On November 29th, 2018, America Walks hosted the webinar, "Active Transportation for Healthy Communities", where we highlighted work being done by three communities of various sizes who are working to create more activity-friendly connections for all.

It featured Sarah Congleton, County Agent for Family and Consumer Sciences Education in Martin County, KY, Jody Holton, Executive Director of the Montgomery County Planning Commission, and Alexis Lantz, urban planner at the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health PLACE Program.

America Walks received many questions and comments from attendees. Our panelists took time to offer their expert answers, to continue the conversation and provide further insight on best practices they are using to improve active transportation systems, in an effort to create safe, accessible, and enjoyable walking conditions in their communities so you can too.

Sarah, have you identified solutions for providing restrooms but addressing potential concerns about negative on-goings that may occur in such facilities?

Sarah: Restrooms are currently available at this park, however to keep vandalism to a minimum, the facilities are only open during daylight hours. Also, we are looking into security cameras.

In Martin Co., about how many community members were on the coalition?

Sarah: There are currently 35 members.

Can you talk about the security of solar lights and vandalism?

Sarah: Vandalism is a major concern of ours - we actually do not have them installed yet, so I can't say for sure whether or not there will be vandalism. We are hopeful that people will see the value in the lighting since it was most suggested from people utilizing the walking trail.cal.

How well-used is the Warfield Trail? Pictures were shy of people.

Sarah: Approximately 600 people utilize the walking trail. It holds as the only safe way of transportation for most individuals that live in the housing authority, so the trail is used frequently. A lot of people travel from West Virginia to use the trail just for physical activity purposes.

Good idea to remove the bollards. Although, in theory, they are intended to keep out motorized users, the reality is that determined motorized users will get in anyway. Instead the bollards are a

not only a barrier to people in wheelchairs, they are dangerous for bicyclists who can crash into them.

Sarah: We are hopeful to install a more welcoming entrance rather than just the ballards. Maybe more signage to help keep motorized users out.

Do any of the presenters have advice about how to change negative perceptions of active transportation with community members? We're currently going through community health improvement planning but keep running into resistance from community members who do not like bikers on roadways and also don't want to see complete streets enacted.

Sarah: We often run into negative perceptions with active transportation - Showing the person/people have been the most persuasive for us. We conducted a walk audit and invited those who were skeptical - showing and explaining safety precautions from a walkers stand point helped. Our community members actually like the idea of biking, however, majority of our streets are narrow, 2-lanes that biking isn't an option for us currently.

Do you find any difficulty in gaining attention for your programs with other community programs that are in place? How do you distinguish your projects from other competing programs?

Alexis: In the case of our planning efforts we have found it important to explain how the various efforts the County is working on fit together. The bigger picture of how things complement each other/are related so folks see that we're coordinating and understand the benefit of each effort. In our case things aren't competing - it's a matter of showing how things are (or should be integrated/complimentary) in order to achieve the goals established by our leadership.

Sarah: Competition is not necessarily an issue in my county. One of the perks of being so small is having community wide support. We once had an issue of having several health coalitions around the county - we realized we were all striving to achieve the same goal, so we combined. I assume that is fairly easy to accomplish having only around 11,000 people.

Did paving the Warfield trail increase the user rates, or was it used as much before the improvements?

Sarah: The trail was used just as much before the improvements.

For Sarah: I've seen other rural places in E. KY in which ATVs are a big mode of transportation. Has there been any use of ATVs on the Warfield Trail? Maybe that was what the bollards were for (although the ATVs would probably just go around them anyway).

Sarah: No, surprisingly, there are no ATV usages on this trail. For the most part, there have only been bicycles and scooters on the trail.

Access to Essential Services was a recent transportation planning emphasis area. Has this facilitated walkability, connectivity and the health concerns of the CDC?

Sarah: Yes, this has facilitated walkability and connectivity. The trail connects housing authorities to several places of necessity; grocery store, pharmacy, doctors office, hardware store, park, etc. With many other efforts involving our CDC Grant, we have seen a decrease in our obesity rates.

Alexis: I don't totally understand this question. In our planning efforts, we have done analysis of land uses including health facilities and we have talked with community members about the places they walk to or want to walk to and what challenges needed to be addressed to improve connectivity. Talking about access to health services is important to transportation planning conversations, especially with our aging population.

Do you use GIS to help define Metric, i.e. performance measures to monitor the success and continued development of System?

Alexis: In our draft Pedestrian Plan and with Vision Zero we include performance metrics to monitor success/track progress. We also identify metrics we'd like to be able to report on but don't yet have the capacity or technology to tackle. Some of these metrics are things that could be tracked through GIS, but most are not.

Sarah: No, not as of now. This project is fairly new - we are trying to find methods of measurement suitable.

Alexis do you know Julie Chavez - She uses CommunityViz (GIS Extension) often used as a tool for landscape management?

Alexis: I don't - definitely welcome an introduction.

Have you seen any local interest in the development of 'Apps' that include bike and pedestrian systems and how that system integrates with the Public Transportation (buses). Route times, attractions, purchase bus tickets, etc.

Sarah: No, the only interest folks have here would be activity trackers to monitor steps/exercise. Our City is very tiny - we have no public transportation systems, busses, bike/pedestrian systems, etc.

Alexis: From my position at DPH this is not a topic that I'm aware of/have been involved in, but there are apps out there that do this and I think people appreciate having something that provides the full picture of mobility options for their respective trips.

How do you get decision makers like mayors county engineers on board and involved in walk audits. How do you get them to see the impact of their involvement?

Alexis: The simple response is invite them to participate. If they can't participate and then invite them to a meeting where residents share out what they captured during the walk audit. Have residents also take pictures and talk about what the images say the them - maybe the photos are of obvious issues like missing curb ramps, but maybe their of less obvious issues like an abundance of liquor stores or nuisance issues that make walking feel unsafe. It can be especially powerful to have youth document issues and present to their elected leaders. If you

know that folks won't want to be put on blast by their stakeholders (whether that's elected officials or engineers) then pre-meet with them to share what was documented during the walk audit so that when the community presentation happens they can look good by talking about how they're going to address these issues the community has identified.

Sarah: Continuous invitations have worked well for me - in person invitations and letters. Persistence is key! A little reminder that their opinion is very valued in our small community has given them motive to be more involved with our grant. Success stories from our grant efforts have helped them see the impacts.

Due to the recent severe fires in CA, are there any different considerations regarding tree placement?

Alexis: The County is working with the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains to develop an Early Detection/Rapid Response Plan for drought- and pest-affected trees, including identifying priority restoration planting locations on public and private property within the Santa Monica Mountains. The project area was badly impacted by recent fires and the project team is looking into how fire and "defensible space" strategies might inform the Plan and/or its education and outreach components.

To date the work of our HDW Tree Committee has been focused on tree planting in the urban areas where concerns about wildfires are not an issue. As illustrated in my slides the Fire Department is involved on the committee and does provide guidelines on the siting of street trees to ensure that they can respond quickly to structure fires in the urban areas.

What is it about those LA county roads that is so fatal?

Alexis: It's a mix of issues, but speeding is the leading cause of the fatal and severe injury crashes in our county. Regardless of the road type, land uses, or population density - speeding is the issue we need to address to reduce the potential of collisions resulting in fatal and severe injuries. The County's Vision Zero initiative will help us focus on the areas with higher concentrations of fatal and severe injury collisions to more holistically understand the issues on each corridor and work together across agencies and with community members to address them.

Do any of the presenters have advice about how to change negative perceptions of active transportation with community members? We're currently going through community health improvement planning but keep running into resistance from community members who do not like bikers on roadways and also don't want to see complete streets enacted.

Alexis: A couple ideas:

- **Start with talking to people about pedestrian safety.** More people can identify with issues from the perspective of a pedestrian, because everyone walks, even if it's just from the parking space to your destination. Once you have the buy-in on pedestrian safety and overall street safety talk about how you use the space differently to provide more transportation options.

- **Get out on the streets during your meeting time** and stop at example problem areas to foster a better discussion. When you're just in a meeting room it removes people from the issues on the street.

- **Engage new and different stakeholders.** Often times the folks that naturally self select to engage in a public planning process skew older. While their perspectives are valuable it's important to engage more people by going to where they are. For example, consider doing outreach directly on the street. An organization here in LA did this by paying a food truck to set-up along a street the city was planning to reconfigure with a road diet and provided free food to people who stopped and talked with them about issues along the corridor and learn about potential solutions to address those issues. It was a way to get community feedback from people who are already out walking the corridor and maybe aren't the people who typically come to community meetings or are involved with neighborhood advocacy groups. Or consider reaching parents by building partnerships with the schools. We find that parents (even though they cause a lot of the issues outside/around schools during drop off/pick-up) care deeply about improving the walkability of their communities for their children, but a lot of parents don't have time to come to evening meetings. So you have to go to them at the schools rather than having them come to your meeting. Also engaging youth is so helpful for building support for improved street safety and active transportation. Have the teens talk to adults about why the need bike lanes or improved pedestrian crossings. It's a lot harder (and it makes people look bad) to tell a kid "I don't care about your safety, I just wanted to drive fast"