



## Research, Best Practices and Logic Model: BUILT ENVIRONMENT - PARKS

### **Research Says:**

- The distance from a person's home to a park is a strong predictor of the frequency of use, and youth who live close enough to a recreational facility to walk or bike may be more likely to actively use those recreation sites (1).
- Specifically, being physically active is associated with (2):
  - improved cardiovascular health
  - weight loss or maintenance
  - decreased risk of becoming obese, or developing type II diabetes, and other chronic diseases
  - and positive psychological health benefits – including reduced stress levels and depression.
- Recent and emerging evidence also suggests that access to the outdoors and contact with nature may promote mental health by relieving stress and encouraging social interactions among friends and neighbors (3-5).

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2. Kruk, J. (2009). "Physical Activity and Health." *Asian Pac J Cancer Prev* 10(5): 721-728.
3. Kuo, F. E., W. C. Sullivan, et al. (1998). "Fertile Ground for Community: Inner-City Neighborhood Common Spaces." *American Journal of Community Psychology* 26(6): 823-851.
4. Ulrich, R. S., R. F. Simons, et al. (1991). "Stress recovery during exposure to natural and urban environments." *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 11(3): 201-230.
5. Wolf, K.L., and Flora, K. (2010). "Mental Health and Function - A Literature Review." In: *Green Cities: Good Health* ([www.greenhealth.washington.edu](http://www.greenhealth.washington.edu)). College of the Environment, University of Washington

### **Best Practices Are:**

- Parks include small neighborhood and pocket (mini) parks, trails, greenways, water shorelines, large planned urban and regional parks, and forested areas within and surrounding cities. Open spaces can be as diverse as agricultural land, forests, gardens, arboretums, and institutional grounds. They provide people with formal and informal gathering places to be physically active, socialize, relax, build community, and connect with the natural world (1).
- Organized, safe, accessible, and affordable places, programs, and events, such as Summer Movies in the Park, increase use of parks and playgrounds, and may also increase physical activity levels, particularly among youth (2)(3).

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3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. State Indicator Report on Physical Activity, 2010. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2010. Available at [http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/downloads/PA\\_State\\_Indicator\\_Report\\_2010.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/downloads/PA_State_Indicator_Report_2010.pdf). Accessed May 16, 2011.; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Communities putting prevention to work: communities addressing obesity. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/CommunitiesPuttingPreventiontoWork/communities/obesity.htm>. Accessed May 16, 2011.; Guide to Community Preventive Services. Environmental and Policy Approaches to Increase Physical Activity: Creation of or Enhanced Access to Places for Physical Activity Combined with Informational Outreach Activities. Available at <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/pa/environmental-policy/improvingaccess.html>. Accessed May 16, 2011.; Institute of Medicine. Does the Built Environment Influence Physical Activity? Examining the Evidence. Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press; 2005. Available from [http://books.nap.edu/openbook.php?record\\_id=11203&page=14](http://books.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=11203&page=14). Accessed May 16, 2011.



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### Logic Model:

