Active People, Healthy Illinois: Engaging Community to Help Connect Activity-Friendly Routes to Everyday Destinations

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Speakers

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ISPAN OVERVIEW

• Five-year, $4.6 million initiative to implement physical activity and nutrition interventions in Illinois
• Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
• Focused on communities hardest hit by chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes and heart disease
• Led by the Illinois Public Health Institute (IPHI), in collaboration with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and multiple partners
ISPAN is made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and administered by the Illinois Public Health Institute in collaboration with partners in the Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity.
Priority Communities

Geographic regions:
• Chicago/Cook County
• Jackson County
• Tri-County Region (Peoria/Tazewell/Woodford Counties)

Populations:
• Low-income
• Rural
• Predominantly African-American/ Latinx
BUILT ENVIRONMENT- Year 1

• Supporting local implementation of bike and pedestrian plans, or complete streets policies in priority regions to create activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations.

• Promoting the connection between health and planning partners through a new online forum, Healthy Communities Illinois.
Walkable Environments

- To promote walking...
  ...people must have safe, appealing places to walk!

- Engaging community in promoting walkable environments to everyday destinations can create investment in policy, systems and environmental changes

- Advocates and communities can work together to:
  - Learn about what makes walkable environments
  - Gather data
  - Create momentum
  - Develop policies and plans
Regional Work

• Promoting complete streets policy adoption in south suburban Cook County
• Adding health criteria to surface transportation funding application in south suburban Cook County
• Creating detailed Complete Streets implementation plan/technical guide in Peoria
• Helping to develop sidewalk prioritization plan in Murphysboro, IL
Murphysboro walk audit

Project Goals:

- Develop a sidewalk gap analysis
- Rate the condition of existing sidewalks
- Identify where to prioritize improvements
Our process

1. Inventory conditions and presence in Google Streetview

2. Organize volunteers to walk each block and verify condition and presence.

3. Document results and prioritize areas for improvement.
Recruiting volunteers

• Promoted by local organizations and the mayor around town
• Flyers posted around town
• Offered incentives and breakfast
• 31 volunteers attended!
Training volunteers

- Confirm presence
- Confirm condition
- Document crossing issues
Visual checklist

- **Excellent**: No cracks, new appearance, well maintained
- **Good**: Some visible wear but otherwise good condition
- **Fair**: Some cracks, clearly visible wear or damage, functional
- **Poor**: Any presence of deep cracks, misaligned, sagging or uplifted slabs, slabs covered in dirt or weeds
Our results

• 3 hours of time
• 125 miles of sidewalks
Next steps

• Develop and prioritize recommendations

• Identify low-hanging fruit and ways to continue stakeholder involvement

• Meet with local agencies and stakeholders to discuss opportunities to collaborate

• Continue to cultivate local capacity
Lessons learned

• Be visible
• Work with local elected officials, public health, and other organizations
• Use existing assets to expand capacity
• Train community members to be technical experts
• Project synergies can lead to big results
• Built environment improvements can lead to behavior change
Bike Walk Everytown: Peoria and Jackson County

• Training program for community members to:
  • Build advocacy skills
  • Learn about walking and biking infrastructure and policy issues from transportation experts
  • Network with other advocates
  • Become an expert yourself!
Elements of success

- Form partnerships with local organizations and public health to spread the word and find participants
- Post trainings on YouTube to expand knowledge base
- Create and update a list of participants and connect them to each others’ cause
- Continue to check-in with participants and provide advice and support for their plan
- Partner with municipalities to advance goals
Next steps

• In-person training in Peoria
• Online training for Jackson County
• Work with participants to advance their policy goals
• Continue to provide training opportunities in-person and online
Questions/concerns:
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