Promoting Walking and Health in City Comprehensive Plans

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WHAT DID WE DO?

We developed relationships between public health staff and planners and worked on projects that support active living.

We developed planning documents with health data and sample language and policies and met with city planners to discuss social determinants of health and ways to include health and active living in comp plans.

WHY INCLUDE WALKING IN PLANS?

Walking should be included in the plan because it improves health, provides access to destinations, and is affordable and doable for most people.

- Walking reduces the likelihood of obesity. 63% of adults in Dakota County and Minnesota are overweight or obese.
- When community design does not support walking, few people walk.
- Few students have sidewalks, trails, or safe crossings to walk to school in the suburbs.
- Less than 4% of adults (16 and older) in Minnesota walked or biked to work in 2013.
- Many suburban neighborhoods lack sidewalks and people walk in the street.

HEALTH EQUITY AND WALKING

Provide walking options for:
- All, across the life span
- Those who can’t or don’t drive
- Those who lack reliable transportation (cars, public transit)

SUPPORTING WALKING

VISION STATEMENT: We support active living and all modes of transportation including walking.

Health in all policies ensures consideration of the impact of policies on everyone’s health.

WAYS TO INCLUDE WALKING

PARKS
- Add walking paths within parks for all ages and abilities

HOUSING
- Develop affordable housing with walkable streets, transit, and access to services
- Locate parks within a half-mile of all residents and connect with sidewalks and trails

LAND USE
- Support mixed-use development and compact, walkable neighborhood
- Build multi-family housing incorporating trails, sidewalks, and parks

TRANSPORTATION
- Make walking safe and attractive with lighting, landscaping and benches
- Build sidewalks and trails on new and updated streets

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Talk to your elected officials and city planning staff about why walkability is important and how to improve it
- Share the healthy comp plan resources
- Do a walkability audit and share the results

RESOURCES: visit www.dakotacounty.us
- City Comprehensive Plans (samples): search “healthy comp plan”
- Healthy Comprehensive Plan Checklist: search “checklist comp plan”
- Walkability Checklist: search “walkability checklist”