

Our Position on the Built Environment

In response to Delaware's increasing rate of childhood obesity, NHPS has launched the "Campaign to Make Delaware's Kids the Healthiest in the Nation," and has mobilized more than 200 organizations committed to promoting children's health in the places where children live, learn and play. As part of this campaign, NHPS and our partners aim to influence the land use patterns and transportation systems that make up the built environment in Delaware to ensure those systems enable healthy lifestyles and make the *5-2-1-Almost None* behaviors attainable for children and families throughout the state.

One of NHPS' goals is to encourage county and municipal governments to consider health during the land use and transportation planning processes.

We recommend the following strategies

- Utilizing more compact and mixed land use that shortens the distance between destinations
- Developing a transportation system that offers a variety of safe and convenient non-motorized transportation options for traveling to routine destinations and removes barriers to walking and biking
- Locating parks, trails and greenways close to neighborhoods
- Encouraging supermarkets and farmers markets to locate in easily accessible areas to increase public access to fruits and vegetables

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Promoting Healthy Communities

Nemours | Health & Prevention Services

Planting the seeds for better health

Nemours | Health & Prevention Services

Our Mission

Nemours Health & Prevention Services (NHPS), an operating division of Nemours, is dedicated to working with others to help children lead healthier lives. NHPS currently focuses on two priority areas: preventing childhood obesity through healthy eating and physical activity and emotional and behavioral health.

The focal point of our efforts to promote healthy eating and physical activity is the *5-2-1-Almost None* healthy lifestyle message, which calls for:



- Eating five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day
- Spending no more than two hours a day in front of a screen
- Getting at least one hour of physical activity per day
- Drinking almost no sugary beverages

The Issue: Childhood Obesity in Delaware

Approximately 37% of Delaware's children have a body mass index (BMI) at or above the 85th percentile, making them overweight or obese. This high percentage is a cause for concern because of the health consequences of childhood obesity, which include abnormal cholesterol, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, asthma, depression and anxiety.



The Built Environment and Healthy Living

NHPS' position on the built environment is grounded in research that shows linkages between environmental factors and levels of physical activity, as well as consumption of fruits and vegetables. Research also suggests that changing the environment can change behavior.



Our recommendations in this area are also compatible with smart growth, which has been defined as a pattern of development that is efficient, compact, and environmentally sensitive, and concentrates future growth near existing and planned public facilities and job centers. Smart growth offers health, social, environmental and economic benefits.

Offering a variety of non-motorized transportation options

Providing a transportation system that includes non-motorized transportation options allows residents to walk, bike or use public transportation to travel to routine destinations. Studies have shown that people reporting access to trails for walking or jogging are 55% more likely to be physically active.

Providing open space for active recreation

Studies show that the proximity of neighborhoods to parks, trails and greenways increases levels of daily physical activity among residents. One survey revealed that those with access to neighborhood parks were almost twice as likely to engage in physical activity as those who did not have access to parks.

Designating areas for supermarkets and farmers markets

Locating a full-service grocery store in a community can have a positive impact on consumption of healthy foods. One study showed that 60% of residents consuming two or fewer servings of fruits and vegetables per day prior to the opening of a new store increased consumption, and 75% of residents consuming less than one serving of fruits and vegetables a day also increased their consumption.

CALL TO ACTION

We can all play a role in changing policies and practices that make it easier for children and families to live a healthy lifestyle and follow 5-2-1-Almost None.

You can start by showing your support for

- More safe and accessible neighborhood parks and playgrounds
- Sidewalks and walking and bike trails in or near neighborhoods
- The ability to walk, bike, or use public transportation to get to your daily destinations

For more information on NHPS and our work to make Delaware's Kids the Healthiest in the Nation, visit www.growuphealthy.org

Compact and mixed land use

More compact and mixed land use patterns that shorten the distance between destinations and are pedestrian-friendly encourage traveling by foot or by bicycle, and result in a number of benefits, including:

- **Physical activity** – achievement of recommended levels of physical activity is possible during daily routines.
- **Traffic reduction** – decreasing the distance between where people live, work and shop reduces dependence on automobiles and decreases traffic.
- **Safety** – providing a space for neighbors to interact creates what has been referred to as “eyes on the street,” where the presence of residents out and about in the community deters crime and increases safety.
- **Environmental preservation** – natural areas, such as farmland and wetlands, are protected when development is confined to a more compact area.
- **Air quality** – air pollution decreases as daily commutes are shortened and automobile-dependence is reduced.
- **Economic development** – concentrating development in existing communities results in public investments in improved public services and private investments in new retail and residential development.
- **Cost savings** – taking advantage of existing infrastructure requires lower costs related to new schools, roads, sewer lines and other public utilities.
- **Housing affordability** – mixed use communities that feature a range of housing choices, including options at different price points, allow residents to choose the type of house that best meets their needs and their budget.

Public Support for Walkable Communities

Public opinion polls show an increasing number of Americans support the development of pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly communities.

Americans consider the following things important when choosing where to live:

- Nearly four out of five (79%) choose sidewalks and places to take walks for exercise or fun.
- More than half (56%) choose being within walking distance to stores and restaurants.
- Half (50%) choose being within walking distance to schools.
- Nearly half (48%) choose being within walking distance to public transportation.



Almost half of Americans support designing communities in such a way that stores, schools and other destinations are within walking distance, even if the result is houses being built closer together.

Americans want more opportunities to walk or bike during daily routines. One survey found that:

- More than half (55%) want to walk more on a daily basis to get exercise or to travel to specific destinations.
- More than three out of five (63%) want to walk more to stores and other locations to take care of errands.

