



FitCity6

PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
THROUGH DESIGN

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Cover image
Credit: Transportation
Alternatives

INTRODUCTION

Active Design is about being smarter and more efficient in the design decisions we make to get better outcomes for our citizens and communities which are even more important today with our limited budgets and resources.

Fit City

Fit City 6, held on May 17th, 2011 at the Center for Architecture, was the sixth annual conference examining how design of the built environment can create opportunities for increasing physical activity and improving public health in New York City. The conference brought together public officials, health professionals, architects, landscape architects, developers, urban designers, planners, and others to address how building, site, and neighborhood design and policy decisions can increase physical activity and access to healthy foods and beverages. Fit City 6 focused on confronting childhood obesity through Active Design. In New York City, 40 percent of elementary school children are overweight or obese. Two major risk factors for childhood obesity are poor diet and physical inactivity — both of which can be addressed through Active Design interventions. Co-hosted by the American Institute Architects New York Chapter (AIANY) and the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Fit City 6 featured design and health practitioners working in the U.S. and around the world to create healthier communities through design. This publication includes highlights from the event’s presentations and speakers’ remarks.

Karen K. Lee, MD, MHSc, FRCPC, Director, Built Environment and Active Design Program, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
These Fit City conferences have led to some

very important initiatives, such as the *Active Design Guidelines* and the LEED Innovation Credit for Physical Activity. The LEED Design for Health through Increased Physical Activity Innovation Credit now complements the other sustainable site credits that are available to promote physical activity within the LEED green building and development rating system. This LEED Innovation Credit for Physical Activity has been approved for several projects in New York City by the U.S. Green Building Council, and there are more than 15 other projects in the pipeline, both in New York City and elsewhere in the U.S., utilizing this credit.

Margaret O’Donoghue Castillo, AIA, LEED AP, 2011 President, AIA New York Chapter
AIA New York has been a partner with the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene in organizing Fit City conferences in New York over the last six years. As architects we know that the spaces we design have enormous consequences on some of the most important issues facing our country and globe, our energy consumption, the environment, the livability of our communities and the health of our citizens. Whether it’s through design that encourages walking, bicycling, active recreation or stair climbing, Active Design is about being smarter and more efficient in the design decisions we make to get better outcomes for our citizens and communities which are even more important today with our limited budgets and resources.

**Rick Bell, FAIA, Executive Director,
AIA New York Chapter**
Yogi Berra was quoted as saying if you don't know where you're going, you're likely to get there. Translating that into design parlance—if you don't care about what you're designing, you're likely to get what you deserve. I think architects, designers, interior designers, planners have been complicit in creating a sedentary society. Now with the *Active Design Guidelines* and with consciousness about the real cost impact of our design decisions, we're seeing changes in New York City and across the world.



NYC Dept. of Health & Mental Hygiene Deputy Commissioner

Andrew Goodman,
Dept. of Parks and Recreation Commissioner
Adrian Benepe,
Dept. of Design + Construction
Commissioner David Burney,
Dept. of Transportation
Assistant Commissioner
of Urban Design & Art
Wendy Feuer,
and Dept. of City Planning
Commissioner
Amanda Burden
Credit: Randi Rosenblum

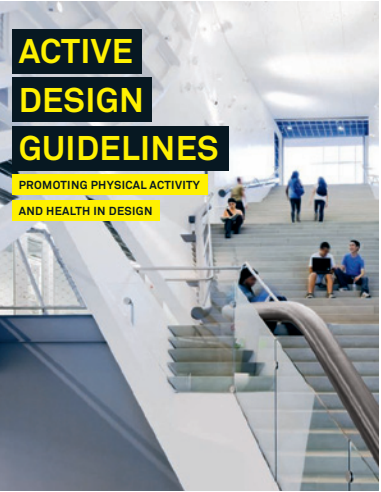
**Skye Duncan, Associate Urban Designer,
NYC Department of City Planning**
As of today there have been six Fit City conferences, two Fit Nation conferences and I have no doubt that before we know it, we could be organizing a Fit World conference as its very own event. To take such critical discussions to the global scale is absolutely essential so that we can learn from others around the world and share both our successes and our challenges in striving for healthy and active cities.



Fit City 6 physical activity break

Credit: Randi Rosenblum

ACTIVE DESIGN: BUILDING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES



Active Design encourages stair climbing, walking, bicycling, transit use, active recreation, and healthy food and beverage consumption. In January 2010, the *Active Design Guidelines* (www.nyc.gov/adg) were released. The *Guidelines* present design strategies for neighborhoods, streets, and buildings to help people lead healthier lives. A product of New York City's Departments of Health and Mental Hygiene, Design + Construction, Transportation, and City Planning, the *Active Design Guidelines* were developed following a two-year process that involved more than 12 New York City agencies, the American Institute of Architects New York Chapter (AIANY), as well as academic partners, community organizations, professional associations, and private sector partners.

Download the *Guidelines* at:
www.nyc.gov/adg

Obesity and type 2 diabetes are now epidemic throughout the country, and both problems have been growing worse rapidly over the past few decades. Mounting scientific evidence, as referenced in the *Guidelines*, demonstrates the important impact that design of the built environment has on physical activity and

nutrition. Today, architectural and urban design too often support unhealthy diets and sedentary lifestyles. The *Active Design Guidelines* aim to reverse these trends, by providing architects, planners, building owners and managers, and other real estate professionals with a manual for creating healthier and more active buildings, streets, and urban spaces. At the same time, the *Guidelines* improve environmental sustainability and universal accessibility, as well as support more vibrant, desirable places to live.

**Louise Cox, LFRAIA, RIBA, FHAIA, President,
International Union of Architects**

The International Union of Architects is committed to making our world sustainable by design and to ensure that architects take a responsible attitude. When fundamental questions about our future, health, food, energy supply, social relations, natural resources and the environment are raised, it is the architect's task to come up with spatial design solutions that can help address these issues. Architecture can make a difference and we must work with the government, with the private sector, and with communities to help solve these issues—we can't do it just by ourselves.

THE HEALTH CASE
FOR ACTIVE DESIGN

Our nation, our states, and our leaders are increasingly hungry for creative solutions that do not pour more money into the healthcare treatment side, but that deal with the upstream solutions necessary to combat obesity and related chronic diseases, including how we design our communities to make healthier choices easier for people.

Joseph W. Thompson, MD, MPH, Arkansas Surgeon General and former Director, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity

Our 20th century health challenge was tobacco. It was only 50 or 60 years ago that 50 percent of U.S. adults smoked. Since that time, we’ve made dramatic changes in the environment that have made it tougher for people to use tobacco products; paired with education and pricing incentives, we have successfully curtailed the number of people smoking nationwide.

Here in the 21st century, we have a challenge that is exponentially more difficult, but probably equally threatening: obesity and the myriad of associated chronic diseases. Due to the obesity epidemic, today’s generation of children may be the first to not live as long as their parents in the history of our nation.

In the 1960’s and 1970’s, only about five percent of our children were obese. But starting in the 1970’s, childhood obesity rates began to rise, and today, 17 percent of our kids nationwide are suffering from obesity.

Our healthcare sector is very adept at treating chronic diseases: doing renal dialysis and kidney transplants and open-heart surgeries. We are not very good at actually dealing with the causes of these diseases, namely obesity and lack of physical activity. The factors that impact these outcomes happen every minute of every hour of

every day in the environment within which we live, where our kids go to school, where we play, where we recreate on the weekends.

When we look at the impact of obesity on our economy, the number one cause of employer and family bankruptcies is an inability to manage healthcare costs. What we have found in Arkansas is that you can save yourself, your business, and your insurer significant money if you lead a healthy lifestyle. If you were a normal weight, did some physical activity and didn’t smoke, on average your healthcare claims costs were \$2,400 a year. If you were obese, however, your claims were \$3,700 a year on average. If you were inactive, they averaged \$3,600.

Our nation, our states, and our leaders are increasingly hungry for creative solutions that do not pour more money into the healthcare treatment side, but that deal with the upstream solutions necessary to combat obesity and related chronic diseases, including how we design our communities to make healthier choices easier for people.

The great news is that these changes do not just benefit our health and the amount of money we spend on healthcare. Creating healthier, more active communities will help us save energy, create more green space, and revitalize our cities. We have to make sure that our kids and our families have a healthy environment within which they live, work and play, which in turn will safeguard the future of our nation.

Total costs are payments for medical (outpatient and inpatient) and pharmacy claims for Arkansas state employees, for the claim period 10/1/04 through 2/28/06. The ‘no risk’ group comprised individuals who were normal weight, did not use tobacco, and engaged in physical activity five days a week or more. Credit: Arkansas Center for Health Improvement

Abraham Jelin, MD, President, New York Chapter 2 of the American Academy of Pediatrics

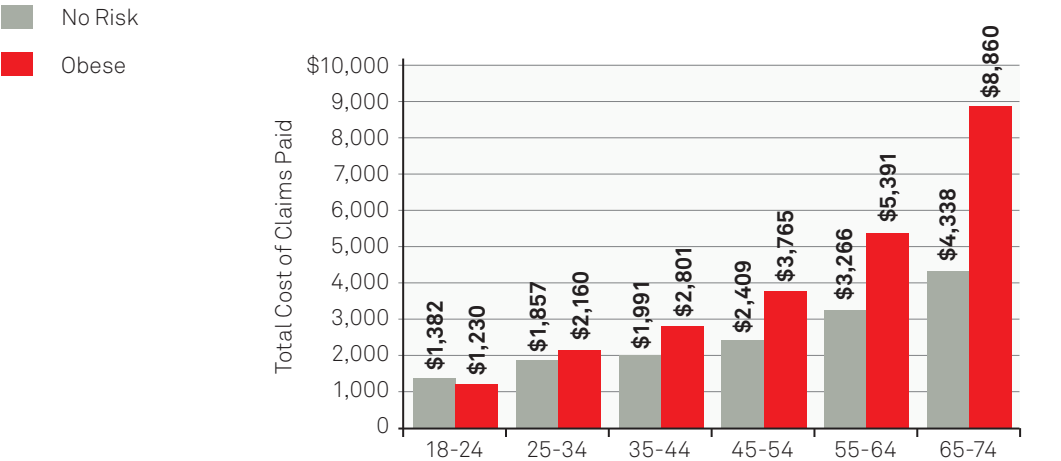
The bottom line is we don’t have a good solution for treating children who are already obese. We all know what kids should do. They should eat less and exercise more. Motivating changes in behavior is much easier if you change the environment in ways that encourage healthier eating and more physical activity.

Prevention is really the most important strategy to combat obesity, and pediatricians need to play an important role. In 2007 the American Academy of Pediatrics recognized obesity as a health priority and developed an overall task force to address this problem for

pediatricians. Our mantra for children’s health is ‘5-2-1-0’: five servings of fruits and vegetables, less than 2 hours of screen time, one hour of exercise and zero sugar-sweetened beverages each day.

There’s also an advocacy role for pediatricians to play. We’ve supported the Breast Feeding Bill of Rights, menu labeling in fast food restaurants, breakfast in the classroom, healthy foods in school lunchrooms and in vending machines, complete streets, and physical education in the classroom. But we can’t make progress on these strategies alone: we need the help of architects, designers, policymakers, and community groups to implement the changes we need.

Arkansas State Employees: Average Annual Total Medical Costs by Age Group



ACTIVE DESIGN IN NYC

This section includes highlights from two Commissioners' panels that were held at Fit City 6, which featured remarks from ten New York City agencies and offices about their Active Design work. Since the *Active Design Guidelines* were released in January 2010, City agencies have worked together to implement the *Guidelines* by creating policies, programs, and projects that support healthier, more active places for New Yorkers.

Making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice

Deputy Commissioner Andrew Goodman, MD, MPH, Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

We have learned that we cannot shift behaviors by relying on education alone, so instead we have to think about how to change the environment and how we make the healthy choice the easy choice. The Health Department is very good at documenting problems, identifying issues, and understanding risks. But we have fewer tools available to us to actually change the physical environment that we all live in, which is why it's so critical for us to have partnerships with other agencies, professional associations like AIANY, and others who play a direct role in design decisions.

During the past year, we were fortunate to receive funding from federal stimulus funds. With that, we have expanded our core group of the Built Environment program of the Health Department and we are also financing positions

at our sister agencies and other organizations. We have also engaged in a partnership with 14 other communities and health departments across the country that are working to create healthier, more active places through design.

In partnership with the Departments of Parks and Recreation, Transportation, and other City agencies, the Health Department launched a new campaign called *Make New York City Your Gym*. One element of this is an enhancement of the Parks Department website called Be Fit NYC (www.nycgovparks.org/befitnyc), so that you can search, find, and organize free and low-cost physical activity and exercise programs around the city.

We have also distributed over 20,000 stair prompt signs to nearly a thousand buildings, working with building owners and managers to make sure that these signs are posted near elevators and staircases. We have also worked with City-operated buildings to ensure their stairwells are open and accessible so that it's easier for people who are able to take the stairs instead of an elevator or escalator.

Integrating Active Design and Universal Design

Deputy Commissioner Robert Piccolo, AIA, NYC Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities

The *Active Design Guidelines* coincide with what we're trying to do at the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, which is universal design, or creating places that are usable by all people, regardless of ability. We recently released

We cannot shift behaviors by relying on education alone, so instead we have to think about how to change the environment and how we make the healthy choice the easy choice.

Stair prompt and other stair signage at the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene new headquarters
Credit: Corey Loupee



ACTIVE DESIGN
IN NYC

Five proposals that emerged from a Green Codes Task Force are related to increasing the accessibility and attractiveness of staircases in buildings. This encourages physical activity and also saves energy on avoided elevator and escalator use.

Inclusive Design Guidelines, which are a Universal Design blueprint for New York City, and Active Design strategies are incorporated throughout this book.

Creating safer and friendlier streets is critical. We're working with the Department of Transportation to help reduce traffic speeds and create safer street crossings, including use of audible pedestrian signals for those who are blind or have vision problems.

We're also working with the Department of Parks and Recreation to support recreational accommodations that work for children with disabilities. There is a wide continuum of what 'disability' means, and it's not just about people in wheelchairs. We need to create play spaces that support children who may have different mental, emotional, or physical abilities.

Implementing PlaNYC for a Healthier
New York City

Laurie Kerr, AIA, Senior Policy Advisor, NYC
Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability
PlaNYC is the plan for sustainable growth in New

York City through 2030, and there is enormous overlap between the goals of this plan and the goals of Active Design. The transportation chapters of PlaNYC are focused on increasing transportation choices in the city, especially walking, bicycling and public transportation, all of which build in physical activity as an integral part of everyday life. The open space chapters are aimed at increasing the number and quality of parks throughout the city, including recreation opportunities on the city's incredible waterfront. There's also a new crosscutting theme focused on increasing access to fresh, healthy foods and beverages.

PlaNYC also has a major focus on fostering green buildings, and several of the recommendations that have evolved in this area further not just sustainability, but also health and Active Design goals. Five proposals that emerged from a Green Codes Task Force are related to increasing the accessibility and attractiveness of staircases in buildings. This encourages physical activity and also saves energy on avoided elevator and escalator use.

Make NYC Your Gym
Campaign subway poster
Credit: NYC Department of
Health and Mental Hygiene



ACTIVE DESIGN GUIDELINES

Urban Design

The Urban Design Chapter of the *Active Design Guidelines* presents strategies for designing neighborhoods, streets, and outdoor spaces that encourage active transportation and recreation, including walking, bicycling, and active play. Key recommended measures include:

- Develop and maintain mixed land use
- Design accessible, pedestrian-friendly streets and neighborhoods with high connectivity, traffic calming features, landscaping, lighting, benches, and water fountains
- Facilitate bicycling for transportation and recreation by developing continuous bicycle networks, and incorporating infrastructure such as safe indoor and outdoor bicycle parking
- Improve access to transit and transit facilities
- Improve access to plazas, parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities, and design these spaces to maximize their active use
- Improve access to full-service grocery stores and fresh produce

Creating a More Walkable and Transit Friendly City

**Commissioner Amanda Burden, FAICP, NYC
Department of City Planning**

The Fit City program and the *Active Design Guidelines* has affected each one of us profoundly. In City Planning, we're responsible for

land use and zoning and we have been working to channel growth only around transit nodes and to create a more walkable New York City. We have rezoned well over one-fifth of the city, and 87 percent of all new development is within a 10-minute walk of a subway station. That really changes the way New Yorkers live and makes for a healthier, more walkable city.

The way we judge all of our projects is how it feels at the street—whether it's walkable, inviting and whether the project helps foster a great journey. We have passed several initiatives through the City Council to help those goals. The Pedestrian Streetscapes Text limits curb cuts on neighborhood streets and makes sure you have more continuous sidewalk planting to create welcoming places to walk. We also made it legal to park Carshare vehicles in garages around the city. Now with that passage, people who are Carshare members can either give up or use cars less often.

This summer we're going to open one of the most important waterfront parks in Lower Manhattan, East River Esplanade South. Just south of the South Street Seaport, this park will give 30,000 residents of Lower Manhattan access to the East River. In partnership with DOT, a continuous bike lane will be available from all the way down the West Side, around the tip of Manhattan and up on the East Side.

We are working to create what we call complete neighborhoods. A complete neighborhood is one that offers schools, work, shopping and services close to home so that you

**Separated pedestrian
paths and off-road bicycle
greenways on the East
River Esplanade in New
York City**
Credit: Kate Rube



ACTIVE DESIGN GUIDELINES

do not have to get in your car, so that you can walk and bike to services and amenities. This helps make people healthier and it cleans the air as a function of there being fewer cars.

Expanding Opportunities for Active Recreation and Play

Commissioner Adrian Benepe, NYC Department of Parks and Recreation

Our biggest issue is figuring out how to meet the health and exercise needs of nearly 8.2 million New Yorkers. Over the last eight or nine years, we've spent about \$3 billion on building, expanding, and adding new parks in the city. This is unparalleled in the modern history of the city, and it's a testament to the importance of having great spaces in which to exercise and play.

As a part of our work, we are in the process of building eight major regional parks. We are transforming 250 schoolyards, which historically only were used during the school day, into full-time playgrounds. Asphalt play yards that were built in the 1950's are also being converted into synthetic turf playing fields that can be used for all kinds of sports.

Night lighting is being added to fields across the city to increase the time you have available to play in these areas. On Randall's Island, we've built likely the largest sports field complex in the nation, installing a total of 60 fields and a world-class track and field complex. These infrastructure changes are being done, not just with city money but with a lot of help from the private sector and nonprofit organizations

working closely with us, to the tune of about \$90 million a year.

We're also working to design parks that are more sustainable and that feature many more ways to exercise. For example, some of our facilities now feature exercise stations aimed toward adults and particularly for seniors—a place where you can sit and pedal a stationary bicycle outdoors.

Standing up for the importance of Active Design is really critical and it can't just be the public policymakers doing so. It has to be all of us—the public health professionals, the citizens, and the designers, all working together.

Creating More Active Streets

Assistant Commissioner Wendy Feuer, Urban Design and Art, NYC Department of Transportation

There is pent-up demand in New York City for more active streets. At DOT, we're doing everything we can to make the city's streets as safe and inviting as they can be to encourage walking and bicycling.

As we've expanded the city's bike-lane network, so too has the number of bicyclists grown. Commuter bike riding has more than doubled between 2007 and 2011, and is expected to triple by 2015. Our Summer Streets program, which last year drew more than 200,000 people to walk, run, bike and play along seven miles of car-free streets in Manhattan, continues to expand and grow in popularity. We now work with 21 community groups in all five boroughs to host car-

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free Weekend Walks. These neighborhoods apply to have streets closed to car traffic over several weekends in the summer, creating additional opportunities for fun and recreation. People really want to get out and be active. If we provide places for them to do so, they will come.

Bike Share will be launched during summer 2012, providing a safe, affordable and healthy transportation option for New Yorkers, and we continue to build out our CityBench program, which creates places for people to take a break or rest while they're walking. And finally, we're gearing up for a wayfinding initiative that will help people navigate the city by foot.

Building Design

The Building Design Chapter of the Active Design Guidelines highlights opportunities for incorporating regular physical activity into daily life that can be found not only outdoors, but inside buildings as well. The following measures can help building occupants incorporate physical activity into their daily routines:

- Increase stair use among the able-bodied by providing conveniently located stairs, posting motivational signage at elevators and escalators to encourage stair use, and designing visible, appealing and comfortable stairs
- Where feasible, incorporate ramps for active vertical circulation
- Locate building functions to encourage walking to shared spaces such as mail and lunch rooms, and, provide appealing,

supportive walking routes within buildings

- Provide facilities that support active recreation and transportation such as centrally visible physical activity spaces, showers, locker rooms, secure bicycle storage, and drinking fountains
- Design building exteriors, scale, and shape that contribute to a pedestrian-friendly urban environment and that include maximum variety and transparency, multiple entries, stoops, and canopies, where appropriate

Bringing the Staircase Back in Buildings

Commissioner David Burney, FAIA, NYC Department of Design + Construction

There has been such an overwhelming response to the publication of the *Active Design Guidelines*, more than any other set of guidelines that we've published at DDC, which I think indicates how important these issues are and how hungry the design community has been for this type of information.

Bringing back the staircase is one of the biggest design opportunities that architects have in their work. Designing a staircase should be a golden moment for an architect. It's a three-dimensional sculptural space that can be so beautiful, not merely a dingy fire stair at the back of the building. Once a staircase is brought back to better prominence, it becomes a social space. You look at structures like the new Cooper Union building by Morphosis in which the staircase is the place where students hang out.

ACTIVE DESIGN GUIDELINES

Bringing back the staircase is one of the biggest design opportunities that architects have in their work.

You can also make small changes to improve staircase design, as in The Melody, an affordable housing building developed by Bluesea Development. Partner Les Bluestone, working with Magnusson Architects took this building and redesigned it to make the staircases more prominent. I think this was an extremely enlightened approach, and it also demonstrates that the *Active Design Guidelines* are for the most part cost-neutral, because Les is in a business where he has to make a profit. You can do this stuff if you want to and it's not going to cost you a whole lot of money.

Queens Borough Commissioner Ira Gluckman, RA, AIA, NYC Department of Buildings

We're working with other agencies to promote people using the stairs more often. One solution to making the stairs more visible in buildings is to use magnetic hold-opens; these allow stair doors to remain open instead of closed, except in the case of an emergency, when the doors will close to prevent the spread of a fire. There's a lot you can do to improve stairways, while still adhering to the Building Code. You can also adjust the tread-riser ratios of stairs to make them more comfortable for people to walk up and down, and you can improve the finish and paint inside stairwells to make them more attractive.

In the summer months, you can also think about air conditioning stairwells. Finally, more designers should think about incorporating windows into stairwells. In some cases you can actually get floor area bonuses for introducing daylight into corridors.

Creating Healthier Buildings for City Employees

Commissioner Edna Wells Handy, NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services

At the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, we provide city government with people, places and things: the supplies, the buildings, the space and the co-workers needed to get the job done. Soon after I started at DCAS, we began opening up the stairwells in City buildings. We've worked to overcome issues like security and access by bringing together tenants with our security teams. The new Department of Health and Mental Hygiene building in Long Island City, Queens has several internal staircases incorporated into the office space, allowing employees to travel freely between floors.

We're also looking at our office buildings' concessions and the products that are sold in vending machines. By working together with the Health Department, we've been able to provide healthy food alternatives in many City buildings.

Internal staircase at the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene new headquarters
Credit: Corey Loupee



ACTIVE DESIGN
GUIDELINES

Public Schools that Encourage
Active Play and Physical Activity

E. Bruce Barrett, AIA, LEED AP BC+D,
Vice President, Architecture and Engineering,
NYC School Construction Authority

There are a lot of opportunities for Active Design in our public school system. Since New York City is a densely populated urban environment, our schools are generally four to five stories tall, and our requirement for students is that, if they are able, they use the stairs. In buildings where we have elevators, the use of elevators is restricted to actual physical need, so nearly everyone in our school buildings takes the stairs on a daily basis.

Primary and Intermediate schools have outdoor playgrounds, whether on grade or on a roof level, and we are working to ensure these facilities are designed for a broad range of kids and for a variety of activities. Today’s play facilities are more colorful than they were in the past. There are different activity zones for children of different ages, and landscaping beyond just the requisite street trees. Where site area allows, high schools have playing fields and on small sites, we try to provide at least some opportunities to get out in the open air.

A few years ago we stopped putting auditoriums into new primary and intermediate schools in favor of installing gymatoriums.

Typically the gymatorium is a gym with a stage at one side, which, for schools that already have a gym, doubles the amount of exercise space available within a school. Another version of the gymatorium has fixed or moveable stadium seating with a large floor area that is used for exercise and for performance. We’re also looking to introduce walking or running tracks around the second level of gymnasiums.

Hydration goes hand in hand with physical activity, so we make sure that there are chilled water dispensers at the end of every serving line in school cafeterias. The corridor water fountains have bottle filler spigots. Some of the new schools also have gardens, and the Department of Education School Food Services has a Garden to Café program where they actually take the produce grown by the kids and include it in school lunches.

Finally, the School Construction Authority works closely with the Department of Transportation to create safe ways for children and their families to walk to school. We have also been working to make schools friendlier for commuting by bicycle. New schools all have bicycle racks, and we’re expanding the school entry vestibules to include bicycle parking, so that bikes can be locked up just within view of the School Safety Officer.

School vegetable garden
at the New York City Urban
Assembly Harbor School
on Governors Island
Credit: NYC School
Construction Authority



ACTIVE DESIGN IN NYC: PRIVATE SECTOR AND COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Playstreets: Closing Streets to Create New Play Spaces

**Elena Madison, Assistant Vice President,
Project for Public Spaces**

A lot of communities around New York City are suffering from lack of public space — playgrounds, open space, and parks. In my neighborhood in Jackson Heights, Queens, I became involved with establishing a temporary plaza and park space as a part of the City's Playstreets program. Public spaces are very much lacking in the area.

The Playstreets program is a joint initiative involving the Departments of Health and Mental Hygiene, Transportation, Parks and Recreation, and Education, working in conjunction with community organizations, residents, and schools.

Playstreets are single blocks of quieter streets that are closed to cars and opened up to children and families for active play.

When we started the 78th Street Playstreet, we created a calendar of events and programs for children and their families on the street, which we marketed in many languages to the area's residents. The Playstreet project has been really successful with not just children, but with seniors, as well. They enjoy having a place to congregate together with younger people. The 78th Street Playstreet started as a temporary street closing that happened once a week. Last summer, however, we were able to keep the street closed to cars for two months. Now we are in discussion about potentially making this site a permanent plaza that will be open to the public at all times.

Children and adults
dancing at Jackson
Heights 78th Street
Playstreet
Credit: Elena Madison



ACTIVE DESIGN IN NYC: PRIVATE SECTOR AND COMMUNITY PROJECTS

The High Line Park

**Charles Renfro, AIA, Principal,
Diller Scofidio + Renfro**

I think what encourages people to be fit is creating cities and places that people want to move in, around and through naturally. The design of the High Line encourages different kinds of physical behavior that engages visitors in a variety of actions— up, down, and across. It's more than a park – it's a platform for experiencing New York City in a new way.

The Kalahari: 40 West 116th Street

**Yvonne Isaac, Vice President of Operations,
Full Spectrum of NY, LLC**

The Kalahari, located on West 116th Street between Lenox and 5th Avenues in Harlem is a LEED-certified, mixed-income housing development by Full Spectrum that opened in 2008. We wanted to make this development

about placemaking. Designed by GF55 Partners LLP, Schwartz Architects, and Studio JTA, the development has two buildings with a plaza in between the two, which is a green roof of the garage. All of the common spaces, such as the exercise room and music practice rooms, open up onto that plaza.

We also have a lot of space for changing art displays on the lobby walls, which encourages people to walk through the long lobby hallway from the front of the building to the back. The building also has bike storage, which is extremely popular; there's actually a waiting list for spots. We were also able to get a permit to have bicycle storage and bike racks on the sidewalk.

If you start early in a collaborative process with your design team, there are many Active Design strategies that can be incorporated from the beginning and that do not require any additional costs.



People walking on the High
Line Park in New York City
Credit: Iwan Baan

DESIGNING ACTIVE COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE GLOBE

Obesity and Diabetes Epidemics in Latin America and the Caribbean

Carlos Santos-Burgoa, MD, MPH, PhD, Senior Advisor on Violence, Injury and Human Security, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO)

In the 48 countries and territories in the Region of the Americas, 76 percent of people die from chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. Diabetes, in particular, is reaching epidemic proportions. The number of people suffering from diabetes in the Americas is expected to grow from 55 million in 2000 to 83 million by 2030, an increase of 50 percent, according to the International Diabetes Federation. We know that the ways to prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes are to have a healthier diet, exercise regularly, maintain a normal body weight, and avoid tobacco use.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the cost of diabetes as of 2002 was estimated at \$65 billion, mostly due to premature deaths and disability. More than 80 percent of diabetes deaths occur in low- and medium-income countries.

The major challenge for us in combating chronic diseases is in making it easier for people to lead healthy lives, particularly in low-income areas and countries. The Americas is one of the world's most unequal regions, and problems such as rapid urbanization, poor planning, poor access to healthy foods, and not enough areas to exercise are having a direct effect on our chronic disease rates.

I have been glad to see my organization and other world leaders respond to these challenges.

The United Nations has a meeting of heads of government to address chronic diseases and there is also a World Conference on Social Determinants of Health in Rio de Janeiro this year. We need a response that is proportional to how large the problems of chronic disease and obesity are for our world.

Using Art and Design to Encourage

Physical Activity

Rosan Bosch, Artist and Managing Director, Rosan Bosch Ltd.

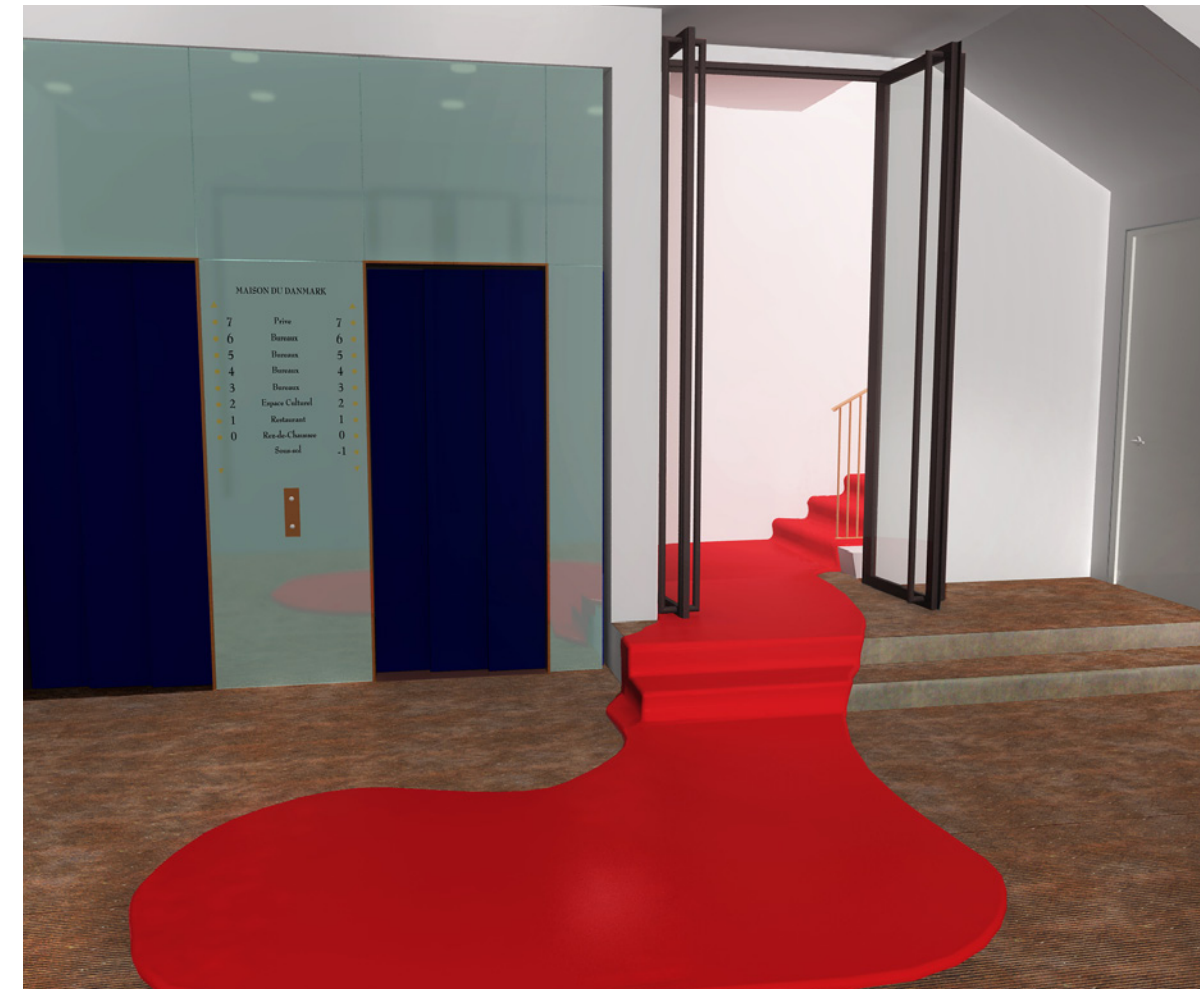
I'm a contemporary artist living in Copenhagen. I have a studio working with architects, designers and artists and we try to change society through our designs. We know that it's wrong for us to be physically inactive, but the problem is not in knowing what's wrong. The challenge is for people to understand that this isn't just about going to a gym, or playing sports, but that we can become healthier by making small changes in our everyday life.

- **Free Zone Signs** These activity zone signs, which mimic traffic signs, comment on the way we use public space. The signs have been developed as an exhibition series under the name 'Free Zone,' an art project creating new and different types of public space. These signs aim to encourage physical activity, but they are also about enjoying life and having fun. It is possible to be active on the streets, not only if you're running late, but as an integrated part of everyday life.



Rosan Bosch jumping in the 'JumpZone' that she created at the Center for Architecture in New York City.
Credit: Laura Trimble

Stair promoting path in the lobby of the Maison du Danemark, Champs Elysées in Paris, France
Credit: Rosan Bosch / VTI-vistec



DESIGNING ACTIVE COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE GLOBE

- **Maison du Danemark | Champs Elysées, Paris, France** The clients for this project wanted people to use the stairs instead of the elevator, but the hierarchy of the room tells you to go to the elevator. This is the way a lot of modern buildings are, and we need to think creatively about how to encourage stair use if major re-design is not an option. In this project, we painted a red path to lead people to the stairs, instead of to the elevator.
- **Hjørring Library | Hjørring, Denmark** For the public library in Hjørring, we created a red ribbon that runs throughout the library, becoming a tool for communication, exhibition, display and interaction. The whole space invites you to use it in a different way: store things in it, crawl on it, etc. It's a very popular space, combining joy and motivation with a place that is usually about quiet and duty.

Danish Pavilion with continuous walking and bicycling path at the 2010 Shanghai Expo
Credit: Image courtesy of BIG, © Iwan Baan

Encouraging Walking and Bicycling through Building Design

Kai-Uwe Bergmann, AIA, RIBA, MAA, LEED AP, Partner, Director of Business Development, BIG

Our approach to architecture is what we call "Yes is More," which in its essence is calling for a positive approach towards the process of creating a building or public space. It can also be defined as the desire to elevate everyone's quality of life by making places where people will want to live, work, or play. In Copenhagen today, where our office is based, 37 percent of people bicycle to work or their studies and the goal is to have 50 percent do so by 2015. Copenhagen is actually in the midst of reshaping its bicycle lanes to be wider than the roads they are adjacent to, thus flipping the space devoted from cars to bikes.

- **Denmark World Expo Pavilion | Shanghai, China** The Denmark pavilion was designed so that you can actually walk or bicycle through the entire exhibition. We enlisted an



DESIGNING ACTIVE COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE GLOBE

The building incorporates a continuous 600 meter ramp for walking and bicycling, which is open for use to anyone living in or visiting Copenhagen.

8 House with external ramps for walking and bicycling throughout the building in Copenhagen, Denmark

Credit: Image courtesy of BIG, © Jens Lindhe

artist, Jeppe Hein, to create a 270-meter-long bench throughout the pavilion, serving as a lighting element and a way to separate pedestrians from the bicyclists. This 'social bench' is also a way to engage people in the space as it twists, turns, and arches. This pavilion was the only one out of 200 that did not use air conditioning. Instead the air was cooled naturally by placing a large amount of water from Copenhagen Harbor in the center of the building. The water cooled the air through a continuous loop in the space. The harbor water was brought over to entice people in China to jump in and to realize that they too could live in a modern harbor city with clean water. During its six months of use, over six million visitors biked, walked and swam through the pavilion, which is more than the entire population of Denmark.

- **8 House | Copenhagen, Denmark** 8 House is a tower with nearly five hundred apartments, located adjacent to a stop of the Copenhagen metro system and a large protected area that forms a park. The 8 House is formed through the layering of penthouses, apartments, row houses and retail, which loop up into the sky. Our underlying objective is to create density without losing the intimacy of each and every individualized residence. The inspiration was an Italian hillside town, in which people walk up and pass their neighbors' homes and have social relationships with those people who live next door to them. The building incorporates a continuous 600 meter ramp for walking and bicycling, which is open for use to anyone living in or visiting Copenhagen.



RESOURCES

Active Design Guidelines
<http://www.nyc.gov/adg>

American Academy of Pediatrics, New York Chapter 2
<http://www.ny2aap.org/>

American Institute of Architects New York Chapter
<http://www.aiany.org>

Arkansas Center for Health Improvement
<http://www.achi.net>

Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG)
<http://www.big.dk/>

Diller Scofidio + Renfro
<http://www.dsrrny.com/>

Fit City 1 Report
<http://www.aiany.org/fitcity1>

Fit City 2 Report
<http://www.aiany.org/fitcity2>

Fit City 3 Report
<http://www.aiany.org/fitcity3>

Fit City 4 Report
<http://www.aiany.org/fitcity4>

Fit City 5 Report
<http://www.aiany.org/fitcity5>

Full Spectrum of NY, LLC
<http://www.fullspectrumny.com/>

International Union of Architects
<http://www.uia-architectes.org/>

Jackson Heights Green Alliance
<http://www.jhgreen.org/>

New York City Department of Buildings
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dob>

New York City Department of City Planning
<http://www.nyc.gov/dcp>

New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcas>

New York City Department of Design + Construction
<http://www.nyc.gov/ddc>

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
<http://www.nyc.gov/health>

New York City Department of Parks & Recreation
<http://www.nycgovparks.org/>

New York City Department of Transportation
<http://www.nyc.gov/dot>

New York City Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/mopd>

New York City School Construction Authority
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/sca/>

Pan American Health Organization
<http://new.paho.org/>

PlaNYC 2030
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/planyc2030>

Project for Public Spaces
<http://www.pps.org/>

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
<http://www.rwjf.org/childhoodobesity>

Rosan Bosch Ltd.
<http://www.rosanbosch.com/>

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/>

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