Office workers—
Sedentary by Practice:

How can we integrate physical activity as part of daily routines at work

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Objectives

- Illustrate how the built environment near the work place can impact sedentary behavior for office workers.

- Highlight opportunities for office workers to increase daily activity through daily routines or daily transportation needs.

- Discuss how planning for the built environment near work sites is as essential to promoting physical activity as it is for residential neighborhoods.

  - Opportunities to walk near the office or worksite provide choices for integrated lifestyle physical activity.
Why worry about office workers?

- Obesity: 12% in 1991, **over 35%** in 2010 (Freid 2003, CDC NHANES, 2012)

- Walk trips: 10.3% in 1960, **2.9%** in 2003 (Pucher 2003)

- 42.6% of U.S. in sedentary occupations (Brownson 2005)

- 60% of our waking hours are at the workplace (Batt 2009)


- Part of corporate culture

- Correlated with overweight and obesity

- Walk less than active occupational workers
How does city planning fit into the public health equation?

- Assessing current land use patterns and design
- Planning for improved built environments that are health-supportive or promote physical activity

Shoes are the cheapest exercise equipment and are a low pollution travel mode!
Conceptual Framework

Walking as a part of daily routines for office workers

- Built Environment Factors
- Organizational Factors
- Personal Factors
- Social and Cultural Factors
What elements within and surrounding the work site we should be concerned about?

**Within work site**

- **Organization Support**
  - Promote or allow walking meetings
  - Promote or allow employees breaks to walk, stretch

- **Design aspects of building**
  - Are the stairs easy to locate? Are the stairs comfortable and safe?
  - Are there features that promote interaction at appropriate times in the day?
  - Are there spaces where employees could exercise or stretch?
  - On site – are there walking paths around the building for short walks?
What elements within and surrounding the work site we should be concerned about?

Surrounding the work site

Land use
  - Destinations to fulfill various needs or activities
  - Distance (actual and perceived)

Built Environment
  - Consistent and adequate sidewalks
  - Shade/weather protection
  - Design aspects
  - Safety (actual and perceived)
Comparing urban & suburban built environments

Spatial analysis

- Are there at least some destinations available to walk to?
- What is the distance to the nearest potentially desired destination?
- Is there adequate infrastructure to go from A to B?
Built Environment
What are the destinations within a 1-5 minute walk?
What are the destinations within a 1-5 minute walk?
Using spatial analysis

Walkable and Bikable Communities Analyst (WBC Analyst)
So does being an office worker in an urban versus a suburban built environment matter?
Urban Office workers

- More likely to make 3+ walking trips per day
- Higher pedestrian step count daily
- Longer duration walking (more minutes) when they walk
Suburban Office Workers

- May need more social support to overcome built environment
- Perceive more built environment barriers which is connected to reduced amounts of walking
- Walking CAN and DOES occur IN SPITE of the built environment

We can do better for both types of built environments!
Land use and Built Environment Factors

➤ URBAN Office workers:
  • Bookstores, Banks, and Food/Restaurants – influenced # of walking trips or walking duration
  • Dry Cleaner – increased step count ~1,000 steps
  • Convenience Store – increased step count ~2,400 steps

➤ SUBURBAN Office workers:
  • A park, bookstore, café, visually interesting architecture – influenced # of walking trips or walking duration
  • Café / Coffee shop – increased step count ~1,500 steps
What can you & I do?

What land use destinations are available now?

What could be planned for and supported for the future near office sites?

What can wellness programs include related to connections with the built environment?
What are options office workers to improve their amount of physical activity?

- Signage
- Employers involvement in encouraging new destinations within walking distance of work site.
- Employer/supervisor emails identifying good times in the work week to walk
- Maps to locations within a 5 minute walk
- Peers sharing information about local businesses
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http://smallbizbee.com/index/2011/07/20/5-most-unusual-office-desks/
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- Pedometers, heart rate monitors
- 10 minute office oriented exercise videos

http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2012-02-14/

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Tracy A. Woodward / The Washington Post
Questions & Discussion

For more information or follow-up on today’s talk:

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