Walkability vs. Livability: Friends or Foes?

Walkability communities have been increasingly promoted as a priority for facilitating residents’ physical activity and healthy lifestyles while reducing the environmental footprint of land development. But their implications on livability remain unclear. We studied residents relocated to a walkable community in Austin, Texas, and found improved satisfaction with overall livability (“a good place to live” and “to raise children”) and specific neighborhood features. Domains representing features of accessible services, environmental quality, and social cohesion predicted both livability measures; convenient transportation is only significant for “a good place to live.” Improved crime safety, natural sights, walkable destinations, and air quality predicted increases in both livability measures; denser streets only predicted the improvement in “a good place to live.” Distinct outcomes for affordable housing and Hispanic residents highlight the need for more residential equity research.