

**Active Living 101 Workshop**

**Eagan Community Center  
November 8, 2006**

**Meeting Summary**



## Planning Group Meeting

Kathleen Gaylord, Chair of the Dakota County Board of Commissioners welcomed members of the Planning Group. Helen Mahan of Active Living by Design (ALbD), the technical assistance providers for the project, introduced the ALbD team - Lisa Perlick, Mark Dessauer and Mark Fenton. Each member of the planning group introduced themselves by name and organization.

## Barriers and Opportunities for Active Living

Following the agenda review, facilitator Mark Fenton engaged participants in answering the question “What are barriers to creating active communities in this region?” Planning group members jotted their ideas on colored paper and placed them on the “magic wall”. These include:

- \* Funding priorities
- \* Segregated land use
- \* Lack of connections
- \* Lack of group bus pick up
- \* Safety – predators – vehicles
- \* Destinations designed for cars
- \* Time constraints
- \* Behavior change
- \* Low density
- \* Lack of connectivity
- \* School district busing policy
- \* Pedestrian safety including design
- \* Current design standards
- \* Pedestrian safety
- \* Lack of time

Following the discussion surrounding barriers, Mark asked the planning group to respond to the question “What do you perceive are the greatest opportunities for creating active communities in this region?” Responses include:

- \* New comp plan change rules
- \* Interest in health lifestyle
- \* Activity integration, schools, workplace
- \* Collaboration and education campaigns “do”
- \* Park land dedication with new development
- \* Existing Trail system
- \* Good infrastructure – parks, trails, recreation
- \* Opportunity to “get it right” with new and redevelopment
- \* “Perfect storm” of motivators – research, healthcare costs, gas prices, increased
- \* Awareness/media attention
- \* Parent involvement
- \* Mixed use
- \* Communication Network
- \* Mass Transit
- \* Attractive environment

## Groups and Committee Roles

Helen reviewed the project timeline and proposed planning group structure handouts. Planning group members asked for further clarification of the vision planning process. Helen explained the purpose of the project and suggested that a leadership group should be formed first to help guide the work and decision-making for the project. Discussions included capitalizing on existing municipal working groups in the cities of Apple Valley, Eagan and Rosemount.

## Stakeholder Roles

Helen directed participants' attention to the Stakeholder Inventory Charts in their packets and reviewed the work that has already been completed on the inventory. She asked the groups to review the stakeholder chart handouts and answer the question "Which individuals or organizations listed on this chart may feel threatened by a regional active living vision? What actions might they take?" She explained that the answers to the questions will help the group to decide who may need to be consulted and interviewed as part of the community assessment activities. Discussion centered around the following stakeholders:

- \* Most everyone
- \* Elected officials/public support
- \* Developers – commercial and residential
- \* Taxpayers – framing value/crime sell benefits
- \* Engineering/maintenance – plowing – bring into planning process
- \* Property owners/home owners/commercial developers – new rules regulations
- \* Public works
- \* Public safety
- \* Developers/retailers/engineers
- \* Safety – police, parents, schools

## Active Living Assessment

Planning group members received copies of the Active Living Assessment. The purpose of the assessment is to identify existing community data and potential gaps centered on the 5Ps. This information will be used as a starting point in the community assessment process. Dakota County Planning Department agreed to provide further instructions and an electronic copy for easy completion.

## December Workshop Overview

Helen reminded group members that the next meeting will be held in Apple Valley on Wednesday, December 13 with a focus on determining goals, outcomes and actions for the community assessment work.

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## Active Living 101 Workshop

National walking expert, Mark Fenton, kicked off the afternoon workshop with a discussion of participants' 10 year vision for an active community. Participants' responses include:

- That residents identify with their city and count and are engaged in at least one extra curricular activity in the local community
- Available and affordable recreational opportunities for all age groups
- People of all ages enjoy safe health outdoor activities in summer and winter
- A community that is safe and inviting that has a myriad of small neighborhoods into connected by an active lifestyle of old and young that use the city streets and sidewalks as the primary mode of connection for trips of less than ½ mile

- A close-knit community with great destinations
- A community with places to go and ways of getting there without using a car
- Walkable communities with connections where people want to go in attractive settings
- Paths, trails and walkways are environmentally friendly and support walking biking wheeling for people of all ages and abilities
- It's easy and enjoyable to run errands by foot or bike
- It is common that people use trails and walk and bike to school, work and shopping in addition to recreation
- Families will be walking and biking together in parks and trails as a regular activity
- People will be able to get to schools, parks, basic shopping without a personal car and feel basically safe doing it
- An active community should incorporate the ability to live, work, be entertained, and other aspects of life in one overall district without needing to always drive between activities
- That intentional use, spontaneous interaction or only brief acknowledgement and understanding of available amenities every day life in Dakota county
- If I were to move here in 10 years I would want an environment where I could walk or ride my bike to run any type of errand when the weather was nice
- A community with a sense of place gather space and connected trails to allow for mobility besides the car
- Has an active population concerned with healthy lifestyles for all children through seniors and is aware of the myriad resources available to them for this purpose
- You will see and know your neighbors and community because we're all outside being active and being a part of the community
- Walkable communities emphasizing the local natural environment and convenient connections to shopping, restaurants and entertainment opportunities
- You can walk to work to the store and school
- Safe connected pedestrian bikeways
- People can safely and efficiently move by foot or bike from any point in the community to any other point
- Will have walking biking and trails that connect a variety of destinations
- I can walk peddle or ride here – the car is just the least attractive option
- A car is not necessary to pick up a ½ gallon of milk

## **Active Living Presentation**

Following the vision discussion, Mark presented extensive information about active living, the impacts of physical inactivity and an overview of the 5P model – preparation, promotion, programs, policy and physical projects. Examples from the 25 Active Living by Design projects were also mentioned.

## **The Walk**

Following the presentation, participants walked around the park and residential areas adjacent to the Eagan Community Center observing both barriers and opportunities for physical activity.

## Bringing it Back Home

After the walk, participants reflected on their “Ah ha” moments from the walk – a surprising or enlightening observation that suggests thinking differently about opportunities for or barriers to physical activity in the community. These observations included:

- Short sighted design
- Crossing islands/lack thereof
- Width of walkway and proximity to street
- Lack of obvious crossing – does not feel safe
- Aesthetics affect our behavior
- You have to have a sidewalk on both sides of the street
- Noise

Next, participants answered the question “What information, data, or assessment would you like to help guide planning to increase physical activity in the community?”

- How many people that use this community can actually go to the transit station or shopping center?
- Who owns the land?
- Where does the ROW end?
- What level of government controls the roadway?
- Local demographics – population, ages, family size, school attendance
- Who owns the land?
- Who pays for it?
- What code for medians?
- Data on economic benefits
- Cost of extras for design – money per mile and money per user
- How much do we need to do?
- Where do users actually need to cross?
- Cost per mile to implement changes
- What would encourage you to walk or bike more?
- Community appetite for change – residents, businesses and other leaders
- How do we make bus system more efficient?
- Survey retail customers (mode and alternate choice of mode)
- Is there a way to reduce amount of arterial roads – having more streets – less volume per road and more friendly?
- Traffic patterns and it’s uses
- Where does traffic come from and where are they going and why traveling by car instead of bike?
- Community appetite for change
- What would encourage you to bike and walk more?

Finally, Mark asked participants to brainstorm ideas among the four P’s (promotion, programs, physical projects, and policies) that would begin to create a more physically active community. Participants’ ideas included:

- Promotion – walkers discount during lunch
- Programs – traffic calming pedestrian friendly roadway design
- Projects – duplicity of shopping i.e. 2 Starbucks
- Policies – identify hubs – use unifying landscape treatments
- Program – mapped and measured routes
- Program – detailed maps and trails with distances
- Promotions – work place promotions
- Programs – give same walking tour
- Projects – critical connections road crossing
- Project – Crosswalk improvements
- Promotion – bikeways, trails and lanes
- Promotion – trails and trail connections through community programs
- Project – bike lanes
- Program – employer has educational program to encourage local employees to be active
- Policy – grass roots organization development to change/demand policy change for active living
- Policy – must require/add landscaping and lighting to pedestrian sidewalks and path and require sidewalks on both sides of street

