Travel Behavior, Physical Activity, and Obesity: 
A Lansing Regional Context

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In 1996, with the release of the first report by the U.S. Surgeon General on physical activity and health, moderate physical activity was placed firmly on the U.S. public health agenda. The report *Physical Activity and Health* recommended moderate exercise five or more days per week or vigorous exercise three or more times per week, suggesting that Americans can be active simply by incorporating moderate activities like walking, cycling or yard-work into their daily routines. Within this context, urban planners and policy makers have recognized their potential role in shaping the urban built environment as one variable that might facilitate increased moderate physical activity among the American population. The objective of this paper is to make explicit the linkages between specific characteristics in the urban built environment, moderate physical activity (in particular walking and cycling), and public health. The review will take place at three different scales—the region, the city, and the city-block. At all three scales, the main interest is placed on accessibility, with the recognition that if distances are short enough, and there is high connectivity within neighborhoods, people might be encouraged to walk or cycle. While the paper will draw on urban built environment characteristics from a number of Michigan municipalities, much of the focus will be placed on the Lansing regional context.