

HEALTHY Comp Plans

TRANSPORTATION



November 2016

This document represents best practices, not Dakota County policies.

VISION

We support a safe, healthy, vibrant, and sustainable environment.

We support active living and all modes of transportation including walking, bicycling, transit and vehicles.

We support healthy food access for all.

TRANSPORTATION AND HEALTH

Transportation connects people to employment, education, housing, healthy food, places to be physically active, friends, and family. Access to these essentials can decrease risk for major chronic diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, certain types of cancer and mental health problems.

Active transportation - walking and bicycling, are simple way to integrate regular physical activity into daily routines. Communities that have the physical infrastructure and programs to promote active transportation tend to have more physically active and healthier populations. In many Dakota County communities, incomplete or non-existent trail and sidewalk connections, infrequent transit service, and long distances between resources are barriers to active transportation.

TRANSPORTATION AND EQUITY

We all need to travel to meet every day needs such as getting to work and school, access to affordable healthy food, and access to health care. In Dakota County, the roadway network provides safe and convenient transportation for those with personal vehicles. However, one third of the population does not drive/own a car, and walking, biking and transit infrastructure is less complete for this group. Those who cannot afford a car, the disabled, and those who choose not to or are unable to drive face transportation hurdles that mean accessing basic needs is time consuming, inconvenient, stressful, and sometimes dangerous. Access to affordable, reliable transportation increases opportunity and is essential to addressing equity in a community.

Equitable access to active transportation matters for individual health as well. Active transportation is an affordable way for people to be physically active, resulting in reduced risk for many chronic diseases, which affect low-income communities and communities of color disproportionality. Shifting from cars to walking and bicycling can also conserve energy, reduce air pollution, and be part of the solution to long-term health impacts from climate change.

Unfortunately, there are disparities in bicycle, walking, and transit infrastructure across communities. For example, high-income areas tend to have more sidewalks than low-income communities do. Addressing these disparities through comprehensive plan policies can result in positive change for the people who need active transportation infrastructure the most.

SUPPORTING DATA

Active Living - Adults and youth are not meeting minimal physical activity recommendations.

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends 150 minutes of physical activity per week for adults and 60 minutes per day for children and adolescents.
- In 2010, 78% of Dakota County adults engaged in regular physical activity.
- In 2013, only about one-fifth of Dakota County students engaged in the recommended amount of physical activity: 5th grade (21%), 8th and 9th grade (20%), and 11th grade (17 %).
- 1.5% of Dakota County residents 16 years and older who work walked or biked to work in 2013. Statewide, it is 4%.
- 43% of county adults said their neighborhood had a transit stop (bus or train) in 2010. 30% said they have no sidewalks in their neighborhood.
- 69% of county adults rated their neighborhood as a very pleasant place to walk (2010).
- Four of the 11 major cities in Dakota County have developed a bicycle/pedestrian plan.
- Across the 11 major cities in Dakota County, an average of 36% of streets have sidewalks or trails (as of 2015).
- Two of the 11 major cities in Dakota County have adopted Complete Streets Policies.

Healthy Food Access - Adults and youth are not eating the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables. Food insecurity is increasing.

- In 2010, 41% of Dakota County adults reported eating five or more fruits and vegetables the previous day. Fewer than one-fourth (17-21%) of Dakota County students reported consuming fruits or vegetables (including fruit juice) five or more time per day in the previous week.
- On average, neighborhoods in Dakota County have less than 1 grocery store or farmers' market within a half mile.
- An estimated 8% of county residents and 13% of children were food insecure (they lacked reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food) in 2012.

Equity

- In 2014, 8% of Dakota County residents lived below the poverty level; the state level was 11%.
- Poverty is increasing, especially for children under age 18.
- During the 2014-2015 school year, 28% of students in charter and public schools in the county received free or reduced price lunches, up 16% from 2005-2006.
- The percent of county households accessing food stamps (7%) has steadily increased from 2008-2013 (up from 2.5% in 2008).
- In 2014, the county served 10,680 people in the Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) program, which is 10% of the population of women of childbearing age and children age 0-5 years.
- 4.5% of county households did not have a vehicle in 2014.
- In 2013, 60% of adults in Dakota County were either overweight or obese. Low-income people in Dakota County have a higher rate of obesity than the population overall.

POLICIES TO CONSIDER

Active Living

Goal: We will create a complete, community-wide bicycle, pedestrian, and transit network.

- Adopt a Complete Streets policy that highlights the importance of multi-modal and active transportation.
- Develop a bicycle/pedestrian plan.
- Develop Safe Routes to School plans.
- Establish an Active Living Advisory Committee.
- Improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists with lighting, wayfinding signs, and traffic calming measures.
- Establish a process to incorporate active living issues into the land-use review and planning processes.
- Implement a city's trail system plan.
- Keep pedestrian routes free from crime.
- Ensure pedestrians and bicyclists are safe crossing streets.

Healthy Food Access

Goal: We will improve the flexibility, mobility, and affordability of connecting people to healthy food.

- Support transit service improvements to better connect people to commercial areas with healthy food sources.
- Pursue opportunities to add specially equipped, grocery-friendly transit service that operates on weekends and off-peak hours and connects directly to stores selling healthy food and farmers' markets.
- Review local policies to reduce or eliminate any impediments to the use of taxi and car-sharing services.
- Encourage car-sharing accommodations in multi-family developments.
- Collaborate with regional economic development agencies on efforts to improve food distribution infrastructure.
- Undertake a systematic assessment of the bicycle and pedestrian routes that connect

consumers to healthy food sources, and address deficiencies through physical improvements to bicycle and pedestrian networks.

- Adopt site standards for food stores that provide safe and convenient pedestrian access to the front door and bicycle parking.
- Adopt a Complete Streets policy that specifically highlights the importance of multi-modal connections to food resources and food retail.

Equity

Goal: We provide equitable transportation to connect people with opportunities.

- Support innovative practices such as mobile food shelves and mobile food markets that can bring food closer to under-resourced customers.
- Prioritize transit service in populated areas with low vehicle ownership and low access to healthy food.
- Prioritize transit service and bike/walk infrastructure improvements in populated areas with low vehicle ownership and low access to needed services.
- Link transit stops to destinations with pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.
- Use health impact assessments to inform and guide transportation policy, projects and planning.
- Fund programs that expand transportation options for disadvantaged populations and people with disabilities, and that promote safe, convenient transportation options for children and seniors.

RESOURCES

Dakota County:

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- Jess Luce, Communities for a Lifetime: Jess.Luce@co.dakota.mn.us
- www.co.dakota.mn.us/Government/publiccommittees/CFL/Pages/default.aspx

Blue Cross Blue Shield Center for Prevention:

- Nadja Berneche, Healthy Comp Plan Consultant: nadja@terrasoma.com
- Eric Weiss, AICP: Eric.Weiss@bluecrossmn.com

General:

- Homegrown South: <http://homegrownsouth.org/>
- Food Access Planning Guide (pp. 20-21): <http://mnfoodcharter.com/planningguide/>
- Design for Health: <http://designforhealth.net>
- APA Policy Guide on Planning: https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/legacy_resources/research/publichealth/pdf/healthyplanningreport.pdf
- Minnesota Department of Health: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/topics/places/plans.html>
- ChangeLab Solutions: <http://www.changelabsolutions.org/healthy-planning>
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/>

Transportation:

- FHWA Literature Review Report
- At the Intersection of Active Transportation and Equity:
www.apha.org/~media/files/pdf/topics/environment/srts_activetranspequity_report_2015.ashx

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