3 › 4 › 50 VERMONT

TIP SHEET

Healthy Communities

EASY STEPS TO CREATING A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

More than half of Vermont adults (60%) are above a healthy weight, making them more susceptible to chronic disease. Communities that are built to support physical activity, safe walking and biking, use of public transportation, and easy access to fresh foods are essential for good health.

KEY STRATEGIES FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

1. **Add health-supporting language to the town plan**
   - Restrict the sale of tobacco near schools and playgrounds.
   - Require green space, gardening space, or sidewalks in new housing and commercial development.
2. **Define action strategies**
   - Support mixed use development that includes no smoking ordinances in public areas
   - Create bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.
   - Maintain smoke-free parks, recreation and open space.
   - Increase access to healthy foods.
3. **Design "complete" streets and roadways**
   - Consider the safety of all road users: walkers, bicycles, wheelchairs, public transportation, and cars.
4. **Maintain and promote places to be active**
   - Include parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces.
5. **Increase access to healthy foods**
   - Dedicate space for community gardens and farmers markets.

THE IMPACT ON HEALTH

Healthy community design makes it easier for people to live healthy lives, Healthy communities see:

- Two-fold increase in daily recommended physical activity in walkable communities.
- 35% increase in physical activity when inviting, safe environments for exercise exist.
- Lower overweight and obesity rates with access to fresh and healthy foods.
- Reduced secondhand smoke exposure and increased quit success with smoke-free places.

"As the community garden flourishes, a sense of community has developed among neighbors. Families are eating vegetables when they were not previously."

MORE RESOURCES

Visit healthvermont.gov/3-4-50 for more resources, including:

Active Living & Healthy Eating: Healthy Community Design Resource

Complete Streets: A Guide for Vermont Communities