Urban Planning For Active Living: Who Benefits?

By Kristin Day

The US population is heavier than ever, with obesity and overweight reaching alarming levels. Inadequate physical activity explains at least part of this trend. As Thomas Halton explains elsewhere (see “Obesity Epidemic” in this issue), 22 percent of US adults today do not participate in regular leisure-time physical activity. The health implications of this are grave, though insufficient physical activity does not affect all groups equally.

According to Pratt, Maceral and Blanton (see “Resources for Active Living” in this issue), low-income communities and some communities of color are especially at-risk. [Cont. on page 7]
The SEVENTH GENERATION

"In every our deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations.”
- From the Great Law of the Iroquois Confederacy

The Environment's Role in Physical Activity: Necessary but Not Sufficient

By Ann Forsyth
Theme Editor Anne Lusk

Americans are getting fatter and exercising less. As Thomas Halton outlines in this issue, this has human costs, overweight and lack of exercise contribute to a variety of chronic diseases. Given the multi-billion dollar cost of health care, there are major economic costs as well. While a num-

ber of genetic and biological factors affect weight, for most individuals overweight is a result of taking in too many calories and expend-
ing too few. This is hard work, takes much money and effort and has been expended to encourage, ex-
courage, and educate people to eat less and exercise more. Those people don't seem to be get-
ning the message has encouraged those in the public health arena to look to the physical envi-

ronment for ways to eliminate barriers to exer-
cise and provide more supportive environments for physical activity. Increasing physical activity even a small amount, enough to lower obesity even a few percentage points, would save billions of dollars annually and also reduce the long-term suffering caused by chronic diseases. This could have a great impact on low-income people and people of color, since a disproportionate number of individuals in these populations are victims of such health problems.

Obesity awareness has brought new attention to the built environment. For the first time in years there is significant funding available to evaluate the human dimensions of urban environments across the U.S. (In the interest of full disclosure, I am the recipient of some of that funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, in collabora-
tion with public health colleagues Katherine Schmitz and Michael Oakes.) Politicians, civic groups and the general public are getting inter-

ested in their neighborhoods, town centers, parks and trails. The buzz seems to validate the interests of planners who have long advocated for design

of healthier cities—more vibrant public spaces, better parks and trails, improved transit systems, and more supportive environments for children, youth, people of color and low-income popula-
tions. The emphasis on the infrastructure required for physical activity has the potential to link advocates for open space, public health and community redevelopment into a powerful coal-

ition promoting investment in the civic, infra-
structure of U.S. cities and the revitalization of public space. Planners are at the center of atten-

tion, and activists look to them for partnership and even leadership.

This issue on the Active City, guest edited by Anne Lusk, examines the potential of this renewed interest in the physical environment to create positive changes in the built environment. It also exam-

ines some of the limits of the current debate.

In recent media coverage of this issue, and in the pronouncements of some designers and plan-
ers, there has been a tendency to get caught up in the oversimplification that sprawl makes people fat. From a public health perspective, there is certainly enormous excitement about the possi-

bility that the environment has some small, but significant, effect on physical activity when edu-
cation has seemingly stopped making a differ-

cence yet it is too easy to slip into a mode of thinking that enthusiastically embraces envi-

ronmental determinism, which sees the envi-

ronment as the key dimension.

As Kevin Krizek points out in his article: “We intuitively know that people have a harder time walking or cycling when opportunities for these options do not exist. But while improved conditions may be necessary, they are not sufficient for households to adopt healthy travel modes.” Krizek, as well as Paul Schuens, both present this more complex picture, explaining how research to date has shown that other fac-

tors—including affluence, gas prices, the diffic-

ties of driving, culture and personal prefer-

ences—are critical to whether people will walk or cycle.

(Cont. on page 6)
The Key to Good Health is Not in the Ignition:
Portland, Oregon Tries New Tool to Reduce Car Travel
By Lavinia Gordon

For years Portland has received kudos for its innovative and successful transportation and land use policies. Portland boasts of a vital downtown, a nationally recognized urban growth boundary, an award-winning light rail and transit system and as being the birthplace of the first modern streetcar in America. The city’s zoning code discourages excessive parking and promotes density around regional and town centers, and Bicycling Magazine has rated Portland the best cycling city in the US every year since 1995.

Despite all this, more and more Portlanders are driving alone in their cars. Total vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the Portland metropolitan area has more than doubled since 1980. Per capita VMT has increased from twelve miles per person per day in 1980, to twenty-one miles per person per day in 1998. Every day Portland residents drive their automobiles over 27 million miles, the equivalent of fifty-six round-trips to the moon!

The Health Connection
All this driving has serious side effects, in Portland as in other parts of the US. Transportation is the largest contributor to global warming and air pollution in the Portland region. Cars and trucks are expected to account for 45 percent of all local greenhouse gas emissions in Multnomah County by 2010. Transportation sources are also the biggest contributors (38 percent) of local air pollutants such as ozone and carbon monoxide.

It is no coincidence that our continuing infatuation with the automobile is coupled with dwindling physical activity and increasing obesity rates. And now has the distinction of being the “fattest” state in the West. Over 60 percent of adult Oregonians and 49 percent of Oregon’s youth are overweight. As discussed elsewhere in this issue, obesity is linked to a number of chronic diseases.

The link between physical activity and health is finally getting attention. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that behaviors linked to inactivity contribute to 300,000 deaths per year. This is the second largest cause of death after tobacco that results from a modifiable behavior.

Large foundations that focus on health, such as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, are directing much of their charitable giving to programs that encourage people to be more active.

There is No Silver Bullet
Short of perhaps raising gas prices to $5 gallon, there is no single remedy to our love affair with the automobile. Most of us have a need for an automobile some of the time. We just need to stop and think each time we reach for the keys. A city that has a wide range of alternatives makes driving “smarter” more feasible.

Portland has many of the essential elements for sustainable mobility: reasonable housing density and street connectivity, an excellent transit system, bike lanes and sidewalks that support biking and walking, a regional carpool system (including online ride-matching), taxi/Uber and car sharing (Portland was the birthplace of car sharing). If Portland has most of the essential elements to support sustainable transportation, why are more and more people driving alone in their cars? Portland is experimenting with a program that may provide some answers.

TravelSmart
The City of Portland Transportation Options Division, with its funding partner TriMet, is conducting a pilot project to test the concept of “individualized marketing” to encourage biking, walking, transit and carpooling. Called TravelSmart, this innovative program creates a dialogue with people about their travel needs.

TravelSmart is based on the premise that a large percentage of people drive alone in their cars due to purely subjective reasons. While a large proportion of people has the means to bike, walk, carpool or take transit, misperceptions about the transportation system get in the way. Individuals may think it takes longer to use an alternative transportation mode than it actually does. They may not know that trips to work are five minutes from their door and can take them directly to where they want to go. Or they may not know that their bus stop is, or how to buy a ticket or where

mile and 22 percent are less than one mile. Almost one-half of all trips (46 percent) are less than three miles. At the same time, most people say they are willing to walk a half-mile and many say they are willing to walk a mile.

Individualized Marketing
While the surveys are essential to evaluate the impact of TravelSmart, the heart of the program is the second phase—individualized marketing. Individualized marketing takes data from the first 600 households responding to the baseline travel survey and segments them into groups based upon their responses.

This “intervention” is where the dialogue happens with participants. While information and training is given, it is individualized in a way that is easy to understand. The intervention includes providing a new envelope full of environmentally-friendly modes (26 percent) were given a small reward. The remaining 33 percent who didn’t want to participate were not contacted again.

Preliminary Results
In May of 2003, results from the first “after survey” of the Portland TravelSmart project were announced. The pilot showed that car travel in the target area decreased by 8 percent, and travel by environmentally-friendly modes increased by 7 percent; those who changed were shifted to walking and public transit. Of the gains made environmentally-friendly modes, they occurred across all age groups and all types of trips—work trips, leisure trips, shopping, etc.

These preliminary results are both promising and consistent with pilot projects in Europe and Australia that use individualized marketing to reduce car travel. The government of Western Australia has invested over $10 million in TravelSmart programs. It is so successful, the economic benefit of Travel Smart that it has diverted capital funds originally intended for highway construction to large-scale individualized marketing campaigns to reduce car travel.

If They Build it Will They Come?
Is it enough to simply build better transportation infrastructure and provide carpool service? Some would argue that building more bike lanes and light rail lines and providing more frequent transit service is the key to increasing biking, walking and transit.

[Cont. on page 9]
7th Generation [Cont. from page 2]

Articles by Kristin Day, Anne Lusk, Paul Schimek and Larry Frank also relate systematic differences in the relationship of low-income people and people of color to the physical environment and how they are related to other populations. While such populations walk more for transportation, they are less likely to do many forms of physically active exercise because they may not get the recommended amount of daily physical activity and their health problems are on the rise. Creating favorable density and street patterns, however, is not enough: it may be crucial for these populations, which often already live in neighborhoods with relatively high densities and good transit infrastructure. Instead, as Day explains, insufﬁcient parks, high crime and fear for safety, pollution, lack of jobs to walk to, dirty streets and sidewalks and residential overcrowding that limits opportunities for exercise at home, as well as other social and economic factors, are vitally important. The media focus on suburban development patterns and middle-class concerns has obscured this point. Some planners have been happy to play along to avoid having to grapple with the situation of the entire population, and some activists have been spoilsport to those who argue that the nature of the problem is very complex, since this dilutes the message activists need to promote.

As a further complication, implicit in the debate is an assumption that it is possible to change the built environment on a massive scale. Certainly the physical environment is constantly being renewed, but ownership patterns and street layout out are fairly stable. While trails can be challenging to site in neighborhoods, Schimek points to the parallel and perhaps even more difﬁcult task of increasing density in many parts of the US, particularly if higher density development comes with less off-street parking than is the norm for new development. As Karla Hondon and the even the usually non-controversial public parks, which provide the infrastructure for physical activity, face signiﬁcant challenges in safeguarding their funding for maintenance and recreation programs. More hopeful may be the social marketing of the kind described by Lavina Gordon, which seeks to be able to encourage people to use and their feet—and change their relationship to the environment without actually changing the environment at all.

Certainly, as Mark Fenton outlines, there are many tried and tested planning and design strategies to increase physical activity in streets and neighboring

Day [Cont. from page 1]

Among high school students, for example, participation in vigorous physical activity is lower among black (54%) and Hispanic (60%) students than among white students (67%). Black and Hispanic adults are also more likely to be insufficiently active as compared to white adults. People with lower family incomes and lower levels of education are more likely to get too little physical activity. In fact, nearly half of those in families with less than a high school education report no regular leisure-time physical activity; by comparison, less than 20 percent of college graduates report similarly inactive US patterns of physical activity are similar to those of other developed countries.

These numbers may not tell the whole story; however, National health surveys, such as the BRFSS (Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System), emphasize typical leisure-time physical activity—reflecting a class bias that assumes physical activity to be an aspect of leisure or recreation, rather than a product of manual work or a function of everyday life, e.g., walking or bicycling for transportation.

So while measurement may be one problem, it is by no means the only one. Physical inactivity or the level of physical activity of the overweight/obese have not been systematically studied for diverse populations, and communities of color clearly face additional physical activity problems that are tied to low levels of physical activity. According to the Centers for Disease Control, for example, one in ten African-American men in the US over 2000 will but now the environment matters is a complex issue. It is not a simple case of if you build it, they will exercise.

Research studies are demonstrating in the situation in cities today and what doesn’t work. In addition to this research, planners can work with public health professionals, transportation ofﬁcials, parks and recreation professionals and the public to fund and test new models as pilot projects. Many planners attack physical activity now looking to planners as potential allies in creating this physical activity infrastructure. Progressive planners can contribute an important voice—advocating for better public infrastructure for all people, raising awareness of the limits of environmental interventions in social issues and advocating for the speciﬁc needs of low-income populations and people of color.

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The causes of physical inactivity warrant further attention because they vary among groups based on race, ethnicity and income. High-tech, labor-saving devices and sedentary occupations, for example, may be less of a cause of inactivity among low-income populations than among more affluent groups. Dependence on cars also difer by race and income levels. The 2000 census shows that non-Hispanic white workers travel to their jobs by walking, bicycling or using public transportation (16% and 14%, respectively), compared to non-Hispanic white workers (6%). More likely than high-tech consumption, it seems, is race. A more realistic picture physical activity in poor communities may be associated with limited time to exercise because individuals are spending more time doing household tasks and errands. Planners and public health professionals must be careful not to generalise from middle-class populations and need more research to determine whether the physical environment is a primary cause of physical inactivity in poor communities and communities of color.

Are We Looking at the Right Aspects of the Physical Environment? Until now, the active living agenda has focused most attention on the design attributes of middle-class, especially suburban, environments that may limit opportunities for everyday physical activity. Such stereotypical suburban environments feature shopping malls surrounded by seas of parking.
Planners and public health practitioners who hope to increase physical activity in communities of color must begin by understanding active living from the perspectives of these communities.

limits opportunities for exercise at home. Aesthetic issues certainly matter, but they are likely to be overshadowed by more pressing barriers that limit accessibility or compromise safety.

The problems of cities are not new, and the causes are abundant: a lack of affordable housing, too few jobs in city centers, private disinvestment, and financially strapped city coffers. The active living agenda could harness its considerable political and media potential by bringing attention to these conditions and to demonstrate links between poor quality urban environments and the expensive health outcomes. Such strategies might generate new interest in addressing the longstanding problems that face older US city centers.

In built-out cities and impoverished rural areas, design and planning solutions to support physical activity will require extra creativity and resourcefulness. Here, the need to increase physical activity is compounded by a range of other pressing needs—jobs, schools, housing, safety. The city of Santa Ana, California, for example, faced with an extreme shortage of park space for its low-income, young population, recently decided to convert one of its large street blocks and curvilinear streets that make it difficult to get directly where you are going; low density and visual imagery that foregoes sidewalks and long distances from homes to shops, jobs, and schools; and prominent garages that produce boring streetscapes.

Such physical features may indeed limit opportunities for walking and bicycling in the suburbs. Many of these features have little to do, however, with the design of urban settings which in the US continue to be occupied disproportionately by low-income residents and by people of color. Indeed, many older, urban environments boast an impressive array of the very features that are hypothesized to support physical activity—grid street patterns that support connectivity, high densities, public transportation, sidewalks and a mix of land uses. Other physical features may better explain lower rates of active living in low-income, urban environments— insufficient parks, high crime rates and fears for safety, pollution, lack of jobs to walk to, dirty streets and sidewalks and residential overcrowding that existing parks to a badly needed school site. New resources to increase physical activity will not be accomplished by locating which limited resources and will address multiple needs at once: community gardens that produce a source of income and fresh food; joint use agreements to open school playgrounds to community groups; neighborhood walk patrols that encourage residents to walk. Usually, these solutions will not be glamorous; they will not involve expensive, high-speed rail or meaningful transportation alternatives.

The scale of intervention is likely to be local and the cost of projects is likely to be modest, though potentially expensive to deliver. In terms of social justice, however, these investments are easier to support than the retrofitting of middle-class and high-income suburbs at the public’s expense.

How Can We Understand Active Living from the Perspectives of Diverse Communities?

To date, most public health research assumes a "barriers" approach to understanding active living in diverse communities. This approach assumes a shared definition of active living, and presumes that characteristics of individuals, groups and environments function to limit participation. Usually, such research finds that low-income populations and communities of color face extra barriers to physical activity compared to whites or those of European origin, heightened health concerns, lack of energy and time. While helpful, this approach falls short in that it does not acknowledge the unique forms that active living may take in each community. It also does not harness the wide range of resources that diverse communities might marshal to encourage physical activity.

Planners and public health practitioners who hope to increase physical activity in communities of color must begin by understanding active living from the perspectives of these communities. Such "culturally competent" planning starts by identifying and learning more about the specific community to be served rather than planning for a hypothetical "norm" and modifying the plans (or not) to fit "exceptions" to that norm.

To understand the meaning of active living for a specific community, researchers and practitioners must work with communities to identify the groups’ relevant history and life experiences, their positive and negative assets, their beliefs and values and their activities and preferences, especially regarding physical activity. How, for example, could community centers become destinations for families? How can we encourage physical activity for children? How can we encourage physical activity in "wilderness settings" for Black Americans? How might park design support the practice of Tai Chi among older Chinese-Americans? In interviewing Latino parents in Pico Rivera, California, children’s travel behavior was learned that these parents, most of whom walked their children to school, aspired to someday being able to drive their children instead. The lack of walkable streets and limited access to cars forced these parents to let their children walk, but they feared for their children’s safety in doing so. As this example suggests, planners should not assume that the majority of middle-class ideas about the “goodness” of walking and bicycling, for groups that have had few alternatives, these transportation modes may have varied meanings and implications.

Communities themselves should be centrally engaged in identifying and developing strategies for active living. The Active Living By Design program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation offers a model of what this might look like. This program provides modest funding and significant technical support to communities that demonstrate a commitment to increasing active living. The program seeks to support communities that have both grassroots and top-level commitment to this goal, and that have developed an agenda of activities that will work in their particular site. Ideally, community involvement would range from members of the planning team to community members planning and implementing active living activities, and less community like "input" or tokenism.

The active living movement succeeds in tapping a widespread, middle-class discontent with hurried lifestyles and placeless communities—a nostalgia for another, perhaps imagined time, when life was less busy and more local in its orientation. In this other time, children walked to school each day and parents did not worry about child abductions or

Fedor [cont. from page 5]

Few would dispute that improved and biker lanes can improve the walking and cycling environment, more frequent transit service and new light rail lines go to a long way toward encouraging alternative modes of transportation. But if we still don’t know how to use these alternatives or where they are, or are just plain timid about trying something new, the capital investment in transportation infrastructure will never be fully utilized.

The key to TransSmart is providing specific information to those who want it, while leaving in peace those who are there for the fun of it. There are a lot of people to make small changes in the way they travel, which makes a big difference in the long run. Almost everyone takes one or two trips per week where they can leave their car at home.

Portlanders will know more about the capacity of TransSmart to increase biking, walking, carpooling and transit when the final survey results are analyzed in January 2004. Plans are also underway to launch a large-scale TransSmart project next spring to coincide with the opening of the new Interstate MAX light rail line in North Portland.

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America’s Obesity Epidemic

By Thomas L. Halton

Obesity in the United States has truly reached epidemic proportions. Currently two out of every three Americans are overweight and 30 percent are obese. Minority groups are particularly affected by this epidemic. Obesity is associated with a variety of adverse health effects including premature death, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers. The majority of these cases are due to energy imbalance, specifically an increase in caloric intake and a decrease in physical activity. The focus of public health programs aimed at preventing obesity must emphasize dietary change and increased levels of physical activity. Of paramount importance to the latter is a commitment by our cities to provide adequate and safe facilities in an effort to encourage physical activity.

Obesity is defined as an excess accumulation of body fat, also known as adipose tissue. Adipose tissue is a normal part of the body and serves many useful functions. It is the principal mechanism of energy storage in humans, and also insulates the body and cushions and protects vital organs. Obesity is associated with increased adipose cell size and in persons with extreme obesity, increased fat cell number. The body fat percentage in obese people can range from 20-70 percent of total weight. It seems as though the body has an almost limitless capacity to store excess energy.

In order to truly define obesity, one must first understand how it is measured. The most common method is the body mass index or BMI. The BMI is calculated by dividing a person’s weight in kilograms by his/her height in meters squared. Body mass index is well correlated with levels of body fat. It is also highly related to health risk. In general, a BMI below 25 is considered “normal” or “healthy.” A BMI between 25.1 and 29.9 would classify a person as “overweight.” Finally, a BMI of 30 or greater would be considered “obese.”

Prevalence

Every few years the Center for Disease Control conducts a National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) to assess a variety of nutritional and health parameters among Americans. Participants in NHANES are randomly selected non-institutionalized members of the US population. Each selected participant submits to a detailed household interview as well as a physical examination. Height and weight are recorded for each participant and BMIs are calculated. The results from the latest NHANES (1999-2000) have been published and the news is not good. Sixty-four percent of US adults, two out of every three, are considered overweight or obese, with a BMI of 25 or greater. Of these, a startling 30 percent are obese, with a BMI greater than 30.

While these numbers are frightening in and of themselves, a cause for greater concern is the upward trend in recent years. For example, the previous NHANES was conducted between the years of 1988-94 (NHANES III). Fifty-six percent of those sampled at that time were overweight, while 25 percent were obese. In the short span of time between these two surveys, obesity increased 7 percent. The situation truly seems to be going from bad to worse, and sadly the children in this country are not faring any better. According to the latest NHANES, 15 percent of children are overweight, more than double the rate in the 1970s.

There appear to be differences in rates of obesity based on race and ethnicity, with minority groups showing higher prevalence. This is especially true among women. According to the latest NHANES, African American females suffer the highest rates of obesity at 51 percent, followed by Mexican American females at 40 percent and then white females at 31 percent.

Causes

For many years, obesity was believed to be caused by a combination of ingesting too many calories and expending too few. While this is still true for the majority of cases, it is now apparent that obesity is more complex and deeply rooted in a variety of biologic systems. Genes seem to play a role, as might metabolic and endocrine abnormalities and psychological factors.

Still, for the vast majority of cases, a lack of physical activity and overeating are the culprits. While portion sizes in this country seem to be ever increasing, physical activity is on the decline. According to the latest Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 54 percent of the US adult population does not meet the particularly strenuous demands of a few minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week. In fact, one in four reported absolutely no leisure time physical activity at all.

It is probably safe to say that in America, the recent increases in the prevalence of obesity are most likely caused by energy imbalance and not genetic factors. After all, just how much does genes change in a period of twenty to thirty years? Therefore, dietary change and physical activity should be the major focus of public health programs aimed at preventing obesity. And since decisions about physical activity are influenced by environmental factors, we must make efforts to ensure that our cities have adequate, safe facilities that will encourage it. For example, a lack of adequate sidewalks or bike paths will influence the decision to walk or bike to work.

In conclusion, obesity is on the rise in this country and the effects on our health and even our economy are considerable. While much is yet to be learned about the causes of obesity, it is safe to say that the majority of cases are due to energy imbalance, primarily eating too much and exercising too little. Levels of physical activity in this country need to change if we are to win the war against obesity. Providing adequate and safe facilities in our cities and towns is an important step toward the goal of increasing physical activity among our population.

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Engineering Physical Activity Back Into Americans’ Lives

By Mark Fenton

In recent months Americans have heard from the Surgeon General, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and no less than the President himself that this nation is in the midst of an obesity epidemic. Unfortunately, while rightly acknowledging the great personal and social costs of the epidemic, none of them have offered particularly enlightened solutions to the problem. In particular, none have proposed bringing to bear any of the myriad policy tools available to them, nor have they championed the types of state and local activities that make a difference at the community level. Fortunately, creative solutions are being pursued in cities and towns across the country.

The Problem with How They See the Problem

Given the incessant media attention, most people now recognize that obesity is a result of a chronic calorie imbalance—eating more calories than you burn on a regular basis. Over the past decade the public health community has seen this epidemic looming and has warned of a commensurate rise in cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension and a host of related complications. Certainly there’s been focused discussion on the need to improve Americans’ nutritional habits. Specific initiatives are also being launched to encourage people to get more exercise. America on the Move, for example, is a program designed to get people to wear pedometers (hip-worn step counters) so that they become aware of and try to increase their daily step totals. More daily steps means more physical activity, goes the thinking, and thus less obesity.

Sadly, almost two decades worth of experience suggests we’re fighting a losing battle if the goal is simply to get people to “exercise” more. The Surgeon General’s Report on Physical Activity and Health, published in 1996, concluded that Americans should accumulate at least thirty minutes of physical activity every day to reduce their risk for chronic disease and an early death. Yet the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) collects annual survey data suggesting that only about 25 percent of the US population gets that much leisure-time physical activity (in other words, conscious exercise), while nearly 30 percent of the adult US population is essentially sedentary, getting no activity at all during the day. Even more disturbing, despite admonitions to “just do it” and “feel the burn,” those numbers haven’t budged for well over a decade. So, we’ve been talking about exercise, and we’re talking about it more now than ever, apparently we’re not prepared to do any more of it, no matter how much we’ve told we should.

This article is based on the premise that there’s a missing link, specifically that the real problem isn’t restricted to a lack of exercise, but also to a continually declining amount of routine physical activity. Not only do we have power devices—from lawn mowers to washing machines, elevators to automobiles—to do all of our work for us, Americans rarely walk or bicycle anywhere anymore. While the number of walking trips (as a percentage of total trips) were roughly cut in half from 1977 to 1995 based on US Department of Transportation Data, automobile trips rose to become almost 90 percent of all trips. Over nearly that same time span, the rate of obesity in the US rose from about 12 percent to over 30 percent of the adult population—i.e., nearly one-third of US adults are now considered obese by medical standards. (For more detailed or state-specific health data, go to www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/)

Given that it is unlikely that Americans are ready to forego automatic garage door openers and washers and dryers, and that there is no evidence we’re inclined to increase our more structured exercise, it looks like we would do well to build more routine walking and bicycling into our daily lives. This is the opportunity our national leaders are missing. (For example, why aren’t they discussing dramatically increasing federal transportation enhancement funding for bicycle and pedestrian facilities as part of the war on obesity?)

Get On the PN Roster

In 1996 PN published its first PN Roster. We plan to develop a new roster in the upcoming year. We are exploring options for a password protected version on the web but there will possibly be a print version. For those of you who remember the old rosters, they were terrific networking resources. We will use the PN address list as the basis for the roster but it is much better to have more information about each member, particularly a brief bio. Remember, PN is a network and it is only as strong as its members.

To make sure you have the best possible information, please fill in the following:

Name:
Organization:
Address:
City:
State:
Zip:
Country:
Phone:
Fax:
Email:
URL:
A brief statement describing your work, interests, and/or activities (up to 50 words or less).

Send it to: pn@pratt.edu (preferred) OR Fax to 718-636-3709
OR mail to Planners Network, 379 DeKalb Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11205
minimal illicit activity and a lot of lighting, as well as separation of walkways from travel lanes and slow traffic speeds.

4. Site Designs. Even if sidewalks are available and safe, destinations are plentiful, people will not walk to uninviting buildings, especially if they are set well back from the road behind acres of parking (above, left). But buildings near the street with obvious entrances, many windows, and bicycle parking are not only more inviting to pedestrians and cyclists, they also provide comfort to those simple walking past (above, right, Brockport, NY).

5. Civic Commitment. Though the softest of the bunch, this may be the most important for long-term, large-scale change. Everyone from elected officials and bureaucrats to the average citizen has to embrace the idea of a more walkable community—and vote with their feet! The best measure of a successful pedestrian environment is whether you see people out and about on foot (below, left), 16th Street Mall in Denver, CO; below right, Park Avenue in Brockport, NY).

How to Build More Active Communities: Creative Approaches and New Partners

In the planning field, many are developing and testing tools and approaches around zoning and site requirements, the two areas most planning entities control. The following strategies show great promise in helping to create places where more people are likely to walk and cycle.

• Require the network. Mandate sidewalks in all development, and bicycle lanes where appropriate. (See the “Pedestrian Facilities Users Guide” and the “Bicycle Lane Design Guide” at www.pedbikein-fo.org.) One approach is to construct sidewalks and bike lanes opportunistically—say, when streets are being paved or sewers redone. Note that in many communities health officers review all development plans (often as oversight of water and sewer issues), meaning they can and should be an ally in supporting completion of the bike and pedestrian network.

• Slow down traffic. Simple traffic calming tools—for example, narrower lanes (opposite page, top left, Charleston, SC), median islands, chicanes and speed tables—have been shown again and again to slow speeds in residential and downtown areas, to the benefit of both pedestrians and drivers. Though not always in a planner’s purview, this is a critical aspect to the other activities described here.

• Mix uses. Zone for corner stores or small businesses and other shops that can and should be pedestrian-friendly

• Precinct drive-through retail settings. Don’t allow fast food or other services to cater entirely to automobiles at the expense of bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Even fast-food outlets and national retailers can succeed, in fact thrive, in more appealing and functional settings (below, Charleston, SC).

• Increase residential and business densities. One approach is to simply reduce lot sizes, but you can go further by providing density bonuses to developers. These allow an overall greater number of units if built in a more compact pattern districts in neighborhoods, and encourage upper floor apartments above first floor retail or businesses.

The sidewalk provides little of the oversight or comfort that makes a sidewalk an inviting place to be, and second, parking is often placed on the lot between the sidewalk and the building, making for more challenging bicycle and pedestrian access. Whenever possible, bring building fronts to the sidewalk edge.

• Reduce or eliminate on-site parking requirements. Wherever possible maximize on-street parking or shared parking between and behind—but not in front of—buildings. Diagonal parking, for example, increases capacity over parallel parking and can also serve to narrow the travel lanes (below, Old Town Sacramento). Ideally, give bicycles the very best parking spaces.

So if All this Works, Who Needs the Healthy Community?

What’s so unique about this? Most of these suggestions you’d find in any smart growth manifesto, or in guidelines for creating a New Urbanist or more sustainable community. This argument adds two key ideas to these approaches.

First, we must wear the mantle of public health advocates when making the case for more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly settings. The focus of the argument for better bike and pedestrian facilities at the beginning of this article was to help people be more physically active, and thus to help fight the very real obesity epidemic. But there are two further health arguments. As automobiles are among the greatest contributors to air pollution in this country, replacing some number of car trips with walking or cycling trips can dramatically help improve air quality, and thus health. Also, reducing bicycle and pedestrian crashes, injuries and fatalities is a key goal, and is a result of better-designed facilities. This argument is especially critical around schools, where child-pedestrian traffic is likely to be greatest.

Second, we must use the skills and infrastructure of the public health community to advance the
cause. Health advocates tend to be skilled at working in and even facilitating multi-disciplinary teams because it’s so often required in their work. Whether collaborating with travel authorities to try containing an infectious disease outbreak, hydrologists and engineers to maintain clean drinking water supplies, or educators of parents to assure vaccinations are complete, public health officials are accustomed to crossing boundaries. Thus, they are ready and willing allies in creating more bicycle and pedestrian-friendly communities, once the clear connection to their goals—more physically active and thus healthier—made. Here are several examples of specific initiatives to launch in your community.

National: Walk to School Programs. Sometimes called Safe Routes to School, the approach is often to build interest among children and parents with an event on International Walk to School Day (usually the first Wednesday in October), and then build a coalition to improve safety and increase routine walking by building better facilities where needed. School or community health officers are often integral to such efforts. (See www.walktoschool.org for details and a national event registry.)

State: Michigan Active Community Awards. The Michigan Department of Community Health encourages communities to do an online self-assessment of “activity-friendliness.” It covers a variety of areas including land use and planning, non-motorized transport facilities and safety, parks and recreation programming, schools, workplaces and public transportation. The assessment asks communities for intended next steps and provides a score. It has both recognized the success (Michigan’s governor personally handed out the 2003 awards) while identifying the areas needing improvement. It also begins a process by forcing communities to pull together an interdisciplinary team simply to complete the survey; that team can become the basis for ongoing work. (See www.mihealthtools.org/communities for the survey and information.)

Local: Bike/Pedestrian Network Building. There are numerous examples from visionary communities nationwide of efforts to complete their bicycle and pedestrian networks. These include passing bonds to underwrite sidewalk and trail construction, or aggressively pursuing road-department conversion of four-lane roads to two-lane roads that have a turn lane, with the leftover space dedicated to bike and pedestrian right-of-way. One especially creative approach towns that purchase homes at the end of cul-de-sacs, streets when they go on sale, construct cut-through pathways to adjacent streets, parks or trails, and then resell the homes with the pathway easement owned by or permanently deeded to the town. It’s a powerful way to increase bike and pedestrian access in otherwise impenetrable dead-end neighborhoods. (See www.walkablecommunities.org and www.pedbikeinfo.org for detailed design and engineering information, resources and an extensive image library.)

Whatever avenues you pursue, keep in mind all of your potential allies. In Cohasset, MA, it has been the health officer, not planners or bike advocates, who has led the charge to get local conservation funds put in place for a feasibility study of a trail along an historic rail corridor. Perhaps the health officer in your community is equally enlightened.

And what about you? Quite simply, you should put up or shut up. The final but perhaps the most effective way to create a more active community is to get involved personally. It’s easy to visualize this happening at four levels: everyone can start at the first, but for greatest effect you should work all the way to the fourth.

1. Be a role model. Froget at least one car trip every day, and bike or walk instead. Even better, walk a child to soccer practice, or walk with friends to dinner or a movie to broaden your impact.

2. Be a lone voice. Show up at planning and zoning meetings, ask questions and at least make people explain why things are being done the way they are.

3. Infiltrate existing entities. I ran for my local planning board and find that nothing is as effective as being on the “inside.” Simply put, if all I do is get the sidewalk network closer to completion in my community, it will be time well spent. But it’s clear one could have an impact working on the zoning or planning boards, school or town council, recreation or conservation commissions—in other words, any one of myriad elected or appointed boards.

4. Create a new coalition. Cross disciplines. Get public safety, health, transportation, planning, public works, education and other officials together with citizen advocates, and make the creation of more walkable and bike-friendly settings a community-wide focus.

Mark Fenton is physical activity program manager at the University of North Carolina’s Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (www.pedbikeinfo.org), host of the PBS TV Series “America’s Walking,” (www.pbs.org/america walking) and author of The Complete Guide to Walking for Health, Weight Loss, and Fitness (Lyons, 2001). Contact him at mark.fenton@veri zon.net. All photo credits, Mark Fenton.
Designing the Active City: The Case for Multi-Use Paths

By Anne Lusk

More people walk and bicycle in cities worldwide where destinations such as grocery stores, post offices or coffee shops are accessible by sidewalks, roads for bicycling and separated multi-use paths. Examples abound in the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium and China. In America, the nations. Special design emphasis should be placed on creating multi-use paths that lead to frequently used services and retail locations in suburban and low-income minority residential areas because these populations are more negatively affected by obesity and its associated consequences.

Background

The recent report “Measuring the Health Effects of Sprawl: A National Analysis of Physical Activity, Obesity and Chronic Disease” by SprawlWatch and the Surface Transportation Policy Project suggested the creation of dense amenity-filled neighborhoods with sidewalks and bicycle lanes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a report titled “Creating a Healthy Environment,” which includes recommendations: (4) providing sidewalks and pedestrian walkways; (5) providing crossing guards and bike paths in areas where most pedestrians are children (e.g., near schools, parks and playgrounds); and (6) providing overpasses, underpasses or tunnels for pedestrians and bicyclists to bypass particularly dangerous roads and intersections.” Both of these reports recommend sidewalks and side-of-the-road bicycle lanes, with mention of bike paths for children. There are important differences, however, in the safety profile and user population of side-of-the-road bicycle lanes or striped lanes and separate dedicated multi-use paths.

In the US, where few separate multi-use paths exist, bicyclists are twelve times more likely than car occupants to be killed compared with the Netherlands and Germany, according to John Pucher and Lewis Dijkstra (see “Resources for Active Living” section in this issue). Furthermore, American bicyclists are three times as likely to be killed in a bicycle accident as Dutch bicyclists and twice as likely to be killed in German bicyclists. In contrast to the US, the Netherlands and Germany are building separate facilities for bicyclists to increase physical activity and reduce the chance of death. From 1976 to 1995, the Dutch, a population that already had miles of separate paths, more than doubled their network of bike paths and lanes. From 1976 to 1995, the Germans almost tripled their bikeway network.

The Issues

Even with data that documents bicyclists’ deaths, it is a challenge to defend the creation of multi-use paths in the United States. Critics of multi-use paths correctly point out that bicycling on the road can be safer for skilled and unskilled bicyclists than bicycling on separate dedicated multi-use paths, a result of the number of users and curb cuts on paths. Separate paths can also be less safe than is often perceived due to an underreporting of pedestrian and bicycle injuries. This underreporting is the result of a variety of factors including the inability of the police to record the accident if there is no injury or no property damage, the involvement of children who do not report the accident to an adult, and the generation of data that is then not processed and thus available for analysis. America’s built environment is also more spread out than in European countries—meaning that distances are longer—and more European communities have flat terrain, multi-cyclists and traffic calming. Finally, it is expensive to obtain land and build separate multi-use paths, whereas many communities already have sidewalks for pedestrians and roads for bicyclists. However, for the 65 percent of the population that is overweight and struggling with diets, gym, surgery and pills, the multi-use path options could be critical.

Therefore, in addition to providing sidewalks for pedestrians and safe side-of-the-road facilities for bicyclists, an important strategy is to provide safe separate dedicated multi-use paths for walkers, bicyclists, joggers and in-line skaters that would be built closer to high population densities and lead to purposeful destinations. Walkers who wish to avoid in-line skaters or bicyclists should continue to stay on pedestrian dedicated sidewalks. Bicyclists who prefer to bicycle on the side of the road should continue to be encouraged to bicycle on the road with safe-side-of-the-road provisions. Design innovations could also, though, be considered to bring multi-use paths closer to where people live and to encourage everyone, particularly individuals who are sedentary, to engage in physical activity.

Why Multi-use Paths?

The populations most negatively affected by obesity are individuals who live in suburban developments that discourage physical activity and minority and low-income individuals who have few physical activity resources. White suburban middle-income populations have indicated their preference for multi-use paths and even use these facilities. Still, multi-use paths should not be automatically built for minority populations under the assumption that what is acceptable to one population is acceptable to other populations.

The situation is a complex one. The Chicago Lakefront Trail and the West Orange Trail near Orlando, Florida are adjacent to low-income minority residential neighborhoods and yet these residents do not use the paths in numbers proportionate to their population density. The Shelby Walk, an innercity SafeWalk built ten years ago in Nashville, Tennessee on a low-income neighborhood sidewalk, does not have a large population that walks to the planned destination. Shelby Park, a traditional park with a pond and ball fields. An African-American resident of Detroit, Michigan commented that in case-dependent Detroit, African-Americans do not want to walk because to walk implies they are poor, don’t have a car, have to walk or have to take the bus. Corlis Wilson Ouellet, an African-American professor at the University of Minnesota, found that African-American children do not always want to do the same physical activities as non-minority children and wish instead to maintain their own sense of identity. Low-income minority residents also face issues of overwork, crime, no funds to purchase athletic equipment, difficulty in storing equipment, a family history that might not include physical activity and lack of information about resources and how to take advantage of them.

However, even with this understanding, multi-use path designs near low-income minority populations can be justified based on other observations. Though the low-income populations in Nashville do not walk on Shelby Walk toward the intended destination of Shelby Park, they walk in the other direction to the grocery store. The residents also walk to Shelby Place, a gazebo park the neighbors have adopted and planted with flowers. Numerous minority residents in Nashville flock to Shelby Bottoms and its five-mile paved greenway where children bicycle and in-line skate beside their parents. In Boston, minority children use the Southwest Corridor multi-use path, Washington D.C., New York Avenue proposal...
The Need for New Designs
America has design models for building rail trails (paths on abandoned railroads) and greenways (multi-use paths) along rivers or lakes, but the nation has yet to expand its design repertoire and incorporate multi-use paths in suburbs or already built cities. For people who live in suburbia, design solutions should be considered to integrate separate multi-use paths with sidewalks, streets, front yards, backyards, alleys and playgrounds. For minority and low-income populations, efforts should be expended to determine how to build multi-use paths close to these populations. In the city it is prohibitively expensive to demolish buildings to construct paths; the most affordable place to locate a multi-use path is on a redesigned sidewalk, road, park or vacant lot, or through a building.

What follows are a few design alternatives that have been tested or are being used in Europe and the US to build multi-use paths in congested areas. These designs are intended to be part of an extended multi-use path system and not, for example, a way to direct road bicyclists to a short two-way multi-use path on the edge of the road and then integrate the bicyclists immediately back into a road system. These designs also do not preclude necessary sidewalks that are dedicated solely to pedestrians or side-of-the-road facilities that should always be available for bicyclists. Instead, the consideration of these designs is a step toward creating an environment in America that contributes to good health for all populations.

Multi-use Paths on Facilities
Erlangen, Germany
A bicyclist, jogger in line skater or walker can more safely travel on a Woonerf, a street that is closed to all but residential traffic. This example in Erlangen, Germany features parking on one side and bollards that separate the residential cars from foot powered traffic. Though the surface shown in this photograph includes brick pavers, a smooth surface is preferable for accessibility and in-line skating.

Minneapolis, Minnesota
Minneapolis closed a street to cars and allowed pedestrians, buses and bicyclists into the now popular Nicollet Mall. Some streets in the US failed as pedestrian zones because all users, except the pedestrian, were excluded. The 16th Street Mall in Denver, Colorado has provisions for buses and pedestrians but does not allow bicyclists or skaters into the corridor. Minneapolis’ more European model encourages engagement in physical activity as a routine part of the day.

Multi-use Paths beside Facilities
Paris, France
Paths have an extensive system of on-road multi-use paths in the heavily built and historic city. One provision is a two-way path between a sidewalk and a road with bushes as a visible and psychological separation from the traffic. To bicycle against traffic can be troubling, especially for skilled bicyclists, so the separation by shrubs provides a degree of removal.

Leuven, Belgium
Pedestrians on a sidewalk, two-way bicycle traffic on a red-surfaced corridor, and parallel parked cars are all accommodated between the historic buildings and the street. Pavers provide space for passengerside car doors to open and bulbouts with bushes and trees enhance the sidewalk and the street. Bollards further separate the rider from the parallel parked cars and raised pavers deter cars from parking on the median.

Multi-use Paths over Facilities
Chicago, Illinois
The Chicago Lakefront Trail skirts Lake Michigan but is also bordered by Lake Shore Drive’s heavy traffic. While tunnels and bridges are options for crossings, tunnels increase vulnerability and bridges involve an incline. Bridges can, however, serve several purposes: provide safe travel for path users; improve the driving experience with cascading flowers; flatten the city skyline; and offer elevated vantage points to path users.

Washington, DC
The Metropolitan Branch Trail is a rail trail that goes from Union Station near the Capitol to Silver Spring, Maryland. A new subway station was planned in the corridor and, rather than sever the path, the two facilities were merged. The trail now runs on top of the station and wide elevations take bicyclists from the trail to the trains.

Multi-use Paths through Facilities
Madison, Wisconsin
The existence of a path and a competing use for the land does not mean the elimination of one for the exclusive use of the other. In Madison, Wisconsin the new Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center includes a path, which pre-dated the convention center, built adjacent to the building and out over the water. There is a pedestrian zone near the water with paver stones dividing the pedestrians from wheeled path users. An area is now open to popular bicyclists and others who wish to get to what had once been an inaccessible downtown lakeshore.

Erlangen, Germany
Incentive or bonus zoning, used often in urban environments such as New York City, allowed developers to build additional floors of office buildings in exchange for open public plazas. Available to pedestrians but no other users. Often, these public plazas

Multimodal Streets
Multi-use paths often extend along plazas and streets, crossing intersections. This design encourages a multimodal street and helps increase safety for all modes.

Bike/pedestrian bridges on Chicago's Lakefront Trail
Bike/pedestrian bridges on Chicago's Lakefront Trail traveled through building courtyards and provided enhanced passage for pedestrians wanting to get to the other side. Similar design innovations could be provided for bicyclists, in-line skaters and joggers through buildings as a form of public space that is then available to all populations.

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Planners Network 2003-2004 Campus Drive
A new student outreach campaign to raise student awareness about progressive planning and provide support for students to organize local progressive planning events and initiatives.

More details on page 16 of this issue of Progressive Planning.
The San Fernando Valley Metro Rapidway

By Phil Ganezer and Smita Mittal

In autumn of 2005, Los Angeles will see an unused railway reincarnated. Upon completion, this railway will be a very long, linear parkway/recreation area and a transportation corridor linking colloquially residential neighborhoods, major employment centers, an enormous outdoor recreational area and an airport. Its new identity: the San Fernando Valley Metro Rapidway (MR).

The opportunity to tie together all these destinations is why the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), the transportation planning and operating agency for Los Angeles County, will convert an abandoned right-of-way (ROW) it acquired from the Southern Pacific Railroad into a thirteen mile transportation/greenway featuring a bus-only road, parallel bike-pedestrian paths and substantial landscaping. The MR will provide new transportation and recreational facilities while creating access for patrons to many important destinations along its east-west path.

Busways have many advantages, including amenities similar to rail transit. Furthermore, construction of busways is initially less capital and time-intensive than rail, but like rail, travel times are minimized and consistent, independent of traffic conditions.

As a major transportation corridor carrying tens of thousands of people each day, the new busway will attract patrons from the surrounding communities. Its greatest impacts, though, will be changing regional traffic patterns and attracting crowds of people to an area that was for decades ignored and perceived as vacant land. People will be attracted to the MR not only to ride the bus but also for recreation to ride bikes, take walks and relax in the park-like atmosphere.

Busway within a Greenway

The urban design concept for the MR could best be termed “a busway within a greenway.” Thirteen miles of continuous ROW provide an opportunity to create a large linear greenbelt across the Valley. Because the design of the busway lanes would typically occupy only twenty-six feet of a 100-foot wide ROW, ample width is available for landscaping, as well as for parallel bicycle/pedestrian paths. By exploiting the large width of the ROW to accommodate these features, patrons will feel like they are riding through a park, with the dense urban landscape concealed.

The design of the bicycle-pedestrian paths is focused on commuters, so it runs straight and does not meander. A straight path means cyclists may safely ride at higher speeds. The path is wide enough to accommodate five feet for each direction of travel. Through most of the length of the MR, an abutting five-foot wide path exclusively for pedestrians is provided. The ROW width varies substantially in a few short segments where MTA was forced to engineer a single, shared pedestrian-cyclist path. Users may gain access from each cross-street. Fences that create a barrier between the path and the busway are designed to provide safety without restricting access to open landscaped areas. Additionally, bicycles will safely travel through cross-streets using traffic signals synchronized to protect them from nearby street traffic. Finally, decorative stamped and textured treatments plus the usual crosswalk striping will accentuate pedestrian and bicycle crossings.

Two other long, regional bike paths will connect to this bike path. One path, extending through the San Fernando Valley approximately fourteen miles west-northwest from the MR’s eastern terminus, is built within the ROW for the regional commuter rail (MetroLink) line between Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. The second path runs generally south, along the Los Angeles River, and will eventually connect to downtown Los Angeles at full buildout. Together, these three provide bicycle access in a large portion of Los Angeles County by providing cyclists several alternative, long, safe routes devoid of motorized vehicles.

Users of this path will find themselves separated from traffic, isolated by ground covering, trees and shrubs. They will hardly notice the adjacent busway because: buses produce no bells, horns or whistles; will run at intervals of five to ten minutes; are only 60 feet long, emit little pollution; and generate minor wind, which is mitigated by fencing. Riding along this path or on the bus will be similar to riding in a park absent the presence of softballs and barbeque smoke.

The eastern terminus of the MR lies in the main commercial district of North Hollywood at an MTA parking facility; it integrates with a transit center and a park-and-ride lot. This facility contains bike lockers and racks and is very close to a large regional park. It is also located in an urban redevelopment district and near the LA Zoo, a park and a zoo being a dense urban landscape.

The design of the busway lanes would typically occupy only twenty-six feet of a 100-foot wide ROW, ample width is available for landscaping, as well as for parallel bicycle/pedestrian paths. By exploiting the large width of the ROW to accommodate these features, patrons will feel like they are riding through a park, with the dense urban landscape concealed.

Roadways is very difficult due to limited available land. To expand would require extensive property acquisition, which is very expensive and politically untenable.

Today a trip along the MR route takes at least fifty minutes during rush hour using existing express buses, even longer on a local bus. Moreover, travel times will increase as projected growth exacerbates congestion. For example, average freeway speeds are forecast to decrease from 35 mph today to 20 mph in 2040. A trip on the exclusive busway will take about thirty-five to forty minutes between Warner Center and North Hollywood today, even during rush hour. And the busway trip will still take only thirty-five to forty minutes in 2040, even while other facilities that are vulnerable to the effects of growth become more congested and slow down.

Exclusive Design for the Valley

The Rapidway design highlights the uniqueness of the ROW as it crosses through the neighborhoods of the San Fernando Valley. The typically 100-foot wide ROW provides an opportunity to design the MR like a typical rail alignment in terms of its exclusive right-of-way and stations. The Rapidway will feature many amenities to ensure user safety and comfort such as: canopies to shelter patrons from the elements, seating, lighting, public art, security cameras, fencing, soundwalls, emergency phones and pedestrian crossings. It will run entirely underground within a dual-bored tunnel through the neighborhoods.

The design of the bicycle-pedestrian paths is focused on commuters, so it runs straight and does not meander. A straight path means cyclists may safely ride at higher speeds. The path is wide enough to accommodate five feet for each direction of travel. Through most of the length of the MR, an abutting five-foot wide path exclusively for pedestrians is provided. The ROW width varies substantially in a few short segments where MTA was forced to engineer a single, shared pedestrian-cyclist path. Users may gain access from each cross-street. Fences that create a barrier between the path and the busway are designed to provide safety without restricting access to open landscaped areas. Additionally, bicycles will safely travel through cross-streets using traffic signals synchronized to protect them from nearby street traffic. Finally, decorative stamped and textured treatments plus the usual crosswalk striping will accentuate pedestrian and bicycle crossings.

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More than 4,000 trees will be planted within the ROW as a part of the busway project, and existing trees will be preserved wherever possible. Selections of drought-tolerant landscape species will beautify the ROW and screen the busway from the surrounding uses while enhancing the surrounding neighborhoods. Native species will be featured as much as possible.

Each station planned for the busway will provide patron amenities typically associated with rail transit: canopies over every platform, seating, lighting, bicycle racks and lockers and ticket vending machines. Other security features will include security patrols by the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, closed-circuit television monitoring and emergency phones. Every station will be equipped with an Advanced Travelers’ Information System (ATIS); electronic signage that will inform travelers of the wait-time for the next bus and provide other real-time operating information. Five of the stations will integrate plaza areas where sidewalks will be permitted so that vendors may cultivate the atmosphere, selling coffee, newspapers, hot dogs, flowers and other items. Occasionally these plazas will be used for seasonal events and other performances.

Station design will establish a unifying theme throughout the line, giving the busway corridor a clear visual and functional impression in the context of the Valley. However, each station will have a unique character drawn from the surrounding neighborhood, typically reflected in the landscaping plant material and/or public art displays. MTA is holding a two-phase community outreach meetings so the adjacent neighborhoods collaborate in the selection of these elements.

In some locations, where homes are close to the ROW, MTA is constructing soundwalls. These walls, typically located on top of earthen berms within the right-of-way and set back from property lines, are designed so they do not create shade where it is unwanted. The cross-section of the busway shows how the soundwalls would screen homes from the busway. Landscaping will be installed and maintained on both sides of these soundwalls.

The busway will include over 3,000 new parking spaces at five stations in addition to existing park-and-ride facilities. The remaining priority parking spaces will be provided to patrons free of charge. Park-and-ride lots will be landscaped and provided with lighting.

Transit in LA

An extensive system of rail transit was developed for travel between newly constructed suburbs throughout Los Angeles County in the last half of the twentieth century. Housing tract developers worked to create rail lines so they could proclaim convenient public transit as a selling feature of the new homes they were offering. This practice became the preferred method of travel and during the decades following the war that rail system deteriorated and eventually was removed from service.

The popularity of the automobile made the transit on these ROWs obsolete, yet the continued popularity of the automobile now makes transit impera-
tive. Angelinos are clearly fed up with traffic; they list pollution and traffic among their top five concerns in recent surveys. Continued population growth bringing with it traffic jams and pollution, coupled with cultural change, is creating an opportun-
ty for the MTA to pursue alternative transporta-
tion solutions. Few of the abandoned rail routes are today usable for transit, unfortunately.

The dedicated busway concept is new to Los Angeles and will provide a very different experience from that of riding the train or bus or driving a single-person automobile on the freeway. The success of the MBRT will be pivotal to future construction of similar facilities and will depend upon using the old—bus transit, unused rail ROW, bicycle path, land-
scaping—in a new way. Ultimately, it will be mea-
sured not by the number of people carried, or the average trip, but by how much patrons enjoy the experience (and the rate at which they switch from using a car). How very LA.

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Smita Mittal is an intern at the MTA. She was pre-
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Bicycle Promenade:

New Solutions for Intermodality in Rails-to-Trails

By Stephen Luoni

Bicycle Promenade, designed by Luoni Gold Design Studios, was the winner of the Gainesville Eco-History Trail Design Competition sponsored by The National Endowment for the Arts New Public Works Program last summer. The Gainesville Eco-History Trail is a 1,500-foot-long right-of-way through a small community of 100,000 in Florida, bordering a mix of residential, industrial, institutional and commercial land uses common in a tradition-
al urban context.

Bicycle Promenade is a feasible alternative to con-
ven
tional multi-use trails if the stations promoting enhanced social and physical activity. Although con-
verted railroad corridors are intended for a range of physical activities, these corridors are often brown-
field sites. The standard solution to the brownfield dilemma is to cap the right-of-way with an unhab-
itable thorny vegetative cover and a straight asphalt path, typically ten feet in width. The result is an unusable path built primarily for speed cyclists that confines public access to only 25 percent of the reclaimed right-of-way. Instead, Bicycle Promenade employs proven phytoremediation (“phyto” meaning plant) technologies to remove soil and groundwater contaminants, allowing 100 percent use of the ground surface for a variety of physical activities, socializing, parking, educational information and bicycling, all within the same budget. Mounds of arsenic-laden soil are shaped and seeded with the brokearor "prickly" plant, an efficient biomonitor of arsenic. Other areas are planted with deep-rooting trees like willows, cottonwoods and poplars, which absorb contaminated groundwater plumes to pre-
vent their migration into the aquifer. By having a Promenade will have a Promenade is a re
combinant infrastructure, accom-
mmodating various types of movement, forms of social exchange, diverse physical activities and regenerative urban landscape ecologies.

Two Intrinsinc Problems of Rails-to-Trails Projects

Rails-to-Trails projects pose two inherent design dif-
ficulties. First, there are right-of-ways are brownfields with toxic soils and groundwater plumes bur-
harbor a variety of pollutants deposited over long periods of time. The path-determined logic of the standard trail design unwisely promotes high bicycling speeds and discourages other uses. Rail brownfields have resulted from railroad companies’ business decisions involving metals (arsenic in the case of the Gainesville Eco-History Trail) along the right-of-way for weed maintenance. Industries bordering right-of-ways also dumped their discharges into these unregulated corridors, not unlike the way in which rivers were once used as sewers. Though metals become toxic as they concentrate, they are considered to be less harmful than other industrial discharges since metals bind to the soil, creating a sta-
tionary problem. Rather than remove the metals, trail builders abate the problem with asphalt paths and vegetative caps to prevent direct human contact with the contaminated soil. Vegetative caps are plant-
ed with thorny specimens designed to discourage occupation of trail sections not capped by an asphalt path. This results in a homogeneous corridor, con-
ducive to high cycling speeds and underutilization of the remaining right-of-way. Considering that the Gainesville Eco-History right-of-way is up to 130’
wide and in the central city, these land use practices are a poor model of urban redevelopement.

In another missed opportunity, the technical design standards employed for most trails address only one mode of locomotion, the bicycle. Like restricted high-
ways, the typical rails-to-trails projects are designed as a command-and-control infrastructure, unwittingly maximizing speed while marginalizing pedestrian and related physical activity. This is ironic since many rails-to-trails are funded from grants to enhance inter-
modality in transportation networks. Though it may appear that the right-of-way’s linear geometry leaves limited design options, many have enough width to combine cycling with paces more suitable to walk-
ing, jogging and skating. Other outdoor public spaces like gardens, greenways, linear parks, river walks, zoos, shelters, parkways and plazas, for example, suc-
cessfully intertwine various paces of movement.
Since the uneven pace in movement among adjacent modalities in rail-to-trails design has not been widely explored, Bicycle Promenade addresses this with a brided movement system as part of a larger multi-valent solution for rail-to-trails projects.

Bio-mediation Infrastructure: From the Industrial to the Public
Bicycle Promenade is a phased regenerative ecological infrastructure, converting hazardous industrial landscapes into a functional urban ecosystem hospitable to human occupation. The project is initiated with a bioremediation program to mitigate contaminated soils and water, which are often found beneath the development footprint, using aerosols that accumulate from the right-of-way’s industrial past. A subsequent successive landscape management scheme will be implemented, culminating with the introduction of a climax ecosystem through the city center.

Mitigation
Key bioremediation strategies in Bicycle Promenade rely on innovative phytoremediation technologies developed over the last decade, which are less expensive than traditional remediation technologies. Phytoremediation is the process of combining microbial and plant enzymes to remediate soil and water contaminated with organic and inorganic compounds. Delivery methods can be active or passive, and the bioremediation process uses vegetation to remove contaminants from soil and water, and to recondition the environment for human use.

Management
Bicycle Promenade implements a successive landscape management scheme to ‘grow’ the promenade. The pioneer stage of landscape succession is the bio-mediation phase outlined above. Once several harvests have removed the arsenic, fern mounds may be incrementally reshaped and replanted with pioneer grasses and shrubs. The roasted clay, the remains of mining operations, is the nutrient base for the newly introduced species. Once the landscape is stabilized and populated with native plants, the system can be maintained with minimal inputs.

Since the uneven pace in movement among adjacent modalities in rail-to-trails design has not been widely explored, Bicycle Promenade addresses this with a brided movement system as part of a larger multi-valent solution for rail-to-trails projects.
The Complex Role of Urban Design and Theoretical Models of Physical Activity

By Kevin J. Krizek

There is considerable enthusiasm among individu-
als in research, advocacy, and policy circles for the
idea that "good" urban design will positively con-
tribute to levels of physical activity. The enthusiasm
demonstrated by such perspectives is refreshing;
most agree it is critically important to support planning
efforts that make physical activity and "active travel" easy, available to diverse and
increased populations and more attractive. At the same
time, however, it is important to be aware of the
false expectations of such planning initiatives,
particularly the potential of urban design, by itself,
to strongly influence levels of physical activity. The
cautions presented below warn us that the magni-
tude of the independent effect of urban design on
physical activity may be less significant than other
issues are accounted for.

Ecological Models of Behavior

The primary reason for this caution is guided by
theories of behavior from public health but also
informed by recent urban planning research about
travel patterns. Colleagues from the field of public
health provide us with highly disciplined models
to guide our understanding of human behavior. A
set of theories heavily relied on are referred to as
social ecological models. An underlying theme of
economic models is that there is a variety of con-
text—individual, interpersonal, organizational and
community—that operate at multiple levels to
influence action; behavior does not occur within a
vacuum. Environmental contexts (i.e., urban design
characteristics such as street design, mixed land
uses, public spaces, sidewalks, bike lanes) are par-
ticularly difficult to pin down because they drive
behavioral decision-making on a variety of levels.
This draws attention to questioning how and in
what manner our beloved urban designs relate to
the multiplicities of human behavior.

Much of the excitement about the potentiality
of urban design to affect physical activity is linked
design as a relatively simple intervention operating
in transparent manner. Providing environmentally
supportive physical environments (through good
urban design) it is thought that, will lead to increased
physical activity. This is akin to the mantra, “if
you build it, they will come.” We are learning, not sur-
prisingly, that things are not that simple. Analyzing
a single policy or environmental change without
fully capturing other important influences may
lead to errant conclusions and even overlook what
comes about that policy or environmental change.
These premature conclusions hold particularly
true for matters related to where people decide to
live and work, what they consider supportive urban
design and how they engage in active travel.
How these dimensions relate to one another is
more suggestive of a tightly spun web that incor-
porates many factors; trying to unravel that web by
isolating and pulling out the urban design thread is
a particularly complex endeavor.

Urban Travel and the Complexity of Urban Design in Ecological Models

Consider the battery of research examining
relationships between urban form and household
tavel. Findings from this body of research tell us
with some certainty that households living in more
urban and mixed-use communities tend to walk,
use transit, or bike more than their suburban coun-
terparts. We also know that when suburbanites
drive, they are behind the wheel for longer dis-
tances than urbanites. While this is encouraging
news for planners and other environmentalists, this
research does little to inform us about the likely
consequences that would result from building
more urban and mixed-use communities. Why?
Because, in part, most of this research to date does
not adequately rely on ecological theories of
behavior and does not account for the complex
manner in which urban design plays out.

Self-Selection and Other Factors Influencing Behavior

A primary outcome of urban form-travel research
suggests there is a healthy dose (pun intended) of
self-selection in who lives in urban, mixed-use com-
munities, i.e., people who like to walk, cycle or use
transit choose to live in places more conducive to
such behavior. The same holds true for families
who move to a neighborhood where they have
convenient access to a trail or a walking path—
this is an option they prefer to have. This suggests
that differences in travel between households with
different neighborhood design should not be cre-
nated to the urban design alone; the differences
should be attributed to self-selection. In other
words, people who are likely to walk choose to
locate in a given neighborhood where they have a
better chance of engaging in active travel, and by
their habitual walking the environmental effects
are magnified.

The effects of urban design versus other factors
such as attitudes or choice of lifestyle need also to
be disentangled. These effects of the latter are
relevant and important, but incorporating them into
analyses is complicated because they are so diffi-
cult to measure. As a result, these factors too often
go not only undiscovered but are even overlooked!
Some factors may come in the form of what
statisticians like to refer to as "latent" (or not direct-
ly observable) variables. These latent variables
relate to concepts such as how we learn our pref-
ences toward travel and/or neighborhoods (e.g.,
through school, through our parents), the influ-
ence of others on our residential decisions (e.g.,
neighborhood groups, image considerations),
our sensitivity to other relevant public services or
services (e.g., schools) or the culmination of each
in the form of our overall lifestyle choice. Ecological
models suggest that these other and larger factors
are significant. The important point is that the rela-
tive magnitude of the independent effect of urban
design on physical activity may become marginal-
ized once these other factors are accounted for.

Allow me to explain the above in a bit more con-
crete terms. Efforts to use urban design to induce
unwilling auto-oriented, physically inactive house-
holds to be more active may be futile for at least
three reasons. First, the auto-using behavior of these
adults may be a function of their overall preference
for auto-oriented behavior or certain built environ-
ments. These preferences are typically those of the
adults in the households since they are driving
(also, pun intended) forces behind decisions
about where to live or how to travel, thereby often
excluding or overriding the choices or preferences
of children. To twist a popular adage, you can take
the family out of the suburbs but you can’t take
reliance on the Chevy Suburban out of the family.”
Second, the auto-oriented, physically inactive house-
holds would locate in neighborhoods that prize
opportunities for physical activity. This in turn sug-
gests that the success of the "physically active city"
may be limited to the relatively small numbers of
people who currently live in or would move to
neighborhoods with "physically supportive" urban
design. The new urbanists and others suggest that
this population is sizable and there is considerable
latent demand for the creation of more such neigh-
borhoods. While this may be the case, more evidence
is needed.

Necessary but Not Sufficient

"Good" urban design is critically important to the
overall health of our cities. A considerable popula-
tion currently lives in environments that simply do
not provide attractive options for active travel. We
intuitively know that people have a more difficult
time walking or cycling where opportunities for
these options do not exist. Reconciling these
instances by creating and enhancing environments
where individuals have choices for different modes
of travel should be a top priority.

But while improved conditions may be necessary,
they are not sufficient for inducing households
to adopt healthy lifestyles. Other factors have equal if
not greater importance and thus the "healthy"
quest into more complex causal links is on.
The effects of such improvements will be modest,
however, so it is important that we dispel the
incorrect unrealistic expectations of such interventions.
Rather, it suggests that working to create a healthy
city is a complex endeavor. To better know the myr-
daed ways in which urban design plays out requires
a fuller understanding of how urban design relates
to basic preferences, learned behavior and
lifestyles. This knowledge will allow policymakers
to promote initiatives that will have a long-term
impact and create healthier preferences and behav-
iors overall. A more thorough understanding will
therefore assist policymakers to consider more
informed policies about our built environment.

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The 2004 PN conference is tentatively
set for New York on June 17-20,
sponsored by Pratt Institute
and Hunter College.
Watch the pages of Progressive Planning
and the PN website and listserve
for more details.
City Planning: A Tool to Promote Physical Activity

By Paul Schimek

Over the past decade, the medical community has repeatedly pointed out the links between physical activity and health (see the article by Thomas Halton in this issue). What is the role of urban planning in promoting such activity? A century ago, urban reformers promoted parks, playgrounds, and ball fields to provide recreational opportunities in crowded urban areas. A half-century ago, aided by new urban expressways and easy mortgage terms, the white middle-class moved to new suburbs, partly in search of open space and recreational opportunities. As expressways extended further away from the urban core, metropolitan areas began to sprawl. Today's new urbanist planners decry the resulting pattern of widely dispersed settlement that essentially makes access to an automobile necessary, increases trip distances and makes walking unpleasant, a result of a lack of sidewalks and street lights, fast traffic and dangerous road crossings. Given these changes, it is no surprise that walking for transportation has declined.

The link between urban form and physical activity has become a hot topic, aided by a $70 million investment from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to find and implement strategies for "Active Design." The hope is that by changing the physical environment, people will incorporate physical activity such as walking, bicycling, or climbing stairs in their daily routines. This goal is in line with the recommendations of the Surgeon General, which call for at least moderate physical activity at least five days per week (45%). Further, it is hoped that environmental intervention will have longer-term impacts, in contrast to the limited and short-lived effects of many encouragement and promotion efforts.

Getting Exercise from Transportation

Most people walk during the day, if only from the parking lot to the office. Public transit users generally walk more. Attention has been focused on trips that are walk-only or bicycle-only, as revealed in transportation data. Walk-only trips account for less than a quarter of daily journeys and their share has declined in the past forty years. Bicycle trips account for less than 1 percent of daily trips. Although households were already highly motorized in the US in the 1950s and 1960s, the last few decades has seen almost complete replacement of walking with motorization. Whereas in the 1960s many adults (especially older women) were not licensed drivers, today the licensing rate approaches 100%. In fact, the number of motor vehicles available to households has recently surpassed the number of licensed drivers. Those without automobiles, who tend to be of the lowest income levels, are the most likely to walk and bicycle for transportation in the US today.

Planners have frequently noted that many auto trips are short enough so that they could be readily made on foot or by bicycle. An oft-quoted figure is that more than 40 percent of urban trips are less than two miles. However, it is also true that US adults under 50 travel an average of thirty miles per day, a distance that is quite difficult to reach without access to a personal automobile.

Promoters of active living by design look longingly at places like European cities, where there is much more walking and cycling for transportation. Even considering the current lack of evidence of a link between population density and increased walking (and cycling to a lesser extent). Therefore, making development more compact, mixing land uses and providing better facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists along European patterns is seen as a key strategy in promoting walking and cycling for transportation.

Determinants of Physical Activity

As noted elsewhere in this issue, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that one-quarter of the population gets no leisure-time physical activity, and less than one-half gets the minimum recommended amount. In contrast to the sharp recent rise in obesity and overweight, however, there has been no major change in reported exercise rates since the earliest data available (1986). Thus an increase in calorie consumption may be more important than changes in physical activity as an explanation of the change in body weight.

Although walking and cycling are not very popular as transportation modes in the US, they are among the most popular forms of exercise. The prevalence of leisure-time physical activity is strongly related to race and class. The CDC reports that only 13 percent of college graduates, but nearly half (46%) of those without a high school degree, are physically inactive. The pattern by household income is similar: Blacks (33% inactive) and Hispanics (36% inactive) are much less likely to be active than whites (25% inactive) and those of other races (25% inactive, mostly Asians).

Thus, while lower-income, minority residents of high-density areas are among the most likely to walk for transportation, they are among the least likely to jog or cycle for fitness. One environmental explanation for this disparity is the continued segregation of African-Americans and, to a lesser extent, other minorities in high-crime neighborhoods. People are less likely to go for a morning jog if they fear getting mugged. For women, the risk of crime is even more of a deterrent to outdoor exercise. Still, obesity has been increasing as the crime rate has been falling. Successful promotion of physical activity in these neighborhoods may require an increase in public safety but obviously there are additional factors that explain the relationship between socioeconomic status and physical activity.

The CDC does not specify which forms of physical activity are most popular, however. Another survey shows that by far the two most popular locations for exercise are at home or on public streets and sidewalks. Private gyms and public parks are much less frequently used. The cost or time of special fitness facilities is therefore not necessarily a major obstacle to increased physical activity.

The Role for Environmental Intervention

Is better city planning the best tool to promote physical activity? There are a number of reasons to be skeptical. We know that high population density is associated with more walking and cycling for transportation. The prevalence of these transport modes, however, may have less to do with their greater attractiveness in these places than with the difficulty of motoring. The few places where significant numbers of people walk for transportation (such as US Marines on base in Pedacillo, central Barcelona, or in the US Marine Barracks in Boston and a few other downtowns) are also places where car parking is expensive and traffic moves slowly. In Europe, driving in cities is often similarly inconvenient and car ownership and use is much more expensive to boot. Increasing residential density and mixing uses in newly developed areas—while maintaining the current planning requirements for parking and very wide streets—may not succeed at reproducing the level of walking in old high-density areas. There is also evidence that only a minority of people in high-density areas get the recommended amount of physical activity. Changing settlement patterns overnight would not necessarily produce the desired increase in exercise.

Furthermore, there is often great resident opposition to higher density development, either in greenfields sites or as infill. Getting that development without also providing ample off-street parking is even more difficult for abutters to accept. Finally, any change in development patterns will have only an incremental influence on the overall form. Major changes in settlement patterns can take decades or more.

Environmental interventions may be more effective on a micro-scale. Many of our major streets are unpleasant to pedestrians and cyclists. These roads can and should be improved whenever they are created or rebuilt, as is suggested by others in this issue. Rates of cycling and walking for transportation may be lower in low-density urban and rural areas, but these areas in many cases already have better conditions for walking and cycling than urban areas (less traffic, more scenic environments, less crime), and they may have more cycling and walking or running for fitness. Thus providing more sidewalks and bicycle paths is unlikely to cause a shift from auto trips to bicycle and pedestrian trips (see also article by Anne Lusk in this issue).

Promoting Physical Activity

Measures to promote cycling have particular potential for increasing physical activity. Unlike people can readily start cycling and gradually increase intensity as they get in shape. Cycling is enjoyable and can be done alone or in groups. Cycling is also a good form of transportation. Even in low-density suburbs, where distances are too great for walking, they are easily cyclable. Typically, cycling can be as fast as or faster than motoring.

There are, however, barriers to cycling that go beyond the physical environment. Most roads are already suitable for cycling, despite popular impressions to the contrary. Removing defects such as holes, ridges and debris is not a problem. Most roadways are wider than a bicycle wheel, and adjusting traffic signal detectors so that they are sensitive to bicyclists would improve cyclists' safety and comfort.

The major obstacles to increased cycling are fear, loathing and ignorance. Would-be cyclists fear being on the road, and a militiam of motorists hates cyclists, thereby increasing the risk of collision. Most people do not recognize that being a proficient bicycle driver requires the skills of being a proficient motor vehicle driver, and some additional skills besides. These...
Parks and Recreation in Active Cities

By Karla Henderson

Physical activity and active lifestyles are essential to the quality-of-life of Americans. In addition to urban planners, architects, landscape architects, public health professionals, and other advocates of healthy lifestyles, we need to be concerned about the need for safe and healthy environments for recreation and exercise. For example, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has articulated the importance of community recreation through the “benefts of parks” campaign. The NRPA has also encouraged the use of public parks for physical activity, contributing to positive psychological, physiological, ecological, economic, environmental and sociocultural outcomes. The NRPA has advocated that recreation centers, parks, trails and greenways offer opportunities for physical activity that are not only enjoyable, but that can reduce stress. The mandate of public recreation is that opportunities are made available for all people, regardless of socioeconomic status or physical ability.

Inclusive Recreation

Inclusion and accessibility are the focus of all public park and recreation agencies. Park and recreation agencies have begun to address how people with disabilities and low-income minorities, for example, might become even more active. These frequently underserved groups, as well as some ethnic minorities and youth in high-risk communities, are often attuned to the social, psychological and/or cultural doorways to them are more likely to be used if they are aestheticly pleasing (e.g., tree-lined paths rather than empty lots). A recent national survey conducted for the American Public Health Association by Widmer and Polling and Research found that 75 percent of adults believe that parks and recreation must play an important role in addressing the growing obesity trend in America. In most communities, these outdoor areas and indoor community facilities are operated and maintained by park and recreation departments.

The National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA) is the premier organization dedicated to improving outdoor recreation experiences for all ages. Over 10,000 outdoor public park and recreation facilities and 65,000 indoor facilities in the United States. Health is a core value and benefit of park and recreation programs. Public health professionals have long recognized the importance of providing information on physical activity, public visibility, policy, research and programmatic resources to help local agencies focus strategically on health and safety. Some of these initiatives include the development of a new called “Hearts N’ Parks” is a national community-based program sponsored by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), National Institute of Health (NIH) and NRPA. The purpose of this program is to reduce the growing trend of obesity and risk of coronary heart disease by encouraging people of all ages to achieve and maintain a healthy weight, follow a heart-healthy eating plan and engage in regular physical activity while taking part in local park and recreation department programs.

Planners can learn from the NRPA’s effective public-benefit programs. In the past ten years, members of the National Recreation and Park Association have the potential to make a difference. They have identified the need for more parks and recreation programs to be offered in communities of poverty, underserved areas, and urban centers. For example, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, established from the proceeds of offshore oil leases under the stimulus of the establishment of public lands you give back to the land (in the form of park and recreation resources) has been earmarked for other purposes by Congress.

New Initiatives in Park and Recreation

To better explain and defend the value of parks and recreation, recreation professionals have emphasized a benefits-based approach that focuses on the relationships of public recreation and parks to health and physical fitness. Research has shown that community supports—e.g., active neighbors, safety considerations and the presence of sidewalks, trails and recreation facilities—contribute to active and healthy communities. Several studies have shown that children are more physically active when outdoors, and that their physical activity levels are often correlated to the number of play areas near home and how frequently they are used. Furthermore, the reform movement of the late nineteenth century was a response to tenement overcrowding, morbidity, crime and communicable diseases. This socio-economic movement combined community development, residential redesign and recreation services to address the city’s ills. Associated with the women’s suffrage movement, the Mother’s and Children’s movement developed policies to protect working children and to support schools and playgrounds. In 1901, the first publicly funded playground program started in Los Angeles to provide everyone with access to recreation amenities. Many of these early initiatives, including equitable access to resources, better urban planning for health, routine physical activity and youth play are the current hallmarks of park and recreation professionals.

While other professions that emerged at this time also dealt with the physiological and psychological health of the population (e.g., health officers, urban planners, transportation specialists, teachers, police, home economists and nutritionists), the park and recreation professionals had to continually defend their role to the broader public. In periods of fiscal restraint, funds for park and recreation have been the first to be eliminated. For example, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, established from the proceeds of offshore oil leases under the stimulus of time America’s public lands you give back to the land (in the form of park and recreation resources) has been earmarked for other purposes by Congress.

Current Issues

Probably the number one subjective beneft of public parks and recreation is fun and enjoyment. Many organizations offer opportunities for physical activity and many of those activities are fun, staff in park and recreation emphasize people having fun in safe environments.

One hundred years ago no one would have real- ized, as today, that children indoors, how much work would be done by machines, and how much stress we would have in our daily lives. Factors such as single-use zoning, which prevents the mix of housing with stores, offices and other places of work; the increased population and population density that can make exercise difcult; and the distribution of free time, which is often in small rather than larger chunks, contribute to both physical and emotional inactivity in cities. Outdoor recreation spaces, in particu- lar, can provide a peaceful environment in which to invigorate the soul. Indoor spaces can provide opportunities to participate in activities with the social support of family, neighbors and friends.

As is true in any organization, the benefits of parks and recreation do not just happen. In today’s soci- ety, staff in park and recreation departments must be attuned to the needs of the public and offer programs that are appropriate for the public’s physical and psychological safety. The major barriers to involvement in physical activity for both adults and youth are an unsafe environment and perceived lack of time. In parks in urban centers are not safe and may become a place for illegal recreation more than positive outcome-oriented recreation. Efforts are underway to provide maintenance, safety, lighting, aesthetics and pleasing landscaping to mitigate the perceptions or realities of danger in parks as well as public indoor recreation spaces.

While recreation facilities can be built through a one-time capital campaign, the resources must be maintained over the lifespan of the facility. Many recreation facilities are managed by volunteer organizations, which can be extended by decades if quality maintenance exists. Budgetary constraints create critical problems when parks are not properly maintained, or some recreation programs rely on volunteer resources. In the future, public parks and recreation must create new venues for the active citizen, but also ensure that current facilities are up to code and are safe for all. Without concerned managers and committed, caring leaders, recreation resources may not be physically or emotionally safe. Educated and highly trained staff who are given the opportunity to be (Cont. on page 35)
BladeNight in Europe: A Weekly Event

By Anne Lusk

A number of European cities—the larger German cities of Munich, Berlin, Duesseldorf, Dresden and Mainz/Wiesbaden and the smaller German commu-
nities of St. Georg and Norderstedt, plus Amsterdam and Paris—host "BladeNight." On BladeNight, a group of inline skaters travel together on a designated and approved route with BladeGuards and police in attendance. Started in Munich on July 18, 1999, as a demonstration for skating rights and, more specifically, a demand for access to smooth pavement for in-line skating, BladeNight is now held weekly in some cities. On BladeNight one might find twenty to thirty kilometer runs, different courses that take about two hours, generous sponsors, novelty and higher-end expert events, trained and uniformed BladeGuards, and participants of all ages.

In June of 2000, the first Berlin "parade" took place. Intended as a demonstration as in Munich, 300 participants skated 12.5 kilometers along certain roads. At the end of that month, another "run" was held with 300 participants who traveled 15.4 kilometers. By July, the skaters were covering 23.2 kilometers and even skated two hours in the rain from start to finish. These regular runs continued and on October 15, an event was organized that included a slower speed run to encourage participation by novices. Nine hundred people skated.

By the summer of 2001, the BladeNight organizers in Berlin were meeting with Senate Administration officials, police and traffic engineers. During that same season, a press reporter from Paris traveled to Berlin to talk and cover the event for the French newspaper Liberation. Berlin now hosts a regular BladeNight every rain-free Sunday. The event starts at 7:00 PM and includes four different routes ranging from fifteen to ninety kilometers as a way to encourage family members and novices to also participate. In Berlin, skates can be rented on Saturday and Sunday. In Paris, only so many people can test if they want to participate in a BladeNight. Sometimes tracks provide music and nearby establishments broadcast the local radio station for the skaters. Paris now hosts BladeNight events on Friday nights and closes roads along the Seine many Sundays for inline skaters.

BladeNight in Berlin now requires 30 trains BladeGuards with 150 BladeGuards per event. These guards must be eighteen years of age or older and have their own sports equipment. As a BladeGuard, they can purchase skates from a sponsor for half-price. The BladeGuards are trained at the local ice skating stadium on a two-hour course. The BladeGuards meet at noon to prepare for a run that starts in the evening. In advance, they are given identical and official helmets, blue jackets or vests, instructions and coupons for beverages and meals. There are four teams of BladeGuards, each with a leader, one team rides in the front, another in the back, and the other two on either side. Police on motorcycles provide an escort for the run and car drivers wait until the parade is past. Some roads are closed for the skaters to pass and some traffic lights flash yellow. At the end of a run, the team leaders host a party for the BladeGuards.

Munich has been hosting BladeNight for five years and nearly a million people have participated in fifty-one runs. On average, 20,000 skaters participate in each run and the activity is perceived as the largest individual leisure sport offered in Europe. The event is considered healthy fitness training for 20,000 regular participants. The benefits of the event listed include environmental awareness and citizen participation, and there are partnerships with the City of Munich, police, Bavarian Red Cross and the General Automobile Association. Though critics have suggested that BladeNight is too heavily sponsored, the event, the photographs of BladeNight show sleek, skilled skaters and hesitant novices with their children. Instructions are given to assist newcomers and a raised arm hand gesture is a shared signal to communicate caution. Speed Nights are now organized in

Henderson [Cont. from page 35]

Certified Park and Recreation Professionals (CPRP) are necessary to facilitate the growing demand and interest in urban opportunities for physical activity. Although part-time and seasonal workers are now available, full-time and innovative professional staff will continue to be needed to facilitate physical activity opportunities for everyone. The local and state governments continue to allocate more power to local governments, the contributions that public parks and recreation organizations make to address the needs and interests of local citizens becomes even more pressing. Unfortunately, without financial resources the potential will not be realized.

Healthy Living as Everyone's Responsibility

The value of public recreation facilities is their potential to contribute to healthy individuals and communities. Although the services provided by urban park and recreation departments have physical health benefits such as decreased risk of heart disease, mental health benefits such as stress reduction and social benefits that include social interaction and socialization, the benefits need to be better understood. As park and recreation staff, advisory boards and citizen participants think about these local services, the notion that public recreation providers in the "health and wellness" business must be reinforced. Issues such as accessibility and availability, facilities and programs, support for personal transportation, incentives for participation and educational or behavioral change programs can be addressed by local park and recreation agencies partnering with other community organizations. For people to become more physically active, supportive and inclusive environments and that integrate the settings, facilities, and programs must be available. Park and recreation agencies offer unique opportunities that can be multiplied when partnered with other community agencies and organizations.

Park and recreation programs exist in cities, small towns and rural areas across the United States and these agencies have been in existence for over a century. Because they are locally-based, great variety exists across agencies, but all share a commitment to healthy living and equitable access to exercise, sport and fitness. These public opportunities, however, do not just happen. There are numerous of the services provided by urban park and recreation departments have physical health benefits such as decreased risk of heart disease, mental health benefits such as stress reduction and social benefits that include social interaction and socialization, the benefits need to be better understood. As park and recreation staff, advisory boards and citizen participants think about these local services, the notion that public recreation providers in the "health and wellness" business must be reinforced. Issues such as accessibility and availability, facilities and programs, support for personal transportation, incentives for participation and educational or behavioral change programs can be addressed by local park and recreation agencies partnering with other community organizations. For people to become more physically active, supportive and inclusive environments and that integrate the settings, facilities, and programs must be available. Park and recreation agencies offer unique opportunities that can be multiplied when partnered with other community agencies and organizations.

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Designing Communities With Health in Mind: The Basis for Effective Interventions

By Larry Frank

Introduction

In the past thirty years, in metropolitan areas where most Americans now reside, there has been a steady reduction in the proportion of travel made using human power, i.e., walking and biking, in favor of travel that relies on private vehicles. Not only has there been a reduction in the infrastructure to support walking and biking, a highway-oriented investment regime has created market signals that have spurred development at or near freeway access points. The result has been an increase in the distances between household, places of employment, retail and commercial destinations, which has made walking for utilitarian or transportation-related purposes difficult. For most suburban residents, the increased distances between homes and parks and other activities such as shopping and job opportunities has increased the distance they need to travel, which has increased the number of trips they make. This has increased the number of miles traveled per capita, which has increased the amount of automobile emissions and the amount of money spent on transportation. As a result of these changes, the health benefits of physical activity have been reduced, and the health benefits of transportation have been increased.

The proportion of obese white males in Atlanta increased from 13% to 23 percent as residential density decreased from 30 to less than 10 dwellings per residential acre. These 2001 results were part of the Atlanta based SMARTRAQ program (www.smartraq.net), which provides a model of collaboration at the community, regional and state level linking transportation, land development, air quality and public health. SMARTRAQ results suggest that the environment that makes us fat also makes us drive and pollute more. For example, average miles of travel per capita increased significantly, and the proportion of grams per capita of harmful nitrogen oxides (NOX) emissions increased from 21.5 to 28.5 grams as residential density changed from over 8 dwellings per acre in urban areas to under two dwellings per acre in suburban areas of Atlanta. (Regression analyses controlling for household size, income and vehicle ownership showed significant relationships between density and obesity, miles of travel and grams of NOX.)

What We Do Not Know

A great deal remains to be understood about how the built environment affects physical activity, weight and public health. While we have only begun to establish this, it is encouraging that the built environment affects physical activity in any way. In 1998 my colleague, Peter Engelke, and I completed a study of the relationship between the built environment and public health. A Literature Review of the Relationship Between Physical Activity and the Built Environment. In this report, we found that the relationship between the built environment and weight is not clear. We found that the relationship between the built environment and walking is not clear. We found that the relationship between the built environment and riding is not clear. We found that the relationship between the built environment and cycling is not clear. We found that the relationship between the built environment and running is not clear. We found that the relationship between the built environment and other forms of physical activity is not clear. We found that the relationship between the built environment and other forms of transportation is not clear. We found that the relationship between the built environment and other forms of land use and transportation is not clear. We found that the relationship between the built environment and other forms of public health is not clear.

What We Know

Over the latter half of the twentieth century, researchers have become increasingly able to measure and document how the design of our physical environment affects our health. A reasonable summary of this research is that the physical environment affects our health in predictable and explainable ways. While much of this work is incredibly informative and seemingly obvious, there has been considerable debate amongst scholars and practitioners over the reliability and validity of such findings. Earlier research showed that certain levels of residential density were required for transit to be viable, and these levels were used for 281 landslips to assess sensitivity and impact on the built environment. Today, we know that the relationship between the physical environment and walking, cycling, and other forms of physical activity is not clear. We know that the relationship between the physical environment and other forms of transportation is not clear. We know that the relationship between the physical environment and other forms of land use and transportation is not clear. We know that the relationship between the physical environment and other forms of public health is not clear.

There are likely to be many surprises and complexities about the ways in which our physical environment impacts how active we are and our overall health. Open space does not increase the time it takes to get to those places, and drastically reduced the likelihood that travel will occur on foot. Research in both Seattle and Atlanta found that the distances traveled to recreate is nearly three times greater for residents of the newest subdivisions than for those more urban counterparts. While we are learning more about the relationship between the physical environment and walking, there is far more that we don’t know. The environment may matter a lot for some of us, but for other groups the effects of the physical environment on health are not so clear.

Dr. Frank is the Bombardier Chairholder in Sustainable Urban Transportation Systems in the School of Community and Regional Planning at the University of British Columbia. He is the principal investigator of SMARTRAQ, or Strategies for More Active Transport and Regional Air Quality, and is Co-PI on a US National Institutes of Health project with Dr. James Salis (PI) and Dr. Brian Saulens (Co-PI).

Island Press recently published a book that be, Peter Engelke (George Washington University) and Dr Tom Schmid (US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) recently completed titled, Health and Community Design, The Impacts of The Built Environment on Physical Activity.
UPDATES

Erminia Maricata, who was a speaker at the planners network conference in Lowell, Massachusetts in 1999, has been appointed executive director of the Ministry of City’s government of the city of Lowell. The Ministry was established by the government of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and is responsible for the design of the national urban development policy, as well as the housing, environmental, sanitation, transportation and urban mobility sectors. The Ministry will be sponsoring a National Cities Conference in October 2003.

Amy Laura Cahn was in the occupied territories this past summer. She describes some of her impressions of the impact of the new apartheid wall on the town of Qalqiliya. She tries to imagine traveling through Worcester (Massachusetts), my home town, with a bit more than twice the population of Qalqiliya. Qalqiliya has an estimated population of 26,000 people, and before I reach the edge of the city I am met by a series of roadblocks, trenches people deep, pyramids of razor wire, and electrified fence. I back up and run and still am set to the opposite direction and it is just the same. In the third and fourth directions, I am further trapped by the most intimidating slab of concrete. I could ever imagine, with sniper towers sharpened around it, and the police cars to the distance as far as going to the 50 most important urban planning and development websites. The site highlighted the magazine archives—See http://www.planningzen.com/sites/applications. In a recent weekly update, Planetizen featured Tom Angott's 7th Generation article from the last issue of PP.

Pnem Hazel Gunn wrote to call our attention to the major omission in the list of Resources on Marxism, Socialism and Planning. The Union of Radical Political Economy has published many articles on these topics in its journal, including many by Pnemers. These can be found at www.urpe.org.

Planetizen Award for PN Website

Planetizen, the planning and development network best known for its regular email-based news digest, recently named the Planners Network website as one of the 50 most important urban planning and development websites. The citation highlighted the magazine archives—See http://www.planningzen.com/sites/applications. In a recent weekly update, Planetizen featured Tom Angott's 7th Generation article from the last issue of PP.

Student [Dis]Orientation

This September, with support from the new PN student outreach campaign, members of PN and the Toronto organization Planning Action organized a joint student [Dis]Orientation in Toronto. The event brought together students from five local universities and others interested in planning to discuss how to navigate through planning education and practice, and shape it into a force for justice and equity. More information is available at www.planningaction.org.

Planners Network Goes Local

In conjunction with the student outreach campaign, Planners Network members have recently begun to organize new local chapters in a variety of cities and universities in North America and beyond. Elsewhere, existing local groups are linking to

Planners Network by becoming local affiliates. Local chapters and affiliates are independent groups that determine their own structure and activities. Planners Network simply provides a forum for networking and some limited resources and support. If you are interested in connecting with or organizing a local group, please contact proplanner@yahoo.com or one of the following local chapter contacts below:

- University of California (Los Angeles): Stefano Bloch (stefano_bloch@hotmail.com)
- University of Washington (Seattle): Katie Sheehy (north@u.washington.edu)
- University of Michigan (Ann Arbor): Joe Grens (grens@umich.edu)
- University of Austin (Austin): Russell McDowell (rustymac@mail.ucexas.edu)
- Chicago: Lee Deuben (leedubner@hotmail.com)

New York City:

Cynthia Golembieski (cag2000@columbia.edu)
- Clark University (Worcester, MA)
- Saeed Bancie (sae_bancie@yahoo.com)
- Concordia University (Montreal)
- Amy Siciliano (asiciliano@graffiti.net)
- Dalhousie University (Halifax)
- Lellik Finkler (lellikfinkler@hotmail.com)
- Toronto: Barbara Halhal (halhal@utoronto.ca)
- Istanbul: Beral Celik (beralicelik@yahoo.com)
- Philippines:
- Jare Amador (camador@mail.aum.edu.ph)

Steering Committee Changes

The steering and dynamic members joined the PN Steering Committee at the PN SC meeting in New York City on July 28. Norma Rantis and Josh Lerner are both from Canada. Thanks to Norma, we now have a new PN newsletter which she created in 7-8 weeks. This year we started a student outreach campaign, and we are also working with members to set up over 10 new local PN chapters.

If It Isn't in the Issue, Place it Here

We hope the ENewsletter will be a great place for us all to share the things we are working on and sharing with yourself and your work, notices about jobs, events, publications, and grants of interest to progressive planners, and we'll compile them monthly (maxi-mum word limit please). Have a message or want to get out? Write it up (maximum 250 words; longer pieces may be considered for the magazine). Send these items to PN ENewsletter Editor Norma Rantis at rantis@acol.coccon.c ca

Save the dates: June 17-20, PN Conference in New York City

It’s time for another exciting PN conference that will bring together grass roots activists, professionals, students and academics in an open dialogue about burning issues facing progressive planning and politics. The focus of the conference will be on rebuilding communities in the US and abroad, with sessions on community building efforts in post-disaster and post-conflict societies from Lower Manhattan to Chimbote, and the Lower East Side; from the Occupied Territories to Baghdad and Beirut; and other urban places touched by war. Hunter College and Pratt Institute will co-sponsor and host the conference sessions and events in Brooklyn and Manhattan. We will have our first organizing meeting on Friday, November 7 at 6:30 at 70 Washington Avenue (14th St. and 16th St. between Avenue C and D). If you have suggestions and/or would like to participate in organizing the conference, please join us on November 7th, or contact Ayse Yüksel - ayseyuksel@pratt.edu or Tom Angotti - tangotti@hunter.cuny.edu.

Edward W. Sawd, Professor of English and Comparative literature at Columbia University in New York City, passed away on September 25, 2003. Sawd is the well-known author of many influential books, translated into several languages, including The Question of Palestine (1980), After the Last Sky (1986) and Culture and Imperialism (1992). Best known among his works is Orientalism (1978), which examines how ideological representations of the Orient in Western scholarship were linked up with colonial political domination and which has been credited with many with launching the field of post-colonial studies. Sawd was also well-known for his role as a leading public intellectual and was the most eloquent and forceful voice for the West in the course of Palestinian independence. He was born to a Palestinian Christian family in 1935 in Jerusalem, then part of British-ruled Palestine. He spent his early years living in Jerusalem and Cairo before the immigrating to the US in 1951, where he pursued his higher studies at Princeton and Harvard. He wrote in the Egyptian Al-ahram Weekly, “I have been moved to defend the refugees’ plight precisely because I did not suffer and therefore feel obligated to relieve the sufferings of my people.” As indicated in a recent exchange on the PLAN-ET list serve, his thoughts have some bearing on the development of a number of planning-related books, such as Janet Abu-Lughod’s New York, Chicago, Los Angeles: America’s Global Cities (1999), Kay Anderson’s Vancouver’s Chinatown Divide (1990), Dispositions of Memory in Canada, 1875-1980 (1991), Ruth Fisher and Jane Jacobs’ Cities of Difference (1998), Jane Jacobs’ Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City (1996), and Anthony King’s Turbulent, Colonialism and the World Economy (1999).

Look for tributes/reflections on Sawd in upcoming issues of the Progressive Planning magazine.
RESOURCES

PUBLICATIONS

The Poorest Become Poorer” (Summer 2003) is available from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, 4000 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20016, Tel.: 202.775.9000. For more information, visit www.aecf.org.

“Developing Organizational Endowments in the African American Community Building for the Future” (July/August 2003) is available from The Aspen Institute, One Dupont Circle NW, #700, Washington, D.C. 20036, Tel.: 202.736.5800, net/aspnstitute.org. For more information, visit www.Obama2008.org.


“Communities Sustain Public Health Improvements Through Organized Partnership Structures” is a 16-page, April 2003 pamphlet available from The Kellogg Foundation, One Michigan Ave. E., Battle Creek, MI 49017-4958, Tel.: 269.968.1611. For more information, visit http://www.kff.org.


“America’s Newest Working Families: Cost, Crowding & Conditions: Solutions for Immigrants,” by Barbara Lipton (July 2003) is available from the Center for Housing Policy, 1801 K St. NW, #100, Washington D.C. 20006, 13th fl., Tel.: 202.466.3121, nch@nchc.org. For more information, visit http://www.nchc.org.


“Discrimination in Metropolitan Housing Markets: Phase 2. Asians & Pacific Islanders,” by Margery Austin Turner, Beatrice Benedrass, Carla Herbst & Lee Seon Joo (July 2003), is available from The Urban Institute, 2100 M St. NW, Washington D.C. 20037, Tel.: 202.261.5709, pafitaire@ui.urban.org. For more information, visit: http://www.urban.org.

“University + Community Research Partnerships: A New Approach,” edited by Jacqueline Dugery and James Knowles (2003), is available from the Pew Partnership for Civic Change, 5 Beus’s Head Lane, #100, Charlottesville, VA 22905, Tel.: 434.971.2073. For more information, visit www.pewpartnership.org.

“Shaping City Center Futures: Conservation, Regeneration and Institutional Capacity” is a detailed account of the evolution of the Grainger Town initiative, a project to regenerate the 19th century core of the city centre of Newcastle upon Tyne. Copies of the report can be obtained at a price of $28.00 from GUBU, School of Planning and Architecture of the University of Newcastle. For more information, email Elizabeth.Storey@ncl.ac.uk or phone 0191.222.5048.

Census Data: A set of complete 2000 Census demographic data packages (described as ‘comprehensive, easy to use, inexpensive’), some with time series data from the 1970, 1980 and 1990 Censuses. For more information, phone 800.577.6717, e-mail info@usa.census.gov, or visit http://www.usa.census.gov.

EVENTS / CONFERENCES

Invitation to Host a Presentation by the City Repair Project. This November, two members of the City Repair Project will be touring the East coast, sharing an interactive slideshow presentation about their work. They are looking for groups who

Resources for Active Living

Special Issues of Journals

American Journal of Health Promotion, Special Issue on Health Promoting Community Design, September/October 2003. Richard Killingworth (Editor), JoAnne Earp, Robin Moore (Associate Editors). Copies can be ordered for $24.95 at www.healthpromotionjournal.com or see www.americanjournalofhealthpromotion.com/publications/journal/82003_09.hrm for contents.


Progressive Planner, Special Issue on Action, Fall 2002. Individual copies $10, multiple copies $8 each. See page 43 for ordering information.

Websites

Active Living by Design www.activelivingbydesign.com

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Centers for Disease Control, Physical Activity, www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/

Reports

McCann, Barbara C., and Reid Ewing. 2003. Measuring the Health Effects of Sprawl: A National Analysis of Physical Activity, Obesity and Chronic Disease: Smart Growth America and Surface Transportation Policy Project. Copies can be obtained at www.smartgrowthamerica.org. Hard copies can be obtained for $15 by calling or writing SGA, 1200 16th St. NW Suite 801, Washington, D.C. 20006, 202.207.3350 or by emailing sga@smartgrowthamerica.org.


Articles


Schinkel  [Cont. from page 31]

skills can readily be mastered, but like swimming or skiing, require instruction for best results. The most important methods to increase bicycle use are to improve bicyclist behavior through training and traffic enforcement and to improve motorist behavior through public awareness and traffic enforcement. Key methods to implement these policies are to remove discriminatory laws; train the police in bicycle laws and enforcement methods; create an advertising campaign about the rights and responsibilities of bicyclists: provide bicycle training classes for adults and children; and enforce traffic and drunk driving laws and prosecute offenders.

Physical activity habits are often developed in childhood, yet the number of teens participating in physical education classes is declining. One survey found that fewer than 20 percent of children in grades 7 to 12 had physical education classes even one day per week. Providing organized physical activities in the after-school hours seems like a promising method of increasing fitness among adolescents, providing life skills and habits and perhaps reducing anti-social behavior among teens. Cycling class could be one potential solution, serving the unique dualrole of sport and transport.

Finding and remedying the specific barriers to physical activity, especially for women, minorities and the poor, and promoting the development of physical activity habits among adolescents may be a more effective strategy than overcoming the substantial political and institutional barriers inherent in reshaping US settlement patterns.

Paul Schinkel (schinkel@ulalum.mit.edu) is a bicycle instructor certified by the League of American Bicyclists and was formerly the bicycle program manager for the City of Brookline.

For these decades, Planners Network has been a voice for progressive professional activists and activists concerned with urban planning, social and environmental justice. PN's 1,000 members receive the Progressing Planning magazine, communicate on-line with PN-NET and the E-Newsletter, and take part in the annual conference. PN also gives progressive ideas a forum in the mainstream planning profession by organizing sessions at annual conferences of the American Planning Association, the Canadian Institute of Planners, and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning.

The PN Conference has been held annually almost every summer since 1994. These gatherings combine speakers and workshops with exchanges involving local communities. PN conferences engage in discussions that help inform political strategies at the local, national, and international levels. Recent conferences have been held in Hoylake, NY; Rochester, NY; Toronto, Ontario, Lowell, MA, East St. Louis, IL; Brooklyn, NY; and Pomona, CA.

Join Planners Network and make a difference while sharing your ideas and enthusiasm with others.

All members must pay annual dues. The minimum dues for Planners Network members are as follows:

$25 Students and income under $6,000
$25 Subscription to Progressive Planning only
$35 Income between $25,000 and $50,000
$50 Income over $50,000, organizations and libraries
$100 Sustaining Members – If you earn over $50,000, won't you consider helping at this level?

Canadians members:
See column at right.

Dues are deductible to the extent permitted by law.

PN MEMBERS IN CANADA

Membership fees by Canadian members may be paid in Canadian funds:

$35 for students, unemployed, and those with incomes < $40,000
$55 for those with incomes between $40,000 and $80,000
$75 for those with incomes over $80,000
$150 for sustaining members

Make cheques to Canadian funds payable to "Planners Network" and send to us by mail to:

Barbara Rohrler, Faculty of Environmental Studies
York University
Toronto, Ontario M3J 1P3

If interested in joining the PN Toronto listserve, include your email address with payment or send a message to Barbara Rohrler at rhohrler@yorku.ca.

PURCHASING A SINGLE ISSUE

Progressive Planning is a benefit of membership. If non-members wish to purchase a single issue of the magazine, please mail a check for $19 or credit card information to Planners Network at 379 Dekalb Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11205. Please specify the issue and provide your email address or a phone number for inquiries. Multiple back issues are $10 each.

Back issues of the newsletters are for sale at $2 per copy. Contact the PN office at pn@pratt.edu to check for availability and to pay by mail or by bank draft.

Copies of the PN Reader are also available. The single issue price for the Reader is $9 but there are discounts available for bulk orders.

See ordering and content information at http://www.plannersnetwork.org/tms/pub/pn-reader.html

PLANNERS NETWORK ON LINE

The PN WEB SITE is at: www.plannersnetwork.org

The PN LISTSERV:

PN maintains an on-line mailing list for members to discuss and respond to queries, list job postings, conference announcements, etc. To join, send an email message to majordomo@list.pratt.edu with "subscribe pn-net" (without the quotes) in the body of the message (not the subject line). You'll be sent instructions on how to use the list.

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INTERNATIONAL MEMBERS: Please send U.S. funds as we are unable to accept payment in another currency. Thanks.
In This Issue

Upcoming Conference in New York

* PN Student Campaign

* Resources for the Active City

Your Last Issue?

Please check the date on your mailing label. If the date is more than one year ago this will be your last issue unless we receive your annual dues RIGHT AWAY! See page 43 for minimum dues amounts.

And while you’re at it send us an UPDATE on what you’re doing.

MOVING?
Please send us your new address.