

Creating Built Environments That Expand Active Transportation and Active Living Across the United States: A Policy Statement From the American Heart Association

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It provides recommendations and resources that can improve transportation systems, enhance land use design, and provide education to support policies and environments to promote active travel.



BACKGROUND

- ❑ This policy statement accompanies the article 'Built environment approaches to increase physical activity: a science advisory from the American Heart Association' by Omura JD et al. providing the scientific rationale for promoting active transportation and activity-supporting built environments. The statement summarises the **important policy, systems, environmental approaches** and **funding opportunities** for prioritising **increases** in active transport
- ❑ **Physical activity** is vital for the **health and well-being** of youth and adults, although the **prevalence** of physical activity continues to be **low**
- ❑ **Promoting active transport** through **policy, systems** and **environmental change** is one of the leading **evidence-based strategies** to **increase physical activity**

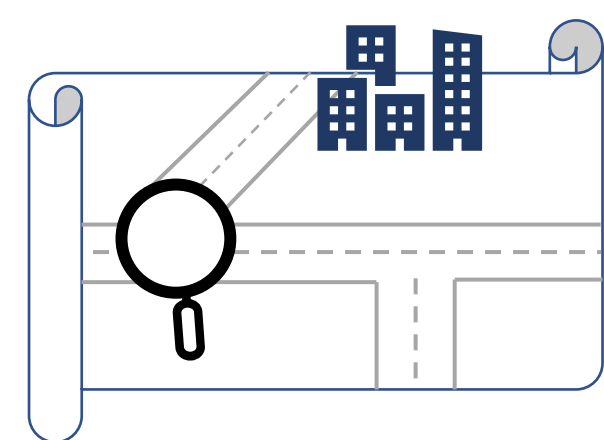
INTERVENTION LEVELS

Interventions for active transport must occur at 3 scales

1. Macroscale

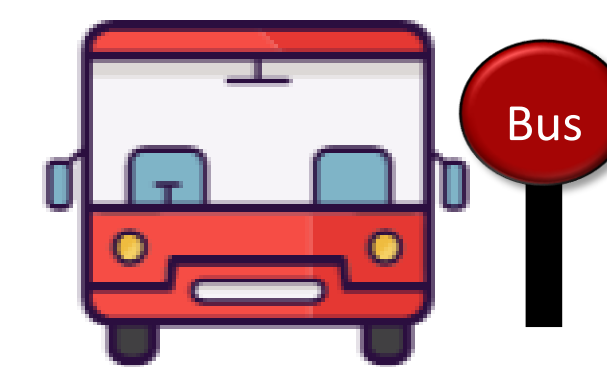
Refers to the density and mix of land uses that place different types of destinations within walk, bicycle and transit distance.

e.g., planning process, zoning ordinance that intentionally intermingle places where people live, work, shop, play, learn etc.



2. Mesoscale

Includes quality, comprehensive and connected networks of facilities for active transport e.g., programs/policies that create opportunities for active travel, protected bicycle lanes, higher frequency bus service



3. Microscale

Entails functional and inviting design details that reward travelers for arriving on foot or by bicycle, wheelchair or transit

e.g., bicycle racks at schools/businesses, benches, lighting, street trees, pedestrian safety measures



POLICY, SYSTEMS, AND ENVIRONMENTAL INTERVENTIONS

Complete Streets

- ❑ Complete Streets policies require street design to address the needs of vehicle and nonvehicle users to allow all residents to travel safely
- ❑ Requires that users of all ages, incomes and abilities be considered in all roadway construction, repair and maintenance

Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure

- ❑ Refers to infrastructure and furnishing that make it easier to accommodate, encourage or enhance opportunities for active transportation
- ❑ Policies for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure can be used to improve the quality, quantity and equity of active transportation facilities



Street Scale Design and Placemaking

- ❑ Street scale design and placemaking can affect the quality of experience of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users
- ❑ Some street scale design elements that are positively associated with active transport are: presence of sidewalks, streetlights, bicycle lanes
- ❑ Placemaking is focused on optimising the design of public spaces for peoples benefit

Safe Routes to School

- ❑ A transportation program (in the US) that enables active, safe travel to and from school
- ❑ The most effective Safe Route to School initiatives combine engineering improvements with education and encouragement programs

Traffic Safety/Vision Zero

- ❑ Monitoring the incidence and locations of crashes, injuries and fatalities during active transport is needed to develop the appropriate infrastructure, education and safety measures to support active transport
- ❑ Vision Zero is a multinational movement that originated in Sweden in 1997 to achieve a transport system with no fatalities
- ❑ Example strategies to support Vision Zero movement: reducing speed limit, enforcing bicycle helmet laws, promoting stronger regulation for safe driving, etc.

FINAL POINTS

- ❑ Evidence is building that it is a **combination of interventions** acting across all 3 intervention levels that is needed to increase active transport
- ❑ **Collaborations** among public health, transportation, planning, parks and recreation, economic development, housing, transit, and bicycle and pedestrian advocates are **essential to achieve policy change** leading to **sustainable population-wide health improvements**
- ❑ **Funding decisions** should be **based on need** to ensure that active transport funding will **not exacerbate disparities in transportation access**
- ❑ **Improving active transport** can also have a major impact on other policy areas such as **air quality** and **climate change**