Activity-Friendly Communities: 
If you build it, will they walk?

Texas Statewide Pedestrian Safety Forum 
July 12, 2018 
Greg P. Griffin, AICP
More Walking = Safer Walking?

Evidence

The Case of Mueller

Next Steps
Evidence from California (& elsewhere)

Evidence from Montreal

• Major arterials are found to have a double negative effect on pedestrian safety.

More Evidence

• …the most compelling countermeasure for pedestrian and bicyclist safety is simply more people out walking and bicycling, which can be viewed as another positive effect of compact development patterns.

• So while there might be more injuries, there are fewer per capita.

Critique

• At present, “Safety in Numbers” reflects an unsubstantiated inference from the non-linear statistical association between pedestrian volumes and rates or numbers of pedestrian collisions.

• In the long run, it is very plausible that increased participation in walking and bicycling, regardless of short-term safety impacts, leads to a stronger political constituency for environmental safety countermeasures and more consistent enforcement of dangerous motorist behaviors.

The Case of Mueller
The Case of Mueller

Why is Mueller activity friendly?

Compared to the city average, Mueller has:

- More Places to Go: 2+ times as many commercial destinations
- More Activity Spaces: 5+ times as many miles of trails
- More Bike Friendly: 3 times as many miles of bike lanes
- More Pedestrian Infrastructure: 35% higher in sidewalk coverage

Environmental Amenities:

- Parks: 18% vs. 10%
- Trails: 8.9 vs. 1.5
- Sidewalks: 78% vs. 43%
- Bicycle lanes: 24% vs. 8%
- Transit stops: 33 vs. 14
- Crosswalks: 14.1 vs. 1.9
The Case of Mueller

Does Mueller actually promote healthy living?

Survey responses from a sample of current residents said that after moving to Mueller, they:

- **Improved Overall Health:** 51% reported improved overall health
- **Walked More:** 85% reported more walking in the neighborhood
- **Increased Physical Activity:** 117 more minutes of weekly physical activity
Conclusions

1. More Walking = Safer Walking, local causes debated
2. Safety countermeasures needed
3. Enforcement of dangerous driving critical
4. Survey data at Mueller suggests ↑ walking

Next Steps

1. Change Planning Regs. to Support Walking
2. Design & Retrofit for safety
3. Fund data-driven enforcement
4. Objective data from Mueller underway
Thanks!

• Active Living Austin research supported by grant from National Institutes of Health
• www.ActiveLivingAustin.org
• Principal Investigators: Marcia Ory, PhD, MPH; Chanam Lee, PhD; Xuemei Zhu, PhD
**POPULATION: Representative**  
(Based on 2010 Census & 2005-2009 American Community Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>City of Austin</th>
<th>Mueller</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino (of any race)</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (one race)</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>71%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Under the age of 18</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean household income</td>
<td>$68,659</td>
<td>$66,923</td>
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