The Surgeon General is Calling on Parks and Recreational Facilities to Step it Up!

- Physical activity is one of the most important things Americans can do to improve their health.
- Walking is an easy way to start and maintain a physically active lifestyle.
- Walkable communities make it easier for people of all ages and abilities to be active.
- Communities can benefit from safe and convenient places to walk.

Evidence shows that people who have more access to green environments, such as parks, tend to walk more than those with limited access. People who live near exercise facilities such as health clubs also have more physical activity. Local, state, and national parks all offer people access to places to walk. As park and recreation planners, you can influence community health by increasing access to your parks and helping people find ways to walk indoors in inclement weather.

Below are strategies for how you can encourage people to walk more:

Design communities that support safe and easy places for people to walk.

- Locate schools, worksites, parks, recreational facilities, and other places that people regularly use within walkable distance of each other.

Promote community programs and policies that make it safe and easy for residents to walk.

- Provide safe and convenient access for all users to community locations that support walking, such as walking trails, parks, recreational facilities, and college campuses.
- Promote the availability of safe, convenient, and well-designed community locations and programs that promote walking.
- Offer walking programs that address barriers, including physical limitations and safety concerns.
- Set up walking groups, buddy systems, and other forms of social support for walking that provide multiple opportunities to walk each week.

Educate people about the benefits of safe walking and places to walk.

- Provide signs and maps to help people find safe places to walk and provide information on accessibility for people with mobility or other limitations.