

Translating Research into Policy: New York City's Executive Order on Active Design

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What is Active Design?

- Urban design strategies for creating neighborhoods, streets, and outdoor spaces that encourage walking, bicycling, active transportation, and recreation
- Building design strategies for promoting active lifestyles through the placement and design of stairs, elevators, and indoor and outdoor spaces

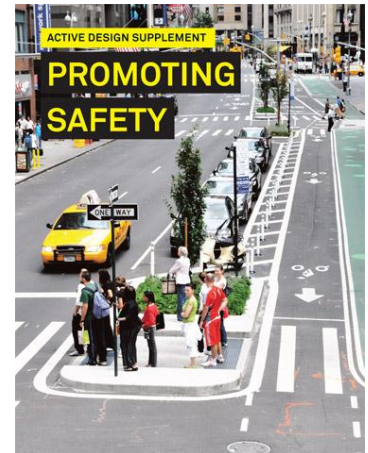


Background and Purpose

- **Evidence:** active design strategies can increase physical activity; environmental and policy change interventions are an evidence-based approach
- **Mechanism:** Through executive action, local government can act as an agent of change by incorporating active design into its own practices
- **Reach:** NYC government designs, builds, renovates, and maintains neighborhoods, streets, parks, and buildings used by millions

Building Support for Active Design in NYC

- Annual Fit City conferences
- Development of the Active Design Guidelines (ADGs)
- LEED Pilot Credit for Active Occupants
- Trainings for design community on the ADGs
- Voluntary adoption of ADG strategies by many City agencies



Process

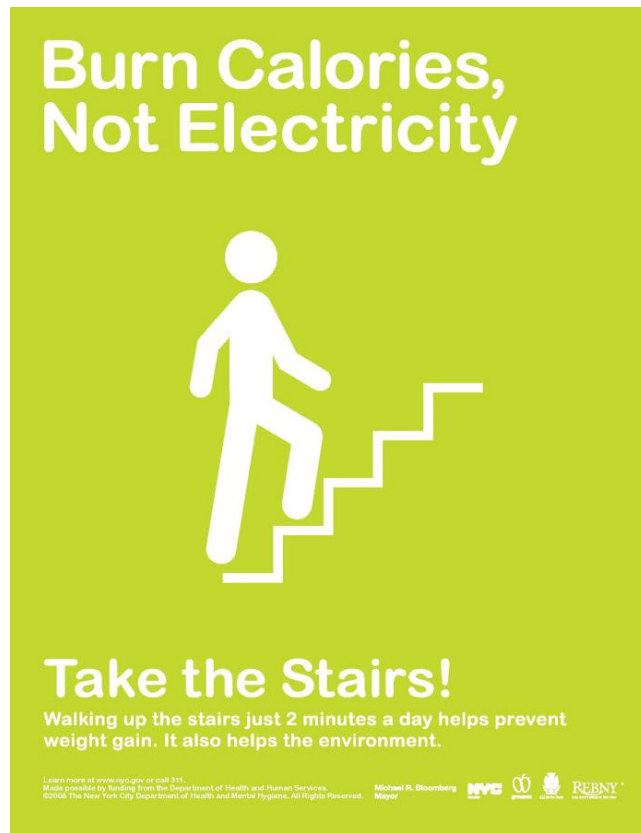
- Multi-agency Obesity Task Force convened by Mayor in 2012; one of the recommendations included:
 - The City should lead by example and evaluate all City construction projects for active design opportunities
- City Hall, along with the Departments of Buildings, Design + Construction, Citywide Administrative Services, Transportation and Health led the drafting process
- All City agencies vetted the policy language

Executive Order Summary

- Section 1 requires City agencies to:
 - Review new construction and major renovation projects for inclusion of active design opportunities
 - Consider strategies from the ADGs & the Department of Transportation’s Street Design Manual
 - Where relevant, specify use of active design in procurement solicitation or contracts
 - Provide information on ADGs and active design strategies in relevant guidelines, standards, handbooks
 - Incorporate LEED Credit “Design for Active Occupants” where practicable

Executive Order Summary

- Section 2 requires City agencies to:
 - Assess opportunities to promote stairway use in City-owned and City-leased buildings and portions of buildings, including:
 - Designating a stairway for occupant and public use
 - Installing signage encouraging stairway use



Executive Order Summary

- Section 3
 - Department of Design + Construction, in coordination with Health, will coordinate trainings for Agencies on the ADGs
 - Agencies shall encourage design and construction personnel to participate in trainings on active design
- Section 4
 - Takes effect immediately [June 27, 2013]

Implementation

- City construction and renovation projects are reviewed for inclusion of active living-promoting strategies during the design process
- Both the Departments of Design + Construction and Health have in-house positions dedicated to advance active design within City agencies and with community groups
- Trainings for City agency staff and design professionals are provided by the Center for Active Design
- Requests for proposals include reference to the ADGs where practicable

Lessons Learned

- Input and buy-in from impacted City agencies is crucial for both policy development and implementation
- Trainings for City agency staff and design professionals increase understanding and build demand for active design
- Partnerships with relevant non-profit and professional organizations promote demand for and use of active design strategies

Limitations

- Agencies are required to review projects for active design opportunities and incorporate strategies *where feasible*
- In some cases, results will be slow to see due to lengthy construction timelines
- Long-term health outcomes may be difficult to measure

Next Steps

- Tracking use of ADG strategies in the design of City office buildings and public facilities
- Future policy efforts may be informed by this information

Conclusions

- Executive action can be a tool to integrate health-promoting strategies into city practice
- This is an example of a strategy to increase incorporation of evidence-based active living elements into NYC's built environment
- Part of a comprehensive strategy to reduce chronic disease

Thank you!

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[Executive Order 359](#)