



# **FIT CITY** TYLER

## **ACTIVE LIVING PLAN**

**For the City of Tyler and Smith County**

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## **The Fit City Tyler Active Living Plan** **For the City of Tyler and Smith County**

*(moving forward, this document will become henceforth referred to as “The Plan”)*

The mission of Fit City Tyler is to create a healthier Tyler, one step, one bite and one health-conscious decision at a time. The Fit City Tyler Active Living Plan was created from input generated by the steering committee and general membership of the Fit City Tyler health and wellness coalition. The Plan is composed of a comprehensive set of programs and initiatives that target increasing physical activity awareness and utilization. The Plan aims to create a national culture that supports physically active lifestyles, and its ultimate purpose is to improve health, prevent disease and enhance quality of life.

The recommendations in the Plan are represented by the following societal sectors:

- Business and Industry
- Education, After School, and Early Childhood Programs
- Health Care
- Mass Media
- Parks and Recreation, Fitness, and Sports
- Public Health
- Transportation, Land Use, and Community Design
- Volunteer and Non-Profit
- Faith-Based Communities

Each sector offers goals aimed at promoting opportunities for physical activity and community utilization of existing and emerging resources that facilitate active living.



## **Introduction to the Fit City Tyler Active Living Plan**

The Plan is organized into societal sectors with priority goals and the strategies to achieve the goals of the plan. Combining all eleven categories in one plan allows users to take advantage of cross-sector collaborations. These goals are not all inclusive but are those the Health Coalition of Smith County believes to have priority in our community. Each goal is followed by measureable outcomes that demonstrate the implementation of that goal and by a list of potential community partners for implementing the goals. These goals and measureable outcomes are summarized immediately below and included in greater detail in the sections that follow.

### **Guiding Principles for this Plan**

Several principles set forth by the National Physical Activity Plan guided the development of the Active Living Plan:

- Increasing physical activity by making the healthy choice the easy choice in our local communities, where we live, work, pray, and play.
- The plan recognizes that individuals are impacted not just by their own personal attributes and behavior, but also by political, societal and environmental influences (this understanding is often described as the ecological model of health behavior).
- Our success is dependent upon engaging leadership and working collaboratively to determine the content of the plan and to implement the plan. At the same time using evidence based strategies and best practices and evaluating effectiveness are equally important.
- All socio-demographic groups will benefit from initiatives proposed by this plan.
- The Plan is a “living document” that must be updated on a regular basis.

## Overarching Goals

- Mobilize public support for the goals and strategies that are included within this Plan.
- Identify gaps and mount a local physical activity education program to educate residents both about why they should and how they can increase physical activity. Integrate the program with other local, state, and national health promotion and disease prevention education campaigns
- Promote and publicly recognize local entities that significantly support the concepts and implementation of the Plan.

## Measures of Success

A positive change in the following measures will occur when physical activity is increased by the implementation of this plan:

1. Local data from the County Health Rankings physical activity portion of the study will increase the amount of leisure-time physical activity reported to a higher percentage of the population of Smith County.
2. Proportion of residents who use active transportation (i.e., walk, bicycle, and public transit) to travel to work, school, and other destinations, as reported through local, state and national sources of physical activity statistics (e.g., BRFSS, community health needs assessments)



## Acknowledgements

The Fit City Tyler Active Living Plan was developed through the direction of the Community Outreach Department of the Northeast Texas Public Health District (NET Health). This county-wide plan was funded through the Texas Healthy Communities Program grant, made accessible to NET Health from the Texas Department of State Health Services. The goal of the Fit City Tyler Active Living Plan designs and implements changes in our community to adopt health practices that will reduce risk factors for chronic diseases. The Fit City Tyler Active Living Plan was first created in March 2017 and was developed into a finalized format in March 2019. A review process will be held every March, so that necessary updates and appropriate revisions can be made by the Fit City Tyler steering committee.

## Special Thanks

We would like to give specific acknowledgment to Dr. Valerie Smith, pediatrician at the St. Paul Children's Foundation in Tyler. Their implementation of the Community Centered Healthy Homes (CCHH) model also included the development of an Active Living Plan, and our joint desires to create and implement this document precipitated other partners that contributed information, time, and expertise in the gathering of data, referrals and information to develop the Fit City Tyler Active Living Plan.

***Special appreciation to our partners from the Texas Department of State Health Services: Cecily E. Brea, M.Ed, Program Coordinator Texas Healthy Communities Program, Chronic Disease Branch, and Debra E. Warren, B.S., CHW, CHWI, Regional Program Specialist, Texas Healthy Communities Program, Chronic Disease Branch.***

## Sector Summaries

The Plan is comprised of recommendations that are organized in nine major categories:

### **Business and Industry**

Smith County businesses are critically dependent on the local community to supply employees. Because of their close ties to employees, the business and industry sector is in a position to encourage positive physical activity behavior change in a supportive environment of workplace policies and culture. Hours at a desk, behind a wheel, or at a counter often lead to employee health problems, which lead to absenteeism, short-term disability, reduced quality and quantity of work, excess health care costs, and overall work impairment. Better community health leads to healthy employees and reduces employee and dependent healthcare costs.

### **Education, Afterschool and Early Childhood**

Approximately one-third of children and teens are overweight or obese, and most youth do not meet national physical activity guidelines. The knowledge, skills, and patterns for active living begin in childhood, so it makes sense that schools play a large role in promoting active living. Additionally, preschool years are crucial for obesity prevention due to the timing of the development of fat tissue, a child who is overweight between the ages of 4-6 faces a greater risk of obesity as an adult. Significant evidence strongly supports the correlation between school-based Physical Education (PE) and increasing physical activity rates. A quality PE program can increase student participation in physical activity, increase their physical fitness, and enhance their understanding about the purpose and methods of physical activity. Physical activity such as walking or riding a bike to and from school is another ideal way to get some of that activity at no extra cost to the child or family.

### **Health Care**

Health care is a major industry in Smith County. It is comprised of people and physical resources devoted to providing health-related services to the community. A major component of improving our health and well-being involves the use of health care resources to increase the level of daily physical activity of patients. Traditionally, health care has focused on diagnosing and treating illness and injury. However, as knowledge of the causes of premature disability and death has advanced, the health care sector has increasingly emphasized early intervention and prevention. In their work with individual patients, health care providers have a unique opportunity to encourage adults, children, and families to increase their daily physical activity. This Plan envisions the health care community helping patients change their behaviors by providing clear, consistent messages that inspire, educate, and transform Smith County into a community of healthy residents through an internalized lifestyle of active living.

## **Mass Media**

Mass media includes traditional media, such as TV, newspapers, and magazines, and new media, such as social networking, text messaging, and websites. This sector has the potential to influence behaviors and attitudes among residents, and partnership and collaboration with other sectors creates a unique opportunity for mass media outlets to promote physical activity to benefit the overall health of the community.

## **Parks, Recreation, Fitness and Sports**

Opportunities for regular physical activity are found in our county's public parks, recreation facilities, and sports organizations. Proximity to parks and recreational facilities is associated with higher levels of physical activity. Improving the use and equitable distribution of the locations of these valuable community resources can greatly impact our community's activity level. The Plan envisions availability, enhanced access, quality, security, and programming of our region's existing and future recreational facilities in all neighborhoods.

## **Public Health**

The public health sector includes governmental public health agencies and non-government organizations that contribute to promoting the health of the community. Historically, the primary role of public health is to monitor, protect, and promote the public's health. These functions complement the health care delivery system and community sectors. Given the integral role of physical activity in maintaining good health and preventing disease, the public health sector offers the necessary expertise and resources to develop, promote and drive community-wide physical activity initiatives through policy advancement via coordination with political bodies, the implementation of policies, education, practice, evaluation, and research. The public health sector can support implementation of the Active Living Plan to capitalize on the existing local momentum to improve community health, the widespread desire to address the growing concern about increases in obesity and chronic disease that are preventable with modest lifestyle changes, and existing cross-sector partnerships.

## **Transportation, Land Use, and Community Design**

The way we live is dependent largely on our environment. Environmental and policy decisions regarding transportation, land use, and community design can change the physical activity behaviors of residents on a large scale. Mobility improvements on roadways should consider not only automotive, but bicycle and pedestrian traffic as well. Traditional, conventional urban design in communities supports sedentary behaviors. A healthy community is one that includes multiple transportation choices. Smith County's environment must shift to a design that supports active living of all residents, promoting stair climbing, walking, bicycling, skateboarding, using mass transit, and active recreation.



## Volunteer and Non-Profit

The National Physical Activity Plan notes that supportive environments are essential if people are to have “real and sustainable opportunities for daily physical activity.” Volunteer and non-profit organizations have been recognized for being pliable sources of innovation and social cohesion, and as leaders in identifying emerging ideas, needs, and community opportunities. They have led the development and promotion of physical activity recommendations and programs. The unique characteristics of these organizations will allow them to mobilize public action in the implementation of many aspects of the Plan and programs for physical activity.

## Faith-Based Communities

All sectors of community engagement should become actuated during a broad-based initiative that is intended to reach as many people as possible. In the Smith County area, churches, food pantries, soup kitchens, clergy meetings, gospel-themed events and faith-based communities are active, in that they have a loyal and dedicated base of employees, volunteers, clients and contributors. Persons who are indigent, homeless, without health insurance, without dedicated transportation and without realized options of maintaining their personal health are the populations that are overlooked or not considered within the development of a community-wide effort to have a broad effect on all populations



# Goals and Objectives of the Fit City Tyler Active Living Plan

## **Business and Industry**

### **Goal**

Empower business and industry leaders to recognize their role as positive agents of change to promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles within their respective workplace(s).

### **Objectives**

Promoting low-cost and free physical fitness opportunities through employer/employee website & employee assistance programs, giving particular consideration to efforts targeting mid-level and low-income employees at their business' worksite(s).

Develop and maintain a clearinghouse of resources (e.g., statewide programs, national initiatives, ongoing corporate campaigns) that support the benefits of accumulating light-to-moderate physical activity at the workplace.

Recruit key business and industry leaders to play central roles in influencing their peers, possibly leading to mentor relationships in the business & industry setting.

Identify key policies and activities that employers, both private and public, can implement to promote physical activity through the promotional activities available through Fit City Tyler's "Healthiest Workplaces in Tyler" Award Program.



## **Education, Afterschool and Early Childhood**

### **Goal #1**

Recommend school districts to use health-related fitness data to measure change and improve programs, as well as to funnel “at risk” students into additional school- and community-based physical activity and nutrition programs to promote behavior change.

#### **Objectives**

Work with the school health advisory councils (SHAC’s) to schedule presentations from Fit City Tyler members and/or from NET Health staff, to ensure continued standards for physical activity programming that maximizes physical activity opportunities.

Support school campuses within Smith County to continue and/or initiate integration of the FitnessGram assessment with components of the Presidential Youth Fitness Program and with other voluntarily avenues to obtain free resources that support their administration of the FitnessGram assessments.

### **Goal #2**

Implement family-focused approaches to healthy living that emphasize parental involvement in the elementary schools, afterschool programs, and early childhood programs.

#### **Objectives**

Develop partnerships that enhance promotion through education of age appropriate physical activity guidelines in staff development settings.

Promote the Active Living Plan at early childhood education settings for children ages 0 to 5 years of age, to provide appropriate physical activity opportunities to parents and to employees of these facilities

Enhance partnerships with all Sectors to continue linking youth and their families with physical activity opportunities in schools and communities, before and after school.

## **Health Care**

### **Goal**

Encourage societies of health care professionals to expand their efforts to establish physical inactivity as a treatable and preventable condition.

### **Objectives**

Foster health professionals to be role models for active lifestyles for their clients and the community, linking individuals to identify opportunities to promote a healthy community and wellness lifestyle.

Engage health care providers in promoting physical activity through clinical practice and community outreach, and providing referral to community resources/programs for inactive individuals.



## **Mass Media**

### **Goal #1**

Coordinate the distribution of a sustained mass media campaign to promote physical activity and healthy lifestyle habits throughout the community.

#### **Objectives**

Develop a clear and standardized local “brand” that promotes the benefits of physical activity, and the ease of accumulating light-to-moderate exercise every day.

Update and publicize information links to increase awareness and/or knowledge of physical activity opportunities.

### **Goal #2**

Serve as a platform to increase citizen awareness and engagement in physical activity by showcasing physical activity opportunities across the Tyler area and throughout Smith County.

#### **Objectives**

Engage traditional and new media (English and Spanish language media; electronic, print, and web-based media channels) to reach diverse audiences in the Smith County.

Promote and incorporate the “Fit City Tyler Active Living Plan” at all local, city and county web-sites, and with-in other appropriate Sector online and physical sites.

Encourage writers and producers to include messages and stories related to physical activity and health that are consistent with the local brand.

## **Parks and Recreation, Fitness, and Sports**

### **Goal #1**

Promote the availability of all public and private programs and facilities that provide easy access to safe and affordable physical activity opportunities.

#### **Objectives**

Increase the presence of signage to showcase specific activities (e.g., mileage markers, trailheads of walking and biking trail systems) at city parks, at recreational facilities, and in communities with few-to-no resources for promoting physical activity.

Utilize existing community partnerships to educate the community about the established physical activity opportunities available, and advertise the opportunities for specific physical activity options that are available at each location.

### **Goal #2**

Establish and utilize partnerships with fitness instructors and local gyms to provide fitness programs in recreation facilities and parks.

#### **Objectives**

Create a monthly program focused on family fitness that incorporate games and activities at wellness fairs and recognizable community events.

Develop at least one comprehensive community fitness challenge with local parks or other facility/organizations, focusing on weight loss, walking, and/or overall fitness.

## **Public Health**

### **Goal #1**

Utilize mass media and inter-agency relationships to provide education about physical activity and inactivity levels within targeted zip codes and cities within Smith County.

#### **Objectives**

Mine available data, scholarly presentations and evidence-based programming that has been implemented and/or is being planned by our Tyler-area academic institutions, professional societies, and local organizations that have available training opportunities.

Develop and implement a communications campaign to encourage healthy lifestyle choices, to include youth and underserved populations, and provide opportunities for recognition through existing communication platforms available to community members.

Utilize established resources for referral and wellness programming for community health opportunities and to increase knowledge of physical activity guidelines.

### **Goal #2**

Identify and develop local experts who can endorse recommendations of proper dosage and variability of physical activity within governmental and non-governmental public health organizations, as part of an integrated and coordinated approach to chronic disease prevention.

#### **Objectives**

Recruit and implement educational tools that are important to promoting physical activity, including resources that address the burden of disease due to inactivity and the implementation of evidence-based interventions.

Expand our knowledge of physical activity, inactivity, and fitness levels throughout the community, including youth and underserved populations, in order to encourage local health-care agencies and community coalitions to share information on evidence-based policies related to physical activity.



## **Transportation, Land Use, and Community Design**

### **Goal #1**

Increase collaboration and accessibility to essential community destinations and areas for physical activity, and improve active transportation utilization of walking and biking areas.

#### **Objectives**

Promote “people first” community design initiatives that will provide safe access for all users (pedestrians, bicycles, transient residents, skaters, etc.), such as the Active Tyler initiative being led by the Tyler Metropolitan Planning Organization (Tyler MPO).

Support municipal policies that enhance street amenities and facility standards related to pedestrian, bicycle and transit.

### **Goal #2**

Increase public awareness of projects that will create safe and accessible active transportation networks, including roadways with pedestrian, bicycle, and transit accommodation, and the existing networks of greenways, trails, and multi-use pathways.

#### **Objectives**

Enhance signage and visibility of transit services and stops, as well as to ensure safe walking and bicycling routes to transit stops.

Broadly disperse content developed by professional organizations who have implemented programs to educate the public on the benefits of the recommended strategies and policies.





## **Volunteer and Non-Profit**

### **Goal**

Develop an effective referral process for healthy living, wellness, physical activity, and nutrition resources for the employees and volunteers who serve at our local nonprofit organizations.

### **Objectives**

Assist in the implementation of health education programs for non-profit/volunteer organizations and their members to promote active/healthy living and support, chronic disease prevention and management programs in their workplace.

Educate other non-profits and volunteer organizations about the Plan and how they can promote healthy practices within their ongoing community events.

Utilize existing resources from the member organizations within Fit City Tyler to provide literature and to educate their employers and volunteer base.

## **Faith-Based Communities**

### **Goal**

Facilitate the creation and maintenance of a coordinated communication process that unites churches and faith-based organizations with existing community health resources that can improve the health of their congregations, employees and persons receiving social support within their respective facilities and areas.

### **Objectives**

Educate churches and related faith-based organizations how to integrate healthy living habits as a part of their meal offerings and recreational activities for their members.

Assist in the promotion of health fairs and outreach programs organized by faith-based organizations in the Tyler area

Utilize existing resources from the member organizations within Fit City Tyler to provide chronic disease prevention and management programs for their congregation members, volunteers, employees and service-recipients at our local churches and faith-based organizations.

## Conclusion

The Fit City Tyler Active Living Plan provides cross-sector strategies and tactics to ensure access to safe, healthy places and programs to support physical activity and active living, ultimately decreasing premature illness and death and improving quality of life. This plan helps leaders to incorporate health considerations into decision-making and enhances collaboration and use of best practices to meet activity-related goals.

This Plan presents strategies and measures that are aligned with community vision. By embracing these strategies and approaches and their rigorous implementation, Smith County can be transformed into a vibrant and healthy community through active living.

The Fit City Tyler Active Living Plan serves as a roadmap to engage the potential partners listed in this plan along with community leaders and stakeholders to define measurable outcomes and annual objectives to advance the strategies within the plan.



# Appendices

- I. Why Promote Active Living?
- II. What is the Fit City Tyler Active Living Plan?
- III. Using the *Active Living Plan*

## Appendix I

### Why promote active living?

The leading causes of death and disability in the United States, include obesity, heart disease, stroke, some cancers, and diabetes, and are all *chronic* and *preventable*. Experts agree that the *actual* leading causes of death are three specific lifestyle behaviors: tobacco use, poor nutrition, and *insufficient physical activity*. Improving all three of these behaviors is crucial for avoiding premature death and chronic disease. This plan focuses on increasing physical activity.

Most Americans do not meet the daily physical activity recommendation to maintain good health, and national surveys indicate the trend is not improving. Only one in four adults meets the national physical activity recommendations of accumulating at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity, and one in four adults do not engage in any physical activity at all. These statistics are consistent with physical activity behaviors of Smith County residents, as recent data from County Health Rankings reports that 28% of adults engaged in no leisure time physical activity at all, and that 30% of Smith County residents are overweight and obese.

Physical inactivity and chronic disease prevalence are critical public health threats due to associated health consequences and the economic burden to society, not only from increased health care costs, but also reduced productive years due to disability and illness.

While some strategies are being developed and implemented at the national level, communities must identify local strategies that will improve the health and enhance the quality of life of local residents.

## Appendix II

### What is the Fit City Tyler Active Living Plan?

The Active Living Plan presents strategies to increase physical activity to promote health and well-being among all segments of the Smith County population. If major improvements in health are expected in Smith County, physical activity promotion **must** be a health priority.

Existing national, state, and local resources contributed to the organization, content, and format of this plan, including *Healthy People 2020*, the *National Physical Activity Plan*, the *2018 City of Tyler Community Report* and the active living plans developed by several contractors within the *Texas Healthy Communities Program*. The Plan provides a community-driven foundation that community leaders can utilize to support policy, environmental, and system changes to increase the likelihood that people in the community will become more physically active, ultimately benefiting the health of Smith County residents. The Plan serves as a roadmap to articulate priorities and guiding how resources are allocated to promote active living for all residents.

The Plan includes specific recommendations organized into nine community sectors:

- Business & Industry
- Education
- Healthcare
- Mass Media
- Parks, Recreation, Fitness, & Sports
- Public Health
- Transportation, Land-use, & Community Design
- Volunteer & Non-Profit
- Faith-Based Communities

Each sector presents strategies to promote physical activity and outlines more specific tactics that community organizations, agencies, leaders, and residents can use to address the strategies.

## Appendix III

### Using the *Active Living Plan*

The Active Living Plan localizes and prioritizes the strategies developed by community partners and is designed to help local institutions and organizations from all sectors of Smith County develop and promote policies, environments, systems, and programs that support active living. Everyone plays a role in the implementation of this plan. This plan can be used to guide decisions about resource allocation, program development, and advocacy.

### Plan of Action

In order to successfully implement The Plan, its policy recommendations are suggested to be presented to the community and local officials, and to become reviewed on a biannual basis by members of the Fit City Tyler steering committee, who represent major businesses, municipal organizations, nonprofits and specific sectors the City of Tyler and within Smith County.

### Fit City Tyler Steering Committee

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