Healthy Communities Tool Kit

How You Can Work Toward

Creating Healthy Communities

Cardiovascular Health, Nutrition & Physical Activity

MDCH Department of Community Health

A Policy Guide for Public Health Practitioners and Their Partners

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Introduction

Creating healthy communities is a valuable public health initiative that increases opportunities for people to live more active and healthy lives. Healthy communities are places where people are able and encouraged to walk, bike, or roll for both pleasure and purpose, have access to affordable and nutritious food, and have access to smoke-free environments. There is increasing recognition of the importance of the environment in shaping behavior, yet strategies that focus on changing environments are often challenging for public health professionals.

In an effort to be true to its vision and mission, the Cardiovascular Health, Nutrition and Physical Activity Section of the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) recognizes this unique opportunity for facilitating the creation of healthy communities and has created the Healthy Communities Tool Kit. The initial concept of the tool kit was adapted from the *Winning with ACEs! How You Can Work Toward Active Community Environments Guide*, which was created by the North Carolina Division of Public Health. The tool kit was expanded to include sections that specifically focus on opportunities for physical activity, access to fruits and vegetables, and tobacco-free environments. The primary audience for this tool kit is public health practitioners, but many community groups and grassroots coalitions will find this information useful as well.

Vision: A heart healthy and stroke-free Michigan.

Mission: Create a heart-healthy and stroke-free Michigan by increasing physical activity and healthy eating, reducing health disparities, and preventing and controlling other cardiovascular disease risk factors.

Creating healthy communities is about creating not only physical and policy changes to the environment, but also social change. Work at the policy level is often critical to bringing about changes. Think about what has taken place regarding tobacco in the last 30 years. Physical environments have changed —we now have smoke-free restaurants, airplanes, and worksites. Social norms have also changed— smoking was once considered sophisticated and is now largely viewed as an addiction. In order to create policy and environmental changes, MDCH's Cardiovascular Health, Nutrition and Physical Activity Section has created the following three recommendations to help guide communities in creating healthier community environments.

1. **Increase physical activity by making it easy and safe to be physically active daily.**
   - Connect your community's neighborhoods, schools, stores, and parks with trails and sidewalks.
   - Add bike lanes and proper signage to key roads.
   - Develop a community media campaign promoting how, when, and where people can be physically active in your community.
   - Collaborate with a local media venue (television station, radio, newspaper, cable station) to provide education on the benefits of being physically active and the risks of not moving.
2. **Support daily consumption of and easy access to healthy foods.**
   - Develop, promote, and increase the availability of farmers' markets, community and school gardens, mini-markets, traveling food stands, and Farm to School programs.
   - Offer a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program with farmers and residents. CSAs can increase the economic success of farmers and the consumption of fruits and vegetables.
   - Implement a fruit-and-vegetable initiative. The fruit-and-vegetable programs include Body and Soul, 5 A Day Power Play, and Get Fit with 5. Specific ideas and resources can be found at

www.5aday.gov (and www.5aday.com).

- Implement a low-fat dairy initiative to increase the amount of dairy consumed by residents, such as the 1% or less milk campaign or 3-A-Day campaign found at www.3aday.org.

3. **Support tobacco-free lifestyles by focusing on tobacco prevention and reduction by promoting smoke-free environments.**

- Support and participate in activities at the state and local levels to provide for and increase smoke-free environments. Information on smoke-free bars, restaurants, and worksites can be found at www. makemiairsmokefree.org. Information on smoke-free apartments can be found at www.mismokefreeapartment.org.
- Create a community cessation network to identify and promote cessation services and resources in the community, and offer the opportunity for local health professionals to be trained in an evidence-based smoking-cessation program, such as the American Lung Association's Freedom from Smoking cessation program for adults and Not on Tobacco (N-O-T) cessation program for high-school-aged youth. Promote and increase the use of MDCH's Smoker's Quit Kit, Expectant Mother's Quit Kit, and I Can Quit cessation hotline (800-480-7848).
- Work on state and local-level initiatives to decrease youth access to tobacco products and to educate local retailers on the Youth Tobacco Act and violations of selling tobacco to minors. For example, ask retailers to change their policy about the placement of tobacco products, (e.g. from behind the counter, to above the counter out of sight) and the placement of tobacco ads, (i.e. removing tobacco advertising inside and outside of the store). Work with the local media to promote *A Tobacco Retailer's Guide to Michigan Law Penalties and Employee Training*, which is the state retailer education campaign. Educate local elected officials about and ask them to eliminate the "preemption clause" of the Tobacco Products Act 327 of 1993. Section 205.434 of the Act prohibits a city, village, county or other local unit of government from imposing new requirements or prohibition pertaining to the sale or licensure of tobacco products.
- Work with local youth groups, restaurant employees, and the media on promotion of a smoke-free-restaurant campaign encouraging all local and chain restaurants to go smoke-free to protect the health of employees, children, families, and other community members.

Remember, as was the case with tobacco-use prevention, creating healthy communities will require time, patience, vision, community education, grassroots mobilization, relationship-building, and persistence. The results promise to be very rewarding, with changes in policies and environments that support people of all ages in living a healthier life.

Chapter 1
A Primer on Influencing Policy Decisions

The Guiding Principle of the Healthy Communities Tool Kit

Using policy to change physical environments and social norms is a powerful approach. Policy -change work is not something to be attempted alone. In large part, success in achieving policy change will result from efforts to educate and mobilize a community. Decision-makers must be convinced that the public perceives a proposed policy to be in the best interest of the community as a whole. This is the guiding principle and critical foundation for this entire Healthy Communities Tool Kit. While you may be taking the lead in figuring out how to create active communities, ultimately the community must be the one backing the healthy community agenda.

Policy and Environmental Change Interventions[1]

POLICIES include laws, regulations, and rules (both formal and informal).

Examples:

- Establish a plan (e.g., master plan, downtown plan, bicycle and pedestrian plan) that accommodates pedestrians and bicycles (see Chapter 4), community gardens, and farmers' markets (see Chapter 2).
- Approve local policies that are consistent with the established plans.
- Appoint a health-promotion or bike/pedestrian advocate to a policymaking board (e.g., planning board, transportation advisory committee).
- Establish a policy to dedicate a portion of locally controlled funds for bike/pedestrian facilities and/or community gardens on a regular basis (e.g., federal urban area direct allocation funds, municipal funds).
- Create a subdivision ordinance to accommodate pedestrians, bicycles or other physical activity (e.g., sidewalk, green-space set-aside, acreage for recreation).
- Update zoning ordinances, building codes, and approval processes to encourage compact community design, utilization of sidewalks, and a tighter mixture of activities that make it possible to go to work, shop for fruits and vegetables, and go to school within a reasonable walking distance from residences.
- Adopt and implement smoke-free policies for parks and other recreational areas.

ENVIRONMENTAL INTERVENTIONS include changes to economic, social, or physical environments.

Examples:

- Walking trails at schools, worksites, and parks.
- Community and school gardens.
- Sidewalk projects (including construction, maintenance, improvement, or widening).
- Pedestrian-safety provisions (e.g., pedestrian signals, crosswalks, or curb ramps).
- Farmers' markets featuring locally grown produce, year-round if possible.
- Bicycle facilities (e.g., bike lanes, wide shoulders, bike racks, or outside lanes).
- New smoke-free walking, hiking, and biking trails with smoke-free signage.
- Street trees and public art to make walks more beautiful, comfortable, and interesting.
- Improved street lighting and surveillance for security.

Working with Elected Officials and Decision-makers...Where in the World do you Begin?

To get started, we'll discuss these topics:

- The "**science**" involved with politics.
- **Key relationships:** how to develop, nourish, and maintain them.
- **Lobbying v. advocacy:** knowing the difference and the best approaches to achieve your goals.

The Necessary Groundwork

The "Science" in Political Science

Working with elected officials is a lot easier than you might think—once you know the basics, you will be surprised at what you can accomplish. The "science" in political science is as basic as understanding relationships, understanding the decision-making process, and recognizing that, as hard as you try, you just can't take the politics out of politics. The dictionary definition of "politics" is "the total complex of relations between people living in society." It really is about relationships, and it is all political!

> ***POLITICS:*** "the total complex of relations between people living in society"

Who Makes Decisions in Your Community?

Do you know who has the authority over transportation plans, land-use policies, and school-site selection in your community or region? If you don't, investigate. Pick up the phone, use the Internet, or ask a friend. Do what it takes to develop a list of decision-makers, with contact information and their respective areas of influence. Be a real sleuth and look up their voting records! The method of investigation will differ depending on the individual; what is important is that you begin to understand who and what you're working with to begin making change (see the worksheets in Chapter 3). Investigate and understand what is important to them. Is it schools, transportation, the economy? To convince decision-makers of what's important to you, you must also understand and know what is important to them.

> **Finding the Decision Makers**
>
> Most municipalities and townships have a website. Check it first for information on elected officials, boards, and ordinances. If the township does not have an up-to-date website, visit your local library and ask the reference specialist to assist in the review of local papers and Web searches on local officials.

When and How Are the Decisions Made?

Once you know who the decision-makers are in the community, find out more by attending board or committee meetings. Watch and learn how decisions are made in your community. Observing behaviors, voting patterns, issues, and community reactions to issues by just sitting in on these meetings moves you from a majority to a minority category. Most residents rarely attend these meetings—only a handful of citizens take the time to become educated about issues. You can then become a resource to the community when the time comes to advocate for a healthy-community-related issue.

Be Informed

The Print Media

By subscribing to your local paper and reading it, you can learn a great deal about what is going on with local issues and how your local elected officials are responding to those issues. The editorial page is especially helpful in determining the climate of public support and decision-maker response. If you are up to date on what is appearing in print, you may be able to anticipate and answer related questions from your elected officials or decision-makers who come to rely on your opinion.

Overwhelmed by the thought of attending endless meetings or reading confusing minutes? Cultivate trusted partners who will let you know when an important meeting is going to take place or of key minutes that need to be read. These partners should also be able to help you identify which decision makers you need to know and which ones are better left alone.

Public Information

In addition to reading the paper, it is also helpful to request meeting agendas and minutes. In Michigan, as in most other states, the law requires most public meetings and records to be open to the public. Consequently, agendas and minutes are available for public review and may be posted on a website. By requesting, and reading them, you are educating yourself.

Developing Key Relationships

Decision-makers and elected officials: who and where are they? They are our neighbors, businesspeople, teachers, entrepreneurs, and parents. Policymakers want to do the right thing for public health, but sometimes it must be explained and promoted to them by their constituents. They rely on trusted friends and colleagues for their information and guidance. Remember that they:

- appreciate information from reliable sources;
- have special interests and projects that may not coincide with yours;
- appreciate having and maintaining a good reputation; and
- are responsive to pressure from their constituents.

Public health professionals and health educators: who and where are we? We are neighbors, parents, and key volunteers trying to create a more active community. Many of us are employees of state/local governments or healthcare systems. We are trying to do a good job and the right thing for the communities we live in. We rely on trusted friends and colleagues for information and guidance. We appreciate reliable information, and we rely on data! We also have special interests (e.g., obesity, heart disease) and projects (e.g., active communities, fruits and vegetables, increasing smoke-free environments and services to help community members quit smoking) that may not coincide with those of decision makers. We value a good reputation. And most importantly, we are the constituents!

Nourishing and Maintaining Relationships

Successful Communication: Let's consider how we communicate. Public health professionals know quite a bit about public health issues, obesity rates, cardiovascular disease risk factors, and even the physical activity levels of persons of different races, ages, and genders. We are very comfortable talking about these issues, and we often use a lot of jargon. Remember that elected officials may not be familiar with our terms and that, instead of winning them over, you may be turning them off when you rely too heavily on public health lingo.

For example: *Which one do you think is going to get a conversation going with your neighbor?*

Public Health Language: "The built environment of our neighborhood really contributes to the decreased physical activity levels of our children."

Layperson Language: "The speed of cars traveling through our neighborhood concerns me. My son has to play primarily in the backyard and I have to drive him to his friend's house, even if it's right down the street. How can we get sidewalks or a neighborhood playground/park?"

Take time to listen to yourself. Ask someone who knows you well —your spouse, grown child, or close friend—if you are guilty of overusing jargon.

Elected officials are people just like you. Typically, they are not experts in the public health field. If they are not informed, they will make uninformed decisions. The key is to seize the opportunity to educate them, starting with what they know and continuing until they express an understanding! Think about it this way: you are providing valuable information about what is important to their constituents. Just remember to use jargon sparingly and speak in terms they will understand.

Ask, Listen, and Respond: The fun part is cultivating a relationship with elected officials or decision-makers. In addition to remembering how we communicate, keep in mind three key components to a good relationship: ask, listen, and respond.

ASK. Once you identify the decision-maker with whom you want a relationship, your first step is to call that person for a meeting (see Chapter 3 for useful worksheets that will help you in recording how best to reach him or her and other important contact information). Once you connect with your target decision-maker, ask questions about him or her, about his or her elected position or appointed office, or about policy. He or she will usually give you the answers, but only if you ask. It's also important to ask if you can help the person achieve his or her goals; ask for suggestions on how to achieve yours. If you have difficulty getting through to your decision-maker, begin working with that person's staff.

LISTEN. Once you ask, you must listen. Listen not only to what is said but to how it is being said. Listen to what an official says at public meetings. Listen for the depth of feeling that is expressed. How emotionally charged is an official on a particular issue? That revealed passion will help you to determine whether you may be able to make a difference in his or her perception of an issue. If it seems as if the staff or the decision-maker is not giving you direct answers, you still may be getting some important information that could help shape your strategy.

Listen to the community, listen to support staff, and, most importanty, listen for opportunities. Action planning is very important and provides parameters for our work, but listening for opportunities and then responding in a timely manner is often key to achieving your goal of a more active community.

RESPOND. Once you have asked the questions and listened to the responses, you can begin to formulate a strategy for policy change. Respond to decision-makers by positioning yourself as a resource. If they have commented that they are not well versed in public health issues, bike lanes, community gardens, or master plans that incorporate bike and pedestrian facilities or fruits and vegetables, respond by becoming their resource. Remember, always say "thank you." Politeness goes a long way in relationship-building. Finally, always follow up on something you have promised to do.

Recipe for Success

When working with elected officials, it takes a little bit of strategy, a lot of people skills, and effective communication. The strategy is to start at their knowledge level. To do that, first find out more about who they are.

Meetings

Once a relationship begins with a key person and meetings are starting to happen, these are important points to remember:

1. Small groups (two to five people) are better than large groups when holding meetings. Going alone works, but to build organizational or coalition capacity, it helps to bring along potential leaders.
2. If a small group will be present at a meeting, work out details in advance. Appoint a spokesperson and a person to listen and observe. Be specific about what you want to achieve; do not wait to be asked what you want the participants to do. Be clear on the difference between lobbying and advocacy (below).
3. Know the subject matter. Elected officials or decision makers are looking to you to educate them on an issue; seize the opportunity to do so.
4. Always leave a concise handout (no more than one page). On the handout, make two or three points in big print, leave lots of space, and be careful not to make a statement that hints at lobbying —unless you called your meeting as a citizen, rather than as a public health professional.
5. Say "thank you"! The value of this common courtesy cannot be overstated. Sending a handwritten note is best.
6. Invite the decision-maker to your events and activities! If he or she is unable to attend, send news clippings or a written summary of what happened.
7. Finally, part of maintaining and developing a relationship involves ongoing contact. Keep the decision-maker updated on what's going on in the field. Serve as a resource. Send e-mails of interesting articles related to your goals, as well as theirs. Anticipate and be prepared for questions. And if you make a mistake, correct it immediately.

CAUTION: Be careful in these meetings not to alienate the person you are trying to win over. Avoid an argumentative or negative tone. Always go in seeking consensus and offering solutions. These tactics will go a long way in helping you position yourself as a resource.

Lobbying v. Advocacy

Lobbying and advocating are positive strategies and can make changes occur, so be sure to know the difference between the two. The two main parameters to be aware of at all times are (1) what you are saying to an elected official, a political appointee, or his or her staff persons, and (2) when you say it.

Lobbying

Proactive communication with elected officials, appointees, or their staff that makes a specific reference to a piece of legislation or legislative proposal that has been introduced before a legislative body (federal, state, or local).[2]

Advocacy

Educating decision-makers (elected, appointed, staff persons) about a cause or issue, without making any direct reference to a specific piece of legislation or legislative proposal.[3]

Four Models of Advocacy

As conveyed by public-policy and political consultant Joel Bradshaw, there are four basic models of advocacy.[4] Public health professionals typically rely on the first: information-based advocacy. We should become more comfortable in using the other three models, especially the relationship-based mode. Let's briefly explore each one.

- **Information-based advocacy:** This form of advocacy is most effective for noncontroversial issues and relies on persuading a decision maker to act in a certain way by providing information on a topic. The framing of an issue is critical, as is avoiding controversy. Information-based advocacy works best when used in conjunction with other approaches.
- **Coalition-based advocacy:** This method relies on diverse individuals coming together in agreement on tough issues and informing decision-makers of their existence and wishes. Public health professionals have much to contribute to this method, considering our experience with facilitating and building community coalitions. "Health" is a provocative calling card, and many diverse individuals and groups will embrace adding the promotion of health to their agendas. The coalition-based approach can be strong and productive.
- **Relationship-based advocacy:** As the name implies, this approach relies on personal relationships, specifically with key decision makers and their staff. Typically, those who oppose the public health view on controversial issues are relationally better positioned than we are—consider the high-powered lobbyists for the tobacco and soft-drink industries. It would serve us well to strengthen our own relationships with key decision makers. Remember, politics is all about relationships. The power in relationship-based advocacy is a result of longevity and continuity. What that means for you is that you must actively cultivate these relationships, nurture them, and maintain them— even after the key vote on your issue has passed. Seize an opportunity to cultivate a relationship when a decision-maker runs for office, has just been elected to office, or has been appointed to a board or committee. Sometimes newcomers are looking for opportunities and issues to build their political reputation. Become their resources by providing reliable information and informing them of constituents' wishes.
- **Power-based advocacy:** This form of advocacy is based on the perception of political power and fear of retribution at the ballot box. It can be highly confrontational and is characterized by letter-writing, rallies, and other mass action that attracts media attention and gradually builds pressure on the undecided decision-makers. This approach can be effective only if a strong and diverse coalition exists, grassroots supporters are

Example: Healthy Communities Challenges. Think of some Healthy Communities agenda items: sidewalks in new developments, community gardens, bike facilities, greenways, students walking to school, etc. Although seemingly innocuous and popular topics, they can often be quite controversial. For example, some would frame these issues as government telling developers how to build and property owners how to use their land. Suggesting that spending a portion of highway dollars on better conditions for bicycles so that they can be on the roads with cars will most certainly be met with opposition. Selecting school sites so that kids can actually walk to them is generally more expensive than placing schools on fields outside of town. These can be emotionally loaded, confrontational topics, and unfortunately, information-based advocacy approaches alone have very little success in influencing such decisions.

meticulously organized, information is appropriately utilized, and relationships exist to back it up. Some theorists go so far as to say that the component of mass action cannot be overused when a power struggle is at hand. Use mass action so much that you create a tidal wave of information, emotion, and pressure. For a suggested approach, see Chapter 5.

Advocacy can take on many forms. If the issue is not perceived as controversial, information-based advocacy alone is usually successful. Advocating for a healthy community is likely to have conflicting elements and will need a creative approach such as using more than one model.

This primer provides an overview of policy basics helpful for getting started in the healthy-community arena. It is by no means an exhaustive list of what to do to achieve policy change—your experience, focus, and goals will allow you to customize your approach.

1 Association of State and Territorial Directors of Health Promotion and Public Health Education and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Policy and Environmental Change: New Directions for Public Health.* 2001. www.astdhpphe.org/healthpolicyfinalreport.pdf

2 American Public Health Association, www.apha.org

3 American Public Health Association, www.apha.org

4 Joel Bradshaw and Associates, Public Policy and Political Consultants. The information presented in the ACEs Guide was conveyed by Joel Bradshaw to a group attending an Advocacy Academy sponsored by the League of Conservations Voters. December 14–15, 2001, Washington, D.C. orderoutofchaos@aol.com

Chapter 2
Community Design and Public Health

Working Together to Create Healthy Communities

This chapter provides a snapshot of how transportation, land use, and public health experts have worked together historically and the need for future collaboration. The chapter contains six sections:

- History in the Making
- Walking and Biking in America
- Improving the a Community's Ability to Eat Healthy
- The Potential Within Environmental Changes
- Overview of Tobacco Control in Michigan
- Social Capital

Have you ever wondered how a township develops character? How a city grows? How road-development decisions are made? Essential players in these sorts of decisions include planners and engineers from the fields of transportation and land use planning. Professionals in these fields include civil engineers that might specialize in transportation or land use planning, landscape architects, and community-design consultants.

There is both historical foundation and current opportunity for collaboration among transportation, land use, and public health experts.

History in the Making

In the 19th century, poor sanitation, food and water quality, and overcrowding in urban centers caused widespread infectious disease. Additionally, many urban residents lived in close proximity to polluting industries. Land use and transportation planners and engineers played a role in reducing the threat to the public's health by designing low-density housing in more dispersed, suburban communities and creating systems for water and sewage treatment. Zoning policies (where land was zoned for particular uses and housing was separated from industries that emitted air and water pollutants) emerged as a response to public health issues that arose during our nation's industrial age. These types of policy and environmental change interventions led to significant declines in infectious disease mortality rates.

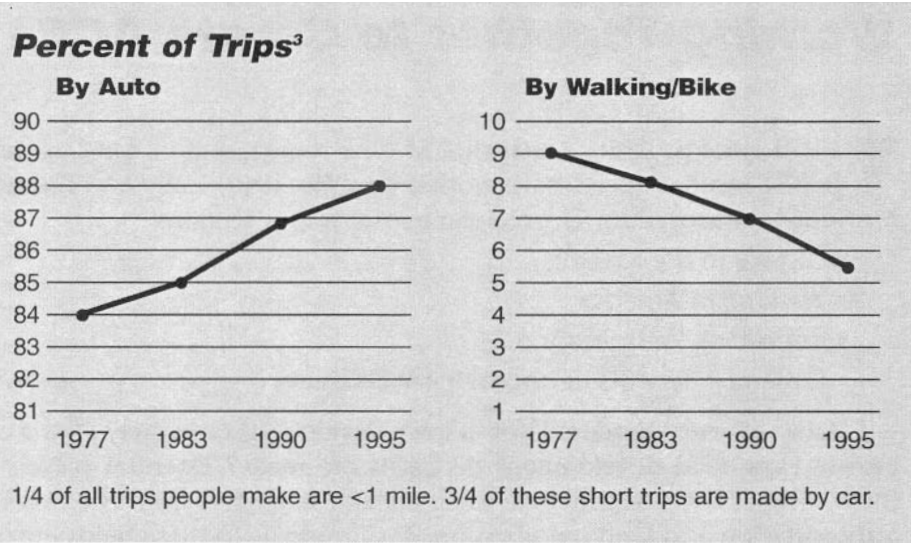
Today there is rising prevalence of chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, and some cancers. While all these diseases have complex causes, they have been dubbed "diseases of lifestyle," and promotion of healthy lifestyles is now a high public health priority. According to the Healthy Michigan 2010 Report, over 50 percent of adults reported participating in physical activity less than the recommended 30 minutes per day. Twenty-five percent said that they participated in no leisure-time physical activity at all. These startling statistics are one reason why policy and environmental changes are vital to increasing the health of Michigan residents.

One important reason why people in Michigan are not as active as they should be is that most communities are designed to favor one mode of travel—the automobile. Building roads, schools,

shopping centers, libraries, and other important places only for convenient access by cars often keeps people from safely walking or biking to their destinations. Once again there is great opportunity for transportation, land use, and public health planners to work together to influence the health of our society.

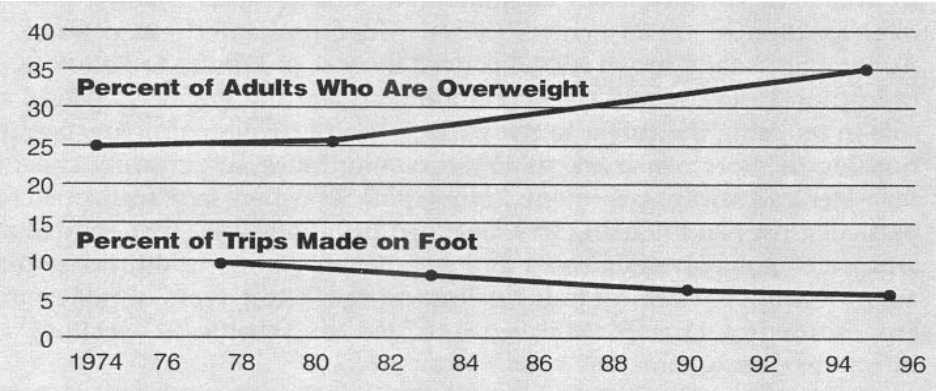
Walking and Biking in America

In the United States, nearly 25 percent of all trips are one mile or less. Yet 75 percent of these short trips are made by automobile. In fact, over the past 20 years, the number of trips taken by foot has decreased by 42 percent. International comparisons show that the United States has the least "walkable" cities and the lowest rate of walking as a means of transportation.



Source: National Personal Transportation Survey

This reliance on automobile travel translates into a negative impact on overall health. The Surface Transportation Policy Projects (STPP) compared health research to transportation data to illustrate this connection. They found that in metropolitan areas where people walk less, the prevalence of being overweight is greater, as shown in the figure below.



Source: National Personal Transportation Survey

Furthermore, for many people within urban cores, walking is the main form of transportation as alternative transportation modes may not be affordable and/or accessible. Walking tends to be particularly important for elderly, disabled, and lower-income people. Inadequate walkability is a major barrier to increased walking in many communities.

Increasing Physical Activity

To develop relevant policies and effective interventions, it is necessary to identify what changes to the built environment support people's ability to walk and bike. Environmental attributes are among the least understood of the known influences on physical activity, but this is a rapidly growing topic of research.

The following research findings provide guidance and validation for creating Healthy Communities:

- People who report having access to sidewalks are 28 percent more likely to be physically active.
- People who report having access to walking/jogging trails are 55percent more likely to be physically active.6
- Walking trips increase with good connectivity of the street network, a greater number of intersections and blocks, and streets that are calm, narrow, complex, and visually interesting.
- Many studies have presented a positive association between people's reporting higher physical activity levels and the access to shops within walking distance.6
- Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TND) offer more opportunities to make short trips and can generate approximately half the automobile trips of similarly sized suburban neighborhoods.

TND is a human-scale, walkable community with moderate to high residential densities and a mixed-use center. These developments have the potential to encourage and accommodate alternate transportation. Residents of traditional neighborhoods—those with connected sidewalks and a mix of uses—have more opportunities to take short trips by foot or bike.

Collateral Benefits of Improving Walkability and Bikeablity

When transportation and land use decisions are made with an eye toward creating a system that serves pedestrians, bicycles, wheelchairs, and public-transit users, there are numerous collateral benefits in addition to providing opportunities to be physically active. While extensive discussion of the following is outside the scope of this Healthy Communities Tool Kit, the following documented collateral benefits are worthy of mention:

- There is growing evidence that current transportation and land use patterns that promote automobile dependence adversely affect air quality and safety.
- International research suggests that shifts to nonmotorized transport increases road safety overall.
- Planning decisions that create healthy communities also have the potential to decrease air pollution and reduce municipal infrastructure costs—it costs less to use existing infrastructure than build to accommodate new, sprawling development.
- Some researchers have even linked healthy communities to reduced levels of depression among residents.12
- There is considerable research indicating a strong link between income inequality and poor health. It is generally accepted that sprawl can aggravate income inequality; more affordable housing is typically located away from jobs, forcing either reliance on the automobile or higher housing costs.,

Improving a Community's Ability to Eat Healthy

Why Is Healthy Eating Important?

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the number-one cause of death in Michigan, placing heavy economic burden on the state. Additionally, obesity is a known risk factor for cardiovascular disease, as well as many other serious health problems. Improving diet quality can play an important role in CVD and obesity management while reducing the associated health risks. It is increasingly important for individuals and organizations to come together to work on a community-wide approach to promoting healthy, active lifestyles.

So what is healthy eating? The details of that question often elude even the best and the brightest public health practitioners. We often face responses from community members such as:

- "Nutrition information changes daily, so I've just given up trying."
- "I've eaten this way my whole life; why should I change now?"
- "My grandfather ate a pound of bacon and a dozen eggs every day and lived to be 90—nutrition doesn't matter."
- "Who has time to eat healthy?"
- "A healthy diet is too complicated and costly."

Luckily, the research base supporting an increased fruit-and-vegetable intake for improved health status grows daily. High fruit-and-vegetable intakes are associated with a lower risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, and certain cancers; plus improvement of blood pressure and low-density lipoprotein cholesterol. Women ages 25 to 74 with more than three 3 servings of fruits and vegetables per day were associated with 27 percent lower risk of CVD and percent lower CVD mortality. Increasing one's fruit-and-vegetable intake is common weight-control advice because most fruits and vegetables tend to have fewer calories per serving than most other foods, making them a good substitute for higher-calorie foods. The beneficial effects of fruits and vegetables are considered to derive mainly from high content of fiber, antioxidants, minerals, folate, and phytochemicals. The problem is that only 20 percent of adults are eating more than five half-cup servings per day—the amount recommended for moderately active two to three year-olds.[16]

Economic benefits of population-based strategies to increase fruit-and-vegetable intake are also evident in communities. If every Michigan family spent $10 per week on Michigan-based products, we would return $35,000,000 to the Michigan economy weekly.[17] If consumers ate more than five servings of fruits and vegetables per day, the average U.S. supermarket would gain an additional $1,750,000 per year for.[18] A common misperception is that fruits and vegetables are expensive; yet according to the Economic Research Service (Bulletin 792-4), a consumer can consume an average of seven servings of fruits and vegetables per day for just 64 cents.[19]

In addition, an increase in fruit-and-vegetable intake has the potential to slow the skyrocketing of health care costs. In a recent study published in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, men aged 40 to 55 had an annual CVD Medicare expenditure of $4,223 associated with a low fruit-and-vegetable intake (less than one serving per day) compared to $3,128 associated with a high fruit and

vegetable intake (more than three servings per day of both fruits and vegetables). In general, the higher the fruit-and-vegetable consumption, the lower the Medicare charges.

Policy and environmental changes have the potential to make a positive impact on eating habits for entire communities. Examples of environmental changes include creation and use of community and/or school gardens and creation and support of local farmers' markets or mini-markets. Examples of policy changes that can positively influence healthy eating include work/school/church commitments to serving healthy options during meetings, such as more fresh fruits and vegetables; vending machines including healthy options, such as low-fat milk, 100 percent juice and water; and designated spaces for local farmers to sell their products.

The bigger question is this: where do I start? How do I know what the community wants and/or needs? The most logical answer to this question is to assess the nutrition environment of the community. Tools are available, such as the Healthy Community Checklist (HCC) and the Nutrition Environment Assessment Tool (NEAT) through www.mihealthtools.org. These tools and the process for completing the assessments are discussed in greater depth in Chapter 7.

The Potential Effect of Policies

Nutrition environment assessment is a powerful tool in identifying needed policy and environmental changes. For example, do you know whether your community is a "food desert"? The term 'desert' is used to describe an environment lacking in certain facilities—in this case, healthy, affordable food. According to the Journal of American Dietetic Association, "Food deserts are those areas of inner cities where cheap nutritious food is virtually unobtainable. Car-less residents, unable to reach out-of-town supermarkets, depend on the corner shop where prices are high, products are processed, and fresh fruit and vegetables are poor or non-existent." Often, food deserts emerge as a result of a variety of factors not limited to:

- Physical and economic barriers, such as a disability that limits the physical ability to shop or carry purchases or food-assistance programs that limit shopping locations.
- Limited ability to procure fresh produce during the off-season, especially in remote locations and cold climates.
- Limited ability to procure a variety of fresh produce in locations where there is such small local demand for fresh fruits and vegetables that store owners are not willing or able to stock highly perishable produce.
- A culture's inability or unwillingness to adapt to the fruits and vegetables available in a local supermarket. Food is often an important cultural link with one's country and culture of origin. If a South Asian lives in a predominantly Middle Eastern neighborhood, the local grocery may not stock produce linked to the South Asian culture.

Well-thought-out and enforced policies have the potential to affect a large number and variety of citizens. Policies can affect the quality and types of food available as well as the impact of profit-driven market forces. Imagine the impact on a community's health and economy if a policy were enforced that encouraged local farming of crops and then required area meal providers (schools, hospitals, nursing homes, corrections, etc.) to treat purchasing those locally grown crops as a top priority. The policy could be shaped in such a way that foods from farther away could be purchased if enough of a locally grown food item was not available. In addition, the policy would also allow for these food services to opt out of the agreement if costs became too high. A well-crafted policy of this type has the potential to affect not only the health of those eating in the participating establishments, but the local economy as a whole.

The Potential Within Environmental Changes

Community Greening

What good is community greening? That question is often asked by those unfamiliar with the potential impact of community gardens and green space. Luckily for community greeners, in recent years researchers have made some remarkable discoveries that demonstrate the benefits. The Plant-People Council has established a bibliography of scientific studies highlighting the individual and community benefits of plants and greening activities—from evidence that gardening can help one sleep better to the observation that street plantings reduce graffiti on nearby walls. In the words of University of Michigan psychologist Stephen Kaplan, the studies prove that "Nature is not just 'nice'… it is a vital ingredient in healthy human functioning." The fact is, plants have been linked to lower stress levels, a greater feeling of peacefulness and tranquility, a lower blood pressure, and decreased muscle tension. In addition, plants and greening activities have been linked to the development of healthy human communities. Researchers have found that they play at least three distinct roles in community development:

- They provide a more livable environment by controlling physical factors such as temperature, noise, and pollution;
- They help create a community image that is perceived as positive by both residents and outsiders; and
- They create opportunities for people to work together, be physically active regularly, and improve their community.

These factors translate directly into tangible economic and social benefits, including reduced crime, higher property values in greened areas, nutritious food from community gardens, increased physical activity, and increased business activity in attractive, green neighborhoods. The *Cultivating Community* monograph published by the American Community Gardening Association documents the stories of over a dozen community gardening organizations that have used community gardening to advance community organizing and development. These programs have been able to empower local leadership, nurture families, strengthen economic development, and improve overall quality of life.

Where does one start in community gardening? It is important to recognize that there are many ways to start or manage a community garden. In order for a garden to be sustainable as a true community resource, it must grow from local conditions and reflect the strengths, needs, and desires of the local community. Community gardens require diverse participation and leadership at all phases of the garden operation. For ideas on sustaining a community garden, visit www.growinghope.net/index.shtml, mixedgreens.org/, or www.lansingfoodbank.org/index.php/garden-project/ or check out the *Growing Communities Curriculum* published by the American Community Gardening Association.

Farmers' Markets

What is a farmers' market? A farmers' market is one in which farmers, growers, or producers from a defined local area are present in person to sell their own produce directly to the public. This type of direct marketing is an important sales outlet for agricultural producers nationwide. Farmers' markets continue to grow in popularity mostly due to the growing consumer interest in obtaining fresh products directly from the farm. The number of farmers' markets in the U.S. has grown dramatically,

increasing 111 percent from 1994 to 2004. Benefits to communities from farmers' markets include:

- Revenue for the 94 percent of all farmers who have less than $250,000 in annual farm receipts.
- Access to locally grown, farm-fresh produce and the opportunity to personally interact with the farmer who grows the produce.
- Nutrition education opportunities, teaching wholesome eating habits and better food preparation.
- Boost to the local community's economy.
- Little or no reliance on grant or in-kind support because market income typically pays for all costs associated with operation of the market.
- Participation of 25 percent of markets in gleaning programs aiding food-recovery organizations in the distribution of food and food products to needy families.

What is the difference between a farmers' market and a mini-market? Farmers' markets bring the farmer directly to the consumer. Sometimes, farmers are not available or other interested parties may wish to provide access to fresh fruits and vegetables through a mini-market. Mini-markets are locations where a community group procures the fruits and vegetables from a local farmer or produce vendor, sets up a table, and then sells the produce at cost to community members. Mini-markets have been successful at local churches, senior centers, and Head Start facilities. Markets like these typically run for an hour or two, once or twice each month.

Overview of Tobacco Control in Michigan

An epidemic of premature death is occurring in our great state of Michigan. Every year more than 15,000 Michiganders needlessly die from tobacco-related diseases, including cancer. In addition, approximately 2,500 adults, children, and infants die from the effects of exposure to secondhand smoke each year, costing Michigan over 200,000 years lost to premature death and several billion dollars annually in lost productivity and health care expenditures. The toll of tobacco is both a personal human tragedy and a major economic burden to our state.

The Facts About Tobacco Use in Michigan and Our Communities

- Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the state of Michigan and in all Michigan counties.
- Tobacco use is linked to all leading causes of death, such as heart disease, cancer, stroke, chronic lower respiratory disease, and diabetes.
- Cigarette smoking results in 15,000 deaths each year in Michigan, and exposure to secondhand smoke results in approximately 2,500 deaths each year, resulting in over 17,000 deaths in Michigan each year caused by smoking.
- Approximately 23.4 percent of adults smoke in Michigan, and 40 percent of these are young adults, ages 18 through 24. On average, adults who smoke cigarettes die 13 to14 years earlier than nonsmokers.
- Approximately 23 percent of Michigan high school students smoke. Nearly 30,000 Michigan youth under the age of 18 become new daily smokers each year, and approximately 32.4 million packs of cigarettes are bought or smoked by minors each year.[24],
- Parental smoking, peer pressure, and tobacco industry marketing and promotions are all powerful influences that can lead to youth smoking. Parental involvement can play an important role in youth smoking prevention.
- Exposure to secondhand smoke is the second leading cause of preventable death in Michigan. Anywhere between 1,400 and 2,500 adults, children, and babies in Michigan die each year from exposure to secondhand smoke.[23]

- Tobacco use has overwhelmingly increased the cost of health care and insurance, devastating the health of Michigan's economy, as well as the health of Michigan citizens. Smoking-related health care expenditures in Michigan are estimated to be $3.3 billion per year, and Michigan residents pay $597 per household in taxes for these smoking-related health care costs.[23]
- Smoking harms people of all ages, including unborn babies, infants, children, adolescents, adults, and seniors.[22]
- Smoking during pregnancy increases the risk of infant death, low birth weight, behavioral problems, and the possibility of onset of childhood and adult cancers.[22]
- Children and adolescents exposed to secondhand smoke are at increased risk of asthma, ear infections, colds, and pneumonia. Adults can suffer from heart disease, lung and numerous other cancers, and respiratory diseases such as chronic bronchitis and emphysema.[27] Seniors who smoke are at an increased risk of vision disease, such as cataracts, and neurological disease, such as Alzheimer's disease and dementia, in addition to being at higher risk for other smoking-related disease and illness.
- Nearly 62 percent of Michigan adults have tried to quit smoking during the past year.[24]
- Quitting smoking results in immediate short-term and long-term health benefits for the ex-smoker, and quitting can reduce a person's risk of dying from a smoking-related illness and extend quantity and quality of life at any age. According to the 2004 U.S. Surgeon General's report on the health consequences of smoking, quitting smoking at age 65 or older reduces a person's risk of dying of a smoking-related disease by nearly 50%.[22]

Communities can play a significant role in decreasing tobacco use among residents by increasing smoke-free environments through adopting and implementing of smoke-free policies and increasing the availability of local services to help smokers quit.

Local surveys from various Michigan counties have demonstrated that the majority of Michigan residents are in favor of smoke-free environments in worksites and other public places. Communities involved in increasing local smoke-free policies also need to identify and increase local services available to help smokers quit. Research has clearly demonstrated that smoke-free policies for worksites and other public places can encourage smokers to quit and prevent youth from starting to smoke. Involvement from all Michigan communities to increase access to cessation services among residents and to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke can greatly improve the health of all Michigan residents.

Tobacco-Control Movement—A Brief History

From its inception, the tobacco-control movement has enjoyed widespread support from varied sources and collaborative partnerships. The Michigan Tobacco Control Program has worked effectively and collaboratively with nonprofit advocacy groups, such as the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society, and the American Lung Association. In addition, the Michigan Tobacco Control Program has formed mutually beneficial relationships with many statewide organizations, such as the Michigan Association for Local Public Health, the Michigan Association for Health Plans, The Center for Social Gerontology, and the Michigan State Medical Society, as well as local groups, around key tobacco-control and policy issues. Tobacco-Free Michigan, a statewide grassroots organization formed in 1990, also has

played a key role in collaborating with state and local organizations on tobacco-related policy and environmental change.

Social Capital

There is some compelling, intuitive literature indicating a link between sprawl and adverse effects on a person's "social capital." Social capital consists of the stock of active connections among people: the trust, mutual understanding, and shared values and behaviors that bind the members of human networks and communities and facilitate cooperative action. These active connections can manifest themselves in memberships in neighborhood associations, PTOs/PTAs, fraternal organizations, and church groups, as well as the willingness to help a neighbor or even to borrow a cup of sugar. Communities with good social capital are more likely to benefit from lower crime figures, better health, higher educational achievement, and better economic growth.

Community design and transportation options may affect social capital. Women spend at least an hour in their cars every day (single mothers spend an average of 75 minutes), usually chauffeuring children or elderly parents. By the time they get home, they may have less inclination to go to a PTO/PTA meeting or participate in a neighborhood association. They may not even know their neighbors. Some researchers are working to determine whether there is a correlation between the amount of time spent in the car and a reduction in social capital.

Not surprisingly, our land use and transportation decisions have the potential to positively or negatively affect our active connections. In other words, if people lived in communities where commuting time was decreased, where every trip did not require a car, and where walking or bicycling options were more abundant, and where community gardens were alive and well, we could potentially see an increase in social capital.

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17 Select MI Campaign, 2005.

18 PBH 5 A Day: The Color Way for Retailers.

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23 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, State Highlights 2004. www.cdc.gov/tobacco/datahighlights/index.htm.

24 Michigan Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, 2004.

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Chapter 3
Who's Who and What's What

In this chapter you will learn whom to get to know and what sorts of organizations are involved in healthy-community work at the local, regional, state, and national levels. The chapter contains five sections:

1. Local and Regional Planning Resources
2. Worksheets to Help
3. Getting to Know Each Other—A Public Health Practitioner Interviews a Town Planner
4. Introducing the Michigan Department of Transportation
5. National Movements—Think Globally, Work Locally

Local and Regional Planning Resources

The best way to begin to understand local planning efforts is to identify local municipal officials, departments, and volunteer boards that play a role. Once you determine who's who and what's what (which can vary widely in different locations), it's a good idea to attend meetings, review minutes, and start contacting decision-makers (elected officials, staff, and volunteer board members). Check out their level of interest, see what they are working on, and—most importantly—offer to be a resource or partner in their efforts.

Below is a general list of local contacts with whom you may want to partner and present your ideas. Please keep in mind that your area may not have all of these boards and committees, and it may have other relevant groups. Committees are often formed to address specific needs of a community. Investigate to learn what is out there. Also recognize that there are regional and state-level resources that may also be of assistance to a community. A few key examples, with descriptions, are included in this list.

Village, Township, or City

Governing Board
- Township or City Council
- Board of Aldermen
- Mayor

Departments
- Planning
- Zoning
- Public Works
- Police
- Parks and Recreation
- Transportation

Key Staff
- Township/City Manager
- Planning Director
- Zoning Administrator
- Transportation/Traffic Engineer
- Police Chief
- Public Works Director
- Parks and Recreation Director
- Community Development Director

Citizen Advisory Councils/Boards
- Planning and Zoning (these may be separate or together)
- Appearance/Aesthetics
- Bicycle and Pedestrian
- Community Design
- Greenways
- Historic District
- Housing and Community Development
- Transportation*
- Land Use and/or Development*

**Indicates that this committee may be ad hoc or temporary in nature.*

Private/Public Organizations and Boards
- Chamber of Commerce
- Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Main Streets Programs
- Neighborhood homeowners associations
- Parent/teacher organizations and associations
- Travel and Tourism Board
- Local school board
- Gardening associations such as Master Gardeners or Cooperative Extension
- Local tobacco-reduction coalitions

County Government

Governing Board

County Board of Commissioners
Chair, County Commission

Key Staff

County Manager
Planning Director
Zoning Administrator
Inspections and Permits staff
Law Enforcement
Superintendent
Parks and Recreation Director

Departments

Planning
Zoning
Public Health
Parks and Recreation
Sheriff's Office

Citizen Advisory Councils/Boards

Planning
Zoning
Health
Environment
Extension
Greenway
Social Services
Housing
Economic Development
Recreation
Transportation
School Board

Metropolitan Planning Organizations

Metropolitan Planning Organizations, or MPOs, are required by federal transportation planning law. MPOs generally contain Census Bureau–designated "urbanized areas"—areas with a base population of at least 50,000 persons and densities equal to greater than 500 persons per square mile. MPO boundaries are mutually agreed upon by the governor and the majority of the local elected officials within an urbanized area. Michigan has 12 major MPOs. MPOs usually consist of two committees—the Transportation Policy or Executive Committee (TPC) and the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC), each of which identifies community needs and makes transportation project recommendations for the Priority Needs List for its planning area. Each MPO adopts a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for its region, and all MPOs work with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to develop a State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). State law permits adjacent MPOs to consolidate as needed and requires that MPOs within a non-attainment work together to coordinate air-quality programs. This is particularly relevant for Healthy Communities Advocates because efforts to improve air quality often include efforts to make communities more bicycle- or pedestrian-friendly.

Rural Task Forces

Rural Task Forces represent the jurisdictions providing transportation services and consist of cities, unincorporated villages with fewer than 5,000 residents, transit operators, county road commissions, MDOT, and, when appropriate, Indian tribal governments.

The Rural Task Forces select projects in accordance with funding targets established by MDOT, based on projected amounts of federal and state funds to be received. Projects within the task force boundaries are also reviewed for eligibility and consistency with the criteria established for the state's Transportation Economic Development Fund and the federal Surface Transportation Program.

Regional Councils of Government (COGs)

These organizations work to meet the region's needs in a wide range of areas—land use planning, economic development, environmental protection, emergency medical services support, programs for the aging, and information services. While programs may vary across regions, COGs generally provide a number of services to their member governments that may include mapping and geographic information services and website design and maintenance.

Local Community Health Coalitions and Community Tobacco-Reduction Coalitions

These coalitions are located in cities and counties throughout Michigan and can provide technical assistance and resources to increase access to nutritious foods, opportunities for physical activity, and local smoke-free environments. Community coalitions can collaborate with community agencies and organizations to assist with planning, supporting, and implementing physical activity, nutrition, tobacco-free programs, policies, and changes in the environment that will aid in the creation of a healthier community.

Worksheets to Help

The following pages contain three worksheets:

- Who Makes the Decisions in Your Community?
- When Do Meetings Take Place?
- Informal Leaders

Who Makes the Decisions in Your Community? Worksheet

Name	Title	Contact Information	Board or Committees	Preferred Contact	Pet Project or Focus
Bruce Cats	*Mayor*	*555 Main Street Smart City, MI 48888 555-3333(t) 555-3331(f) mayorbruce@smrtity.org*	*City Council, Regional Planning Commission, Rotary*	*Emails for short notes; in person for lengthy conversations*	*Smart Growth, affordable housing*
Pete Cowthorpe	*Planning Director*	*444 Main Street Rurality, MI 48111*	*Staff to Planning Board, Zoning Board, Land Development*	*Telephone, email*	*Revising Land Development Plan to include higher density, mixed uses, and multiple modes of transit, connecting neighborhoods to local schools.*

EXAMPLE

How To:

To gain an understanding of who's who within your community, complete the *Who* and the *When* worksheets (located on the following pages) by visiting the local government websites for both your city and county. If none currently exists, visit your local library and ask the reference specialist for this information or visit/call your local government sites (town halls, county office buildings, wherever meetings are held) and ask the secretary or staff person for the relevant information.

The *Informal Leaders* worksheet may require time and experience to figure out who the "movers and shakers" are in your community. Informal leaders may change as the nature of the work changes.

When Do Meetings Take Place Worksheet

Committee or Board	Meeting Frequency	Time	Public Comment Period	Relevant Information
Planning Board (City)	*3rd Monday of each month*	*4 pm*	*Yes, varies*	*Request agenda packet from Luann prior to meetings; talk to Mike about content of agenda & best practices.*
County Commissioners	*1st Monday and 3rd Wednesday of each month*	*5 pm, Mondays* *9 am, Wednesdays*	*Yes*	*Request agenda from Libby; talk with county manager to get an agenda.*

EXAMPLE

Informal Leaders Worksheet

Name	Contact Information	Boards or Committees	Pet Project or Focus	Notes
Eva Luna	*1133 S. Main St. Happyville, MI 48887 553-4545 (tel) 553-4546 (fax) evarocks@scream.net*	*One Less Car Coalition; Council for Women; School Board*	*Fewer widenings of roads, more sidewalks and bike lanes*	*Good organizer and public speaker*
Barney Bedrock	*4433 Bedrock Lane Brevard, MI 48555 554-5566 barney@yahoo.com*	*Chamber of Commerce; Committee of 100; Partners for Economic Progress; Rotary*	*More road widenings = bigger and better business and more $$ for residents, industrial growth*	*Doesn't get the bike/ped connection to econ. development; had some meetings with him, but need more.*

EXAMPLE

Getting to Know Each Other—A Public Health Practitioner Interviews a Town Planner

This is an actual interview that a public health practitioner conducted with her town planner. Conducting an interview like this one is an excellent way to get to know professionals in transportation and land use planning, as well as to learn more about the planning process in your area.

Planning and Policy

Public Health Practitioner (PHP): *If a health professional or a citizen wants to suggest community changes or get involved in the planning process, where should he or she start?*

Town Planner (TP): Start by contacting the planning staff, either at the municipal level or with the county. They may already be planning on doing what you are requesting as part of a short- or longer-term plan. For example, our Capital Improvements Program is an extensive five-year plan that includes roads, sidewalks, and trails.

PHP: *If we don't have township/city planning, where do we start?*

TP: You can also start with the County Planning Department. There is a County Planning Director and usually a County Parks and Recreation Director. You can usually go to their websites for contact information.

PHP: *What is the main difference in what the Planning Department focuses on versus the Parks and Recreation Department?*

TP: The Planning Department is generally more focused on patterns of development, including land uses and transportation, whereas the Parks and Recreation Department is more focused on recreation facilities and programs. In some communities these departments work closely with each other, while in others they may work very separately.

PHP: *Is there a policy manual for planning?*

TP: The Land Use Plan of the city/county is the "policy," but it is not set in stone and can be flexible depending on the situation. That plan along with, for example, a Thoroughfare Transportation Plan and a Capital Improvement Program/Budget act as the policy for planning. Tools are then needed to implement the plan—such as the Unified Development Ordinance, which details the processes concerning new development.

PHP: *How can we tell if "new development" is occurring?*

TP: When property is being developed, we generally post signs on the property, such as Development, Rezoning. This is always done if a public hearing is required about the development. If you want to see if a sidewalk or community garden space will be included or just want to know what is being developed, you can call the planning staff for information.

Local Involvement

PHP: *Can community members get involved in shaping these policies, implementing specific standards, or influencing the design of developments?*

TP: Corridor Plans or Small Area Plans generally focus on a specific area for a limited amount of time. These are usually more interesting to people and often involve a steering committee to which people are appointed or recommended, sometimes through an expression of interest to be part of the process. For example, for one corridor plan in town, the GIS system identified property owners in a particular area and then contacted them to see if they were interested in participating. Ultimately, the mayor selected the steering committee. So if it is well known that a particular individual has an interest or if an individual has built a relationship with staff and the board, then that individual may find himself receiving an invitation to participate in some capacity.

Also, Planning Board meetings and Town Commissioner meetings are always open to the public and public comment is welcome, both non-agenda items and during public hearings on issues.

Bright Idea:
Keep your ear to the ground and your eyes peeled! Read the public notice section of your local newspaper to find out about upcoming rezoning issues, permits, etc. You can also request agenda packets for planning boards and commissions, boards of adjustment, and town councils.

PHP: *In addition to steering team committees for certain projects, how else can community members be involved?*

TP: Community members can be involved on boards. One can express interest and submit an application in some townships. Generally, boards are appointed by the mayor and have terms of two years, but some appointments are indefinite. People can and should get involved anytime the opportunity presents itself—attend meetings and keep your eyes open for public workshops and hearings.

PHP: *What other groups should I get to know if I want to learn more about these issues?*

TP: Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) typically deal with transportation issues on a regional level. Councils of Government focus on regional planning as well, but they focus on the region more comprehensively—not just transportation but environmental issues, trails, etc.

PHP: *What is the bottom line for getting started in the arena of promoting Active Community Environments (known as Healthy Communities in Michigan)?*

TP: Establish relationships with your Planning Department staff—know what is going on and let them know what you are interested in. Get involved!

Sidewalks and Bike Lanes

PHP: *Are there provisions for the inclusion of sidewalks in new development?*

TP: In this township, when land is being developed for a new purpose, sidewalks must be included. Depending on the type of street, sidewalks may be on both sides or on only one side of the road. For main thoroughfares, sidewalks must be on both sides. For urban streets, which are classified as all roads except for thoroughfares and cul-de-sacs, sidewalks must be on one side of the road. Cul-de-sacs usually do not require sidewalks because it is thought that traffic will be slower on these roads.

PHP: *If we or a group of neighborhood citizens request a sidewalk, will we get it?*

TP: A sidewalk can be requested but may not be approved because, for example, not everyone on the street may be in favor of it. Some people oppose sidewalks because they feel it will take away area from their front yards. Often it takes unanimous support of residents who would be affected by the sidewalk for it to be approved. Technically, municipalities have the power of eminent domain—they can take the property and pay the owner fair market value for it, but usually towns do not want to do that. Another reason a sidewalk may not be approved is that the township does not have funds to construct it.

PHP: *Are provisions for bike facilities (bike lanes, wide shoulders, wide curb lanes) similar to those used for sidewalks?*

TP: Bike lanes are more difficult because they require more space. Often, if a bike lane is to be included, it may require that some of the utilities (e.g., traffic sensors) be placed under the road, rather than under the bike lane. Many townships do not want to do this in case there are problems and the street needs to be dug up. Bicycling often defaults into "Share the Road," where bicyclists are expected to share the road with cars rather than use a separate lane.

Smoke-free Bike Lanes and Other Recreational Areas

PHP: *How can community members get involved in increasing smoke-free environments where people are physically active?*

TP: Community members can contact their local tobacco-reduction coalition and develop a plan to present to the city or township manager or village board, depending on the municipality, and request that they consider making new and existing bike lanes, walking trails, and parks smoke-free. Making these areas smoke-free not only protects the health of residents while they are active but also increases safety by decreasing fire hazards and preventing fires that can be caused by people throwing away cigarette butts on the ground. In addition, not allowing smoking increases the beautification by eliminating cigarette butts on bike lanes, on walking trails, and in parks as well as other recreational areas.

Introducing the Michigan Department of Transportation

When individuals or groups start working to create more-active communities, at some point they will cross paths with the MDOT). Learning the inner workings of MDOT can be somewhat overwhelming. But knowing some basics about our state DOT can help.

First, understand that MDOT is a very large state-level organization. MDOT has responsibility for a tremendous number of roads and highways and consequently has many divisions and departments. Main roads through a community are typically state-maintained, but there are many municipal-system roadways over which MDOT has no jurisdiction. It serves Healthy Communities Advocates well to understand the difference between these two systems, how the systems work, and ways to partner with MDOT and local decision-makers in order to achieve common goals. Yes, common goals exist!

Second, understand that MDOT's structure suggests that a particular order be followed to achieve local changes in support of healthy communities.

- **Start Locally.** It is always critical for a Healthy Community Advocate to work with local elected officials, whether the community is part of a MPO a Rural Task Force, or neither. Begin by informing the local elected officials and key staff of needed improvements and the importance of having a community with safe bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Other key contacts include engineers, directors of public works, and the city or county manager. When a community resides within an MPO jurisdiction, all transportation plans formulated within these jurisdictions must be made in collaboration with the MPO. The same applies to communities within a Rural Task Force jurisdiction. Depending on where you reside, it is important to work first with these planning organizations in developing a plan before approaching MDOT. Without the support of the MPO or Rural Task Force, a community plan will not go very far.
- **State-Level Contacts:** While the transportation system has a structure and a recommended order for getting things done, the process is not always linear.

Caution:
For most communities, it is critical that before contacting the state level, Healthy Communities Advocates work through all other levels—that is, start locally! This works to a community's advantage. If local and regional players (local elected officials, MPO representatives, Region and TSC engineers) are fully informed, they can have a ready response should a state-level staff person contact them. If a community group has not worked through the suggested channels, then it will appear not to have the support of local elected officials. Local support is critical to a project's success.

Sometimes a community may feel compelled to start with state-level contacts, rather than at a local level. This may be due to time constraints, new information regarding a particular project or development, or staff changes. Building relationships is always important, but remember that a project will ultimately go through the MPO process.

- **Regional Level:** As you identify and work with your local contacts, also begin working at a more regional level. In MDOT terms, that means within a particular region office.

  MDOT has seven regions across the state and each has an MDOT field office with engineers and other key staff who may be able to answer questions or provide guidance on particular improvements to roads under state jurisdiction. These include all statewide interstate freeways and state trunkline roads. State trunklines are identified with a black and white sign and the letter M followed by a number, such as M-43 (Saginaw Hwy.) or M-99 (Martin Luther King) in Lansing.

  Within each region are also multiple Transportation Service Centers (TSCs), which serve the local communities in that area. It is imperative that the region engineer and staff be informed of a community's bicycle and pedestrian needs. Having a good relationship can go a long way toward making lasting improvements within a community. The region engineer will have extensive knowledge about the community and potential funding options. In particular, the region engineer will have knowledge of all planned projects and resurfacing projects for their assigned region.

National Movements—Think Globally, Work Locally

National Quality of Life movements are directly and indirectly related to creating active and healthy communities. They span a broad spectrum of issues, from affordable housing to clean air. Promoting physical activity may not be at the top of these potential partners' agendas, but what public health brings to the table is often found to be intriguing and less controversial. It serves public health practitioners and their partners well to investigate a fit within these groups.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation convened a panel of experts from multiple disciplines in November 2000 in Washington, D.C. The experts compiled the following list of Quality of Life movements, each with identified key principles. Read through this list and then investigate to find out whether there is a similar group or effort in your locality or region. Once you determine who and what exists, meet with key individuals, see what they are working on, and evaluate whether a collaborative partnership will further your efforts.

See page 10 for Quality of Life Movement Table

Some of these Quality of Life movement principles may be familiar or intuitive to you, while others need additional investigation. Take time to do some Internet research in order to boost your understanding and comfort level.

Quality of Life Movement	Associated Disciplines	Principles
Smart Growth	*Land Use* *Transportation* *Economic Development*	• *Mix land uses* • *Take advantage of compact building design* • *Create housing opportunities and choice* • *Create walkable communities* • *Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place* • *Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas* • *Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities* • *Provide a variety of transportation choices* • *Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective* • *Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions*
Livable Communities	*Architecture* *City Planning*	• *Create better homes and communities* • *Create community school and civic places* • *Encourage smart growth* • *Enhance water resources* • *Empower individuals and communities* • *Preserve open space and farmland* • *Promote transportation choices* • *Reclaim brownfields* • *Strengthen local economies*
Sustainable Communities	*Environment*	• *Live sustainably* • *Create community* • *Grow a sustainable economy* • *Protect natural resources* • *Smart growth* • *Govern community*
Healthy Communities	*Public Health*	• *Broad definition of health* • *Broad definition of community* • *Shared vision from community values* • *Improve quality of life for everyone* • *Diverse citizen participation and widespread community ownership* • *Focus on system change* • *Develop local assets and resources* • *Benchmarks and measures of progress and outcomes*
New Urbanism	*Architecture* *Economic Development* *Urban Design*	• *Compact, walkable neighborhoods with clearly defined centers and edges* • *Interconnected network of streets* • *Neighborhoods and surrounding region connected by public transit* • *Diverse mix of activities (residences, shops, schools, workplaces, parks) in close proximity* • *Wide spectrum of housing options should enable people of broad range of incomes, ages, and family types to live within a single neighborhood.*

Chapter 4
Windows of Opportunity

In this chapter you will be introduced to windows of opportunity whereby advocates have an opportunity to influence community design through land use and transportation planning processes. Be forewarned: this work is not simple or straightforward, but your efforts to understand the process will be very beneficial to your organization. This chapter contains eight sections:

- Land Use Planning in Michigan
- Land Use Planning Intervention Points
- Policy Statements for Land Use Planning
- Transportation Planning
- Michigan Long-Range Transportation Goals for 2000–2025
- Policy Statements for Multimodal Transportation Plans
- Developing a Local Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
- Funding for Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects

Land Use Planning in Michigan

In August of 2003, *Michigan's Land, Michigan's Future: Final Report of The Michigan Land Use Leadership Council* was presented to Governor Granholm by The Michigan Land Use Leadership Council. The report outlines general land use and related trends and conditions in Michigan; vision and goals for future land use; principles and recommendations for urban revitalization, land resources-based industries, planning and development regulations, and infrastructure and community services.

The council established the following three goals to help guide in creating the report:

- Economic prosperity;
- Stewardship of the environment and cultural and natural resources; and
- Equitable distribution of benefits to all residents.

In order to meet these goals, the council addressed the following issues within the report:

- Preserving agricultural land, forestland, wildlife habitat, and scenic resources that form the basis of Michigan's land-resource-based industries by enhancing existing programs and creating new incentives for private landowners to maintain these valuable undeveloped open spaces.
- Supporting efforts to make Michigan cities more livable by expediting the reuse of abandoned properties, controlling blight, encouraging private investment, encouraging mixed-use development, improving transportation options, supporting a full range of housing options, and attracting and retaining residents who can contribute to the viability of our urban core areas.
- Making better use of existing public infrastructure by encouraging public and private investment in already developed areas.
- Providing new tools to local government to encourage better land use decisions that allow more compact, mixed-use development.

- Creating incentives to encourage interagency and intergovernmental cooperation in addressing land use issues and public investments of more than local concern.
- Encouraging private investment in already developed areas by removing governmental barriers and creating incentives.
- Streamlining state and local government financial assistance and regulatory programs that support land use practices consistent with the visions and goals previously outlined.
- Seeking government partnerships with for-profit and nonprofit sectors to create a range of affordable housing options.
- Identifying "commerce centers" where infrastructure is already serving relatively dense populations to guide the future investment of state resources to support private investment and development.a

The intent of the report was to provide decision-makers with a foundation for making land use policies that protect the natural resources of the state as well as protect the interests and well-being of Michigan residents. The goals and issues outlined above have been provided to create awareness and to educate public health officials on state priorities and focus areas. This knowledge will be beneficial in working with local planners and in understanding the planning process. A full copy of the report can be obtained by visiting The Land Use Leadership Council website at www.michiganlanduse.org/finalreport.htm.

Land Use Planning Intervention Points

The American Planning Association has identified five intervention points in which interested citizens can get involved in influencing the development of a more physically active community.[b] Public health practitioners should consider these five intervention points as important windows of opportunity.

1. Visioning and Goal-Setting
2. Plans and Planning
3. Implementation Mechanisms
4. Site Design and Project Review
5. Public Facility Siting Decisions

> *"We shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us."*
> —Winston Churchill
>
> *October 18, 1943, to the House of Commons (meeting in the House of Lords)*

Visioning and Goal-Setting

This is the process by which a community imagines its most desirable future, and it's the time you have the most impact in planning—at the beginning. Many planning efforts begin with some sort of community visioning exercise (e.g., "What do we want to look like in 20 years?"). Visioning and goal-setting processes are often called strategic-planning efforts, but they are actually a precursor to true strategic planning. Visioning and goal setting typically involve thinking broadly about the direction in which a community wants to head. This exercise provides a foundation for further specific strategic plans that spell out details for getting there.

How To:

Specific ways in which you may want to get involved in a visioning and goal-setting effort:

- Ask to be placed on the Visioning Committee.
- Offer to assist in gathering community input.
- Make a presentation about the benefits of a walkable, healthy community. (Chapter 7 provides useful tools for Healthy Community presentations.)
- Offer to develop educational materials and fact sheets, or to gather statistics.

Communities that decide to embark on a visioning process are usually looking for ideas and innovation. For public health professionals, this is a great opportunity to educate and create momentum for healthy communities. If community members get excited about walkability, access to healthy foods, smoke-free living and active-living opportunities, these issues can become part of a working vision and can be embedded within community goals. Ultimately, there can be substantial impact on future policy and development.

Plans and Planning

In the world of land use planning, there are typically three broad categories of plans: comprehensive plans, sub-area plans, and functional plans. These plans can powerfully affect a community. The challenge for public health practitioners is to understand the scope of each type of plan and get a seat at the table when these plans are being written or revised.

Comprehensive Plan Examples	Sub-area Plan Examples	Functional Plan Examples
Master Plan	*Neighborhood Plan*	*Transportation Plan*
General Plan	*Downtown Plan*	*Infrastructure Plan*
	Corridor Plan	*Parks and Recreation Plan*
	Small-Area Plan	*Open-Space Plan*
		Circulation Plan
		Human Services Plan
		Housing Plan
		Bike/Pedestrian Plan

A **Comprehensive Plan** for a community tends to be broad in nature, so the inclusion of any healthy-community principles would be general in scope. Some examples might include enhancing walkability countywide or encouraging new development when bicycle and pedestrian connections are feasible

A **Sub-area Plan** may include a level of detail that specifically outlines a particular pedestrian or bicycle "treatment," such as sidewalks on both sides of the road, bicycle racks in the business district, or countywide traffic-calming measures.

Functional Plans may be made entirely of bicycle or pedestrian elements, as is the case with a bicycle and/or pedestrian plan or a particular section of a transportation plan. A housing plan or an infrastructure plan can include elements that will enhance opportunities for walking or bicycling through infill development or rehabilitation of existing buildings. While functional plans may seem only remotely related to healthy-community design, they carry tremendous opportunities for positively impacting physical activity. Pay attention to these functional plans— they may be just the "window" you need to start the healthy-communities ball rolling.

Urban infill is a loosely defined term, which refers to development projects on vacant urban land or the redevelopment of a blighted building or neighborhood.

You may be surprised at how much you have to offer to warrant getting a seat at the table when these types of plans are being written or revised. Additionally consider the data, resources, and best practices you have to offer.

Data that help you make the case for creating active communities include:

- Local health data (BRFSS).
- Results from a local community assessment (see Chapter 7 on community assessments).
- National health trends.

Resources here means your talents to pull diverse source of information together—your partners, your money, or relevant healthy communities publications, guides, and books (see Chapter 8).

Get Involved!

It is important to remember that the local planning department views public input as a necessary component of any good plan. When a formal public input meeting is called, make sure that the room is full of healthy-communities advocates. Have your coalition prepared to make short presentations and to write follow-up letters. The opportunity to provide public input is an important juncture.

Best practices are found in a growing body of information on quality-of-life movements (see Chapter 3). Information on best practices that can help planners and decision-makers figure out how to get started in their communities can be found by:

- Surfing the Internet, using key words such as *smart growth, livable communities, walkability, bicycling and walking, new urbanism*, etc.
- Visiting websites for national, state, and local planning organizations. Often they post their ordinances, recommended policies, and design guidelines. Finding a community with demographics similar to your own that has experienced success in creating an active community can be very helpful.

Implementation Mechanisms

Several implementation mechanisms are in place throughout planning departments and local governments across Michigan. Chief and perhaps the most powerful among these is the zoning ordinance. Zoning can regulate everything from density to open space and all that falls in between.

If mixed-use development is determined to be the key to a more active community, its inclusion in the zoning ordinance and the subdivision regulations is critical. If sidewalks are desired in new developments, they must be reflected in the zoning ordinance. Unfortunately, supportive planning commission members and staff will be unable to help if these aspects are not in the ordinance, but your relationships with them will help. Start discussions about adding in important implementation mechanisms that foster healthy communities. If at first an existing ordinance blocks progress, don't give up! Talk with decision-makers and keep requesting supportive changes to existing ordinances.

Example:

1. Higher density, with a more compact design.
2. Mixed uses (commercial/business districts, residences, schools, churches) with design guidelines to ensure that the buildings remain at a human scale and proportion.
3. Connectivity among destinations and transportation options.
4. Required bicycle or pedestrians facilities (sidewalks, crosswalks, bicycle parking, etc.).
5. Open spaces and parks.

In an effort to create transportation projects that increase the quality of transportation, quality of life, and the vitality of our communities, context sensitive design was introduced as another important

implementation mechanism. In 2003, Governor Granholm issued a directive outlining several strategies for the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to incorporate context sensitive design whenever feasible. Under the directive MDOT will:

- Create educational programs for staff and consultants to develop the skills necessary to implement context sensitive design for transportation projects; and
- Develop policies and procedures to expand utilization of context sensitive design principles.c

Context sensitive design is the collaborative, interdisciplinary approach involving stakeholders for the development of a transportation facility that considers its physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility.

Site Design and Project Review

Most planning jurisdictions have established site design and project review requirements, especially in downtowns and historic districts. Typically, Michigan communities require the planning commission to review a project before it goes on to the governing body. Through a standard review process, the planning commission ensures that the proposed project meets all zoning ordinance requirements. It is important to remember, however, that not every project will go before the planning commission. Smaller projects may be handled by planning staff, or even the city or township manager. Check with your local planning department to find out the parameters of your community.

Special Requirements

A planning board can make certain special requests before approving a project through a process called "special use." A special-use review allows a planning board to recommend that the project meet additional requirements, such as making the project compatible with the adjoining uses or with the neighborhood in which will be developed. As a general rule, however, the planning commission cannot ask the project to incorporate elements above and beyond what is required by the ordinance. Therefore, it is crucial that healthy-communities elements are included in the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations prior to project review.

Does Your Community Have the Following Site-design Elements in its Zoning Ordinance or Subdivision Regulations?

- An emphasis on security, through lighting and increased visibility.
- Protection from traffic (e.g., adequate buffers, sound considerations).
- Buildings oriented to the street.
- Zero or minimal setback requirements for buildings.
- Integrated public art.
- Architecture and appearance that is compatible with the neighborhood and that encourages pedestrian activity.
- Street trees, landscaping, open spaces.
- On-site pedestrian and bicycle facilities, particularly when there are several destinations within one site.

Public Facility Siting Decisions

Most planning jurisdictions, whether municipality or county, will have to determine appropriate sites for public facilities such as libraries, post offices, city/town hall, parks, and community centers. The exception is school siting; selection of a site is decided by the school district.

These important facilities are common destinations. Sometimes there is a tendency to locate public facilities in a greenfield area, because of lower land costs and the opportunity to build a new building. When planned with sensitivity to the area and surrounding uses, greenfield development can offer opportunities for active living. Alternatively, careful reuse of existing buildings, or infill development, can also achieve these results. The goal with either is to strive to locate these important community facilities near where people, live, shop, worship, and play.

Buzzword: Greenfields are areas where no development pattern currently exists. They may be farms, pastures, or previously undeveloped land.

A Final Word on the Five Intervention Points

These five intervention points provide a framework in which interested citizens can get involved in community design and land use planning. It bears repeating that the most important thing is *getting* and *staying* informed on what is going on in your community. This sort of knowledge depends on key relationships within the planning, political, and development communities. These strategic relationships will allow you to take advantage of the intervention points in a manner that produces results.

Understanding where an impact can be made and where it is not possible enhances your reputation with the planning staff and planning commission members. An informed advocate is welcome in most circles; an uninformed advocate who stomps his feet without having done his homework rarely is.

Policy Statements for Land Use Planning

Below are suggested policy statements, with several examples and accompanying strategies that may help you as you work with your local planning staff and commission. These particular policy statements may not be the best fit for your community, but can be a starting point for thoughtful discussion and collaboration. Your planner may already have some of these ideas in mind but lack the support that he or she needs to start working on them. Your efforts may be able to bring public attention and support to these ideas. Start looking over existing zoning ordinances, meet with your local planner or trusted planning commission member, and identify which of the following statements might work best within your community.

Policy 1: Revise zoning ordinances to encourage and facilitate a network for pedestrian and bicyclists.

- Require sidewalks on both sides of all public streets, ensuring that they connect to building entrances.
- Encourage a greater mix of uses and housing choices in neighborhoods and communities.
- Offer development incentives.
- Cluster buildings and activities.
- Orient buildings toward the street and sidewalk.
- Promote increased visibility with lighting and building site designs.

Overlay zones—which permit a special application of land use and building design standards in a targeted area—and **planned unit developments (PUDs)** are two examples of tools that can be used to create mixed-use and walkable communities.

- Plant street trees.
- Reduce the amount of required off-street surface parking (e.g., change minimum to maximum parking requirements).
- Avoid blank or dull facades.
- Promote quality architectural and landscape design.
- Use innovative zoning tools to encourage mixed-use communities and buildings.

Policy 2: Encourage traffic-calming approaches, innovative street layout, and design.

- Require building and site design that makes commercial and/or business districts more walkable.
- Connect developments, parking lots, greenways, and walkways.
- Ensure that civic buildings are sited in greenfield areas and are part of a planned, walkable community with a mix of uses.
- Incorporate transit-oriented development (TOD) and traditional neighborhood development (TND) principles into existing land development regulations.
- Take advantage of planned unit and residential development (PUD, PRD) guidelines to encourage mixed-use communities.

Policy 3: Utilize traffic-calming approaches, innovative street layout, and design.

- Utilize context sensitive designs (www.fhwa.dot.gov/csd/ or www. pps.org/vss/cssonline.htm.)
- Prioritize and implement streetscape improvements.
- Develop on-street-parking policies.

Policy 4: Earmark capital improvements programs for mixed-use development or multimodal enhancements.

Policy 5: Utilize financial set-asides.

Policy 6: Avoid linear (strip) development by promoting the construction of "activity centers:" clusters of shopping, services, employment, and public activity that will broaden the choices and opportunities of citizens to live, work, shop, worship, visit, and attend school in the area.

- Convert declining shopping malls and strip commercial streets into mixed-use developments.
- Concentrate critical services near homes, jobs, and transit.

The above policy statements are examples taken from:

- City of Hendersonville Principles of Growth Steering Committee, "The City of Hendersonville Principles of Growth." (May 2002) Contact City of Hendersonville, N.C. Planning Department.
- The Smart Growth Network and The International City/County Managers Association, "Getting to Smart Growth: 100 Policies for Implementation" (2002) Found at www.smartgrowth.org/pdf/gettosg.pdf

Many other examples exist. Surf the internet to find the ones best suited for your community. Investigate local government websites and look for zoning ordinances, growth principles, and small-area or neighborhood plans for innovative ideas.

Transportation Planning

The key window of opportunity for transportation planning in Michigan is the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). But even more important is to understand that almost everything in the STIP first comes from a local or regional plan. Trying to insert something into the STIP without its first being part of a plan—a transportation plan with at least a 20-year planning horizon per federal regulations, or a pedestrian plan, etc.—will result in failure more often than not if the project sponsor is seeking federal funds or a federal action is required. To create more healthy communities, you must understand how the STIP works.

The STIP includes projects from many Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) departments, including highways, enhancements, public transportation, rail, and non-motorized facilities. MDOT develops a new STIP every two years. Communities are given an opportunity to offer input through their MPOs and Rural Task Forces. But remember, if it's not in a long-range transportation plan, it's not likely to appear in the STIP.

Another key element in the funding of transportation planning is the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: a Legacy for Users, otherwise known as SAFETEA-LU. SAFETEA-LU is a $244.1 billion, five-year federal transportation funding bill passed by Congress and signed by the President on August 10, 2005 and replaces the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). The bill authorizes funding for fiscal years 2005 to 2009. Under SAFETEA-LU total spending on transit programs and projects will reach $52.6 billion, while spending on highway programs and projects will reach $233.9 billion between the years of 2004 and 2009.

What this new legislation means for Michigan:

- SAFETEA-LU is projected to provide Michigan with approximately $239 million more in federal highway funds each year than we received under TEA-21.
- Michigan will receive $108 million per year in public-transit funds from 2006 through 2009—an increase of $28 million per year or 39 percent over the funding that Michigan previously received.
- Increased highway and transit funding translates into more jobs for Michigan.
- Michigan will get back more of the federal gasoline-tax revenue that we send to Washington, D.C.; under TEA-21, Michigan's return was 90.5 cents on the dollar; by the end of SAFETEA-LU, Michigan's return will be 92 cents on the dollar in 2009.
- MDOT will reassess its Five Year Transportation Program in the context of this new legislation and make adjustments based on available funding and system condition goals.
- Many new programs that will benefit the citizens of Michigan are included in the new bill.
- SAFETEA-LU includes earmarked funding for 171 transportation projects in Michigan, with a total value of $643,304,000.
- MDOT is in the process of reviewing this massive, 1,700-plus-page legislation; please check for updates and additional information.d

As communities update their transportation plans, they must address multimodal transportation needs. Multimodal transportation includes bikes, pedestrians, transit, rail, and in some cases local streets rather than just highways. As time goes on, more communities will be using their new multimodal transportation plans to determine priorities and thus what they request for STIP inclusion. If a community does not yet have an adopted multimodal plan, other plans that can identify projects for STIP inclusion include bicycle and pedestrian plans, greenway plans, and public-transit plans. Investigate what plans your community already has in place and encourage the inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian projects in the STIP as well as in the local capital improvements budget.

For urban areas, plans are reviewed, public input is heard, and projects—typically selected from the transportation plan—are placed onto a Priority Needs List or in the current Transportation

Improvement Program through a project-selection process developed by the MPO or Rural Task Force. For rural and nonurban areas, plans are reviewed, public input is gathered, and projects are selected and placed directly in the STIP. Let's explore both scenarios in more detail.

Urban Areas

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) were discussed in Chapter 3. For review, Michigan has 20 urbanized areas or municipalities with a population of 50,000 or more and 12 MPOs. For these areas, transportation priorities are developed by MPOs in conjunction with the MDOT Statewide Transportation Planning Division. They work together in planning and producing metropolitan STIPs.

Each MPO has two committees: the Transportation Policy or Executive Committee (TPC) and the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC). The TPC and the TCC identify community needs and make transportation project recommendations for the Priority Needs List for their planning area. Note that:

- The TPC is a governing board and consists of the local elected officials from the governments represented in the MPO planning area.
- The TCC serves a technical advisory function and consists of township managers and staff as well as transit and other transportation planners.
- The TPC and TCC often have a citizen advisory group, or seek out information and feedback from bicycle and pedestrian task forces or transit groups.

Incidental Projects are part of a planned highway bridge improvement and are considered incidental (e.g., paved shoulders, wide outside lanes, bicycle lanes). These projects are built with a mixture of state and federal funds as part of overall highway improvement.

Independent Projects are separate from any other scheduled highway improvement and are considered independent projects (e.g., off-road bike and pedestrian paths or greenways, bicycle parking, bicycle maps).

Non-urban Areas

Rural Task Forces were discussed in Chapter 3. For review, almost all nonmetropolitan counties and townships are organized within Rural Task Forces. For these areas, transportation priorities are developed by MDOT in consultation with local transportation providers.

All Communities

The STIP is updated every two years and includes a three-year capital improvements horizon. Each STIP cycle includes public hearings and other opportunities for public input. When existing STIP projects are advanced or completed, there is opportunity for new projects from the Priority Needs List to move onto the STIP. For a healthy-communities Advocate, this is a key process to know and understand. Getting healthy communities projects into the transportation plan (on a mode-specific plan) and on the Priority Needs List, both *incidental* and *independent* (see box), will increase the likelihood of their being placed on the STIP.

A good rule of thumb is to communicate with the appropriate decision-makers, whether they are part of an MPO/Rural Task Force or not. Without their buy-in and support, a project is less likely to move forward. For both MPOs and Rural Task Forces, make sure their voting members are familiar with the bicycle and pedestrian needs of your community. Make a formal request that these needs be placed in plans and on the Priority Needs List. As always, the key is clear communication with the appropriate decision-makers.

Summary for Influencing the STIP Process

1. Work with your local elected officials. Make sure your local elected officials know that you want the STIP to reflect multimodal projects. In order to get a specific project on the STIP, you must inform the local government officials who communicate with MDOT. This applies equally to MPOs, Rural Task Forces, and communities not part of a planning organization.
2. Work with MDOT regions and Transportation Service Center Offices in your community. To find a complete listing of MDOT regions and TSC locations please refer to the MDOT website at www.michigan.gov/mdot/. By law, MPO members and MDOT must work together to collect the needs of their region and to review the STIP. Let them know what your community wants.
3. Make it known to MDOT. Put your desires and comments in writing and forward them to MDOT or to the Director of Transportation via either your MPO or your MDOT regional office.

Michigan Long-Range Transportation Goals for 2000-2025

The Michigan Long-Range Transportation Goals for 2000–2025 were created by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) as a means of creating a transportation environment that meeting the needs of our communities and residents through greater connectivity, increased access and safety, modernization, and intermodalism.

The goals and recommendations outlined below were created to ensure that future needs and accommodations for changing technologies are met in a successful and efficient manner.

The recommendations are as follows:

- Preserve our current mobility.
- Modernize the transportation system.
- Improve the management of our transportation assets at all levels.
- Improve the safety and security of transportation systems.
- Improve intermodal connectivity between modes of transportation.
- Improve connectivity and continuity within modes of transportation.
- Identify transportation revenues for the future.
- Implement the state long-range plan throughout the MDOT regions.

The eight goals of the state long range plan provide direction for all transportation programs using federal funds. The goals are the following:

- ***Preservation***: Within the constraints of state and federal law, make direct investment in existing transportation systems to effectively provide safety, mobility, access, and intermodal connectivity; support economic activity and the viability of older communities; and ensure that the facilities and services continue to fulfill their intended functions.
- ***Safety***: Promote the safety and security of the transportation system for users and passengers, pedestrians, and motorized and non-motorized vehicles.
- ***Basic Mobility***: Work with the general public, public agencies, and private sector organizations to ensure basic mobility for all Michigan citizens by (at a minimum) providing safe, effective, efficient, and economical access to employment, educational opportunities, and essential services.
- ***Strengthening the State's Economy***: Provide transportation infrastructure and services that strengthen the economy and competitive position of Michigan and its regions for the 21st century.
- ***Transportation Services Coordination***: Create incentives for coordination between public officials, private interests, and transportation agencies to improve safety, enhance or consolidate services, strengthen intermodal connectivity, to maximize the effectiveness of

investment for all modes by encouraging regional solutions to regional problems.

- ***Intermodalism***: Improve intermodal connections to provide "seamless" transportation for both people and products to and throughout Michigan.
- ***Environment and Aesthetics***: Provide transportation systems that are environmentally responsible and aesthetically pleasing.
- ***Land Use Coordination***: Coordinate local land use planning, transportation planning and development to maximize the use of the existing infrastructure, increase the effectiveness of investment, and retain or enhance the vitality of the local community.

Policy Statements for Multimodal Transportation Plans

To achieve a community that encourages daily physical activity through regular tasks such as running errands, commuting to work, and walking to school, bicycle and pedestrian facilities must be incorporated into local transportation and land use plans. Planning for multiple modes of transportation—vehicles, bikes, pedestrians, wheelchairs—will increase the opportunities for people to be more active on a daily basis.

Legislation passed in summer 2001 now requires that all revised transportation plans be multimodal. Take advantage of this opportunity by offering to assist the municipality or MPO/Rural Task Force staff in gathering information and resources related to a multimodal plan.

Below you will find a list of suggested policies designed to achieve a multimodal transportation plan, including objectives and examples when appropriate. As always, use what is applicable for your community and modify what is not.

Policy 1: Transportation and land use planning are integrated and complementary.

- Incorporate policy statements in both the land use and transportation plans to reflect a commitment to multiple modes of transportation.

Policy 2: Multiple modes of transportation are an integral part of daily life.

- Promote the integration of multiple modes of travel into existing and future transit patterns, paying particular attention to facilities and connectivity.
- Utilize multimodal checklists in the development review process.
- Establish an office and staff dedicated to promoting bicycling and walking.
- Work with regional and local public-transit providers to develop a public-transit system reflective of community needs.

Policy 3: Direct, convenient, and continuous connections will exist throughout the community/municipality/township.

- Provide a continuous network for pedestrians and bicyclists, utilizing through-block pedestrian connections and shorter blocks.
- Promote direct bicycle and pedestrian access to transit centers and other destinations.
- Create a continuous network of streets, allowing for future street extensions and connections.
- Limit distances between sidewalks, transit stops, and building entrances.

Sidewalks should be constructed at least five-feet in width, with a minimum two-foot planted strip between motorist traffic and the sidewalk, with a six-foot planting strip preferred when on-street parking is not present.

Policy 4: Appropriate facilities will exist for multiple modes of transportation, including but not limited to driving, bicycling, walking, and public transit.

- Encourage and identify multimodal or "shared" streets when appropriate.
- Accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists within street rights-of-way.
- Dedicated bicycle lanes, wide paved shoulders, or wide outside lanes, as appropriate, should be considered to accommodate bicycle traffic.
- Transit stops should be part of a connected, continuous network (bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicular traffic).
- Provide adequate sidewalk space for pedestrians, including sidewalk design standards.
- Reduce block lengths.
- Allow two-way traffic on streets whenever possible.
- Encourage on-street parking.
- Decrease roadway turning radii.
- Promote weather-protection designs for all modes.

Policy 5: Planning staff will work cooperatively with representatives from public schools, regional governments, the MDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation, and the MDOT Traffic Engineering and Safety Systems Branch to design and promote safe routes to schools.

- Promote the selection of new school sites based on proximity to neighborhoods, as well as a balanced view of bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicular traffic.
- Improve traffic safety around schools by providing bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- Strategically locate bus stops along pedestrian-friendly routes.

Policy 6: To ensure safety for all motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users, roadway designs other than five-lane, undivided highways are encouraged when expansion or widening projects are being considered.

Policy 7: With any road improvement or widening project, multimodal facilities are considered.

Policy 8: In order to have a safer environment for all users, access-management approaches will be utilized wherever possible.

- Minimize driveways or major streets through spacing and shared-use requirements.
- Provide turn lanes and restrict turning movements in and out of driveways to limit the number of conflict points at each driveway.
- Encourage connections between parking lots to connections with adjacent local streets and sidewalks.
- Provide sufficient spacing between driveways and intersections.
- Simplify intersections to reduce conflict points.

Policy 9: To relieve traffic congestion while still accommodating pedestrian and bicycle movement, alternative design solutions will be examined and utilized as appropriate.

- Explore street conversions or "road diets" for roads with four or more lanes.

The previous policy statements were adapted from:

- City of Hendersonville Principles of Growth Steering Committee. "The City of Hendersonville Principles of Growth." (May 2002) Contact City of Hendersonvillle, N.C. Planning Department.
- N.C. Department of Transportation, Public Transportation Division, Report 1—'Introduction to Issues. The Land Use-Transit Connection: Creating Livable and Sustainable Communities in North Carolina" (September 1999).
- N.C. Department of Transportation, Public Transportation Division, Report 2 —"Tools and Experiences from Other Communities. The Land Use-Transit Connection: Creating Livable and Sustainable Communities in North Carolina"(March 2000).

Many other examples exist. Surf the Internet to find the ones best suited for your community. Investigate local government websites and look for their zoning ordinances, growth principles, and small-area or neighborhood plans for innovative ideas.

Developing a Local Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

One of the best things a community can do is to have its local government adopt a bicycle and/or pedestrian plan. An adopted plan will indicate a concerted local effort to improve bicycle or pedestrian transportation and safety. The plan provides a guide of established priorities to work toward ensuring that bicycle and pedestrian elements are included in the local thoroughfare or transportation plan.

Process

1. Identify goals and objectives for improving bicycle and pedestrian transportation. Here are several examples:
   - Creation of comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian networks (including greenways where possible).
   - Construction of needed facilities.
   - Implementation of policy changes.
   - Elimination of hazards and barriers (see ADA Guidelines).
   - Education to heighten motorists' awareness of cyclists, and cyclists' understanding of road-riding rules.
2. Collect data and analyze local conditions using these suggested approaches:
   - Conduct one of the following active community environments assessments: Healthy Community Checklist (HCC), or the Promoting Active Communities Assessment Tool (see Chapter 7).
   - Research existing bicycle and pedestrian travel.
   - Gather existing transportation plans (MPO plans, county/city transportation plan).
   - Gather land use plans (both county and city, if available).
   - Map or identify major points of origin and destination (shopping, schools, parks, residential, recreational, libraries, institutions).
3. Develop a project "wish list." Be as specific as possible, noting municipal and state road projects.
4. Prioritize the top five needs and projects.
5. Utilize existing Design Guidelines and Recommendations within your document.
6. Draft a plan. You'll need to decide whether you want to create separate plans or a combined bicycle and pedestrian plan. It will depend on your community, its capacity, and its commitment to carry out your plan.
7. Take the plan to the local coalitions, and bike- and pedestrian-advocacy organizations for review and approval.
8. Seek review from MDOT Bike/Ped Division and Statewide Planning Branch, as well as local planners, chambers of commerce, Main Street organizations, and other community groups/leaders.
9. Make revisions.
10. Prepare the final plan for governing-body review and adoption.

A good resource for design guidelines and recommendations is:

The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, found online at www.bicyclinginfo.org or www.walkinginfo.org. Its site includes downloadable images, recommended policies, and text useful in developing bicycle and pedestrian plans.

Funding for Bicycle or Pedestrian Projects

The MDOT system has several funding options for bicycle or pedestrian improvements. But MDOT is not the only funding source for such projects. There are also local and federal funding options, as well as national organizations and foundations. Below are several funding options in Michigan. The key is to investigate what is currently available presently and be ready to write proposals.

Six Funding Strategies in Michigan

1. Position a project as an improvement to an existing road project included in the State Transportation Improvement Plan. Depending on the road jurisdiction, these sorts of *incidental* projects, once included in the STIP, will be reviewed by MDOT's Project Planning Division for state trunk lines or by the MPO/Rural Task Force for local roads. MDOT's Non-Motorized Transportation Planning Staff may also be involved in the review. If these groups are familiar with your project and your community's plans for bicycling and walking, they will make more informed and potentially favorable decisions regarding your request.

Here's a TIP for you: If a community wants a bicycle and pedestrian project as part of an existing road project, it should be put into the STIP. If your project is placed on the STIP, do not assume that it will be selected for construction. It has a chance, but it must endure feasibility studies, coincide with budgeted allocations, and be supported. In addition, as it moves through the process, different divisions within MDOT review STIP projects (Bike/Ped Division for one). There are also several different phases (planning, design, right-of-way acquisition, construction, etc.) through which the project must pass. The local government should have a representative or group follow the project as it moves through different phases to ensure implementation.

2. Make the bicycle or pedestrian improvements an *independent* project in the STIP, such as a greenway or bicycle-parking facilities around a downtown area.
3. Work with the MDOT region and/or TSC office to request funding for spot improvements or smaller projects. The first step is to contact the Region Engineer, explain the request, and then ask for solutions. Possible examples are raising storm-drain grates to grade, making safer railroad crossings, and painting crosswalks around the schools. The sum of money to which a region or TSC office has access is typically not large, so keep the request small.

4. Take advantage of statewide initiatives offered through MDOT Bureau of Transportation Planning. Possible examples are safety education initiatives and/or helmet promotions. It is important to coordinate with bicycle and pedestrian program planning staff to accomplish these types of initiatives; they may be just the projects to jump-start local bicycle or pedestrian projects on a broader scale.
5. Seek funding through the state Enhancement Program, authorized by SAFETEA-LU and administered by MDOT.
6. Local funding options may include a township's capital improvement budget, a bond referendum, public/private partnerships, and development requirements. An example of funds that may be available because of a development requirement is contributions made to a sidewalk fund in lieu of construction.

Funding Sources for Non-Motorized Transportation and Trails[5]

Federal Funding Sources

TEA-21 Funding Categories: Bicycle/Pedestrian Considerations. TEA-21 offers a great degree of flexibility in spending federal funds for transportation purposes. As a result, bicycle and pedestrian projects are eligible for funding under many funding categories. The following federal funding categories can fund bicycle and pedestrian projects.

Transportation Enhancement Activities (TEA). "Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles, pedestrian and bicycle safety education activities," and the "conversion of abandoned railway corridors to trails" are explicitly listed among the eligible activities under this category of funding. MDOT is responsible for administering the funds.

Anyone can sponsor a project, but must apply through an eligible applicant. Eligible applicants include all governmental entities that receive fuel-tax revenues; such as city and village road agencies, all county road commissions, public-transit agencies, MDOT, and the Mihcigan Department of Natural Resources. Applications are accepted year-round, and the projects require a 20 percent match. The average match in Michigan has been more than 30 percent.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ). The CMAQ program was created to reduce congestion on local streets and improve air quality. Funds are available to urban communities designated as "non-attainment" areas for air quality, meaning that the air is more polluted than federal standards allow. Pedestrian and bicycle projects are eligible projects for CMAQ funding.

Scenic Byways Program. Grant money can be used for the construction along (scenic) highways of facilities for the use of pedestrians and bicyclists. TEA-21 authorizes the use of federal funds to identify and designate federal, state, and local scenic byways. These byways, typically back roads, are intended to showcase areas of great beauty and rich history. Funds may be spent on the construction of facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists along these designated highways.

Safe Routes to School. The Safe Routes to School (SR2S) Program is administered by MDOT, and funds are used to create safe routes to urban and rural elementary schools. SR2S is an international movement to make it safe, convenient, and fun for children to walk and bicycle to school. Grant

money is used for engineering projects as well as efforts in encouraging and educating parents on the importance of the use of the safe routes to school.

Recreational Trails Program. The Recreational Trails Program is administered by the DNR, and funds are used to renovate or develop recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized uses. Projects sponsored by local unit of government can be considered for funding if they contribute to DNR program goals and if they are located on DNR land. Applications must be developed jointly with a DNR division/bureau.

Michigan Funding Sources

Section 10k of Public Act 51 of 1951. As amended, Michigan's transportation law (MCLA 247.660k) reserves 1 percent of state transportation funds for non-motorized transportation. But any improvement in a road, street, or highway that facilitates non-motorized transportation by the paving of unpaved road surfaces and shoulders, widening of lanes, or any other appropriate measure is considered a qualified non-motorized facility for the purposes of this section.

Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund. The objective of the Trust Fund is to provide grants to local units of government and to the state for acquisition and development of lands and facilities for outdoor recreation or the protection of Michigan's significant natural resources. Applications are evaluated on established criteria such as resource protection, water access, and community recreation. At least a 25 percent match for both acquisition or development projects is required from local applicants. Recommendations are made by the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board (members are appointed by the Governor) to the state legislature for final approval.

Recreational Improvement Fund. The Recreational Improvement Fund is administered by the DNR and funds are used to renovate or develop recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized uses. Projects sponsored by local units of government-can be considered for funding if they contribute to DNR program goals and if they are located on DNR land. Applications must be developed jointly with a DNR division/bureau.

Local Funding Sources

Transportation Improvements Program (TIP) and Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Non-motorized improvements, especially those located within road rights-of-way, are most likely to be funded as incidental parts of larger transportation projects, and thus should qualify for the same transportation funds as the rest of the roadway construction or improvement projects.

Parks and Recreation Budgets. Trailway funding can come from the budgets of willing agencies, which may include local and county parks and recreation departments, the HCMA, or the DNR Parks and Recreation Division.

Downtown Development Authorities. Downtown Development Authorities are formed to promote and fund investment in downtown areas. Districts are defined that qualify for Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and other special funding formulas. Local businesses both benefit from and contribute to these authorities. The public infrastructure improvements that are part of downtown revitalization often include pedestrian facilities and amenities. Bicycle facilities, including bicycle parking and bikeway implementation, may also be accomplished within these infrastructure improvements.

Millages, Bonds, and Assessments. Local, county, or state millages and bond issues may be passed by voters or governing bodies. A number of Michigan communities—for example, Ann Arbor, Rochester Hills, Grosse Ile, Novi, and West Bloomfield Township—have millages for park operations,

maintenance, development, and land acquisition. This can be one of the most effective approaches for funding a greenway or local trailway system initiative.

Utility Leases. Public greenway/trailway corridors can obtain lease revenue from compatible uses, such as buried pipelines or communication lines. There can be one-time payments for acquisition or development or annual payments for operation and maintenance.

Private Funding Sources

American Greenways Dupont Awards Program. Administered by the Conservation Fund, in partnership with Dupont and the National Geographic Society, this program provides grants of $500 to $2,500 to local greenways projects. These grants can be used for activities such as mapping, conducting ecological assessments, surveying land, hosting conferences, developing brochures, producing interpretive displays and audiovisual material, incorporating land trusts, and building trails. Grants cannot be used for academic research, general institutional support, lobbying or other political activities. The submission period for grant applications is September 1 to December 31.

DALMAC Fund. Established in 1975 to promote bicycling in Michigan, the DALMAC Fund is administered by the Tri-County Bicycle Association and supported by proceeds from the DALMAC (Dick Allen Lansing to Mackinaw) bicycle tour. The Fund has supported safety and education programs, bicycle trail development, statewide bicycle organizations and route-mapping projects. Applications must be submitted between January 1 and April 1. Grants are awarded from June to August.

Recreational Equipment Incorporated (REI) Environmental Grants. Nonprofit organizations are eligible for funding but must be nominated by an REI employee. This is a recent change, and REI will no longer accept unsolicited grant requests and proposals. REI's charitable giving focuses support on projects that protect outdoor places for recreation and help increase participation in outdoor activities. Grants are primarily organized in two areas, conservation grants and outdoor recreation grants.

Land Trusts. National, state, regional, county, and local private land trusts (or conservancies) can purchase land for resale to public agencies, buy options to protect land temporarily, receive land donations, put together land deals, and provide technical assistance. As private entities, land trusts can often act more quickly than public agencies.

Southeast Michigan GreenWays Initiative. The GreenWays Initiative will help connect the communities of southeastern Michigan through the creation of a connected green infrastructure, including biking and hiking paths, conservation corridors, and habitats among and between communities. The GreenWays Initiative was developed to create opportunities for collaboration and shared environmental awareness and appreciation by the residents of Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Washtenaw, Livingston, Monroe, and Saint Clair Counties. A five-year program of the Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan, the GreenWays Initiative is a comprehensive effort that will expand and enhance the region's natural landscape. Two types of grants are available: GreenWays Predevelopment Grants for predevelopment activities and GreenWays Land Grants for the physical construction of greenways and trails.

Businesses. Local businesses are frequent partners in the promotion of non-motorized transportation and trail projects. Public-spirited companies provide meeting rooms, provide small grants, donate copying or printing services on company equipment, or provide free or reduced-fee use of the company's special services. Local firms also sometimes promote bicycling and walking to work by hosting seminars and providing bicycle parking and other incentives.

Friends Groups and Other Organizations. The long-term success of many trail projects and non-motorized initiatives has been due to "friends" groups and advocacy organizations that follow a project through from inception to implementation. Friends groups can also provide a number of services, including physical labor (as through "Adopt-a-Trail" maintenance or construction activities), fundraising, user education, promotion, and actual surveillance of the facility.

Civic groups and school groups can play an important role in supporting non-motorized projects through advocacy, promotion, and hosting events. Local organizations often best understand local needs.

Community and Other Foundations. Private foundations are nongovernmental, nonprofit organizations managed by trustees and directors, established to maintain or aid charitable, educational, religious, or other activities serving the public good, primarily by making grants to other nonprofit organizations. The overwhelming majority of foundation grants are awarded to nonprofit organizations that qualify for "public charity" status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The following directories might identify sources of funding to support the efforts of organizations wishing to promote non-motorized transportation and trail projects.

Directories of Foundation Funding Sources

- *Guide to Foundation Grants for Rivers, Trails, and Open Space Conservation*, 2ND edition. Prepared by National Center for Recreation and Conservation, National Park Service. June 1996. Available from NPS, (330) 657-2378.
- *Michigan Foundation Directory*. Prepared by Council of Michigan Foundations and Michigan League for Human Services. Available from libraries and the Council of Michigan Foundations, (616) 842-7080. www.cmif.org.
- *The Foundation Directory, and The Foundation Directory Part 2*. Prepared by the Foundation Center. Available from libraries and the Foundation Center, (212) 620-4230. www.fdncenter.org.

1 Michigan's Land, Michigan's Future: Final Report of the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council. August 15, 2003. Accessed: November 3, 2005. URL: www.michiganlanduse.org/finalreport.htm.

2 As presented in an Experts Symposium titled "Planning and Designing the Physically Active Community," hosted by the American Planning Association to develop a Planning Advisory Service. March 2002, Chicago, Il.

3 Executive Directive No. 2003–25. December 23, 2003. Accessed on November 2, 2005. URL: www.michigan.gov.

4 SAFETEA-LU of 2005. Accessed on November 2, 2005. URL: www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,1607,7-151-9621_14807_37755-124084--,00.html.

5 "Funding Source for Non-Motorized Transportation and Trails." Michigan Department of Transportation. 2005.

Chapter 5
Working With the Community

Models for Successful Community Participation

The suggestions and strategies offered in this chapter are a combination of thoughts offered by Peter Lagerway, Seattle Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, along with practices and experiences gathered throughout Michigan. Volumes have been written on the topic of community coalition-building but, this is an attempt to distill the most appropriate tactics for your healthy-communities-related work. As is the case with all of this work, experience is the best teacher. Use these suggested approaches as a starting point, read from the resources included in the end of this chapter, talk to trusted colleagues who are leaders in this field, and then go and create your own stories.

"If we build it, they will come." This may have worked for Kevin Costner's character in the film Field of Dreams, but it may not necessarily be a recipe for success in the healthy-communities arena. "If we build it right, sometimes they will come" is more likely. A greater measure of success is garnered if community members participate in the process. If community members are involved in planning their own healthy community and implementing specific projects, not only is "it" more likely to be built, but "they" will be much more likely to come.

Convincing a decision-maker that the public desires a proposed policy change (e.g., sidewalks, bike lanes, farmers' markets, or smoke-free recreational areas) because it's good for the health of the community, as well as individual residents, is a challenge. To do that, you must cultivate community involvement. While that may be one of the most difficult aspects of working to create healthy communities, it may also be the most rewarding.

Your role as change agent and facilitator includes not just pushing the policy agenda, but engaging the community, educating its members about the benefits of healthy communities, letting residents educate you on how to do it, and partnering with them every step of the way. Most important of all, it is to convince the decision-makers of the public's perception that a proposed policy change is in the best interest of the community. As with elected officials and decision-makers, nourishing and maintaining relationships with community members needs to happen. Here are three models for successful community participation: working in and with neighborhoods, partnering with special-interest groups, and strategies for working with advisory boards and commissions.

Neighborhoods

A gold mine for any healthy-communities advocate is the neighborhood. In many Michigan neighborhoods, you will find a concern over "cut-through" traffic, speeding cars, a scarcity of places to walk and bike, few places to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, a lack of affordable housing, exposure to secondhand smoke in certain public places, a lack of safe places for children to play, or

a lack of access to healthy food choices. Without any encouragement, neighborhoods and other geographically defined groups will naturally take ownership of their issues, prioritize their needs, and demand action. Typically, many neighborhood improvements designed to solve safety or health issues will have the result of doing just that. For example, by implementing traffic-calming techniques such as sidewalks, on-street parking, street trees, and narrowing of lanes, walkers and cyclists benefit.

Some points to consider when working with neighborhood groups:

- Approach the group before issues arise. Clearly explain your community-health-related policies, providing persuasive reasons why creating more active, healthy and smoke-free communities benefits the neighborhood (all ages, genders, races).
- Provide key message points appropriate for this audience, as well as a realistic plan that pulls together the resources on that particular community in order to accomplish its goals.
- Keep your ear to the ground for opportunities. When an issue arises, contact the neighborhood and offer to be a resource. Sometimes a hot issue can rekindle a dwindling neighborhood association. Other times you may need to identify or cultivate leadership within the neighborhood. Often there is a "diamond in the rough" who just needs some encouragement to be the neighborhood leader who gets things done.

Following the same suggestions for working with elected officials, you will want to identify leaders, arrange for a meeting, and learn more about their issues. Discern how your interests may complement their issues: then offer to be a resource to find solutions. A word of caution here: don't get overextended as the neighborhood resource. By balancing your goals with the group's needs, you can ensure that you remain one of many resources and not the only person they turn to in time of need or crisis.

Building and Maintaining a Healthy-Community Coalition

What is a Coalition?

In simplest terms, a coalition is a group of individuals or organizations with a common interest who agree to work together toward a common goal. That goal could be as narrow as obtaining funding for a specific intervention, or as broad as trying to permanently improve the overall quality of life for most people in the community. By the same token, the individuals and organizations involved might be drawn from a narrow area of interest, or might include representatives of nearly every segment of the community, depending on the breadth of the issue.

Coalition goals are as varied as coalitions themselves, but often contain elements of one or more of the following:

- Influencing or developing public policy, usually around a specific issue.
- Changing people's behavior (reducing smoking or drug use, for instance).
- Building a healthy community. This term generally refers both to the community's physical health (which may include not only medical and preventive or wellness services, but the environment, community planning, housing, hunger, substance abuse, and other factors) and to its social and psychological health (encompassing diversity, education, culture and the arts, violence prevention, youth development, employment, economic development, mental health and other human services, etc.).

Why Start a Coalition (and Why Might it be Difficult)?

Consistency can be particularly important in addressing a community issue, especially if a number of organizations or individuals are already working on it. If their approaches all differ significantly, and they're not cooperating or collaborating, it can lead to a chaotic situation in which very little is accomplished. If, on the other hand, they can work together and agree on a common way to deal with the issue and on common goals, they're much more likely to make headway. There are a number of reasons why developing a coalition might be a good idea. In general terms, it can concentrate the community's focus on a particular problem, create alliances among those who might not normally work together, and keep the community's approach to issues consistent.

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Some more specific reasons for forming a coalition might include these:

- To address an urgent situation.
- To empower elements of the community, or the community as a whole, to take control of its future.
- To actually obtain or provide services.
- To bring about more effective and efficient delivery of programs and eliminate any unnecessary duplication of effort.

When discussing duplication of effort, "unnecessary" is a key word. In most instances, a number of organizations providing similar services, or services to the same population, are addressing a need greater than even all of them together can meet. The important thing here is to explore whether a unified approach can in some way increase or improve the services currently available.

- To pool resources.
- To increase communication among groups and break down stereotypes
- To revitalize the sagging energies of group members who are trying to do too much alone.
- To plan and launch community-wide initiatives on a variety of issues.
- To develop and use political clout to gain services or other benefits for the community.
- To create long-term, permanent social change.

Barriers to Starting a Coalition

Barriers to starting a coalition often exist, and it's important to be aware of and anticipate them, because they may dictate the process that the coalition will have to follow in order to begin successfully. Among the most likely:

- **Turf issues.** Organizations are often very sensitive about sharing their work, their target populations, and especially their funding. Part of the work of starting a coalition may be to convince a number of organizations that working together will in fact benefit all of them and better address their common issues.

- **Bad history.** Organizations, individuals, or the community as a whole may have had past experiences that have convinced them that working with certain others—or working together at all—is simply not possible. A new coalition may have to contend with this history before it can actually start the work it needs to do.
- **Domination by "professionals" or some other elite.** All too often, agency people with advanced degrees, local politicians, business leaders, and others, in their rush to solve problems or to "help the disadvantaged," neglect to involve the people most affected by the issue at hand and other community members. Creating a participatory atmosphere and reining in those who believe they have all the answers is almost always part of starting a coalition.

Part of a solution here may often be providing support for those who aren't used to the "professional" way of holding meetings and reaching conclusions, while at the same time training professionals and others to include those whose opinions are likely to be far more accurate and important to the solving of the problem than their own. This might mean bringing in an outside facilitator, or simply paying careful attention to guiding the process from within the group.

- **Poor links to the community.** A first step may have to be the development of hitherto nonexistent relationships among agencies and the community at large.
- **Minimal organizational capacity.** It might be necessary to find a coordinator, or for one or more individuals or organizations to find a way to share the burden of organization, for the new group if it is to develop beyond —or as far as —a first meeting.
- **Funding.** The difficulty of finding funding is an obvious obstacle. Less obvious are the dangers of available funding that pushes the coalition in the wrong direction or requires it to act too quickly to address the issue effectively. New coalitions have to be alert to funding possibilities from all quarters, and also have to be vigilant about the kind of funding they apply for and accept.
- **Failure to provide and create leadership within the coalition.** Coalitions demand a very special kind of collaborative leadership. If that leadership isn't available and can't be developed from within the coalition, its existence is probably at risk. It may be necessary to bring in an outside facilitator or training in collaborative leadership,or both to salvage the situation.
- **The perceived—or actual—costs of working together outweigh the benefits for many coalition members.** The task here may be to find ways to increase benefits and decrease costs for the individuals and organizations for whom this is the case if the coalition is to survive.

If you understand the potential barriers to forming a coalition in your community, you can plan for them and increase your chances of success.

When Should you Develop a Coalition?

A coalition needs to have a purpose if it is to be successful. As discussed above, the purpose may be broad or narrow, but it's unlikely that a diverse group will come together unless there's a compelling reason to do so. At particular times, circumstances help to move the formation of coalitions.

1. **When dramatic or disturbing events occur in a community.**
2. **When new information becomes available.**
3. **When circumstances or the rules change.**
4. **When new funding becomes available.**

5. **When there's an outside threat to the community.**
6. **When a group wishes to create broad, significant community change.**
7. **When you have not only a good reason for starting a coalition, but also the possibility that one *can* be successfully started in the community.**

A coalition for social change can be a different proposition from one dedicated to much narrower or shorter-term goals. For one thing, social change takes time—years, or even decades, not months. Coalition members must make a commitment for the long run, and they—or their organizations, as individuals come and go—must honor that commitment.

A second point is that a social-change coalition must be held together by a coherent, shared vision. Such a vision is usually not possible without a group process that can articulate the vision and help others see it as a reachable goal.

Third, social-change coalitions must often settle for small gains that add up only over time. Members must be able to be satisfied with small victories and to weather the inevitable setbacks that sometimes cancel those victories out. Taking the long view is as important to successful social change as making a long-term commitment.

Who Should be Part of a Coalition?

In general, the broader the membership of any coalition, the better, but there are certain people and groups whose representation on a coalition is absolutely essential.

1. Stakeholders. These are the people who have a stake in the success of the coalition's efforts. They can include:

- *Those most affected by the issue*. These may comprise current or potential participants in programs, people who lack such basic amenities as health insurance or decent housing, sufferers from particular diseases, or— in the case, for instance, of many environmental and public health issues—the community as a whole. It makes no sense, and is patently unfair, to make decisions that affect people's lives without including them in the process.
- *Formal and informal helpers, those charged with carrying out community functions related to the issue, and others affected by what the coalition might do.* The staffs of health and human service providers or other organizations and community agencies, police, school personnel, the probation and court system, local employers, landowners—some or all of these or many others may be directly or indirectly involved in the results of coalition initiatives.

2. Community opinion leaders. It's extremely useful to save seats at the table for those who can influence many others. Clergy, business or civic leaders, or people who are simply highly credible in the community may fall into this group.

Involving *emerging* leaders is equally important. These are people, often without a particular position, to whom others look for guidance. They may be leaders of volunteer efforts, youth highly respected by their peers, active parents, or just those with clear leadership potential. They are important to have on board, both for their ideas and energy and for the influence they wield and will wield as they become more widely known and respected in the community.

3. Policymakers. The participation of local political leaders, state representatives, and others in policy-making positions will both add credibility to your enterprise and increase the chances that you can actually influence policy in your area of interest.

How Do You Start a Community Coalition?

So…you've decided that a coalition is indeed the way to go in your community. How do you actually go about starting one?

In addition to these specific groups, virtually any coalition can benefit from the membership of at least some concerned citizens who may have no direct connection to the issue at hand. Such people can both act as barometers of the attitudes of the community at large, and bring information back to the community that helps to explain the work of the coalition and give it a higher profile.

Another group that you might want to involve, but in a slightly different way, is the media. Rather than trying to get media members to join, you might want to contact them to publicize and cover your coalition and its efforts. If they join, there may be ethical limitations on the amount of coverage they can give you.

1. Put together a core group. You're probably already not alone in your concerns about the issue at hand, and you may already have a core group—a few individuals or organizations— ready to work at forming a coalition. If not, your first step is to find and make contact with those few individuals and organizations most involved with the issue.

Some reasons why a core group, rather than an individual, should lead the effort:

- A core group will have more contacts and more knowledge of the community than a single individual.
- It will give the idea of a coalition more standing among potential members.
- It will make finding and reaching potential members a much faster process.
- A core group will make the task easier on all the individuals involved, and therefore more likely to get done.
- It shows that the effort has wide support.

There are a few ways to approach assembling a core group:

- Start with people you know. If you're a longtime activist on this issue, or if you've been living or working in your community for a while, you have lots of contacts, particularly among others concerned with the same things you are. Use those contacts now, either to pull them into the circle or to get the names of others who might be part of a core group. Someone who knows you—assuming you have a positive relationship—is usually more easily persuaded than someone who doesn't.

- Contact people in agencies and institutions most affected by the issue. Pumpkinville Youth Services, in its drive to start a coalition on youth violence, went to both the chief of police and the superintendent of schools for support. As a result, a community affairs officer and an assistant superintendent both became part of the core group that set out to put the coalition together.
- Talk to influential people, or people with lots of contacts. These may be business or civic leaders, ordinary citizens with high credibility, or people such as the United Way director, whose job it is to know nearly everyone.

2. Identify the most important potential coalition members. Especially if your coalition has a narrow and time-limited purpose, there are probably people or organizations you can't do without. It's important to identify them and to target them specifically for membership. This may mean courting them—an initial meeting over lunch where you pick up the tab, for instance, or a promise of a place on the steering committee.

Try to recruit to the core group some members of the populace most affected by and concerned with the problem. A youth violence coalition should look for teens—perhaps gang members—to be core-group members; a homeless and housing coalition should try to recruit current or former homeless people. Incorporating such people into the core group will give you a built-in reality check, provide a link to the populace they represent, add credibility to your effort, and make clear your commitment to a participatory process.

Most of these individuals and organizations are referred to in "Who should be part of a coalition?" above, but each community is different. In yours, there may be a specific person among the target population, or a particular township official, without whom nothing can get done. The chances are you that—and if not you, then other members of the core group—know this person, or at least know who he or she is, and have some connection to him or her.

As mentioned earlier, none of this is to say that you shouldn"t recruit many other people and organizations to your coalition as well. It simply means that you need to make a special effort to enlist these crucial members.

3. Recruit members to the coalition. Now that your core group is in place, and you've decided on the potential members who are necessary to the success of the coalition, you can start recruiting members. Although it's important to start with the individuals and groups mentioned above, you'll probably want to be as inclusive as possible. It's unusual to hear about a coalition suffering because it has too many members.

Use the networking capacity of your core group to the fullest. The core group can brainstorm a list of possible members, in addition to those deemed essential. Then each member can identify individuals on the list whom he or she knows personally, or organizations in which he or she has a personal contact. If names without a contact are left on the list, they can be divided among the members of the core group.

There are, obviously, a number of ways to contact people and organizations, including:

- Face-to-face meetings.
- Phone calls.
- E-mail.
- Personal letters.
- Mass mailings.
- Public-service announcements or ads in the media.
- Flyers and posters.

These are listed here in their approximate order of effectiveness, with direct personal contact being the best. It also takes longest, however, and probably should be reserved for those "must-haves" discussed earlier. Most people are likely to be recruited by phone.

Be sure to ask those you talk to for suggestions about other potential members, and try to have them make the contact. That will spread out the work, and also give the invitation more credibility, since it comes from someone the contacted person knows. If you are successful, you could end up contacting and recruiting several times the number of people and organizations on your original list.

When you contact people to recruit them to the coalition, make sure you have something substantive to offer or to ask them to do. An invitation to a first meeting—at a specific time and place far enough in the future that schedules can be arranged to fit it in—is perhaps the most common offer, but you could also, for instance, ask people to contact their state representative or to work with a small group. An appeal to join without something specific attached to it will often fall on deaf ears. People's time is valuable, and they want to know that it won't be wasted.

4. Plan and hold a first meeting. The first meeting of a coalition is important. If it's a high-energy, optimistic gathering that gets people excited, you're off to a good start. If it's depressed and negative, or even just boring, it's a good bet that a lot of people won't come back. It's up to the core group, in what may be the last official task they undertake, to plan a meeting that will start the coalition off on the right foot.

There are really two concerns here: the logistics of the meeting (where, when, how long, etc.) and its content.

There are a number of possibilities for the content of the first meeting. The agenda should depend on your particular issue and purposes, and on the needs of your community, but you'll probably want to include some of the following:

- Introductions all around. Everyone present should give a brief statement of who they are, the organization, if any, with which they're connected, and the nature of their interest in the issue.
- Start defining the issue or problem around which the coalition has come together. This might mean the whole group's coming up with an actual statement, or it might entail an initial discussion, followed by a small group's being asked to draft a possible definition for the next meeting.
- Discuss the structure of the coalition. What kind of group will it be, how (if at all) will it be run, and what kinds of things will it actually do? Is hiring staff a reasonable goal, either currently or eventually?
- At least start the process of creating a common vision and agreeing on shared values about the coalition's direction. This is the first step toward developing the vision and mission statements that will define the coalition and guide its work.
- Discuss a procedure for forming an action plan. Again, this may result in an actual, or at least a preliminary, plan, or it may lead either to the appointment of a smaller group to draft a plan or to the establishment of a procedure by which the larger group will generate a plan over a set period of time.

- Review the things to be done before the next meeting, and who has agreed to do them. As mentioned above, its important that people leave the first meeting feeling that something has been accomplished. If tasks are being worked on, and specific results are expected at the next meeting—even if those results are simply statements or preliminary plans to react to—coalition members will have that feeling of accomplishment.
- Schedule at least the next meeting. It may be possible to develop a regular meeting schedule at this first meeting, or it may make more sense to schedule only the next meeting and wait until the membership stabilizes and some other people join before creating a long-term schedule.

5. Follow up on the first meeting. You've held a successful first meeting —terrific! The job of building a coalition has only begun, however. First, you have to follow up to make sure that there will be a well-attended second meeting at which work can continue.

The list that follows is one for whoever is actually putting the coalition together. That may be an individual, a core group, a staffer, or even a new coalition governing body of some sort. Whoever it is, someone has to be responsible for keeping an eye on the larger picture and making sure that the jobs get done. Without some level of coordination from somewhere, it's very unlikely that a coalition will survive and succeed.

- Distribute the minutes of the first meeting and reminders about the next meeting to those who attended, and send them out with invitations to potential new members as well. Try to widen your net as much as possible. Get to the folks you missed the first time, or to those whose names you've gotten from people who attended the first meeting.
- Follow up on the groups or individuals who are working on tasks assigned at the first meeting. Offer help, attend meetings, try to involve other people with relevant skills or knowledge—do everything you can to make sure those tasks get accomplished.
- If committees or task forces are forming, try to recruit new members for them. The real work of the coalition will probably be done in these small groups, so it's important that they have the right members. If you know people with expertise who could be used in particular ways, grab them. Most people will respond if they're asked, especially if they're asked because you value what they bring to the task.
- Keep looking for new coalition members.
- Keep track of the fundamental building blocks of the coalition that aren't in place yet. If the group hasn't yet decided on a structure or a coordinating body, you need to make sure that the decision doesn't get pushed aside, but that it's either in the works or being actively considered. If there's no action on an action plan, you need to provide the push to get it going.

6. Next steps. A number of specific things—some of which you've already started in that first meeting—need to be done to make sure that the coalition keeps moving forward.

- Gather information. In order to plan for action, you need as much information about the problem or issue, and about the community, as possible. Many organizations, particularly those most involved with the issue at hand, are likely to have statistics or other data on hand. The U.S. Census can be a good source of demographic information, as can local colleges or universities and local government departments. The more information you can gather, the easier it becomes to define the problem, to know if you're addressing something that's actually a major community issue, and to plan a strategy that will effectively address it.

- Finish creating vision and mission statements. These can be hashed out in a small group after everyone has had input in a larger meeting, or you can actually try to generate them in the larger group itself (perhaps by splitting people up into smaller groups, then coming back together to reconcile differences). It's important that there be agreement on the wording and intent of these statements because they will be the foundation of the coalition, referred to again and again over time as the group tries to decide whether to tackle particular issues. Everyone has to feel ownership of them if the coalition is to develop an identity.
- Complete an action plan. The coalition's action plan is, obviously, intertwined with both its structure and its vision and mission. In practice, coalitions often start with a sense of what they need to do, and their structures, visions, and missions grow from that.
- Finish the work of designing a structure for the coalition. Again, this has to be a shared task, with everyone having a chance to contribute ideas. There is such a broad range of possibilities here—from practically no governance to a very clear, formal hierarchy—that it's crucial that the group come up with a form that everyone can live with. Once a structure has been agreed on, there may still be the need for writing bylaws and otherwise formalizing it.
- Elect officers, or a coordinating or steering committee. Once there's agreement about the structure of the coalition, it's time for members to decide whether they want some sort of governing body, and to choose it so that the work of the coalition can go ahead.
- Examine the need for professional staff. Depending on the scope of its work plan, a coalition may feel that it needs professional staff—at least a coordinator—to be effective. If it has the resources, a community coalition may be able to hire a full- or part-time coordinator. Or it may see the need for one and set out to find the resources. In addition to direct grants to the coalition, one or more member organizations may be able to provide funding, or employers or other elements of the community may be willing to fund all or part of a coordinator's salary if the work of the coalition is relevant to their concerns.
- Determine what other resources (financial, material, informational, etc.) you need, develop a plan for getting them, and decide who's going to be responsible for carrying it out. If you already have funding for a paid staff person, finding resources may be one of his or her primary responsibilities…or it may not. A committee of the coalition may have that responsibility, or someone may simply take it on. Part of creating a strategic plan that encompasses your vision, mission, and action plan is looking at the resources you'll need to reach your goals and planning for obtaining those resources.
- Start the hard work of maintaining the coalition over time. Once your coalition is a going concern, it still needs care and feeding. After it's been around for a while and had some success, people may start to take it for granted, or the original members may start to burn out or to get stale. Careful maintenance for the long term is an extremely important task.

7. Some general guidelines for getting a coalition off the ground. In addition to the specifics mentioned above, there are some more general elements to starting a coalition:

- Communicate, communicate, communicate. Make sure that lines of communication within the coalition and among the coalition, the media, and the community are wide open. Open communication will ensure that no one feels left out of the loop, and that everyone has the information necessary to make coalition efforts successful. Good communication with the media and the community will increase your chances for publicity and support when you need them.
- Be as inclusive and participatory as you can. Work at making the coalition a group in which anyone in the community will feel welcome, and continue to invite people to join after the first

meeting. Try to involve everyone in the coalition in generating vision and mission statements, planning, and major decisions. The more that people feel ownership of the coalition itself, the harder they'll be willing to work to achieve its goals, and the less likely they'll be to allow turf issues or minor conflicts to get in the way of the coalition's progress.

- Network like crazy. Try to involve, or at least to keep informed, as many other groups in the community as possible. Let them know what you're doing, invite them to coalition meetings (to make presentations, if appropriate, or just to see what's going on), invite them to join if they're interested, educate them about the issue. If groups in the community are informed about your work, they're more likely to be supportive and to tell others about what you're doing as well. They may also have better connections to policymakers than you have, and may be able to help you approach them.
- Try, at least at the beginning, to set concrete, reachable goals. Success is great glue— achieving reachable goals early can help a coalition develop the strength to later spend the years it may take to pursue and achieve long-term goals.
- Be creative about meetings. Community activists and health and human service workers often feel that they spend their whole lives in meetings. If each coalition meeting can be different, and have some elements of fun to it, you'll be much more likely to retain both membership and interest in the coalition. Some possibilities include rotating the responsibility for meetings among the groups comprising the coalition; having only a few meetings a year, each with a particular theme, and doing most of the work of the coalition in committees or task forces; and regularly bringing in exciting presentations on the issue or in areas that relate to it.
- Be realistic, and keep your promises. If you're not sure you can do it, don't say you will. If you say you will, be sure you do.
- Acknowledge diversity among your members, and among their ideas and beliefs. Your coalition will probably mirror the cultural, economic, racial, ethnic, and religious diversity of your community, and will certainly represent a diversity of opinion. Not everyone will agree with everything the coalition does or wants to do, and sometimes the minority opinion will be right. Make sure to take everyone's opinion and restraints into account, and to use diversity as a spur to discussion, rather than a source of division.

By the same token, it's important that there be a mechanism for getting things done when there is a disagreement, whether it's a majority vote or something else. A long-term disagreement over strategy or tactics can permanently hang up a coalition, and make it totally ineffective.

- Praise and reward outstanding contributions and celebrate your successes. In addition to success itself, the celebration of success is a great way to cement the bonds among members of a coalition. Whether through individual or group awards, or through parties or other events, celebration of achievement will help your coalition thrive, and will give you a much-needed opportunity to remember that there's a reason you're doing all this.

To Sum Up

In situations with issues are too large and complex for a single organization to address, a coalition of groups and individuals working together may be the solution. A coalition can develop a coordinated response to an issue, increase the efficiency of service delivery, pool community resources, create and launch community-wide initiatives, build and wield political clout to influence policy, and work effectively toward long-term social change.

Coalitions may form in response to:

- Significant or disturbing community events.
- New information.
- Changes in circumstances or regulations.
- The availability of funding.
- An outside threat to the community.
- The need to create significant change in the community.

Whatever the reason, coalitions can form only when the possibility—in the form of mutual trust and a perceived need—exists. A coalition should encompass all stakeholders—those affected by the work of the coalition and by the issue it addresses—as well as community-opinion leaders, policymakers, and community members at large.

To start a coalition, it's best to begin with a core group and work outward, pulling in the necessary members mentioned above, as well as a more general membership from the community and from other, more peripherally involved organizations. Holding an exciting first meeting at which real accomplishments are achieved and the work of the coalition is set in motion will help to successfully launch the enterprise.

Even more important is following up before the second meeting to make sure that groups are doing the work they said they would do, that attendance won't fall off, and that new members will be added. Areas that must be addressed are:

- An agreed-upon definition of the issue or problem that the coalition is addressing.
- The creation of vision and mission statements.
- The development of an action plan.
- The design of a structure for the coalition.
- The need for professional staff.
- Resources.

Finally, you have to continue to pay attention to some general rules for forming and running a coalition:

- Communicate openly and freely with everyone.
- Be inclusive and participatory.
- Network at every opportunity.
- Set reachable goals, in order to engender success.
- Hold creative meetings.
- Be realistic about what you can do: don't promise more than you can accomplish, and always keep your promises.
- Acknowledge and use the diversity of the group.

A coalition can be a powerful force for positive change in a community. If you can form one that lasts and addresses the issues it was meant to, you've done a major piece of community-building work.

Why is Maintaining the Coalition Important?

Let's admit that starting a coalition, or any other group, can be challenging. It takes skill, sensitivity,

timing, persistence, faith; it brings out the best in you. Yet challenging though it sometimes may be, start-up is only half the battle. Truthfully, it's probably less than half. For now that the coalition is standing on its own two feet, it needs to start striding toward its community goals. Those accomplishments lie in the future. To ensure a successful future, the coalition needs to stay alive and healthy. To stay alive and healthy, it needs to be maintained.

What Needs to Be Maintained?

What needs to be maintained are the key structures, functions, and relationships of the coalition that helped get it started in the first place. For a coalition, the key ingredients are social and include:

- The coalition's reason for being—its vision, mission, and objectives.
- The basic governance and operating rules of the coalition.
- The coalition leadership.
- The coalition membership.
- The division of labor, within and among the leaders and members.
- The coalition's strategic and action plans, both short- and longer-term.
- The coalition's actions and results, so that it is accomplishing something (what it means to) in the world.
- The coalition's funding, so that those accomplishments can be continued.
- The coalition's visibility in the larger community.
- The coalition's public support.
- And finally, what might be called the spirit of the coalition, the good feelings and relationships among all involved, which are a fundamental precondition for the coalition's continued existence. This point is addressed at greater length later in this section.

How Do You Maintain a Coalition?

The first steps in maintaining a coalition, or any other group, take place inside the mind of the coalition group member. They are internal. To state them as specific guidelines:

1. Develop the awareness that maintenance is necessary.

2. Make a decision to engage in it.

These internal steps are in some ways the hardest part of the entire process. But once you —as individual members and then as a group—have taken them, and made the decision to create and implement a maintenance plan, you are well on your way.

3. Design a maintenance plan.

4. Carry out your maintenance plan.

Suppose you have the awareness and have made the decision. Let's think about the next question: How do you put a maintenance plan together? (Note the assumption here again: A maintenance plan will help you, rather than doing maintenance by the seat of the pants.) In designing your plan, you have a number of choices to make at the very beginning. Each is detailed below.

Design a Maintenance Plan

Who Should Design the Plan?

Among your options: The plan can be designed by the coalition's leaders; or a subgroup of the leaders; or a subgroup of members chosen by the leaders; or by the larger membership itself.

In most cases, the leaders should take responsibility for setting the wheels in motion; but that doesn't necessarily mean that they have to drive the work themselves. They can delegate it, and often the best

way to go is to select a few key experienced members who are interested in maintenance and have the time to plan it. Usually, a small group will work best. The plan can be presented to the leadership, then to the larger membership for review and comment, and then for revision as might be needed.

The plan's details will depend on what kind of coalition or group you are. If you have five or six regular active members (and even a coalition that small can be effective), chances are that one or two people are going to take the lead. But when 5 or 6 become 50 or 60, you have the luxury of forming a larger committee to plan what is needed and perhaps carry it out.

How Comprehensive Should the Plan Be?

Should the plan, and therefore the actual maintenance, include all aspects of the way the coalition runs, or just several?

Your choice will again depend on the resources and the particulars of your group. But when you start, a good general guideline may be to take a middle path. That is, maintenance for you may not mean attention to the refreshments served at meetings, but it may in fact mean close attention to the format and content of the meetings themselves.

In other words, make the work feasible for you, something you feel comfortable taking on. It's good to challenge yourself a little, but don't overwhelm yourself at the beginning.

How Formal Should the Plan Be?

You can have loose-leaf notebooks full of maintenance procedures and schedules (as maintenance teams for machines such as elevators would), or you can write things down on a scratch pad. You can keep detailed records, or no records at all. You can do maintenance simply through oral discussion, or with hardly any discussion whatsoever. A mental note might do the job, but so might computerized systems.

Once again, the possibilities vary, and your choices will depend on the size and nature of your group. And once again, a middle path may make the most sense for most groups, at least at the start. Informality can lead to sloppiness, but excess formality to rigidity. As a rule, the level of formality of the work should be in harmony with the level of formality of your coalition or group. If it's a step or two more formal, that might not be a bad idea.

Who Should Carry Out the Plan?

Briefly, your options here are similar to those for maintenance plan design: the coalition leaders themselves, a subgroup of the leaders, a subgroup of members chosen by the leaders, with variations throughout.

Three additional guidelines may help:

First, the people carrying out the plan may be the same as those designing it, but not necessarily; the implementers should generally have a strong voice in plan design, but the planners and the implementers need not always be the same people.

Second, implementation of the plan usually works best when the work responsibilities are divided up according to function—that is, not very surprisingly, the membership chair will typically have the lead role in recruiting and keeping new members; the publicity chair will take the lead in maintaining publicity efforts; and so on down the line.

Third, implementation will always be more successful if there are clear lines of accountability, no matter who is doing the actual implementation work. Not to pick on him or her, but to whom is that membership chair accountable? We know that the chair is a wonderfully creative and responsible

person—but even so, we would like to establish accountability to someone other than oneself. It's just that organizations work better that way.

How Frequently Should Maintenance Take Place?

The theoretical choices range from daily to never, with all stops in between. A guideline: Not so often that you spend too much time in this effort relative to other coalition tasks, and not so often that there is unlikely to be any change since the last review; but not so infrequently that previously undetected problems may have arisen.

What does this mean in practice? A yearly review—give or take—will work well for many groups. Anything less may be too little. More frequent reviews can be given to past problem areas calling for special attention. In general, the maintenance schedule need not be the same for all aspects of the coalition's work—some aspects may be reviewed more frequently and others less.

The answers to these questions above may imply that there are many ways to design and carry out a maintenance plan, and that there is no one way to do maintenance that is head and shoulders above the rest. This is true. The best way to do maintenance will depend on the nature, history, composition, and goals of your particular group, as well as its plans, and its commitment to do maintenance work. Consider also these criteria: Whatever your maintenance choice, it must be something that is workable for you, that you can implement in daily practice, and that you and your coalition can feel good about.

Suppose, though, that you have now made your choices. How do you go about carrying them out? How should you actually conduct maintenance in practice? This leads to Step 4:

Carry out your maintenance plan. Once again, you have options for doing so. They include:

External Reviews

These are reviews by outside reviewers or consultants. Sometimes they may be mandated by your funding source. Such external reviews can vary among themselves:

- The reviewers can be paid professionals from outside the community, or a single local volunteer.
- The reviewers can review your policies, practices, and accomplishments across the board. Or they can survey smaller and more limited practices.
- The reviews can last several hours or several days.
- The external reviews can be combined with internal reviews, as noted below.

In any case, the criteria used to conduct a review should be clear to everyone. Ideally, they should be worked out in advance, together with the reviewers. There should be no surprises.

External or outside reviews are relatively rare for coalitions, though less rare for other types of groups.

Not surprisingly, they have their own advantages and disadvantages. They can be expensive. The reviewers may not have good understanding of your organization, and may be using different criteria from yours. The value of the review will be only as good as the expertise, sensitivity, and communication skills of the reviewers.

On the other hand, such a review can provide a helpful outside perspective, by seeing your operations with a fresh pair of eyes and by giving you insights that you might not otherwise have had. That review can also lend objectivity and sometimes specific expertise. And sometimes it can also be free, especially if it is mandated from the outside.

All the other maintenance procedures noted below are internal, conducted by the people in the coalition itself.

Internal Reviews

1. Formal reviews. What makes them "formal"? They have their own policies and procedures; they take place on a regular basis; they are institutionalized in the culture of the coalition; they are likely to produce a written report.

Formal reviews can also vary:

- They can take the form of an annual program review, with its own predetermined methods. A meeting of the executive committee or other governing group can be set aside for it.
- Or instead of a self-review conducted by the whole group, a subcommittee or designated group may be charged with conducting the review and reporting its findings to the whole group (reporting out). This report would then be discussed by the larger governing group.
- The review can also be done at a membership meeting of the full group. Or a report prepared by others can be made to the full membership at that meeting for discussion.
- Sometimes the review is not of the entire operations of the coalition, but of some of its specific practices—publicity, budget, etc. This more limited type of review can also be done by the full group, or a subgroup, with reporting out as noted above.
- It's also possible to rotate a series of smaller reviews, so that one aspect of the coalition's work is reviewed (and maintained) every year or every few months. In this way, maintenance proceeds on a staggered schedule: this month, funding; next fall, membership review; and so on.

Your coalition or group can decide to carry out any of these types of reviews. Once that decision is made, then it's a matter of setting up procedures to make sure the review is implemented, completed, and utilized.

2. Informal reviews. Maintenance does not always have to be a formal procedure, with structured agendas, clipboards, checklists, and written reports. A coalition can decide upon and carry out less structured ways of collecting the information it needs to see how things are going. For example:

Feedback at scheduled meetings. A natural opportunity for informal review and maintenance is at the end of scheduled meetings. So, for example, a short portion of each general meeting can be devoted to feedback. ("Any comments on this meeting?" "Are we going about things in the right way?" "How did you feel about the way things went?" "Were you happy with what we accomplished today?") The same can apply to other types of meetings, such as executive committee and subcommittee meetings.

Feedback by mail, e-mail, or telephone. From time to time, a postcard can be sent to coalition members asking them for feedback on certain aspects of coalition performance and soliciting for suggestions for improvement. This process can be accomplished by e-mail as well, or sometimes over the telephone.

Retreats. These are usually extended meetings for the full coalition staff held away from the coalition's usual place of business (sometimes at a special retreat center), and sometimes led by an outside facilitator. Their purpose is often to review, maintain, and refresh the group's work, though retreats can also be held to design new plans, or to consider a specific topic or challenge. Their potential advantage is the freshness of the setting, the freedom from daily distractions, the expectation of new accomplishment, and the mental preparation that occurs before the event.

Daily communication. The process of maintaining your coalition can also be part of daily communication, although one might not call it "maintenance" or a "review" as such. In this sense, maintenance is a part of almost everything you do. Voicing an opinion without fear of personal criticism, keeping members posted about what is going on, giving personal support if someone is

having a bad day—each of these little acts maintains the coalition, even though one might not give them a "maintenance" label. These small transactions, multiplied over months and years, sustain the energy and spirit of the coalition's work.

Keep in mind that any of these methods can be combined with any other. Feedback at meetings can be combined with feedback by mail. Regular strong internal communication can be combined with occasional retreats. Maintenance of a coalition can (and should) occur in many different ways.

Keeping the Flame Alive

We've spoken about maintenance so far almost as if it's mostly step-by-step, almost by-the-numbers. In some ways it is, and in some ways it should be. But there's another part of maintenance that is much harder to reduce to action steps—namely, keeping the spirit of the coalition alive.

That is, people join groups to get things done, but also to have a pleasant time in so doing. Getting work done is essential; yet if belonging to the coalition is all work and no play, then it can become drudgery. The member thinks: Life is full of options; why should I give energy to something that is routine and cheerless, and that doesn't really make me feel good? Sooner or later, quite possibly sooner, such members (whether paid or volunteer?) will leave.

The wise coalition leader, then, will make the coalition a happy place to be. He or she will build in some fun—some times to relax, push all work to one side, and simply enjoy one another's company. Going out to eat, throwing a surprise birthday party, having a cookout, taking some group time off for no particular reason, finding regular reasons to celebrate—these are examples of events that keep members connected to the coalition. Members stay involved not just because of the work, but because they feel affirmed as full human beings, because their human spirit is nourished.

All this is part of coalition maintenance, just as much as any itemized review process.

Leaders, take note.

What are Alternatives to Maintenance? Some Other Coalition Directions

Maintaining the coalition is important; maintaining the coalition may even be crucial, which is why we've spent so much time discussing it. But we haven't yet mentioned one essential point: Maintaining the coalition, in the sense of doing what you've done before, may not be what you want to do.

For people change, and so do groups. Community situations change; so do community needs. Coalitions are not immune from change, and your coalition may want to change with the times. Simple maintenance, holding on to the status quo, is not your only option.

What are the other options? You can grow; or spin off something new; or change your focus; or cut back; or simply end. Your coalition has choices. You can pursue any one of these options, or several of them at different times. But which option should you choose, and how should you go about choosing it? We'll consider these options in turn, along with some of the conditions that might be favorable for each one.

(Much of what follows is adapted from The Spirit of the Coalition, by Bill Berkowitz and Tom Wolff; see Additional Resources at the end of this chapter.)

Growing

You can grow. This is a natural tendency of groups and organizations, especially if they are doing well.

And suppose you are doing well. Suppose, too that the previously suggested maintenance checks have been completed to most people's satisfaction. Then why not do more of what you're doing, or branch out or up? You have successfully taken on some tasks; how about some more? Or how about a new challenge, in a different area?

Coalition growth may be the right way for you to go:

- When the coalition has a track record of stability.
- When it has a track record of success.
- When the community need is present.
- When the resources (people, money, and time) to sustain you will be present as well.
- When your members want to grow.
- When the community wants that, too.

But when you start thinking about growing, look before you leap, or even step. It's helpful for your coalition to know some of the dangers that may come with expansion:

1. If you grow bigger, you will need more resources to sustain you.
2. Growth also puts more pressure on the coalition leadership. The leadership and membership have limits, and can do only so much—even though growth can also mean new opportunities for the coalition that are difficult to pass up.
3. As the coalition becomes bigger, more visible, and more accepted in the community, there can be pressure to become administrators of community services, to actually run them. This can take you away from your planning, coordinating, and catalytic roles. You may not necessarily want to be a direct services provider.
4. Finally, if you grow, you can get spread too thin. And then you start feeling the strain of overload. Even if you can manage the strain, the quality of what you do begins to deteriorate. In this sense, there is danger in success, for it can steer you toward failure.

Resolving the issue of growth. While all these issues surrounding growth should make you stop and think, they are resolvable. The resolution begins by realizing that growth is not all or nothing. The issue is not simply grow or stay stagnant, or to grow or die. Your growth can instead be targeted and controlled. You can choose the degree to which you want to grow, when you want to do it, in what respects, and how. You can engage in a form of coalition career-planning.

When you do, it always helps if you build from a stable base. One coalition leader put it this way:

> "We need to be strong with what we already have, and be certain that growth is in a healthy and productive direction, before we start tinkering in new areas. Each time we grow, we're starting all over again. For us to start a whole new area, it's probably going to take some time for us to learn to do it right, and I'd like to make our current work more solid before we start approaching anything else."

So in a nutshell: If you choose to grow, you want to be in control of the process, and not let the process be in control of you. With thought, you can do this; and with experience and practice, your decisions about growth can become both easier and more productive.

"Spinning Off"

Growth—planned and controlled—may be a goal for your coalition, and a sensible and wise one. But choosing growth is not the only possibility. Whatever new initiatives the coalition takes on need not be permanent; they can be temporary. That is, you can take on something new, get it started, and then let it go.

This is what we mean by "spinning off." It is similar to incubating a program until it is strong enough to survive on its own. Or it's like being a mother bird until the fledgling gets its wing feathers and is ready to fly.

Spinning a program off may be desirable:

- When a particular community need continues to exist.
- When your coalition has addressed that need, but doesn't want to do so any more.
- When another group is wanting to (or willing to) and also able to perform that task

Coalitions cannot handle all community needs, and so it often makes sense to hand the glory, and the headaches, over to someone else. Yet when you spin something off, there can be problems. One key concern is "parental responsibility." How far does your responsibility extend? How long do you keep your attachment? You don't want to hang on too long because that's an energy drain on you. Yet you certainly don't want to let go too soon, either.

A different but equally relevant concern: It's also true that if you send the new venture out on its own, you take your chances. Your child might turn out to be ungrateful. The project could come back to haunt you.

Spinning off new programs—and seeking to develop new programs precisely so that they can be spun off—is often an excellent choice. True, success is not guaranteed. But to increase your chances of success, when you spin something off, you can do set up conditions and make the rules of future engagement clear. You can agree to provide technical assistance and consultation. You can stipulate as best you can what you will and will not do.

Still, the reality is that when you spin a program off, It's largely out of your control—which is often part of the reason you wanted to spin it off in the first place. It's helpful to accept that reality. More often than not, you can't have it both ways.

Changing Focus

An effective coalition does not have to grow, and it does not have to spin off new programs. It can simply change its focus. This may be a good idea when the original objectives of the coalition have been met, and when the coalition membership and leadership are motivated to take on other tasks. If you originally came together to improve public transportation, for example, and new bus lines are now running, you might choose to tackle job training (because people can now more easily get to good jobs). Or you could focus on youth employment, or affordable health care, or virtually anything else that is needed.

Cutting Back

In a different scenario, suppose a coalition hits tough times, external or internal, economic or psychological. Or suppose another group in the community emerges that seems to be providing the same functions, and providing them well. If either of these situations comes along, and if they are severe or prolonged, you can downsize. You can simply cut back.

There may be good reasons to do so. You may need to consolidate a little after some healthy growth. You may have grown too fast, and need to make some readjustments. A large grant may be coming to an end. Some other group may now be willing to take over an activity that's been an albatross around your neck—or maybe your albatross is a fledgling that is finally ready to leave the nest by itself. Under these circumstances, cutting back could be a reasonable idea, at least for the moment. It weeds out inefficiencies, brings you back to basics, and prompts you to think more carefully about priorities.

These types of events, like others in the paragraphs above, are all normal events in a coalition's development. And as a reminder, neither growth nor downsizing has to be forever. If you cut back now, that doesn't mean you'll never grow again. The evolutionary path of coalitions, and of social systems, is usually not a straight line.

Ending

You can also decide to end, and simply stop operating. This is often a sad event, but it doesn't have to be.

Coalitions are not immortal, nor are they expected to be. A coalition can simply outlive its own usefulness and decide to disband. The once-burning need may now be an ember. The leaders and members may have taken on new assignments, or changed their life priorities, or gotten sick, or moved away. And if the initial impetus or funding for starting the coalition came from the outside (perhaps from grant money), the impetus and the funding may now have shifted.

If the goal or mission has by now been accomplished, we can say congratulations for a job well done. Even if some goals have not been reached, and even if things must end semi-voluntarily or not voluntarily at all, the coalition's effort may nevertheless have made a difference. What's more, should the need flare up again, the coalition could spring back to life. In any case, new coalitions may arise later on, sometimes with some of the same members, and be better off because of your trailblazing efforts.

Staying the Way You Are

One more option: You can simply keep going the way you are. If you've been doing something well, why not continue it in just the same way? Your coalition may want to do so when it has built a track record of success, when the original need still exists, when community support is stable, when things are going well, when both leaders and members (and community members) are satisfied with the status quo, and when both leaders and members choose to maintain it

Staying the same sounds easy; it seems reasonable; but it is among the hardest options to carry out. The outer world, and your inner world, changes. There are ongoing, constant pressures to move in one direction or the other: to grow, or do something different, or fold your tent. To make a conscious choice to stay the same, and to maintain that choice regardless of those pressures, and stay steady as she goes—that isn't easy to do.

It can be a laudable thing to do, and preferable as well. But it's not necessarily the best thing to do, either. The danger is that you can grow stale, or smug, or increasingly less relevant, or wither on the vine. Change often brings energy, a rekindling of the spirit. If you stay the way you are, you need to ensure that the underlying spirit of the coalition will be sustained.

To restate a major theme: Will your coalition be better off changing in some way? It might, or it might not; there's no single answer. Your answer should depend on assessment of your coalition's and your community's present needs, desires, resources, support, and accomplishments, weighed against the

costs and benefits of other options available to you. Let's clarify this point in the next part of our discussion.

To sum it up: The maintenance of coalitions in practice

We have treated these different coalition directions as independent options, but that has been partly for purposes of exposition. In practice, the options swirl closer together, with the predominant pattern changing, like weather systems passing overhead.

The reality of coalition maintenance and evolution lies closer to this: You keep going because you're doing some good. You have some core functions. Perhaps you take on something new from time to time, wisely or not. Maybe that something dies on its own. Maybe somebody else kills it; but maybe it works, and you keep it. Or maybe you spin it off, so that it can stand on its own. New opportunities like that keep coming along every so often. You can choose among them.

How can those choices best be made? To answer that question, it will help to reflect on and review the key elements that ultimately maintain and sustain both coalitions and any other social organization:

Accomplishment

First, of course, is accomplishment. If the coalition, if any organization, is doing good work and that work is recognized, the community is much more likely to support it. New members, and new funding, are easier to come by. Success is reinforcing. So if the coalition (and its leadership) can find a way to keep generating positive events, other things will tend to fall into place. And this applies **regardless** of whether the coalition chooses to grow or contract or move in a different direction.

Institutional Consciousness

A second key element is an institutional consciousness. This means that the coalition and its members believe and act as if they are an integral part of community life, a prominent and constant feature on the local landscape. The larger community feels the same way. The coalition has a sense of permanence. It's here to stay; everyone knows it. It's become institutionalized.

To develop an institutional consciousness takes strong and committed coalition leadership. (Accomplishment helps, too.) But it also takes effective coalition **structures**. Members need to know that attendance at each monthly meeting is expected, that they are expected to serve on at least one task force, that elections will be held on the last Wednesday in September, and that the first post-election business will be a coalition action plan. These or equivalent structures, reliably and repeatedly utilized, strengthen allegiance. Over time, they deepen the coalition's roots. *Institutionalization*, that five-dollar'word, basically means "rootedness"—even though the coalition's roots, like the roots of a tree, lie below the surface.

Positive Spirit

Good works and good structure are two essential elements maintaining any coalition. But finally, what you also want to maintain are good **feelings**—the positive spirit that brought people together and kept them coming together in the first place. The personal closeness, the cohesion, the camaraderie are hard to overestimate. We spend our personal time where we feel comfortable, accepted, and valued for who we are. Why should we think that our own coalition members would feel, or act, any differently?

After the coalition is established, it may choose among many different maintenance options. The key point about coalition maintenance is that there are genuine choices; it's best to choose consciously. You can maintain the momentum of your coalition, speed it up, or slow it down. You can determine

the direction of your coalition and keep or change it in the way that you and your coalition members see fit, rather than be at the mercy of outside factors.

The choices you make will depend upon your particular coalition's history, personality, assets, community needs, environmental factors, and available time. Many choices are justifiable, and many different choices may be made over a coalition's life span. And your maintenance choices here are ongoing, meaning that your best choice today might not be your best choice tomorrow -which is part of what makes community work exhilarating, challenging, and fun. But maintaining or changing the coalition, like most other areas of community practice, is up to you.

If your coalition is doing good work, it will probably choose to sustain it, in one form or another. Continued accomplishment, institutionalized structures, and vibrant spirit will help you maintain your efforts and your successes. These coalition needs are interrelated, and they are continuous; they never go away. A wise coalition leader, like the one quoted below, will come into alignment with these principles of coalition life.

"Coalition building is a very lengthy process, and it's one that doesn't always go smoothly or according to anybody's pre-established time line. People in coalitions need to remember that, and to accept that, and not be disappointed that things don't go as quickly as they want to. As each new member comes in, it changes the whole dynamic and the whole focus, and that's part of it. It's constantly evolving. The coalition never has an end in sight, not unless you want to disband it. It just doesn't have an end. It constantly changes. You just have to keep going and plugging away. That's just the nature of it…"

Information contained in this chapter was adapted from the University of Kansas Work Group on Health Promotion and Community Development's Community Tool Box at (ctb.ku.edu/).

Healthy Community and Tobacco Reduction Coalition Successes

Healthy-Community Coalition Successes

During 2005, a total of 15 community coalitions in Michigan received grants to create environmental and policy changes. Of those health coalitions, the following 37 communities experienced change: Cadillac, Fremont, Grant, White Cloud, McBain, Lake City, Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo Township, Ypsilanti, Dexter, Chelsea, Manchester, Saline, Marquette, Ishpeming, Negaunee, Chocolay Township, West Branch Township, Ewen Township, Gwinn, Allen Neighborhood, South Lansing, Northwest Lansing, Pontiac, St. Clair County, St. Johns, DeWitt, Holland, Zeeland, Eaton Rapids, Canton Township, Saginaw, Bay, Midland, Northville, Chippewa County, and Munising.

Projects implemented as a result of the completed assessments and funding include the following:

- Marquette Yellow Bikes Program.
- Regional Recreational Authority working to establish a non-profit to run Al Quaal.
  Recreational Area and Noquomenan Trail network.
- Project Senior Fresh.
- Smart Commute Week.
- Two new neighborhood farmers' markets.
- Development of a health impact assessment tool.
- Purchase and installation of bike racks.
- Development and distribution of walking maps.
- Creation of promotional materials that highlighted physical activity and healthy food opportunities.

- Purchase of educational and media kits to be used to promote smoke-free environments as well as school materials aimed at increasing healthy eating.

Tobacco-Reduction Coalition Successes

The power of such partnerships has resulted in significant improvements on the way toward a tobacco-free Michigan. With the exception of the Youth Tobacco Act and the Michigan Clean Indoor

Case Study: The Allen Neighborhood Center (ANC) serves as a hub for neighborhood education and capacity-building. ANC offers activities that promote the health, safety, and stability of families and neighborhoods on the East side of Lansing. Activities include home repair training, health screenings, a community garden, and a weekly neighborhood farmers' market. During the 2005 season, the market saw an average of 270 shoppers each week, had over $350 in Project FRESH sales (the WIC farmers' market nutrition program), and had over $1,600 in EBT food stamp sales. ANC has been extremely successful in working from the grassroots level at improving the daily lives of local residents. Numerous grants have been secured as well as a "Cool Cities" designation by the State of Michigan. Public health practitioners have learned (and continue to learn) a great deal about reaching community residents by talking to, listening to, and assisting ANC.

Air Act, all of the following legislation passed since the 1990 Task Force recommendations[1]

- Restriction on smoking in publicly owned buildings and certain other venues. Michigan Clean Indoor Air Act—Public Act 198 of 1986.
- Ban on the sale of tobacco to minors. Michigan Youth Tobacco Act—Public Act 314 of 1988.
- Prohibition of the sale of cigarettes outside of original packaging (loosies)—Public Act 272 of 1992.
- Restrictions on the distribution of free tobacco samples through the mail— Public Act 273 of 1992.
- Ban on use of tobacco products in school buildings at all times and on public school grounds until 6:00 p.m. on school days—Public Act 140 of 1993.
- Ban on smoking at any time in licensed child care centers and child-caring institutions—Public Act 217 of 1993.
- Ban on smoking in licensed family child care homes during hours of operation—Public Act 217 of 1993.

- Increased nonsmoking seating in restaurants—at least 50 percent nonsmoking seats in establishments with 50 seats or more; at least 25percent non-smoking seating in smaller restaurants. Public Act 242 of 1993.
- 1993: Increased tobacco excise taxes (75 cents per pack on cigarettes; 16 percent of wholesale price on other tobacco products)—Public Act 327 of 1993.
- 2002: Increased tobacco excise taxes (50 cents per pack on cigarettes; 16 percent of wholesale price on other tobacco products)—Public Act 503 of 2002.
- Requirement of a tax stamp on all tobacco products sold in Michigan—Public Act 187 of 1997.
- Ban on billboard advertising of tobacco products—Public Act 464 of 1998.
- Smoke-free regulations in all worksites and public places, excluding bars and restaurants. in Marquette City (1998), Ingham County (February 2002), Washtenaw County (November 2002), and Genesee County (November 2003).
- Over 40 local ordinances and policies that address smoke-free environments, vending machines, tobacco advertising, and retailer licensing.

Special-Interest Groups Working for Policy and Environmental Change

Special-interest groups offer another rich resource for community involvement that can promote policy change. The following is a suggestion for establishing a "friends" group and for creating an avalanche of voices that local decision-makers simply cannot ignore.

Caution:

Often the local health promotion task force or coalition (e.g., Local Physical Activity and Nutrition Coalition or Task Force) has members from local government agencies. Government workers may feel uncomfortable advocating for policy and environmental changes—even with careful training. That's okay. Other special-interest groups, neighborhood associations, or outdoors clubs exist whose members are not hindered by any sort of political repercussions from vocal advocacy. Tap into these groups when creating your friends group.

The friends group should consist of motivated and passionate people. You will need to find approximately 15 to 50 people who are committed to the healthy-community cause. For the particular purpose of keeping the healthy community mission fresh in the minds of elected officials and decision makers, the members need only to remain persistent in their message for a short period.

The approach is simple: over the course of 50 weeks (omit two weeks for holidays), get a minimum of 25 people who are particularly interested in an issue to commit to the following five tasks:

- Write two letters/year.
- Make two phone calls/year.
- Send two e-mails/year.
- Attend and speak at two public meetings/year.
- Make two visits with policy- or decision-makers/year.

To be successful, the message conveyed in each of these methods should be consistent, yet different enough not to sound like a form letter. The real work will come in coordinating the timing of this effort. The coordinator of this approach should have a large calendar and write in each volunteer's name, task, and appropriate date. It also helps to provide some volunteer training to the friends groups. This can be as simple as an overview of the local political process or as complex as bicycle and pedestrian design elements. The training should be appropriately geared toward the skill level of the group, as well as the ultimate goal.

Here's a Tip:

The success of this approach rests in the simple truth that elected officials and decision-makers rarely hear the same message from this many people over an extended length of time. This approach creates the effect of an "avalanche." In addition, your more sensitive government employees are not the ones making contacts. That's the beauty of a friends group; they are essentially friends of your cause who want to make their voices heard. You simply furnish the megaphone.

This approach has a relatively low volunteer burden, but it can create an avalanche of voices, sustained momentum, and, ultimately, change.

Advisory Boards and Commissions

One way to institutionalize healthy-communities elements into a community is to create a government-appointed advisory board or commission that focuses on bicycle or pedestrian issues,

community gardens or farmers' markets, or both. As a general rule, it is best for the advisory board to limit its work either to bicycle or pedestrian interests or to community gardens or farmers' markets. The experience of numerous communities illustrates the importance of having separate advisory boards. One interest dominates the other when the two exist as one. Keep in mind, however, that these boards are typically begun as bicycle and pedestrian committees and evolve into separate boards later.

Here's a Tip:
The creation of a full-time coordinator position within local government that focuses on bicycle and pedestrian needs as they relate to all other transportation modes, planning, and city operations is ideal. A typical job description would include both bicycle and pedestrian responsibilities, serving as staff to both bicycle and pedestrian advisory boards.

In creating such a board, it is vital that there be municipal support and buy-in. In other words, make it the "Mayor's Pedestrian Advisory Board" or the "County Farmers' Market Committee." Such an advisory board will carry more weight and potentially have more influence over local policy decisions than a board created by an advocacy group that has not been endorsed by a local government organization. Additionally, an advisory board is likely to outlast individual politicians, making it a sustainable entity that addresses bicycle/pedestrian needs.

Here's a Tip:
Forming an advisory board ordained by the local governing body is likely to be a long-range goal. As a first step, however, work toward establishing a more informal bicycle or pedestrian Committee modeled after the suggestions included here. That way, when the timing is right to pursue institutionalizing an advisory board, there is a structure already set up with knowledgeable, interested candidates.

Government support and endorsement can carry inherent pitfalls, namely—e.g., the membership of the board can become very political. It is critical to the success of these boards that membership is controlled by staff dedicated to the same interests. This positive control over membership can manifest itself in the **interview process**, in recruitment and advertising, and in the writing of the board bylaws. Successful pedestrian and bicycle programs also rely on **effective meeting practices** and **strategic planning**. Suggest the following processes to your trusted elected official or decision-maker.

Neighborhood Tobacco-Reduction Coalitions

The role of **local tobacco-reduction coalitions** was included in Chapter 3. In a community where a coalition does not exist, community members can develop a coalition or advisory board that is interested in protecting community members' health, specifically through increasing local smoke-free policies where people are physically active, or in other places that have the potential to protect a large percentage of the community, such as school districts, colleges/universities, worksites and other public places.

Interview Process

To attract quality members, advertise in local newspapers and neighborhood and faith-organization newsletters, and post information around town. Get the word out as much as possible. Ideally, the demographics of the board should match that of the community.

Request that interested individuals submit a resume and cover letter explaining their interest. Look for a history of volunteerism and the level of effort that he applicant generally gives to projects. Avoid the "professional" volunteer: a person's ability to balance personal and professional interests is a good characteristic of a potential member. These people will generally be willing to learn something new.

Boards, Staff Responsibilities, and Effective Meetings

Advisory boards seem to function best at 9 to 12 members, with rotating three-year terms. Elect an effective chair from the beginning, and have a grooming process for the next one in place when it's time to elect another. You may want to consider longer terms for the chair to avoid confusion in leadership. Regardless of membership or chairs, it is imperative that staff provide training so that people understand what they are there to do. Strive for a conference or a retreat every other year that provides education, inspiration, new information and designs, outside speakers, and opportunity for team-building. Ideally, this training will provide a framework that staff can then build on throughout the year.

Staff responsibilities are important to understand on the front end. A staff person dedicated to this board, must set clear boundaries. Staff should serve in a rather limited role, yet one that allows the members to do their work most effectively. One example: avoid letter-writing or taking notes/minutes for the board, but do assist in getting guest speakers for the meetings. Staff often works with the chair to design effective and productive meetings.

Staff can include the bicycle and pedestrian coordinator, a health department employee assigned to work on healthy communities, or a nonprofit staff person who has formed a more informal physical activity and nutrition committee.

The key to successful and **effective meetings** is to make each one important. Outside presenters, presentations by board members about particular projects, and a discussion of a timely issue all make meetings important. Typically, staff will have an idea of timing and relevance that should be used to assist the chair in setting the agenda. Yet,, staff should not dictate which topic should take precedence, but rather present options to the chair or other leaders on the board, who then make the decisions as to the topic and/or invited guest.

Here's A Tip:

The 3 Ps: Plans, Projects, and Policies

All can be short-, medium-, or long-term efforts and all can and should be parallel processes. The 3 Ps provide focus for the board and, ultimately, change for the community.

Plans: Comprehensive land use plans, transportation plans, bicycle and pedestrian plan that includes healthy-community elements.

Projects: Capital projects, often bid out to contractors (e.g., intersection redesign)

Policy: Revise design guidelines to be more bicycle- or pedestrian-friendly; sidewalk requirements for all-new development.

To ensure a positive experience, staff should assist in order to develop a presentation that works for everyone. Make the speakers comfortable, assuring them that they won't be "on their own" if the board has tough questions or sensitive issues surface. When the experience is a positive one, an equally positive reputation develops for the board. As a result, other speakers will be more inclined to accept invitations or even request to come before the board.

Priorities and the 3 Ps

Prioritizing projects contributes to effective meetings, but this sort of strategic planning merits added attention as a successful approach to achieving sustainable changes. Each year, the advisory board should determine its priorities for specific and achievable goals—for short, medium, and long terms. Once the list is developed, each project or priority should be assigned to one member to track, influence, and basically "bird dog." The members will inevitably take ownership of the project and report on that issue to the board. Assigning priorities to members lessens the burden on staff and enhances relationships between board members and key players with common priorities.

These suggestions for working with the community will get you started on your way to fruitful partnerships and sustainable changes that will lead to successful creation of a healthy community!

Information contained in this chapter was conveyed by Peter Lagerway, Seattle Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinator and FHWA Pedestrian Safety Roadshow Facilitator, to Roadshow Facilitators in Training, Raleigh and Durham, N.C., June 2001 and the Community Tool Box (ctb.ku.edu/). Any liberties taken with the material have been at the writer's and editor's discretion to suit Michigan's needs.

Additional Resources

Mountains of literature have been written on coalition-building and community mobilization. Here is a short list of excellent resources.

Excellent Websites

ctb.ku.edu/

The Community Toolbox from the University of Kansas Work Group on Health Promotion and Community Development has been online since 1995, and it continues to grow weekly. The core of the Tool Box is the "how-to tools." These sections use simple, friendly language to explain how to carry out the different tasks necessary for coalition-building. There are sections on leadership, strategic planning, community assessment, advocacy, grant-writing, and evaluation, to give just a few examples.

www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com

Local Physical Activity & Nutrition Coalition Manual: Guide for Community Action North Carolina Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Health. 2001.

www.www.commcoalition.msu.edu

Michigan State University Extension provides useful resources and information for new and existing coalitions within Michigan. This site provides links to resources, facts, and success stories that communities may find helpful.

Excellent Books

From the Ground Up: A Workbook on Coalition-building and Community Development. Edited by G. Kaye and T. Wolff. Amherst, Mass.,: AHEC Community Partners 1997.

Getting to Yes. R. Fisher and W. Ury. New York: Penguin Books, 1991.

The Spirit of the Coalition. B. Berkowitz and T. Wolff. American Public Health Association, 2000. www.apha.org.

[1] Tobacco-Free Michigan: A Five Year Strategic Plan for Tobacco Use Prevention and Reduction 2003–2008.

Chapter 6
Working with the Media

In this chapter you'll find some practical information and ideas that focus on the importance of the media. The media can reach many people with a powerful message about the importance of healthy communities and the need for advocacy to change the way in which our communities and transportation systems are designed. Success or failure in advocating for a policy change may well depend on which side does a better job of framing the issue in the media and in the public debate. If public health advocates succeed in framing the issue as a public health problem, the policy may well be defeated. In other words, present the issue in a way that will be appealing to the public at large, and keep that message in the forefront of the debate.

An important skill for media advocates to develop is the ability to translate research findings and national policy debates into terms that are relevant to local residents. This can be done by using simple, commonsense language, citing concrete local examples and anecdotes, and highlighting the key implications for local policy—the "bottom line." The ability to frame the issue and use the science as the foundation for the frame is powerful in refuting an opponent's claim.

Many excellent resources (some listed at the end of this chapter) are available on the very important topics of developing a strategic communications plan, working with the media, and media advocacy. Use this chapter to begin to formulate ideas about what needs to be done to develop strategic approaches to using a variety of media interventions in your community.

What is covered in the media not only gets the attention of the public, but also reaches policymakers. Policymakers and opinion leaders regularly rely on the editorial pages to understand the pulse of a community. When using news stories and editorials, advocates can make a more good case by presenting a solution and making a practical policy appealing. Although health-promotion practitioners cannot use federal funds for lobbying (influencing elected officials to enact specific legislation or a specific call to action on a specific piece of legislation), advocates can explain and present evidence for the benefits of the health-promoting policies.

How Does Work with the Media Affect Policy and Environmental Change?

Much of this Healthy Communities Tool Kit has been about the use of policy to change physical environments and social norms in order to help promote physical activity, healthy eating, reducing tobacco use, and reducing exposure to secondhand smoke in daily living. Policy change is a long process, and initial efforts that cannot be skipped or skimped include community education to heighten awareness of the issue and grassroots mobilization. Strategic use of the media plays a role in accomplishing this crucial groundwork.

What is covered and how it is covered by the media can influence the way in which individuals think about an issue, which can build community support for a policy initiative. It eventually influences social norms. Success is marked not only by wide discussion of the topic but also by large groups

of constituents calling for solutions. Ultimately, strategic use of the media helps to pave the way for smooth implementation and enforcement of Healthy Communities–promoting policies. Only after community support for a policy is assured can a campaign for policy change, which includes media advocacy, be launched.

First Things First

It is helpful to think about planning for work with the media in two stages. The first is getting ready. The second stage is more strategic, focused, and tactical. It includes preparing for opposition. Both stages relate to an overall plan for media advocacy in relation to policy change.

Media Advocacy: The strategic use of news media to support community organizing to advance a public-policy initiative.[1]

Getting Ready

Just as with decision-makers, you must also target and cultivate relationships with members of the media, both print and broadcast. In addition to knowing who the reporters are for health, get to know who covers transportation, city and county government, the environment, and schools. Develop a list of media contacts. Start building relationships with those people by providing good information about the issue, or by commenting on stories that have already been done.

> **Saying Thank You**: Saying thank you is a hallmark of good manners and it fosters a good impression. When thanking reporters, one must use wisdom. Never send a note of thanks for putting *your* story in the paper or for covering *your* particular organization. Instead, thank the reporter for thorough and fair coverage of a very important topic, as well as unbiased, investigative reporting on an issue.

Once you establish your credibility, you may find yourself being called on for information. Be ready to respond to the media quickly when asked. The media knock once and require response on a very short deadline. If there is no response within a single news cycle, the opportunity is likely to be lost.

Getting Strategic

A good strategic plan assesses where the advocate wants to go and how to get there. At its heart, effective strategy is rooted in the following key questions. It will serve you well to work through these questions with your coalition before proceeding to implementation of your advocacy with the media.

Nine Key Questions to Consider in Developing an Advocacy Strategy[2]

(see page 60 for worksheet)

Looking Outward

1. **What do we want? (OBJECTIVES)**
   Any advocacy effort must begin with a sense of its goals and clearly defined policy objectives. These goals have important distinctions. What are the content goals (e.g., the specific policy objectives) and what are the process goals (e.g., building community among participants)? These goals need to be defined at the start in a way that can launch an effort, draw people to it, and sustain it over time.

2. **Who can give it to us? (AUDIENCE)**

Who are the people and institutions that you need to move? They include those who have the formal authority to deliver the goods (i.e., legislators). They also include those who have the capacity to influence those with formal authority (i.e., the media and key constituencies, both allied and opposed). In both cases, an effective advocacy effort requires a clear sense of who these audiences are and what access or pressure points are available to move them.

3. **What do they need to hear? (MESSAGE)**
   Reaching these different audiences requires crafting and framing a persuasive set of messages. While these messages must be tailored for different audiences, depending on what they are ready to hear, the messages themselves must be consistent. In most cases, advocacy messages will have two basic components: an appeal to what is right and an appeal to the audience's self-interest.

   Message development should be directly informed by the strategic plan. Develop hard-hitting, clear messages to tell the story of why healthy communities are important. The media require simple, short, and straightforward explanations. Pick two or three main points and make them repeatedly.

4. **From whom do they need to hear it? (MESSENGERS)**
   The same message can have very different impacts, depending on who communicates it. Who are the most credible messengers for different audiences? In some cases, these messengers are "experts" whose credibility is largely technical. In other cases, we need to engage the "authentic voices" who can speak from personal experience.

   Speaking effectively to members of the media and to the public requires preparation, coaching, and practice. Identify and adequately train members of your coalition to serve as spokespersons who are able to comfortably deliver consistent and science-based information.

5. **How can we get them to hear? (DELIVERY)**
   There is a wide continuum of ways to deliver an advocacy message. These range from the genteel (e.g., lobbying) to the in-your-face (e.g., direct action). Which means is the most effective varies from situation to situation. The key is to evaluate the situation in light of delivery methods and apply them appropriately, weaving them together in a winning mix.

Looking Inward

6. **What have we got? (RESOURCES)**
   An effective advocacy effort takes careful stock of the advocacy resources that are already there to be built on. These include past advocacy work that is related, alliances already in place, the capacity of staff and other people, information, and political intelligence. In short, you don't start from scratch; you start building on what you have.

7. **What do we need to develop? (GAPS)**
   After taking stock of the advocacy resources you have, the next step is to identify the advocacy resources you need that aren't there yet. This means looking at alliances that need to be built, and capacities such as outreach, media, and research, which are crucial to any effort. Be realistic about the level of resources needed—your strength and the strength of the opposition.

8. **How do we begin? (FIRST EFFORTS)**
   What would be an effective way to begin to move the strategy forward? What are some potential short-term goals or projects that would bring the right people together, symbolize

the larger work ahead, and create something achievable that lays the groundwork for the next step? Create awareness of the issues prior to advocacy. Get on the radar screen.

9. **How do we tell whether it is working? (EVALUATION)**
   As with any long journey, the course needs to be checked along the way. Strategy must be evaluated, revisiting each of the questions above (e.g., are we aiming at the right audiences? Are we reaching them?). It is important to be able to make midcourse corrections and to discard those elements of a strategy that don't work once they are actually put into practice.

   Being ready and effective requires having a strategic plan in place with specific policy objectives. Once your coalition has answered the above questions, you can move on to more focused and tactical strategies for pursuing the media.

   Proactively, you want to get coverage of the issues and the need for healthy communities, using the media to promote your policy recommendations. Keep in mind, though, that advocacy always produces a response. Policy advocates must anticipate a negative response—be prepared to endure opposition and have a crisis-communication plan in place.

Crisis Communications—A Plan for Damage Control

Time is of the essence. A coalition can be prepared to respond quickly by:

- Predicting what hard-to-answer questions may come up.
- Formulating concise answers.
- Formulating strategies for transitioning from the crisis-response mode to proactively delivering the main message about healthy communities and the facts of the public health crisis that are due to physical inactivity, unhealthy eating, tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke.

Caution:

Sometimes advocates need to anticipate and prepare not only for challenges to their message, but also for attacks on their credibility. Anticipating and preparing for this will allow a coalition to respond with integrity and composure.

Just For Fun—Opposition Acromyms

NIMBY	Not in my back yard
NIMFYE	Not in my front yard either
PITBY	Put it in their back yard
NIMEY	Not in my election year
LULU	Locally undesirrable land use
NOPE	Not on planet Earth
CAVE	Citizens against virtually everything
BANANA	Build absolutely nothing anywher near anything

Healthy-community efforts may be opposed for a variety of reasons. Consider:

- Subdivision developers who do not want the added expense of pedestrian-friendly amenities.
- Legislators who prefer that all transportation dollars go toward more and wider roads rather than multimodal transportation options.
- Residents who believe that sidewalks in front of or trails in the back of their homes might increase undesirable foot traffic.
- Parents who are concerned that walking to school is unsafe.
- Adults who want the ability to eat what they want when they want and not to be inundated with "healthy" while doing so.
- Developers who want to use farmland for their proposed subdivisions.
- Concern that "locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables" equates to higher prices, less variety, and less "pretty" produce.
- Adult smokers who do not want to be told what to do in regard to smoking, and want to be able to smoke when and where they want.

Politics among local officials and decision makers can play a significant role in tobacco-related policy and environmental change. Therefore, it is important to get to know local officials and decision-makers, become knowledgeable about political issues, and develop strategies on how to address these issues and increase awareness among local decision-makers that changing tobacco-related policy is a health issue rather than a political issue.

Timing is Everything

Policy change and working with the media requires a flexible strategy and the ability to respond rapidly to opportunity. If national data are going to be released regarding physical-activity guidelines, obesity rates, or safe streets, it is critical that the local healthy-community coalition address the issue immediately, telling people why it is important and what they can do about it. If there is an important groundbreaking ceremony happening, an election coming up, or a national event such as National Bike to Work Week or National Public Health Week or a statewide event such as Smart Commute Week, take advantage of these opportunities to start local dialogue on commuter routes for cyclists or safe routes to school.

Of course, an opportunity may not arise exactly when you are ready for it. In that case, you may have to get creative and bring the issue and the dialogue into the forefront yourself.

Nine Key Questions to Consider in Developing an Advocacy Strategy Worksheet

Objectives	
Audience	
Message	
Messengers	
Delivery	
Resources	
Gaps	
First Efforts	
Evaluation	

1 Wallack, L.M., Woodruff, K., Dorfman, L., and Diaz, I. News for Change: *An Advocate's Guide to Working with the Media*. Sage Publications, 1999

2 Jim Shultz, director, Democracy Center (Advocacy Institute West).

Chapter 7
Tools You Can Use

This chapter includes descriptions of the following tools that have been used in Michigan:

1. Healthy Community Checklist
2. Promoting Active Communities
3. Nutrition Environment Assessment Tool
4. Designing Healthy Environments at Work
5. Healthy School Action Tool
6. Smoke-free Communities Assessment Tool

These tools will help you:

- Gather data about your community.
- Build relationships with fellow advocates and decision-makers.
- Mobilize community groups to action.
- Develop a plan of action.
- Increase public awareness.
- Advocate for sustainable change.

To complete the assessments, you will need input from people who are familiar with your community and its policies. People or local organizations to consult during the assessment process might include:

- Members of planning and zoning boards
- City or township planning staff and consultants, including engineers, landscape architects, and community design specialists
- Department of Transportation
- Parks and Recreation Department
- Elected officials
- Police or sheriff's office
- School district administration or school board
- Health Department
- University Extension offices
- Hospital outreach staff
- Wellness coordinators for large employers
- Local media
- Fitness club staff
- Local tobacco-reduction coalition members
- Staff and volunteers from local chapters of the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, and American Lung Association

Do not simply hand over the assessment for completion. Instead, have members of your coalition interview the people necessary to answer the questions. By actively interviewing various people, conversations may arise that lead not only to useful information, but also to a fruitful relationship. You may find that the interviewees do not always know the information being asked, prompting further research and discussion about policy and facility issues.

The specific approach depends on the capacity of your community coalition. All the assessments are Web-based and can be completed in a variety of ways, including (but not limited to) by a single interviewer, a pair of interviewers, or a coalition. Once the information has been collected, the

assessment can easily be completed online. If a coalition has many interested members, different individuals or teams could each tackle a section.

By promoting the healthy behaviors listed throughout this tool kit, your community can increase its residential demand and economic assets, as well as the health of its residents. Michigan is striving to be a top choice for people to reside and for businesses to locate. Make your community the place in which people want to live, work, and go to school by assessing the health of its environment with the tools provided at www.mihealthtools.org.

This website, resources, and tools were developed by the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) and several partners to address the health crisis that citizens are experiencing, such as obesity or being at risk for heart disease or stroke. The tools can all be completed free online, and automatic reports will be generated. Resources and technical assistance are also provided through MDCH. The data obtained by the website will be kept confidential and will not be released without permission.

Healthy Community Checklist (HCC): The HCC features a 40-item quick assessment of a community's health environment related to promoting physical activity, healthy eating/healthy weight, and tobacco-free lifestyles.

Promoting Active Communities (PAC): The PAC supports communities in identifying actions they can take to make it easier for people to be active—from zoning rules to worksite wellness to education offered by medical providers.

Nutrition Environment Assessment Tool (NEAT): NEAT can serve as the first step in improving your community's support of healthy eating. NEAT and the associated materials found on the website will also point to ways in which your community's environment can be improved to encourage healthier eating among its residents.

Designing Healthy Environments at Work (DHEW): Determine the extent to which your worksite supports employee health. Employee health and economic health go hand in hand. The DHEW assessment helps employers identify ways to create a healthier work environment. The website also provides information and resources for worksites that want to take steps to create opportunities for employees to be physically active, eat healthy, and live a tobacco-free lifestyle.

Healthy School Action Tool (HSAT): The HSAT is aimed at bettering the health of our children by focusing on school environments, where children spend much of their time. The HSAT is a self-assessment and planning instrument to help schools take positive action, and the Healthy School Environment Recognition Program, recognizes schools that have demonstrated significant accomplishments in creating healthy environments.

Smoke-free Communities Assessment: Find out the smoke-free policy status in your community, such as in different municipalities, worksites, restaurants, schools, and college and university campuses, and what services exist in your community to help residents quit smoking. Resources are provided to increase the number of smoke-free environments to reduce and eliminate residents' exposure to secondhand smoke and increase the availability of local services to help residents quit smoking and live a tobacco-free lifestyle.

Intended Outcomes

The completed assessment provides excellent baseline data, which can later be used to measure and report progress.

The information obtained can be used to create a community-action plan. The action plan is an important outcome of the assessments because it allows the opportunity for communities to prepare for funding, develop coalition action teams, aid in advocacy efforts, and guide in determining and prioritizing policy-change initiatives and plans for physical projects (e.g., sidewalks, traffic-calming measures, street lighting). The action plan should be revisited and updated often to reflect accomplishments and new priorities.

The process of completing one of the assessments may also be an important catalyst that sparks a community effort or injects new life into an existing coalition.

Practice Tips

If the comprehensive nature of the assessments seems overwhelming, consider using the sections that are most relevant for the local climate or your plans. Alternatively, capitalize on their comprehensive nature and recruit and train new volunteers and provide training. This will result in an invested coalition that will push the healthy-communities agenda further than any individual could or should.

Consider the benefits of bringing a fellow coalition member with you to the interview. You may be able to build potential leadership within your coalition in this way. In public health, we need to learn to build broader capacity instead of trying to do everything ourselves. By inviting coalition members to key meetings, you are enabling the coalition to share important project updates with key decision-makers as well as creating the opportunity to network and build relationships that could further the progress of the coalition's efforts.

Publicizing the results of the assessments depends on what is best for the effort. When using the media to get a point across, be careful not to alienate the decision-makers you are trying to influence.

Chapter 8
What to Read and Whom to Know

There is a growing wealth of information about the hot and timely topic of healthy communities and policy changes to promote healthy communities. This Healthy Communities Tool Kit was primarily designed to steer interested parties through the complex policy process for moving the agenda forward. It offers some practical getting-started tasks and tools for community work, especially in Michigan. But many other resources are available to guide your work. This section provides a "Must Read" list of websites and documents for creating healthy communities, access to healthy foods and tobacco-free lifestyles. As you begin to search these lists, you will discover that much, much more is available. Take a day or week to surf the Web, gather materials, read, and find out about what is taking place across our country and all over the world regarding healthy communities.

What to Read in Physical Activity

Must Read Documents and Websites

www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/health_professionals/active_environments/aces.htm
This is the website for CDC's **Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity**, which houses its Active Community Environment—related work. You will find a one-page Healthy Communities handout on this website, along with a description of other work that the CDC is committed to regarding Active Community Environments. This site also provides an excellent related Links section for environmental approaches to promote physical activity.

www.activeliving.org
The Active Living Network is a project of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and is intended to build and support a national coalition of leaders committed to promoting the connection between places and health. The website has been designed for researchers, advocates, and program implementers from a wide range of professions, including public health, urban planning, and transportation. The site contains invaluable Tools and Resources section where you will find a communications kit containing core messages, PowerPoint presentations, and downloadable images. The site also includes research tools, case studies, links, and resources.

www.activelivingbydesign.org
Active Living by Design is a national program of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and is part of the University of North Carolina School of Public Health in Chapel Hill. The program establishes and evaluates innovative approaches to increase physical activity through community design, public policies, and communication strategies. This thorough website offers a featured link and featured publication that is regularly updated. Additionally, you will find an extensive list of other links, presentations, publications, and tools.

www.pedbikeinfo.org
The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC) of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, and the CDC is a clearinghouse for information about health and safety, engineering, advocacy, education, enforcement, and access and mobility. The PBIC serves anyone interested in pedestrian and bicycle issues, including planners, engineers, private citizens, advocates, educators, police enforcement, and the health community. From this website, you can access two additional websites: www.walkinginfo.org and www.bicyclinginfo.org. which provide specific information related to walking and cycling, respectively.

www.transact.org

The goal of the **Surface Transportation Policy Project** is to ensure that transportation policy and investments help conserve energy, protect environmental and aesthetic quality, strengthen the economy, promote social equity, and make communities more livable. The project emphasizes the needs of people, rather than the needs of vehicles, in ensuring access to jobs, services, and recreational opportunities. The website provides must-read publications such as *Driven to Spend, High Mileage Moms, and Mean Streets*. The project also offers advocacy tips, presentation tools (PowerPoint slides for most publications), and updates on national legislation such as T-3.

www.lgc.org

The Center for Livable Communities is a national initiative of the Local Government Commission and helps local governments and community leaders be proactive in their land use and transportation planning. This superb website offers publications, downloads, and links to relevant topics.

Creating a Healthy Environment: The Impact of the Built Environment on Public Health, by Richard Jackson and Chris Kocktitzky, is a monograph focusing on the health impacts of urban sprawl. It features discussion of how the built environment (including buildings, streets, open spaces, and infrastructure) relates to the promotion of discouragement of physical activity. Found at www.sprawlwatch.org.

Getting to Smart Growth: 100 Policies for Implementation is a policy guide published by the **Smart Growth Network**. It is meant for states and communities that recognize the need for smart growth but are unsure how to achieve it. This useful resource offers ten principles for smart growth associated with healthy, vibrant, and diverse communities. In addition to the principles, suggested policies and implementation techniques are offered. Whenever possible, real-life scenarios are provided. Available online at smartgrowth.org and at www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/.

Increasing Physical Activity Through Community Design: A Guide for Public Health Practitioners is a May 2002 report published by the **National Center for Bicycling and Walking** (NCBW). It presents seven types of projects for making more walkable and bikable communities including (1) community audit; (2) sidewalks; (3) street crossings; (4) bicycle-friendly streets;(5) trails; (6) slowing down of cars; and (7) safe routes to school. Funding strategies are also presented. Copies of the report are available as a pdf file at www.bikewalk.org (this is the website for NCBW, which is an excellent resource as well) or by calling (292) 462-6622.

New Community Design to the Rescue: Fulfilling Another American Dream is a 2001 report by the National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices. New Community Design principles can be used to create vibrant neighborhoods of housing, parks, and schools within walking distance of shops, civic services, jobs, and transit—in short-a modern version of the traditional American town of times past. The report can be found at www.nga.org.

What to Read for Tobacco-free Environments

Must Read Documents and Websites

www.tcsg.org/sflep/home.htm

MDCH Clean Indoor Air Regulation Toolkit—This toolkit is to assist communities in assessing community readiness to pass a smoke-free worksite and public-places regulation or ordinance, and with the step-by-step planning and implementation process, including assessment and planning of local tobacco-cessation services.

www.cdc.gov/tobacco/ETS_Toolkit/index.htm
CDC Online Toolkit: *Taking Action Against Secondhand Smoke* provides the tools needed for people with various levels of advocacy experience to take action to reduce secondhand smoke in their communities.

www.cancer.org
A resource available from the **American Cancer Society** is *Communities of Excellence in Tobacco Control—A Community Planning Guide*. Contact ACS for more information on how to obtain a copy of this guide.

www.ttac.org/products/index.html
Basics of Tobacco Control (BOTC)—Pathway to Change is a comprehensive tobacco-control resource that includes information, strategies, and tools to help individuals and local, state, and national organizations with their tobacco control efforts. It can be by new hires for a comprehensive orientation to the tobacco-control issue as well as by seasoned professionals who need a quick, easy way to access the latest tobacco-control resources, websites, and other information. Visit the website to order a free copy of this resource.

www.tecc.org/public/pdfs/secondhandSmoke.pdf
The **Tobacco Education Clearinghouse Catalog** contains resources for adopting smoke-free policies in outdoor recreational areas. The online catalog includes guides on how to develop, adopt, implement, and enforce smoke-free policies in outdoor recreational areas, such as parks, playgrounds, fairgrounds, outdoor arenas, beaches, and other places where outdoor events are held. In addition, enforcement materials are included, such as decals and other types of signage.

What to Read in Nutrition

Must Read Documents and Websites

www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/
This is a USDA website with tips, information, and other resources for those interested in starting, growing, or sustaining a farmers' market. Information includes the growth of farmers' markets from 1994 to 2004, funding for farmers' markets, and a locator option for finding local markets by state/city. The site is hosted by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) at the USDA.

www.localharvest.org
Why buy locally grown? People worldwide are rediscovering the benefits of buying local food. It is fresher than anything in the supermarket, which means that it is tastier and more nutritious. It is also good for your local economy—buying directly from family farmers helps them stay in business. Use this website to find farmers' markets, family farms, and other sources of sustainably grown food in your area, where you can buy produce, grass-fed meats, and many other goodies.

www.communitygarden.org?
The American Community Gardening Association (ACGA) recognizes that community gardening improves the quality of life for people by providing a catalyst for neighborhood and community development, stimulating social interaction, encouraging self-reliance, beautifying neighborhoods, producing nutritious food, reducing family food budgets, conserving resources, and creating opportunities for recreation, exercise, therapy, and education.

www.pps.org/PublicMarkets/
Project for Public Spaces is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating and sustaining public places that build communities. PPS provides technical assistance, education, and research. The Public Market portion of the site includes funding opportunities, training opportunities, and sustainability ideas.

www.fns.usda.gov/cga/FactSheets/ProgramFactSheets.htm
This **USDA** site provides invaluable links to learn more about the various nutrition and nutrition education programs administered by the USDA.

www.mottgroup.msu.edu
The C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at Michigan State University began in January 2003 as a vehicle to promote community engagement and scholarly activity focused on community-based food systems.

www.michigan.gov/mda/0,1607,7-125-1570_23189-60796--,00.html
Select Michigan is a consumer education program aimed at helping shoppers more easily identify and purchase Michigan-grown, processed, or manufactured local and organic food products.

www.farmtoschool.org
Farm to School programs are popping up all over the U.S. These programs connect schools with local farms, with the objectives of serving healthful meals in school cafeterias, improving student nutrition, providing health and nutrition education that will last a lifetime, and supporting local small farmers.

www.miffs.org
Michigan Integrated Food & Farming Systems (MIFFS) is a collaborative effort to create and support more sustainable food and agriculture systems for producers and consumers in Michigan. Agricultural productivity, economic viability, environmental protection, resource efficiency, and strong communities are all important goals of MIFFS.

www.fooddeserts.org
This website contains information about food deserts, why they affect everybody, the links to globalization and social exclusion, and how the effects of food deserts may be alleviated or eliminated.

Whom to Know

This section highlights types of people and organizations across the state that may also be working on creating healthier communities.

- Zoning and Planning Officials
- City Engineers
- Parks & Recreation
- School Districts
- Colleges/Universities
- Law Enforcement
- Key Businesses
- Health Care Professionals
- Hospitals
- Community-service Organizations
- Local Transportation
- Faith-based Organizations
- Public Health Department
- Residents/Target Audience
- Media
- Health Clubs
- Farmers
- Public Officials
- Local Cool Cities Organizations
- University Extension Offices

Conclusion

Why don't Americans walk or bike anywhere?

Old answer: They're lazy.

New answer: They can't.

USA Today, April 22, 2003

New national surveys on attitudes toward walking and biking find that the American public wants to walk and bike more places more often, and is willing to invest in making it possible. That is good news because community interest and involvement gets the attention of decision-makers.

The Healthy Communities Tool Kit has provided some background and suggestions for getting started in the exciting endeavor of making your community more walkable, bikeable, smoke-free, and with increased access to fruits and vegetables. While you don't need to become an expert in transportation, land use planning, nutrition, or tobacco control, some understanding of the processes that are in place will help you to be a knowledgeable advocate.

Sometimes it takes years for a community to achieve policy change and tangible outcomes that make active and healthy living an option. Policy change requires a flexible strategy and the ability to respond rapidly to opportunity. Be encouraged that small, incremental steps add up. The route to achieving a healthy community will be different in every community, as will the outcomes. What's important is simply to start. Across the board, everyone wins when transportation systems and community design support active living, healthy eating, and tobacco-free lifestyles.

For questions or additional assistance regarding the information included in this tool Kit as well as information on coalition-building, please contact:

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Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

TERMS

Accessibility The ability to reach desired goods, services, and activities.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans Comprehensive plans that can include construction detail for both new and existing (enhancements) bicycle or pedestrian facilities. Plans may also include policies regarding new construction pertaining to both land and transportation uses.

Bike Lane A portion of the roadway designated for preferential use by bicyclists

Brownfield Abandoned or underused properties where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination.

Children's Gardening Community and school-based gardens aimed specifically at children. Most programs address the science of gardening, small business skills, plants as landscape, nutrition and food sources while a few include horticultural therapy for children in hospitals, treatment settings, disadvantaged youth, and disabled youth.

Community Gardening Community gardens are particularly important to the elderly, disabled, and disadvantaged individuals in urban areas. Most often, the community garden is developed under the leadership of a group interested in horticulture and using it to improve the quality of life and the appearance of the community. These gardens are located near the people who need them and are run by the people of the community. The Cooperative Extension Service of the USDA has been influential in establishing community gardens in order to improve the nutrition of the people gardening, to develop leadership skills among these people, and to help them improve their communities in many other ways. Other organizations, such as the American Community Gardening Association, have resources available for assistance in establishing community gardens. (from The National Gardening Association)

Community Livability The environmental and social quality of an area as perceived by residents, employees, customers, and visitors. This includes safety and health (traffic safety, personal security, public health), local environmental quality (cleanliness), interactions (neighborliness, fairness, respect, community identity, and pride) opportunities for recreation and entertainment, aesthetics, and existence of unique cultural and environmental resources (historic structures, mature trees, traditional architectural styles).

Crosswalk Marked or unmarked area of intersection where pedestrians cross. It can also be marked on a roadway where pedestrians are able to cross mid-block.

Curb Extension Also known as a bulb-out, neckdown, or flare. This is a section of curb that extends into the roadway in order to shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians.

Curb Radius The curved edge of the roadway at an intersection.

Density Bonus Allows developers to build in designated areas densities that are higher than normally allowed. For example, they may be able to build five or more units per acre if they demonstrate that the development is walkable, or that they will provide additional sidewalks.

Density, Residential The number of permanent residential dwelling units per acre of land.

Farmers' Market A farmers' market is one in which farmers, growers or producers from a defined local area are present in person to sell their own produce, direct to the public. All products sold should have been grown, reared, caught, brewed, pickled, baked, smoked or processed by the stallholder.

Farm to School Farm to School programs connect schools with local farms with the objectives of serving healthy meals in school cafeterias, improving student nutrition, providing health and nutrition education opportunities that will last a lifetime, and supporting local small farmers.

Food Deserts The term 'desert' was used to describe an environment lacking in certain facilities – in this case healthy, affordable food.

Gentrification The movement of middle- and upper-income people into areas where predominately low- or moderate-income residents had lived.

Greenfields Areas where no development pattern current exists. They may be farms, pastures, or previously undeveloped land.

Impact Fee A charge to a developer of a development to cover the costs of providing new services, such as roads and parks. Fees pass the cost of development onto the new property owners via the developer, rather than having the costs absorbed by all taxpayers in a jurisdiction.

Incidental Projects Projects which can by incorporated into already scheduled highway improvements.

Independent Projects Projects not already scheduled in highway improvements.

Infill Development in existing communities that utilizes existing infrastructure rather than building on previously undeveloped land.

Land Use The occupation or utilization of land or water area for any human activity.

Land Use Classification System for classifying and designating appropriate use of properties. Examples include Mixed Use, High Density Residential, Commercial, etc.

Mixed-use Area Zoning that allows for a range of land uses in one area, rather than segregated, single-use zoning. For example, buildings with retail space at street level and apartments above.

Multimodal Of or referring to multiple mode of transportation, including vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian travel.

Municipality An area defined by a local governing authority (villages, towns, cities).

Neo-traditional Development An approach to land use planning and urban design that promotes the building of neighborhoods with mix of uses and housing types, architectural variety, a central public gathering place, interconnecting streets and alleys, and edges defined by greenbelts or boulevards. The basic goal is integration of the activities of potential residents with work, shopping, recreation, and transit all within walking distance.

Open Space Any parcel or area of land or water that is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open space use for the purposes of 1) the preservation of natural resources; 2) the managed production of resources; 3) outdoor recreation; and 4) public health and safety.

Ordinance A law or regulation set forth by a governmental authority, usually a city or county.

Pedestrian Buffer Usually associated with sidewalks or greenways, it's the area separating pedestrians from traffic. Some of these are planted and landscaped, others function as utility strips, providing space for light poles, etc.

Pedestrian Mall Defined space designated for pedestrian use, while prohibiting automobiles.

Planting Strip Similar to the pedestrian buffer, an area separating the sidewalk (or parking lot) from curb/gutter to traffic. It is typically utilized for utilities, but may also include plantings, grass, or other materials that differentiate the space from the sidewalk or parking lot.

Plat A map showing actual or planned features of land such as streets.

Policy A course or action or a guiding principle of a government, political party, or business intended to influence or determine decisions, actions, or other matters.

Priority Needs List An ongoing list of priority transportation needs and projects for a particular urban area. Typically, used by MPO's to determine which projects (especially those concerning multiple modes) will be selected to be placed on their Transportation Improvement Program.

Regional Pertaining to activities or economies at a scale greater than that of a single jurisdiction and affecting a broad geographic area.

Regulation A rule or order prescribed for managing government.

School Gardening See Children's Gardening.

Shared Roadway A road used by both bicyclists and motorists.

Shared-use Path A facility separated from other motor vehicle traffic by an open space or barrier, and typically used by pedestrians, joggers, skates, and bicyclists as a two-way path.

Sidewalk A designated facility for pedestrians that is usually, but not always, located in the public right-of-way next to a roadway and constructed of concrete or other hard, smooth surface.

Topography The qualities of a surface, including its elevation points and the position of natural and manmade features.

Traditional-Neighborhood Development (TND) See Neo-traditional Development.

Traffic Calming Techniques Strategies such as decreased speed limits, sidewalks and trees, narrow streets, and speed tables that discourage higher speeds on roadways.

Transfer of Development Rights Allows an owner of a property to sell the right to develop a piece of land to a developer, who then transfers these rights to a location where new development is allowed (such as an infill area in an older suburb or central city area).

Transit-Oriented Development The development of housing, commercial space, services, and job opportunities in close proximity to public transportation. Reduces dependency on cars and time spent in traffic, which protects the environment and can ease traffic congestion, as well as increasing opportunity by linking residents to jobs and services.

Urban Greening See Community Gardening.

Urban Growth Boundary A line drawn around a metropolitan area to designate where growth will be directed. New infill development is usually encouraged in existing urban areas to reduce the need to continue to build outward, while land outside the boundary is protected as open space for agricultural, forestry, or low-density residential development. Most UGBs are required to be adjusted periodically so that there is always a supply of developable land within the boundary.

Walkability The quality of walking conditions, including safety, comfort, and convenience.

Wide Outside Lane A lane of at least 14 feet that allows an average-size motor vehicle to safely pass a bicyclist without crossing over in the adjacent lane.

Zoning The division of a city or county by legislative regulation into areas or zones with specific allowable uses for real property and size restrictions for buildings within these areas.

ACRONYMS

AASHTO American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. AASHTO develops guidelines and standards for road design, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

ACE Active Community Environments are places where people of all ages and abilities can easily enjoy walking, bicycling, or using a wheelchair for both pleasure and purpose.

ADA Americans with Disabilities Act

AICP The American Planning Association's professional institute, providing recognized leadership nationwide in the certification of professional planners, ethics, professional development, planning education, and the standards of planning practice. Certified planners use their skills to find solutions to community problems in ways that will carry the community toward its desired long-term goals.

ASLA The American Society of Landscape Architects is a national society that represents the landscape architecture profession.

CDC The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CMAQ Congestion, Mitigation, and Air Quality Improvement Program. A popular source of funds for pedestrian and bicycle facilities, this program provides funding to areas that are officially designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as air quality "non-attainment" or "maintenance" areas. Funds must be spent to reduce ozone, carbon monoxide, or particulate matter pollution.

GIS Geographic Information Systems. Database and mapping software which can be used in transportation and land use planning.

ISTEA Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. The precursor to TEA-21 (see definition below). Landmark legislation that opened the door for funding multiple modes of transportation.

LAB League of American Bicyclists. A national advocacy group located in Washington, D.C.

MCP Master City Planner

MPO Metropolitan Planning Organization.

MDOT Michigan Department of Transportation. This department makes all decisions concerning transportation, both motorized and non-motorized.

PRD Planned Residential Development. Similar to the PUD, this type of development is usually found on large tracts of land. In addition, it is to be planned and developed as a single entity containing one or more residential clusters. Commercial, public or quasi-public uses may be permitted if such uses are primarily for the benefit of the residential development.

PUD Planned Unit Development. Following an overall site plan, this type of development is usually found on large tracts of land, containing multiple land uses within the actual project. For example, a large tract may be developed with a mix of single-family and multi-family housing reserving part of the site for commercial or public uses.

RLA Registered Landscape Architect

RTF Rural Task Force

STPP Surface Transportation Policy Project. Research and Advocacy resource on transportation issues. Its interactive website: www.transact.org

TPC Transportation Policy Committee. Governing board of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) consisting of representatives from the local governments within the MPO planning area.

TCC Technical Coordinating Committee. Technical advisory committee to the TPC consisting of town managers and staff, and transit and other transportation planners.

TEA-21 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century. Federal act providing states with money and guidelines for transportation. Includes "enhancements" out of which bicycle and pedestrian amenities may be funded. www.fhwa.dot.gov./tea21/sumcov.htm

TIP Transportation Improvement Program.

TOD Transit-oriented Development. A type of development designed to maximize access by transit and non-motorized transportation. It is best utilized within existing residential and commercial areas, as density is a driving force in its overall success. It may also include features to encourage transit ridership. For example, the neighborhood center may have transit stations and a few multi-story commercial and residential buildings, surrounded by several blocks of townhouses and small-lot single-family residential, and a larger-lot single family housing farther away.

TND Traditional Neighborhood Design. See definition for Neo-traditional development.

TRC Technical Review Committee. A committee usually consisting of Planning Department staff, and additional members as needed, that considers and reviews projects and plans scheduled for Planning Board action or review. Examples of items considered: site plans, master plans for Planned Unit Developments, special use review or other land development matters consistent with the Zoning Ordinance. The committee members ensure that the proposed projects comply with the development requirements and applicable municipal standards, while also making recommendations.

USDOT United States Department of Transportation. The USDOT is the federal DOT which sets standards and allocates federal funding to the states.