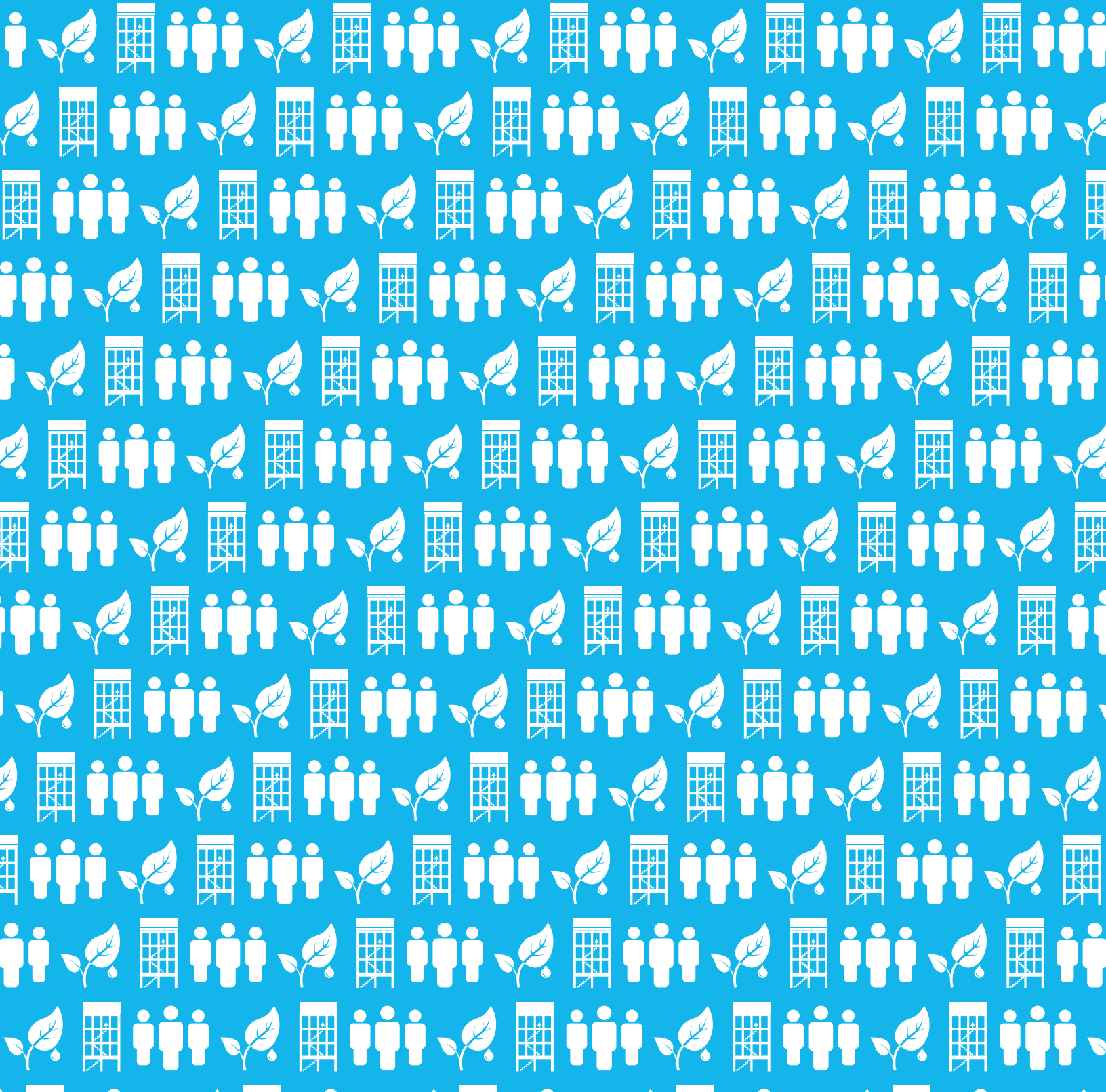


a healthy LA



...is a community

Social Capital

A healthy community, in both its social and physical aspects, is one that offers access to physical activity and nutritious food. It must also provide additional contributions to individual wellness, including equitable access to education, housing, jobs, the ability to live without fear of violence, freedom from environmental hazards, and a meaningful built environment.

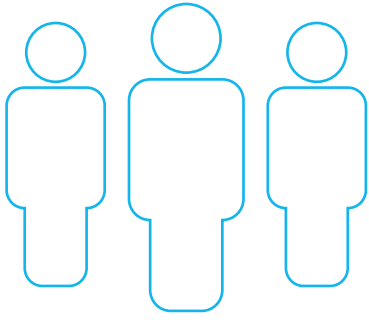
Clean Environment

Built Environment

The design of our communities is critical to the creation of a healthy Los Angeles. The relationship between physical activity, health and the built environment is intuitive and well understood. Mental well-being, in addition to physical health, is also a critically important consideration impacted by the physical environment. ["Depression and mental illness contribute a substantial burden on public health and should be treated with the same urgency as physical health."](#)²⁵ The organization of our communities and the design of the built environment can positively support emotional and social well-being.

Building design can easily promote one aspect of healthy design - a more active lifestyle. The organization of a building and the use of a stairway as a visible and accessible element are simple ways to increase daily physical activity. Embracing universal design makes buildings, products, and environments equally accessible to all people, with and without disabilities. Supporting increased access by making streets, open spaces, and facilities universally accessible enables improved physical activity opportunities among people with disabilities possible.

Placemaking is at the heart of a community and critical to individual stability and well-being. It is a complex concept that includes the creation of community identity, common facilities, a relationship between urban dwellers and nature, and necessitates well-designed buildings and neighborhoods. These elements of our urban environment are the building blocks of strong, healthy neighborhood and provide the foundation for community kinship. Together, these elements can elevate our quality of life and result in a cleaner, more active, and socially connected Los Angeles.



Social Capital

Social capital refers to the worth of our social networks and acknowledges a shared investment in our neighborhoods and city. In contrast to the measurable benefits from physical improvements to the urban environment, it is more difficult to quantify results from these strategies that are broader in scope. **“Lack of social contact increases risk of chronic stress, heart disease, and other illness. People with the weakest social ties have significantly higher death rates, possibly as great as three times higher than those who are socially integrated. Although many other forces contribute to social isolation, city design is increasingly blamed. Segregated land uses and building design, inadequate public transportation, the demise of centers that provide locally accessible services, and loss of places to exercise all contribute to alienation. For many, especially the elderly, lack of physical access is one of factor leading to illness and often death.”**²⁸ However, places with distinctive identities and that are well designed contribute to a sense of belonging and pride. They are places where people know their neighbors and are where residents have a communal stake in the overall safety and success of their neighborhoods.

Strong social network

Connected and walkable neighborhoods have stronger social networks than car-dependent neighborhoods, thereby increasing its social capital.²⁶

Trust more

People living in walkable neighborhoods trust neighbors more, participate in community projects more, and volunteer more than in non-walkable areas.²⁷

Community Participation *Personal investment by residents through volunteering and participation in community events creates a stronger social fabric.*

- Incorporate community outreach in the public and development process resulting in social investment.
- Encourage participation in neighborhood councils to provide informed local knowledge to Developers, City officials, and staff.
- Incorporate community buildings and open spaces providing a place for socializing and connecting.
- Utilize targeted environmental signage, universally accessible streets, paths, open space and facilities allowing increased activity among people with disabilities.

Identity *Perception of neighborhoods, buildings and open spaces generate community identity.*

- Celebrate the unique spirit, culture, and values of neighborhoods through urban design.
- Create focal points by the use of landmarks and unique structures.
- Incorporate public art to provide a unique perspective and iconic element.
- Create gateways and definable edges at neighborhoods with special signage, landscape treatments, and built elements.

Safety *A safe and secure environment through urban design supports social contact and active public places.*

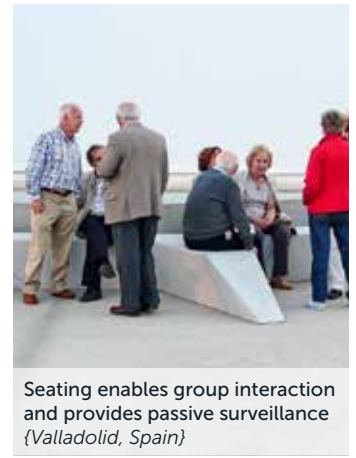
- Establish a safe and secure environment by the use of “eyes on the street” - a strategy derived from the notion that streets are safer when busy and when people are watching, creating a more defensible space.
- Utilize public seating in open spaces, encouraging people to see and be seen.
- Provide facades with many windows and doors facing streets to improve visibility and access



Public art celebrates community values and enhances visual interest
{San Francisco, CA}



Parks provide places for cultural events and socializing
{Chicago, IL}



Seating enables group interaction and provides passive surveillance
{Valladolid, Spain}



Seating provides opportunities for active and passive gatherings
{New York, NY}



Creative use of existing spaces expands cultural and community learning and gathering opportunities
{New York, NY}



Public art strengthens community identity and aids wayfinding
{Vercorin, Switzerland}



Interpretive signage educates and informs the public to unique histories, events, and places
{Indianapolis, IN}

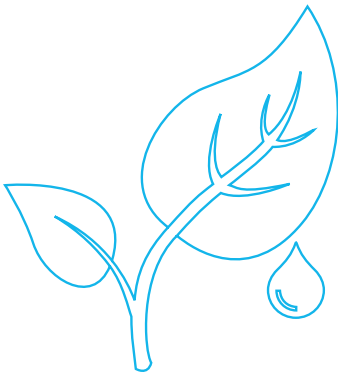


Community events, such as CicLAvia, encourage social interaction and pride in the community
{Los Angeles, CA}

Why This Matters To...

YOU Active participation from community members results in a greater personal investment in the community and the establishment of kinship and connection.

L.A. A successful and safer community results from people who are connected and invested in each other, creating a network of healthy neighborhoods within the city.



Clean Environment

Personal health, as a result of environmental factors, is well documented, with access to clean air, water and land, as fundamental contributor of individual health and well-being. Contaminated surroundings lead to increases in a multitude of diseases including asthma, various cancers, and other chronic conditions. Resolution of these issues requires complex solutions that are beyond the scope of this document, but urban design can assist in mitigating the impact of a polluted environment. Simple yet effective strategies can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and remediate polluted water and land leading to a decrease in associated diseases.

8% of children

More than 8 percent of children in LA suffer from asthma. An increase in tree-lined streets could lower the number by 25 percent.²⁹

1 tree

One tree can remove 26 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere annually – the equivalent of 11,000 miles of car emissions.³⁰

2% reduction

For every 5 percent of tree cover added to a community, storm water runoff is reduced by 2 percent.³¹

Air Reducing air pollution through physical design is introduced here as part of the overall fundamentals of a healthy community. The following strategies provide a basic introduction to the myriad potential improvements that can be made to the physical environment to improve air quality.

- Planting street trees will clean air by reducing pollutants, dust and pollen.
- Reducing vehicle miles traveled through increased walking, biking and active transportation lessens greenhouse gas emissions.

Water Urban design strategies addressing protection of the water supply and storm water management are the primary components introduced in this section. Further resources addressing this topic are readily available from other sources.

- Limit development within 50 feet of water bodies.
- Reduce storm water runoff by increasing permeability to prevent harmful land pollutants from getting into waterways.
- Use best management practices such as bio-swales and detention ponds to capture stormwater.
- Reduce storm water runoff by utilizing street trees to filter contaminated water.

Land The strategies included in this section are only a small aspect of responding to land degradation, soil contamination and habitat destruction.

- Utilize land development strategies centering on reuse of previously developed land.
- Mitigate brownfields for active infill urban development.
- Limit exposure to polluted soils and leftover contaminants.
- Protect prime soils.



Urban forests sequester CO² and filter pollutants from ground water {Boardman, OR}



Green roofs help minimize stormwater impacts from storms {Philadelphia, PA}



Engineered wetlands treat wastewater and runoff before reintroduction into the water system {Birmingham, AL}



Sidewalk bio-swales treat and reduce runoff {Los Angeles, CA}



Permeable pavement allows for stormwater filtering and absorption {Arnhem, Netherlands}



Constructed wetlands treat wastewater {Shanghai, China}



Increase permeability to prevent harmful land pollutants from entering waterways {Los Angeles, CA}

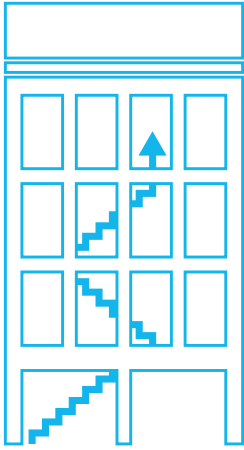


Bioremediation of soils on a post-industrial sites allow for renewed access to clean land and habitat opportunities {Los Angeles, CA}

Why This Matters To...

YOU Eliminating air, water, and land pollution lessens personal exposure to the potential effects of carcinogens. and chronic diseases.

L.A. Planting trees can provide shade, save on energy costs, clean air, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, capture polluted urban runoff and beautify neighborhoods.



Built Environment

The built environment encompasses structures, parks, streets, and is the most permanent aspect of our city. It also can be the most influential and impactful element on health of the urban environment. Building locations and relationships, function and design influence how residents and users perceive their neighborhood and how they move throughout their day.

A neighborhood is best organized so that it is active, connected and conveys a strong sense of place. Architectural design supports well designed neighborhoods and impacts individual wellness through a wide range of strategies. Buildings can contribute to placemaking by acting as landmarks or destinations and together, they can create a cohesive community character. Architectural massing, façade design and entry location support pedestrian friendly streets while building elements such as windows can increase visibility and security. The design of buildings can encourage people to incorporate physical activity into their everyday life through their relationship with the street, sidewalk and by the organization of their interior spaces.

There are numerous neighborhoods in L.A. with vastly diverse characters, cultures and forms. While each deserves a custom fit, a mix of land uses, compact development and increasing density in developing or established communities, while encouraging active building design, contributes to strong communities and healthy lifestyles.

0.5% rise

Every 1 percent rise in the urban sprawl index increases the risk of obesity by 0.5 percent.³²

12% reduction

Each quartile increase of land-use mix—an attribute of neighborhoods that encourages walking—yields a 12 percent reduction in the likelihood of obesity.³³

Climbing stairs

Climbing stairs is twice as taxing as brisk walking and 50 percent harder than walking up a steep incline or lifting weights. Peak exertion is attained much faster through climbing stairs than walking.³⁴

Density nodes *In a city that is growing in population, densifying certain areas contributes to active living while preserving the low density / suburban, or at times rural character, of some of Los Angeles' neighborhoods.*

- Utilize mixed use development. Residents are more likely to walk if there is a diversity of usable destinations within walking and biking distance.
- Provide access to supermarkets, schools, retail stores, and offices within ¼ mile walk of residential neighborhoods.

Architectural Design *A building's relationship to the urban fabric supports pedestrian friendly environments and its design can increase opportunities for physical activity.*

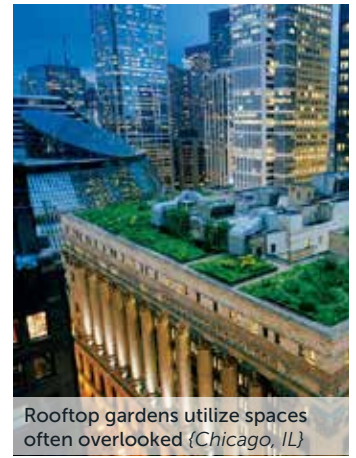
- Design building massing that responds to pedestrian scale and creates visual interest.
- Designing prominent stairways encourages their use.
- Provide at least one visible stair in all buildings for everyday use.
- Locate building functions to encourage walking to shared spaces and resources, rather than for convenience.
- Create building entrances near public transit stops to promote its use.
- Incorporate universal design increasing access for people of all abilities



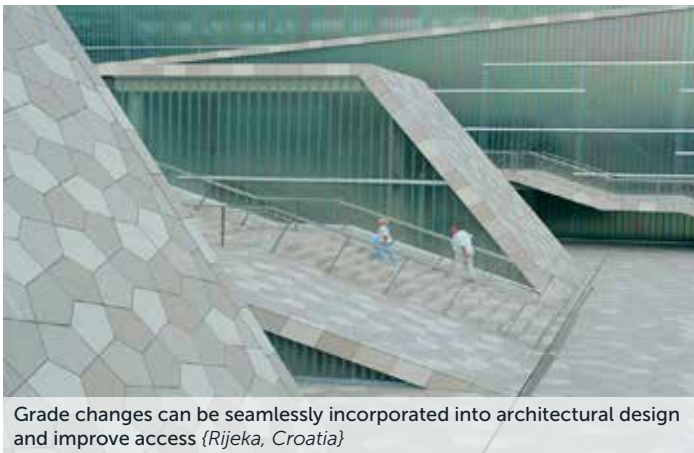
Innovative design integrates opportunities for gardens, access to natural light and room for physical activity (Copenhagen, Denmark)



Universal design allows for equitable access and activity by all users (Madrid, Spain)



Rooftop gardens utilize spaces often overlooked (Chicago, IL)



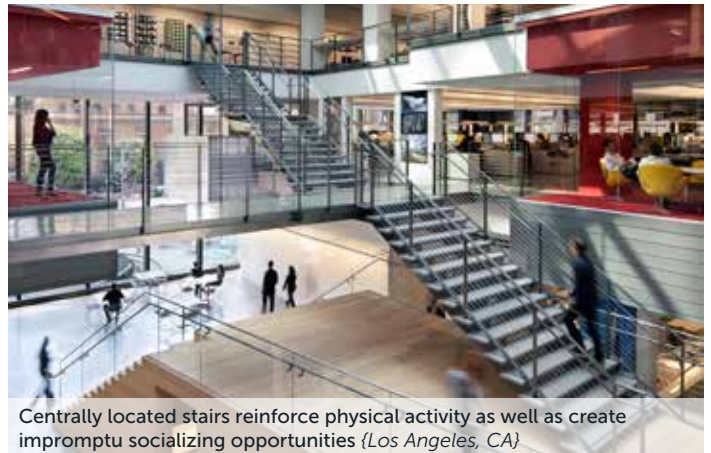
Grade changes can be seamlessly incorporated into architectural design and improve access (Rijeka, Croatia)



Prominent exterior stairs promote activity while also creating unique architectural opportunities (Los Angeles, CA)



Higher density development creates a compact footprint and allows for increased walkability to goods and services (West Hollywood, CA)



Centrally located stairs reinforce physical activity as well as create impromptu socializing opportunities (Los Angeles, CA)

Why This Matters To...

YOU Increased physical activity by stair use burns calories and can also have a direct impact on cardiovascular health

L.A. The clustering of homes, jobs, retail, and services create urban nodes with the potential of increasing activity and connectivity. Because of the population density, these nodes may be well served by public transit, enabling convenient access to the region for a broader segment of the population