

Incentive Policies to Encourage Physical Activity and Healthy Eating

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Research Informing Policies & Practices for Healthy Youth

ABOUT BRIDGING THE GAP

Bridging the Gap is a nationally recognized research program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation dedicated to improving the understanding of how policies and environmental factors influence diet, physical activity and obesity among youth, as well as youth tobacco use. Bridging the Gap is a joint project of the University of Illinois at Chicago's Institute for Health Research and Policy and the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research. For more information, visit www.bridgingthegapresearch.org

METHODS

Study Purpose

- 1.) To describe the prevalence of local land use policies that incentivize the development of park and recreation areas, open space, and sidewalks as a means to promote physical activity.
- 2.) Describe the prevalence of local policies that address fresh food financing or incentive policies as a means to promote healthy eating.

Policy Instrument Development

One policy assessment instrument was developed to evaluate the nature and extent to which zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, and other policies specifically incentivize (e.g., financial incentives, in-kind services, expedited permitting processes, or density/development bonuses) the development of parks, recreation areas, open space, and sidewalks/trails as a means of facilitating active living. Another policy instrument was developed to evaluate the nature and extent to which zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, and other policies specifically incentivize the development of food stores or alternative healthy food access points (green carts, produce stands, farmer's markets, produce stores).

- The BTG-COMP Built Environment Local Zoning/Policy Audit Tool
- The BTG-COMP Food Code/Policy Audit Form

Policy Collection and Coding

Land use regulations and other policies were collected in 2011 (via the Internet with telephone follow-up) from 371 county and municipal government jurisdictions surrounding 154 secondary school catchments where a national sample of secondary school students were enrolled. Policies were reviewed by Master's level researchers to identify provisions that incentivize physical activity and healthy eating using detailed coding protocols.

Analysis

Descriptive statistics were computed using STATA v.12.0.

INSTRUMENTS

Built Environment Audit Tool

K. INCENTIVE POLICIES	Source Document	Do the incentives apply for development/maintenance of the any of the following?							
		K1. Incentive Policy Addressed (Marker)		K11. Parks/Rec. Areas*		K12. Open/Green Space*		K13. Sidewalks*	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
a. Does the community have any financing/incentive policies that might encourage active living?		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1. Financial incentives		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. In-kind		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Permitting		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Density/developmental bonuses		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Other, specify:		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

POLICY:	DESCRIPTION:
Ka1. Financial	Financial incentives can be in the form of reduced development fees, tax credits/exemptions, or subsidies that promote active living. An example is reduced fees for developers providing certain features (e.g., open space).
Ka2. In-kind	An in-kind incentive is when a payment is made in the form of goods or services rather than cash. For example, a local government can provide a good or service to developers willing to provide certain features (e.g., the government provides playground equipment to developers who provide recreation space).
Ka3. Permitting	Permitting incentives often speed up or streamline the review process for a project if the development includes a desirable public amenity. For example a community can expedite the review process for developments that meet optional zoning standards of high quality construction and public amenities (such as open space, walkways, or pedestrian circulation systems). Permitting incentives also include allowing a type of development that encourages active living (e.g. permitting a conservation subdivision that requires usable open space).
Ka4. Density/developmental bonuses	Density or development bonuses are the granting of an allowance of additional density in a development in exchange for the provision by of desirable amenities that would promote physical activity (e.g., public open spaces, playgrounds, etc.). For example, one community allows an increased number of dwelling units for an increased amount of common open space: "For each one percent increase in the amount of common open space and improved common open space provided, the number of dwelling units allowed increases by .15."
Ka5. Other, specify	This section is intended to capture incentive policies that encourage active living that do not fit under any of the other categories. For example, one code states: "In order to provide playground area and open space when practicable and upon the approval of the board of appeals the developers may reduce the lot area by 10 percent in order to provide this area." Since this incentive doesn't fall under any of the established categories we will code this under the "other" row as "reduction of lot size".

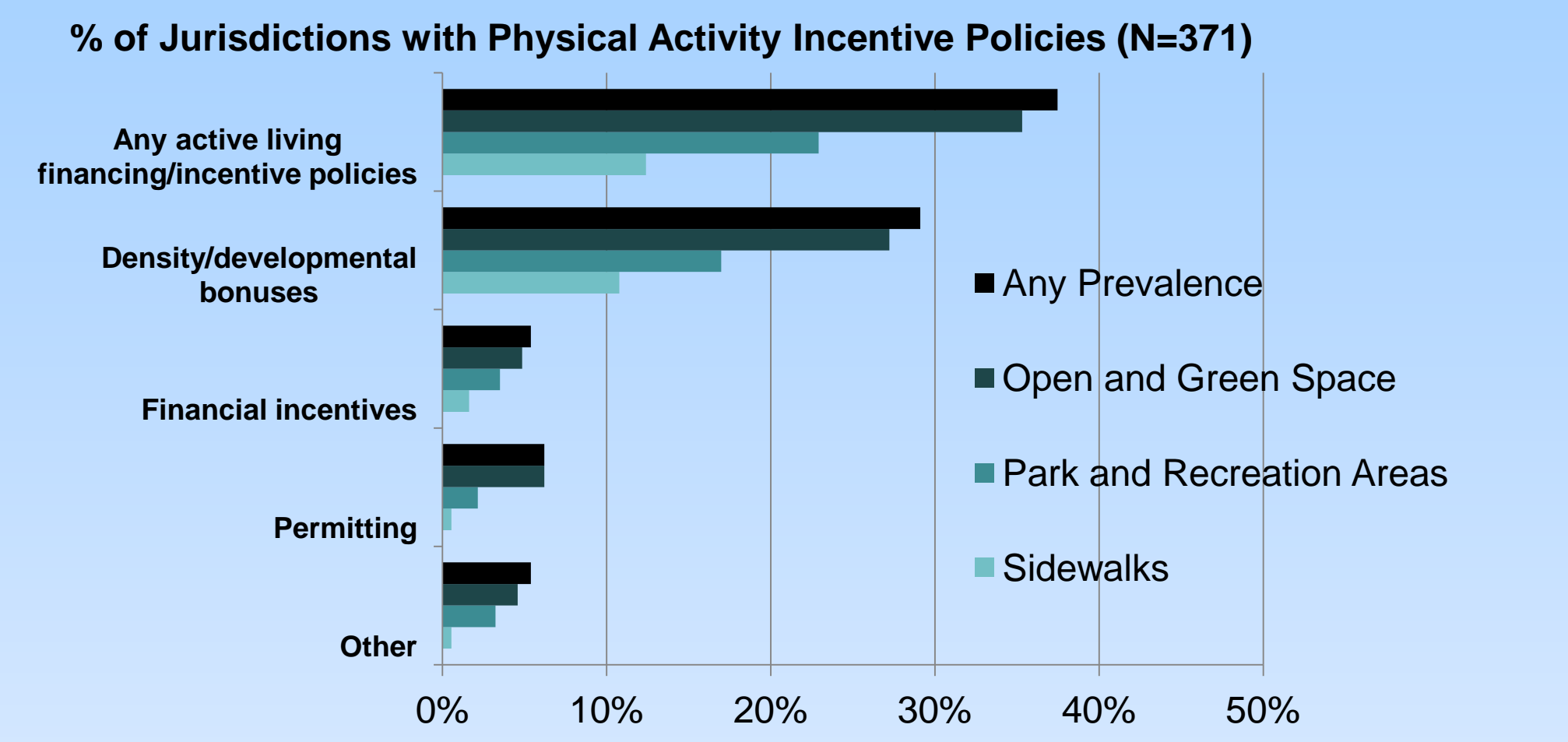
Food Policy Audit Tool

G. INCENTIVE POLICIES	WHERE DO THE INCENTIVES APPLY?					
	G1. Policy		G2. Food Stores (e.g. supermarket, grocery)*		G3. Carts/Farmer's Markets/Produce Stores, etc.*	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
a. Does the community have any fresh food financing/incentive policies?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1. Financial incentives*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. In-kind*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Permitting*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Density/developmental bonuses*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Other, Specify:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

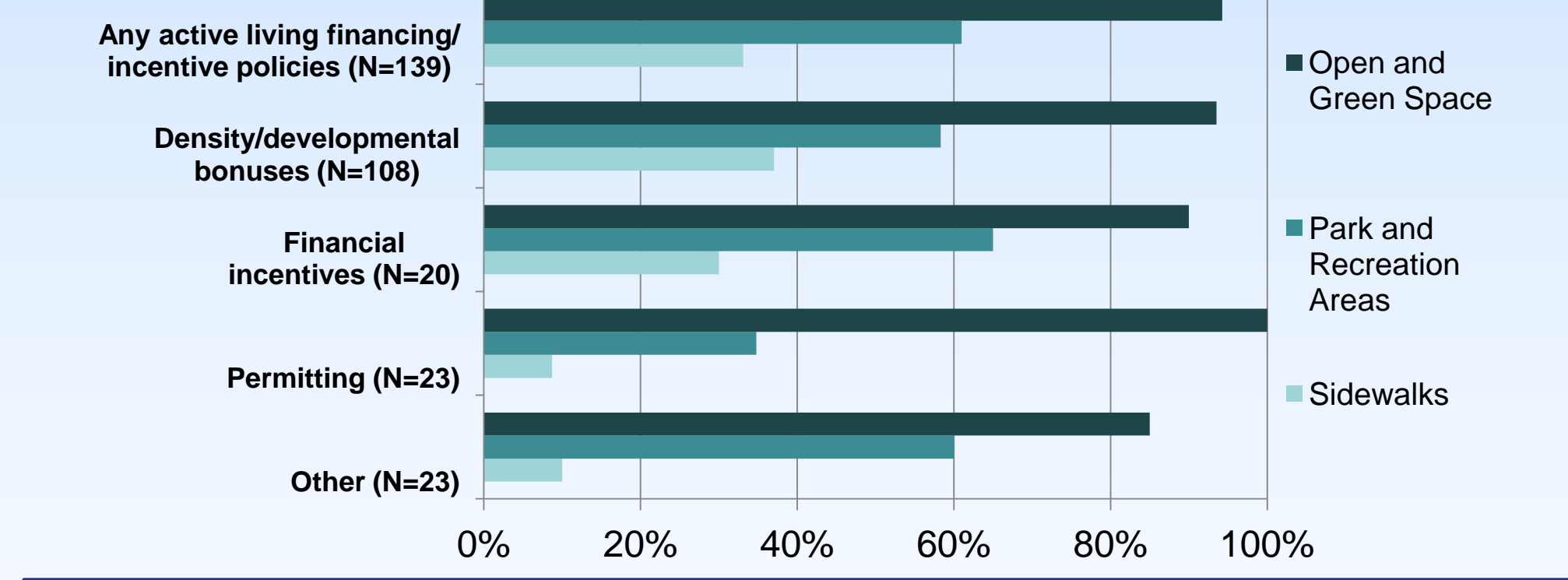
POLICY:	DESCRIPTION:
Ga1. Financial	Financial incentives can be in the form of reduced development fees, tax credits/exemptions, or subsidies that promote fresh food financing. For example, a community can provide various levels of tax reduction for grocery stores that locate or expand in certain areas.
Ga2. In-kind	An in-kind incentive is when a payment is made in the form of goods or services, rather than cash.
Ga3. Permitting	Permitting incentives often speed up or streamline the permitting/review process for a project if the development includes a desirable public amenity. For example, a community can create a policy that allows produce cart vendors in food deserts to be fast-tracked in the permitting process.
Ga4. Density/developmental bonuses	Density or development bonuses are the granting of an allowance of additional density in a development in exchange for the provision by of desirable amenities that would promote healthy eating. For example, New York City stores can be certified as Fresh Food Stores if they devote a certain percentage of their selling area for perishable goods such as produce, dairy products, and fresh meats. Mixed use buildings that contain a Fresh Food Store can have their residential F.A.R. increased by one square foot for each square foot of Fresh Food Store floor area.
Ga5. Other, specify	This section is intended to capture incentive policies that encourage healthy eating that do not fit under any of the other categories.

RESULTS

Physical Activity Incentive Results



Food Policy Incentive Results



Food Policy Incentive Results

- Only 3 jurisdictions incentivized healthy food access.
- 2 jurisdictions incentivized healthy food access through financial incentives.
- 1 jurisdiction incentivized healthy food access through a development bonus.

CONCLUSION

•Data from this study suggests that jurisdictions are more likely to incorporate incentives that facilitate active living environments in their zoning and land use policies than incentives that address healthy food access.
 •The National Physical Activity Plan recommends incentives as a way to increase active transportation and physical activity. Some strategies suggest incentives for projects that create active transportation networks that not only include roadways with pedestrian/bike accommodation but also networks for trails and multi-use pathways.