



Active Michigan Communities

2008 Issue 3

Welcome

This past weekend I visited one of my favorite places: Chicago. I always enjoy going to the Windy City for the great restaurants, museums, and shopping, but perhaps my favorite part of the visit is when we park the car. After we dodge traffic on I-94, inch along scenic Lakeshore Drive, and fight for a suitable parking spot, we ditch the car for the entire weekend. Instead we walk, bike and use public transit to get where we want to go. For me, using active transportation gives me a birds eye view and a better appreciation of a community. On the two mile walk from a restaurant in downtown Chicago to where we were staying, we met people walking friendly dogs, listened to part of a concert, laughed at children playing in a sculptured fountain, and stopped to dance a little Salsa. All of this spontaneous fun would not have happened if we'd been in a car. And cities like Chicago make it so easy to choose active transportation because the accommodations are in place. But this didn't happen overnight; communities, including Chicago, spend years on creating active living environments. While not all communities are alike, each has the potential to become more walkable and bikeable and you can help make it easy for residents in your hometown to choose active transportation. This edition of the Active Michigan Communities Newsletter has some great ideas to help you get started.

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Community Spotlight: Flint



Spin Outside the Crim Event

Even though Flint is traditionally known as the "Vehicle City," local organizations are working to integrate active living and alternative modes of transportation into the culture of the community. The Safe and Active Flint (SAF) Coalition is a multi-disciplinary group of local stakeholders working to promote active living in Flint. This coalition, with the help of many partner organizations, has implemented numerous community initiatives to promote and support physical activity, including Safe Routes to School, Safe Routes for Work, and Smart Commute, which encourage Flint residents to choose active transportation (e.g., walking, biking). The SAF Coalition is also working with the Disability Network to incorporate Complete Streets principles into the planning and construction of area roads to accommodate all users of transportation networks. In addition to these efforts, the Friends of the Flint River Trail collaborated with the SAF Coalition to identify and document on and off road bike routes throughout the City. This spring, the University of Michigan-Flint Center for Applied Environmental Research used this information to design and print the City's first bike map so to make bicycle commuting easier for everyone.

Worksites in Flint are also working to transform the city into an active living community. Hurley Hospital, with the Genesee County Lank Bank, is working to redevelop the Hurley neighborhood to make it more walkable and safe by increasing the number of walkways and creating higher density residential buildings. In addition, the Crim Fitness Foundation continues to host the Crim Festival of Races, which provides an opportunity for individuals of all ages to physically active. For more information, visit: www.crim.org/safeactiveFlint.

In recognition of these and other efforts to incorporate alternative modes of transportation, in May 2008, Flint received an Honorable Mention as a Bicycle Friendly Community through the League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle Friendly Community Campaign, which honors communities that work to better accommodate and support bicyclists. (See page 3 for more details). It is through these active living efforts that the City of Flint is transforming into a "New Vehicle City."

Summer is the Perfect Season for Active Living

Summer is here and now is a great time to check out *Pure Michigan*. This website lists opportunities to be physically active and shows what Michigan communities have to offer by way of active living. Instead of resting inside in the in air conditioning or laying by the pool, get motivated to participate in the numerous festivals, tours, and adventures available across the state.

Looking to plan an event in your community? *Pure Michigan* can provide examples of community activities and inspire new ideas for implementing an event that showcases your community's active living environments! Coordinate a community walk, a neighborhood bike ride, or organize sports leagues at local parks. Take advantage of the nice weather; a time when more people are willing to participate in outdoor activities. So, don't miss out on the opportunities of summer to begin developing events that promote your community's active living initiatives and strengthen your community connections. Visit: www.michigan.org.



Annual Labor Day Tradition Connects Michigan Communities



The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports invites Michigan communities to host a 2008 Labor Day Community Walk. Labor Day Walks will be held throughout the state, in conjunction with the Mackinac Bridge Labor Day Walk, to support "Getting Michigan Moving," an initiative by the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness to promote the health benefits of physical activity

and create behavior changing programs that equip Michigan residents to lead physically active lifestyles. Michigan has nearly 10 million people and approximately 50,000 participate in the traditional Mackinac Bridge Walk each year. Communities are encouraged to host their own "virtual bridge walks" to double or triple the number of walkers on Labor Day.

Sponsorship from Farm Bureau Insurance allows the Governor's Council to endorse the local 2008 Labor Day Walks. Registered communities receive a logo that can be used on any of the printed materials associated with the event, as well as a free packet to assist in planning a successful Community Walk.

To register a Labor Day Community Walk, or to receive a free Labor Day Walk packet, please visit: www.michiganfitness.org/LDCBridgeWalk.htm.

Now Available: *Resident's Guide for Creating Safe and Walkable Communities*



The Federal Highway Administration Office of Safety has released *A Resident's Guide for Creating Safe and Walkable Communities*, which provides examples from communities across the nation working to improve pedestrian safety. The *Guide* includes information, ideas, and resources to help residents learn about issues that affect walking conditions; find ways to address and prevent these problems; and promote pedestrian safety. The *Guide* also contains fact sheets, worksheets, and sample materials that can be distributed or adapted to meet the needs of a community. References to other resources and materials are also provided. You can download an

electronic copy for free and hard copies are available for purchase.

Please visit: http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/ped/ped_walkguide.

New Mini-Assessments Available to Registered PAC Communities

Due to popular demand, the Promoting Active Communities (PAC) program now includes mini-assessments so that you can evaluate multiple neighborhoods and worksites in your community to see if they are active living-friendly.



The new mini-assessments are unscored and designed to help you better understand the different strategies for promoting and supporting physical activity that are being employed throughout your hometown. **To take advantage of the mini-assessments, your community must currently be registered for the PAC.** After registering, you can access the mini-assessments by logging onto your community's homepage, available through that PAC website at: www.mihealthtools.org/communities. The mini-assessments are accessible through two links on the homepage: (1) the *PAC Assessment* drop-down menu, and (2) the *Assess More Worksites & Neighborhoods* tab.

If your community is not yet registered for the 2008 PAC, initiate participation and begin organizing a multidisciplinary community team in order to take advantage of this great new resource. Visit the PAC website at: www.mihealthtools.org/communities to learn more or visit: www.michiganfitness.org/active/ActiveMichiganCommunities to see what communities across the state are doing to integrate active living environments into their neighborhoods and worksites.

Bicycle Friendly Community Campaign



In May, Flint received an Honorable Mention as a Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) through the League of American Bicyclists Bicycle Friendly Community Campaign. Flint is one of three communities in Michigan to be acknowledged through this program. In 2005, Ann Arbor received a bronze-level designation; and in 2006, Jackson received an Honorable Mention.

The League of American Bicyclists (LAB) awards these four year designations to communities that have made impressive, measurable efforts to integrate bicyclists into the community. There are four levels- platinum, gold, silver, and bronze-awarded twice each year, plus an Honorable Mention that recognizes communities that have made noticeable progress in their efforts to become more bicycle-friendly. The designations are based upon five categories, known as the 5 E's: (1) education, (2) engineering, (3) enforcement, (4) encouragement, and (5) evaluation. Flint joined nine other communities in receiving a Honorable Mention in 2008.

In addition to becoming a nationally recognized bicycle-friendly city, the BFC application process provides valuable feedback for your community. The BFC application requires an extensive assessment of the 5 E's within your community, allowing you to raise awareness in your community of bicycle-friendly initiatives being implemented and to collaborate with local stakeholders to identify which of the 5 E's warrants improvement. Furthermore, the LAB reviews your application responses and provides suggestions for integrating bicycle-friendly concepts into your community's planning and development. As an additional incentive to this campaign, communities that have received a BFC are eligible for small grants to fund programs that advance bicycle-friendly initiatives.

The insight gained from this assessment can complement the Promoting Active Communities (PAC) program or any Safe Routes to School or Safe Routes for Work program. All communities are strongly encouraged to start working towards becoming a bicycle-friendly community.

For more information, please visit: www.bikeleague.org/programs/communities.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: Upcoming Events & Deadlines

Metro Detroit Youth Day: July 9th. Come out to enjoy a day of sports clinics, contests, motivational speakers, games, education, and a free lunch at the 26th Annual Metro Detroit Youth Day. Last year, over 30,000 youth ages 8-15 came out to enjoy the largest one day youth event in the State of Michigan. This event provides a great opportunity to be active during the summer months and learn new ways to integrate healthy, active living into the daily routines of Michigan's youth. For more information, visit: www.michiganfitness.org/endorsements/index.php or contact Edward Deeb at edwarddeeb@michbusiness.org.



Pro-Walk/Pro-Bike Conference 2008, Seattle. Join hundreds of bicycle and pedestrian advocates, public officials, land use experts, public health promoters, and Safe Routes to School coordinators in Seattle, September 2-5th for the 14th biennial Pro-Walk/Pro-Bike Conference. For more information and to register, visit: www.bikewalk.org/2008conference/index.html.

2008 Promoting Active Communities Assessment Deadline: August 15th. Don't forget to register for the Promoting Active Communities (PAC) program and begin organizing your multidisciplinary team of community stakeholders today! To register for the PAC and find more information, visit: www.mihealthtools.org/communities.

Planning Ahead: Smart Commute 2009.

This year, thousands of Michigan residents left their cars at home on May 16th and biked, walked, or carpooled to celebrate Smart Commute Day. To build on the energy from this year's celebrations, now is the time to start planning your community's events for Smart Commute 2009. Talk with your local community leaders to discuss strategies and ideas for promoting alternative modes of transportation for May 15th, 2009. Visit: www.lmb.org to learn about past Smart Commute activities in Michigan.

Grant Opportunities

Are you looking for grant opportunities to fund your active living community projects? Do you want to find out about possible grant opportunities and learn more about the types of programs that have previously received funding? The following two websites list different grant opportunities available to communities as well as provide descriptions of previous grant recipients.

- **Active Living Research Grants & Results**– lists grant opportunities for various active living initiatives. Visit: www.activelivingresearch.org/grantsearch
- **Bikes Belong Grants Program**– lists grant opportunities for bicycle-related initiatives. Visit: www.bikesbelong.org/grants



About Us

The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports was established in 1992 to improve the health of, and increase physical activity among, Michigan residents. The Michigan Fitness Foundation was created in 1994 as a 501(c)3 nonprofit public charity foundation to expedite Governor's Council policies and programs and provide a broader funding base to pursue its mission of Getting Michigan Moving. The foundation is licensed by the Michigan Attorney General to solicit and receive charitable gifts and grants.



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Our Mission

The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports envisions a physically educated population with the knowledge and skills to enjoy a healthy, vigorous and safe lifestyle in communities designed to support physical activity.

Endorsed Physical Activity Events

Get the Governor's Council's seal of approval on your event! The organization endorses events that encourage physical activity in communities across the state. Physical activity events that range from running races to softball tournaments are eligible to be endorsed by the Governor's Council. Having your event endorsed is free, and gives you additional publicity through the Governor's Council website! Do you have an event that you think could be endorsed by the Governor's Council or do you want to find events that have already been endorsed? Visit <http://www.michiganfitness.org/endorsements/index.php>. If you have questions about the endorsement program, contact Tricia Fraas at (800) 434-8642 or tfraas@michiganfitness.org.

Additional Resources

Benefit-Cost Analysis of Bicycle Facilities. Is your community considering building facilities to accommodate bicycles? Would you like to know how much these bicycle facilities will cost? Do you want to quantify the benefits of bicycling and bicycle facilities? This tool available through the Bicycling Information Center can supplement your bicycle advocacy efforts. Visit: www.bicyclinginfo.org/bikecost/.

SpaceShare: Less cars, more community. SpaceShare is a carpooling and Green Networking guide for event planners. This organization provides a quick, easy way to connect individuals arriving at an event, such as a conference, to allow for carpooling across communities. So forget the rental cars and implement this Smart Commute program within your community during the summer tourist season or for any large community festival. More information available at: www.spaceshare.com.

Clif Bar 2 Mile Challenge. Since 40% of urban travel is 2 miles or less, Clif Bar has designed a website that challenges individuals to ride their bikes instead of driving a car. This interactive program allows you to insert your address and map your daily commute. You can also challenge your friends, co-workers, and neighbors to use active transportation for any commute 2 miles or less. To take the challenge, visit: www.2milechallenge.com/home.

The Healthy Transportation Network (HTN). This California based online resource provides bicycling and walking safety information as well as trains local stakeholders interested in creating environments that encourage safe bicycling and walking. Available at: www.healthytransportation.net.

To Subscribe to the Active Michigan Communities Newsletter

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