

# CREATE THRIVING, ACTIVITY-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES:

## Tools to Make the Case for Investments in Activity-Friendly Communities

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### BACKGROUND

Designing activity-friendly communities can make it easier for people to regularly obtain the amounts of physical activity they need for substantial health benefits, such as improved cardiovascular health and cognitive function. The Community Guide recommends combining active transportation and land use initiatives including parks to increase physical activity. To address growing interest in whether these built environment changes also provide economic benefits, the National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research (NCCOR) has developed a new evidence-based resource collection of economic indicators that can help inform decisions for community investments such as sidewalks, trails, and bike lanes.<sup>1</sup>

### METHODS

NCCOR conducted discussion groups with experts representing disciplines such as housing, transportation, and community development to identify economic indicators that may change with built environment improvements. A workshop and survey narrowed down indicators based on feasibility, quality, and influence to the 10 priority indicators now featured in the resource collection.<sup>2</sup> Its centerpiece is an Economic Indicators Library with guidance on how the indicators can be used. Other resources include an overview factsheet on the 10 indicators, talking points to make the case for building activity-friendly places and evaluating their economic outcomes in more equitable ways, and a customizable PowerPoint slide deck for community presentations.

### ECONOMIC INDICATORS TO MEASURE BENEFITS OF CREATING ACTIVITY-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

- **Walkability**
- **Employment Rate**
- **Vehicle Miles Traveled per Capita**
- **Vacancy Rate (residential)**
- **Air & Water Quality**
- **Housing Affordability**
- **Retail Sales per Square Foot**
- **Property Tax Revenue**
- **Number of Small Businesses**
- **Life Expectancy**

### OUTCOMES/RESULTS

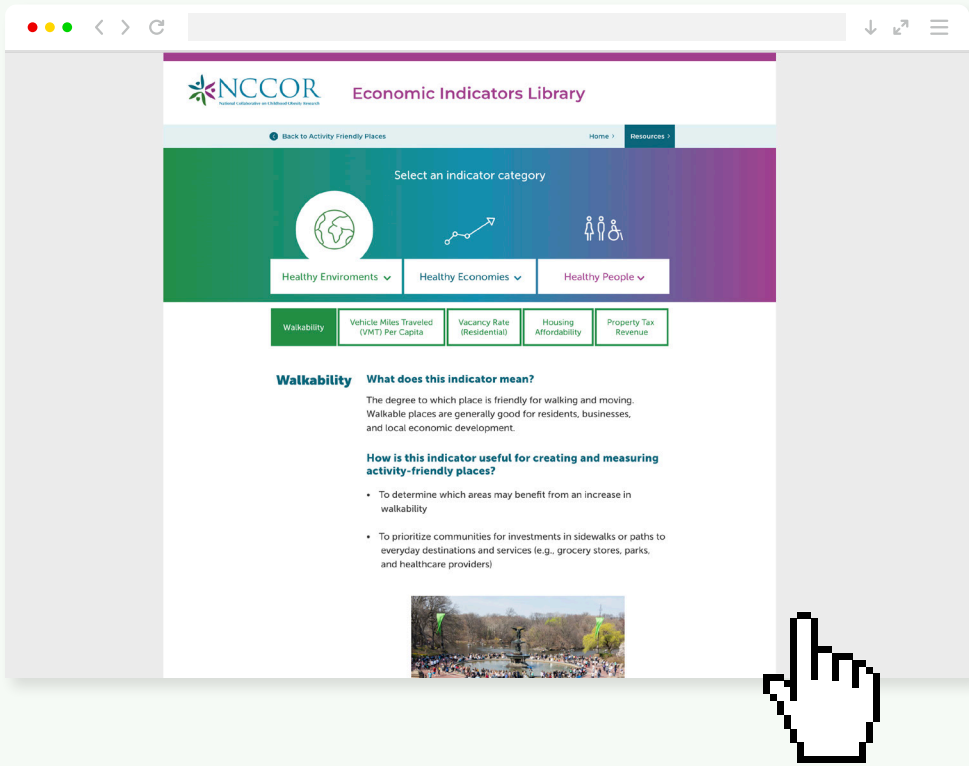
The Create Thriving, Activity-Friendly Communities Resource Collection was launched in June 2022, and the Economic Indicator Library launched in October 2022. The Resource Collection provides public health practitioners, decision makers, and community members with resources and tools to make the case for the economic, environmental, and health benefits of designing communities for physical activity. Since the launch, the webpage has been a top performer on the NCCOR website, with 173,000+ webpage views in five months. Materials are designed for audiences outside public health, including land use and transportation officials, business owners, residents, policymakers, civic leaders, and other community decision makers.

### CONCLUSIONS/IMPLICATIONS

Whether a community's priorities center around economic, environmental, or human health, designing communities for physical activity provides measurable benefits. NCCOR's new collection of online resources is helping public health practitioners, decision makers, and community members better understand, communicate, and compare the potential economic and equity impact of activity-friendly places.

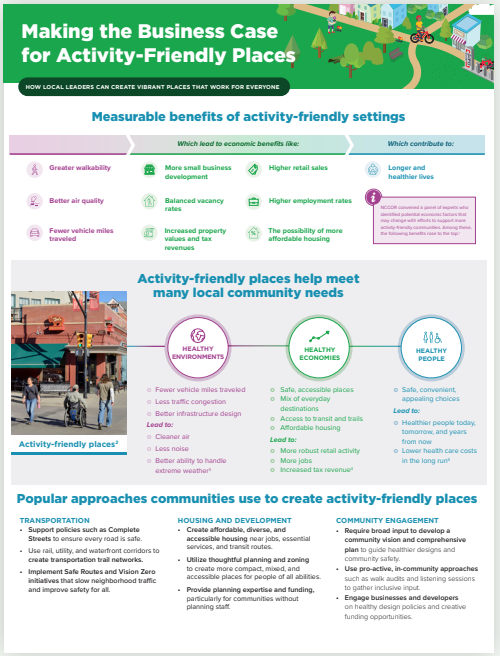
#### REFERENCES

1. Cradock AL, Buchner D, Zaganjor H, et al. Priorities and Indicators for Economic Evaluation of Built Environment Interventions to Promote Physical Activity. J Phys Act Health. 2021; 18(9): 1088-1096.
2. NCCOR. Create Thriving, Activity-Friendly Communities. Available at <https://www.nccor.org/nccor-tools/create-thriving-activity-friendly-communities/>.



### ECONOMIC INDICATORS LIBRARY

The Economic Indicators Library is a user-friendly tool that features information on 10 ways to measure the benefits of activity-friendly communities and support community planning efforts. It includes how the indicators may be used and limitations to consider.



### FACTSHEET

Share this factsheet at a community town hall or meeting with a decision maker. It includes an overview of 10 measurable benefits of activity-friendly places, popular approaches to creating activity-friendly places, and 3 case studies.

### TRAIN-THE-TRAINER SLIDE PRESENTATION

Use this adaptable slide presentation to focus on benefits of activity-friendly communities that are most relevant to your community. The presentation is designed to be as comprehensive as possible, covering each of the 10 indicators in detail and how they can be measured, but you can decide how much or how little of the detail you want to include for your audience.



### DISCUSSION POINTS

The discussion points can be used to help facilitate a conversation about activity-friendly communities with local leaders, policymakers, decision makers, and community organizations. They are organized into categories with key considerations to keep in mind and questions that may help prompt conversation.



**LEARN MORE BY VISITING**  
<https://www.nccor.org/nccor-tools/create-thriving-activity-friendly-communities>  
**OR SCANNING QR CODE**

**NCCOR: WORKING TOGETHER TO REVERSE CHILDHOOD OBESITY**  
The National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research (NCCOR) is a partnership of four of the leading funders of childhood obesity research: the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). For more information about NCCOR, visit [www.nccor.org](http://www.nccor.org).

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