



# NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY OF LIFE STUDY

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In 2002, the National Institutes of Health funded a study of how neighborhood “walkability” is related to physical activity and quality of life. “Walkability” refers to the availability of nearby destinations within walking distance and direct routes to those destinations.

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This is a report summarizing the key results. We will be sharing this information with officials in your area so they can learn how to help create neighborhoods favorable to active living. We thank all participants who contributed to the success of this study. We hope this summary of results is interesting and useful.

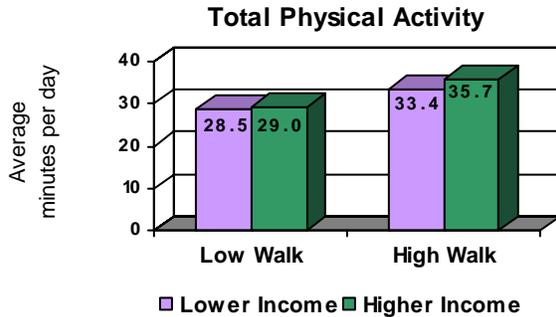
*Key findings:*

- 2199 people participated in the study (1287 in King County, WA and 912 in the Baltimore, MD region)
- People living in high-walkable neighborhoods did substantially more physical activity than those in low-walkable neighborhoods.
- People living in high-walkable neighborhoods were less likely to be overweight or obese than those in low-walkable neighborhoods.
- We did not find differences in quality of life by “walkability” of neighborhood.

*“It’s very easy to walk places in our neighborhood and to simply get out and about’. That’s a large reason why we moved here. There is an energy that we really enjoy and we simply love where we live.*

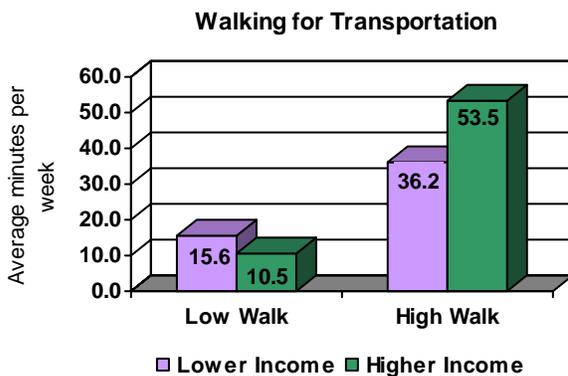
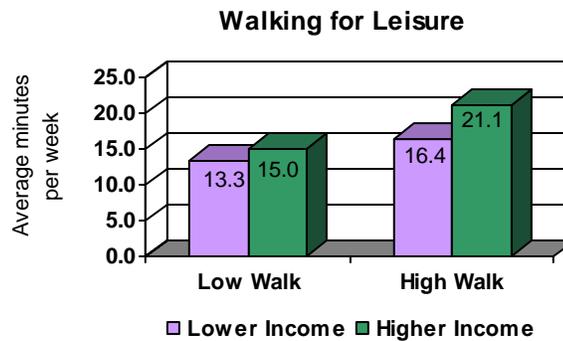
*- Sarah, Baltimore, MD*

Neighborhoods were selected to represent high and low walkability and higher and lower income areas of Seattle and King County, WA and the Baltimore, MD region. Income was based on Census data.



We found that the minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity (from the movement meter) were higher for those in high vs. low walkable neighborhoods. Over one week, the differences are about 35-45 minutes.

Walking for leisure (as reported on the survey) was higher for those in high vs. low walkable neighborhoods.



Walking for transportation purposes (as reported on the survey) was also higher for those in high vs. low walkable neighborhoods.

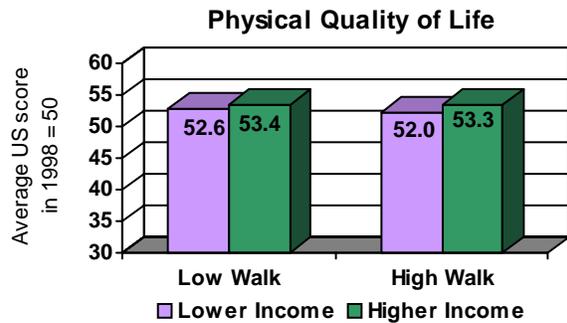
Walking for both transportation and leisure contribute to overall higher physical activity among people living in walkable neighborhoods. Additional analyses are needed to explore trends for less impact of walkability among lower income adults.

*“In my neighborhood I can walk to a grocery store, theatre, coffee house and a couple of restaurants all within 20 minutes”*

*-Rockland, Kirkland, WA*

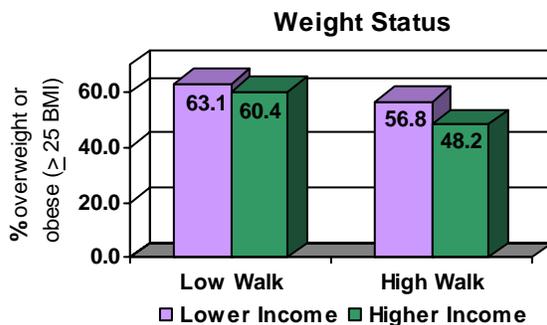
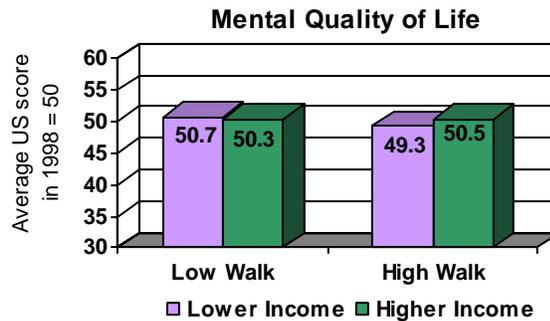
*“Being physically active is easy to incorporate in my everyday activities, from walking to the grocery store to riding my bike to the swimming pool to taking the bus or METRO to work.”*

*-Mary, Rockville, MD*



We did not find significant differences in physical quality of life for people living in high vs. low walkable neighborhoods. But there are significant income differences. People living in lower income neighborhoods reported a lower physical quality of life.

We did not find significant differences in mental quality of life for people in high vs. low walkable neighborhoods.



We found that the percent of overweight or obese individuals was lower for those in high vs. low walkable neighborhoods. Overweight and obesity were more common in lower income neighborhoods.

\* All analyses were adjusted for gender, age, education, # motor vehicles/adult in household, region, marital status, number of people in household, and length of time at current address. In addition, neighborhood clustering was adjusted for in all models. For physical activity and overweight/obesity status, time was adjusted for, to account for repeated measures.

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Let us know what you think about these findings and how you may want to use them. Email comments to Kelli Cain at [kcain@projects.sdsu.edu](mailto:kcain@projects.sdsu.edu).