

Speak Up, Act Up, & Step Up.

3 Lessons for Healthy Community Design.

**Boise, ID
June 2013**



**Zion Nat'l Park, Lee Pass Trailhead,
3:15 am, May 14.**

My lessons:

- The real risk our children face.
- It's not about me/you.
- It's the environment! (Overcoming the stickiness problem).
- A call to action: speak up, act up, step up!



Spring run-off in Zion.

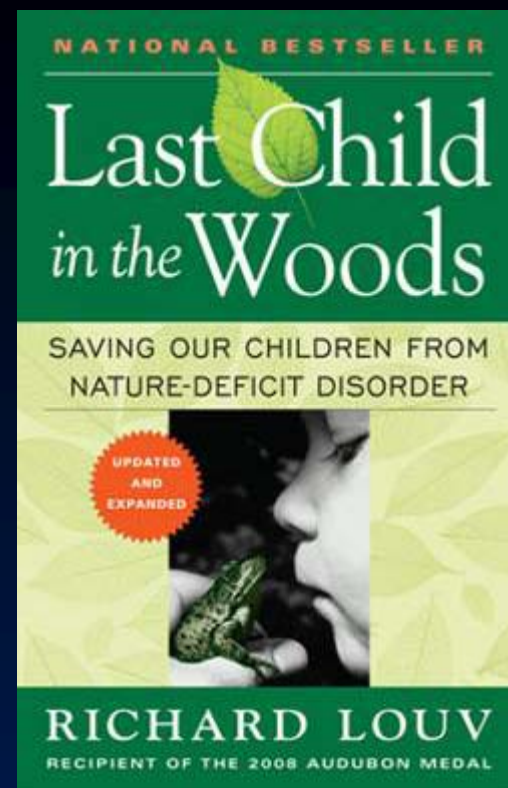
Youthful recollections?





30-Nov-2009

Not just my idea . . .



Kids held back with 'over-organised' play, says Shane Gould

By Alan Brown

OLYMPIC swimmer and Shane Gould has blamed children's sports programs as "over-organised" and holding back the natural development of physical skills, contributing to physical and mental problems down the track.

The swimmer, who won five individual medals at the 1972 Munich Olympics, yesterday picks out against children as young as five being pushed into team sports, rather than encourag-



Gould

ing them to play naturally. Gould said the current emphasis on organised sports, such as soccer, tennis and swimming, is "over-organised" and holding back the natural development of physical skills, contributing to physical and mental problems down the track.

"I believe that children are over-organised and they don't have enough opportunity just to play naturally," she said. "I think that's a big problem. We're pushing them into team sports, rather than encourag-

ing them to play naturally. That is really too young for kids to be involved in organised sport, even though it is modified," she said at the Australian Institute of Public Management annual conference in Adelaide.

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ing them to play naturally. That is really too young for kids to be involved in organised sport, even though it is modified," she said at the Australian Institute of Public Management annual conference in Adelaide.

Currently working on a master's degree in social geography at the University of Tasmania, Gould will publish her thoughts on children's physical activity in the December issue of the *Child* publication in state capitals.

She blames the loss of traditional Australian backyards and the "unplanned" of public play spaces as factors reducing child-

ren's ability to play naturally.

"Public liability seems to be the main focus for the design of our children's playgrounds and all of us need to take some responsibility for this," Gould wrote.

"The need to blame someone for a child's fall seems a piece of governmental equipment has had the appalling knock on effect of almost eliminating child's play and led to this deconcerting report on our public spaces."

"Children prefer a log and a ditch to play structures."

Speaking after her address,

Gould said home-entertainment TV shows emphasising aesthetically pleasing courtyards had encouraged people to ditch traditional backyards.

"Kids need backyards — they need to dig dirt and pull up plants and see the roots. They need to find worms and beetles and make tracks and build cubbies and pull them down again," she said.

A mother of four, Gould raised her children on a property at Margaret River in Western Australia, where outdoor activity was an important part of everyday life.

In her article, Gould argues the

Howard government's focus on after-school sports to address childhood obesity was "well-meaning" but failed to attract most children, who often had a "can't do" attitude to sports.

"Children, particularly under eight, do not, in my opinion, need to be involved in organised sports," she wrote.

Gould said children today were missing out on "low-cost, low-impact" activities such as reading, climbing, skipping and spinning.

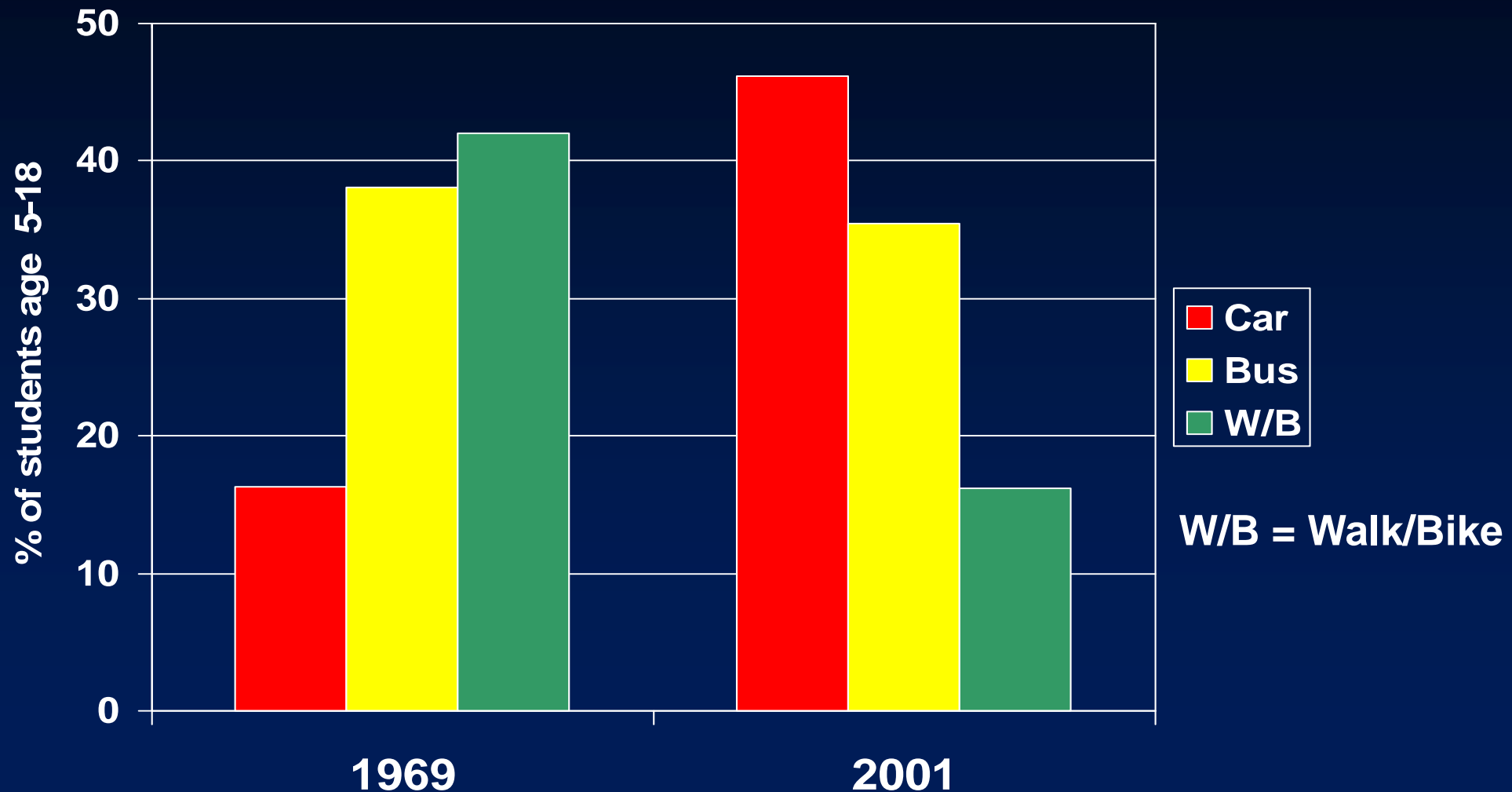


Have your say at theaustralian.com.au

The Australian, 14-Oct-2009

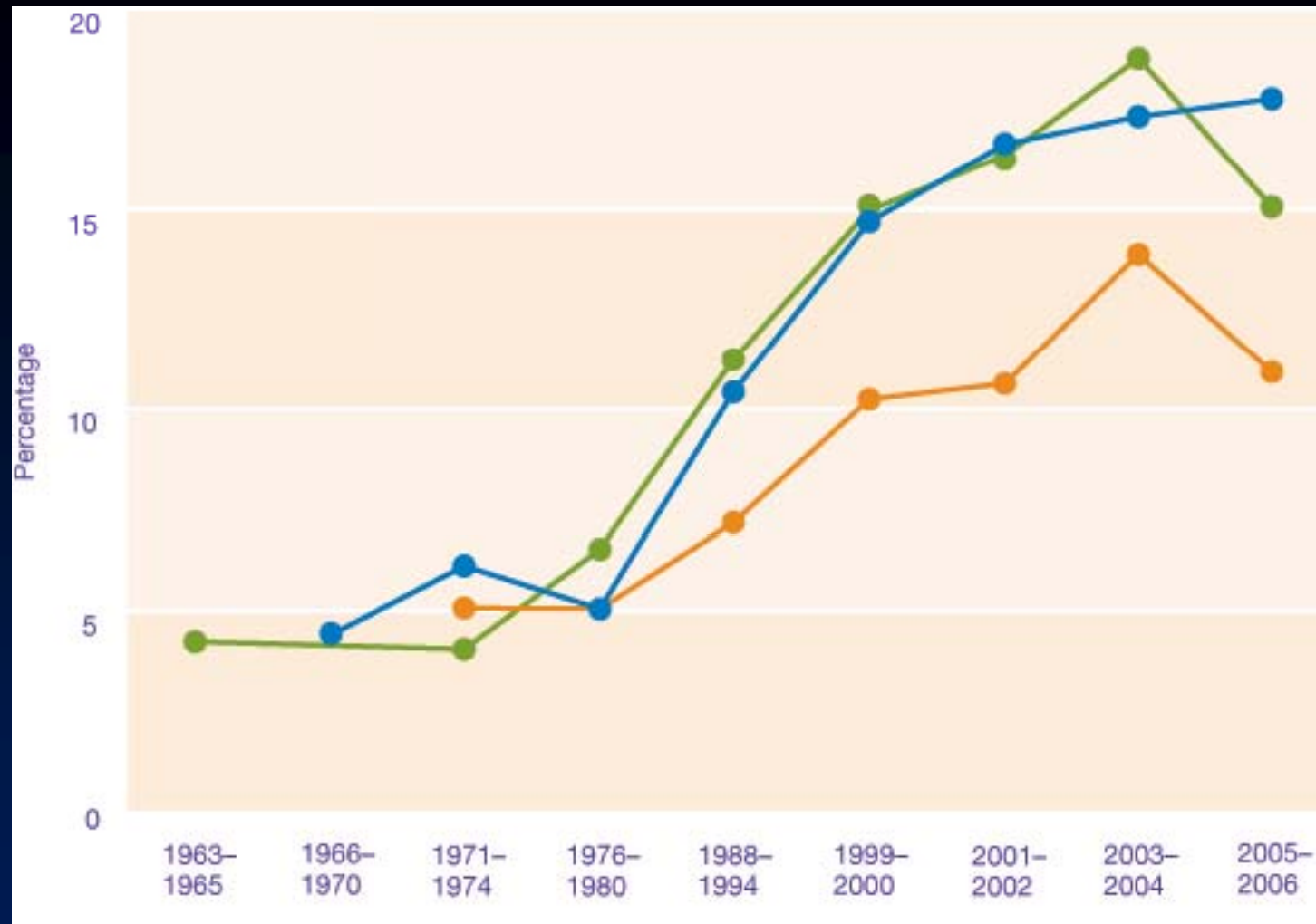
Changes in Walking & Cycling to School, 1969 to 2001

Ham et.al., *Jour. of Physical Activity & Health*, 2008, 5, 205-215



Trends in Childhood Obesity & Overweight

- 2–5 Years of Age
- 6–11 Years of Age
- 12–19 Years of Age



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *National Health & Nutrition Examination Surveys.*

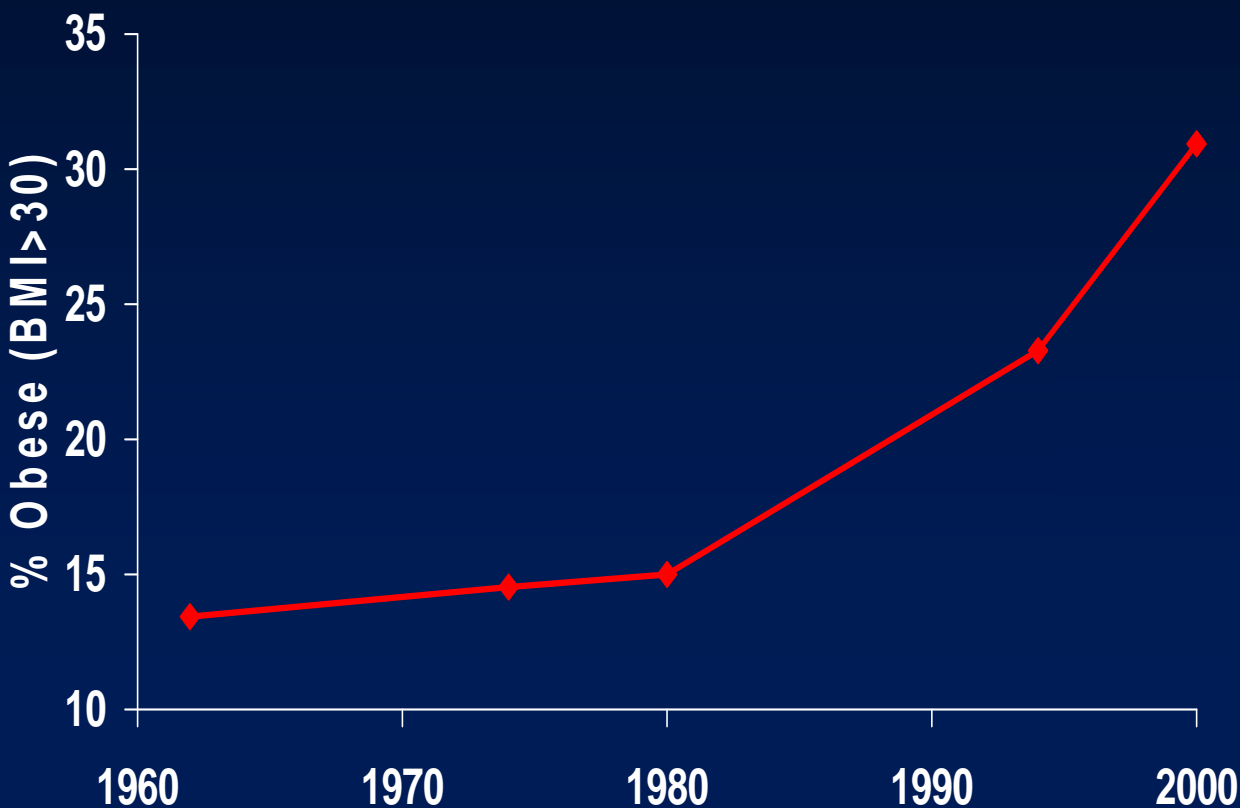
www.rwjf.org/files/publications/annual/2008/year-in-review/

www.markfenton.com

The *real* risk the next generation faces . . .

US “Obesity Epidemic”

Ogden et. al. (*JAMA* 288, 14; Oct. 2002)



My rant:

Change the discussion. It's *not* just an obesity epidemic. It's twin epidemics of **physical inactivity and poor nutrition.***

*** Two of the three biggest drivers of skyrocketing healthcare costs.**

Three numbers describe the epidemic of *physical inactivity*:

30 Minutes of daily physical activity recommended (**60** min. for youth).

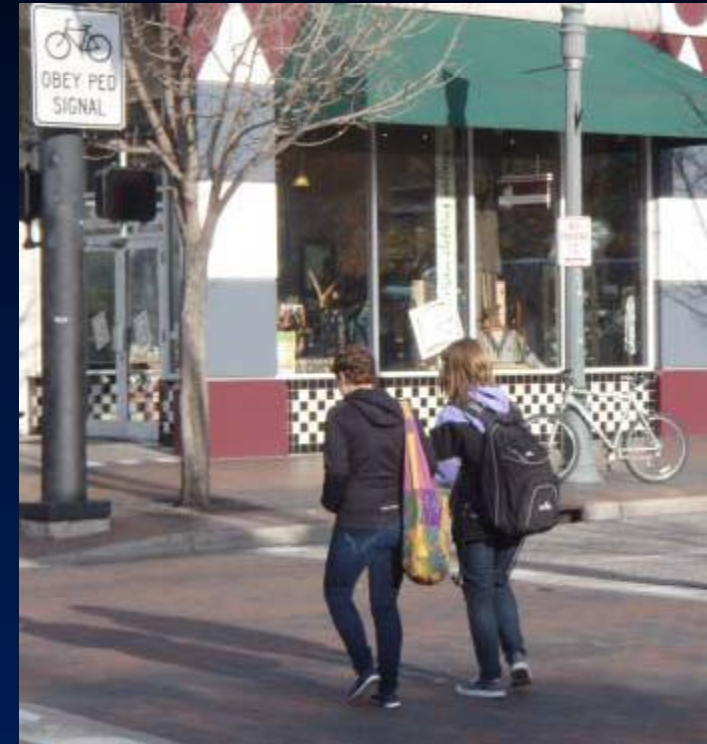
20 % of Americans who meet the recommendation (thru LTPA).

365,000 Estimated annual deaths in America due to physical inactivity & poor nutrition. (2nd only to tobacco.)

Surgeon General's Report 1996 Physical Activity Guidelines 2008

www.health.gov/paguidelines

- **150 mins/week** of moderate **physical activity**; more is better.
- Any activity is better than none.
- Can be **broken up**.
- **300 min/week** for children.
- Reduced risk for CVD, diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity, dementia in old age, clinical depression, a growing list of cancers . . .

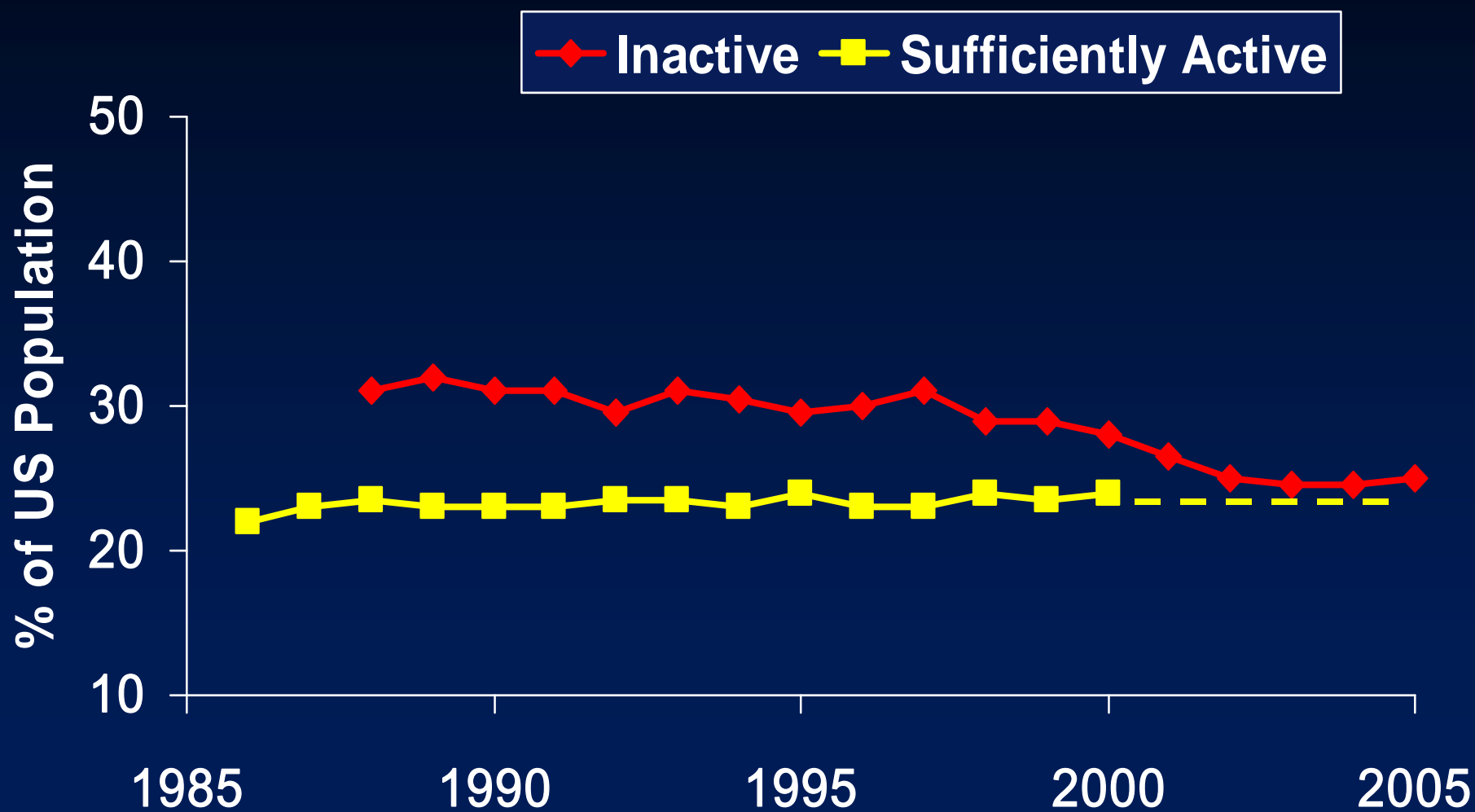


**This
counts!**

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Leisure Time Physical Activity in the US

(MMWR: 50(09), 166-9; 54(39), 991-4)



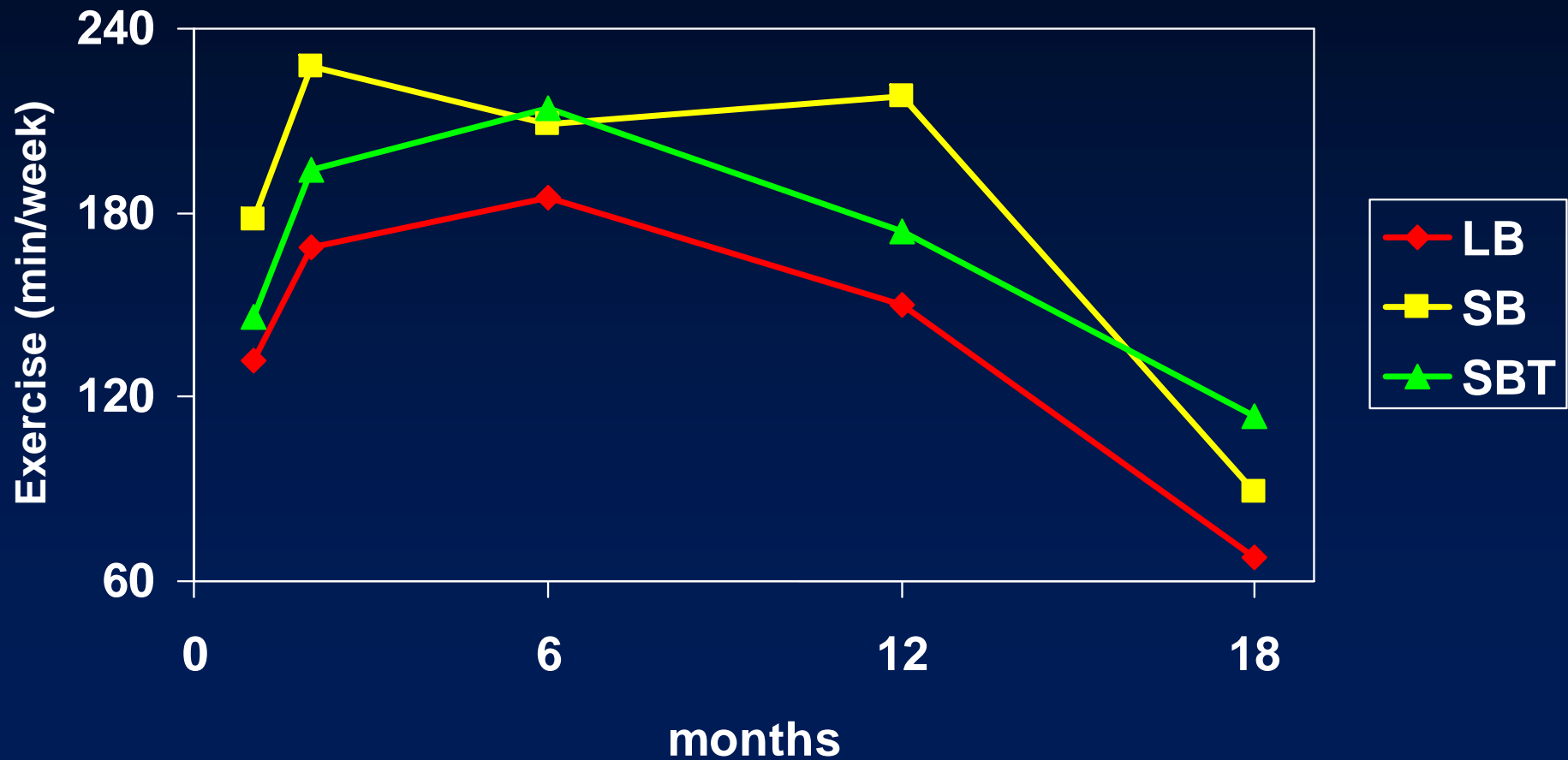
Why?

At least in part the
stickiness
problem.

Exercise Participation

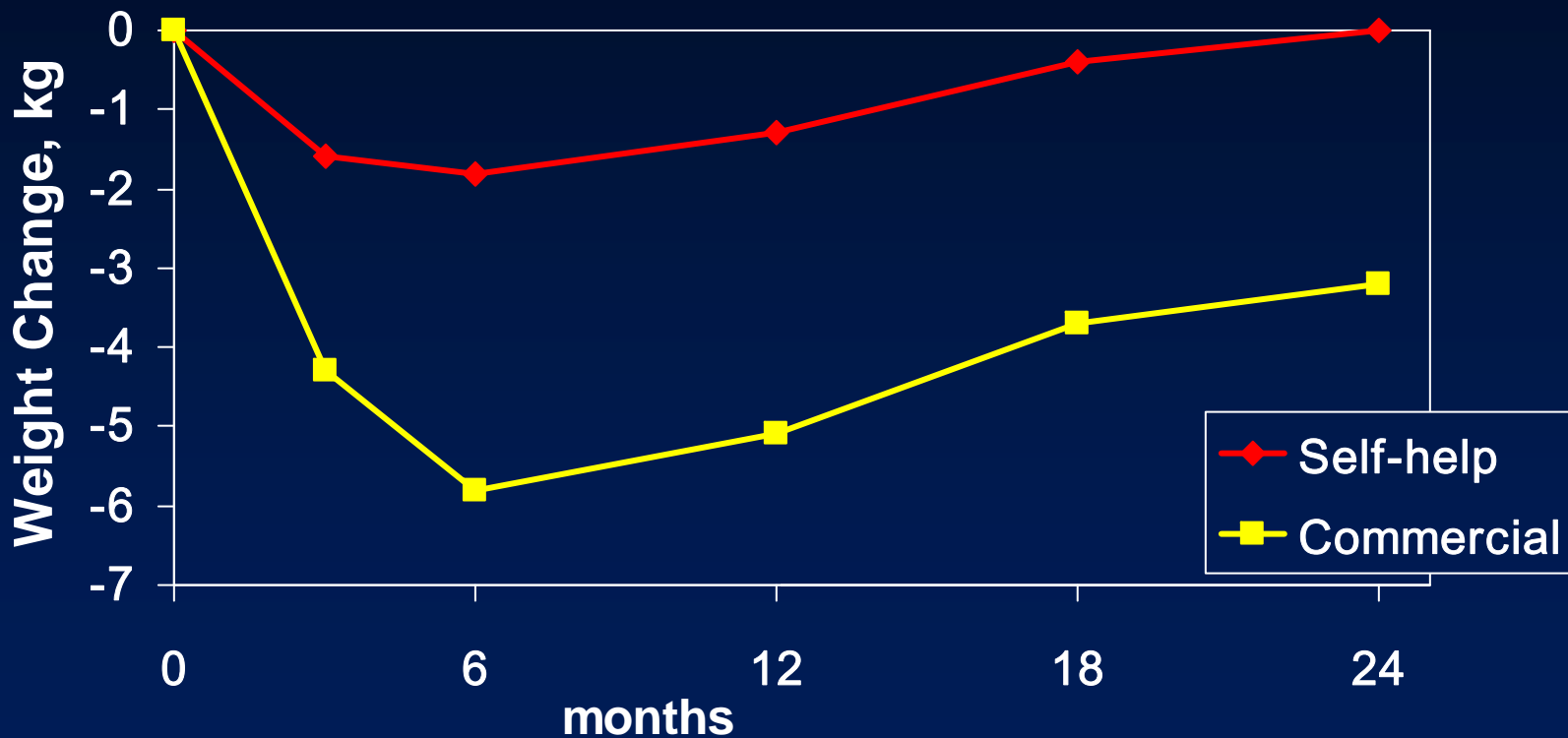
Effect of Short Bouts, Home Treadmills

(Jakicic et.al., *JAMA* 282, 16)



Self-help vs. Commercial Weight Loss Programs

(Heshka et.al., *JAMA* 289, 14; April 9, 2003)



Social Ecology

Sallis & Owen,
*Physical
Activity &
Behavioral
Medicine.*

Determinants
of behavior
change

Individual
motivation, skills

Interpersonal - family,
friends, colleagues

Institutional - school, work,
health care & service providers

Community - networks, facilities

Public Policy - laws, ordinances,
permitting practices & procedures

**Easier to
Implement**

Individual
motivation, skills

Interpersonal - family,
friends, colleagues

Institutional - school, work,
health care & service providers

Community - networks, facilities

Public Policy - laws, ordinances,
permitting practices & procedures

**Greater
Impact**

Socio-ecological successes?



Tobacco use

Seatbelts, child safety restraints

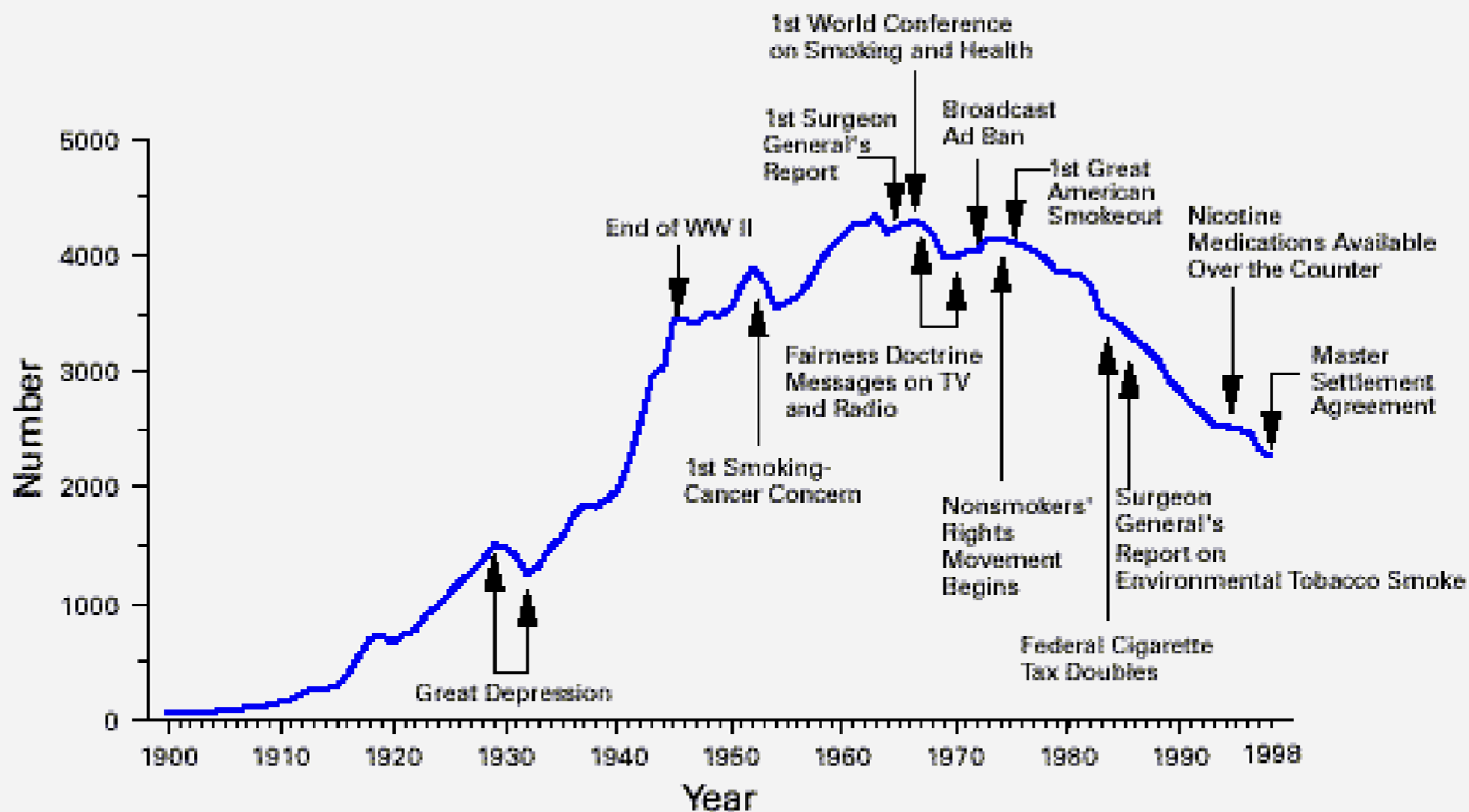


Water-borne disease

Recycling



FIGURE 1. Annual adult per capita cigarette consumption and major smoking and health events — United States, 1900–1998



Sources: United States Department of Agriculture; 1986 Surgeon General's Report.

Thanks to Prof. Ross Brownson, Wash. Univ., St. Louis

www.markfenton.com

**Necessary and
important,
but not enough. >**



**< We must build
communities
where people are
intrinsically
more active.**

Quiz II:
Find 10 signs of
activity supporting
**environments &
policies.**



**Swift Current,
Saskatchewan**

10 Signs of a truly Active Environment in Swift Current, SK.

1. Sidewalk exists and . . .
2. It has been cleared, and . . .
3. Ice rink is located in neighborhood.
4. Two sheets; boards for older kids; lights.
5. Back alley garages, utility poles = better sidewalks.
6. Informal game, kids developing “life” skills.
7. He kept a wary eye on us while there . . .
8. Corner store where he can stop for a snack, drop off mail, pick up something for mom.
9. It’s a really cold day (~ -20C) and he’s still walking.
10. Parents believe it’s safe enough for walking.

**If we build it, will
they come?**

YES! Four elements:

1. Variety of uses within walk, bike, & transit distance.
2. Connecting facilities: trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, transit.
3. Destinations are functional & inviting for pedestrians, bicyclists, & transit users.
4. Safe & accessible for all ages, incomes, abilities



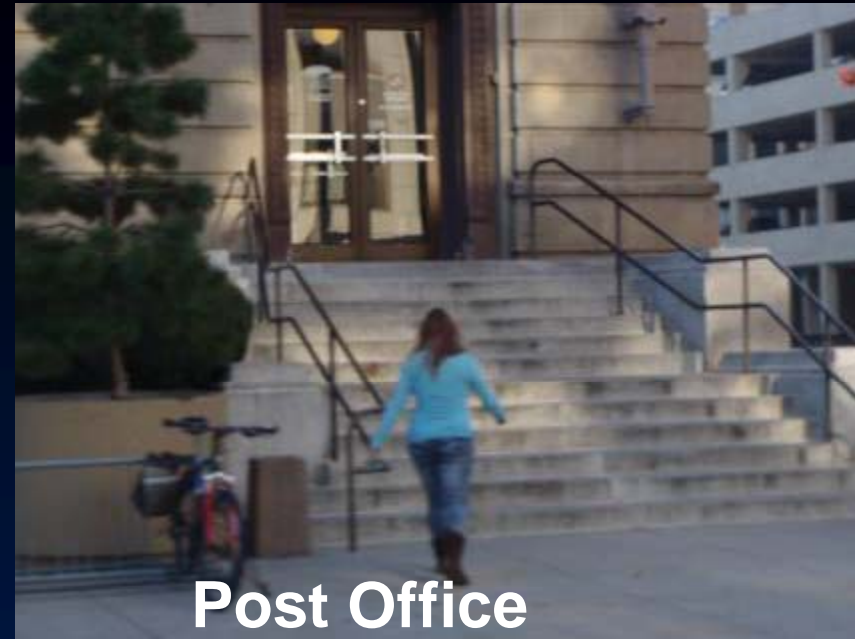
www.thecommunityguide.org

CDC Guide to Community Preventive Services

www.markfenton.com

In planner language:

- Mix of land uses; varied clusters.
- Comprehensive network, all 4 modes.
- Functional & inviting site designs.
- Universal safety & access for all.



1. Land use.

Varied destinations in proximity.



E.g. post office, grocery, schools

Compact neighborhoods & shared open space.

Mixed use, multi-family.

Housing above, retail below.



2. Network encourages active travel with:



- Presence of sidewalks, trails, bike lanes, sharrows.
- Shorter blocks, cul-de-sac cut-throughs, more intersections.
- Access to quality, reliable, affordable *transit*.



3. Site design:



Which setting seems more appealing for travel on foot and by bike?

Site design?

Boise



- Buildings near the sidewalk, not set back; parking on street or behind.
- Trees, benches, lighting, awnings, “human” scale.
- Details: bike parking, open space, plants, art, materials.



Possible incentives:

- Decrease, share parking (bike parking req., bonus).
- Build-to, not set-back requirements.
- Residential bonus.
- Expedite permits.



Neenah WI



Appleton WI

Elected & appointed officials must be supported if you expect them to act courageously!

4. Safety.

- Engineering can dramatically improve safety.
- Increasing pedestrian and bike trips *decreases* overall accident & fatality rates.



Median islands



Roundabout (Neenah, WI)



Curb extensions

(Jacobsen P, *Injury Prevention*, 2003; 9:205-209.)

www.markfenton.com

Diagonal parking increases on-street capacity, but . . .



Meridian



Des Moines, IA



- Reverse angle:**
- Fewer, less severe collisions.
 - Safer for bikes.
 - Slows traffic.



8th St., Boise

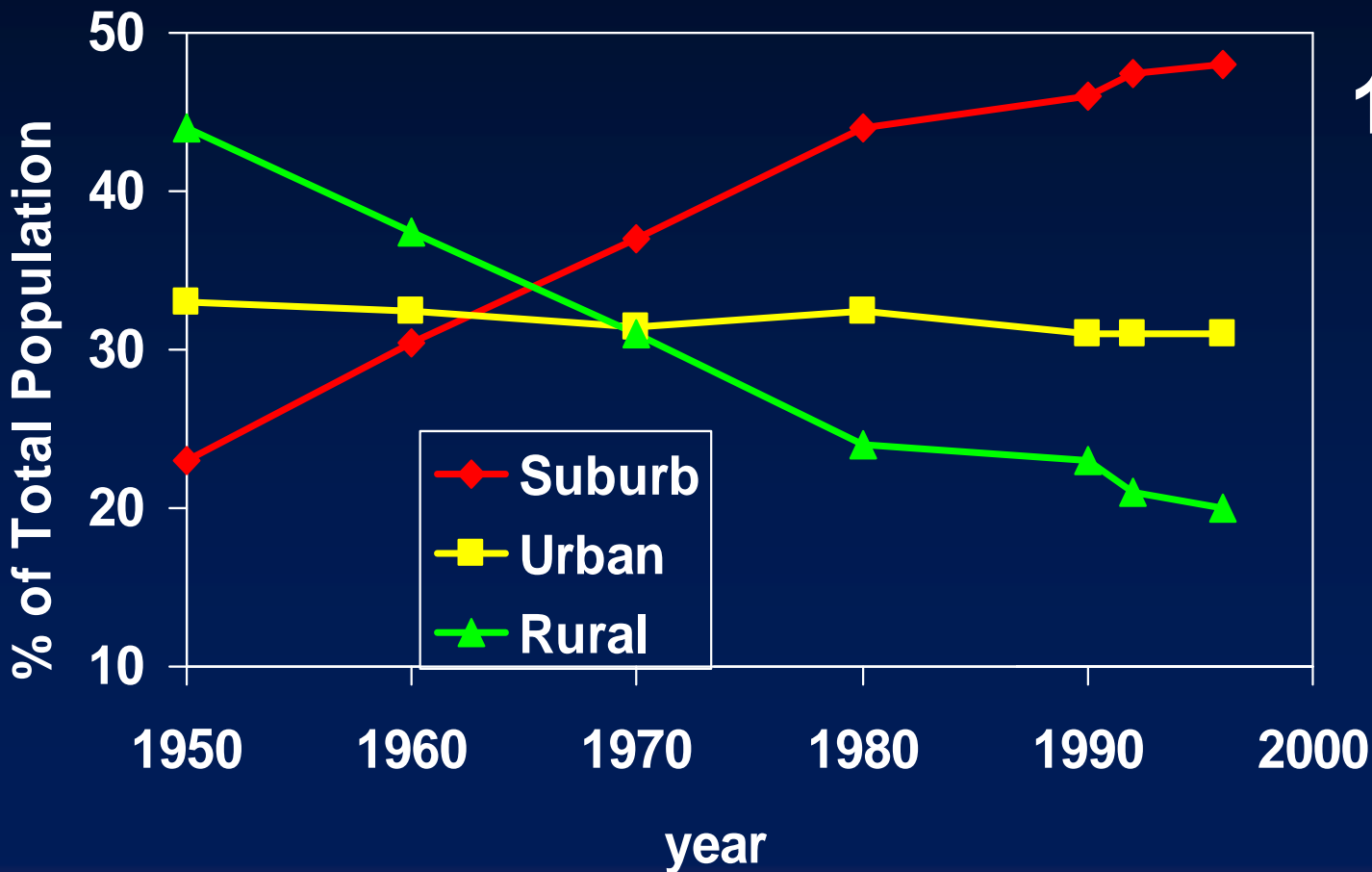


“But what about rural areas . . . ?”

Suburbanization of America

US population shift, 1950-1996

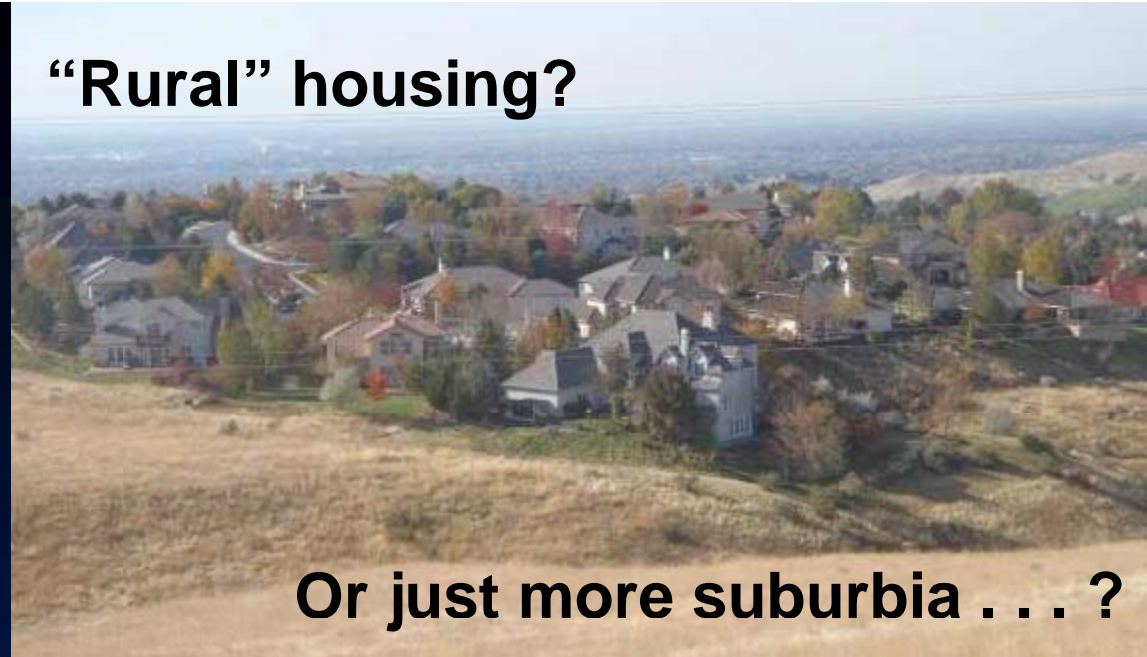
(after *Bowling Alone*, R. Putnam, 2000)



1. Suburbia is steadily consuming the landscape . . .

**2. Rural areas are
where you can
affect the shape of
development
*before it's done!***

“Rural” housing?



Or just more suburbia . . . ?



e.g. Fairview Ave.



Five Elements of Healthy Community Design:



Ped, bike,
& transit
network



Healthy affordable
food



www.activelivingresearch.org

www.markfenton.com

How do you help?

- **Speak up:** To family & friends, students, colleagues, the media, especially community leaders.
- **Act up:** Help improve the built & policy environments for P.A.
- **Step up:** Be a role model—build lifestyle activity into your day!

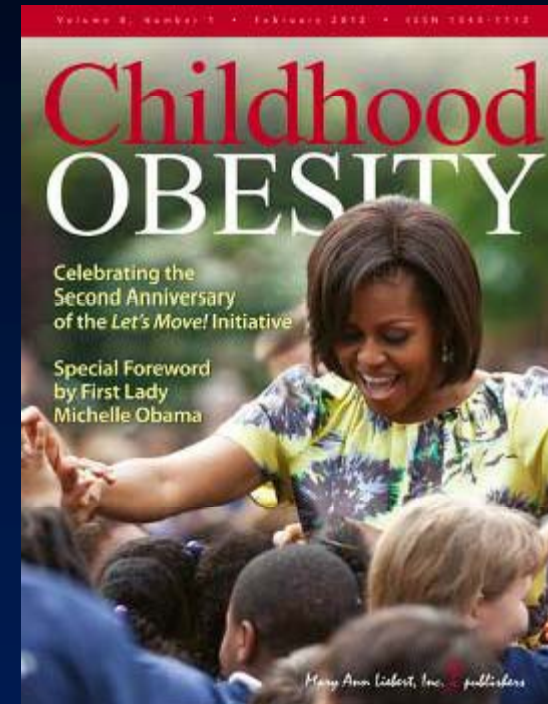
Speak up:

- Not just an obesity epidemic; twin epidemics of **physical inactivity** & poor nutrition!
- Suggest, prescribe **physical activity** to students, administrators, patients, family, friends, colleagues, everyone.
- Help build **active lifestyle skills** for every day activity, not just structured exercise.
- Be a vocal advocate for more **walkable, bicycle-, & transit-friendly** communities.

Act up: Support five national movements changing the physical activity landscape.

(Fenton, Community Design & Policies for Free Range Children, *Childhood Obesity* 8(1), Feb 2012)

1. Healthy planning & zoning.
2. Complete Streets.
3. Transportation trail networks.
4. Transit- & bicycle-friendly policies.
5. Comprehensive Safe Routes to School.



1. Show up at a planning or school board meeting. Testify in behalf of:

- Keeping schools close to where kids live!
- Neighborhood corner stores, pocket parks, services . . .
- No more big box & strip malls—build villages!



Caldwell



Terre Haute

www.activelivingbydesign.org

www.markfenton.com

Communities in Motion 2040:

- Transit, Trails, & Transit Oriented Development (TOD) option most in-line w/ healthy design.
- Steer, don't just respond, to land use.



- E.g. **Health Impact Assessments.**
- **Count costs of physical inactivity!**

2. For ACHD, COMPASS actively support:

- **Complete Streets.** All users (pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, & drivers) of all ages & abilities considered in every road project (new, repair, maintenance).



www.completestreets.org

www.markfenton.com

Some challenging CS work:

- Complete Streets: during paving, painting, maintenance.
- Multi-lane one-way roads w/ one purpose.



4-lane, one-way streets?



Nampa



Chinden, designed for 35 mph?

Lane re-alignments

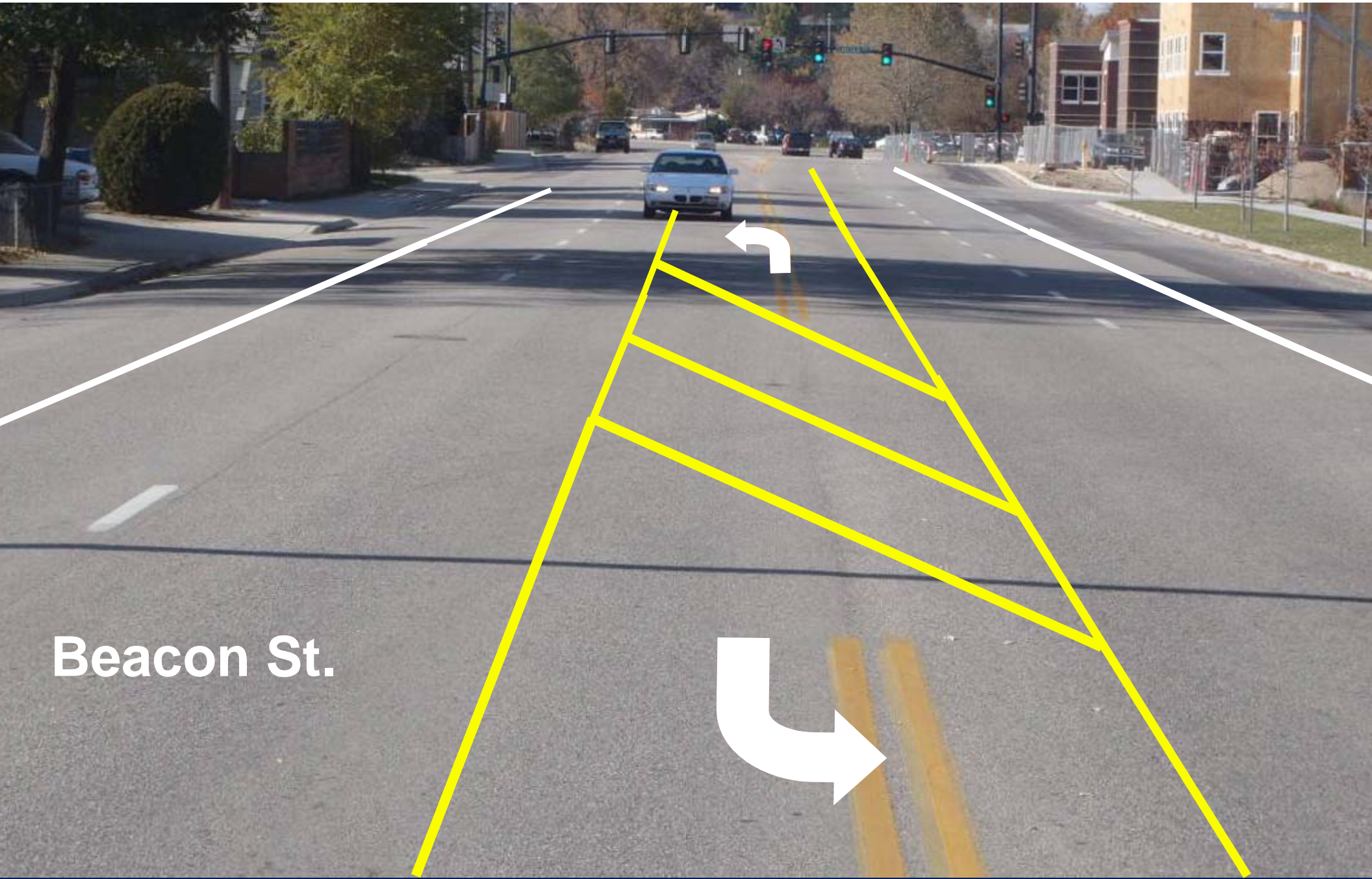
- Often called road diets, being seen more often.



Urbana, IL; before & after.



- Can reduce collisions & severity.
- Dramatically improves performance for pedestrians & cyclists.



Beacon St.

3. Support a comprehensive network of *transportation* trails.

- **Connect** to other parts of network (sidewalks, bike lanes, transit).
- Focus on **destinations** (schools, shopping, parks, senior housing)
- Balance the cries of the **NIMBY, BANANA, & CAVE** people.



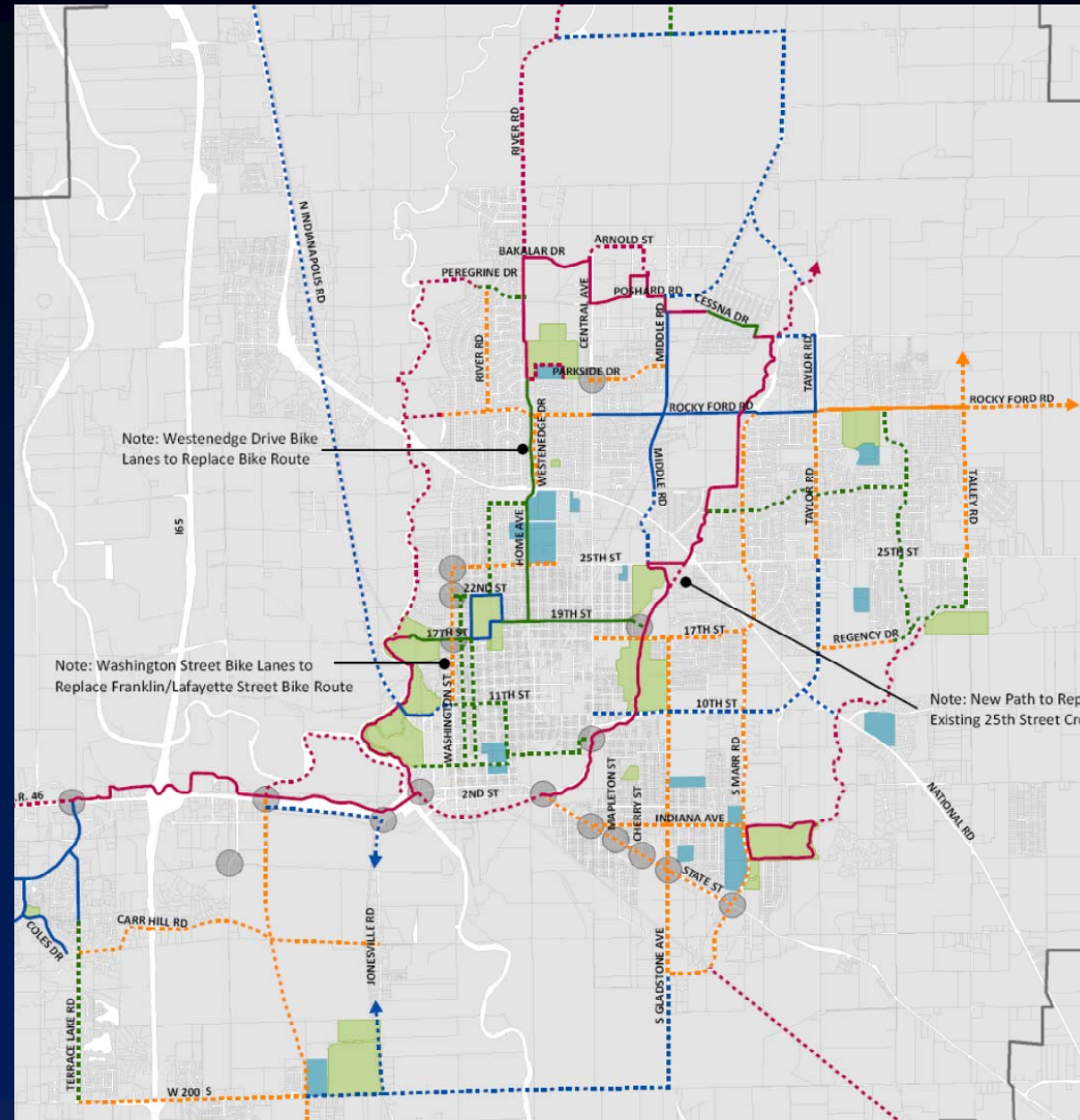
Boise Greenbelt



Boone, NC

E.g. Columbus, IN Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

Voted into community Comprehensive Plan.



Columbus, Indiana Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan



An Element of the
City of Columbus
Comprehensive Plan

Adopted: Month DD, YYYY

4. Work for a bicycle- & transit-friendly community.

- **Bike Friendly Campus** or **Bike Friendly Community** rating (bronze to platinum).
- Student, staff ID's as transit passes. Use them!
- Community “buy a bike rack” program.
- Teach bicycle skills, safety, repair in your school. >

www.bikeleague.org



Charlotte's bike share



Blue Island, IL.

www.markfenton.com



The High Cost of Free Parking

D. Shoupe



**Boise Bicycle Project –
skills, maintenance, . . .**

5. Safe Routes to School – more than just an encouragement program!

- All 5 E's: **Engineer** bike lanes, racks, sidewalks; **educate & encourage** walk/bike groups; **enforce** proper speeds.
- Measure BMI? Must **evaluate** how kids get to school (walk, bike, bus, car) and why . . . !

www.saferoutesinfo.org





What did the kids think? The ENVIRONMENT

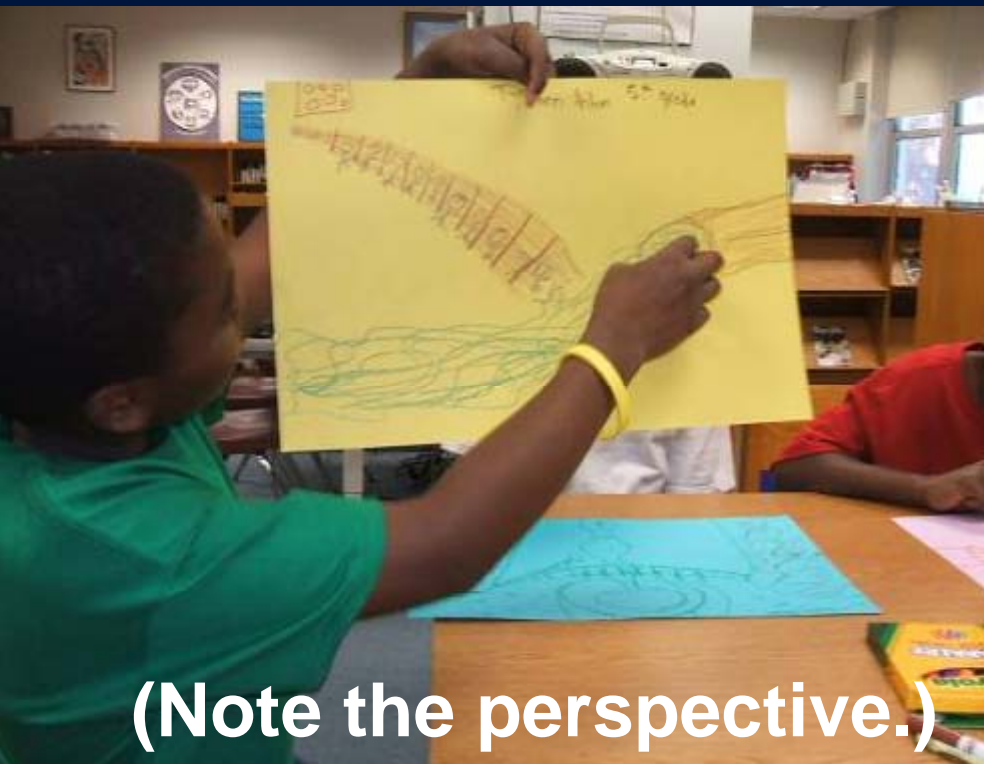
- “I had to walk with my little brother to keep him out of trouble . . .” (Ciairah)



- “We saw a dog across the creek, in the trees . . .” (Jarrette)

What did the kids think? FUN.

- “This is Tyshion falling in the water off of the bridge . . .” (Khalil)



(Note the perspective.)



- “This is the pipe the water comes out of, and this is Khalil falling in the water . . .” (Tyshion)



Recommendations:

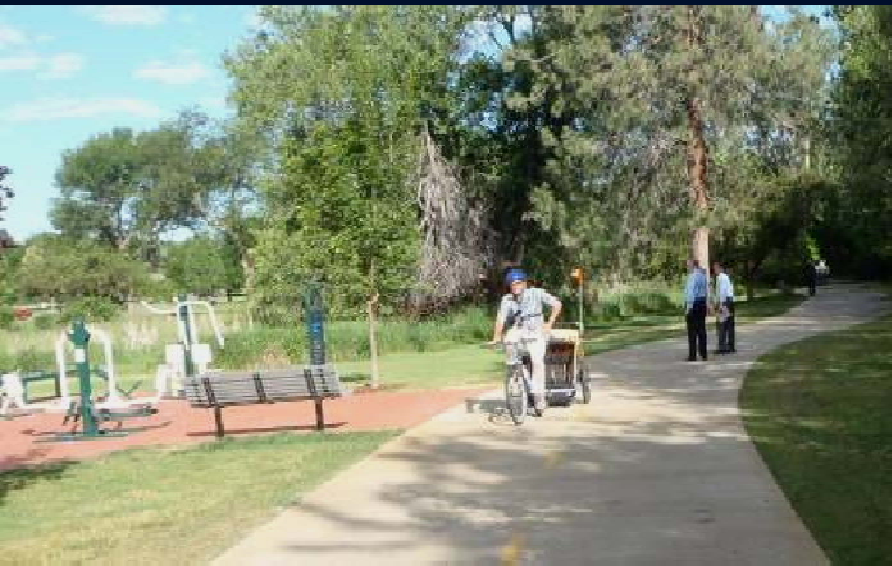
- Do this all the time, not just as an “event.”
- Improve the trail through the park.
- Plant a garden, trees along the way.
- **5 minute safety delay** on cars at dismissal.

www.saferoutespartnership.org

www.saferoutesinfo.org

www.markfenton.com

**Step up:
Be an active
role model.**



**Leave the car behind at least one trip
per week; walk, bike, or take transit
instead. And take a friend along.**

Why care about stickier communities for active living?

- The **inactivity** epidemic; **our kids may pay!**
- **~4,000** pedestrian, **~40,000** motor vehicle, **~400,000** sedentary-related deaths/year.
- **Carbon footprint**, air & water pollution.
- Failing **transport infrastructure**; hour+ commute time/day, traffic congestion & costs.
- Dependence on **foreign oil**; **wars** in Mid-east.
- More eyes on the street, **less crime**.
- **Livable communities**, where employers want to locate.

**Olshansky et.al., “A
Potential Decline in
Life Expectancy . . .”
New Eng. J. of Med.,
March 17, 2005**



Brockport, NY



www.markfenton.com