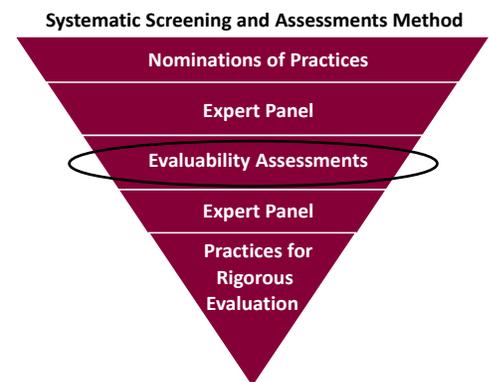


# Active Transportation Spotlight: Boston Bike to Market Program

## Evaluability Assessment Overview

Evaluability Assessments (EAs) are a method to better understand innovative policies and initiatives being implemented in states and communities. A component of the Systematic Screening and Assessment Method (SSA), EAs provide preliminary evidence about which initiatives have the greatest potential for effectiveness and can inform subsequent evaluation activities. EAs are considered a “pre-evaluation” activity to determine whether a more rigorous evaluation is feasible or merited for a particular initiative, often saving costs and time. EAs also benefit the initiative by strengthening implementation and local evaluation.

The Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity (DNPAO) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) used EAs to identify the potential promise of several nutrition, physical activity, and obesity prevention initiatives and their readiness for rigorous evaluation. EAs consist of a site visit to assess implementation, data availability, intended outcomes, and staff capacity to better understand an initiative or policy. Upon completion of the site visit, feedback is provided to the initiative, which includes recommendations for future evaluation.



## What kinds of Evaluability Assessments were conducted?

In 2011, DNPAO used the SSA method to learn of the potential promise of five state- and local level *active transportation initiatives*. *Active transportation initiatives* encourage active transport like walking and bicycling through the promotion of a supportive infrastructure for leisure or commute activities in multiple settings.

## Active Transportation Spotlight: Boston Bike to Market Program

One of the five initiatives selected for the DNPAO Evaluability Assessments (2011) project was a Bike to Market program in Boston, Massachusetts.

The Bike to Market program is a community health program that was established by bicyclist advocates, public health researchers, and city representatives. The program is designed to provide opportunities for community members to use alternative forms of transportation, specifically their bicycles in a safe manner.

The program bridges community interests of bicycling and farmers’ markets by providing free services to children and adults at various farmers’ markets in Boston neighborhoods that lack a bicycle repair shop. These services include: free bicycle repair, bicycle safety equipment (helmets) and education, and distribution of bicycle locks.

## Goals of the Boston Bike to Market Program

The Bike to Market program aims to increase local access to bicycles that are safe for children and adults to ride in their neighborhood; decrease bicycle theft; improve cyclists’ knowledge about how to ride a bicycle safely through Boston streets; and increase community collaboration and civic engagement in street redesigns and other policy changes. By offering these programs at farmers’ markets, the program also aims to increase awareness of healthy food options among residents.

### Active Transportation Initiatives Selected (2011)

- **Boston, Massachusetts Bike to Market Project**
- Missouri Livable Streets Project
- Nashville, Tennessee Regional Transportation Plan
- Sunday Streets in San Francisco, California
- Washtenaw County, Michigan, Building Healthy Communities Initiative

## Program Accomplishments

- Since the program began in 2010, the Bike to Market program has repaired over 1,600 bicycles and expanded the program from 9 to 16 farmers' markets. In 2012 the program aims to repair over 1,200 bicycles at 10 locations, two of which are now held weekly rather than monthly.
- By the end of the 2011 farmers' market season 265 helmets were distributed. In 2012 the program aims to distribute 600 helmets.
- In 2012, based on community input at Bike to Market stands, the Boston Cyclists Union began an effort to promote indoor bike parking at affordable housing developments. This effort is aimed at reducing bike theft and making bicycling an easier habit to maintain in low-income communities.

## Considerations for Similar Initiatives

The following considerations were developed by Boston stakeholders involved in the EA conducted with the Bike to Market program. When planning or implementing a similar active transportation initiative, consider the following:

- **Program Location.** Identify venues that are accessible to your target population to provide program services.
- **Partnerships.** Partner with stakeholders working on both physical activity and nutrition. Consider also working with city leadership to gain political support.
- **Program Sustainability.** Engage volunteers familiar with bicycling to provide expertise in bicycle repair, safety skills, and community needs for safe, accessible cycling areas. Seek diverse funding sources, including in-kind donations, to support the program, which includes funding for bicycle parts, bicycles, helmets, lights, and locks.

## Evaluation Considerations for Similar Initiatives

A rigorous evaluation of similar initiatives should be appropriately conceptualized and implemented. Evaluation activities for a similar program should consider the following evaluation questions:

- How have perceptions of cycling and safety changed in the community?
- How has the use of bicycles changed?
- Has the program influenced the number of bicycle crashes, bicycle safety, and bicycle theft in the community?
- What changes have occurred in the built environment?
- What changes have occurred in physical activity levels among program participants?
- How has the program impacted changes in attendance and purchases at participating farmers' markets?

## Resources

- For more on Boston Bike to Market Program: <http://bostoncyclistsunion.org/campaigns/market/>
- For more on Evaluability Assessments: Leviton, L.C., Khan, L.K., & Dawkins, N. (Eds). (2010). The Systematic Screening and Assessment Method: Finding Innovations Worth Evaluating. *New Directions for Evaluation*, 125.

## Boston Bike to Market Contact Information

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