

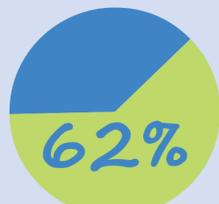
Parks and recreation agencies are creating *Safe Routes to Parks* to facilitate safe access to parks for all people¹

Walking Offers Big Benefits

Walkers are approximately

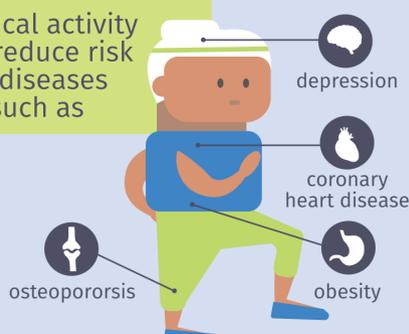
3x

more likely to meet physical activity recommendations than non-walkers.²



of adults reported walking at least 10 minutes a week for leisure or transportation.²

Physical activity can reduce risk of diseases such as



as well as stroke, Type 2 Diabetes and some cancers.³

Walking is the **most popular aerobic activity**⁴

Parks Promote Walking

People living within a **10-minute** walking distance of a park

have higher levels of physical activity and lower rates of obesity.⁵



Group walking

in nature can significantly lower depression, stress and enhance mental well-being.⁶

Five Essential Elements to Safe Routes to Parks

When people can safely walk to parks, it provides more opportunity for physical activity and greater access to open space.



Safety

Safety elements (e.g., lighting, traffic) must be included for pedestrian routes.



Convenience

Walking routes to parks should be no longer than a 10-minute walk.



Access & Design

Proper design, signage, ADA compliance, and multiple entry points benefit all users.



Conditions

Sidewalks and trails should be inviting, comfortable, and safe for all users.



The Park

Facilities, amenities and programs at the park should reflect the needs of the community.

Safe Routes Get People Walking

Physical activity on trails is more frequent if they are **well-maintained**.⁷

Trails maintained in excellent condition had **73% more users** than those in poor condition.⁸

Older adults frequently report that access to **well-maintained green space and sidewalks** encourage more walking for leisure and transportation.¹¹

In Lincoln, Nebraska, for every \$1 invested in multi-use trail development and maintenance, **an average of \$3.00 was saved** in direct medical costs.¹⁰

Traffic calming and presence of playgrounds and recreation areas were consistently associated with **more walking and less pedestrian injury**.⁹

Addressing Walkability in Your Community



Assess Park Usage

Conduct observation studies or local needs assessments to determine if residents are using the park.



Conduct a Walkability Audit

Identify walking routes that are well-maintained and those that require improvement.



Engage the Community

Gather feedback from residents on what improvements are needed for them to feel safe walking to parks.

Safe Routes to Parks is a vital component in creating more walkable communities and a sustainable future.



www.nrpa.org/Walking

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