We Are Where We Live: Placemaking and Health

Richard Killingsworth

the harvest foundation
Fostering a Community of Choice
Imagination
We Are Where We Live
Infill development on strip shopping center site

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the harvest foundation

Fostering a Community of Choice

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The phenomenon of the human mind, according to research at Cambridge University, it doesn't matter in what order the letters in a word are, the only important thing is that the first and last letter be in the right place. This is because the human mind does not read every letter by itself, but the word as a whole. Amazingly, and I always thought sleeping was more important!\"
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I couldn’t believe that I could actually understand what I was reading. The phenomenal power of the human mind according to a researcher at Cambridge University.

It doesn’t matter in what order the letters in a word are, the only important thing is that the first and last letter be in the right place. The rest can be whatever and you can still read it without a problem.

This is because the human mind does not reach every letter by itself, but the word as a whole. Amazing and I always thought spelling was important.
The Effect of Place on Health, Quality of Life and Livability

- Access to health care
- Quality of schools
- Economic opportunities
- Air, water, and land quality
- Enhanced public safety
- Choices for active living
- Choices for health eating
- Ease of social interaction
- Investment in social capital

Richard Killingsworth
Society
Community
Organizations
Family, Friends
Individuals

Placemaking Considers the Possibility That...

- the pattern of growth has upset the balance of human behavior.
- the social costs of the way we have developed may be far more reaching than traffic jams and sprawl.
- the healthy new developments we live in may be the opposite.
Indicator Species

Photo by Keyt Harrington
A Dream

A Detour

A Dependency

A Disturbing Trend
Lack of Centers

Low Density

Large, Segregated Single-Use Zones

Sparse Network

Lack of Centers

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The Emergence of a Sedentary Society

- Automobile
- Television
- Computers
- Convenience Engineering
- Built Environment
- Human Nature
Canine Constitutional

A brisk walk in the park keeps Marcy B in shape between dog shows. His owner, Columbus resident Cathy Stumbo, got up early to give her 3-year-old Doberman his regular workout. They typically log 15 miles in Berliner Park.
Physical Inactivity 1994-2005

% of Adults

Bouts of Physical Activity – When & Where?

Blair et al. *Med Exerc Nutri Hlth* 1:54, 1992

- Noon-time jog
- After-dinner walk
- Walk to bus stop

Energy Expenditure (METS)

- Sedentary
- Structured Exercise
- Lifestyle Activity
Place Matters

- Place determines...
  - Quality of Life
  - Overall Health Status
  - Economic Vitality
  - Intellectual Capital
  - Sustainability
Good City Form

- Kevin Lynch
  - City form guides function
- Christopher Alexander
  - The pattern of the city develops the language of how people communicate and behave.
The Life of Cities

• Jane Jacobs
  • “….a well designed city gives people constant mutual support, both economically and socially.”
The Life of Streets

• Donald Appleyard
  • Less traffic improves conditions for walking and bicycling and encourages social interaction
The Burden of Physical Inactivity

- **The Problem**
  - 1 in 4 adults are sedentary
  - Over two-thirds do not achieve recommended dose

- **The Public Health Burden**
  - 64% overweight and 1 in 3 obese
  - CVD, Cancer, Diabetes
  - Physical inactivity is a primary factor in over 200,000 deaths annually.

- **The Economic Burden**
  - Medical costs associated with physical inactivity exceed $100 billion annually.

Obesity Trends Among U.S. Adults

BRFSS, 1985

(*BMI ≥30, or ~ 30 lbs overweight for 5’ 4” person)
Obesity Trends Among U.S. Adults
BRFSS, 1991
(*BMI ≥30, or ~ 30 lbs overweight for 5’ 4” person)

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Obesity Trends Among U.S. Adults

BRFSS, 1997

(*BMI ≥30, or ~ 30 lbs overweight for 5’ 4” person)
Obesity Trends Among U.S. Adults
BRFSS, 2001
(*BMI ≥30, or ~ 30 lbs overweight for 5’ 4” person)
Obesity Trends Among U.S. Adults
BRFSS, 2004
(*BMI ≥30, or ~ 30 lbs overweight for 5’ 4” person)

Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC.

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Obesity Trends Among U.S. Adults
BRFSS, 2006
(*BMI ≥30, or ~ 30 lbs. overweight for 5’ 4” person)

Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC.
Why the Recent Obesity Epidemic?

Many theories
- Community Design
- Transportation
- Television
- Labor Saving Devices
- More Work Hours
- Less Physical Activity
- Fast Food
- Genetic
- Pathogenic

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Culture of Fear

We have created a society that is oriented to change through fear and anxiety.

Misguided Direction: "the solution lies in focusing more attention on body weight by screening youth at school and educating them about the 'dangers' of obesity." Robert Jeffery, Univ. Minnesota
Another Perspective on Health and Weight

Adjusted Relative Risk
CVD Mortality

Percent Body Fat

Provide a social and physical environment to support an extra 15-30 minutes of walking per day to expend enough calories to lose or control a pound of weight per month.

Saelens, Annals of Behavioral Medicine, 2003
Transportation Choices
Connected Networks

Quality of Life, Livability, Economic Sustainability

Access to Healthier Options

Sustainable Agriculture, Housing, Schools, Parks, Water, etc.
Active Living Strategies

- Preparation
- Promotion
- Programs
- Policies
- Physical Projects
Strategy 1: Preparation

- Build diverse partnerships
- Build a vision
- Assess policies and environments
- Build a plan of action
- Identify a champion
Strategy 2: Promotions

- Utilize mass media for awareness and advocacy
- Schedule Events
- Develop key messages for focus areas and people
- Develop Awards and Recognition Program
Strategy 3: Programs

- Safe Routes to School
- Complete Streets Programs
- Incentive Campaigns: Bicycle Friendly Communities
- Parks and Trails Programs
- Walking / Bicycling Clubs
Strategy 4: Policies

- School Siting - provide pedestrian accessible elementary school sites
- Update codes to encourage density and mixed land use
- Multi-use public facilities for the community
- Develop health impact statements for new development
Strategy 5: Physical Projects

- Build safe and well-connected pedestrian and bicycle networks
- Design close-to-home play areas for families
- Adopt traffic calming measures to reduce speed, noise & volume
- Create pleasant and functional urban “greenspace” settings
“Come my friends, ‘Tis not too late to seek a newer world.”

Alfred Lord Tennyson, Ulysses, 1842
CONTACT INFORMATION

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