for active living and cultural activities

Threats

- Perceptions that initiatives will cost too much
- Driver backlash against parking restrictions, higher fees and a congestion charge
- Developers unaware of the economic value of including trails and playgrounds in areas that are being rebuilt
- Fears and perceived fears related to road safety
- Multiple languages and low literacy levels in some neighbourhoods (need for innovative means of communication)

Identify funds and resources

There are numerous ways to obtain funding for active living initiatives. Project grants and corporate sponsors can often fund short-term initiatives and events; however, obtaining sustainable long-term sources of funding is critical.

Ensure adequate dedicated funding for active living infrastructure, maintenance, programmes and staff in various city departments, including transport, urban planning, health, recreation, social services and crime prevention.

Consider projects that are already underway and how they might contribute to making a community more activity-friendly. For example, a school or housing project in the early stage of development could be linked to a walking or cycling trail. Add cycling lanes when roads are slated for repair. Finding opportunities in current projects can provide quick success without requiring extensive new resources.

Partner with other sectors: team up with voluntary and professional partners in sport, active living, health and education to get the most out of spending on active living initiatives. Partner with the private sector as sponsors of special events and ongoing programmes and in contributing to projects such as developing trails, building playground structures and regenerating neighbourhoods.

Share facilities: for example, joint-use agreements between schools and parks or swimming pools can stretch available money for the purchase and maintenance of recreation and sport facilities while increasing opportunities for active living.

Seek out funding streams: identify and pursue funding sources for promoting active living, preventing obesity, encouraging sporting events, improving the environment and enhancing transport at the local, regional and national levels.

Use incentives and financing techniques. Create financial and building code incentives for the redevelopment of vacant and run-down properties and the development of walkable areas. Encourage employers to provide employees with facilities and incentives for active transport and exercise at the workplace or after work. Use parking fees and congestion charges to help fund improvements to the built environment that facilitate active living.

Identify and promote the fiscal benefits of active living environments. Make developers and businesses aware that pedestrian-friendly neighbourhoods and proximity to trails and parks result in increased property values.

Set goals and objectives

Your strategic vision, city profile, consultations with residents and stakeholders and analysis of your opportunities and constraints will enable you to decide on the key areas you wish to pursue. Now you are ready to develop goals and objectives for your initiative.

Consider setting both long- and short-term goals and objectives related to the process as well as the outcome. The latter are particularly useful if you are required to show that progress is being made.

Goals tend to be broad statements organized under specific headings or themes. One way to organize goals is to structure them under the following headings: built environment, the social environment, specific settings and population groups (Box 11).

Box 11. Sample goal statements for a physical activity plan

Built environment

To increase opportunities for active living in the built environment through planning processes and urban design that: encourage active transport (such as cycling and walking) and the use of public transport; control road traffic and reduce car use; support easy access to local destinations, green spaces and recreation areas; and provide streets and neighbourhoods that are well connected, appealing and safe for pedestrians and cyclists.

Social environment

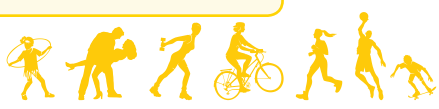
To increase opportunities for active living in the social environment by recognizing and building on the strengths of a diverse population, reducing inequity, increasing social support for active living, enhancing security and crime prevention, addressing real and perceived threats to participation, effectively communicating with the public, offering campaigns and events and working in partnership to providing innovative programming in recreation and sport for all ages and groups.

Specific settings

To increase opportunities for physical activity in schools (from day care to university), workplaces, health care settings, recreation and sport facilities, neighbourhoods and homes.

Population groups

To improve understanding of the benefits of active living and increase opportunities for active living for all residents (with a special emphasis on children, youth, older people and employees) and to reduce inequity in physical activity for people with disabilities, people and neighbourhoods with low socioeconomic status and other minority and high-risk groups.



Objectives are measurable statements that can be used to determine whether a goal has been met. Objective setting is linked to evaluation: if you are to evaluate your progress you must gather baseline measurements at the beginning of the initiative and not wait until the end. Here are four steps for identifying the objectives that you want to achieve, with a specific example related to active transport to and from school.

1. Describe the situation you want to change or the problem you want to solve.

Example

Most children are driven to school. In addition to distance, parents cite concerns about safety as the main barrier to walking and cycling to school.

2. Identify the specific actions you want people to take to help solve the problem.

Example

- Raise awareness of the problem and the benefits of active transport to and from school
- Create school, parent and community partnerships for solving the problem
- Identify and create safe, active routes to school (local level)
- Provide tools and support to help communities and schools implement active safe routes to school
- Accompany young children to school by walking or cycling (such as a walking school bus)
- Encourage and support children and young people to walk and/or cycle to and from school

3. Set measurable objectives that can help you monitor and evaluate your progress.

Example

During the school year (10 months):

- increase the number of community politicians, police and traffic officials, students, parent school association members, principals and teachers who are aware of the problem and willing to take action;
- develop school, parent and community partnerships for active safe routes to school, initially in two school districts (10 schools);

- implement walking and cycling school bus programmes, initially in two school districts (10 schools); and
- increase the number of children and young people who safely walk and/or cycle to and from school.

4. Decide how you will measure the achievement of these objectives.

Example

In designated school districts:

- baseline measures of current awareness, concern and intention to act – follow-up surveys mid-way and at the end of the school year;
- the number of school, parent and community partnerships for active safe routes to school formed and active (baseline and follow-up);
- the number of walking and cycling school bus programmes (baseline and follow-up);
- the number of road crashes involving students (baseline and follow-up);
- the number of children and young people who walk and/or cycle to and from school (baseline and follow-up);
- the prevalence of school policies related to driving children to school and safety for pedestrians and cyclists (baseline and follow-up);
- the prevalence of safe and secure bicycle parking at schools (baseline and follow-up);
- the number of children and young people who walk and/or cycle to and from school (baseline and follow-up); and
- the satisfaction of students, parents, principals and teachers with active, safe routes to school programmes and policies.

5. Stage 2: preparing a plan

The point of cities is multiplicity of choice.

Jacobs *(25)*

Stage 2

Preparing a plan

1. Develop key interventions
   - Policies
   - Programmes
   - Plans
   - Infrastructure strategy
   - Communication
2. Set priorities for intervention options in the built environment
3. Set priorities for intervention options in the social environment
4. Set priorities for intervention options in specific settings
5. Strengthen individual intentions

This chapter provides information on key interventions, with examples in the built and social environments and in specific settings, and ideas on how to strengthen individual intentions to be active. Part 3 provides sample programmes and explains where to get further information on the ideas suggested here.

Develop key interventions

Key interventions or activities to promote active living fall into several categories.

Policies

Policies set direction for the course of action on many fronts. Ideally, local governments will adopt an overall policy to consider the promotion of physical activity as an integral part of all decision-making and then apply it when making decisions related to funding, programmes, urban planning and infrastructure development. Similarly, workplace and school policies can remove barriers and encourage physical activity.

Programmes

Programmes are schedules of new or changed activities to increase levels of physical activity for the general population and for targeted populations, in a variety of settings and offered by a variety of partners. Programmes include group activities, information and skill development, individual outreach, special events and comprehensive citywide campaigns.

Plans

Plans ensure that city and neighbourhood planning documents and guidelines address how urban planning decisions affect residents' ability to engage in physical activity; and new plans can be developed, for example, to increase walkability in a certain neighbourhood.

Infrastructure strategy

Improved or expanded infrastructure enhances opportunities for physical activity, such as changes to parklands, trails or sport facilities and other aspects of the built environment that support active living, such as cycle tracks or sidewalks.

Communication

Communication includes both internal communication with the leadership group and external communication with the public. Promotional information and mass-media campaigns to encourage physical activity are most effective when used as part of a comprehensive campaign and strategy involving multiple interventions (Box 12).

There is inevitably a long list of potential activities. Tool 7 (Part 3) provides a checklist of several criteria that can be used to select which activities to pursue in both the long and short term. Planners should play special attention to interventions that will reduce inequity in physical activity in particular parts of the city and among specific groups. One way to do this is to assign responsibility to one member of the leadership group for advocating and monitoring how the active living plan and strategy improve social inclusion and reduce inequity.

Box 12. About city-wide comprehensive campaigns

City-wide comprehensive campaigns can influence both the behaviour of individuals and the social systems in which they live. These campaigns can also create institutional and organizational support for behaviour change goals.

These campaigns typically use both mass media and direct interpersonal programmes to reach the general public and specific population groups. Mass-media messages are combined with organizational efforts directed toward schools, workplaces, health care settings and communities. Interventions are conducted in stages based on the assumption that people modify their behaviour in a process that requires different types of support at different times. They target multiple audiences, use multiple channels of communication and involve multiple partners and stakeholders. Some address more than one type of health behaviour, such as combining a campaign for physical activity and healthy eating. This approach is particularly useful if there are concerns about obesity in the population.

Set priorities for intervention options in the built environment

Design elements in the built environment, such as street layout, land use, the transport system and the location of recreation facilities, parks and public buildings, are components of a community that can either encourage or discourage active living. People are more active when they can easily access destinations such as parks, workplaces and shops. Major barriers include urban sprawl (low-density land use, the separation of shops, workplaces and recreation, and long, wide roadways that lead to dependence on cars), crowded city centres with little room for green space, poor support for active transport (such as cycling and walking), low priority given to public transport, high vehicle speeds and unsafe conditions for walking and cycling, unattractive, run-down neighbourhoods and locked stairwells in buildings.

Promoting physical activity and active living in urban environments: the role of local governments. The solid facts (1) summarizes the evidence on challenges and opportunities in the built environment.

Action strategies in urban planning

- Carry out health impact assessment to make sure that active living issues are incorporated into land-use review and planning processes.
- Strategic land-use and transport planning should be integrated. Work with planning, transport and economic development agencies to ensure that the long-term evolution of your city and region reduces car dependence and promotes equitable access to high-quality public transport.
- Protect the traditional design of older cities and control further development of dispersed, segregated, suburban land uses, such as business, retail and leisure parks, isolated educational or hospital development and sporadic residential developments, which by their nature, rely on car access.
- Set a good example: plan and locate educational, health and social facilities and the municipality's own offices in ways that deter car dependence and encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

Action strategies in active transport and public transport

- Create a comprehensive plan for cycling and walking in existing and future development and integrate the plan into broader transport planning.
- Support cycling with appropriate traffic policies and legislation, expanded networks for cycling, safe and attractive cycling routes and trails that connect people to local destinations, access to city bicycles for short trips and bicycle storage areas in public places. Build separate tracks for

pedestrians, cyclists and cars on busy streets. Provide bicycles for government staff, especially police, park employees and meter-readers, to use on neighbourhood routes.

- Implement traffic control measures such as severe restrictions on speed, 20 km/hour zones, adequately timed lights, clearly marked crossings, traffic-calming devices (such as speed bumps) and crossing guards at crucial intersections. Provide clear signage about road traffic patterns to help cyclists, pedestrians and drivers avoid injuries and learn to respect each other's routes.
- Make driving more expensive. Charge high prices for parking in the city; consider using congestion charging as a means of reducing car use overall and combining it with financial transfers to improved public transport.
- Give priority to funding for public transport and projects such as sidewalks, trails, traffic-calming measures and bike lanes. Park-and-ride schemes should only be used in low-density areas where existing levels of public transport are inadequate. Locate them as close as possible to the source of the traveller: for example, in outlying community sectors rather than the edge of the city. Encourage cyclists and walkers to use them as well.

Action strategies in urban design

- Reduce urban sprawl by embedding workplaces, shops, schools and health care facilities within integrated neighbourhoods that facilitate walking and cycling.
- Provide easy access to seashores, rivers, lakes and forests on the periphery of the city.
- Conserve and develop green spaces. Provide incentives for developing vacant lots and run-down areas into green and/or open spaces. Work toward an urban green network accessible to all residents complemented by a network of squares and other small outdoor places for active living.
- Provide convenient and visible stairs and signage for public spaces that encourages people to take the stairs. Design buildings that encourage the use of stairs and ensure that stairwells are unlocked in office buildings and health care facilities.

Action strategies in communication

- Provide people with clear information about the availability of safe and enjoyable opportunities to be active in your city. Produce and promote a citywide active living map of parks, trails, cycling and walking routes and facilities that offer sport and physical activity programmes.
- Include children and older people and people with disabilities in planning activities related to increasing opportunities for physical activity in the built environment (Box 13).

Box 13. Pay attention to special population groups

- Ensure that children and young people have safe places to play. Make some city streets active leisure zones suitable for children's play and ensure that housing developments incorporate shared play areas in common spaces. Provide interesting, safe, well-maintained playgrounds, wading pools, outdoor skating rinks, skateboard parks, sport fields and cycling paths that children and young people can use.
- Encourage active socialization for older adults. Improve walkability, especially in areas where older people live: provide well-maintained sidewalks, benches for resting, adequate lighting and shaded and attractive streetscapes. Encourage the development of places for socialization on city streets, such as coffee shops and small markets. Provide spaces for older people to be active in local parks and green spaces with activities such as tai chi, bocce ball or pétanque, crocket, dog walking and organized group walks. In cities in cold climates, ensure that sidewalks are clear of ice in winter.
- Increase access to active spaces. Put playgrounds, sporting areas, trails and parks within walking or wheeling distance. Provide free or subsidized access to swimming pools and other facilities to children and youth, older adults and people with disabilities.
- Improve accessibility to public transport and/or provide transport to recreation facilities for people with disabilities, older adults and families in disadvantaged circumstances.
- Ensure that residential settings for all income groups have full opportunities for health-promoting transport and equal access to green spaces. Set targets for achieving this.

Set priorities for intervention options in the social environment

The socioeconomic environment presents both challenges and opportunities for creating and maintaining activity-friendly cities.

Action strategies in diversity and equity

- Conduct equity reviews to demonstrate how all citizens have equal opportunity to participate in sport and physical recreation programmes regardless of sex, age, race, income level or ability. Take extra steps to ensure that vulnerable populations have access to the same choices and opportunities for physical activity and active living as the population at large. Adopt municipal recreation policies on gender and race equity in both services and leadership.

- Celebrate multiculturalism and diversity. Identify and work with various cultures and religions in the community to promote appropriate physical recreation and active living opportunities and to find the best solutions for overcoming common barriers.

Action strategies in social cohesion, safety and social support

- Support organizations working in sport, active living, cultural expression, active transport and nature and partner with them in programmes that aim to build social cohesion while increasing opportunities for physical activity.
- Enable safety, security and crime prevention. Keep pedestrian and cycling routes free from crime; clean up and patrol vacant properties; and employ design principles that discourage crime.
- Ease public fears about safety by monitoring and providing statistics on crime and traffic injuries and reassuring parents, women and older people.
- Encourage social support through programmes for families, school and workplace groups.

Set priorities for intervention options in specific settings

Creating or improving opportunities for physical activity in the places people spend time can significantly increase the percentage of people who are active at least three times a week, especially when combined with the distribution of information about the benefits and opportunities for active living. These interventions are most likely to be effective in five key settings: schools, workplaces, neighbourhoods, health care and leisure and sport settings.

Promoting physical activity and active living in urban environments: the role of local governments. The solid facts (1) summarizes the evidence on physical activity and schools, workplaces and health care settings.

Active schools

Communities and schools – from preschools to colleges and universities – are important partners in promoting physical activity. Through physical education and health programmes, schools provide instruction for skill development and educate young people about healthy, active lifestyle choices. Children and adolescents attend school most of the days of the week; the journey to and from school can be an important part of a physical activity regimen. Schools can also play an important role in a broader city strategy by creating supportive social networks for children, young people and families; providing a facility for community sport programmes and events; and building awareness and

knowledge about physical activity. Secondary school students can serve as role models and coaches for younger children, and universities can assist the community by developing and evaluating special programmes in collaboration with the community.

Tool 5 (Part 3) provides a sample "report card" on how well a school or group of schools is doing in promoting physical activity. Chapter 8 provides information on where to get resources related to active schools and active, safe routes to and from school.

Action strategies in schools

- Work with schools, the education system and parents to promote daily, high-quality physical education classes at all levels. Ensure that physical education classes are designed for all children and not just those who are athletic; help students develop a lifelong appreciation for active living.
- Commit adequate resources for physical activity instruction and programmes, including budgets, facilities and teachers who are specialists in physical education and health education.
- Support other school policies and programmes that enhance physical activity levels and fitness among children and youth. These include providing space, equipment and supervision during breaks, involving teachers in active play time, training older students to organize active play for younger students during breaks and improving extracurricular sports, activities and clubs.
- Adopt standards for safe, active and enjoyable outdoor and indoor play on a daily basis in preschools, nurseries and daycares.
- Include planning for physical activity as part of broader programmes for health-promoting schools.
- Provide safe and active routes to school in collaboration with the education system, parents, the police and local agencies and teach children road safety rules.
- Encourage parents, grandparents and caregivers to walk or cycle to school with young children. One innovative idea is the walking school bus: an adult picks up several children on a neighbourhood route and walks or cycles with them to school.
- Make school facilities available for active recreation and sports after hours at no cost to residents and clubs.
- Evaluate how your school is doing and publish an annual report card with grades assigned to the various aspects of physical activity promotion (see Tool 5 in Part 3).

Active workplaces

Because most adults spend about eight hours or more each day at work plus commuting, worksite and employer- or union-sponsored programmes to promote and enable physical activity can be an important part of an active living strategy. Workplaces can affect the health and fitness of their employees by providing supportive policies and environments, access to facilities, health promotion information and incentives for active travel to and from work.

Ideally, these efforts benefit both the employer and employees: the worker gains improved health and increased energy; the employer gains a more productive and healthier workforce, reduced absenteeism and disability days, an improved corporate image and more-satisfied employees.

Action strategies in workplaces

- Implement policies and programmes that support physical activity. Form active living committees that represent all levels of trade unions and management; encourage active commuting (such as bicycle racks and storage) and discourage car use (such as by not giving car and parking fringe benefits); provide opportunities for physical activity at the worksite (such as fitness programmes, showers and changing rooms, walking groups, supporting sport clubs and industrial competitions); or provide subsidies for employees to use local facilities if on-site facilities are not possible.
- Encourage stair climbing by keeping stairs clean and unlocked and posting signs to encourage their use and noting the benefits of using them.
- Provide flexible work hours that allow employees to be active before or after work.
- Set an example in government workplaces by implementing these policies and programmes.
- Encourage other employers and businesses to adopt similar policies and practices and collaborate with them when an intervention requires the support or expertise of local government services. Publicly recognize employers and businesses that provide opportunities for physical activity for their employees, retirees and families.
- Provide and promote active safe routes to work that encourage walking, cycling and the use of efficient public transport systems in combination with these active modes of transport.
- Design urban environments that locate workplaces and businesses in mixed-use neighbourhoods or close to public transport stations.
- Create a workplace and active living focus in the public health department to bring together small and large businesses in the city that express an interest in creating or improving access to physical activity for their workers. When appropriate, link businesses up with local recreation and physical activity services and programmes.

Active neighbourhoods

Neighbourhoods are defined by factors in the physical, social and political environments such as electoral districts, walkability to various settings and destinations, catchments for schools and health care facilities and the cultural characteristics of a population in a given area. Families and individuals socialize in and spend much of their time in their neighbourhood.

Action strategies in neighbourhoods

- Reorient community design to favour people over the car and other technologies. Locate essential services, healthy food outlets, workplaces, and other destinations within easy walking or cycling distance from where people live. For new developments, require enhanced access to public transport and improvements to sidewalks, intersections and streetscapes. Avoid dead-end streets (culs-de-sac) or build paths between closed streets.
- Support safe, walkable neighbourhoods with greenery, places to rest and attention to historical and cultural landmarks; maintain sidewalks and keep them clear of ice and snow (in cold climates). Encourage downtown revitalization and discourage large parking and industrial lots.
- Conserve and develop green spaces. Create community pocket parks in crowded city centres. Retrofit run-down areas with residences built around a shared garden or small playground. Plant trees and flowers to green city squares and provide shade.
- Connect affordable housing and active living opportunities. Support walkability, green space development and sporting opportunities in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.
- Enable safety, security and crime prevention: implement community policing techniques, such as neighbourhood watch groups and neighbourhood police units. Ease public fears by meeting with residents and reassuring parents, women and older people.
- Reach out to isolated people (such as older people, people with disabilities or people who speak a minority language) with outreach programmes led by peers and leaders living in their neighbourhood.
- Provide community gardens and encourage gardening at home through awareness campaigns and garden tours.

Leisure and sport settings

Increasingly, people – especially children and adolescents – are replacing active pursuits with passive forms of leisure activities, such as screen time (videos, computer games, Internet chatting, etc.). Although sports organizations still form the context for physically active leisure time for many people,

people increasingly tend to participate in more individual activities, such as swimming for exercise or going to an exercise facility.

Action strategies in leisure and sport settings

- Support sport and outdoor recreation organizations and encourage them to broaden their activities to attract new participants who are not as athletically inclined: for example, promoting and facilitating Nordic walking, hiking and non-competitive activities.
- Provide free access to swimming pools, ice rinks, gymnasiums, public tennis courts, fields and other sporting facilities and encourage use by the public of all ages.
- Invest in active leisure public facilities such as hiking trails and community gardens. Provide low-cost rentals of boats, bicycles and other equipment.
- Locate new sporting facilities in low-income neighbourhoods and parts of the city where inactive residents live and encourage the use of these facilities for recreation (Box 14).
- Ensure safety with good lighting, trained voluntary leaders and a community police presence.
- Discourage screen time with events such as Turn Off the Television Day (or week).

Health care settings

The health sector has a major role in promoting and coordinating action to support the promotion of physical activity *(4)*. It can do so in three complementary ways:

- promoting and engaging in intersectoral work at all levels;
- ensuring that health professionals, whose advice is trusted by the population, promote physical activity for individuals; and
- leading by example as an employer.

Action strategies in health care settings

- Collaborate with and encourage health and long-term care facilities to increase opportunities for active living and appropriate physical activity for both their employees and users.
- Encourage health professionals in primary care settings (such as nurses, physicians (including paediatricians) and physiotherapists) to promote active living and to counsel inactive people to begin moderate appropriate exercise.
- Include planning for physical activity as part of broader programmes for health-promoting hospitals.
- Invite stakeholders and sectors to collaborate on initiatives to promote and enable healthy active living.

Box 14. A key priority: reducing inequity in physical activity

Disadvantaged populations (especially those with low incomes) are less likely to be able to afford or have access to a gym; user fees may prohibit low-income families from participating in recreation programmes and sports. Disadvantaged populations are less likely to have easy access to the places that encourage an active lifestyle, such as safe streets and sidewalks, parks, trails and community gardens. When they do choose to be active, they often face disproportionate risks related to road safety and the real or perceived risk of crime.

Neighbourhood renewal schemes that provide facilities and equipment for active living (such as basketball courts, skateboarding parks, playgrounds and soccer fields), safe routes to school and to public transport stations and establishing safe neighbourhood parks can reduce inequity in access and choices for physical activity. Programmes that are culturally sensitive can draw in women, young people in minority populations and other groups that are often excluded from mainstream sport and physical activity programmes. Accessibility and integration are key to enabling people with disabilities to enjoy enhanced levels of participation.

Strengthen individual intentions

Behaviour change is a complex and dynamic process. Many personal variables, including behavioural and psychological factors, influence people's plans to be physically active and whether or not they start and stay active on an ongoing basis (Box 15).

Some common reasons people cite for not adopting more physically active lifestyles include:

- not enough time;
- cannot afford it (especially people with low incomes and older people);
- lack self-motivation and find exercise boring;
- other high-priority tasks (especially working mothers and caregivers);
- too competitive and not fun (especially children and young people);
- lack confidence in the ability to do it (low self-efficacy);
- fear of being injured or have been injured (especially among older adults);
- lack of support and companionship from friends and family members;
- do not have parks, sidewalks, cycling trails, shops or recreation facilities convenient to the home or workplace;

- concerns about road safety (especially older people and parents in relation to their children);
- concerns about personal security and crime (especially girls and women and parents of young children);
- unattractive environment for walking: litter, graffiti, air pollution, broken sidewalks, no resting spots or shade, etc. (especially women);
- no space of our own to do the things we like to do (especially young people);
- ageism (too old to be active), sexism (not appropriate for girls and women) and cultural restrictions; and
- weather conditions such as extreme heat or cold and icy conditions (especially older people).

Helping people overcome these barriers requires a combination of environmental approaches and individual change strategies. Here are some ideas for increasing personal motivation for active living.

Box 15. Essentials for changing behaviour among inactive populations

Leading behavioural scientists suggest the following points to be essential elements for behaviour change among inactive populations.

1. They must believe that the benefits of being active (improved health, more energy, social time with friends etc.) outweigh the disadvantages (cost and time).
2. Performing the behaviour must be consistent with their self-image and not violate personal standards or values: that is, they must see perceive more social acceptance and pressure to perform the behaviour than not to do it.
3. They must have the skills necessary to perform the behaviour.
4. They must be ready to change: that is, have a strong commitment and intention to follow through.
5. Their self-efficacy must be high: that is, they believe they are capable of performing the behaviour.
6. Their environment must be free of constraints that make being active difficult or impossible and provide social support and opportunities to be active in a variety of settings.

Experts in a consensus workshop saw all of these as important factors but identified three – 3, 4 and 6 – as essential and sufficient for this behaviour change to occur *(26)*.

- Make the message relevant to your target audience by linking physical activity to values and issues that they are concerned with and by appealing to their level of readiness for change.
- Choose spokespeople and role models that your audience respects.
- Use competitive but fun challenges between cities, businesses, schools, neighbourhoods, etc.
- Encourage small steps to success and build skill development and self-efficacy into your programmes and messages.
- Provide opportunities to sample new behaviour with special events and incentives such as a free paddle boat ride or a mass street dance.
- Encourage people to enter into contracts for success, monitor their progress and reward themselves as they become more active and fit.
- Set up buddy systems and informal groups for physical activity, such as stroller walking on set days and times for young mothers with infants.

6. Stage 3: implementing the plan and measuring success

National policies and plans on physical activity should be socially inclusive and participatory. The successful implementation of physical activity promotion strategies will depend on whether cultural ties, groups and customs, as well as family ties, gender roles, social norms, languages and dialects have been taken into account.

A guide for population-based approaches to increasing levels of physical activity: implementation of the WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health (27)

In the final stages you take a look at timing issues, implement activities in stages, measure your success and make changes to better realize your vision and objectives. You also share your results both within your city and with colleagues in other cities so that we can learn from each other.

Stage 3

Implementing the plan and measuring success

1. Stage implementation
2. Evaluate your progress
3. Share your results
4. Review and update your plan

Stage implementation

Some promising strategies to increase physical activity can be achieved quickly; others require a longer-term commitment. For example, a community might seek to improve physical activity fairly quickly, by making intersections safer so children can walk to school. A community could focus on improving physical activity in the long term by advocating for changes in urban design or for public investments in parks or recreational facilities. Some projects may be completed in the current year; others will take a number of years to complete. Strategies are more successful when they incorporate both short- and long-term activities. Take advantage of existing resources and enthusiasm to show results quickly when appropriate but ensure that sustainable resources and leadership are built in for larger-scale infrastructure and policy changes. Building an identity for your strategy takes time: protect and share it with responsible partners and use social marketing techniques to increase public recognition of your strategy and plan.

Starting at home by implementing activities, policies and programmes in government offices and the sites of other key stakeholders is always a good idea. It demonstrates commitment and leadership, and allows some experimentation with ideas in friendly settings (Box 16).

Box 16. Elements of successful programme and policy implementation

In 2002, at a joint Consultation on Physical Activity Policy between WHO and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, participants developed a policy framework for physical activity. In terms of implementation, the following elements were identified as necessary for success:

- consultation and needs assessment;
- written plan and objectives;
- surveillance of physical activity patterns, policy, public opinion and environments;
- stable base of support;
- clear programme identity and message;
- coalitions, partnerships, leaders and champions and intersectoral action;
- multiple intervention strategies, sites, populations at all levels;
- integration of physical activity efforts with overall noncommunicable disease prevention and with the policies of related sectors;
- focus on physical activity providing enjoyment and social interaction; and
- evaluation throughout the process.

Source: Shephard et al. *(26)*.

Evaluate your progress

Evaluating your progress is essential for gaining continued support. Although it is shown in stage 3, evaluation starts at the beginning in stage 1. Your evaluation should always relate to the goals and objectives defined in stage 1 of the planning process. This requires baseline measures at the beginning of the initiative (Box 17).

Three types of information need to be gathered:

- increased opportunities for physical activity resulting from your plan, such as kilometres of new walking trails and improvements in cycling tracks, which may or may not lead immediately to quantifiable measures of increased participation;
- the number of new programmes, schools, workplaces and people participating, changes in beliefs and attitudes, number of partners, etc., which are direct quantifiable measures that can be attributed to your plan; and

- the perceptions of community leaders and residents of all ages of the plan and its effects, which may be especially important to stakeholders, funders and elected officials.

Box 17. Types of evaluation

There are four main types of evaluation.

Formative evaluation

Formative evaluation focuses on activities that are in the planning stages to ensure that they are based on stakeholders' needs and using effective and appropriate materials and procedures. Formative evaluation includes such things as: needs assessment, programme logic models, pretesting communication materials and audience analysis.

Process evaluation

Process evaluation focuses on activities that are already underway. They examine the procedures and tasks involved in implementing the strategy. They seek to answer the question, "What services, activities and interventions are actually being delivered and to whom?". Process evaluation includes such things as tracking the quantity and description of people who are reached and tracking the quantity, quality and types of services and interventions provided. It also includes assessing how communication channels are working and funding for developing and implementing the plan.

Summative evaluation

Summative evaluation focuses on activities that are already underway or completed. They can include changes in attitudes, knowledge or behaviour, changes in morbidity or mortality rates, number of people participating or served, cost–benefit analysis and cost–effectiveness analysis. Summative evaluation investigates the effects of the activity, both intended and unintended. Impact evaluation asks "Did the activity make a difference?"; and outcome evaluation asks "Did the activity meet its stated goals and objectives?".

Outcome evaluation

Outcome evaluation can assess both short-term outcomes (immediate changes in individuals or participants, such as participation rates, awareness, knowledge or behaviour) and long-term outcomes, which look at the larger impacts of a programme or policy on a community. Outcome evaluation can also analyse the results in relation to the costs of the programme.

Source: Van Marris & King *(28)*.

Share your results

The results of an evaluation should be provided back to the stakeholders and partners, staff, elected officials and interested residents through written reports, summaries in the mass media and/or presentations. Keep your audience in mind when preparing to report on an evaluation. Most want to know whether the objectives were met and whether the targets posed for the first year of the plan made a difference and succeeded. If not, why not? Choose a format that will appeal to your audience. Keep it simple. Remember that pictures are valuable and that stories can be more powerful than statistics. The WHO European Healthy Cities Network also encourages individual cities to share their results with others so that they can learn from each other.

Review and update your plan

At this stage you are ready to revisit your goals and objectives and answer the question: "Is the purpose and focus of our plan still relevant and useful?". You should also be prepared to implement the changes your evaluation results suggest. Give priority to the changes that are most important and feasible to implement and then work together to make them happen.

7. Tools

Tool 1. Identifying potential partners for a physical activity task force or leadership group

Sector	Organization or area of specialty	Possible contribution	Potential task force member
Health			
Recreation			
Sport			
Education			
Urban planning			
Transport			
Business			
Special groups			
Elected officials			
Housing or residents' committees			
Other			

Source: adapted from *Community physical activity planning: a resource manual (16).*

Tool 2. Opportunities for physical activity: a community assessment tool

Influence	Observational indicators	Examples of related questions that could be asked
Land-use mix – diversity and access	Distance from neighbourhood of interest to: ▪ playground ▪ workplace ▪ place of worship ▪ schools ▪ day care ▪ shops ▪ recreation and sport facilities ▪ parks and green spaces ▪ non-fast-food restaurant Access by public transport, cycling and walking	What is the closest shop, post office, school, park, playground, public transport stop, etc.? Where do you eat, shop, work, study, etc. (that is, do you use the closest ones mentioned above?)? How do you get there? How long does it take? How long would it take it you walked? Or cycled? What would prevent you from walking or cycling (other than distance)? What prevents you from using green spaces and recreation and sport facilities more often? How long would it take if you took public transport? What would prevent you from taking public transport?
Street and walking environment	Presence of dead-end streets, long blocks and wide roads Distance between intersections Paths and connecting routes Alternative routes to get to central locations (parks, school, etc.) Presence of greenery and trees along streets and attractive landscapes and views Presence of litter and graffiti Attractiveness of homes, buildings and routes Presence of run-down yards and developments	Do you walk in the neighbourhood? If so, when, to where and for how long? Do you think that your neighbourhood is good for walking? Why? What prevents you from walking in your neighbourhood (at various times of the day)? Is your neighbourhood attractive (for example, clean, greenery, aesthetically appealing)?

Influence	Observational indicators	Examples of related questions that could be asked
Infrastructure for walking and cycling	Presence of sidewalks (on what proportion of streets?) Maintenance of sidewalks Presence of cycling paths or lanes on main streets Presence of separate cycling or pedestrian trails Labelling and maintenance of paths and trails Presence of city bicycles free of user charges Presence of adequate, secure parking areas for bicycles Presence of areas for walking dogs and appropriate signage	Do you have sidewalks in your neighbourhood? If yes, are they well maintained? Are there specific cycling paths or lanes at the side of the streets? Do you have access to cycling or walking trails? If yes, are they well maintained? What makes it easier for you to walk and/or cycle? What prevents you from walking or cycling more? Do you walk a dog? If yes, where do you go with your dog? Are there good routes for walking dogs and places to play with your dog? Can you get to school or work by walking or cycling or a combination of walking or cycling and public transport?
Social support and perceptions of social support	Number of people walking around the community at various times of the day and various days Number of people at various facilities and locations (such as recreation centres, sport facilities, parks and schools) at various times of the day and various days	Do you engage in physical activity with family members, friends and/or neighbours in your community? If yes, where do you go and when? What prevents you from being more physically active with family members, friends and/or neighbours? Do you often see people out and about in your neighbourhood? Do you feel comfortable talking with people you meet while out for a walk?

Influence	Observational indicators	Examples of related questions that could be asked
Safety (such as road safety, crime, animals and weather)	Speed of motorized road traffic at different times of the day Presence of crosswalks, pedestrian signals and traffic-calming practices Lighting at various times of the day (trails, sidewalks, schools, recreation centres, etc.) Number of reported injuries and collisions with pedestrians and cyclists Number of reported crimes in neighbourhood Number of reported attacks and injuries by unleashed dogs Presence of a community police force Presence of neighbourhood watch programmes	Do you feel safe walking in your neighbourhood? Walking to work or school? Please explain why or why not. Do you feel safe cycling in your neighbourhood? Cycling to work or school? Please explain why or why not. How would you improve safety in your area so that people could walk and cycle more?
Access to the natural environment	Presence of accessible routes to waterfronts and surrounding forests, rivers, hills etc.	Do you go to surrounding areas such as lakes, seashores, forests and ski hills on the periphery of the city? If no, why not? If yes, how often do you go? How do you get there?
Special population groups	Presence of accessible, active spaces and social support for children and young people Opportunities for active socialization by older people Presence of accessible, active spaces and social support for people with disabilities	Are there safe and interesting places for your children and adolescents to play and be active? If yes, where do they go? How do they get there? What prevents children and adolescents from being more active in your community? If you are older, are there opportunities for you to be active in your community? What prevents older people from being more active in your community? If you have disabilities, are there opportunities for you to be active in your community? What prevents people with disabilities from being more active in your community?

Source: adapted from Sundquist et al. *(29)*.

Tool 3. A sample walkability audit

The rating scale is as follows.

1	2	3	4	5
Very poor	Poor	Just acceptable	Good	Very good

Did you have room to walk? Some common problems: Sidewalks or paths started and stopped Sidewalks were broken or cracked Sidewalks were blocked with poles, signs, dumpsters, etc. No sidewalks, paths, or shoulders	Rating: _____
Was it easy to cross streets? Some common problems: Road was too wide Traffic signals too long or did not give enough time to cross Needed crosswalks or traffic signals Parked cars blocked our view of traffic Needed kerb ramps or ramps needed repair Dead-end streets with no connections to destination	Rating: _____
Did drivers behave well? Some common problems: Backed out of driveways without looking Did not yield to people crossing the street Turned into people crossing the street Drove too fast Drove through stop signs or traffic lights	Rating: _____
Was the walk pleasant? Some common problems: Needed more grass, flowers or trees Not well lit Dirty, lots of litter, run-down houses or vacant lots Dirty air due to automobile exhaust Fear of crime or attacks Loose dogs or other threats	Rating: _____
Overall walkability score (total points) **16–20** Pretty good for walking. **11–15** Okay, but it needs work. **5–10** It needs a great deal of work.	

Source: adapted from *Walkability checklist (30)*.

Tool 4. How cycling-friendly is your city?

Take a bicycle ride in your community and then answer each question. Circle an overall rating for each question and note any problems you encountered by checking the appropriate box(es). Make a careful note of any specific locations that need improvement. Add up the numbers to see how you rated your ride.

1. Did you have a place to bicycle safely?

a) On the road, sharing the road with motor vehicles?

Yes, some problems:

- ☐ No space for cyclists to ride
- ☐ Bicycle lane or paved shoulder disappeared
- ☐ Heavy and/or fast-moving traffic
- ☐ Too many trucks or buses
- ☐ No space for bicyclists on bridges or in tunnels
- ☐ Poorly lit roadways

Other problems: _____

b) On an off-road path or trail, where motor vehicles were not allowed?

Yes, some problems:

- ☐ Path ended abruptly
- ☐ Path did not go where I wanted to go
- ☐ Path intersected with roads that were difficult to cross
- ☐ Path was crowded
- ☐ Path was unsafe because of sharp turns or dangerous downhills
- ☐ Path was uncomfortable because of too many hills
- ☐ Path was poorly lit

Other problems: _____

Overall rating as a safe place to ride: (circle one)

1	2	3	4	5	6
awful	many problems	some problems	very good	good	excellent

2. How was the surface on which you rode?

Good, some problems. The road or path had:

- ☐ Potholes
- ☐ Cracked or uneven pavement
- ☐ Debris (such as broken glass, litter, gravel, etc.)
- ☐ Dangerous drain grates or utility covers

Other problems: _____

Overall surface rating: (circle one)

1	2	3	4	5	6
awful	many problems	some problems	very good	good	excellent

3. How were the intersections through which you rode?

Good, some problems:

- ☐ Had to wait too long to cross
- ☐ Couldn't see crossing traffic
- ☐ Signal did not give me enough time to cross
- ☐ Unsure where or how to ride through intersection

Other problems: _____

Overall intersection rating: (circle one)

1	2	3	4	5	6
awful	many problems	some problems	very good	good	excellent

4. Did drivers behave well?

Yes, some problems. Drivers:

- ☐ Drove too fast
- ☐ Passed too close
- ☐ Did not signal
- ☐ Harassed me
- ☐ Cut me off
- ☐ Ran red lights or stop signs

Other problems: _____

Overall driver rating: (circle one)

1	2	3	4	5	6
awful	many problems	some problems	very good	good	excellent

5. Was it easy for you to use your bicycle?

Yes, some problems:

- ☐ No maps, signs, or road markings for cyclists
- ☐ No secure place to leave my bicycle
- ☐ No way to take my bicycle with me on the bus or train
- ☐ Scary dogs
- ☐ Hard to find a direct route I liked
- ☐ Route was too hilly

Other problems: _____

Overall rating of ease of use: (circle one)

1	2	3	4	5	6
awful	many problems	some problems	very good	good	excellent

How does your community rate? Add up your ratings and decide.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Total _____

26–30 You live in a bicycle-friendly community.

21–25 Your community is pretty good, but there is room for improvement.

16–20 Conditions for riding are okay, but plenty of opportunity for improvements.

11–15 Conditions are poor and you deserve better! Call the city now.

5–10 Oh dear. Consider wearing body armour before venturing out again.

Source: adapted from *Bikability checklist (31)*.

Tool 5. How well are our schools doing? A sample report card for physical activity

Grading scale: yes = excellent; yes but = okay but could be improved; no = failure

1. Physical education

- ☐ Does the school provide high-quality daily physical education classes for all students?
- ☐ Does the physical education programme encourage participation of all students in each class, regardless of ability?
- ☐ Is there an emphasis on enjoyment, safety, success, fair play, skill development, mastery of lifelong activities and personal health?
- ☐ Are the teachers responsible for teaching physical education qualified to teach the subject?
- ☐ Do the students look forward to physical education classes?

Overall grade: _____

2. Physical activity during and after school hours

- ☐ Does the school have standards and policies to ensure safe, supervised, active and enjoyable outdoor and indoor play on a daily basis?
- ☐ Does the school support and resource extracurricular sports, activities and clubs?
- ☐ Is planning for physical activity part of broader programmes for health-promoting schools?
- ☐ Are school facilities available for active recreation and sports after hours at no cost to community residents and clubs?
- ☐ Does the school share facilities to enable children and young people to participate in activities such as swimming and tennis?
- ☐ Does the school have policies prohibiting the withdrawal of physical activity as a form of punishment?

Overall grade: _____

3. Active transport to and from school

- ☐ Does the school support and encourage walking and cycling to and from school in collaboraion with parents, the police and local agencies, such as safe routes to school programmes or walking school bus programmes?
- ☐ Does the school have policies discouraging parents from driving their children to school and protecting the safety of cyclists and pedestrians, such as no-idling zones, traffic-calming measures, crossing guards and pedestrian walkways?
- ☐ Does the school have safe, secure parking facilities for bicycles?

Overall grade: _____

4. Family involvement

- ☐ Are parents and other family members involved in physical activity programmes and sports at their children's school?
- ☐ Does the school communicate with parents about the value of physical activity both at school and in the home environment?
- ☐ Does the school communicate with parents about monitoring and restricting the amount of screen time (television, computer games, videos etc.) at home and the need to encourage active play after school hours?

Overall grade: _____

5. Health, fitness and body weight

- ☐ How do the children and young people at your school fare on basic tests of strength, flexibility and cardiovascular fitness compared with other students in the same age and grade levels?
- ☐ How do the children and young people at your school rate their health?
- ☐ How do the parents rate the health and fitness levels of their children?
- ☐ What percentages of children and young people at your school are overweight and/or obese?

Overall grade: _____

Tool 6. Special events

A plan for physical activity can take advantage of existing events at the international, national or local level or create innovate new ones. Events can help people in building confidence and skills and demonstrate that physical activity can be fun and can fit into a busy lifestyle. They provide an opportunity to showcase cultural diversity through activities such as folk dancing and traditional sports and can help create an identity as an active city for all residents. Special events are also good for tourism and attract guests to the city and surrounding area.

Here are some ideas.

- Build on existing events sponsored by health charities (such as breast cancer walks and runs), sport organizations, organizations for children and older people and others.
- Participate in national days that promote physical activity and in international mass participation events (see list below).
- Create fun physical activity challenges between cities, schools, hospitals and workplaces.
- Sponsor seasonally related activities, such as a "summer-active" campaign.
- In colder climates, host winter carnivals with a variety of active living events, such as bartenders' skating race, make-your-own sled race and skiing and skating triathlons.
- Create innovative events linked to other themes or targeting specific audiences or settings (see below).

Examples of innovative events to promote physical activity include:

- walking tours at the zoo, in historical settings including cemeteries, with experts in bird watching, nature and conservation, dog parades and hiking and orienteering events;
- water activity events such as dragon boat racing, rowing for beginners and fishing events for grandparents and grandchildren;
- gardening events: workshops, allotment garden challenges, intergenerational events with children and experienced gardeners and garden walking tours;
- community clean-up events: clean parks and streams and community car and dog washes;
- introduction to skateboarding and Le Parkour (Box 18);
- midnight basketball tournaments for youth, intergenerational lawn-bowling events, beach volleyball tournaments (create a beach if you do not have one), marathon football and other sport events with a new twist;

Box 18. Le parkour: the art of movement in the urban environment

Le parkour is a new urban sport that began in a poor neighbourhood in the suburbs of Paris and is spreading quickly among cities all over Europe and the rest of the world. Le parkour consists of finding new physical ways to traverse the city landscape – scaling walls and trees, roof-running, balancing on existing structures and leaping from building to building. Described by urban acrobats as the art of movement and even a philosophy, le parkour is a way of using the obstacles found in one's path to perform jumps and acrobatics that combine speed, fluidity, aesthetics and originality. Beginners are advised to practice daily, not to start with high walls, to work in groups and above all not to be dared to go too far. For converts, it demonstrates the classic human urge for freedom and expression within the built environment of modern cities.

- indoor events: mall walking, physical activity fairs and open houses in sport and recreation facilities;
- dance instruction and dances on outdoor tennis courts and in indoor facilities;
- family picnic days with activities for all ages;
- muggle quiddich (inspired by Harry Potter) and other activities from fantasy and/or historical stories; and
- zany events linked to traditions or special days: Finland (and the Finnish diaspora) has an annual wife-carrying race in which the International Wife Carrying Competition Rules Committee mandates that "all participants must have fun".

European and international events promoting physical activity

Move for Health Day is a WHO initiative to create awareness and promote the benefits of physical activity as essential for the health and well-being of the general public. Each country determines the timing and nature of the Move for Health Day (http://www.who.int/moveforhealth/about/en).

Day of Dance (organized on a day between 10 and 17 May) is organized by member cities of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network. Young people from many cities and countries dance the same dance at the same time on the same day. Contact member cities.

The ZOOM Campaign (March until November each year) aims to help children to make their daily journeys independently and in an environmentally friendly way. The modules and materials produced within the campaign offer concrete ideas and activities for teachers, parents and children (http://www.local-climate-protection.eu/zoom2008.html).

European Mobility Week (mid-September) is a week-long series of activities contributing to converting from private cars to sustainable and active modes of transport (http://www.mobilityweek.eu).

Car-Free Day is part of the European Mobility Week. Many cities restrict private car use and offer a variety of activities on this day.

International Walk to School Month (October) gives children, parents, schoolteachers and community leaders an opportunity to be part of a global event as they celebrate the many benefits of walking. In 2008, millions of people in 40 countries walked to school together (http://www.iwalktoschool.org).

The Global Embrace consists of a chain of locally organized intergenerational walks and celebrations encircling the globe during a 24-hour period on the International Day of Older Persons, 1 October.

The International Day of Disabled Persons (3 December) provides an opportunity to focus on physical activity and people with disabilities (http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/disiddp.htm).

Tool 7. A checklist for identifying activities with which to proceed

This checklist identifies some criteria that can be used to set priorities among and select activities and interventions with which to proceed. Not all criteria apply to every activity; you also may have additional ones to apply.

Rank the activities from 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest).

Will achieve the goals and objectives of the plan	1 2 3 4
Will address the needs of targeted audiences and groups	1 2 3 4
Will help to reduce inequity	1 2 3 4
Recognizes and supports diversity	1 2 3 4
Can produce the desired results in the desired time frame	1 2 3 4
Will be supported by stakeholders and the leadership group	1 2 3 4
Will be supported by residents of the community or city	1 2 3 4
Will be supported by partners in a variety of sectors	1 2 3 4
Will be supported by external funding agents	1 2 3 4
Has a clear lead agency or department	1 2 3 4
Takes full advantage of existing resources and initiatives	1 2 3 4
Can be implemented with available financial resources	1 2 3 4
Can be implemented with available staff and voluntary resources	1 2 3 4
Will not conflict with or duplicate other initiatives	1 2 3 4
Can be realistically implemented within the time frame	1 2 3 4
Can be evaluated	1 2 3 4
Is sustainable over the long term	1 2 3 4
Will attract mass-media support	1 2 3 4

Source: adapted from *Community physical activity planning: a resource manual (16).*

8. Learning from others: examples from cities in Europe

This chapter includes activities submitted for this publication in 2006 and for the process of evaluating Phase IV (2003–2008) of the WHO European Healthy Cities Project in 2008. Many other cities have exemplary programmes and policies. To learn more about the activities described here, please contact the healthy city coordinator in the particular city of interest and/or visit the city web site.

City	Intervention or theme	Key points
Albiate, Italy	Albiate in Forma: a comprehensive approach	Involves the municipality, schools, parishes, voluntary organizations and health care practitioners. The programme has shown an increase in physical activity overall and a decrease in falls by older people and has demonstrated cost-effectiveness (2003–2006)
Barcelona, Spain	Shape Up Programme to prevent obesity in city schools	Pilot project in schools in 22 European countries. For more information, visit http://www.shapeupeurope.net (2008)
Brno, Czech Republic	Green spaces for physical activity	Reconstructing a central park into an active living space; creating a natural public garden (2006)
	Reducing obesity among children	Activities organized by local community groups for people with disabilities, older people, mothers with children, etc. (2006)
	Support for youth-at-risk and children in ethnic minority neighbourhoods	Activities involving the whole family, summer camps for obese children (2006) Skating parks and youth clubs in high-risk housing areas; attractive, monitored playgrounds in ethnic minority neighbourhoods with connections to youth centres (2006)

City	Intervention or theme	Key points
Brighton & Hove, United Kingdom	Comprehensive plans	Active Living Strategy and Action Plan and City Sports Strategy and Action Plan (2006)
	Cycling demonstration town: personal travel advisers	In 2005, Brighton & Hove was one of six English towns and cities designated as a cycling demonstration town. A comprehensive bid secured £1.5 million from the central government Department of Transport, which has been more than matched by the City Council. To achieve a 5% increase in cyclists each year, personal travel advisers and other staff intensively support more than 75 individuals each year to become regular bike users. They also work with schools and businesses to promote cycling as a preferred mode of transport. New cycle infrastructure in the local area enables its greater use as a choice of transport. Through the personal travel adviser work, the cycling demonstration town team has demonstrated fewer car trips and more cycle trips (2008)
Bursa, Turkey	Creating parks for culture and recreation	Upgrading areas into parks for culture, leisure, recreation and sport (the largest is Merinos Cultural Park). Emphasis on preserving and planting trees (known as a city of trees) and integration with the inner city (2006)
	Special events	Annual sport and healthy living tournament for staff in the Metropolitan Municipality of Bursa; integration of activities for people with mental disabilities into Cultural Park and Sports Festival and Youth and Sports festival with more than 3000 participants (2006)
	Sport development	The municipal sports club has activities in 10 sports and summer sport schools. The club operates in collaboration with schools and families (2006)
Cardiff County, United Kingdom	Walking for Health	The programme of regular, brisk, short walks aims to improve health by promoting regular walking, particularly targeting sedentary and disadvantaged people. Trained volunteers lead weekly walks in local places of interest and parks. A co-coordinator is employed part-time to develop and promote the scheme, which is grant funded. In 2007, more than 600 walks were held. Evaluation found that 64% of respondents walk every week, and 66% reported notable improvements in general fitness and well-being (2001–2007)

City	Intervention or theme	Key points
Copenhagen, Denmark	Comprehensive plan and campaign	Copenhagen on the Move is a multifaceted long-term programme designed to increase citizens' participation in physical activity (2006)
	Cycling-friendly	Comprehensive support for cycling including well-designed cycling tracks and trails, traffic-calming, city bicycles, promotion programmes, cycling workshops, etc. (ongoing)
	Rehabilitation and wellness for citizens with chronic diseases	Rehabilitation focusing on healthy lifestyles including physical activity: cooperation between the City, hospitals and general practitioners (2008)
Dimitrovgrad, Russian Federation	Sports for children in local neighbourhoods	City divided into 24 "active zones" each with a trainer to teach children who do not usually participate in sports in a variety of sports they identify as ones in which they would like to participate. In 2007, there were 5500 participants and 80 tournaments (2008)
Dublin, Ireland	Special events (women and older people)	More than 40 000 women participate each year in a 10-km Women's Mini Marathon sponsored by the *Evening Herald* newspaper. The annual Senior Games Festival helps older people meet others and try a new activity and encourages strong social connections between towns throughout Ireland (2006)
	Programmes for children and older people	The *Sports Formula* programme employs and trains about 20 people to bring non-competitive recreational activities to schoolchildren. The Rainbow Walking Challenge encourages older people to take up walking and then improve their fitness by moving through the colours (2006)
Grand Nancy Urban Community, France	Programmes for families with children 0–6 years old	Mum, Dad, Let's Move Together aims to increase by 25% the numbers of children 0–6 years old and their parents, who actively play together. The campaign includes assessment surveys, training of concerned professionals, provision of equipment, an education campaign and special events (2008)
Helsingborg, Sweden	Pedestrian-friendly environments	Extended and upgraded the city promenade, which runs through a varied landscape and various historical parts of the city. Maps and information provided (2006)

City	Intervention or theme	Key points
Horsens, Denmark	Equality in active living: leisure time passport	The programme and policy provides disadvantaged children and youth with opportunities to be active by helping with the cost of fees, memberships and transport. Cooperation with youth groups, schools, institutions and sport clubs (2008)
	Special event – Senior Games	Some 900 local seniors participated in open physical activity and sporting events as well as delegations from 15 other towns. Cooperation with local associations and the development of a team of volunteers were critical (2008)
Izhevsk, Russian Federation	Activities for older people	Activities to support healthy aging and physical activity organized around the International Day of Older Persons (2006)
	Sports and physical activity for disabled children	Programme to draw disabled children and youth into sports (football) (2008)
Jerusalem, Israel	Special event – sport for older people	Annual Elderly Sports Day organized by the municipality and JDC-ESHEL, the Association for the Planning and Development of Services for the Aged in Israel (2006)
Kadiköy, Turkey	Enabling physical activity for special groups	Morning exercise and walking programmes for older people; exercise programmes in kindergartens; provision of fitness equipment stations in local parks; a well-equipped fitness centre for municipal staff to use (2006)
	Sport development	Municipal sports club and summer sport schools (2006)
Kuopio, Finland	Active children and youth	Active child and youth project involving education, cultural and recreational Services and research at Kuopio University. "Fitness Track" works with schools, teachers and students (2008)
Kuressare, Estonia	Physical infrastructure strategy	Since 2002, several physical activity facilities have been built or renovated, including an active "health" park, football grounds, playgrounds, swimming pools, walking trails and cycling paths (2006)
	Children and young people	The city government provides per capita payments to sports clubs and training groups that actively engage children and youth (2006)

City	Intervention or theme	Key points
Kvasice, Czech Republic	Walking with schoolchildren and parents	Half-day walks on Saturdays for children and their parents, visiting local sites of historical interest and linking health and educational objectives. The walks are kept fun through treasure hunts, competitions and challenges. A good alternative to walking to school, since 40% of students are from nearby villages and many travel to school by bus (2006)
Liverpool, United Kingdom	Regeneration of a run-down area into a sporting area	A partnership of local regeneration agencies turned a local grot-spot into a much-needed sports facility called Admiral Park. Local schoolchildren were included in the planning (2006)
	A comprehensive programme and policy	The Sport and Physical Activity Alliance is the strategic arm of "Active City". In the past year, 151 000 people participated in Active City (2008)
	Encouraging women from diverse ethnic backgrounds	A total of 231 women from 16 ethnic backgrounds across different areas in Liverpool completed a survey, and 17 partook in focus groups with the help of community volunteers, many of whom were bilingual or multilingual. A resulting community intervention has been designed to accommodate the factors identified influencing the physical activity levels of women from diverse cultures (2008)
	Healthy Weight – Healthy Liverpool	A strategy developed by the Obesity Task Force that builds on the work already underway within the City – including the many physical activity projects that are supported through the Liverpool Active City Campaign and the innovative food initiatives as a part of Taste for Health. There is the Healthy Schools Programme and the Healthy Schools Bus Initiative. The Healthy Schools Bus is fitted out with a treadmill and other fitness equipment. There is also a lesson about nutrition (with fruit tasting) and a sports and multi-skills session in school (2008)
	Personal health trainers	Liverpool's NHS personal health trainers are a new and dynamic team (of 19) recruited from, based in and working across Liverpool communities, supporting individuals in making healthier lifestyle choices (2008)

City	Intervention or theme	Key points
Ljubljana, Slovenia	Enabling physical activity for special groups	The city provides funds to nongovernmental organizations that organize physical activities for their members, such as the association for people with heart disease. The City Agency for Sport provides sport activities in kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools, and during holidays, as well as competitions, races and annual events such as the city marathon. Swimming is emphasized in elementary schools: more than 90% of all children learn to swim (2006)
Lódz, Poland	Improving health through physical activity and proper diet	Through Physical Activity to Health targets preschool and school-aged children, adults and older people. Includes education, counselling and activity programmes for groups with and without obesity (2006)
London, United Kingdom	Traffic congestion charge	One example of charging cars to enter a zone in the centre of the city. Although the primary objective was to reduce traffic congestion, cycle journeys have increased by 20% with a 7% reduction in crashes. There may also have been an increase in journeys walked – both as trips but also as part of the increased number of journeys on public transport (ongoing)
Maribor, Slovenia	Special event – dance	The Quadrille Dance Festival started in Maribor to increase participation in physical activity among youth and to promote the tradition of dance. In the following years, many other cities joined in. The event was entered into the Guinness Book of Records when 23 628 dancers performed the same dance with the same music at the same time all over central Europe (2006)
Medjimurje County, Croatia	Intersectoral collaboration to promote physical activity	Programme within public health capacity-building offering educational information and sport and recreation programmes through collaboration with others including health and sport professionals and volunteers. Involved mass media, politicians, institutions, nongovernmental organizations and private sponsors (2005–2007)
	Together for Better Health of children and adults	Educational classes for students, their parents and school employees about healthy diet and adequate physical activity. Measurement of body mass index among individuals in the programme (2008)

City	Intervention or theme	Key points
Milan, Italy	Parks and green spaces	The Parks Project aims to prevent violence and antisocial behaviour in public parks and to build cycling and walking paths in the large parks. A green belt around the city connects the parks and allows green corridors to the inner city (2006)
	Active living in public housing	Urban planners designing public housing settlements that promote active living (2006)
	Special events	The annual Stramilano is a non-competitive march that twins cities around the world and involves thousands of participants, including children. Several voluntary organizations hold popular events that support the creation of new cycling paths and green corridors (2006)
	All Dance for Health	Milan is a leader in the all-Europe Day of Dance and the use of dance among people with disabilities and older people and disadvantaged children (ongoing)
Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom	Comprehensive programme of sports, exercise and physical activities for all ages	The Year of Exercise and Sport (YES) project focused on grassroots initiatives along with high-profile elite events to inspire residents. A project of the City Council supported by partners in all sectors (2006)
	Fusion card	Card entitles those aged 5–18 years to free activities at leisure centres, pools and local facilities. More than 7000 cards have been issued, with wide distribution in a variety of neighbourhoods. A comprehensive evaluation is underway (2008)
Novocheboksarsk, Russian Federation	Sports Facilities for All	Novocheboksarsk is called the most athletic town in Chuvashia. There are 126 600 citizens, 22% of whom are actively engaged in physical culture and sports. To support this, there are 304 sports facilities in the town: 12 swimming pools, including the only 50-metre pool in Chuvashia and in the Volga region, a city stadium with 8000 seats, 45 sport halls, 115 sports fields, 13 shooting galleries, 10 ice hockey rinks, 15 sports clubs, a 200-metre track-and-field arena, a lighted ski track, a skiing base, an ice palace and a sports complex that is unique in the Volga region

City	Intervention or theme	Key points
Odense, Denmark	Cycling city	Between 1999 and 2002, 50 projects to promote and enable cycling were implemented, including physical improvements, changes in regulations and campaigns, with an emphasis on trying out innovative ideas. By the end of 2002, cycling traffic had increased by 20%, and the number of accidents involving cyclists had been reduced by 20% compared with 1996–1997. The project resulted in great savings for the health sector, largely attributed to increased safety and to a reduction in noncommunicable diseases (ongoing)
Pécs, Hungary	Supporting role models	Aquamagic provides attendance free of charge for water sport activities for all interested teachers in kindergartens, primary and secondary schools. The idea is that teachers serve as role models and will inspire their students to take up water sports (2006)
	Shape Up Project – school-based, regional and Europe-wide	A pilot project on how changing the school environment can promote physical activity and healthy eating and prevent obesity. Three schools participating in Pécs for three years (2008)
Poznan, Poland	Programmes for children	City offers universal swimming lessons and courses in skiing, skating and snowboarding and co-funds recreation centres and sports leagues. Many thousands of children participate (2008)
	Shape Up Europe	Poznan schools are participating in this three-year project to change school environments to promote physical activity and healthy eating and prevent obesity (2008)
Rijeka, Croatia	Healthy, active ageing for people 50 years and older	Free, supervised and adapted exercise programmes for citizens older than 50 years. The number of participants continues to grow (2008)
Rome, Italy	Walking School Bus	The City Council worked with school authorities and parents, the police, district representatives and road safety officers. Each walking school bus has an adult "driver" in the front and at the rear. In 2005, more than 50 schools (1300 children and 100 bus lines) were involved. In 2006–2007, the programme will be extended to all school districts (2006)

City	Intervention or theme	Key points
Salamanca, Spain	Walking for health	This programme informs people about the benefits of walking and provides group walks, including ones with an expert on bird-watching (2006)
San Fernando de Henares, Spain	Active and Sustainable Mobility Plan	An integrated set of actions to decrease car use and enable more active and environmentally friendly transport. Includes reduced speed limits, construction of pedestrian areas, underground parking spaces and a network of protected cycle-ways and improvements in public transport (2006)
	Car Free Day and Active Mobility Week	One week in September is dedicated to a sustainable mobility week including Car Free Day on 22 September. In 2006, activities included closing the town centre to private cars, a non-competitive cycling ride, an international conference, the installation of 14 new bicycle parking sites, repair workshops for children's bikes, and the creation of a mobility panel with various committees working on pedestrian mobility, the elimination of barriers, cycling, public transport, etc. (2006)
Sandnes, Norway	Cycling City	Comprehensive programme to encourage cycling including about 70 km of cycle lanes, 400 parking stands and free city bikes. After 10 years, cycle traffic has increased by about 10% and now represents 5% of the overall road traffic in winter and 12% in warmer seasons (ongoing)
	Involving children in land-use planning: the Children's Trail Programme	Children identify and register play areas, shortcuts and reference areas for schools and nurseries. These must be used in all planning activities to safeguard important play areas (2006)
Sant Andreu de la Barca, Spain	Active living against obesity	"Do you want to play with us?" offers physical activity close to home to children 6–12 years old: 60 minutes of active games led by an instructor in open-air municipal areas marked by a common logo (2008)
South Finland–Estonia	Cross-border cooperation	Seven local governments in Estonia and seven in Finland are participating in collaboration to enable local governments to improve opportunities for physical activity and encourage cooperation between sectors and governments at the national and international levels. Includes a survey, cooperative training and workshops and special events (2006)

City	Intervention or theme	Key points
Stockholm, Sweden	Walking programme	For almost 10 years, the municipality has been offering free walking tours led by trained volunteers. The walking groups primarily attract women aged 55 years and older; many have never exercised before. Participants find walking in groups to be sociable, safe and stimulating (ongoing)
Stirling, United Kingdom	Partnerships for active living	The Stirling Physical Activity Task Group is a unique partnership with representatives from voluntary organizations, environment, transport, public health, health promotion, primary care, Active Stirling and children's services. This has resulted in more efficient use of resources and some innovative initiatives, including midnight football, twilight basketball, free swimming for those younger than 16 years of age, music and dance activities and workplace-based initiatives. Long-range urban design plans include shifting road traffic flow, supporting safe active routes to schools and safer play areas and regenerating several run-down sites (2006)
Stoke-on-Trent, United Kingdom	Reducing inequity	The Go5 Project helps people with lower socioeconomic status become more physically active. Primary health care professionals refer clients to a 10-week programme offering up to five activities per week: gym visits, swimming and led walks for a maximum of £10 (2006) Closing the Gap assists sporting groups to better engage with non-traditional partners and work effectively with young people who are experiencing or are at risk of social exclusion (2006) Lifestyle programme for high-risk individuals, who are offered an intensive lifestyle support programme including counselling and group-based sessions in physical activity, weight management and positive thinking. A robust evaluation is underway (2008)
Sunderland, United Kingdom	Community wellness programme for disadvantaged populations	Provides opportunities for physical activity in the heart of the community (eight sites) with trained staff and volunteers; 2000 users in the first nine months
	Exercise referral for prevention and management of chronic disease	Physicians refer high-risk people and those with chronic illnesses to the City wellness programme. Each year more than 1500 individuals complete the 15-week programme

City	Intervention or theme	Key points
Turku, Finland	Comprehensive plan and strategy	Motion 2000 included a wide range of communication activities, services, counselling and the involvement of city planners in making changes in the built environment. Between 1993 and 2004, the percentage of active adult city residents increased from 28% to 42%. The development and implementation of a comprehensive strategy continues and is described in *Active living in Turku – promoting health by means of physical activity (32)*
	Home exercise for older people	The Gym at Home! Programme includes leaflets and television exercise programmes that older people can do at home. Uses volunteer peer instructors. Cooperation between local nongovernmental organizations and health care and sports services
Udine, Italy	Prevention and management of back pain	Ladies and Gentlemen against Back Pain is a cooperative project designed to enable older citizens to prevent back pain and improve posture. Three-month exercise course free of charge (2008)
	Adding life to old age: a regional programme involving 15 municipalities	Regional healthy city project includes promoting healthy eating and creating walking groups who meet 2–3 times per week
Vila Real, Portugal	Active schools, growing healthy	The aim of this project is to verify the effect of multidisciplinary intervention programmes (nutrition, physical activity and leisure time) on the prevalence of obesity among children 3–10 years old. Evaluating and characterizing the eating habits in these children, the activities during leisure time, verifying the conditions of the equipment schoolyard and activities during free time in the schoolyard and the levels of physical condition through the classes of physical education. This project will be implemented during four years and will include a nutritionist, physical education teachers, parents, teachers, counsellors and specialists in different types of equipment for playgrounds and schoolyards to promote active lifelong behaviour (2008–2011)

9. Key sources for further information

Web sites with multiple resources and links

Active Living by Design (http://www.activelivingbydesign.org). Innovative approaches to increase physical activity through community design, public policies and communications strategies.

Active Living Leadership (http://www.activelivingleadership.org). Leadership for healthy communities, advanced policies for healthy eating and active living. Extensive list of resources including briefs, articles and tools.

Active Living Network (http://www.activeliving.org). Designing active communities, promoting healthy lives. A gateway to tools and resources for promoting active living and healthy communities.

Active Living Research (http://www.activelivingresearch.org). Multiple resources including literature citations and fact sheets summarizing the evidence on active transport and active recreation.

Alberta Centre for Active Living (http://www.centre4activeliving.ca). Comprehensive lists of resources and links related to active living in a variety of settings, including community design.

Center for Advanced Studies in Nutrition and Social Marketing (http://www.socialmarketing-nutrition.ucdavis.edu). Provides tools that measure environmental change in several areas, including physical activity, diet, and workplace and school environments.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity (http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa). Resources and numerous links to the Division of Adolescent and School Health, President's Council, etc.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Sprawl Watch Clearinghouse (http://www.sprawlwatch.org). Articles and publications on active living and creating healthy urban environments and effects on public health.

Community Guides (http://www.thecommunityguide.org). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Guide to Community Preventive Services. Systematic reviews of the effectiveness of selected population-based interventions designed to increase levels of physical activity.

European network for the promotion of health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA Europe) (http://www.euro.who.int/hepa). The vision of the network is to achieve better health through physical activity among all people in Europe.

Green Map System (http://www.greenmap.com). Green Maps are locally created maps that chart the natural and cultural environment using adaptable tools and a shared visual language of Green Map Icons to highlight green living resources.

International Association of Public Transport (http://www.uitp.com). A worldwide network of public transport professionals. Reports and a city mobility database are available.

International Council on Active Aging (http://www.icaa.cc). Information and educational resources to promote active living and wellness with age.

Healthy Kids Tool Kit (http://www.healthytoolkit.ca/home). Public Health Agency of Canada. Tips, activities, lesson ideas, research and promotional ideas on healthy eating, active living, physical education and healthy relationships.

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence: public health intervention guidance on physical activity (http://www.nice.org.uk/PHI002). Four commonly used methods to increase physical activity.

ParticipACTION Archives (http://www.usask.ca/archives/participaction). An archive of social marketing examples and articles about the world's longest running and most successful physical activity social marketing campaign.

Paths for All Partnerships (http://www.pathsforall.org.uk). Learn from 19 diverse organizations in Scotland who have partnered to create a network of paths for walkers, cyclists and horse riders of all ages and abilities.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Centre (http://www.pedbikeinfo.org). A clearinghouse for information about pedestrian and cycling issues, resources and links.

Saskatoon in Motion (http://www.in-motion.ca). Web site of Canada's premiere active city with links to other cities and the provincial programmes spawned by the pilot project in Saskatoon.

Smart Growth (http://www.smartgrowth.org). Articles, case studies and publications on smart growth, active living and public health.

South Carolina Prevention Research Center (http://prevention.sph.sc.edu). Information, electronic newsletter and electronic mailing list on physical activity.

Sustrans (http://www.sustrans.org.uk). Creative, imaginative and practical community-based solutions to the transport, environmental and health challenges affecting everyone; photo library and information on guidelines, best practice and active travel, smart and safe routes to school, cycling, walking, etc.

Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (http://www.thepep.org). Clearinghouse for information on sustainable public transport, including projects on walking and cycling.

Wisconsin Department of Health Services (http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/ToolCalcs.htm). An extensive supply of tools and calculators related to physical activity and nutrition.

Selected publications

Examples of comprehensive city plans

Active living in Turku: promoting health by means of physical activity. Turku, City of Turku, 2006 (http://www.marebalticum.org/balticoffice/images/stories/active_living/turkubook.pdf). This publication describes the 15 years of experience in building an active city that values and promotes health-enhancing physical activity. It is a practical handbook presented as a cookbook of ideas, best practices and products.

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WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
EUROPE

A healthy city is an active city: a physical activity planning guide

Peggy Edwards and Agis D. Tsouros

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World Health Organization
Regional Office for Europe
Scherfigsvej 8, DK-2100 Copenhagen Ø, Denmark
Tel.: +45 39 17 17 17. Fax: +45 39 17 18 18. E-mail: postmaster@euro.who.int
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A HEALTHY CITY IS AN ACTIVE CITY: A PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PLANNING GUIDE