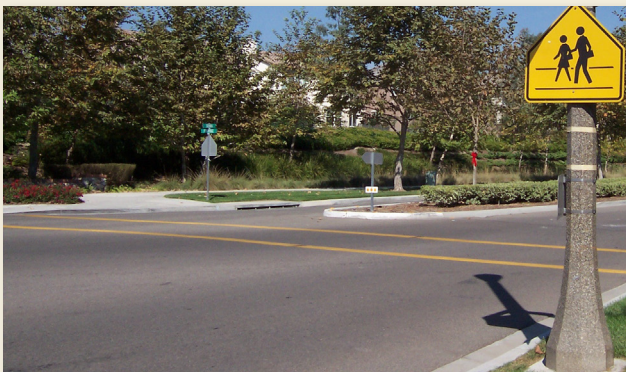




Health and the Built Environment: A Fact Sheet

The “built environment” – buildings, parks, public spaces, and transportation infrastructure – strongly influence people’s daily decisions, including how to travel, what to eat, and where to play, socialize, and be physically active. These daily decisions have a broad effect on public health, impacting levels of physical activity, nutrition, obesity, safety, and mental health. In fact, lack of physical activity and being overweight or obese are major risk factors for cancer, heart disease, stroke, and Alzheimer’s – four of the five leading causes of death in Murrieta, in California, and in the United States. Some of the key connections between health and the built environment are shown below.



Land Use and Transportation

- People are more likely to walk or bicycle at least 30 minutes per day when many destinations are near the home and there is a direct path to get there.¹
- Residents in areas with higher-density and mixed land uses make fewer vehicle trips and drive fewer miles than residents of areas with mostly one type of lower-density land use.²
- Men who walk or bike to work are half as likely to be obese, have lower risk of cardio-vascular disease, and have overall higher fitness levels.³



Parks and Open Space

- People living within walking distance (1/4 mile) of a park are 25% more likely to meet the Surgeon General’s minimum exercise recommendation of 30 minutes three times a week.⁴
- Those with easy access to open space are more likely to engage in high levels of walking.⁵
- In one study of young children, a 1% increase in park and recreation area within a ½-mile radius of the home was associated with a 1.2% increase in physical activity.⁶



Access to Healthy Food

- Low fruit and vegetable consumption is a strong predictor for chronic disease and obesity.⁷
- In one study, the presence of a full-service neighborhood grocery store was associated with higher fruit and vegetable intake and fewer overweight residents.⁸



Murrieta Existing Health Conditions

Murrieta's population is relatively young. Its median age of 30.7 years is slightly lower than the Riverside County median age of 31.6, but five years younger than the national median age of 36.¹¹ The rate of hospitalizations for asthma in Murrieta is lower than the state average, but the rate of hospitalizations for heart attacks is higher.¹⁰ The leading causes of death in Murrieta are cancer and heart disease, followed by stroke, chronic lower respiratory disease, and Alzheimer's – similar to the state and county average.⁹

Land Use and Design

Most of Murrieta is low-density and automobile-oriented, with large sections of the City devoted to single uses, such as residential subdivisions or commercial shopping centers. Many neighborhoods have cul-de-sacs and dead ends without pedestrian connections to nearby businesses and neighborhoods.

Transportation

Murrieta residents commute an average of 36.5 minutes one-way to work, which is 35% longer than the California average of 27 minutes.¹² To get to work, 77% percent of Murrieta residents drive alone (similar to the state average), while 13.4% carpool (higher than California average), 1.3% walk (one-half the California average), and 0.1% take public transit. Murrieta has 39 miles of Class I bikeways (off-street), 34.7 miles of Class II bikeways (lanes), and 9.3 miles of Class III bikeways (shared-street).

Parks

Thirty-four additional acres of parkland would meet Murrieta's standard of 5 acres per 10,000 residents.¹³ As the population grows, more parkland will be needed to meet this standard and to provide space for recreational facilities like sports fields. According to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, there are six "underserved areas" in the City that are farther than ½ mile from a neighborhood park or play area.

Access to Healthy Food

Murrieta is relatively well-supplied with grocery stores compared to other cities, with approximately 1.4 grocery stores per 10,000 residents. Murrieta has a relatively low proportion of liquor, convenience and fast food stores, but has 25 outlets specializing in selling desserts. Murrieta has a new community garden (Produce for People) and farmer's market (at Village Walk Plaza).

Existing Programs

The City's Healthy Murrieta initiative includes events and programs to increase community health, and provides information about healthy eating and activities (www.healthymurrieta.com).



¹ Frank, L. D., Schmid, T. L., Sallis, J. F., Chapman, J., & Saelens, B. E. (2005). Linking objectively measured physical activity with objectively measured urban form: Findings from SMARTRAQ. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 28(2, Supplement 2), 117-125.

² Crane, R. (2000). The influence of urban form on travel: An interpretive review. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 15(1), 3-23.

³ Gordon-Larsen, P., Boone-Heinonen, J., Sidney, S., Sternfeld, B., Jacobs, D. R., Jr., & Lewis, C. E. (2009). Active commuting and cardiovascular disease risk: The CARDIA study. *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 169(13), 1216-1223.

⁴ L. Frank et al., 2000, Linking Land Use with Household Vehicle Emissions in the Central Puget Sound: Methodological Framework and Findings, Part D, Vol. 5, Transportation Research.

⁵ Giles-Corti, B., Broomhall, M. H., Knuiiman, M., Collins, C., Douglas, K., Ng, K., et al. (2005). Increasing walking: How important is distance to, attractiveness, and size of public open space? *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 28(2S2), 169-176.

⁶ Roemmich, J. N., Epstein, L. H., Raja, S., Yin, L., Robinson, J., & Winiewicz, D. (2006). Association of access to parks and recreational facilities with the physical activity of young children. *Preventive Medicine*, 43(6), 437-441.

⁷ Epstein, L. H., Gordy, C. C., Raynor, H. A., Beddome, M., Kilanowski, C. K., & Paluch, R. (March 2001). Increasing fruit and vegetable intake and decreasing fat and sugar intake in families at risk for childhood obesity. *Obesity Research*, 9(3), 171-178.

⁸ Inagami, S., Cohen, D. A., Finch, B. K., & Asch, S. M. (July 2006). You are where you shop: Grocery store locations, weight, and neighborhoods. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 31(1), 10-17.

⁹ Riverside County Community Health Agency, Department of Public Health, Epidemiology & Program Evaluation Branch, July 2009, with data from State of California, Department of Health Services, Center for Health Statistics, Death Statistical Master File, Riverside County, 2005.

¹⁰ California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD) Patient Discharge Database, provided to Raimi + Associates by Meredith Millet, California Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Investigations Branch, March 2010)

¹¹ Stanley R. Hoffman Associates, Economic Trends and Conditions Murrieta General Plan Update, January 7, 2010.

¹² U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Selected Economic Characteristics, 2006-2008, available at www.factfinder.census.gov.

¹³ Based on a Murrieta population estimate of 97,029, U.S. Census, American Community Survey Demographic Estimates, 2006-2008, available at www.factfinder.census.gov. Cities with more than 1 grocery store per 10,000 residents are considered well-served.