

Step It Up! Region IX e-Town Hall

Breakout Session Notes

During the *Step it Up!* Region IX e-Town Hall, three breakout groups discussed the below questions in regards to policy, infrastructure, and events, respectively. What follows is a summary from each session.

1. *Please share a bit about yourself, your organization, and the work you do around the issues of walking and walkability. What are you most interested in?*
2. *Please discuss what successes and challenges you face related to this type of work or project.*
 - *What has worked well?*
 - *What assistance or resources would be helpful in overcoming challenges?*
 - *What assistance or resources could your organization potentially provide other organizations in the area?*
3. *What would be most helpful in moving your work forward? How can collaborative learning opportunities, like today's e-Town Hall, be most useful in achieving your goals?*

Policy Breakout Group

YMCA of Southern Arizona has been very involved with the Surgeon General's Call to Action through work with *Activate Tucson* for the past 12 years. Successes includes 100 miles of shared use path, a walking school bus, and current work on a complete streets policy. *Walk Tucson*, part of the *Activate Tucson* Coalition, is currently exploring the Vision Zero initiative. Funding has been the main barrier.

Palm Springs has worked on several events including a 5k/1k annual event, walking paths with activities, and a complete bike master plan. They are currently developing a pedestrian master plan.

Southern Nevada Health District has received federal funding for 5-6 years. They work with regional transportation on a complete streets policy. They are currently updating their regional pedestrian plan and working on Safe Routes to School. They currently have over 900 miles of trails, but not all are connected and have signage. They are interested in *Beyond Complete Streets*.

Santa Clara County Health Department has worked more on events and education than policy. In 2012 the county did pass a complete streets resolution, and in 2015 included a Health Element in its updated General Plan. Currently interested in sample policies.

Maricopa County Department of Health has focused on complete streets implementation and active transportation, especially within municipal general plans.

Rails to Trails considers connectivity a *Beyond Complete Streets* focus area. Rails to Trails have a trail modeling tool for communities to evaluate use and degree of connectivity. Vision Zero is another possibility to address safety.

Infrastructure Breakout Group

Shared Resources

- Active Living Research (www.activelivingresearch.org) - Large collection of resources, including policy briefs and infographics
- Physical Activity Policy Research Network Plus (www.jhsph.edu/paprn)
- National Association of Realtors (www.realtor.org) - Starting to realize that health is important to people and has good resources
- Designed to Move: Active Cities (www.activelivingresearch.org/blog/2015/07/designed-move-active-cities) - Highlights the co-benefits of active design that can be shared with local decision makers
- Project for Public Spaces (www.pps.org) - Sam Goater can be contacted at sgoater@pps.org and @walkbikeplaces
- America Walks and Everybody Walks websites (www.americawalks.org and www.everybodywalk.org)
- CDC Physical Activity Branch (<http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/>)
- Plantizen (<http://www.planetizen.com/>)
- Streets Blog (<http://usa.streetsblog.org/>)
- Strong Towns (www.strongtowns.org)
- Sidewalk Fund - Funding strategy where developers of new projects contribute the equivalent funds of a sidewalk that is unnecessary to build with their project to allow the resources to be used elsewhere

Interests

- Using evidence to inform policy and built environment decisions that can improve health and increase physical activity (PA) for all populations.
- Partnerships to create healthier communities.
- Building walkable communities for the low income populations and encouraging families to be physically active together. These are communities that typically have high crime rates, unsafe streets, pollution, etc. and families have minimal resources for PA.
- Exchanging resources and sharing information.

Challenges

- Limited funding makes prioritization necessary with regard to a countywide pedestrian plan. The lack of pedestrian advocacy groups makes this challenging. Partnership with local public health on countywide obesity prevention plan, which includes an active transportation

component, is encouraging. However moving the mindset of local public works from usual practices in infrastructure to best practices has been a challenge.

- Making connections between health and transportation and educating transportation officials on walking and walkability is a challenge. Engaging multidisciplinary teams is critical (e.g. planning, transportation, public health, education representatives (SRTS), parks and recreation, advocacy orgs, non-profits) in order to create relationships that can lead to change. There is a need to convince elected officials of economic benefits (co-benefits) of increasing walking in a way that will resonate.

Events Breakout Group

Recruitment of parents to participate in a Walking School Bus must be strategic (e.g. face to face contact yields better results than does sending a flyer home with children). Examples of “face to face” contact are:

- Outreach to parents in front of the school as they walk/drive their children to school
- Outreach at existing school-based events such as Kindergarten “Kickoffs” (“kindergarten parents are some of the best”) and other “special events and classes (incorporate Walking School Bus theme into an art-based activity)
- Outreach will vary by school

Other strategies include:

- Customizing Walking School Bus messages based on the community in which the school is located so that messages resonate with parents and other adults in the geographic area
- Approach the “walkers”
- Enlist the support of Elected Officials (they may be able to provide supplies)

Example of Walking School Bus Success:

- Walking School Bus can be a success when school Principals are involved. For instance, in one school in Alameda County, on Fridays, parents who facilitated the Walking School Bus continued to walk for about 30 minutes after walking the children to school. For a period of time the Principal joined them on their 30-minute walk and then offered to cover the class of any teacher who wanted to join the parents who walked. Teachers joined the Friday Walks.