

Environmental Design and Public Health Presentation to Parliamentary Inquiry



Kellie-Ann Jolly and Rachel Carlisle
Heart Foundation (Victoria)
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Links between environmental design and health



Influence on physical health:

- Physical activity - active transport and recreation
- Ready access to and provision of public transport
- Reducing air pollution, noise
- Injury prevention
- Sun protection and sunlight access
- Improved access to fresh, locally grown food



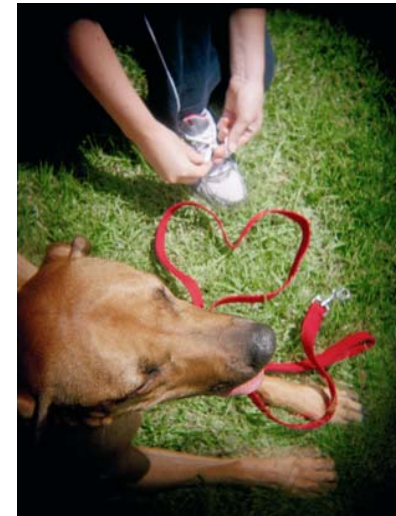
Influence on mental health:

- Safe and secure environments
- Sense of place
- Community connectedness/social inclusion
- Ability to find appropriate housing



The evidence

- The built environment is directly associated with physical activity particularly walking
- Countries with higher proportion of walking, cycling and PT trips have lower levels of obesity
- People in more sprawling places spend less time walking for leisure and transport
- Access to larger, high quality public open space associated with increased recreational walking
- Easy access to healthy food choices where people live, work and play is important to help maintain health and prevent chronic disease



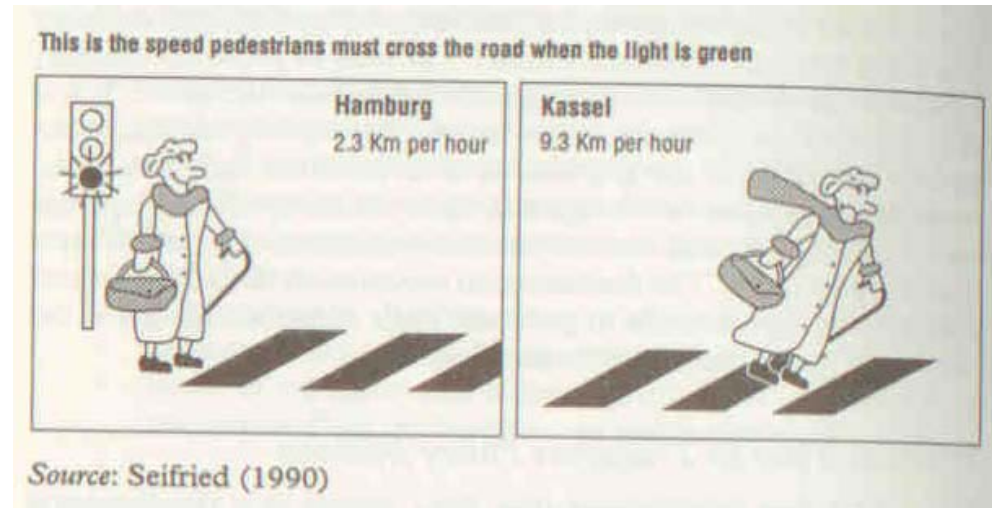
The built environment and walking

- Research shows that walking for **transport** is associated with living in neighbourhoods that have:
 - Mixed use planning: good access to destinations including public transport
 - Higher residential densities make local destinations viable and indirectly encourage walking (30 lots per hectare)
 - Street connectivity: directness of travel routes, minimise obstacles, and avoid crossing of major roads.
- Walking for **recreation** is associated with the attractiveness or aesthetics of the neighbourhood environment, and convenience of facilities.

The built environment can be a barrier or an enabler.....



How fast must granny run?





The built environment and food

We can ensure healthy and sustainable food by:

- Create places that facilitate people's access to healthy and sustainable food in urban environments
- Provide supportive operating environments for healthy and sustainable food outlets/enterprises
- Protect high quality peri-urban agricultural land, Green Wedge areas and natural environments



A healthy and sustainable food system

“We can give people all the information and advice in the world about healthy eating and exercise, but if parents can’t buy the food they need to prepare those meals because their only options for groceries are the gas station or the local minimart, then all that is just talk.”

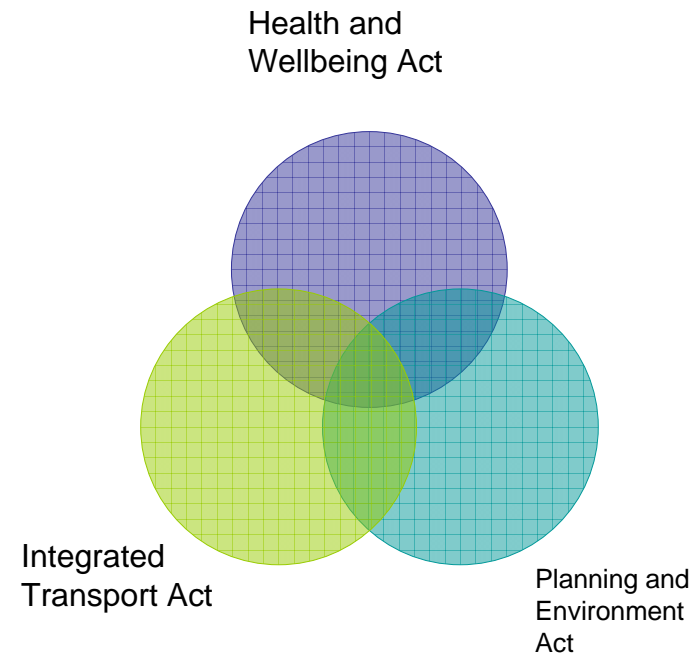
Michelle Obama



Overarching legislation and policy



- Bring the Planning and Environment Act in line with the updated Public Health and Wellbeing Act (2008) and Transport Integration Act (2010)
- Inclusion of an explicit reference to 'health and well being' in the Objectives of the Planning and (as per Transport Integration Act 2010)
- Review and update the VPP in line with proposed changes to the Planning Act
- A new Planning Act to mandate the alignment of Municipal Strategic Statements with the Council Plan and Municipal Public Health Plans – an integrated framework for local policy action.



Conclusion

- High quality, evidence based, 'people' focused environmental design is essential for public health
- Environmental design (via planners and urban designers) is critical in ensuring the health and wellbeing of the community

