

DNPAO State Program Highlights

Urban Design and Transportation Policies and Practices



State-Based Programs

The Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Program (NPAO) is a cooperative agreement between the CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity (DNPAO) and 25 state health departments. The program's goal is to prevent and control obesity and other chronic diseases through healthful eating and physical activity.

DNPAO Target Areas

The state programs develop strategies to leverage resources and coordinate statewide efforts with multiple partners to address all of the following DNPAO principal target areas:

- **Increase physical activity**
- Increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables
- Decrease the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages
- Increase breastfeeding initiation, duration, and exclusivity
- Reduce the consumption of high energy dense foods
- Decrease television viewing

Strategies Related to Urban Design and Transportation Policies and Practices

DNPAO developed six guidance documents to provide assistance and direction regarding each of the principal target areas. The guidance document developed to increase physical activity includes the following strategies:

- Communitywide campaigns
- Point-of-decision prompts to encourage use of stairs
- Individually adapted health behavior change programs
- Enhanced school-based physical education
- Social support interventions in community settings
- Creation of or enhanced access to places for physical activity combined with informational outreach activities
- Active transport to school
- **Street-scale urban design and land-use policies**
- **Community-scale urban design and land-use policies**
- **Transportation and travel policies and practices**

Urban Design and Transportation Policies and Practices

Strategies related to urban design and transportation policies and practices that promote physical activity include street-scale urban design and land-use policies and practices; community-scale urban design and land-use policies and practices; and transportation and travel policies and practices. These types of policies and practices can encourage active transportation by facilitating walking, bicycling, and public transportation use.

State Activities Addressing Urban Design and Transportation Policies and Practices

Colorado

Healthy Community Design in Colorado

In collaboration with LiveWell Colorado, Kaiser Permanente, and additional statewide partners, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) co-authored the newly released *Built Environment Policy Blueprint*. This document examines how the built environment may be affecting health outcomes throughout Colorado and describes what communities are doing to increase opportunities for active living and healthy eating. To promote the key recommendations of the *Blueprint*, CDPHE plans to co-facilitate trainings with community partners in six different locations throughout the state. These subsequent trainings, called Planning for Active Community Environments (PLACE), will further promote sustainable partnerships at the local level and provide resources to address improvements to the built environment.

Currently, CDPHE is facilitating the development and release of subsequent reports to clarify and refine strategies detailed in the *Blueprint* to increase active living and healthy eating through policy and environmental strategies that are contextually sensitive to urban, suburban, rural, and resort communities in Colorado.

In addition to these activities related to the *Blueprint*, CDPHE is also fostering new partnerships with organizations throughout the state that shape the role of healthy community design, including the Department of Local Affairs, the Department of Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency, various metropolitan planning organizations, housing coalitions and advocates, and local governments to provide key resources and training that require leadership and sustained promotion of activities in this emerging field.

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Michigan

Bicycling Parking Initiative in Michigan

The Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Program at the Michigan State Health Department provided technical assistance to Ingham County health department and Meridian Township on developing an ordinance on bicycle parking. These efforts began after a health impact assessment was conducted in the community that identified the need to enhance bicycle parking as a strategy to increase access to and promote bicycling and walking.

In February 2010, a zoning amendment was established that now requires bicycle parking to be installed at newly constructed buildings and any buildings adding motor vehicle parking spaces at a ratio of one bicycle parking space per ten motor vehicle parking spaces. This new amendment also sets guidelines for the location, design criteria, and dimensions of the bicycle racks that are installed. As of September 2010, five new bicycle racks have been installed in Meridian Township and the state health department plans to promote this strategy to other Michigan communities.



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Trail Improvements in Michigan

The Michigan Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Program has supported Marquette County by providing technical assistance to the local health department. The Marquette County Active Living Task Force, a collaborative forum to collectively improve the health and fitness of Marquette County residents, developed a trail plan to connect mining sites, museums, downtowns, and transportation centers from Republic to Chocoday Township through the 48-mile Iron Ore Heritage Trail. For the past five years, this trail plan has guided connections throughout the trail system allowing it to be used for recreation and commuting. To further support the development and maintenance of the trail system, seven municipalities in Marquette County have recently formed the Iron Ore Heritage Trail Recreation Authority, which works to raise awareness of the importance of non-motorized trail development.

As a result of these efforts and the development of the trail plan in 2005, an additional 18 miles of trail have been added and many trail enhancements have been completed. The Recreation Authority passed a property tax to support matching requirements to expand the trail.

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Minnesota

Minnesota Active Living Advisory Group

The Minnesota Active Living Advisory Group (ALAG) is a coalition of state agencies and organizations collaborating and coordinating efforts to improve opportunities for active living in Minnesota. The purpose of ALAG is to improve the quality of life of Minnesota residents through improved access to transportation, housing, recreation, education, safety, health, and environmental resources that promote active living.

Some efforts of ALAG include providing technical assistance during implementation of the Statewide Health Improvement Program; supporting the Minnesota Complete Streets Coalition with the development of implementation toolkits; and supporting Community Putting Prevention to Work efforts to establish Safe Routes to School state policies and an infrastructure for SRTS state training.

As a result of the partnership, the Minnesota Department of Health has facilitated and leveraged collaboration opportunities with various state partners, including the following:

- The Minnesota Department of Transportation's Share the Road Campaign, an education campaign striving to eliminate deaths and reduce injuries due to bicycle-motor vehicle collisions.
- The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Green Step City program, a voluntary challenge, assistance, and recognition program to help cities achieve sustainability goals through implementation of selected best practices focused on energy use reduction.
- The Minnesota Department of Education's School Transportation Services.
- The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' Legacy Park and Trail Planning, an effort to create a network of parks and trails to connect all Minnesota residents to outdoor recreational opportunities.
- The Minnesota Department of Human Services' Communities for a Lifetime Initiative, which supports community projects that improve accessibility, provide alternative forms of transportation, increase housing variety and affordability, and encourage flexible and supportive employment opportunities that benefit younger adults, working families, people with temporary or permanent disabilities, and older adults.

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New Hampshire

Trail Improvements in New Hampshire

The New Hampshire State Health Department has provided technical assistance to two local entities on improvements to community trails and the surrounding area.

In 2009, residents in Laconia, New Hampshire, were surveyed on how a nearby trail, the Winnisquam-Opechee-Winnepesaukee (WOW) trail, could be improved to increase bicycling and walking and to increase connectivity among nearby destinations. The survey results revealed that most residents perceived the trail to be unsafe and minor improvements could be made to increase usage.

Using this information, the New Hampshire State Health Department provided technical assistance to the Lakes Region Healthy

Eating, Active Living (HEAL) Initiative to make the needed changes to the WOW trail, including installing a security camera, motion light detectors, benches, and flowers, and painting over graffiti along the trail. In addition, the HEAL Initiative engaged local businesses, community members, and students to create murals on two large buildings visible from the trail. In May 2010, a 1.2 mile paved portion of the trail officially reopened, completing Phase 1 of a 9-mile stretch of trails connecting the towns of Meredith and Belmont.

As a result of these improvements to this portion of the WOW trail, several local businesses have promoted the trail as a venue for walking and bicycling as part of their employee wellness programs. Many students are also now using the trail because of its link between a local school to a nearby library. Future plans for the project include connecting other portions of the trail and also pursuing funding from the New Hampshire Safe Routes to School Program.

In addition, the New Hampshire State Health Department supported the Greater Franklin HEAL Initiative in renovating a community park called Odell Park and the addition of a walking trail to its perimeter. With the support of the state health department, a playground, park benches, and gazebo were installed, the park tennis courts were resurfaced, and the River Walk Trail was built. Future plans for this initiative include improving park signage and planning promotional events to increase residents' awareness of the park renovations.

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New York

Building Multiuse Trails in New York

The New York State Department of Health released a request for applications to fund communities to implement policy, system, and environmental changes that increase opportunities for physical activity and access to healthy foods. Twelve contractors were selected for funding. Specifically, one contractor selected was Parks & Trails New York, a nonprofit organization with a mission to expand, protect, and promote a network of parks, trails, and open spaces throughout New York for use and enjoyment by all residents. This contractor is using their funding to work on the Healthy Trails, Healthy People initiative, which is a collaboration of municipalities to create or expand trails, especially those that could be

used for transportation and recreation. Throughout this process, the Department of Health has provided technical assistance and training to the contractors and other local public health partners working to build multiuse trails.

Through this initiative, Parks & Trails New York reached more than 20,000 residents by helping communities develop more active environments through creating multiuse trails. Parks & Trails New York assisted 27 different communities in 25 counties with their trail development efforts. Twenty-two of these are expected to complete their projects, which will offer 144 miles of new trail for public use.

Complete Streets in Rural New York Communities

In 2009, the New York State Department of Health released a request for applications to fund communities to implement policy, system, and environmental changes that increase opportunities for physical activity and access to healthy foods. Twelve contractors were selected for funding. Specifically, one contractor selected, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties, is working on Complete Streets initiatives in small towns. Throughout this process, the Department of Health has provided technical assistance and training to the contractors and other local public health partners working on Complete Streets efforts that redesign and develop streets to enable safe access for all users—pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities.

Since the project began in 2009, Complete Streets have been established in one county and three towns. Once established in a specific region, a committee is formed to collaborate with local and regional officials to develop a transportation improvement plan.

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North Carolina

Healthy Environments Initiative

Since 2006, the North Carolina Division of Public Health has convened and facilitated the Healthy Environments Collaborative, which comprises the North Carolina Departments of Transportation, Commerce, Environment and Natural Resources, and Health and Human Services, working closely with two University partners. These departments are working towards integrating and influencing interdepartmental efforts to improve the health of North Carolina

residents, the environment, and the economy.

The collaborative has successfully secured funding to complete the following activities related to physical activity: (1) conduct state level policy analysis and define a specific process for promoting physical activity through land use and transportation planning, including policy inventory and gap analysis; (2) partner with local pilot communities to inform state policy efforts, which will involve selecting pilot communities, training local implementation teams and advocates, and engaging community leaders in focus groups around state policy change; and (3) implement marketing and media strategies to promote social change within communities and the administrations that serve them.

Since the establishment of the collaborative, several accomplishments have been reported including the following:

- Developed an inventory of the departments' state policies and analyzed more than 250 policies.
- Conducted more than 1,000 telephone surveys and 12 focus groups to inform key media messages on the initiative.
- Selected and funded 11 community teams to provide a local perspective on state-level policies and to identify gaps.
- Conducted a Health Impact Assessment training for state officials.

Future plans for the collaborative include continued policy analysis to identify key policy conflicts, barriers, and gaps; training for state and local level stakeholders; Health Impact Assessment trainings for municipalities; implementation of a physical activity and public health course for state public health practitioners; and development and implementation of campaigns to inform state-level policy change related to healthy environments.

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Rhode Island

Complete Streets in Rhode Island

In April 2009, the Rhode Island Department of Health collaborated with the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) of Rhode Island to launch a Complete Streets pilot program in Newport, Rhode Island. The initiative began with community action forums and street surveys to assess barriers to walking and bicycling and explore ideas to improve sidewalk and crosswalk accessibility. The street surveys used, the Walkability

Assessment Survey and the Create the Good Sidewalk and Streets Survey, were developed by AARP and conducted by volunteers, community leaders, and state representatives from the Rhode Island Department of Health, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, and Grow Smart Rhode Island, a statewide public interest group representing a broad coalition of partners challenging sprawl and leading the charge for better-managed growth.

The results from the street surveys were analyzed and presented to various members of the community at public workshops, city council meetings, and advisory commission hearings. As a result of conducting these assessments and engaging the community in various phases, a Complete Streets initiative was implemented.

Future plans for the initiative include replicating the assessment and community engagement process in other municipalities throughout the state. The Rhode Island Department of Health, in partnership with AARP and Grow Smart Rhode Island, will select communities appropriate for this initiative based on future road projects identified by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation.

Transportation Reform Project in Rhode Island

The Rhode Island Department of Health partnered with the Coalition for Transportation Choices, a group of local and state-level organizations working towards providing all Rhode Island residents with healthy transportation options, to initiate a Complete Streets initiative. The Sierra Club, a coalition member and an established grassroots environmental organization, conducted several community outreach activities to create awareness of the initiative. This included attending town council meetings to discuss the benefits of Complete Streets and collaborating with city planners to incorporate Complete Streets language into comprehensive plans.

With the support and technical assistance of the Rhode Island Department of Health and the efforts of the Sierra Club and the Coalition for Transportation Choices, the initiative is progressing. As of March 2011, a Complete Streets bill has been drafted and will be presented to state legislators within the next few weeks. The bill establishes a State Complete Streets Council and appoints members within the Division of Planning in the State of Rhode Island Department of Administration to coordinate activities among state departments and agencies engaged in creating and maintaining complete streets.

In addition, collaboration with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation for Complete Streets efforts has initiated. More

specifically, in Providence, the Department of Transportation is assessing how their next significant street paving project can be amended to be the first model Complete Streets project in the state.

Future plans for the initiative include providing support and technical assistance to two towns on Aquidneck Island in their efforts to pass a Complete Streets resolution.

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South Carolina

South Carolina Complete Streets Training Initiative

A team of experts from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, Eat Smart Move More South Carolina, the Palmetto Cycling Coalition, and an organization called Palmetto Public Affairs worked collaboratively to provide training and technical assistance on Complete Streets policy development at the local level. The trainings were conducted in four South Carolina communities including Anderson, Conway, Summerville, and Rock Hill. The purpose of the training was to mobilize these communities to begin the process of creating and proposing a local Complete Streets policy.

Although the project was developed and implemented through a partnership effort, the Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity at the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control was the lead partner. The Division provided the primary funding and subject matter expertise, and developed the evaluation plan.

The four selected communities benefited from the training and consultation. One community has since adopted a local Complete Streets policy at both the city and county level; one community has drafted a Complete Streets policy which will be proposed in the upcoming months; and the remaining two communities are currently in the process of developing a local Complete Streets policy.

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Tennessee

Collaboration Efforts with the Tennessee Metropolitan Planning Organization

The Tennessee Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity program has been closely involved with efforts to support transportation and travel policies and practices. In 2009, the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) completed a regional bicycle and pedestrian study to (1) provide a comprehensive inventory of existing and currently proposed bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the greater Nashville region; (2) increase the region's understanding of how improving walking and bicycling connectivity increases individual mobility, enhances transit options, and promotes active living; (3) serve as a framework for identifying and selecting bicycle and pedestrian projects for the region's long-range transportation plan and transportation improvement plan; and (4) provide guidance for engineering, education, enforcement, encouragement, and evaluation activities to help improve the safety of walking and bicycling.

The Nashville Area MPO engaged local governments, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and the general public while conducting the study to better understand bicycle and pedestrian needs within the region. The study results have provided guidance for policies, programs, and investments intended to maximize opportunities for increased walking and bicycling in Davidson, Rutherford, Sumner, Wilson, and Williamson counties, in addition to the cities of Spring Hill and Springfield.

As a result of this study, the Nashville Area MPO made several recommendations in a study report to improve transportation and travel policies in middle Tennessee including the following:

- Expansion of greenways.
- Development of a regional bicycle network that would provide more than 1,100 miles of on-road bicycle accommodations.
- Creation of sidewalks on all major thoroughfares.
- Enhancements to public education and law enforcement efforts to improve roadway safety conditions for all users.

The Tennessee Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity is a member of the Tennessee Obesity Task Force, for which the Nashville MPO senior planner and project manager serves as the incoming chair. It is anticipated that this collaboration will facilitate the implementation of the study report's recommendations.

In addition to these efforts, Nashville Mayor Karl Dean signed an executive order in

October 2010 to ensure that public streets were built to accommodate all modes of transportation through a formal Complete Streets policy for Davidson County.

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Utah

Active Community Environment Policy Review

In 2009, the Utah Physical Activity, Nutrition, and Obesity Program began to identify what policies were in place that addressed physical activity and nutrition environments at the local level. Previous work had been done to assess physical activity policies in communities by surveying municipal administrators. However, there was some concern that self-report data may not accurately reflect the actual existence of a policy on physical activity, but instead it reported the official's recollection of related policies.

Through collaboration with a local university undergraduate course in urban planning, ordinances for all cities and towns within Utah with a population of more than 5,000 residents were reviewed for any policy that involved six active community environment (ACE) criteria.

These criteria have demonstrated an effect in promoting or discouraging physical activity participation, including sidewalks, bicycle lanes, greenways, recreational facilities, commercial buildings, and shared use paths. Online and paper copies of ordinances throughout the state were reviewed using a survey template by each reviewer.

Results from this policy analysis found that all cities and towns within the sample had at least one of the ACE criteria, primarily in sidewalks and trails. While the larger cities had a high number of ACE criteria, smaller towns were just as likely to create bicycle and pedestrian friendly environments as measured by these six items.

Cooperation with a local university provided the needed manpower to accomplish an inventory of this size and the use of a non-traditional partner provided a skill set that provided greater depth of information than if the review had been conducted internally.

Most importantly, the inventory has established a baseline number from which additional policy changes for physical activity can be made.

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these trainings, Tacoma, Sedro-Wooly, and Spokane have passed a Complete Streets resolution or policy.

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Washington

Active Community Environments in Washington

The Washington State Department of Health is working on a project called Active Community Environments that seeks to improve the health and quality of life for Washington citizens by improving and increasing opportunities to be physically active. The vision for Active Community Environments is to create places where people of all ages and abilities can easily enjoy walking, bicycling, and other forms of recreation. The strategies for realizing this vision include improvements to sidewalks, on-street bicycle facilities, multiuse paths, trails, parks, open spaces, low-cost or free recreational facilities, mixed-use development, and connected grid of streets.

This Washington State Department of Health has collaborated with the State Department of Community Trade and Economic Development, the Department of Transportation, and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations to develop Active Living Task forces in communities throughout the state. Nine counties were selected to establish a taskforce of community members and transportation and health professionals. The goals of the taskforces are to complete the Active Community Environment assessment tool, which is a baseline inventory of active living elements, and identify opportunities for improvement. The taskforces also provide input on activities related to project planning and development; urban planning; and project prioritization for sidewalks, trails, bicycle lanes, and other non-motorized facilities.

As a result of these efforts, the Active Community Environment project has accomplished the following:

- The Spokane Health Department partnered with the Department of Planning and the Department of Transportation to write and adopt a citywide pedestrian plan that includes connectivity in low-income neighborhoods.
- The Tacoma Health Department helped write and adopt the Tacoma Master Mobility Plan which addresses all forms of transportation.
- Three Complete Streets trainings were conducted across the state to policy makers and health, transportation, and public works professionals. As a result of

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Visit the CDC DNPAO Web site to learn more information about our funded state programs:

<http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/stateprograms/index.html>