



Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan

Advocates for Healthy Weight in Children

July 16, 2009

Name, Title
Organization
Address
City, MI Zip

Dear Representative **Name**:

Michigan was one of fifteen states selected to receive funding through the National Governors Association *Healthy Kids, Healthy America* program supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The purpose of the program was to develop a multi-year strategic policy plan to reduce childhood obesity. The program has since grown into an impressive Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan Coalition consisting of executive-level decision makers from government, public and private sectors, non-profit organizations, businesses, health care, communities, and schools.

These tremendous efforts have resulted in a five-year strategic policy plan and framework for a comprehensive statewide effort to reduce childhood obesity in Michigan. Six key priority areas for this year include:

1. Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School in Communities
2. Improved Access to Fresh Healthy Food at Food Retailers in Underserved Areas
3. Physical and Health Education in Schools
4. Coordinated School Health Programs
5. Body Mass Index (BMI) Surveillance
6. Medicaid Coverage of Childhood Obesity

Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School in Communities focuses on support for communities and roadways planned, designed, and constructed to accommodate safe access for children, as well as, pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. When communities implement complete streets, residents are connected with businesses, restaurants, schools and other popular destinations with sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, and/or paths.

The Coalition has created a Complete Streets Resolution and is pursuing having it passed by the Michigan Legislature. We would like to share the draft resolution and supporting materials with you, and we ask for your support in getting this Resolution passed. I look forward to hearing from you, and I can be reached at abrown@planningmi.org or 734-913-2000.

Sincerely,

Andrea Brown, AICP
Executive Director, Michigan Association of Planning
Chair, HKHM Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School Community Policy Action Team

Enclosure



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RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES FOR REDUCING CHILDHOOD OBESITY AND PROMOTING ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS ON MICHIGAN ROADS

February 2009

WHEREAS, a transportation system conducive to bicycling and walking improves public health, reduces traffic congestion, decreases air and water pollution, helps address climate change, enhances economic vitality, contributes to regional, local and personal prosperity, and improves the overall quality of life in the State; and

WHEREAS, the National Institute of Medicine recommends fighting childhood obesity by changing local ordinances and policies to encourage construction of sidewalks, bikeways, and other places for physical activity; and

WHEREAS, Michigan is challenged by an obesity epidemic with 2007 data revealing that 64.6 percent of adults and 28.9 percent of children and adolescents are overweight or obese, due in large part to a lack of regular physical activity; and

WHEREAS, a study conducted by Chenoweth, et al. projected that physical inactivity cost Michigan 12.7 billion dollars in 2007; and

WHEREAS, according to national highway statistics more than one quarter of all trips are one mile or less – and almost half are less than five miles; most of these trips are now made by car. Streets that provide travel choices give people the option to avoid traffic congestion and increase the overall capacity of the transportation network; and

WHEREAS, in 1969, approximately 50 percent of children in the United States got to school by walking or biking; but in 2001, only 15 percent of students walked or bicycled to school; and

WHEREAS, as much as 20 to 30 percent of morning traffic is generated by parents driving their children to school, and in the United States, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children ages 3 to 14; and

WHEREAS, With passage of the federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) in August 2005 recognizing the desirability of encouraging children to walk and bicycle to school, Congress created the Safe Routes to School program to incentivize, enable and encourage all children, including those with disabilities, to walk, bike, or roll to school; thus, improving student health and safety as well as reducing traffic, fuel consumption and air pollution in the vicinity of schools; and



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WHEREAS, the Michigan Department of Transportation’s *MI Transportation Plan (State Long-Range Transportation Plan)* shows that people want more transportation options; and

WHEREAS, surveys reveal that people are dissuaded from walking or bicycling because of concerns over traffic danger and other barriers, and case studies have shown that when those barriers to bicycling and walking are removed, people are more physically active; and

WHEREAS, the Michigan Department of Transportation has adopted the Context Sensitive Solutions design process on all road construction projects to address all stakeholder needs within a transportation corridor where appropriate; and

WHEREAS, “Complete Streets” are roadways designed to accommodate safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across Complete Streets to school, work, play or to run errands; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets principles and concepts have been and continue to be adopted nationwide at state, county, metropolitan planning organization, and city levels in the interest of proactive planning and adherence to federal regulations that guide transportation planning organizations to promote multi-modal transportation options and accessibility for all users; and

WHEREAS, of the 118,327 miles of roads open to bicyclists, pedestrians and other non-motorized users, the Michigan Department of Transportation has jurisdiction over approximately 7 percent, the state’s 83 counties have jurisdiction over approximately 75 percent and cities and villages have jurisdiction over approximately 18 percent;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature recognize all infrastructure as potential “Active Infrastructure,” and that bicycle, pedestrian, and transit needs should be given full consideration in the planning and development of transportation facilities.

FURTHER, the Legislature challenges and encourages County and local road agencies to establish bicycle and pedestrian facilities in conjunction with the construction or reconstruction of transportation facilities in accordance with Complete Streets, Context Sensitive Solutions, and Safe Routes to School principles.

FURTHER, the Michigan Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Regional Planning Authority staff should serve as technical resources to City and County road agencies, to collaboratively designate common Complete Streets, Context Sensitive Solutions and Safe Routes to Schools specifications that are consistent across jurisdictions for all regionally significant roadways, local roadways, and trails serving schools, commercial areas, residential areas and locally or regionally significant points of interest.



Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan

Fight Childhood Obesity: Increase Physical Activity with Complete Streets, Context Sensitive Solutions and Safe Routes to School.

“Physical activity is an efficient and powerful tool for preventing chronic diseases and for promoting health and well-being.”

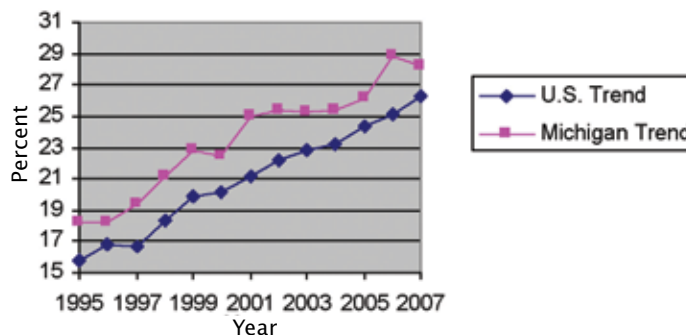
Source: American Journal of Health Promotion, 2007.

“It is dishonest to tell our citizens to walk, jog, or bicycle when there is no safe or welcoming place to pursue these life-saving activities.”

Richard Jackson, M.D., Director of Center for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Environmental Health, 2001.

The Problem

Michigan's Adult Obesity Rate Exceeds the National Average



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2008.

- Physical inactivity impacts obesity in children. By being active and choosing the right foods, individuals can decrease their risk of developing chronic diseases. *“Children and adolescents should do 60 minutes (1 hour) or more of physical activity daily.”* 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans.
- Too often, the built environment makes it difficult to integrate physical activity into daily routines. Active infrastructure provides opportunities for children to walk and bike to school, stores, parks and other destinations.
- The less time children spend outside, the less likely they are to be physically active. Outdoor physical activity is

greatly hindered by the lack of sidewalks and community design guided exclusively by the motor vehicle. Institute of Medicine, 2005.

- Physical inactivity projected health care costs for Michigan totaled \$12.7 billion in 2007. Physical activity reduces the risk of chronic diseases, thus decreasing the burden on Michigan's economy. Chenoweth, et al., 2003.

Did You Know?

- Complete Streets, Context Sensitive Solutions and Safe Routes to School- all improve public health, benefit the local economy and increase safety for everyone.
- Schools with non-motorized access routes can see a 15% increase in the number of students who walk or bike to school. This can add up to 24 minutes of physical activity a day for children. Active Living Research, RWJF 2007.



Definitions

Complete Streets: Roadways planned, designed and constructed to accommodate safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across streets which include sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes.

Safe Routes to School: An international movement that makes it more safe, convenient, and fun for children to walk or bike to school. The program encourages and educates children and parents about the benefits of walking or biking to school, as well as helping to facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of initiatives that will improve the routes children travel to get to school.

Context Sensitive Solutions: A collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that involves all stakeholders to develop a transportation facility that fits its physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility. Context Sensitive Solutions is an approach that considers the total context within which a transportation improvement project will exist.

Built Environment: Man-made surroundings that provide the setting for human activity consisting of buildings, roads, sidewalks, and trails and other activities that change the natural environment.

Active Infrastructure: Built environment that facilitates physical activity.

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- Complete Streets provide children with opportunities to walk, bike and play in a safe environment. More children are likely to walk or bike to school when sidewalks are present and where there are safe street crossings. National Complete Streets, 2009.
- By including Complete Streets designs, communities have reported a range of \$171 million to \$963 million in benefits from increased revenue, increased tourism, and increased quality of life. Land Economics, 2000.
- Measures that design the street with pedestrians in mind- sidewalks, raised medians, better bus stop placement, traffic calming measures, and treatments for disabled travelers- all improve pedestrian safety. National Complete Streets, 2009.

Solution

- The Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan Initiative seeks systemic changes in schools, health care and communities that can address childhood obesity. Implementing Complete Streets, Context Sensitive Solutions and Safe Routes to School principles in community design makes it easier to integrate physical activity into daily routines.
- Recognize all infrastructure as potential 'active infrastructure'.
- Support efforts to require Complete Streets, Context Sensitive Solutions, and Safe Routes to School principles by county and local road agencies to safely and systematically accommodate all users when planning, building, reconstructing or rehabilitating infrastructure.

Resources

www.michigan.gov/hkkm

www.completestreets.org

www.saferoutemichigan.org

www.contextsensitivesolutions.org

www.mihealthtools.org/Communities/



Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan

www.michigan.gov/hkkm

Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan was initiated with a grant from the National Governor's Association through the Healthy Kids, Healthy America program. This program was designed to provide the nation's governors with the opportunity to address childhood obesity in schools and communities in their state.

Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan is working with executive-level decision-makers from government, public and private sectors, school districts, health care and non-profit organizations to create a multi-year strategic policy plan to reduce childhood obesity in Michigan. This policy plan will include targeted approaches and implementation plans to guide state leaders in adopting policies that will increase access to physical activity and healthy food choices, especially fruits and vegetables.

For more information, please contact:

Andrea Brown, AICP

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Chair, HKHM Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School Policy Action Team

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