



# Healthy Community Design

Success Stories from State and Local Leaders



ActiveLiving  
LEADERSHIP

Working with government leaders to  
create and promote active communities

Active Living Leadership is a national project supported by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

**“We talk all the time about the things people need to do to have a healthier lifestyle, but when everything in an environment works against a person, it is that much harder to do. That is why the Foundation sees sprawl as a serious issue.”**

**—Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, M.D., M.B.A.  
President and CEO  
The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**



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# Introduction

With obesity and physical activity the focus of so much public discussion, it is no surprise that we're hearing the term "active living" more and more. So what exactly is "active living," and how do we make sure we get more of it?

Active living is a way of life that integrates physical activity into daily routines. For individuals, the goal is to get a total of at least 30 minutes of activity each day by, for example, walking, bicycling, playing in the park, working in the yard, taking the stairs, or using recreation facilities. For communities, the goal is to provide opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to engage in routine physical activity and to create places and policies that encourage better physical health.

While much attention has been placed on the individual view of active living, more and more initiatives are under way to help create more active, healthy communities. Active Living Leadership is one such project. It is a unique partnership developed to help state and local leaders create and promote places, programs and policies that support and enable active lifestyles. Supported by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Active Living Leadership brings together several national organizations

that provide numerous opportunities for collaboration between appointed and elected officials, executive and judicial functions, and state and local levels of government. The Active Living Leadership partner organizations include: the International City/County Management Association, Local Government Commission, National Association of Counties, National Conference of State Legislatures, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, and United States Conference of Mayors.

This Active Living Leadership report profiles the notable efforts of elected and appointed government leaders who are supporting healthy community design across the nation. Some of these efforts stem from a desire to support economic development, others to decrease environmental degradation or improve residents' quality of life. But all of the policy changes and programming efforts have a positive effect on health because they support community design that provides more opportunities for people to engage in routine physical activity. More importantly, these stories serve as stellar examples of how vision, leadership and dedication can enable healthy community design.





# Active Living – Why do we need it?

In many communities across the United States, it can be a challenge just to go for a walk. Four- and six-lane roadways are filled with speeding cars and trucks. Traffic lights and crosswalks are few and far between. It's nearly impossible for people to walk to do errands or go out to dinner because everyday destinations such as grocery stores, banks, dry cleaners and restaurants are clustered in groups, separated from the road by acres of parking lots. In many cases, bike lanes and walking trails are limited or simply do not exist.

And it's not just adults who can't get around on foot or on bike. It's estimated that less than 16 percent of kids walk or bike to school, compared with about 50 percent just a generation ago (EPA 2003). There are many reasons why. Schools often are located on the outskirts of town, too far away for kids to walk.

Even when the distance is manageable, a lack of sidewalks on the route makes it too dangerous. Fear of crime is another concern.

All of these factors contribute to an unfortunate result: Americans of all ages are getting less physical activity. At the same time, obesity and related chronic diseases are a major public health problem, in part because so many Americans are sedentary.

Since 1991, the incidence of obesity and overweight has increased by 74 percent, and diabetes prevalence has increased by 61 percent (Mokdad et al. 2003). In 2001, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated direct and indirect costs associated with obesity at \$117 billion per year nationwide (U.S. DHHS 2001).

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**Change does not automatically flow from a plan or structure; it has to be driven by people who champion the cause.**

**MacDougall, Wright, and Atkinson (2002)**

## Active Living – How can leaders help?

Creating communities that encourage people to engage in healthy lifestyles is not an easy task. At both the state and local level, it requires collaboration among planners, school boards, community development corporations, housing authorities, public health professionals, public works departments and other agencies. At the local level, it also involves input from residents, community organizations, business leaders and real estate professionals. Government leaders have the unique ability to bring together the right people and encourage collaboration around active living opportunities.

It's also the support and vision of local and state leaders that make the development of healthy communities feasible. Leaders make decisions every day that can create or eliminate opportunities for physical activity. Transportation decisions, for example, often determine whether a sidewalk is built in a new subdivision or whether an old sidewalk is repaired. Parks department policies can ensure the maintenance and safety of open spaces that lure people outside for physical activity. Finally, leaders have the ability to create sustained funding for active living community design efforts and programs.

# Active Living Leadership – The power of collaboration

Healthy community design is best crafted when local, regional, and state elected and appointed officials collaborate. And that collaboration is at the heart of Active Living Leadership. The initiative enables conversations about effective active living policies and strategies across jurisdictions.

The launch of a Kentucky Active Living project provides a great example of how Active Living Leadership supports unique partnerships. Beginning in the fall of 2002, and for months thereafter, the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center), Kentucky League of Cities and an advisory group worked together to introduce active living concepts to Kentucky leaders.

The group's work commenced with a May 2003 statewide Leadership Forum on Active Living. During the Forum, ICMA and the NGA Center provided an opportunity to learn about statewide active living efforts and community programs. More importantly, the forum brought together state legislators, city managers, county judges, administrative department heads and mayors to begin to address healthy community design issues.

ICMA continues to provide technical assistance to communities in Kentucky, and many of the original Kentucky Active Living advisory members continue to lead efforts. The result? Healthy community design activities are flourishing.

For example, the Kentucky League of Cities continues to embrace physical activity and healthy community design. At their 2004 annual convention, they hosted a walking audit, walking tour and presentations on healthy community design. In addition, they are considering developing curricula focused on walkable communities to be included in a state-mandated planning and zoning professional training program.

The Kentucky Active Living project is a testament to the kind of momentum that can be generated by collaborative projects that aim to make real change. Many believe that the project's activities contributed, at least in part, to the creation of a new initiative called "Get Healthy Kentucky!" that was announced by Governor Ernie Fletcher in the summer of 2004. As part of the initiative, the governor released a new report on obesity. Dr. James W. Holsinger, Jr., secretary of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, said, "If stopping this epidemic were as simple as telling people to eat less and exercise more, this problem could have been fixed long ago." He added that it is necessary to address the policies and environmental factors that seem to encourage poor diets and prevent people from being more physically active.

In the fall of 2004, ICMA and the NGA Center began to survey forum participants to identify active living activities that have taken place in the year since the forum. They expect the results of this survey to shine a spotlight on the benefits of collaboration.



# Local Success Stories

At the local level, where land-use and community design decisions are made, local officials, including mayors, council members and county supervisors, are ultimately responsible for zoning, ordinance and other policy development that shape community design. Local officials are also responsible for engaging citizens in the design process. Locally appointed officials, such as city managers and county administrative officers, oversee the daily adherence to codes and ordinances and

can often suggest improvements to existing systems. All of these officials have the unique ability to convene department heads, encourage information flow and cross-disciplinary activities, promote important community issues and support effective programming to increase active living. The following stories provide examples of how community leaders and partnerships can develop active living policies at the local level.





**"We had a very willing developer eager to take a creative approach, enthusiastic elected officials, a supportive community and an urban planner experienced in pedestrian-oriented design. Everyone was on board. We needed that cooperation to make it happen."**

**—Gerald Johnson, Lincoln City Manager**

# Making the Right Connections in Northern California

**Lincoln, California    Population: 24,000**

**Incorporated in 1890, Lincoln is located northeast of Sacramento near the Sierra Foothills in South Placer County. Lincoln was named the fastest-growing city in California, but still retains its small-town atmosphere with broad, tree-lined streets and a downtown plaza.**

What happens when a city manager, a developer and an urban planner begin working together to integrate physical activity into everyday life? For the rapidly growing city of Lincoln, California, it has meant the transformation of auto-oriented, single-use subdivisions into walkable, livable neighborhoods.

## **Joining Forces**

The scene was an Active Living Network summit in November 2002. The goal was to gather together diverse professionals to

examine the relationship between the physical environment and health and to brainstorm what might be done to make communities more activity-friendly. One attendee was Randall Lewis, a developer of large-scale projects in California, who expressed interest in applying active living concepts to upcoming residential developments. He discussed these ideas with Judy Corbett, executive director of the Local Government Commission (LGC), a nonprofit membership organization serving local government officials and an Active Living Leadership partner.

A few months later, with funding from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, LGC began hosting monthly dinner meetings to bring together city and county decision-makers in the seven-county Sacramento region to educate them about ways to create healthy, walkable communities. One of the regular dinner

participants was Gerald Johnson, city manager from Lincoln. And the developer for a large proposed subdivision in the city of Lincoln happened to be Randall Lewis.

“At one of the dinners, I told Judy that we thought the proposed new development was a wonderful opportunity to apply some of the active living concepts in Lincoln,” said Johnson. “And I lamented the fact that the developer didn’t seem interested in that approach because he was submitting plans for a traditional suburban subdivision. There was this pause, and Judy just looked at me for a few seconds. Then she said, ‘You folks are not communicating. We need to get you together.’”

Seizing the opportunity, Corbett organized a meeting that included Johnson, Lewis, Lincoln Mayor Primo Santini and Ken Kay, the principal of an urban planning firm specializing in pedestrian-oriented design. Johnson laid out Lincoln’s wish list for the new development of 2,500 homes. It included specific requests for walking and biking paths; narrow streets that slow traffic and make pedestrians feel more comfortable; easy, direct access to shops and a neighborhood school; and easily accessible open space.

“As it turned out, the developer had been thinking along the same lines,” said Johnson. “Neither of us realized that the other was genuinely interested in applying active living ideas to this project. It took Judy and the Local Government Commission to help us realize that no one involved wanted to wind up with a typical subdivision that practically forces people to get in their cars every time they have to do something.”

## **The Plan**

As the group went through the list, the developer said he was willing to modify his initial proposal to carry out each of the city’s requests. In turn, the urban planner demonstrated how the existing plan might be modified to accomplish each goal. This key

meeting resulted in the creation of a land-use proposal by the developer that incorporates every one of the city’s requests—and more.

The plan features homes organized around neighborhood parks, with windows overlooking the public areas. This design allows residents to easily see the parks, ensuring they will be well-monitored, safe places for children to play. Each home is directly connected via a street or path to a centrally located community center, neighborhood store and school. Even students who live furthest from the school will have to walk only one mile to get there. Running through the development are wetlands and creeks with paths and bridges that traverse them. Homes facing open space will have windows that overlook it, again building in a natural surveillance system to better ensure the safety of children. To slow auto traffic and provide ample tree shading, the streets are narrow, sidewalks are between 6 and 8 feet wide, and streets are lined with either bike lanes or multi-purpose trails.

## **Community Cooperation**

Community design seminars, sponsored by LGC, have been well received by city staff, planning commissioners and city council members. For example, fire officials usually resist any suggestion to narrow streets. But at one seminar in Lincoln, the city’s fire chief, who also serves as chief of police, heard how effective narrow streets are in preventing injuries and accidents and proclaimed, “Narrow ‘em down!”

## **Moving Forward**

The LGC expects this project to represent a turning point in the effort to create active living environments in one of the most rapidly growing areas of the United States. Preliminary financial analyses by the urban planning firm indicate that the Lincoln development will be more profitable for the developer than a traditional, auto-oriented subdivision. And the



enthusiasm and overwhelming support from the city's elected and appointed officials means a faster review and approval process for the project. Construction is expected to begin soon after the approval process is completed.

"We had a very willing developer eager to take a creative approach, enthusiastic elected officials, a supportive community and an urban planner experienced in pedestrian-oriented design," said Johnson. "Everyone was on board. We needed that cooperation to make it happen."

The plan for new development in Lincoln is already stimulating action in other communities. Planners in Shasta County are looking to this project as a possible model. Officials in Yuba County, with 11,000 new units in the pipeline, have met with their developers to tell them the Lincoln model is what they would like to see in county subdivisions. Additionally, they are developing a plan to incorporate design guidelines in the general plan to assure that all new developments in Yuba County are walkable.

As for Lincoln, the new project has led to the development of an active living vision for the entire city. Lincoln plans to grow from a town of 27,000 to a community of 126,000 by 2050. City leaders are crafting a new blueprint for growth that rejects sprawling developments in favor of "villages," communities so self-contained that residents will rarely need to venture out in cars.

Under the proposal, each village will have its own job center, restaurants, shops, parks and school. Streets will be designed in a grid to offer multiple routes. There will be separate pathways for bicycles. A committee is updating the general plan to set aside at least 40% of new land for open space, parks and trails.

"We believe that if enough of these well-planned communities promoting active living gain market success, then that is the way developers will go," said Johnson.





**“The idea is for residents to be able to live, work and play all in this area without ever having to get into a car.”**

**—Bill Scheyer, Erlanger City administrator**

# From Concept to Action in a Kentucky Suburb

**Erlanger, Kentucky    Population: 17,000**

**Erlanger, Kentucky, is home to some of the first suburban subdivisions in Northern Kentucky. Just after the Civil War, in 1887, a company called the Erlanger Land Syndicate filed its plans to subdivide the area into 220 lots. The Cincinnati-Southern railroad line from Richwood to Cincinnati ran through the city, and workers bought homes in the new suburb, located about 8 miles southwest of Cincinnati. Erlanger is home to Toyota's North American manufacturing headquarters.**

How can the chief appointed official of a mid-sized suburban community promote healthier lifestyles and enhance quality of life? For the city administrator of Erlanger, the answer is a multi-faceted approach combining programs, policies, cooperation among departments and partnership with the private sector.

## Joining Forces

Erlanger City Administrator Bill Scheyer has struggled with his weight for a long time and knows how difficult it can be to fit daily

physical activity into a busy schedule. He empathizes with his fellow residents who wrestle with the same challenges. So when the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) first told Scheyer that Kentucky had been selected as a target state for the first year of the Active Living Leadership initiative, he leapt at the chance to get involved.

“I knew obesity was becoming such an epidemic and that Kentucky was unfortunately right in the forefront,” said Scheyer. “Somebody had to mobilize the community and respond.”

Indeed, Kentucky had the fourth highest prevalence of obesity among the 50 states and U.S. territories in 2001, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Obesity prevalence in Kentucky increased from 13% in 1991 to 25% in 2001.

To get things started, ICMA staff met with Scheyer, who has been active in ICMA

leadership since 1996, and with the training director of the Kentucky League of Cities (KLC) to brainstorm about how active living ideas could be introduced in the state. They developed a list of stakeholders and a smaller advisory committee, composed of 20 top leaders in state and local governments and other relevant institutions. The group soon embarked on a series of meetings, culminating in a workshop that would introduce active living concepts to Kentucky leaders across the state.

## The Plan

While the workshop planning was under way, ICMA worked with Scheyer and other city and community leaders to identify efforts the city of Erlanger could initiate in support of active living. Three projects were identified.

**Step Forward.** Step Forward is an initiative to expand and complete the city's sidewalk system. It is part of a larger program to promote community walkability and active living in Erlanger. A survey identified all of the missing sections needed to complete a sidewalk loop throughout the city. The estimated cost for all needed sidewalk and crosswalk improvements is \$1.75 million. "Of course, the city doesn't have that kind of money to complete this kind of project all at once," said Scheyer. "But now that we have the master plan, we can start chipping away at it."

In May, the Erlanger City Council voted to spend \$15,000 for sidewalk and crosswalk improvements on a route near a school. "Without the master plan and the focus on active living issues, this kind of spending request could have sat for several years with no action," said Scheyer.

According to Scheyer, another success factor is having dedicated staffing provided by the Northern Kentucky Health Department (NKHD). Julie Sparks, a senior health planner at NKHD, provides much needed oversight and coordination for the city effort.



**Erlanger Center.** Erlanger Center is a city-led development project planned for an underused parcel of land between highway interchanges. Project plans include a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood with a compact grouping of office, residential, entertainment and retail developments.

"We are aiming for an urban atmosphere in a suburban area," said Scheyer. "We want it to be a true mixed-use development. The idea is for residents to be able to live, work and play all in this area without ever having to get into a car."

**Doe Run Park.** For the Doe Run Park initiative, Erlanger has joined with Drees Homes, a national residential developer, to turn an existing man-made lake and surrounding open space into a community and regional asset. Plans call for linking adjacent communities and developments to a new park via trails and greenways, providing easy opportunities for physical activity. The project goals are to enhance quality of life, provide new infrastructure for healthy lifestyles and demonstrate the private-sector role in contributing to the public good.

Step Forward, Erlanger Center and the Doe Run Park initiatives all have come together during Scheyer's engagement with the Active



Living Leadership initiative in Kentucky. The discussions about infrastructure, land-use and community design helped him to identify strategic linkages among these different projects. “We could have looked at each one as a separate project,” said Scheyer. “But, in fact, we see the network of sidewalk improvements as a way to link the two other projects, so that all three become the framework for a community culture in which everyone gets out walking more.”

### **Community Involvement**

To help get people out and moving, Scheyer designated Kathy Cahill, a Community Development Coordinator, as the city’s active living contact person. Her first job was to organize a walking club and link it to the city’s wellness program, as well as to city parks and recreational activities.

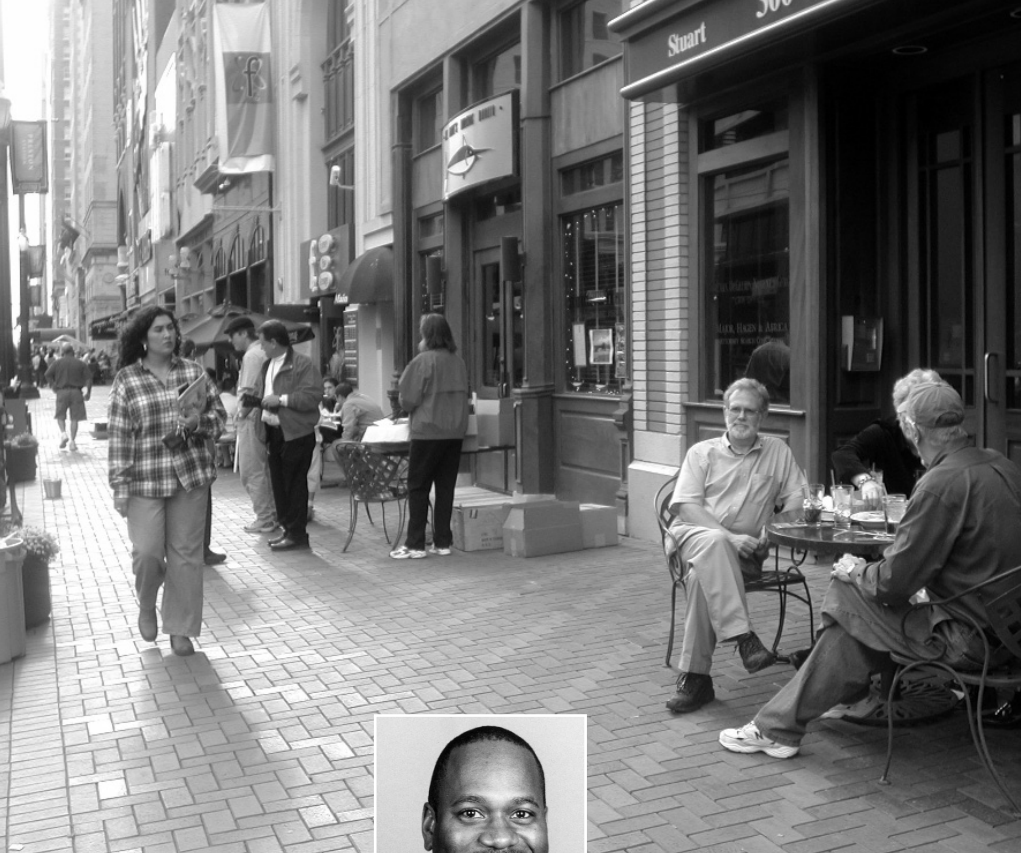
The walking club has been featured in a number of local newspapers, including the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. In the future, Scheyer plans to broaden the idea of a walking club to include a walking-to-school component, at least in the sections of the city where street design and distance permit.

Scheyer also spearheaded a new walkability project to focus on enhancing community culture around active living. The project includes local partners such as the Area Planning Commission, Northern Kentucky University, the Erlanger/Elsmere School System, the Northern

Kentucky Chamber of Commerce and the Erlanger Church Association. Planned activities include expanding the walking club, scheduling additional sidewalk improvements and performing a walkability assessment.

### **Moving Forward**

Scheyer has bigger plans ahead. Since identifying walking to school as a priority issue, he has begun working with researchers on comparing the health of children in the city’s two school systems. The Erlanger/Elsmere system is in the older part of the city, where streets are laid out in a grid and students routinely walk to school because of their close proximity. The Kenton County system draws students from suburban-style communities and requires a full bus system. The research project will track student behavior to document the impact of the environment on students’ transportation behavior. The study is expected to provide data needed to examine healthy community design programming and policies, such as Safe Routes to Schools.



**“The Houston Main Street Coalition project is an outstanding initiative that supports healthy community design and healthy living for all citizens.”**

**—Angelo D. Kyle,  
National Association of  
Counties President**

# Strolling Down Main Street – Houston’s Restoration Story

**Houston, Texas      Population: 2 million**

**Houston is the fourth most populous city in the United States. An estimated 2 million people live within its 617-square-mile city limits, while roughly 5 million people live in the greater metropolitan area. Houston is a sprawling metropolis known for a development tradition that is auto-dependent and averse to public regulation.**

After decades of decline, Houston/Harris County’s 8.5-mile Main Street is being restored to what it once was: the region’s economic center and residential “grand avenue.” Capitalizing on a resurgence of public and private investment, the mayor and county judge teamed up with more than 70 stakeholder groups to form the Main Street Coalition.

## **Joining Forces**

The decline of Houston’s Main Street can be dated to the early 1950s, when a citywide freeway system was constructed. In the boom of the 1990s, however, the corridor experienced a resurgence of interest and investment. Private- and public-sector groups undertook efforts to revitalize and redevelop Main Street and its adjoining areas into community-friendly economic and social centers.

In 1998, these groups came together to form the Main Street Coalition, a broad-based partnership working to develop and implement a unified vision for the corridor. The Coalition hopes to revitalize and transform the Main Street Corridor through the strategic combination of improved land-use and

transportation planning, particularly the development of light rail and strengthened pedestrian connectivity. It will attempt to stimulate and accelerate development, including inner-city residential housing, new businesses and urban beautification. The coalition also will coordinate and leverage public and private investment.

## **Making It Work**

Former Houston Mayor Lee P. Brown and Harris County Judge Robert Eckels supported the formation of the Main Street Coalition. The city and the county each provided \$150,000 in start-up funding for the project and have since acted as grantees for federal and state corridor improvement funds.

The ongoing involvement and leadership of local elected officials has been critical to developing a unified vision for the 8.5-mile corridor that encompasses Houston's downtown, midtown, Museum District, Texas Medical Center and Astrodome Complex.

Because there are no local zoning laws, officials had to take an active role to make sure the project united the growing residential population with public institutions, the business community, sports facilities, medical services and entertainment and cultural venues. This approach opened up the corridor to residents, who can now conduct a growing number of daily activities on foot and bicycle rather than by car.

## **The Plan**

The underlying principles of the Main Street Corridor Master Plan reflect the themes of sustainable design. For instance, the Main Street Corridor will be "anchored" on both ends: to the north by a regional transit hub and to the south by an "exposition park" composed of parks, natural landscaping and walkways on the site of the former Astrodome. There are also smaller mini-parks throughout the corridor

that provide neighborhood-based recreational opportunities and other accessible community gathering points.

Light Rail Transit will serve a crucial role in unifying the corridor. Other services will be provided through a sharp focus on smart development. High-density development will promote mixed uses throughout Main Street. Business and living space will be balanced with an emphasis on the public environment, including streets, squares, esplanades and trees. All of these areas will be complemented by landscaping that humanizes the urban environment, links places together for pedestrians and bikers, increases flood control, and reconnects Houston to its bayous and outlying regions.

## **Community Cooperation**

One of Main Street Corridor's pilot projects, the Third Ward Connectivity Project, demonstrates how all of these concepts come together. The Third Ward, one of Houston's oldest and most populous wards, is a predominantly African-American neighborhood on the southeastern edge of the Main Street Corridor.

Through a \$2.4 million Federal Highway Administration Transportation System and Community Preservation grant, as well as more than \$5 million in local capital improvement funds, the Third Ward Connectivity Project supports transit and pedestrian improvements, including improved street furniture, signage, landscaping and public art on streets.

The Third Ward is a significant area of focus because, in the past, community-enhancement efforts aimed at improving public health often failed to reach African-Americans and other minority groups. With both obesity and diabetes as leading causes of illness and death in the African-American community, it is essential to develop effective ways to reach this and other underserved populations through active living initiatives.



## Moving Forward

Houston's Main Street Corridor is primed for success. Organizers have pulled together the right community players, concentrated on using proven design principles, and most important, put people first in their plans. Patricia Rincon-Kallman, assistant director of planning for the City of Houston, emphasizes that the heart of the Main Street Revitalization Project is the integration of land-use with transportation, emphasizing public spaces and a pedestrian-friendly, attractive environment. This allows citizens to escape their cars and travel safely by foot or bicycle, which is particularly critical for neighborhoods that are highly transit-dependent.

Efforts are unfolding in two stages. The first phase involves design and engineering; the second, construction. The new design features pedestrian-friendly streets and enhanced safety measures. An extensive public participation and outreach effort allowed residents to select the design to assure that it met their needs. As attractiveness, connectivity, mobility and increased safety are coming to the area, so, too, are new opportunities for healthy community revitalization. Soon, Main Street will be Houston's street again.





**"Active Living initiatives are vital both for individuals' physical health and for the region's economic health."**

**—Sandy Spoelstra,  
Marquette City Commissioner**

**"As public officials, I believe we should do everything we can to provide people opportunities to be active in their daily lives."**

**—John Korhonen, Ishpeming City Manager**

# Trails Connect Citizens to Active Living in Marquette County, Michigan

**Marquette County, Michigan    Population: 64,000**

**Marquette County sits along the southern shores of Lake Superior in Michigan's central Upper Peninsula. A rural area covering 1,841 square miles, it is the largest county in the state. County residents and visitors have access to many outdoor recreational activities, including fishing, boating, canoeing, hiking, snowmobiling and two-tracking. In June 2003, Marquette County was named one of 10 All-America Cities by the National Civic League.**

In Marquette County, an old mine shaft being restored as a museum may serve as a trailhead for a potential rail-trail that would connect the cities of Ishpeming and Negaunee. This proposal is just one part of a larger effort by local officials and community organizers to tap into the county's historic and natural assets to develop a regional trail network and create active living communities.

## The Plan

When a United States Senator is in town and asks to see the progress of a specific project, "you know that project has made its mark," Sandy Spoelstra said with a laugh. Spoelstra is City Commissioner and Community

Development Coordinator for the Marquette County Chamber of Commerce Lake Superior Community Partnership (LSCP).

In late May 2004, Senator Carl Levin, D-Mich., while visiting the Upper Peninsula area, requested a brief tour of part of the planned Naquemanon Trails Network (NTN), a system of interconnecting trails spanning Marquette County.

The NTN is the centerpiece of the county's efforts to use regional cooperation to promote active living. The NTN is a proposed 500-mile interconnected land and water trail system that would provide opportunities for non-motorized transportation; preserve community character; provide recreation and exercise opportunities close to home; and link communities to cultural and historical features.

NTN planners envision a community with trails connecting schools, downtowns and neighborhoods throughout the county, maximizing the region's natural assets as a means of promoting economic development, enhanced quality of life and better health. The



organizers want to develop a tourism economy in the region, while also enticing young professionals to relocate to the county and encouraging entrepreneurs to establish businesses there.

John Korhonen, city manager of Ishpeming in Marquette County, has been an enthusiastic supporter of these efforts from the beginning. He believes that promoting active living is essential for creating a healthy community.

"The rates of obesity, diabetes and strokes in this country are just out of control," said Korhonen. "Somebody has to do something. As public officials, I believe we should do everything we can to provide people opportunities to be active in their daily lives."

For Korhonen, personal experience has informed his views on active living policies. "I had a heart attack 15 years ago. So I know that, as clichéd as it might sound, if you don't have your health, you have nothing. I want to help people in our community avoid conditions like heart disease and diabetes."

## **Community Cooperation**

The Marquette County Chamber of Commerce has played a leading role in the active living initiative through LSCP, the regional partnership focused on improving quality of life and fostering economic development through regional public-private partnerships. As the community development coordinator, Spoelstra provides outreach to local leaders and works to build regional cooperation among the county's municipalities.

Combining her role at LSCP with her experience working on active living issues, and with support from a variety of local officials, Spoelstra has made significant progress in fostering community cooperation. The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) assisted Spoelstra in these efforts in May 2003, when it funded her trip to the Designing Healthy Livable Communities conference in East Lansing, Michigan.

At the conference, Marquette received a Promoting Active Communities award from the

Michigan Governor's Council on Physical Fitness in recognition of the community's ongoing efforts to promote active living. Spoelstra accepted the award from Governor Jennifer Granholm, participated in the conference and shared healthy community design success stories with other meeting attendees.

## **Moving Forward**

Following the conference, Spoelstra helped to incorporate active living issues into the agenda for the annual meeting of the Wellness Council of the Upper Peninsula in October 2003.

Working together, the Wellness Council and ICMA invited Nancy Krupiarz, Michigan state director of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, to speak to local officials and community leaders about active living issues at the meeting.

Progress in the region has continued in recent months. Spoelstra, county officials and community groups have been working on an innovative, comprehensive corridor access management plan with the Michigan Department of Transportation to promote non-motorized transportation along a major highway.

Also, Negaunee Township is considering a proposal that would require all road upgrade projects to include provisions for improving or developing walking trails. And in April 2004, Marquette County was named one of the nation's most livable communities by the national nonprofit association Partners for Livable Communities.

Meanwhile, Spoelstra became so dedicated to the active living movement that she ran for city commissioner in Marquette City with active living as a major issue of her platform.

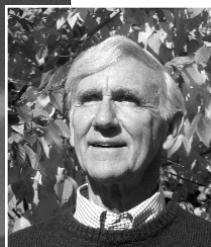
"Working on active living issues has really inspired me," said Spoelstra, who ran for public office for the first time. "I've learned that a healthy, physically active, vibrant community can serve as a magnet to attract businesses and professionals. Active living initiatives are vital both for individuals' physical health and for the region's economic health."



## State and Regional Success Stories

As with local officials, state officials have the unique ability to convene department heads, encourage information flow and cross-disciplinary activities across departments, promote important issues and support effective programming to increase active living. Often it is the people at the top levels of government who are in the best position to champion community design visions and foster policy development. Typically, at the state level, the governor and staff set the vision for transportation planning and community

development. Along with the governor, state legislators are responsible for formulating and establishing legislation that guides transportation, housing, financing, education and health policy decisions. Many active living policies can be driven at the state and regional level. Here are a few examples of policy, legislative and partnership efforts at these levels.



**“The time is at hand, actually overdue, for the integration of health professionals with transportation planners, urban design folks, public policy formulators and others who seek improved livability and wellness in our communities.”**

**—Spense Havlick, Former Boulder City Council Member**

# Active Along Colorado's Front Range

**Colorado Front Range    Population: 3.6 million**

**The Colorado Front Range lies on the eastern edge of the Rocky Mountains. The region, which makes up about 5 percent of the state's land area, is home to an estimated 80 percent of Colorado's population. Cities in the region include Fort Collins, Boulder, Denver and Colorado Springs. The region has experienced explosive growth in recent years, adding about 1 million residents in the past decade or so. Today, there are more people living on the Front Range than were living in the entire state of Colorado in 1990.**

A one-day workshop in Denver in early 2003 marked the start of something big in Colorado. Organized by the Local Government Commission (LGC) and the Livable Communities Support Center (LCSC), the workshop served to launch the Colorado Front Range Active Living Leadership Project. The effort is aimed at reaching out to local, regional and state government officials, community organizations

and public health leaders to inform them about active living projects and to help them take steps to improve their own communities.

## **The First Steps**

More than 135 leaders, including local elected officials, state and local government staff, public health professionals and smart growth advocates attended the workshop in January 2003.

The workshop was designed to inform local government and health leaders about the important connections among community design, active living and public health. It helped to put active living issues on the map for local and state government leaders from a wide range of backgrounds, including planning, transportation, land development and public health.

The event garnered enthusiastic reviews from participants and inspired local leaders to take action.

Karen Stuart, Mayor of Broomfield, Colorado, started a personal walking program, lost 25 pounds and became a leading advocate for active living initiatives in her home county. With other council members who attended the workshop, Mayor Stuart introduced active living concepts to the Broomfield City Council, which has since taken numerous steps to support active living strategies.

"There have been 10 to 15 occasions during Council meetings when Council members have mentioned what they learned at the workshop," said Council Member Gary Brosz. "It definitely affected our thinking."

And in a March 2004 letter, John Pickle, Director of Environmental Health at the Broomfield Department of Public Health, informed LCSC that Broomfield officials are updating the city's master plan to include active living issues. "This revision provides an opportune time to build stronger alliances between the city and county of Broomfield departments, ensuring plans and objectives are created to promote an active, livable community," he wrote.

Another leader who was inspired by the January 2003 workshop is Spence Havlick, who was then a member of the Boulder City Council. After his term expired later that year, he received a grant to travel through Australia for several months to work with local officials on active living.

In an e-mail to his Colorado colleagues, Havlick wrote, "The time is at hand, actually overdue, for the integration of health professionals with transportation planners, urban design folks, public policy formulators and others who seek improved livability and wellness in our communities."

## Building on Momentum

To build on the enthusiasm and momentum generated by the January 2003 workshop, Active Living Leadership partners arranged a series of dinner meetings for local elected officials and city and county managers from the Front Range. The dinners provided a lively forum where participants could learn about new approaches to active living and community design. More than 60 local elected officials, city and county managers, and public health officials attended these dinners and heard presentations on topics such as mixed-use and transit-oriented development, street and sidewalk design, and approaches to reforming land development regulations.

## Making Progress

The interest in active living inspired by the workshop and dinner meetings has carried over into other work in communities along the Front Range. In October 2003, several cities and counties hosted meetings with Dan Burden, Director of Walkable Communities, Inc., an organization that helps communities become more pedestrian-friendly. Burden discussed active living design issues with staff, developers and elected officials in the city/counties of Broomfield and Denver, City of Parker, City of Nederland and fast-growing Arapahoe County.



**"As a government official I have the unique ability to help residents become healthier through the community's built environment to encourage people's physical activity levels."**

**—Karen Stuart, Mayor of Broomfield, Colorado**





## Moving Forward

The Colorado Front Range Active Living Leadership project has involved collaboration among the LGC, the International City/County Management Association and state partners, such as LCSC, Colorado On the Move and the Colorado Office of Smart Growth.

In addition, an advisory committee of more than 20 key Colorado leaders continues to play a major role. This committee developed the program for a second workshop held in February 2004, which drew 200 attendees. The second workshop was so well received that it is slated to become an annual event.

The February 2004 meeting led to the creation of the Active Community Environment (ACE) Task Force under the auspices of Colorado's Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). In a letter describing the task force, Rachel Oys of CDPHE wrote, "Recognizing the importance of the built environment on the health and well-being of citizens within a community, the ACE Task Force will bring

together professionals from diverse disciplines and industries to collaborate on new and innovative ways to retrofit existing communities and ensure that new communities are built to standards that encourage healthy lifestyles and preserve the quality of life that Coloradans expect."

The ACE task force, co-chaired by LCSC Executive Director Rich McClintock, is charged with taking the lead in institutionalizing the Active Living Leadership effort across the state. The task force is responsible for coordinating an annual statewide workshop and regional trainings, building partnerships with local health departments, administering a mini-grant program for local communities and providing technical assistance to communities throughout Colorado.





**"I understand the intricate weave of chronic disease, land-use policy, transportation choice, and attitude in our society, and the need to address these threads across disciplines to see appreciable results."**

**—Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm**

## Making Progress in Michigan – State Administrators Raise the Bar for Active Living

**State of Michigan    Population: 9,938,444**

**Michigan has nearly 37 million acres of land and 10 million inhabitants. With 10,083 inland lakes and 3,288 miles of Great Lakes shoreline, dozens of downhill ski resorts and four national parks, Michigan certainly has a bounty of natural resources. However, according to the Michigan Land-Use Leadership Council, land is being developed eight times faster than the population is growing. Over the past decade, residents have been fleeing the cities for the countryside, and some would say the quality of life for Michigan residents is in jeopardy.**

Active living is cool. Of course, anyone working on active living issues knows this. But the governor of Michigan has made it official.

Governor Jennifer Granholm saw an opportunity to improve both quality of life and the economy, and to respond to citizen feedback that walkable communities are the number one characteristic of a cool city.

Through the governor's "Cool Cities" initiative, the state is highlighting walkability as a key attribute that makes a city hip and vibrant. The program is providing small grants to a dozen of Michigan's downtown business districts and neighborhoods to expand parks, improve sidewalks, rebuild streets, add lighting, establish farmers' markets and preserve historic structures. Communities that receive the grants could later become eligible for substantial state and federal funding for big projects, such as adding miles of new landscaped sidewalks and streets or expanding a mass transit system.

In addition, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center), the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) have teamed up with the Michigan Governor's Council

on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports, which has long recognized the influence community design can have on residents' physical activity levels. In May 2003, the NGA Center and ICMA collaborated with the Council and the Department of Community Health on a statewide conference, *Designing Healthy, Livable Communities*, to draw attention to the connections between health and community design.

The evening before the conference, the NGA Center and ICMA sponsored an invitation-only dinner for state and local leaders. More than 50 government leaders, including the state surgeon general, head of the state Department of Community Health, four state legislators, a mayor and several city planners, attended the dinner. Local and state leaders spent the evening discussing healthy community design issues, such as mixed-use development and pedestrian-oriented transportation options, and how they affect their respective communities.

At the conference the following day, Governor Granholm presented awards to 16 Michigan communities for their efforts to encourage physical activity through community design. Since the conference, the governor has continued to support active living issues. She has competed with other pedometer-wearing lawmakers to see who could rack up the highest number of steps over a 16-week period. The governor and her staff beat the legislative team.

The conference also featured the release of a study that found physical inactivity among Michigan's 7.6 million adults cost almost \$9 billion in 2002. More than 60 news publications around the state published articles about the study's findings.

Since the conference, both the NGA Center and ICMA have continued to provide technical assistance to communities and state leaders in Michigan.



A Healthy Communities Network, formed by the organizations that helped to plan the 2003 conference, went on to hold a second conference in the fall of 2004. The Network is chaired by Janet Olszewski, Director of the Department of Community Health, and David Hollister, Director of the Department of Labor and Economic Growth. This collaboration between public health and economic development officials will provide opportunities for the Network to inform state-level community design, community development and health strategies.

Governor Granholm also has provided her support for the Network. In a letter sent to the Council, the Governor stated:

*As Vice-Chair of the NGA Health and Human Services Committee, I understand the intricate weave of chronic disease, land-use policy, transportation choice and attitude in our society, and the need to address these threads across disciplines to see appreciable results. ... Michigan's Land-Use Leadership Council has also recognized the link between walkable communities and healthy lifestyles. And the NGA-supported Designing Healthy, Livable Communities Conference – convened in May 2003 – is a fantastic example of pulling land-use, transportation and health issues together.*

And in May 2004, Michigan Surgeon General Kimberlydawn Wisdom, M.D., launched a new plan called "Prescription for a Healthier Michigan." As part of the initiative, Dr. Wisdom plans to debut a program aimed at helping individuals adopt more active, healthy lifestyles.





**"You can choose to be physically active to help improve your own health. And it is also important that the communities we live in support those healthy choices by providing safe places that encourage physical activity."**

**—Washington State Secretary of Health  
Mary Selecky**

# Taking First Steps in Washington State

**State of Washington    Population: 5,894,121**

**Washington state's largest city, Seattle, is an important port and gateway to East Asia and the Arctic North. The state's diverse geography, recreational havens and economic opportunity make it a popular place to live, work and play.**

**Washington is home to 281 cities and towns, but the majority of population growth since 2000 remains concentrated in the western portion of the state, with the largest four-year gains being in King, Pierce, Snohomish and Clark counties.**

The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) is providing support to state leaders interested in active living strategies in Washington state, where it has partnered with the Washington Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity (WCPPA), a group of public- and private-sector professionals working in partnership to promote regular physical activity. Together, the

NGA Center and WCPPA created a vision for educating state leaders, identifying those prepared to take action, and assisting them as they develop policies, programs and projects that foster active living. With input from the Local Government Commission and the National Conference of State Legislatures, they held a briefing on active living in April 2004.

While specific Active Living Leadership activities in Washington are just beginning, the WCPPA is making great strides in connecting transportation, health and planning issues within the state. Exciting developments included participation at the April 2004 meeting by Mary Selecky, Secretary of the Washington State Department of Health (WSDOH), and Dennis Madsen, C.E.O. of REI, a Washington-based outdoor recreation company. At the meeting, participants discussed three priority





issues that WCPPA is now recommending. They are: 1) pedestrian- and bicycle-oriented transportation facilities and services, 2) active living land-use planning and development, and 3) communication efforts that promote active living.

In addition, with the help of NGA Center, WSDOH and WCPPA commissioned a study evaluating the cost of physical inactivity in Washington state. The study found that physical inactivity cost the state more than \$5 billion in 2002. Direct costs were estimated to be \$118 million in cardiovascular diseases,

\$44.6 million in mental health due to depression and anxiety, \$17.3 million in muscular and bone injuries, \$9 million in diabetes and other metabolic disorders, \$7.4 million from cancer, and \$1.3 million from carpal tunnel syndrome and other nervous system problems.

WSDOH and WCPPA continue their active living work in partnership with organizations and agencies around the state to develop ways to make physical activity easier and eliminate the barriers that prevent people from making healthy choices.



**"State funding is essential to leverage resources from local governments and nonprofits."**

**—Former State Senator Jane Krentz**



**"Metro Greenways has been able to pull together coalitions on projects and generate local and private revenue that exceeded expectations."**

**—State Representative Dennis Ozment**

# Active Living Through Collaboration – Minnesota's Metro Greenways Program

**State of Minnesota      Population: 4,919,479**

**Minnesota's 66 state parks preserve some of the most beautiful scenery in the "land of lakes." They are popular destinations for hiking, camping, biking, swimming, fishing, birding, picnicking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Policies and programs enacted in Minnesota's Twin Cities strongly support preservation of the region's natural assets while fostering economic development. For instance, preservation programs recently protected 1,400 acres of land. At the same time, Minneapolis-St. Paul ranked sixth nationwide in the number of new and expanded corporate facilities.**

In many cities, an empty tract of land less than a mile from downtown would not stay undeveloped for long. Even if the tract were a contaminated "brownfields" site, it likely would be snapped up by developers following a cleanup. But thanks to Minnesota's Metro Greenways Program, which incorporates active living principles, that's not what happened in St. Paul. Instead, the city and the Trust for Public Land joined together to restore a

brownfields site adjacent to a rail track in the floodplain of the Mississippi River and to develop links to a number of regional trails.

The Minnesota Legislature created the Metro Greenways Program in 1998. It is a collaborative, public-private partnership that encompasses seven counties in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area and is administered by the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Its goal is to develop a regional network of parks, open spaces, and walking and biking trails that link together natural areas. The program provides funds for state land acquisition and grants to local governments. The local governments must conduct natural resources inventories and demonstrate collaboration with nonprofit land conservation organizations and private landowners as conditions for receipt of these competitive grants.





Metro Greenways has allocated \$7 million to fund 18 land conservation projects since its inception, protecting 1,400 acres. In addition, it has provided more than \$750,000 in matching grants for local governments to conduct their own natural resources inventories. This approach represents an increasingly important opportunity to leverage state aid, because local governments are able to raise additional funds from other sources to preserve more open space. In fiscal year 2004, the state legislature appropriated \$1.5 million for the program, 75 percent of which will be used to purchase land or the development rights to land. The balance will be used to clean up and restore lands for use in achieving the program's land conservation and recreational objectives.

State Representative Dennis Ozment, the Republican Chair of the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee, points to DNR's ability to leverage money as a key reason for the program's success.

"Metro Greenways has been able to pull together coalitions on projects and generate local and private revenue that exceeded expectations," said Ozment.

Jane Krentz, a former Democratic state senator who chaired the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee, agrees. "State funding is essential to leverage resources from local governments and nonprofits like the Minnesota Land Trust," said Krentz. "There will never be enough money from the state to outright purchase all the land we should be setting aside, so tools like purchasing development rights are an important component of the program."

The program's success, however, may have created competition with statewide open space efforts.

"My colleagues in both chambers now want to expand the program beyond seven counties," said Ozment. "And funding those efforts will require the commitment of citizens in each county to raise enough money to match fewer state dollars." Ozment, for one, is optimistic based on recent local successes at the polls.

The National Conference of State Legislatures sponsored a series of site visits to Metro Greenways projects in September 2002 for legislators and staff in neighboring states. The visits confirmed the program's success in piecing together strategically important blocks of open space to promote walking, biking and other forms of physical activity.





**"A \$500,000 grant can help a mill town on a river advance its vision for the community, and making the community more walkable is a large part of it."**

**—Maine State Senator Sharon Treat**



## Encouraging Active Living Through Legislation – Maine's Smart Growth Legislation

**State of Maine    Population: 1,274,923**

**Maine's ruggedly beautiful coast has made the state a popular summer destination and a haven for artists. But Maine is much more. The state has 16 counties and nearly 500 municipalities. A rich supply of natural resources has influenced the course of its development.**

Municipal government in Maine enjoys a special authority called "home rule." This authority is given to the towns and cities of Maine in the state's constitution. Under "home rule," municipalities may govern themselves in any way that is not denied them by state or federal law.

The Maine Legislature passed a law in 2000 to encourage smart growth planning at the local level. It aims to limit the state's growth-related capital investments to designated growth areas contained in a local government comprehensive plan. As a result of the new law, state

agencies, when awarding certain grants, are now required to give preference to municipalities that have adopted comprehensive plans consistent with smart growth objectives.

The law also created the Municipal Investment Trust Fund to provide loans to municipalities undertaking comprehensive downtown revitalization efforts. By redesigning downtowns to include more commercial and recreational opportunities, communities could entice more residents to live, work and socialize in walkable neighborhoods.

The early results of the smart growth law are promising. Beth Della Valle in the State Planning Office characterizes the growth-related capital investment strategy as incredibly successful.

“We’re not telling municipalities where they develop, but letting them know that they will have to shoulder more of the capital costs if they choose to do so outside of designated growth areas,” says Della Valle.

The goal is to maintain the viability of urban centers, or as in much of Maine, village centers. State Senator Sharon Treat, the current majority leader and a key sponsor of the legislation, emphasizes the importance of the Municipal Investment Trust Fund in helping smaller communities to revitalize faltering downtowns.

“A \$500,000 grant can help a mill town on a river advance its vision for the community,” Treat explains. “And making the community more walkable is a large part of it.”

Overall, the smart growth law incorporates mixed-use development concepts, including urban infill and redevelopment, multi-modal transportation and transit-oriented development. Urban infill and redevelopment policies can encourage downtown revitalization by offering financial incentives to local governments in designated areas, and to developers to design mixed-use projects in designated areas. Multi-modal transportation makes use of several types of transportation options to reach an endpoint, including public transit, walking and biking. If schools, offices and retail outlets are located close to one another, there is greater likelihood that multi-modal transportation planning will succeed. Transit-oriented development is a part of multi-modal transportation. It incorporates more bus and rail options into a local government’s transportation mix and gives residents more opportunities to combine walking and biking with those options to get to schools, jobs and shopping centers.

The impacts of these integrated smart growth approaches on physical activity are not direct and immediate, because encouraging walking and biking is not necessarily their primary objective. However, these approaches may result in long-term public health benefits, because in redesigning existing communities or constructing new ones, the infrastructure and facilities necessary to sustain walking and biking opportunities can be developed.

The National Conference of State Legislatures provided technical assistance to the Maine Legislature through testimony at committee hearings and will continue to monitor the legislation’s progress in achieving both smart growth and public health benefits.



# Resources – Policy and program ideas for leaders

Our real-world leadership stories give great examples of how active living can be woven into the process of governmental planning. Below is a sample of additional policy and program ideas you may want to consider for your own community, neighborhood or state.

## **Foster Collaboration and Information Sharing**

Government officials can make decisions that promote active living by bringing different departments together. Officials also can use the bully pulpit to introduce walkable communities into public dialogue.

- Provide forums for private, nonprofit and government professionals from transportation, health, education, recreation, economic development and other relevant fields to discuss active living strategies.
- Create formal committees to discuss and coordinate active living strategies. Include all departments that play a role in active living, such as health, transportation, education, economic development, planning, safety, conservation, environmental protection, and parks and recreation.
- Appoint an active living coordinator on your staff.

## **Support Safe, Pedestrian-Oriented Transportation**

Decisions about transportation resources play a major role in the way communities are designed. By supporting improved connections between destinations and providing transit options, leaders can help ensure a balanced transportation system that makes it possible for residents to walk or ride a bicycle to the store, school or work.

- Support a Complete-the-Street policy that requires that streets be designed with pedestrians and cyclists in mind.
- Incorporate biking and walking strategies into your comprehensive plan. Use tools such as walkability audits to identify pedestrian infrastructure gaps.
- Keep pedestrian routes free from crime and traffic injury.
- Clean up vacant properties and keep sidewalks and bikeways clear of debris and snow.



## **Support Land-Use Planning and Development that Enable Active Living**

The way communities are designed and built influences residents' ability to engage in routine physical activity.

- Incorporate active living issues into land-use review and planning processes. Ensure new development plans include pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly elements.
- Support code reform. Use incentives, zoning and development strategies to stimulate development of mixed-use projects. Increase density, reduce parking requirements, and create more open spaces and parks.

## **Encourage Healthy School Sites, Facilities and Policies**

Location plays a large part in whether or not children can walk or bike to school. School curricula can educate children about the health benefits of active living and enable daily opportunities for physical activity.

- Hold forums for school officials. Connect active living and health concerns with school issues. Discuss items such as school location, community services and mandatory physical education.
- Support policies that enable new schools to be located in walkable neighborhoods instead of on expansive and isolated greenfields. Lower the acreage requirements and establish a rehab-first policy.
- Support walk-to-school and safe-routes-to-school programs.

## **Support Recreation Facilities, Parks and Trails**

Neighborhood parks that are within walking and biking distance of a person's home or work can promote greater physical activity. Trails that link homes, work, commercial centers, public transit, and community facilities provide safe and attractive thoroughfares for pedestrians.

- Develop a cohesive system of parks and trails.
- Maintain and create new neighborhood parks and pocket parks so that all residents have a park within one mile of their home.

## **Identify and Create Funding Sources**

State and local officials can leverage, secure and dedicate funding for active living initiatives.

- Use incentive systems that support pedestrian-oriented community design and transportation.
- Leverage existing funding streams for active living initiatives from:
  - Federal, state, regional and local sources, such as transportation enhancement, congestion mitigation and air-quality programs.
  - Tobacco/alcohol tax revenue. In Michigan, for example, 6 percent of the tobacco tax creates their Healthy Michigan Fund.

# Resources – Internet sites

These Web pages will lead you to a variety of resources detailing research, best practices and tools that support healthy places, programs and policies.

**Active Living by Design**

[www.activelivingbydesign.org](http://www.activelivingbydesign.org)

**Active Living Leadership**

[www.activelivingleadership.org](http://www.activelivingleadership.org)

**Active Living Network**

[www.activeliving.org](http://www.activeliving.org)

**Active Living Research**

[www.activelivingresearch.org](http://www.activelivingresearch.org)

**Active Living Resource Center**

[www.activelivingresources.org](http://www.activelivingresources.org)

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Healthy Places Site**

[www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces)

**International City/County Management Association**

[www1.icma.org/main/topic.asp?tpid=31&hsid=1](http://www1.icma.org/main/topic.asp?tpid=31&hsid=1)

**Local Government Commission**

[www.lgc.org](http://www.lgc.org)

**National Association of County and City Health Officials**

[www.naccho.org/project84.cfm](http://www.naccho.org/project84.cfm)

**National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity**

[www.ncppa.org](http://www.ncppa.org)

**National Conference of State Legislatures**

[www.ncsl.org/programs/health/rwj.htm](http://www.ncsl.org/programs/health/rwj.htm)

**National Governors Association Center for Best Practices**

[www.nga.org/center/topics/1,1188,D\\_6893,00.html](http://www.nga.org/center/topics/1,1188,D_6893,00.html)

# Active Living Leadership Background and Contact Information

To learn more about Active Living Leadership, contact the national project office:

## **Active Living Leadership**

San Diego State University  
3900 Fifth Avenue, Suite 310  
San Diego, CA 92103  
619.260.6336  
info@activelivingleadership.org

The national project office provides coordination, leadership, strategic direction and overall management of the Active Living Leadership initiative. The office also serves as a link between active living policy research and active living implementation efforts; directs special projects and national communication activities; and works with other national partners committed to active living issues.

## **Active Living Leadership Partners**

### **International City/County Management Association (ICMA)**

ICMA promotes excellence in local government through professional management. As a Leadership partner, ICMA works with local governments and with its own membership of 8,000 chief appointed officials to facilitate the development of policies and programs that foster healthy, livable communities.

### **Local Government Commission (LGC)**

LGC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership organization of elected officials, city and county staff, and community leaders. LGC staff provides inspiration, technical assistance and information on creating livable, walkable communities. As a Leadership partner, LGC works with local elected officials and key staff on issues related to active living and community design.

### **National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center)**

The NGA Center helps governors and their key policy staff develop and implement innovative solutions to governance and policy challenges. As a Leadership partner, the NGA Center provides assistance to governors and their staff related to active living, public health, quality of life and economic development.

### **National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)**

NCSL is a bipartisan organization serving the legislators and legislative staff of the states, commonwealths and territories. Its mission is to improve the quality and effectiveness of state legislatures, foster interstate communication and provide the states a strong, cohesive voice in the federal system.

### **National Association of Counties (NACo)**

NACo is a membership organization serving more than 2,000 counties and representing over 80 percent of the nation's population. With its headquarters on Capitol Hill, NACo is a full-service organization that provides an extensive line of services, including legislative, research, technical, and public affairs assistance, as well as enterprise services to its members. The association acts as a liaison with other levels of government, works to improve public understanding of counties, serves as a national representative for counties and provides them with resources to help them find innovative methods to meet the challenges they face.

### **U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM)**

USCM is the official nonpartisan organization of the nation's 1183 U.S. cities with populations of 30,000 or more. Each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official: the mayor. The primary roles of USCM are to: promote the development of effective national urban/suburban policy; strengthen federal-city relationships; ensure that federal policy meets urban needs; provide mayors with leadership and management tools; and create a forum in which mayors can share ideas and information.



**ActiveLiving  
LEADERSHIP**

Working with government leaders to  
create and promote active communities

*Active Living Leadership is a national project supported by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and administered by San Diego State University. RWJF has awarded nearly \$5 million in grants through the program since 2002. Active Living Leadership focused its initial efforts in five states: California, Colorado, Kentucky, Michigan and Washington. In 2004, the initiative added a focus on several of the Mid-Atlantic States and broadened its overall support to leaders nationwide. In 2005, Active Living Leadership will include a specific focus on healthy community design to reduce youth obesity.*

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