

**Planning Group Meeting
December 14, 2006**

French Regional Park - Plymouth

**Community Assessment Action Planning
Meeting Summary**



Introduction

Hennepin County Commissioner Gail Dorfman welcomed members of the Planning Group. Following introductions of the Planning Group and members of the Active Living by Design team, Helen Mahan and Kate Kraft reviewed the agenda and desired outcomes for the day:

- Refine or further input into fundamental elements of active living vision
- Determine what information is needed, what you have and what you will need to collect
- Develop an action plan for how the new information will be collected and who will do it

Refining Fundamental Elements of Active Living

Mark Dessauer described the four key areas and supporting evidence for active environments: access to facilities, destinations, networks and safety. Kate reviewed the active community features information collected at the September meeting.

Developing a Community Assessment Action Plan

Planning Group members were separated into four smaller groups, one for each active environment category. Using the active living assessment information collected from Planning Group members and compiled by Karen Nikolai, each group created a list of questions to determine some basic information needed for each of these elements. These questions include:

ACCESS TO FACILITIES

- Are facilities and spaces complementary to our natural environment?
- Are they supportive of multigenerational use?
- What is the variety of activities & does it fit the area demographics?
- Does the facility make a statement about your community? (does it fit your current & desired residents)
- What facilities are planned for the future?
- What agencies provide public education?
- How/who promotes facilities?
- Fee or free?
- Multiple languages for signage promotional materials?
- Are they distributed equitably geographically?
- What are others doing and how do we compare? (need to attract new businesses and residents)
- What are they?
- Where are they?
- How old are the facilities?
- Are they ADA compliant?
- Who maintains them?
- Who owns them?

- Are they part of larger system or stand alone?
- Who uses?
- Are some facilities under-used?
- How do we define facilities?

DESTINATIONS

- Where do people go? Kids/adults?
- Where do people want to go?
- How do they get there?
- Are destinations safe? (personal safety)
- Schools and U of M – where do students, staff and faculty come from?
- What are the qualities of a good destination?
- How do people get to school? (students)
- Are there zoning barriers for some destinations?
- Where are key employment centers?
- How to simplify transit system?
- Adequate trip end facilities?
- Where can you live without a car everyday?
- What's missing that would make a good destination?
- Where to go if you have a flat on the way to my destination?

NETWORK

- How can we maximize access and overcome obstacles?
- Are there disparities in the system?
- What are the maintenance standards of the system and who will maintain that?
- What design standards can we use for the system?
- Gaps in the system, where are they? (bike lanes, trails, sidewalks)
- Where do we have useful signage?
- Consistent messages
- Integration with commercial areas
- Resources to keep information up to date
- What is depicted on signage
- Can we identify end point – businesses or destinations?
- Can we identify support amenities for the system? (parking, lockers, lighting, bike racks, restrooms)
- How do plans get integrated and prioritized?

SAFETY

- Are community facilities in “safe zones” i.e. community centers, ice arenas?
- Have block captains/neighborhood walk groups been surveyed about safety?
- Is the PLOS/BLOS data or rating systems available i.e. Orlando?
- Do we have money to maintain our trails – safe surfaces/curb cuts?
- What are the unintended consequences of safety zones?
- How people are using trails – conflicts of multi-use/safe use, helmets?
- What makes you feel unsafe? Perception vs. reality – community data, senior population – time to cross the street, families with small kids, school kids, bikers, runners?
- How do we reach these groups?
- Who can make these improvements?

- Who has the power to implement these changes?
- What number of bike/ped accidents have happened? Locations, frequency, GIS
- What crime data is available – safe areas to bike/or walk/run?
- Do senior residence facilities have safe walk zones?
- Do schools have safe walk/bike zones?
- Do businesses have safe walk/bike zones – do paths connect to larger networks?

Utilizing the list of questions, Planning Group members worked together to create a community assessment chart that listed the following:

- New information that needs to be collected
- Types of information currently available
- Responsibilities for extracting existing information (checking out plans, surveys, demo data)
- Suggestions for tools to collect new information

SAFETY			
Question	Information Available?	Best to Answer?	Best Method to Answer
How do we measure perception of safety?	Maybe	Decision Resources, City Managers, Community survey, League of MN Cities	Focus groups, attitude surveys completed
Do you feel safe walking or biking in your community?	Maybe	Senior Community groups, user groups, schools, Parent groups	Focus groups, intercept surveys, calls, determine key audience, block captains
What car/bike/ped accident data is available?	Yes	City, Police dept., Public data, transportation/traffic	Phone calls, GIS mapping
What/where are the crimes against people – what level?	Yes	Police depts.	GIS Map
What public facilities are in accident & crime zones?	Yes	City Planning Dept.	GIS, PID data
How frequently are there personal injuries on trails? Safety on trails?	Maybe	Park boards, cities, users	Call survey, user surveys, intercept surveys
Likelihood of having a pedestrian accident in the compared to national average? What are the laws that govern crossings? Enforcement?		DOT – county wide data, sheriff's office, 3 Rivers District Research Dept., Transit for Livable Communities, "hot spots"	

DESTINATIONS			
What are key destinations for kids, adults, seniors to recreate, work, go to school and run errands?	Yes	School, met council, cities, commercial market research, senior centers	Phone calls, internet, library visit
Where do people live in relation to destinations?	Yes	Census, met council	Calls, internet, visit
What mode of transportation do they use to get there?	Yes	Met Council, MNDOT, Hennepin County, cities, public works	Calls, visits
What are the barriers to getting to destinations?	Yes	Transit for livable communities	Survey
What are the qualities of a good destination to promote active living?	Yes	?this group	Focus groups
What cities have good examples of mixed use development to promote active living? (zoning, incentives)	Yes	Cities Met Council	
Percentage of population that lives within a certain mileage of key destinations? Are destinations safe (*physically)?		U of M – Kevin Krizek	
NETWORKS			
Where are gaps in system Bike lane Trail Sidewalk Connection	Yes Yes Yes Yes	HC gap study HC gap study City comp plan (zoo & update)	GIS mapping GIS City by City plans (zoos)
Have useful signage?			
What systems have signage?	No	Cities, HC, TRPD, DNR	Inventory & interview (GIS locations)
Is it (signage) useful?	Some available	Mpls. Parks, TRPD,	Surveys, focus

(wayfinding)		midtown greenway, Public, Chamber	groups
Can we identify end points?	Yes	Chambers, Community, City Schools, large employers,	Online, GIS
How do we overcome obstacles?	Yes, mapping	Cities, County TRPD	Surveys focus group
Where are support amenities? Parking, bike racks, restrooms, benches, H2O, lighting	Yes and no	HC TRPD, Cities	Survey, inventory observation
Are there disparities to access	Yes	Mapping – planning dept. cities	Collection from agencies
Design standards?	Yes	AASHTO, MNDOT, HC	Collection
Maintenance standards	Yes	Cities, County TRPD	Collection
How close are employers connected to trail or transportation systems?			
FACILITIES			
Percentage of population lives within ¼ mile of park, trail or rec facility? Who can afford it?		MN Park and Rec Assoc. SCORP	
How do we compare to?	Yes	Public works, DNR, Community development	Indicators or key measurements
What facilities are planned for future?	Yes	Community planning	Community visioning
Are facilities matching community targeted demographics	Yes	Park & Rec commissioner, Public and city	Community visioning
What kind of activities are provided	Yes	Parks & Rec	
Who uses facilities?	Yes	Community Development, Parks & Rec	Website, bark/in/the park and/or the gov regional systems
Who owns them? Private facilities? Faculty inventory and age, locations, use, ownership, funding source	Yes	DNR, Parks & Rec	Online, city records, public works department

Communications

At the end of the meeting Mark Dessauer presented a brief overview of communication for the group. The presentation described the new website (activelivingcommunityvision.org) to highlight each community and host information (documents and presentations) and the role of the communications committee. Mark then tasked the group to form a communication committee based on interest and expertise as well as write up an overview of the planning group and its goals.

Next Steps

- Project leader Karen Nikolai agreed to organize a leadership group to continue working on the community assessment questions and chart.
- Planning Group members and the ALbD team agreed to reflect on the assessment questions developed during the meeting and provide Karen with suggested changes and comments.

