



CAROL WERNER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ENVIRONMENTAL AND ENERGY STUDY INSTITUTE
122 C STREET, N.W., SUITE 630 ■ WASHINGTON, D.C., 20001 ■ 202-628-1400 ■ www.eesi.org

BRIEFING NOTICE

Healthy Communities for Young and Old: How Transit and Better Community Design Help The Most Vulnerable Generations

Monday, May 1, 2006
1:30 - 3:00 p.m., 2167 Rayburn House Office Building

The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) invites you to a Congressional briefing on the role of public transportation and better community design in improving the quality of life for the nation's youngest and oldest generations. An increasing proportion of U.S. residents is comprised of the oldest and youngest Americans - with more than a quarter of the population younger than 18, and 12 percent, 65 years and older. Yet the ways in which our communities are designed pose obstacles to the young and old, often hampering their autonomy and diminishing their health. **The high cost of gasoline is a huge threat to our most vulnerable populations - young, old and low-income. More than ever, people need mobility options.** This briefing will explore current trends in the health and well-being of children and seniors and how improved community design and expanded transportation choices could enhance health and quality of life.

Speakers at this briefing will include experts on livable communities, land-use and transportation planning:

- **Dr. Howard Frumkin**, Director, National Center for Environmental Health, Center for Disease Control (CDC). He is the co-author of *Urban Sprawl and Public Health: Designing, Planning, and Building for Healthy Communities*.
- **Richard Gilbert**, Director of Research, Centre for Sustainable Transportation, Toronto, Canada. He is the lead author of a new report *Child and Youth Friendly Land-Use and Transport Guidelines*.
- **Kathryn Lawler**, Director, *Aging Atlanta*, Atlanta Regional Commission

Policy makers, urban planners, and health professionals are evaluating the livability of American communities in terms of the availability of appropriate housing, access to mobility options, ability to "age in place," and integration of exercise into one's daily routine. They urge that transportation and land-use policies should reflect enhanced mobility options, including more accessible public transportation, walking, and bicycling. New programs such as **Safe Routes To Schools** as well as **existing programs supporting transit** in the new transportation law **SAFETEA-LU** will address some of these mobility issues, so **the implementation and funding of these programs is critical.**

Transportation and mobility options have a profound impact on the lifestyles of younger and older Americans. Public transportation can be a critical source of mobility, provide an affordable transportation alternative and contribute to personal independence and quality of life for these vulnerable generations. Increased opportunities for walking, biking and use of transit will increase physical activity, helping to address the health concerns of youth and elderly.

- **One-sixth of medical trips by people over 50 were via transit.**
- An AARP survey found that **60 percent of seniors did not have transit** within a 10-minute walk of their home.
- **Almost 64 percent of seniors do not engage in regular physical activity; and 41 percent are overweight.**
- According to CDC, in 1969, **35 percent** of students lived within a mile of school and **87 percent** of those walked to school. Today, **only 20 percent** of students live within a mile of school and only about one-third of them walk.
- The CDC recently reported that between 1999 and 2004, there has been **a significant increase in the prevalence of girls and boys between the ages 2 and 19 who are overweight** (13.8 percent in 1999 to 16.0 percent in 2004 for girls, and 14 percent in 1999 to 18 percent in 2004 for boys).
- Obesity increases risk for heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and other major health problems. In 2000, the U.S. Surgeon General estimated that **the economic cost of obesity was approximately \$117 billion.**
- Almost **a third of the current U.S. health care expenditures is for older adults.** By 2030, **the number of older Americans is expected to double** from 35 million to 70 million. Given this trend, the impact of lack of physical activity on medical care costs is likely to grow as a result of an aging population.

This briefing is open to the public and no reservations are required. Please feel free to forward this notice. For more information, contact Shefali Ranganathan (sranganathan@eesi.org), 202-662-1883.