



An Active Living Network Shows How Community Design Can Promote Health and Physical Activity

Communications activities to maintain the Active Living Network

SUMMARY

Between 2001 and 2007, the [Active Living Network](#) engaged with experts from the diverse disciplines active in community design. The Active Living Network provided them with information about how community design can promote health and physical activity, and encouraged them to communicate with each other.

The network is part of a suite of Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Active Living programs, launched in 2002, that collaborate to increase physical activity through community design, public policies and communications. See [Context](#) for more information.

Key Results

- The Active Living Network created and nurtured a network of professionals, advocates and organizations to support and promote the creation of active, healthy communities. Some 70 organizations—from such diverse disciplines as planning, design, transportation, parks and recreation, local government and public health—had signed on as network partners as of December 2007.
- Program staff developed the Active Living Network [Web site](#) and developed tools and resources such as communications toolkits and the [Active Living Storybank](#), a searchable database of projects, programs and other initiatives creating healthy communities. The Web site had 456 resources and 174 stories (as of December 2007). The average number of monthly visitors in 2007 was 3,337.

Program Management

Pyramid Communications in Seattle, developed and supported the Active Living Network.

Funding

From February 2001 through April 2007, RWJF supported the Active Living Network with eight grants to Pyramid Communications totaling \$1,412,751. In addition, running through December 2007, RWJF supported the network with grants and contracts from the Childhood Obesity Team's Communications authorization.

THE PROBLEM

"For the vast majority of individuals, overweight and obesity result from excess calorie consumption and/or inadequate physical activity. Unhealthy dietary habits and sedentary behavior together account for approximately 300,000 deaths every year." That statement appeared in a [2001 report](#) by the U.S. Surgeon General.

When this project began in 2002, the problems of overweight and obesity had been spreading throughout communities in the United States. In 1999, according to the 2001 Surgeon General's report:

- In the United States 13 percent of children ages 6 to 11 and 14 percent of adolescents ages 12 to 19 were overweight.
- The prevalence of obesity had nearly tripled for adolescents in the past two decades.

At the time, only 54.6 percent of American adults met the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of 30 minutes of moderate physical activity—such as brisk walking—at least five days a week, according to the [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System](#). And according to the Surgeon General, data were lacking about whether most children met the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity per day.

The Impact of Community Design on Physical Activity

The built environment—which includes all of the buildings, streets, sidewalks, parks, playgrounds and other places and spaces created or modified by people—appears to have played a role in the decline of physical activity and the rise in overweight and obesity among residents of the United States. On its [Web site](#), the CDC describes some of the consequences of the way many American communities have been built since World War II, often described as "sprawl":

- Zoning laws that segregate land uses into isolated categories separate housing from schools, businesses and recreational uses.
- Large tracts of land have been converted into low-density housing, commercial settlements or paved parking lots.
- The automobile has become the primary means of transportation.

- An increase in traffic congestion, poor air quality, contaminated water and land and a scarcity of affordable housing.
- Less safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Many public health researchers believe that the most effective ways to increase daily physical activity for the greatest number of people over the long term are those that change the built environment to make communities more walkable, bikeable and otherwise more physical-activity friendly. But the complex task of changing the built environment—the design and land-use policies and practices of a community—requires input from an array of disciplines, including urban planning, design, transportation, parks and recreation, local government and public health.

CONTEXT

In 2000, RWJF launched a suite of national programs designed to work together to increase physical activity through community design, public policies and communications. "We wanted to reengineer activity back into people's lives," said Karen Gerlach Joyce, former RWJF program officer, who, together with Katherine Kraft, former RWJF senior program officer, designed the Active Living programs. The programs are described below.

- *Active Living by Design*, has funded 25 community partnerships, from 2002 through October 2008, to develop and implement strategies to increase physical activity by changing community design. These community partnerships are composed of at least three organizations—at least one representative from health care, public health or the medical community; and at least two organizations representing other disciplines, such as planning, transportation, architecture, landscape architecture, urban design, real estate development, parks and recreation, housing, public safety, education and/or other related fields.
- *Leadership for Healthy Communities* (formerly called *Active Living Leadership*) works with government leaders to create policies that reduce childhood obesity by promoting active living, healthy eating and access to healthy foods. The program started in 2002 and is funded through November 2010.
- *Active Living Network* (the subject of this report) promoted active, healthy environments by building a national coalition of leaders and advocates from the professions influencing community design including land use, architecture and urban planning. RWJF supported the network from 2002 to 2007.
- *Active Living Research* supports research that examines how environments and policies impact physical activity and aims to identify promising approaches for preventing childhood obesity, especially among ethnic minorities and children living

in low-income communities (for more information see [Program Results](#)). The program started in 2002 and is funded through November 2012.

- *Active Living Resource Center* provides technical assistance to create active communities. RWJF program officers expected many communities to be interested in Active Living by Design-and in fact, more than 1,000 communities applied for funding and were not chosen for participation in the program. The resource center was established to provide resources to them. For more information, see [Program Results](#).

In 2007, RWJF announced a commitment of at least \$500 million over five years to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015. The Foundation's efforts focus on improving access to affordable healthy foods and opportunities for safe physical activity in schools and communities. RWJF places special emphasis on reaching children at greatest risk for obesity and related health problems: African-American, Latino, Native American, Asian-American and Pacific Islander children living in low-income communities.

THE PROJECT

First Steps: Bringing Together the Professionals Involved in Community Design

In 2001, RWJF contracted with [Pyramid Communications](#), a communications and public affairs firm based in Seattle, to plan and hold a national conference of experts from the diverse disciplines that would need to play a part in promoting healthy changes to community design (ID#s 040248 and 046502).

During the conference, held in November 2002 in Boulder, Colo., RWJF launched the Active Living Network. Pyramid also created a Web site to support the conference, which later evolved into the network's [Web site](#). Over 100 professionals attended the conference from the fields of:

- Architecture.
- Banking.
- Environmental protection.
- Government.
- Private development.
- Public health.
- Transportation.
- Urban planning.

Some 36 conference participants signed on as partners committed to working within and through their organizations to promote the concepts of active living through improved community design. Initial partners included:

- American Planning Association.

- Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations.
- Institute of Transportation Engineers.
- National Recreation and Parks Association.
- Surface Transportation Policy Project.

See [Appendix 1](#) for some of the other initial partners.

The goals for the new network were to reach out to experts in the diverse disciplines impacting community design and to educate them about the impact community design can have on health. The network also would provide a networking forum for these professionals.

The Active Living Network promoted activity-friendly community design by reaching out to professionals in the diverse disciplines that play a role in community design. The network had three goals:

- To build demand for change by raising awareness about the impact of the built environment on physical activity and health.
- To promote collaboration among professionals and organizations from a variety of fields striving to create active, healthy communities.
- To take critical information and research about community design and health from diverse disciplines and make such information both understandable and accessible to a wide range of audiences.

Network Activities

To accomplish the goals of the network, network staff at Pyramid Communications:

- Grew and nurtured a network of professionals and representatives of organizations interested in creating active, healthy communities.
- Developed a Web-based [resource center](#) and posted tools and resources.
- Promoted the Web site to the network of partners and to a broader audience of users concerned with creating active, healthy communities.
- Convened meetings of professionals to promote activity-friendly community design.

Project Evolution

Leadership and strategy changes at RWJF over the course of this program led to two changes:

- **Expanding the audience.** When RWJF began its focus on childhood obesity, program staff reached out to engage professionals and organizations responsible for helping children from low-income and ethnic/racial communities. Children from these communities are at higher risk of overweight according to a report published by Princeton University and the Brookings Institute.

Specifically, project staff sought out and posted to the Web site stories of efforts by these communities to create physical activity-friendly environments and improve access to healthy foods.

- **Downsizing the network.** The strategic changes at RWJF led to a downsizing of the Active Living Network, according to Brad Kahn, the initial program director. Program staff mostly ceased convening groups, transitioned to a mostly Web-based network and looked for ways to have a greater impact online.

For example, program staff redesigned the Web site in 2006 to make it more interactive, enabling users to post news and publications to the site, search for information, link to other Web sites and subscribe for news about their specific areas of interest.

Assisting RWJF with Childhood Obesity Prevention Strategy Development

In mid-2006, RWJF staff asked Pyramid staff working on the network to develop recommendations to inform RWJF's new efforts to increase access to healthy foods, as part of its work to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic. In particular, RWJF staff wanted to know:

- Does a national network in support of increasing access to healthy foods already exist or is a new network needed?
- What is the appropriate role for a network in building the field of access to healthy foods?
- If a new network needs to be built, how should it relate to the existing national efforts to promote active living and RWJF's suite of Active Living programs?

Pyramid staff conducted background research to assess available knowledge on access to healthy foods and conducted one-on-one telephone interviews with people in eight sectors who were working to increase access to healthy foods. The background research included:

- Review of RWJF's Web site, its Active Living programs and other documents related to childhood obesity.
- Review of the [Healthy Eating/Active Living Convergence Partnership](#), which works to strengthen and accelerate collaborative efforts among practitioners, policy-makers, funders and advocates to support healthy eating and active living. RWJF is one of the

partners, along with [Kaiser Permanente](#), [Nemours](#) (a large provider of health care to children in Delaware), the [W.K. Kellogg Foundation](#), the [California Endowment](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

- A review of relevant projects, organizations and people.

Pyramid staff also interviewed 29 individuals from eight sectors:

- Advocacy.
- Agriculture/food systems.
- Community organizations.
- Education.
- Health.
- Government.
- Planning.
- Transportation.

In November 2006, staff submitted a report to RWJF entitled *Increasing Access to Healthy Food: Findings and Recommendations*. See [Appendix 2](#) for recommendations.

RESULTS

Pyramid staff reported the following results to RWJF:

- **The Active Living Network created and nurtured a network of professionals, advocates and organizations to support and promote the creation of active, healthy communities.** Seventy organizations (the original 36 and 34 new organizations) had signed on as network partners as of December 2007. New partners included:
 - California Department of Health Services.
 - National Association of County and City Health Officials.
 - Safe Routes to School National Partnership.
 - The Institute of American Architects.
 - Urban Land Institute.

According to Kathryn Thomas, RWJF senior communications officer, the program drew in many organizations that had not previously been aware of or engaged in the health dimensions of community design. See [Appendix 3](#) for a list of organizational partners (as of December 2007).

Program staff worked with professionals, advocates and organizations in many ways, including:

- Bringing together representatives of bicycle advocacy organizations who were working on creating safe routes to school, including the League of American Bicyclists, the National Center for Bicycling and Walking and the Pedestrian and

Bicycle Information Center, to discuss strategies and possible funding for safe routes to school programs.

The meeting was held June 18, 2003, in Washington. Several of the organizations went on to participate in Safe Routes to School programs funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

- Working with members of the Institute of Transportation Engineers and the National Association of City and County Health Officials to write an Op-Ed article on how a lack of active transportation options affects Americans' health. The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* published the piece on November 12, 2003.
- Convening a meeting of 24 representatives of local, regional and national foundations, as well as representatives of health care organizations, to discuss opportunities to collaborate on work related to children (held at RWJF in Princeton, N.J., on February 10, 2005).

Participants included representatives of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation, the Coalition of Community Foundations for Youth and the Missouri Foundation for Health, as well as RWJF. See [Appendix 4](#) for the topics discussed and a list of post-meeting steps that participants proposed to promote collaboration among funders.

- Helping the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials develop an agenda and identify speakers for its September 2007 Healthy Communities Policy Institute. Active Living Network Director Welling Savo Justin made a presentation during the institute's opening panel on active living and access to healthy foods.
- **Members of the Active Living Network promoted the principles of active living and healthy communities within their organizations and to their professional communities.** For example:
 - Staff from partner organizations created links from their organizations' Web sites to the Active Living Network Web site and wrote about the Web site in their organizations' e-newsletters.
 - Staff from the Washington Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity and the Northern Kentucky Health Department distributed program brochures and other materials about creating active communities at state conferences.
 - The American Society of Landscape Architects declared April 2005 "National Landscape Architecture Month" with design for active living as its theme.
- **Pyramid staff developed the Active Living Network [Web site](#) and developed new tools and resources for the site.** Web content covers four areas: development, transportation, health and environment. It includes news and resources; the Active Living Storybank and profiles; and a list of partners, and it has a map of the United

States for searching content and potential partnerships by state. As of December 2007, the Web site contained 456 resources and 174 stories.

Resources included:

- Communications toolkits, annotated fact sheets and research reports.
- PowerPoint slides, videos and materials to use in presentations.
- Links to Active Living Network partner organizations and related Web sites.

The [Active Living Storybank](#) is a searchable database of projects, programs and other initiatives to create healthy communities. Communities could submit their own stories. Story topics include construction projects, community gardens, advocacy campaigns and legislative initiatives. For example:

- [Waksik Wago](#) is a partnership that serves the tribal Winnebago Village in rural Eastern Nebraska. An Indian term for "active people," Waksik Wago is focused on creating safe routes and connections for walking and bicycling.
- [Taqwa Gardens](#) in the Bronx, N.Y., is an urban park that generates more than 2,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables per year within its two acres.

During one sample time period, from September to December 2005, the Storybank had more than 6,000 visitors.

Several dozen [profiles](#) highlighted people, places and organizations working to promote active living and create healthy communities, including:

- Ten special profiles on "[Active Living Heroes](#)," including:
 - [Dan Burden](#), executive director of Walkable Communities in Florida.
 - [Majora Carter](#), founder and executive director of Sustainable South Bronx.

Pyramid staff kept users updated on news, resources and stories through Active Living Update, a monthly e-mail newsletter that they sent to about 2,500 people each month.

Note: As of January 1, 2008, RWJF was maintaining the Web site. No new content was being added, but resources, the Storybank and other content were still available.

- **The Active Living Network created an online community.** In 2006, program staff redesigned the [Web site](#) to make it more interactive and to enable professionals and advocates to build an online community. With the new design, users could access Web content and:
 - Connect with others working on active living (e.g., representatives of communities featured in the Storybank).
 - Post comments on content.

- Promote their active living efforts, events and publications.
- Search for information by topic, keyword or activity.
- Subscribe to RSS feeds based on their interest.

The new Web site design and Pyramid Communication's activities to promote the Web site had a positive impact on the Active Living Network. For example:

- In 2006, 26 new partners joined the network.
- In November 2006, the month following its launch, the new Web site had 3,517 visitors, nearly double the number of visitors in November 2005. Average number of monthly visitors for 2007 was 3,337 with a one-month high of 4,376.

For more examples of the effect of the new design and information about the campaign to promote the new Web site, see [Appendix 5](#).

- **Pyramid staff wrote *Making Places for Healthy Kids*, a 2005 report describing eight projects around the United States to promote children's physical activity.** Staff gathered most of their information from interviewing 12 individuals involved with the projects, which included:

- Three projects involving parks and/or playgrounds:
 - [Orchard School Playground](#), Cleveland.
 - [Adventure Island Playground](#), Clay County, N.C.
 - [Mildred Helms Park](#), Newark, N.J.
- One community garden: [Physical Fitness and Nutrition from the Ground Up](#), Fort Wayne, Ind.
- Four efforts to create sidewalks or make traffic conditions safer for pedestrians:
 - [Completing the Streets with Walk to School Day Challenge](#), Hinsdale, Ill.
 - [WALK Arlington—Building Safe Routes to School](#), with new sidewalks, Arlington, Va.
 - The Evergreen Cemetery Jogging Path, Los Angeles.
 - [Parkmead Neighborhood Path](#), Walnut Creek, Calif.

The description of each project included:

- Background.
- Changes to the built environment.
- Key players.

- Funding sources.
- Outcomes.
- Challenges.
- Lessons learned.

See [Recommendations](#) for steps to promote the promising practices that staff identified in the eight case studies.

Findings

In a November 2006 report to RWJF entitled *Increasing Access to Healthy Food: Findings and Recommendations*, Pyramid Communications staff reported the following findings (based on telephone interviews with 29 people in advocacy, agriculture/food systems, community organizations, education, health, government, planning and transportation):

- **"Access to healthy foods" meant different things to different people.** Interpretations ranged from preserving farmland to developing and keeping grocery stores in low-income communities to eliminating advertising of junk food to children.
- **Interviewed participants represented many different constituencies, each with its own agenda and a multitude of priorities.** On occasion, the priorities of different groups conflicted. For example, some were willing to work with private industry and some were not.
- **Many participants had strong ties to existing informal networks.** These networks had established priorities and policies in place that would not likely disappear in a larger, more formalized network.
- **The agriculture/food systems sector already had leadership from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Community Food Security Coalition that were working through informal networks to develop sustainable food systems.**

Recommendations

In *Making Places for Healthy Kids*, Pyramid Communications staff developed recommendations based upon its background research and interviews. Staff recommended that professionals, advocates and organizations working to promote active living:

- **Consider the needs of people of all ages when planning changes to the built environment to encourage active living.** Design all such projects to appeal to children to help them develop the habit of being physically active, which can reduce the prevalence of childhood obesity.

- **Widely disseminate information about successful projects to inspire and share strategies with others who are concerned about the lack of physical activity opportunities for children.** Educate decision-makers, including mayors, governors, legislators, educators, transportation agencies, parks and recreation departments, planners and others through their professional organizations so they will support and/or lead changes that encourage children to be more active.
- **Identify, cultivate and support champions to lead activity-friendly design projects for kids in their communities.**

See [Appendix 6](#) for additional recommendations.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. **Build face-to-face relationships to create or solidify an online network of people, especially if you are introducing a new idea or engaging people who have not met before.** The Active Living Network convened groups of professionals in its early stages. "There is no substitute for knowing who you're talking to," said Brad Kahn, former network director.
2. **Do not try to force a single agenda on diverse groups.** Keeping a broad agenda and letting partner organizations work within their own context helped network staff engage many partners not traditionally engaged in public health. (Kahn/Former Network Director)
3. **Engage many professions and fields in active living work.** Project staff found that opinion leaders in many professions and fields understood the connection between health and community design and their potential to create change. (Kahn/Former Network director)

Afterward

The Active Living Network is still available online, with content current as of December 2007.

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APPENDIX 1

Initial Active Living Network Organizational Partners (as of January 2003)

The initial Active Living Network partners included:

American Planning Association	National Recreation and Park Association
Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations	Project for Public Spaces
Center for Neighborhood Technology	Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Community Initiatives, LLC	RWJF Programs
Congress for the New Urbanism	<i>Active for Life: Increasing Physical Activity Levels in Adults Age 50 and Older</i> (for more information see Program Results)
Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities	<i>Active Living Research</i>
Institute of Transportation Engineers	Sierra Club National Challenge to Sprawl Campaign
League of American Bicyclists	Smart Growth America
Livable Communities Support Center	Surface Transportation Policy Project
Local Government Commission	Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center
Maryland Governor's Office of Smart Growth	Voorhees Transportation Center
Milne & Associates, LLC	Walkable Communities, Inc.
National Center for Bicycling and Walking	
National Charrette Institute	
National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity	

APPENDIX 2

Recommendations to RWJF Staff from Increasing Access to Healthy Food: Findings and Recommendations

Pyramid Communications staff recommended the following to RWJF staff:

- **Do not establish a new national network around access to healthy foods.**
- **Reframe the definition of active living to include access to healthy foods as it is influenced or improved by the built environment.**
- **Underscore the links between active living and access to healthy foods.** Strategies might include:
 - Developing grocery stores within walking or biking distance of neighborhoods.
 - Developing public transportation lines that provide convenient access to supermarkets or farmers' markets.

- Developing or revising zoning laws that make it easy for grocery stores to locate in neighborhoods.
- Developing city or master plans that take food access into account.
- Educating policy-makers about ways to improve access to healthy foods through the built environment.
- Building or retrofitting schools to have kitchens cook food from scratch, not just reheat it.
- **Incorporate strategies to increase access to healthy foods into the work of each RWJF Active Living program.**
- **Update the Active Living brand to reflect the inclusion of access to healthy foods as a focus area, for example, by incorporating "access to healthy foods" into the taglines of each program where it is applicable.**

APPENDIX 3

Active Living Network Organizational Partners (as of December 2007)

1000 Friends of Minnesota	Center for Neighborhood Technology
Adventure Cycling Association	Clallam County Rural Road Standards Advisory Committee
Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center (VTC) at Rutgers	Colorado Walks
Alliance for Holistic Aging	Community Initiatives, LLC
America Bikes	Community Partners, LLC
America on the Move	Congress for the New Urbanism
America Walks	Crane Associates, LLC
American Architectural Foundation	Feet First
American Planning Association	Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities
American Public Works Association	Indiana Governor's Council for Physical Fitness & Sports
American Society of Landscape Architects	Institute of Transportation Engineers
Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture	International City/County Management Association
Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations	Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition
Ayers Saint Gross	League of American Bicyclists
Be Active North Carolina Inc.	Livable Communities Support Center
Bikes Belong Coalition	Local Government Commission
California Department of Health Services	Loyalist College Fitness and Health Promotion Program
California Park and Recreation Society	Maryland Governor's Office of Smart Growth
Casey Partners, LTD	

Milne & Associates, LLC	Sierra Club National Challenge to Sprawl Campaign
National Association of County and City Health Officials	Smart Growth America
National Association of Local Boards of Health	Solomon Architecture
National Center for Bicycling and Walking	Surface Transportation Policy Project
National Charrette Institute	The American Institute of Architects
National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity	The Conservation Fund
National Education Association	The Lawrence Group
National Recreation and Park Association	Trips for Kids
Northwest Parks Foundation	Trust for Public Land
Portland Parks and Recreation	University of Kentucky College of Design
Prevention Research Center at Tulane University	Urban Health Initiative
Project for Public Spaces	Urban Land Institute
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy	Walkable Communities, Inc.
Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham	WALKArlington
Rollins School of Public Health of Emory University	Washington Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity
Safe Routes to School National Partnership	Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo and Western New York, Inc.
	Wisconsin Walks

APPENDIX 4

Meeting on Collaboration on Work Related to Children, February 10, 2005

Topics of Discussion

- How to frame the issue of obesity to reach all people who may be at risk of obesity.
- How to evaluate complex systems such as the built environment in a community.
- How to draw on the strengths of the foundations represented to move beyond barriers and find ways to collaborate.

Potential Steps to Promote Collaboration Across Foundations

From the summary report of the meeting:

1. **Message development and language**, including the need for a common language (obesity vs. social justice orientation), filtering issues down to key messages and enforcing consistency.
2. **Framework**: Explore criteria to decide what "levers to pull," key points of leverage and potential points for an early win.

3. **Stories of change:** Create an accessible resource that captures stories of change at the community level. Share and disseminate.
4. **Dissemination of materials:** Develop a one-stop shop to get tools, resources and information.
5. **Consider existing vehicles:** Do not reinvent the wheel. Look at how established networks can be used to get the story out, without creating new ones that might compete with limited resources.
6. **Lessons of sustainability:** Use what has been learned from research to date about how projects become successful and sustainable. Move away from start-up funding sources to become sustainable.
7. **Explore ways to break down silos between different sectors such as transportation and the environment.**
8. **Bring others into the effort.**
9. **Address embedded race/class issues,** and how funders relate to people in different communities.

APPENDIX 5

More Examples of the Impact of the New Active Living Network Web Site and Promotional Efforts

More Examples of the Impact of the New Web Site

- Planetizen.com judged the Active Living Web site among the [top 10 Best Web sites of 2007](#). (Planetizen.com is a Web site for the urban design and development community.)
- As of June 2007, 42 percent of all site traffic came from search engines.
- In October 2007, the site ranked first in the Google search engine for terms "Active Living" and "ActiveLiving."
- Traffic to the Web site tripled or quadrupled on the day the monthly newsletters were sent.

The Campaign to Promote the New Web Site

Project staff:

- Wrote press releases and pitched the new Web site to 40 media outlets around the United States.

- Purchased a \$100 online advertisement through *Planetizen.com* in fall 2006 to drive traffic to new Web site.
- Sent an e-mail in fall 2006 announcing the new Web site to 184 organizations including the network partners and additional organizations concerned with community design and health.

APPENDIX 6

Additional Recommendations from Making Places for Healthy Kids

- **Start with projects that make it safer and easier for kids to walk and bike to and from school and then encourage parents to let their children do so.** These are opportune starting points for communities to begin making changes that promote children's physical activity.
- **Support Safe Routes to School programs and International Walk to School Day and use them to raise awareness and rally community support.** Use them as a necessary first step to making infrastructure improvements, such as safe sidewalks and bike paths for children to get to and from school.
- **If access to affordable fresh produce and outdoor recreation is lacking in a neighborhood, consider establishing a community garden in tandem with a program to teach gardening and fruit and vegetable preparation to children and their families.**
- **Seek financial and in-kind support from every possible source:**
 - Local and national foundations.
 - Relevant nonprofit organizations.
 - Parks and recreation departments.
 - Transportation departments.
 - School districts.
 - State legislatures.
 - City councils.
 - Local businesses.
 - Local hospitals and clinics.
 - Insurance companies.
- **Establish a quantitative measurement that can be used to compare physical activity levels before and after the built environment change.** One example is the number of children walking and bicycling to school.
- **Actively seek leadership, input, advice, feedback and involvement from every possible interest in the community, including the kids.** The community should "own" the project long before it is built so that residents will take on the role of stewardship after it is completed.

- **Be prepared to deal early on with any and all issues the project brings to the surface.** Time spent on resolving such issues in the planning stages will save time and money. Recognize that changing the built environment to encourage physical activity can break down many barriers to community building and developing a strong sense of place among residents. Bringing people together to build a better environment for children is also a way to build community in the long run.

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