



# The Active Communities Tool Assessment Modules

The Active Communities Tool (ACT): An Action Planning Guide and Assessment Modules to Improve Community Built Environments to Promote Physical Activity



<https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/community-strategies/active-communities-tool>





# MODULE 1:

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## STREET DESIGN AND CONNECTIVITY

- » This module assesses the plans, policies, and resources your community uses to design the physical roadway network, for example, regulations or zoning codes, street connectivity, and plans for existing and future streets constructed by the community and through future development.
- » Who should be involved – technical experts with knowledge of the community’s zoning policies and codes and subdivision regulations; specifically experts in planning, transportation, and public works.
- » Approximate time to complete – 30 minutes.

Term	Definition
Arterial roads	High-capacity roads that primarily deliver traffic from collector roads to freeways/ expressways and between urban centers.
Collector roads	Roads that gather traffic from local roads and deliver traffic to arterial roads.
Comprehensive Plan	The adopted official statement of a governing body of a local government that sets forth (in words, maps, illustrations, and/or tables) goals, policies, and guidelines intended to direct the present and future physical, social, and economic development that occurs within its planning jurisdiction and that includes a unified physical design for the public and private development of land.
High-stress and low-stress streets	Refers to the level of stress the street segment imposes on cyclists. The classification is based on traffic characteristics such as road width, traffic speed, the presence of a parking lane, and whether bikes are in mixed traffic, in bike lanes, or on segregated paths.
Local ordinances	Policies passed by local governing authorities, such as a city council or board of commissioners. They include, but are not limited to zoning regulations, subdivision ordinances, and street design guidelines.
Major and collector street plan	A comprehensive plan and implementation tool for guiding public and private investments in the major streets (Arterial roads and Collector roads) that make up the backbone of the city’s transportation system.
Performance measures for connectivity	Quantitative metrics used to evaluate active transportation projects and/or the transportation system. Examples include percent of network constructed, intersection density, or facility miles.
Shared-use paths	Paths that include paved or unpaved accommodations for both pedestrians and bicyclists for transportation or for recreation.
Street connectivity	Refers to the directness of links and the density of connections in a street network. A well-connected network has many short links, numerous intersections, and minimal dead ends.

Please answer these questions based on the community / municipality selected.

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## PLANS

The **Plans** referred to in this module are those written and adopted by a local authority. Plans can stand alone (topic specific) or be part of a Comprehensive Plan (e.g., Master Plan, General Plan). “Plan” is capitalized to indicate it is adopted by a local authority. These can often be accessed on local government websites or by contacting planning officials within the community or regional transportation/ planning agency (e.g., Metropolitan Planning Organization).

### 1.1 Does the community have a Plan that identifies high- and low-stress streets?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable
- Don't know

### 1.2 Does the community have a Plan that prioritizes higher street connectivity in neighborhoods with high stress streets?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable
- Don't know

### 1.3 Does the community have a Major and Collector Street Plan—either as a stand-alone document or as part of a Transportation System Plan or Comprehensive Plan—which describes existing and future streets constructed by the community and through future development?

- Yes, and it is 0–<5 years old
- Yes, and it is 5–<10 years old
- Yes, and it is 10 years or older
- No → skip to #1.8
- Not applicable → skip to #1.8
- Don't know → skip to #1.8

### 1.4 In the past year, about how often was this Plan consulted by groups or individuals, such as elected officials, the planning department or local developers when making relevant decisions?

- Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Not applicable
- Don't know

**1.5 Does this Plan have street connectivity goals?**

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable
- Don't know

**1.6 In the past year, were any of the street connectivity goals or priorities specified in this Plan accomplished?**

- Yes → Describe: \_\_\_\_\_
- No
- Not applicable
- Don't know

**1.7 Does the Plan consider modes of transportation other than automobiles (such as walking, biking, public transportation)?**

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable
- Don't know

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**POLICIES**

The **Policies** referred to in the following questions are those written and adopted by a local authority. Policies include local ordinances which are passed by local governing authorities. Policy documents can often be accessed on local government websites or by contacting local government administrators or planning officials within the community.

This section includes questions about the community's residential or commercial regulations and/or zoning codes, which includes land use codes, zoning codes/regulations, subdivision ordinance/regulations, overlay district regulations, and special use district regulations.

**1.8 Community residential or commercial regulations or zoning codes**

<b>Does the community's residential or commercial regulations or zoning codes:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
a. Set maximum block lengths or block size requirements?				
b. Set connectivity index standards?				
c. Require stub-outs to ensure connectivity to future developments?				
d. Encourage alleyways?				
e. Allow for or encourage greenways or paths alongside creeks/streams?				
f. Allow for or encourage greenways or paths alongside utility easements?				

**1.9 Community subdivision regulations or zoning codes**

Does the community's subdivision regulations or zoning codes:	Yes	No	Not applicable	Don't know
a. Discourage cul-de-sacs?				
b. Regulate cul-de-sac length and size?				

**1.10 Community subdivision regulations or zoning codes**

Does the community's subdivision regulations or zoning codes require or suggest:	Require	Suggest	No	Not applicable	Don't know
a. Pedestrian and street connectivity between neighborhoods?					
b. Cul-de-sacs connect to other destinations via multi-use paths or other pedestrian/bicycle easements?					
c. Residential developments connect by sidewalks or pathways to other neighborhoods?					
d. Residential developments connect by sidewalks or pathways to schools or other community destinations?					

**1.11 Community subdivision regulations**

Does the community's subdivision regulations require or suggest that all newly constructed or redeveloped streets connect to adjacent neighborhoods and community amenities via:	Require	Suggest	No	Not applicable	Don't know
a. Streets in residential areas?					
b. Streets in commercial areas?					
c. Sidewalks or shared-use paths in residential areas?					
d. Sidewalks or shared-use paths in commercial areas?					

**1.12 Does the community have performance measures for street connectivity?**

Yes → Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

No

Not applicable

Don't know

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## RESOURCES

This question asks about resources to support plans, policies, and built environments that impact physical activity.

### 1.13 Does the community actively invest transportation funding to improve street connectivity?

Yes → Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

No

Not applicable

Don't know





US Department of Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion  
Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, & Obesity