

Isanti County Active Living

[Progress of Year 1 Activities]



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Introduction to this Report

Active Living is a way of life that integrates physical activity into one's daily routine. The goal is to accumulate at least 30 minutes of activity each day. Individuals may achieve this by walking or bicycling for transportation, exercise or pleasure, playing in the park, working in the yard, taking the stairs or using recreation facilities¹. The manner in which we — as a community — incorporate elements of active living into our lives is related to the environment in which we live. For example, is it safe to walk to the corner store? Is it possible to ride a bicycle to work and not feel threatened by traffic?

Recognizing the important role of physical activity in promoting healthier lifestyles, Active Living by Design (ALbD) and The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) chose to spotlight 25 community partnerships within the United States. In the fall of 2003, each partnership received a \$200,000 Active Living by Design (ALbD) grant and generous technical assistance to promote tenets of active living. A cornerstone of these efforts was to promote discussions of which matters related to land use, transportation, architecture, trails, parks and other issues that could help enable healthier lifestyles.

Isanti County Parks and Recreation in Isanti County (Minnesota) was privileged to be one of the community groups nationwide to receive a grant from ALbD. The grant rewards the ongoing efforts of Isanti County and showcases such activities by supporting programs, publicity, and policies to promote active living. Recognizing the significance of Isanti County activities, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, in concert with ALbD, commissioned this report to document the efforts completed during the first year of work. The aim of this report is provide a reference for other communities across Minnesota, and the upper Midwest, to learn from such activities, incorporate similar programs into their community, and advance ALbD.

The ALbD award granted to Isanti County spans five years. The period from November 2003 until November 2004 comprises the first year and forms the material for this report. Supported efforts will continue for four more years, extending into 2009. The progress to date needs to be considered in this light and we look forward to learning of how many of the foundations laid during this initial time frame will flourish in subsequent years.

Four sections comprise the bulk of this report: (1) the setting and the motivation for this particular project, (2) an overview of the ALbD initiative and the setting in Minnesota, (3) detailed elements of activities in Isanti County, and (4) reflections on progress to date. An appendices help fill in details related to some of the matters discussed.

PART 1: The Issue and the Setting

Are Americans leading lives that incorporate elements of active living? Research suggests that approximately only one-quarter of U.S. adults achieve recommended levels of physical activity². As a result, physical inactivity is a major public health concern for the United States population of all ages. Most alarming are rising rates of obesity of children and adolescents. Approximately 15 percent of those aged 6 to 19 are overweight, while another 15 percent are at risk of becoming so. For some children, the only exercise received during the day is in gym class, an opportunity which itself has become less available in the state of Minnesota.

In 2003, the legislature eliminated the Profile of Learning Graduation Rule, which required schools to teach physical education. With the elimination of this requirement, many schools throughout the state are dropping gym class from their curricula. Both physical education teachers and health care professionals think the timing could not be worse³. National data indicate that nearly one third of youth are insufficiently active, and over half of all youth fall far short of recommended levels of vigorous activity. These patterns persist despite widespread documentation and reporting of the health benefits of physical activity and the health risks associated with physical inactivity, overweight, and obesity. In addition to higher-than-ever proportions of overweight and obese children, there has also been an alarming rise among youth of type-2 diabetes, an obesity-related disease historically seen almost exclusively with adult onset.

In light of these trends, demand is increasing for new and expanded theories to explain these behavioral patterns and serve as the basis for novel intervention approaches. One intriguing approach draws from the fields of public health and urban planning to suggest that levels of physical activity are related to patterns of urban development. These hypotheses are still relatively general in nature and are only recently being tested. But we know that exercise is one of the main components to maintaining a healthy weight and lifestyle. Furthermore, while we admit that poor eating habits and excessive time spent watching television or playing computer games are likely reasons for such declining health, Americans' reluctance to be physically active can be exacerbated by the design of our communities.

Only in recent years, however, have individuals in research, advocacy, and policy circles actively promoted the idea that “good” urban design will positively contribute 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. An existing body of research is starting to coalesce around these themes, describing how physical (in)activity is linked to elements of community design. Some research has focused on how community design relates to levels of physical activity for children⁴. Other work concludes that residents of sprawling counties are less likely to walk in their leisure time, have higher levels of body weight, and experience other negative health effects⁵.

Simply put, residents and children who have few attractive and safe options for travel other than riding in a car, have fewer opportunities for physical activity and for accruing 30 minutes of exercise daily. It is more difficult to build daily activity into their lifestyles. A common

theme in available research and policy initiatives calls for urban planners, traffic engineers, health practitioners, and other policy officials to foster a built environment more accessible for active travel.

Focus on Minnesota

Our efforts here focus on activities in and around Minnesota. To help place matters in context, we provide a glimpse of background information showing that Minnesota is closely aligned with national averages. In the U.S., obesity rates for adults increased to 20.9 percent in 2001. This represents a 5.6 percent increase since 2000 and, remarkably a 74 percent increase since 1991⁶. Such rates have caused many in the healthcare field to refer to these trends as an epidemic. Overall, Minnesota statistics hover around the mean with almost 20 percent of adults in the state reaching levels considered to be, by definition, overweight⁶.

Linking such rates to aspects of community design shines a bit more light on the situation. A report released by Smart Growth America, *Measuring the Health Effects of Sprawl*, measured a “sprawl index” for 448 counties across the U.S. Results ranged from 63 for the most sprawled to 352 for the least sprawled. The index was calculated based on 22 variables, including residential density, average sizes of blocks, and the type of street patterns.

The report focused on counties in major metropolitan areas, thus 10 Minnesota Counties were included. The County Sprawl Index was compared with the characteristics of over 200,000 people living in these counties. A total of ten Minnesota Counties were captured in the analysis — including Isanti County — which showed to be the most sprawling of those included (see Table 1). According to the study, individuals in sprawling counties are more likely to have a higher body mass index (BMI), high blood pressure and hypertension⁷.

Table 1: Sprawl Index

County	County Sprawl Score
Isanti	70.12
Chisago	79.39
Wright	79.85
Carver	85.66
Scott	90.36
Anoka	95.92
Washington	96.80
Dakota	98.09
Hennepin	119.74
Ramsey	123.09

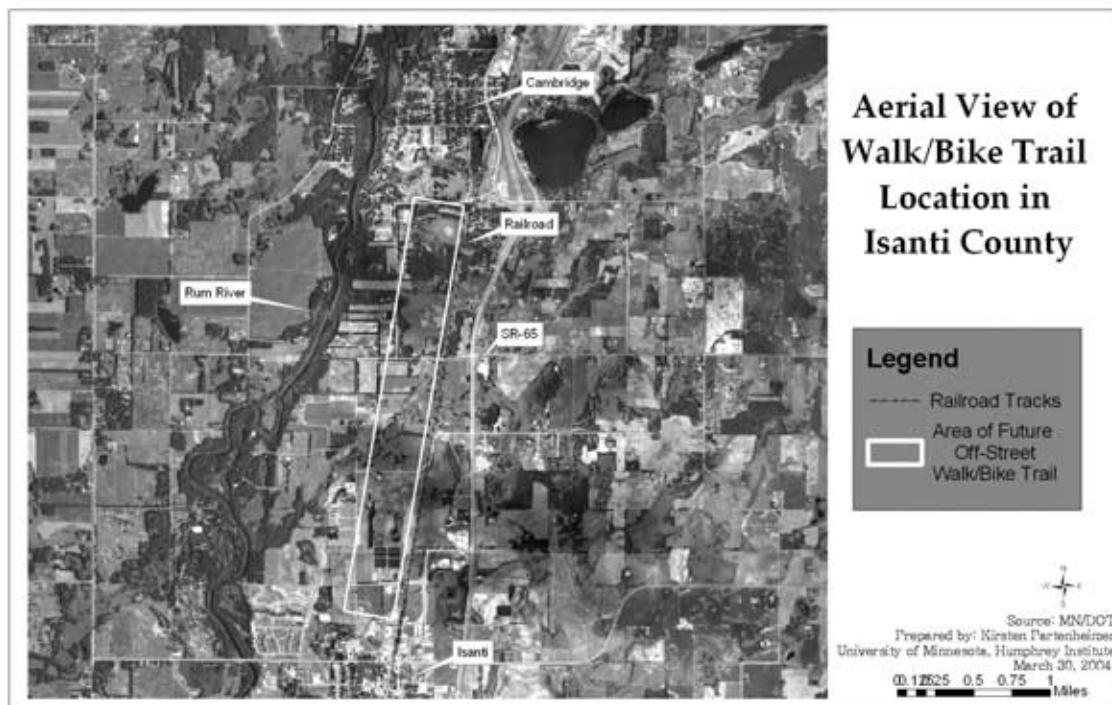
Source: Smart Growth America pg. 34⁸

Congressman James Oberstar, whose jurisdiction includes Isanti County, summarizes his view on part of the problem: “Communities are no longer well designed for walking, bicycling or other physical activity but instead are designed primarily for vehicular traffic.” Within Minnesota, the issue has been spurred by media attention given to the notion of “walkable” communities and the effect of sprawl on health. Few outside the planning or health communities may have given it much thought until an article reporting on the connection between waistlines and sprawl made headlines in the *Star Tribune* in August 2003. The article, inspired by research in national medical journals, reports that people who live in sprawling areas walk less, drive more and as a result develop serious health problems⁸.

The focus on Isanti County

Located in East Central Minnesota, Isanti County has a population of approximately 35,000 people, which is spread over 438 square miles in 13 townships. The population is predominantly white (97.11 percent); many residents trace their roots back to a single parish in Sweden. The community has long prided itself on maintaining a high quality of life for its area residents. According to U.S. Census figures⁹, the average household income is \$50,127 and the average family income is \$55,996, compared with national averages of \$41,994 and \$50,046 respectively. The focus of the activities described in this report center the towns of Isanti (pop. 2,324), Cambridge (pop. 5,520) and Braham (pop. 1,276). The three cities are all within 15 miles of each other; Cambridge is bordered by Braham ten miles to the north and Isanti five miles to the south. The area is historically rich in agriculture and several scenic farms dot the landscape. The cities of Isanti and Cambridge lie along the east bank of the Rum River (Figure 1), which flows south from Lake Mille Lacs 145 miles to its confluence with the Mississippi river in the city of Anoka.

Figure 1: Aerial view of Isanti and Cambridge



The three cities of Cambridge, Isanti, and Braham have synergistically grown over the past two decades. It was largely considered unnecessary for any one town to duplicate the investments or resources of another. Subsequently, Isanti is endowed with ice rinks and ball fields; Braham has parks, bowling allies and ball fields; Cambridge is home to the movie theaters, bars, restaurants, and other nightlife amenities. The dispersed nature of amenities and facilities has resulted in a sense of interdependence among residents of the three cities; residents travel from one town to the next to access recreation or other activities they may not have in their own backyard.

The rural enclave of Isanti County is also woven into the fabric of a dynamic and thriving metropolitan area. A mere 45-minute drive from the heart of Minneapolis or St. Paul, Isanti represents a bedroom community to the economic engine of the upper Midwest i.e., the Twin Cities (Figure 2).

Figure 2: 11-county metro area



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Isanti is part of a group of counties to the north and west, which have received considerable growth in the last decade—mainly a result of these outlying areas being among the “next frontier.” Largely because of their proximity to Interstate 94 and low housing prices, Sherburne and Wright Counties experienced exceptional growth. Chisago County, to the east of Isanti, experienced an increase of over 10,000 residents in 10 years. Between 1990 and 2000, the population of Isanti County grew 20.7 percent; their population is also slated to increase nearly 40 percent by the year 2020 (Table 2, Table 3). The composition of the county is changing with such growth; a traditionally rural population dominated by farming is being transformed into one dominated by subdivisions, which now dot the outskirts of town (Table 4).

Table 2: Population of Isanti and Peer Counties

	1990 Population	2000 Population	% Increase
1. Sherburne	41,945	64,417	53.6%
2. Chisago	30,521	41,101	34.7%
3. Wright	68,710	89,986	31.0%
4. Isanti	25,921	31,287	20.7%
5. Rice	49,183	56,665	15.2%
6. McLeod	32,030	34,898	09.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and author’s calculations

Table 3: Population and population projections for Isanti County

	Population	% Increase
1990	25,921	-----
2000	31,287	20.7
2010*	37,105	18.6
2020*	43,529	17.3
	-----	39.1**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and author’s calculations.

* Population projections.

**Percentage increase between 2000 and 2020.

Table 4: Urban and rural areas

	Inside Urban Clusters	Outside Urbanized Areas	Rural: Farm	Rural: Non-Farm
1990	N/A	19.65	7.53%	72.81%
2000	26.52%	N/A	5.02%	68.37%

Source: U.S. 2000 Census Bureau

Furthermore, most trends related to travel — in an area already known to be very auto-dependent — are headed in directions that do not support active living. Nearly 80 percent of workers commute alone by car, a 5.5 percent increase from 1990 (Table 5). While there is a slight increase in the number of people walking to work, this number comes at the expense of carpooling and is dwarfed by those using autos to get to work. In fact, Isanti County Public Health Department reports that County residents have some of the longest commuting patterns in the state, leaving workers longer in their cars and less discretionary time to incorporate physical activity into their life.¹⁰

Table 5: Means of transportation to work

Means of transportation to work for workers 16 and older	% in 1990	% in 2000	Difference
Drive alone	74.5%	80.0%	5.5%
Carpool	15.9%	13.1%	-2.8%
Bus	0.5%	0.2%	-0.3%
Bicycle	0.5%	0.2%	0.0%
Walk	1.8%	2.9%	1.1%

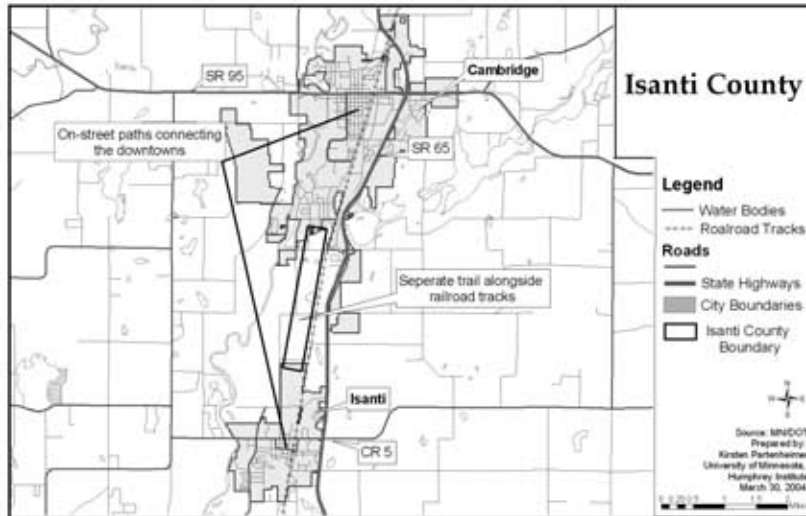
Source: U.S. 2000 Census Bureau

PART 2: Progress in Isanti County

Efforts to promote active living in Isanti County enjoy a history dating back at least 20 years. This report cannot do justice to the countless hours of community work that have been expended over the years; current efforts benefit from such momentum that has been generated. This report primarily documents the principle activities since the award of the ALbD grant starting in November 2003 and continuing through the end of 2004. It therefore describes a small part of much larger and longer efforts of active living. A current account of what is happening in Isanti, however, would be remiss to not place such efforts within its history. In the late 1980s, a group centered around Community Education recognized the merits of better connecting bicycle routes between their home and the high school in Cambridge.

The envisioned location of the bicycle trail was along the existing railroad right-of-way shown in Figure 3 along with some of the primary roadways. The high school made valiant strides, raising \$1,200. Though this was hardly enough to make a dent in this kind of project, through

Figure 3: Isanti County



the years, the desires for such a trail remained steadfast.

More than a dozen years later, the relatively simple concept of providing a bicycle-pedestrian footpath connecting Cambridge to Isanti rose in importance. After the turn of the new millennium, Isanti Council Member Sue Larson and the Isanti Park and Recreation

Board revived interest in the project. She asked Mayor Palmer of Cambridge to start a new bike trail committee and recruited Bill Carlson as a member. This group had considerable support from U.S. Congressman James Oberstar, a representative from Minnesota's eighth district and a bicycle enthusiast. This group solicited interest from the Isanti County Commission, who has supported the project since it was revived in 2001. Bill Carlson contacted the commission when he was recruited. He informed them of the benefits and aimed to engage them in the process. The county Commission has been periodically updated on the status of the Bike/Walk Trail. The County serves as the fiscal agent for the group and also contributed funds for trail connection.

Shortly after 2001, Congressman Oberstar alerted this group to an opportunity available from ALBD: \$200,000 and substantial technical assistance to help further this trail and other active living elements within the community. What was initially a meeting to advance a relatively straightforward project (i.e., a bicycle trail) soon turned into a major grant writing project, requiring considerable time, resources, and undying commitment.

A core group of interested parties formed to organize their efforts and submitted a proposal to compete with almost 1,000 other applications across the country. After considerable review, Isanti County was selected as a featured community partnership. By the time the group received the grant, the foundation for the success of this project had been in the making for years. This new group, initially named Isanti County Trails and Greenspace for Life, was fortunate to have many motivated, skilled, and experienced community members. These members also brought with them their professional or social networks from which to recruit partners or expertise. Subsequently, this group of individuals became a natural choice for steering committee members and several months later the effort became referred to as Isanti County Active Living (hereafter, ICAL).

Part 3: The 5 P's of the ICAL Initiative (Year 1)

A central charge in all of the 25 partnerships, as directed by the ALbD central office in Chapel Hill, is to advance five distinct themes of activities set forth by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. These goals, also known as the “5 P’s,” offer a framework to organize thoughts, activities, and a work plan. The “5 P’s” provide what is largely considered to be five different elements necessary for successful planning of active living and include:

- Preparation
- Promotion
- Programs
- Policy influence
- Physical projects

Because many of the efforts of ICAL are situated around the 5 P’s, they subsequently provide the framework for this part of the report below. Within each “P,” we describe important elements and activities.

Goal 1: Preparation

Preparation is defined as efforts to provide the groundwork and enable partnerships to work towards community change. Preparation is the foundation for the 5 P’s — in many respects it comprises the cornerstone on which to build subsequent efforts. It is also the least tangible — it centers on marshalling available resources, orienting social capital, motivating myriad groups to work together around a common cause. The key component to the success of the ALbD program is to form partnerships and collaboration among policy makers, governments, researchers, communities and health specialists.¹¹ Even the smallest communities will find that they have a wealth of resources, from those who can contribute professional expertise to those who simply have time and labor to volunteer. In Isanti County, this has involved putting in place different structures to better coordinate the planning process. A variety of partnerships have developed — and strengthened — over time in Isanti County. Some have already been discussed. These partnerships in no doubt are the result of determined commitment from myriad partners. These partners work hard to achieve pieces of the larger dream while often maintaining regular work schedules. Three distinct partnership preparation efforts have been critical to the success in ICAL and are described below.

Form a List of Partners — A central key to the ICAL initiative has been to form what are referred to as partners of the ICAL project. This is a group of over 21 individuals who represent varying organizations throughout the county. The partners hold, on average, quarterly meetings to review tasks assigned and report on progress. The majority of partner representatives also maintain full employment elsewhere; their efforts toward ICAL are largely volunteer. This group functions to: (a) coordinate different activities between varying groups, (b) increase awareness of ICAL Programs, (c) engage other professional organizations in supporting active community design, and (d) participate in sub-committee event planning.

Different partners enjoy varying levels of participation in the project. Although there is a dedicated group of partners, there is the need to seek additional partners to strengthen and build on existing commitment. More recently, they endeavored to encourage their current partners to be more active in the program and pledge assistance with events. In addition, a key aim from the outset has been to expand the web of active partners to include commercial establishments focusing on dimensions of active living and other non-government related entities. (See Appendix A for a list of the Partners for the Project.)

Establish a Steering Committee — The list of partners comprise a group of less than one-dozen individuals who represent the collective interests of ICAL; the steering committee is the group charting specific directions for ICAL. They comprise a dedicated group of individuals who meet monthly, if not more frequently. More frequent meeting may be required to, for example, write various grant proposals or try to coordinate with units of government and significant partners, such as Isanti County Public Health, Braham City Council, Isanti planners, the Cambridge Economic Development Director and members of an environmental coalition. Steering committee members also staff multiple events and put extra time into research, publicity or administrative needs.

The list of steering committee members (and their affiliation) include:

Kathy Minkler	Director, Public Health of Isanti County Health Department
Bill Carlson	Project Director, Isanti County Active Living
Lisa Perlick	Project Coordinator, Isanti County Active Living
Bev Ceaglske	City of Braham
Ken Ceaglske	Braham City Councilman
Joe Crocker	Isanti County Environmental Coalition
Carla Vita	Isanti City Planner
Phil Anderson	Anoka Ramsey Community College
Lisa Darling	Health Educator, Isanti County Public Health

When the idea to build the trail between Isanti and Cambridge was revived in 1999, the big question was who to involve. Bill Carlson was an obvious choice. As co-chair of the Isanti Bike Trail Committee, he had the expertise to lead a community organization. A 66-year-old retired postal worker, Carlson volunteers 40 plus hours a week with Isanti County Trails and Greenspace for Life. Bill subsequently leads much of the efforts of the steering committee, the partner meetings, and has become a focal point for these efforts. Once the ALbD grant was up and running, funds were used to hire a part-time coordinator for the project, Lisa Perlick. Lisa assists partners with planning and administrative work and is an invaluable resource in so far as moving along many of the initiatives and helping to report back to ALbD national office.

Year One Work Plan — To help direct the actions of the initiative, the steering committee was responsible for producing a Year 1-work plan. The plan helped the partners and steering committee define goals for the program and set deadlines for projects and events. By providing a road map of activities, the work plan helps a relatively ambitious endeavor to stay focused. (See Appendix B for a copy of the Year One work plan.)

Goal 2: Promotion

The second goal, promotion, refers to efforts to educate the public, media, and alert the community at-large to other cues to action. Efforts to promote ICAL come in several forms, including flyers, newspaper advertising, e-mail blogs, radio clips or billboards. A central mantra in this project has been to “get the message to the people,” no matter what the media. Promotion has been one of the stronger elements of the ICAL efforts to date, employing several approaches, which are described below.

“Kickoff” the Event with Good Press — The kickoff for much of the promotion of ICAL occurred at the project’s inception. Toward the end of 2003, ICAL received considerable media attention from several sources. Upon award of the ALbD grant, St. Paul Pioneer Press and Dispatch released several articles highlighting the news in this ex-urban setting. A different article announcing the award of the grant was featured in the Pioneer Press (shown below in Figure 4). The local news on channel KARE 11 also ran a story on the ALbD grant, thereby providing television coverage. Unquestionably, the “buzz” created at the project’s inception helped create a foundation of knowledge and activity on which future publicity could be based.

Figure 4: Sample article announcing grant



Create a logo — An initial and important step in any media outreach program is to convey a consistent message. Towards this end, ICAL adopted the logo shown in Figure 5, depicting footsteps and a bicycle wheel. Employing this image in print, on t-shirts, and other publicity materials ensures that ICAL demonstrates a consistent “look” throughout their publicity efforts. Promotional gifts displaying this logo included health information about walking, stretching, and diet, tote bags with the ALbD logo, fact sheets about the state of physical

activity, brochures, a cycling map of Isanti County, and walking maps of Braham, Isanti and the Cambridge Spirit River Nature Area.

Figure 5: ICAL logo



Figure 6: Sample article



Recruit Traditional Media — A key goal in promotion has been not only to maintain publicity throughout the project, but also expand the range of media outlets by which ICAL would send their message. Below we describe in more detail ongoing and local publicity efforts that have been employed.

- Newspaper — *The Star Tribune*, *STAR* and *Isanti County News* provide articles and advertisements for free or at a considerably reduced price. Descriptions of upcoming events, progress made by the organization or articles from the public health department on health issues and active living are also included. Figure 6 above shows a sample article, appearing in the local newspaper *Isanti County News* in July 2004.
- Magazine — Initiative Foundation IQ Magazine printed a two-page article about Bill Carlson and ALbD in connection with trails.
- Radio — The local radio station, KBEK, has been instrumental in promoting most events with free interviews and reduced pricing on the advertisements. Lisa Perlick has been interviewed several times on this station pertaining to different events such as Walk the Town and the Rum River Bicycle Classic.

Use Targeted Media and Electronic Means — The above described approaches are relatively traditional efforts to distribute the message. To increase awareness to more difficult to reach groups, ICAL also orients its publicity efforts to relatively targeted groups.

➤ Direct flyers — The Senior Commission on Aging allows ICAL to put a flyer in their mailing that serves 350 senior residents in the county. Similar efforts include the District 911 Community Education Brochure.

➤ Web site — The Isanti County Active by Design’s webpage can be accessed through the County of Isanti’s Web site www.co.isanti.mn.us/activeliving.htm. This page lists community activities, updates and provides links to other community partnerships and organizations in the ALbD program.

Diversify Publicity Efforts — To capitalize on their partnerships with the health field, ICAL is working in conjunction with local health providers to help create awareness about the benefits of healthy living. The Isanti County Public Health Department is developing a health education plan. The plan involves research about the psychological barriers to active living to help assess the health risks facing county residents and their needs. In addition, ICAL has formed partnerships with other organizations and businesses. For example, local food providers such as Perkins (the restaurant) and Herman’s Bakery, help sponsor events focused on fitness such as The Rum River Classic Bike Tour and Town Walks.

Publicize in Newsletters — In an effort to create awareness about ALbD activities in the different communities, ICAL published eight pages of additional print in a Community Education brochure. This was a direct mail piece that reaches over 11,000 homes in Isanti County. Six of the eight pages contain information on the activities of the ICAL; the remaining pages were donated to the Community Education brochure. This was a one-time event since as a partner, the Community Education brochure now allows ICAL to print events for free in a column. The publication is now distributed three times a year.

Market at Braham Pie Days — Braham, one of the three communities of ICAL, prides itself as being the “Pie Capital of Minnesota.” To help promote this tradition, each year the Pie Day Committee holds an event including vendor booths and publicity about other non-profit organizations. ICAL had a prominent showing at last year’s event and further helped generate patronage for the program. Vendor booths and non-profit booths were put up and ICAL was on hand to provide information and answer questions on active living. The event was very successful in terms of patronage for it attracted a significant crowd comprising both old and young.

Map the Town — A relatively important discovery early on in ICAL’s efforts was that many residents were simply unaware of suitable walking routes within their community or neighborhood. ICAL therefore commissioned maps as part of activities to promote everyday fitness for residents in Isanti, Cambridge and Braham. These maps (Figure 7, Figure 8) show easy routes to walk around existing parks and trails. The maps are often distributed during several ICAL events; copies are also printed in the Community Education brochure.

Figure 7: Map of Isanti

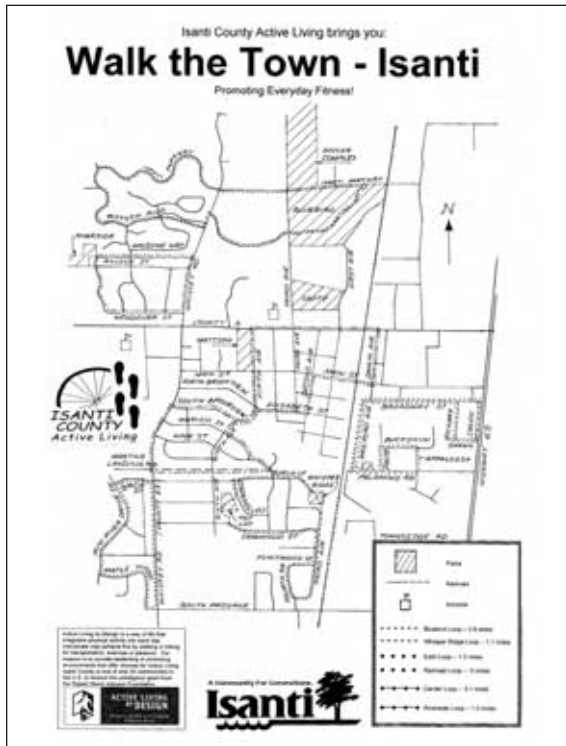
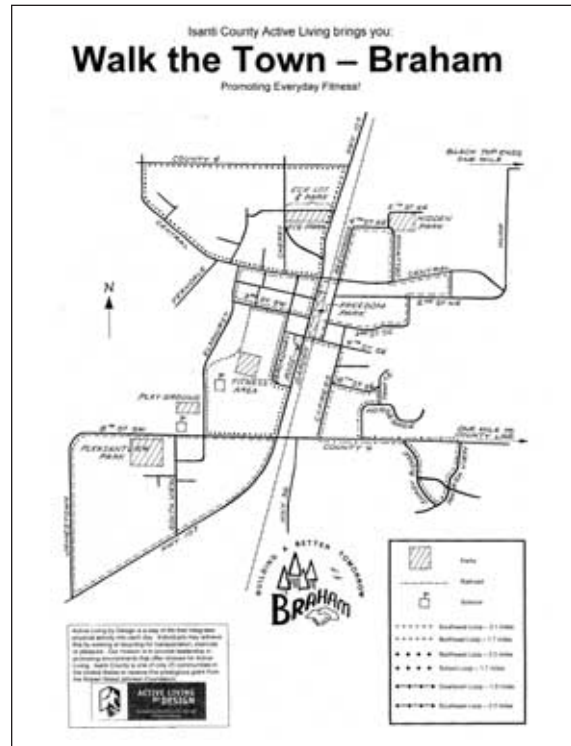


Figure 8: Map of Braham



Sign the Town — The boldest effort to date to communicate the ALbD message to the broader public was to increase awareness through a large billboard. ICAL rented a highway size billboard (measuring almost 11 by 23 feet) alongside of the popular county road connecting Cambridge and Isanti (Minnesota State Route 65). The cost of the billboard amounted to \$1,150 for four months and was paid for in part from ALbD grant funds. The billboard will be changed annually and depict a message for different seasons. The first billboard message shown below (Figure 9), displays the ALbD logo, phone number and the slogan “Promoting Everyday Fitness.” At the end of 2005, the billboard message will be changed to “Every Minute Counts,” aiming to educate the public about the benefits of accrued daily minutes of fitness.

Figure 9: ICAL billboard along Minnesota State Route 65



Goal 3: Programs

Preparation is about creating and strengthening partnerships to further active living. Promotion helps distribute the word about activities. However, neither directly provide the means or opportunities to actually further active living. There are a variety of programs, activities, initiatives and entertainment that are incentives to increases in active living. Once an individual is exposed to a given behavior that furthers active living (e.g., a walking routine, bicycle commuting), there is a higher likelihood that individual will continue such activity. A variety of the programs ICAL has been assembling throughout the past year are briefly highlighted below.

Create Nature Walks — The Rum River, as described earlier, runs adjacent to much of Cambridge. Near the Cambridge Campus of the Anoka Ramsey Community College and the Cambridge Campus of Cambridge Community College — just on the outskirts of downtown — existed an underused, but potentially valuable resource for active living: a walking trail. Seeing this vision of a trail, Bill Carlson subsequently led an effort to make it a reality. He helped recruit funds from Blandin and volunteers through the Anoka Ramsey Community College. These complementary efforts helped ICAL turn this underutilized area on the West Bank of the Rum River into a vital nature walk.

They established directional signs, kiosks, and interpretive signs describing the species, together with other informational placards. The area is now an ideal location for a walk at all times of year. Building on the improvements made as part of the above described nature walk, ICAL, in collaboration with the City of Cambridge, subsequently produced permanent interpretive signage (Figure 10) for what is now referred to as the Spirit River Nature Area. This area now provides downtown residents and employees an attractive destination for walks over their lunch hour. The City of Cambridge supported the event with a grant of \$10,000 (using funds from the Blandin foundation) for the signage and brochures for the Spirit River Nature Area.

To commemorate the occasion, ICAL organized the Rum River Ramble held on October 9, 2004, at the Anoka Ramsey Community College to highlight the new interpretive signs. The event attracted 50 people who took part in the free walk held as part of the day's activities. As part of the activities lined up for the event, ICAL distributed flyers (Figure 11) depicting the history, existence of wildlife and importance of the Rum River Basin in Isanti County. ICAL plans to organize this event yearly, so as to encourage frequent walks by residents.

Figure 10: Interpretive signage

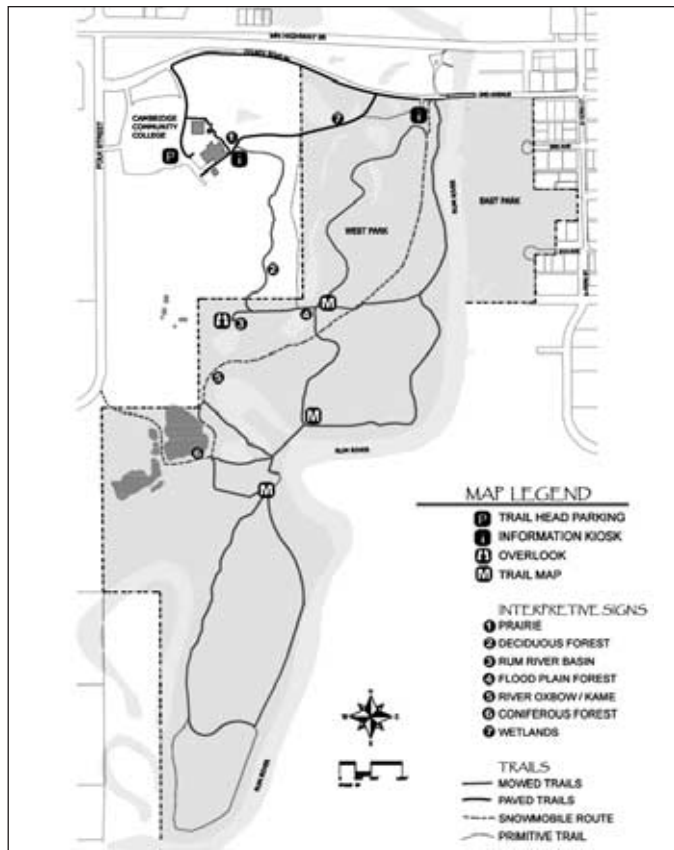


Figure 11: Rum River Basin


RUM RIVER BASIN

IMPORTANCE

The Rum River was the super highway for the Isanti Indians. To them, this important waterway was known as *Watpa Waken*, the *Great Spirit River*, until a white man's pun turned "spirit" into "rum."

The Isanti Indians included four tribes of the Dakota Nation: Mde-Wakanton, Sisseton and Wahpeton, and Wahpekute. For nearly 1,000 years, they traveled this river from their principal village of Kathio near Lake Mille Lacs to hunting ground south of here.





Father Hennepin called this waterway the St. Francis River and traveled it in 1680 as a captive of the Isanti Indians.


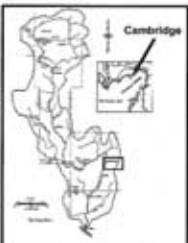


Logging on the Rum River, 1844
Cambridge Historical Society

WILDLIFE

- Mink, river otter and muskrat are common along the river.
- Look for cedar waxwings and wood ducks. Yellow-rumped warblers are abundant in the spring.
- Red-shouldered hawks nest along the Rum River. Listen for their distinctive "kee-yeer, kee-yeer" above the flood-plain forest.

HISTORY

The Rum River was formed from a glacier; the last glacier to cover Isanti County came from the southwest and was called the Grantsburg Sublobe. See how its shape follows the form of the Rum River and the Anoka Sandplain.

After 1750, the Ojibwe controlled Kathio, leading to many tribal conflicts along what they called the *Everywhere-Lake River*.

The first logs were taken from the Rum River in 1820 by soldiers at Ft. Snelling. The first commercial logging began in 1848.

This Project is a cooperative effort of the City of Cambridge and the Cambridge Campus of Anoka-Ramsey Community College. Funding for signage and educational materials was provided by a grant from the Bordin Foundation.

Adopt Pedometer Programs — Encouraging pedestrian activity is the first goal of any ICAL program. Measuring changes in pedestrian activity is an important second step. The Surgeon General recommends reaching 10,000 steps per day, which is the rough equivalent of 30 minutes of exercise. ICAL initiated a program to allow residents to record the number of steps each day by using a pedometer, a pager-sized device worn on one's belt that records the number of steps taken based on one's body movement.

The program is called, "Wheel It, Walk It," and ICAL and the Public Health Department of Isanti initiated it with the purchase of 100 pedometers. These devices regularly cost \$15 but are subsidized for \$5 for residents. Voluntary members of the program are required to keep daily records of their number of steps. A project coordinator monitors progress of individuals. Residents are provided with pedometers and their daily "steps" are recorded and kept on file. Such an activity is particularly useful in stimulating competition among the elderly to encourage slightly longer walks.

Allow Walking the School — Despite considerable enthusiasm about outdoor walking trails, several residents prefer indoor environments for walking. Recognizing that winters in Minnesota may not always lend themselves to outdoor activities for all, ICAL capitalized on a community-based program to allow residents to walk in the school halls after school hours. The Community Education Program offers passes to anyone interested in the program. To enroll, one has to register for a pass from the school at no cost. It is anticipated that all schools in the county will open after school hours to provide such an option. In addition to schools, several larger stores and malls are also becoming involved. In some facilities, posted signs enable people calculate mileage walked.

Walking School Bus — One of the major initiatives promoted by ALbD, popular in communities nationwide, is encouraging active travel among youth to and from school. Unfortunately, many impediments exist including fears associated with high levels of traffic, abduction, poor street crossings, etc. Conventional wisdom suggests many of these impediments can be overcome by assembling what is referred to as a Walking School Bus. A Walking School Bus is a procession of children who walk to school under the guidance of one or more parents who volunteer to walk with them. One parent starts walking their child to school and "picks up" other children along the way until they are at school. The parent again walks the children home from school and "drops them off" at their homes.

ICAL is proposing to implement such a program for the start of the 2005 school year in select neighborhoods. Trails that are separated from motorized traffic are important for such programs as Safe Routes to School and Walking School Bus. Both programs aim to supporting healthy lifestyles in children and acclimate children to the power of walking to destinations. Trails will foster a sense of independence among children who do not have transportation to after school programs because their parents are at work. The High School, Middle School and Elementary School in Cambridge all have access to sidewalks and are integrated in the community. Isanti has a Middle School and Elementary School within the community with access to sidewalks. The proposed Greenway Trail, once built, will link Isanti and Cambridge so the Cambridge-Isanti High School students would be able to use the trail.

“Walk” the Town — In another event to increase levels of walking among residents, ICAL helped to organize an event to “Walk the Town.” This program was organized in the summer of 2004 and involved exhibits and booths in the downtown core of the cities. The previously described walking maps were distributed, describing routes for walking between surrounding parks and shops. Fifteen people participated in the first event in Braham; a similar event was held later in the summer in Isanti. The *Star* newspaper covered some of the early events (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Newspaper coverage of Walk the Town



Establish an Apple-a-day Program — A cooperative project between Isanti County Public Health and the Cambridge Medical Center (CMC) recently completed several Community Health Education Presentations. For example, a presentation in the fall of 2004 entitled, “Live Active,” brought together different groups of community fitness and activity promoters. There was a presentation and group activity by a local chiropractor in town followed by another presentation from the Physical Therapy department at CMC.

Following the presentations there was time for the participants to learn what the community could offer in terms of physical activity promoters. The mix of vendor booths included: ICAL, Curves (fitness center for women), It Figures, Anytime Fitness, Cambridge-Isanti Community Education, CMC-Physical Therapy Department, Chiropractor-Dr. Jon Fagerness, CMC-Education Department, and Isanti County Public Health. Participation hovered around 40 people for the presentation, which represents an average number for an Apple-a-day event.

Walkable Community Workshops — Nationwide, there is a considerable attention being devoted to trying to retrofit existing communities to be more walkable. Such improvements include wider sidewalks, benches, aesthetic landscape design, and various traffic-calming techniques. A series of workshops are offered by the National Center for Bicycling and Walking as part of educational programs to educate and train the public on the benefits of well-designed communities. ICAL worked with the Minnesota Department of Health to host three Walkable Workshops in the cities of Isanti, Braham and Cambridge.

The workshops recruited participants from local elected officials, public administrators, health officials, transportation planners and other local stakeholders and community members. The aim was to highlight ways in which local land use and transportation decisions affect walking habits, personal health and overall physical activity. Again, this effort received considerable attention in the local newspaper.

Stimulate “Active” Fairs — Two other programs, or fairs, also helped promote a variety of activities centered on active living. The first was the result of yet a different partnership; this walk event was the product of efforts between ICAL, the Cambridge Medical Center (CMC), and Isanti County Public Health (ICPH). Again, booths and exhibits allowed residents to learn of different opportunities and tips for healthier living.

The second, called the Be Active Fair, was organized primarily for senior citizens in May 2004. The intent was to inform senior citizens of the various opportunities to be more active. Partners were on hand at the Cambridge Senior Center to answer questions from seniors and provide tips and benefits on healthy living. This event was featured with pictures in the *Isanti County News*, a local newspaper.

Spur a Fitness Challenge — In an effort to incorporate physical activity in their daily work routine, the city of Cambridge employees initiated this event. The staff at Cambridge City Hall now earn points for healthy eating and exercises.

Isanti Jubilee Run/Walk — Finally, ICAL also sponsored two athletic events in the summer of 2004 to spur increased activity. Partnering with “It Figures Fitness,” ICAL held a run/walk that was free to the public. The event was successful in drawing more numbers of people relative to other events, accruing over 140 participants. (Figure 13)

Figure 13: Isanti Jubilee Run/Walk



Rum River Bicycle Classic — The second event was a bicycling event. Isanti County is well known for its pastoral roads that create a welcoming environment for cyclists of all abilities. Several years ago, the county held a widely known bicycling event called the Rum River Bicycle Classic. For a variety of reasons, however, the event was not held in recent years. That changed in 2004. On August 14, ICAL resurrected this successful program as one of its primary programs. The event offered a 20 or 51-mile bike tour of Isanti County, attracting over 160 participants including Congressman James Oberstar. The ride started and ended at the Anoka Ramsey Community College with rest stops in Isanti and Braham. There was a fee of approximately \$20 per person, which included a t-shirt, sundries related to active living, refreshments at predetermined stops, and entertainment. The ride concluded with a short ceremony during which Congressman Oberstar provided an overview of the importance of Active Living by Design, trails and healthy living.

The event was successful because of the generous cash and in-kind sponsorship from local businesses. In-kind sponsors of food or beverages for the event included Herman's Bakery, Kaffee with Nancy, County Market, Mom's Co-op, Pizza Hut, Econo Foods and Perkins. The *Star* newspaper also provided in-kind sponsorship by running a 1/4 page advertisement in two different issues. Cash sponsors include Cambridge Eye Associates, Cambridge Medical Center, Wells Fargo, Cambridge Chiropractic, Advanced Telemetry Systems, Inc., Hansen Surveying, Melissa Hutchens, DDS, and Century 21 Moline Realty. Media coverage for the event was provided by the *Star* newspaper and *Isanti County News*, which had pictures of the event on both the front and back pages of the issue. A letter to the editor (Figure 14) by one of participants in the event appeared in the local paper.

Figure 14: Letter to the editor



Goal 4: Policy Influence

The last two “P’s”— policy and physical projects — are elements of an ALbD program that are the most long lasting but at the same time most difficult to complete. Exerting policy influence refers to efforts to modify public policies and standards as well as influence the organizational practices that create them. Such efforts are in no doubt the least tangible and the most difficult to quantify.

Crafting policy involves considerable time and effort to build consensus. The novelty of the ICAL initiative means that many policies currently being deliberated have not yet been implemented. But this does not mean they are no less important. For example, ICAL has had several meetings with adjacent communities to discuss possibilities for extending the Greenway trail. ICAL has commissioned several meetings with government agencies to consider options for incorporating active living elements into daily government policy. One of the most formidable efforts to date was ensuring that new development be required to incorporate physical infrastructure for walking and cycling into plans for proposed Rights of Way. For a development to be approved in Isanti or Cambridge, developers must now include walk/bike paths both in the development and between developments and other destinations.

Most notably, ICAL has helped influenced a local developer to incorporate active living principles into an entire new subdivision, the Heritage Green development. The results include 86 acres in a central location of the city as a mixed-use project with a combination of homes, parks, community center, pedestrian-friendly streetscape, open space, Cambridge-Isanti bike/walk trail, sidewalks and linkage to surrounding neighborhoods. The process required to facilitate this interaction — and ultimate result — required several hours of Bill Carlson’s time.

Goal 5: Physical Projects

Finally, physical projects are efforts to directly shape the built environment to make it more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. Longer than partnerships, promotional efforts, or any program that is administered, physical projects last a lifetime. Once constructed, they have enormous impact and help make or break a community's efforts to be successful in promoting active living.

Constructing the Greenway Trail — The core aim behind the ICAL initiative rests with the Greenway trail. The proposed route for the trail will cut across a small portion of wetlands. Once considered swamps and unsightly, wetlands provide an integral part of the ecosystem and a habitat for a variety of plant and animal species. Crossing even a small area will be expensive because it will be necessary to employ the technology of “float” trails. Sue Larson, City of Isanti Councilwoman, was urging an engineering firm experimenting with new technology or a new product to install the portion of the trail over the wetlands gratis, partly as a community service project and partly as advertisement of their product.

The first phase of the trail is tentatively slated for construction in late summer of 2005; this part will connect Isanti in the south to Cambridge. The proposed trail will consist of a combination of in-town, on and off-street bike lanes and a three-mile exclusive right-of-way in the middle. The second phase, slated for 2006 or 2007 at the earliest, will use trails on county roads to connect Cambridge to Braham, approximately 12 miles to the northeast, on the edge of the county.

Enhancing Sidewalks — It is also important, however, to think broadly about other needs throughout the community. The downtown core of Cambridge has recently been refurbished to include many of the tenets previously described and urged in the walkable community workshop. Some of such improvements are shown in Figure 15 and Figure 16. ICAL initiated construction of sidewalks and walkways throughout the towns of Cambridge, Braham and Isanti. These sidewalks will provide pedestrians access to schools, shopping centers, businesses, as well as a variety of places.

Figure 15. Examples of sidewalk/intersection improvement



Figure 16. Example of sidewalk improvement



Improving Intersections — Intersections pose a risk to pedestrians as they walk to school, work or other place. Safe intersections are necessary to prevent accidents when pedestrian have to cross roads. As part of development-related construction in Isanti County, there have been improvements in intersections on the roads. Streets are clearly marked and traffic lights have been provided to facilitate pedestrians crossing. Trouble points have been identified and retrofitted with visibly marked streets and traffic lights to aid pedestrian crossing (Figure 17).

Figure 17. Example of intersection lighting in front of a school



Part 4: Take Away Lessons — Application to Other Communities

Through diligent work and countless hours of volunteer efforts, ICAL has made valiant strides in furthering “active living” through a variety of means. Many of the tenets mentioned above, introduced as part of the 5 P’s, are easily replicated in other communities. Parts of the recipe for success — forming partnerships, launching programs — are relatively straightforward and are considered low hanging fruit. Other efforts are more complicated and required considerable groundwork.

As we reflect on the progress of ICAL to date, it is important to be aware of matters where the ICAL program could build further support. After reviewing the progress today, there continues to be at least three dimensions requiring further attention: (1) targeted marketing of the ICAL message, (2) ensuring the physical infrastructure, and (3) coalescing active living efforts around the trail. Each is briefly discussed below.

Targeted Marketing — ICAL began their effort with a relatively low understanding of active living among the population. Throughout the public in Isanti County, active living was not prominently on anyone’s radar screen. Efforts to build a Greenway Trail between Isanti and Cambridge were considered a “pipe dream” of a select group of individuals; bicycling and walking were activities that the larger population might do on a few of the cherished days of summer — not as part of daily activities.

ICAL’s efforts during the first year cast a wide net when it came to promoting various ideas and programs. The principal aim was to get the word out, regardless of age, sex, occupation or lifestyle. The target audience was everyone! The event booths and other promotions that were held initially attracted good numbers of people. An increasing number of events in concert with a relatively general message, however, lost its impact quickly.

A key tenet of ALbD is that different groups of populations demand different messages. What may be applicable to an aging population is not likely to be of much use to teenagers. Families with children comprise a relatively large and unique market of active living participants themselves. Furthermore, little attention has been devoted to examining such relationships specifically for youth or providing a systematic approach for doing so. Because youth and adolescence represent unique parts of the life course that are particularly important in the development of lifelong behavior patterns, this is an important gap to fill.

A conscientious effort toward select target populations would have more direct impact. A series of walking clubs and pedometer programs could be targeted towards the elderly. Training classes for different aerobics could be slated for middle-aged parents. A variety of youth programs might be tailored towards different skills for a variety of ages.

Effectively identifying an audience for a message of any program is a first step. Targeting that particular audience with applicable programs and incentives is the next step. A key area to build on in the ICAL efforts is a more directed effort for ensuring that certain populations get the message. Towards this end, in year two, ICAL will be enhancing the number of programs (and their characteristics) to children and families. With more directed efforts, ICAL hopes that such efforts will spur increased participation in walking clubs and other more pointed programs (e.g., classes) will be able to reach economies of scale to ensure success.

Ensuring the Physical Infrastructure — The greenway trail connecting Cambridge to Isanti provided the initial impetus to the ICAL efforts. Many partnerships were originally formed around its inception. The greenway trail continues to serve as an axis around which most of the other activities, however peripheral, revolve. The central mission of the trail — providing an attractive facility for active transportation between Cambridge and Isanti — embodies much of ICAL’s central mission. A major issue, as we reflect on progress during the first year, however, is that this facility remains in its early phases of planning.

Funding — Constructing greenway trails are difficult. They require seemingly countless steps, including preliminary public meetings, legal planning, cost-estimation, design, and construction. This says nothing about what is unanimously regarded the most difficult obstacle: funding. Quite simply, championing a trail building effort from conception to completion requires that a planner have the perseverance of a marathon runner and the patience of an archeologist. ICAL deliberately worked to put in place critical elements of the political infrastructure of this pursuit such as the organizing committees. Approximately \$30,000 worth of funding has been solidly secured for building the trail. The aim has always been to concentrate on such efforts more intensely at a later date. ICAL, however, has made progress in planning for trail construction and other programming, despite the lack of complete funding for the construction, estimated at approximately \$400,000. To date, funding has been procured from the initial fundraiser by high school students in the late 1980s (\$1,200), private donations (\$2,500), an Initiative Foundation (\$5,000 for a feasibility study), Isanti Township (\$10,000), Isanti County (\$10,000), RWJF (\$8,000, for an environmental engineering study), Local Trail Connections (\$50,000¹), and TEA-LU funding (\$288,602²).

Acquiring the Right of Way — An often overlooked stumbling block for many trail building efforts is acquiring the right of way. The ownership of land is a highly sensitive topic among adjacent property owners. Landowners often fear matters of liability, trespassing or vandalism and for this reason, may oppose any given project or divorce themselves from planning efforts. Their reasons for refusing to sell even small portions of their land are often interpreted as irrational and lead to heightened frustration among planning authorities.

The ICAL greenway trail requires slivers of land from the edge of five privately owned properties. Three owners enthusiastically consented and donated the land as a tax deduction. Another landowner refused; a fifth was undecided. When the undecided landowner passed away, his widow suddenly refused to contribute to the trail building effort. Subsequently, ICAL has furnished the owners with information to address their concerns. They provided owners with a report describing how greenway facilities and railroad tracks can harmoniously co-exist in the same corridors (trails adjacent to railroad tracks are often perceived as safety hazards).

Isanti County could always acquire the land via eminent domain, however, this is a strategy relied on as a last resort. ICAL is optimistic that the patience and education will encourage the last two owners to alter their decisions. In the interim, ICAL has received verbal agreements from the landowners to grant an easement for the Greenway Trail; appraisals of value are being conducted.

¹ Pending.

² This funding has not been secured yet and will come from money dedicated in the House version of the Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (TEA-LU), Bill H.R. 3550. The House approved \$275 billion over six years, but this amount must be reconciled with the \$318 billion version the Senate passed in February.

A key aspect to making the Greenway Trail come to fruition is more concerted attention . Currently, Isanti County does not have an individual on staff whose sole responsibility is furthering the trail. Lisa Perlick, the half-time Project Coordinator for the ICAL project is already stretched thin in pursuing other dimensions to the ICAL project. Yet, the trail planning, design, and construction requires a full-time individual to pursue this part of the project.

Focusing Active Living Efforts Around the Trail — Finally, there is need to weave together the success of the general programs and activities with the focused infrastructure investment of the Greenway. If the Greenway Trail serves as the backbone to spur physical activity, then programs and activities need to coalesce around such a resource. To date, a sprinkle of concentrated activity has been centered on the Greenway Trail. Such activity has mostly been in the form of developing the political infrastructure to help make decisions about its routing and design. In many respects, such preliminary efforts make sense since the Greenway is not yet built. However, as ICAL advances throughout the next four years, considerable effort needs to ensure that the programming activities mesh well with the important new infrastructure investment.

A significant challenge remains in successfully promoting the trail for everyday use. While existing trails are popular for recreation, especially in the summer, potential users may perceive the distance between Isanti and Cambridge to be too far for commuting or every day uses.

Methods to draw public involvement in the Greenway Trail might include public gardening weekends to help beautify the trail, Run/Walk events or races, or bicycle commuting seminars. Furthermore, it will be important for ICAL to begin to think about promoting events in both Isanti and Cambridge that would encourage or perhaps even require that families travel between the two via the trail.

Either way, several factors are important to consider. Many who are encouraged to use these trails may feel uneasy about traveling on the more secluded and lighter-traveled stretches. A security plan should be devised to protect users from not only the small likelihood that they could be victims of crime, but more so to give them a sense of security and a sense that they have the freedom to use the trail by themselves or during non-peak hours. The security plan could include, but should not be limited to, having police officers or trained volunteers patrol the trail by bike, installing emergency call boxes or educating the community about safety precautions.

The long stretch of trail poses possible maintenance challenges. The size of the trail could put a strain on the county department charged with maintaining it because this calls for extra funds, which may not be readily available. Trails, however, are wide enough to allow service vehicles through to clear debris or plow snow. An option to consider is volunteer groups who could be responsible for light maintenance, such as trash pick-up.

Charting Similar Courses

With the awarding of ICAL from ALbD, active living has received a “healthy shot in the arm” in Minnesota and for that matter the upper Midwest. The described efforts to date through the 5 P’s have helped establish momentum and enthusiasm that is burgeoning.

ICAL currently has the luxury of access to technical and advisory support at Active Living by Design (ALbD) — resources which may be unavailable to other groups not associated with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. It is therefore imperative that similar efforts in other communities recruit community members and professionals who can volunteer their skills, champion a similar initiative, and develop similar programs in other areas.

The process documentation described herein can serve as a foundation for the types of activities that promote active living. Active Living by Design’s mission is to create environments that promote physical activity. The greenway in Isanti County served as the impetus for the project; but like many communities, ICAL knows this takes more than building a sidewalk or greenway. For communities to change sedentary behavior, they will need to adopt a holistic approach that connects with policy, programs, promotions, preparation and physical projects. The 5 P’s described in this report could be relied on in part to help chart a similar course in other communities and further active living for all.

About Us

The Active Communities / Transportation (ACT) Research Group is a collection of students, faculty, and researchers at the University of Minnesota who conduct research on land use-transportation policies and programs relating to “active” communities and/or “active” transportation. Current projects include examining the factors that influence the types of neighborhoods households choose, how individuals travel who live in such neighborhoods, the relationship to active modes of transportation (i.e., cycling), and tools and techniques in planning for “active” modes of transportation. For more information, visit: www.umn.edu/~kkrizek/act.htm.

Appendix A: List of Partners

Bill Carlson	Project Director, Isanti County Active Living
Kathy Minkler	Director, Public Health of Isanti County Health Department
Lisa Perlick	Project Coordinator, Isanti County Active Living
George Larson	Isanti County Commissioner
Steve Nelson	Director of Isanti County Parks
Rod Elmstrand	Director of Extension Services
Carla Vita	Isanti City Planner
Ken Ceaglske	Braham City Councilman
Ken Runberg	Superintendent of Schools, District 911
Jon Ward	Clinic Administrator, Cambridge Medical Center
John Schlager	Cambridge City Council, Cambridge-Isanti Bike/Walk Trail
Kathi Schaff	Cambridge Area Chamber of Commerce
Sue Blom	Licensed Psychologist
Rob Lininger	Licensed Psychologist
Joe Crocker	Isanti County Environmental Coalition
Bill Berg	Pastor, First Baptist Church
Greg Carlson	CEO, Grandview Christian Ministries
Erven Skaar	Isanti County Commission on Aging
Mike Eklund	Isanti Township Supervisor
George Kroeninger	Executive Director, Be Active Minnesota
Chris Kimber	Physical Activity Promotion Coordinator, MN Dept. of Health
Doug Differt	Deputy Commissioner, MN Department of Transportation
Kristie Billiar	Chief Engineer, MN Department of Transportation
Deven Nelson	Staff Assistant, Congressman Oberstar
Phil Anderson	Cambridge Community College
George Wimmer	Isanti Jaycees
Michael Huber	Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota
Bob Works	Office of Transit MNDOT
Steve Voss	District 3 Planning Director
Bob Bollenbeck	East Central Regional Development Commission
Beverly Ceaglske	City of Braham
Dennis Olson	Isanti County Sportsman
David Carlberg	City of Cambridge
Marlys Palmer	Mayor of Cambridge
David Apitz	Mayor of Isanti
Terry Turnquist	Mayor of Braham
Bob Voss	Ex. Director ECRDC
Lisa Darling	Health Educator, Isanti County Public Health
Carl Kuhl	Senator Norm Coleman's Office, currently Governor of Minnesota
Jim Gelbmann	Senator Mark Dayton's Office
Marc Kimball	Senator Mark Dayton's Office

Appendix B: Year One Workplan

Goal 1: Develop and maintain an effective partnership to promote active living

Tactic #1 (Preparation): Bring together organizations and people with an interest in promoting active living within Isanti County

Activity # 1: Obtain resolutions and commitments from partners, local governments, boards, organizations, and individuals to participate.

- *Add 3 partners by March 3, 2004*

Activity #2: Recruit commercial establishments that focus on active and healthy living. These include such places as local bike shops, sporting goods stores fitness establishments, athletic stores, health food stores and outlets, etc.

Activity #3: Develop a list serve of all partners and interested parties for communications and outreach.

- *Make a list serve by May 31, 2004*

Tactic #2: Establish Administrative Structure of Trails and Greenspace For Life Committee

Activity #1: Establish a steering committee

- *November 24, 2003*

Activity #2: Advertise and fill Part Time Coordinator and staff positions Greenspace for Life Committee

- *Hire Project Coordinator February 1, 2004*

Activity #3: Develop a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Foundation for Trails and Greenspace For Life Committee; apply for Tax Status with Internal Revenue Service; engage Attorney for pro-bono donated work to complete; meet regularly and assign tasks to coordinator, director and committee members

- *December 31, 2004*

Tactic #3: Assess scope and possibilities of Active Living connections in Isanti County and adjacent communities/counties

Activity #1: Examine bike and walk trail possibilities and routes through cities and Isanti County, and to adjacent counties

- *July 1, 2004*

Activity #2: Examine and quantify barriers to trails

- *Safe routes to school programs September 1, 2004*

Activity #3: Research potentials for year-round activities and usage of trails and links to existing and proposed parks within geographic boundary and adjacent county/community resources

Goal 2: Increase community awareness of the health and other benefits of active living

Tactic #1 (Promotion): Use existing outlets to inform community of activities for healthy living.

Activity #1: Establish a Web site to inform community of activities for healthy living and regularly update and provide links to other community partners and organizations.

- *July 1, 2004*

Activity #2: Establish booth and marketing events/brochures for major community and county events such as Isanti Rodeo/Jubilee Days, Isanti County Fair, Braham Pie Days, 4th of July celebrations, Cambridge Parade and winter downtown celebrations, etc.

- *Isanti Home Show booth - Saturday and Sunday March 27 and 28, 2004*
- *Isanti Rodeo Days - Run/Walk - Saturday, July 10, 2004*
- *Isanti County Fair - Walk the Town - Cambridge - Saturday, July 24, 2004*
- *Braham Pie Days - Walk the Town - Braham - Friday, August 6, 2004*
- *Cambridge Chamber Event - Rum River Classic Bike Tour - Saturday, August 14, 2004*
- *Isanti Bluebird Festival - Walk the Town - Isanti - Saturday September 18, 2004*
- *Cambridge Community College - Walk - Rum River Ramble - Saturday, October 9, 2004*

Activity #3: Include information on active living in school newsletter to promote healthy activities and the trail project to kids; include active living information articles to City monthly newsletters for Cambridge, Isanti and Braham city publications which also appear in the local newspapers; include articles on City Web sites that appear online; include in the local newspapers Web sites; include active living articles on Isanti and Braham school Web sites; include articles at Cambridge Community College campus via newsletter and their Web site; include program literature at local libraries and on their regional library Web site

- *Ongoing*

Tactic #2: Isanti County Public Health to identify local health risk factors

Activity #1: Use five-year assessment plan to identify local risk factors and develop a health education plan

- *February 1, 2005*

Activity #2: Obtain and develop information on psychological barriers to Active Living

- *February 1, 2005*

Activity #3: Develop Education Plan Based on Identified Barriers to Active Living

- *February 1, 2005*

Tactic #3: Marketing For Health

Activity #1: Use Cambridge Medical Center (Allina) and Public Health Clinics to get positive messages out and provide information on Active Living and Committee/Foundation activities

- *Cambridge Eye Clinic and Cambridge Medical Center (Bike Tour)*
- *Cambridge Medical Center - Information on Healthy Activities - Newsletter*

Activity #2: Work with local food providers, school and businesses to promote healthy and active living; include local fast food outlets, grocers, food vendors, restaurants on healthy choices, eating healthy eating habits and reduced portions

Activity #3: Develop a fitness challenge and similar events for Isanti County including bike and walking events for charity, the Bike-Walk Committee and Foundation, develop promotional materials for local bike shops and businesses, market and develop contests for biking and provide recognition for participation, keep kids, adults and seniors in activities.

- *Isanti Home Show booth - Saturday and Sunday March 27 and 28, 2004*
- *Active Living by Design Brochures*
- *Isanti Rodeo Days - Run/Walk - Saturday, July 10, 2004*
- *Market brochures and information to schools, senior centers and local businesses to increase target market*

- *Isanti County Fair - Walk the Town Cambridge - Saturday, July 24, 2004*
- *Market brochures and information to schools, senior centers and local businesses to increase target market*
- *Braham Pie Days - Walk the Town - Braham - Friday, August 6, 2004*
- *Market brochures and information to schools, senior centers and local businesses to increase target market*
- *Cambridge Chamber Event - Rum River Classic Bike Tour - Saturday, August 14, 2004*
- *Market with local sponsors, guarantee t-shirt for participants pre-registration, family discounts, 2 routes - one 12 - 15 miles and the other 35 miles*
- *Isanti Bluebird Festival - Walk the Town - Isanti - Saturday September 18, 2004*
- *Market brochures and information to schools, senior centers and local businesses to increase target market*
- *Cambridge Community College - Walk - Rum River Ramble - Saturday, October 9, 2004*
- *Market with brochures and information to schools, senior centers and local businesses, community centers to increase target market and include more families*

Goal 3: Increase access to and availability of diverse opportunities for active living

Tactic #1 (Programs): Tie 3 cities' parks and Isanti County park system together

Activity #1: Assess the availability and access of the current system

- *Ongoing*

Activity #2: Meet with parks and planning directors in each community and county to coordinate comprehensive plans and existing/future parks plans; develop plan of action

- *Ongoing - Partner meetings*

Activity #3: Develop access/linkage plan and share with departments of transportation of all government units and county, MN DOT

- *MN DOT is a Partner and will attend ALBD Partner meetings - March 16, 2004*

Tactic #2: Create pedestrian and bike-friendly environment

Activity #1: Develop maps of each city and County Park and trails; identify trailheads

- *July 1, 2000*

Activity #2: Identify routes for biking/walking and traveling county without a car

- *December 31, 2004*

Activity #3: Survey each city and Isanti County for barriers including busy streets, intersections, unsafe crossings, railroad tracks, etc.

- *Ongoing with the cities as they change and grow*

Tactic #3: Explore other recreational opportunities

Activity #1: Develop a plan for use of river canoes on Rum River, wetland trails, development plan for an arboretum, zones and areas for cross country skiing

- *Arboretum Nature Walk has acquired funds and a committee is meeting in April to develop trails and signage*

Activity #2: Plan for school activities and program to include active living access for weight training, swimming and walking

- *Safe Routes to school*
- *Walking School Bus*

- Activity #3:** Involve Active Living Program and integrate into School District's Community Education program which includes yoga, aerobics, softball, etc.
- *Yearly events printed in the Community Ed program for Cambridge for Spring/Summer edition due out in March*

Goal 4: Enhance public policy and organizational supports for active living

Tactic #1 (Policy Influence): Create Isanti County Unit for Active Living

Activity #1: Convene the County advisory committee on Active Living by Design

- *May 31, 2004*

Activity #2: Hold regular meetings between government agencies (City, Township, County, State) and the Active Living by Design partnership

- *Ongoing - Partners meetings - Senator Dayton's staff assistant will attend Partner meetings*

Activity #3: Work with local legislative representatives and enhance available support for active living by design projects and potential funding support

- *Invitations to Partners within the government to all Partners meetings to events*
- *Project Director will meet with local representatives on March 3, 2004*

Tactic #2: Work with all local government units to create ties to strengthen Active Living activities and programs

Activity #1: Develop ordinances for park and trail/open space set-aside for builders/developers

- *Ordinances already in place for Isanti, Cambridge and Braham*

Activity #2: Work with City, County and State of Minnesota Transportation Departments to develop/redevelop bike and walking shoulders along new and existing roadways in county

Activity #3: Work with surrounding townships to incorporate trail extensions outside city boundaries and get support and share information on trail and active living policies of the partnership

- *Will meet with townships of Isanti, Cambridge, Bradford, Stanchfield and Springvale by December 31, 2004*

Tactic #3: Work with Local Service Clubs such as Jaycees, Rotary Club, Senior Center, Lions, and Chambers of Commerce as well as local churches to promote active living in work places

Activity #1: Get resolutions from organizations and businesses to participate in Active Living Program for County

- *October 31, 2004*

Activity #2: Provide health information to distribute for active living lunchtime activities

- *Ongoing with the Director of Public Health*

Activity #3: Determine level of interest and potential plans for business and services active living projects in work places

- *Ongoing*

Goal 5: Improve built and natural environments to support active living

Tactic #1 (Physical Projects): Bike and Walk Trail Design and Construction

Activity #1: Promote corridors between services and recreation; survey for possible routes and green corridors

- *Corridor between Cambridge and Isanti already been determined*
- *Alternate plans in place between Cambridge and Braham*

Activity #2: Develop plan for County, integrating city-wide plans already in place and contemplated

- *Ongoing with the county park board and with the cities*

Activity #3: Identify funding resources and begin applying for needed improvements from State, federal, and private foundations

- *Local Trail Connections Grant by February 28, 2004*
- *Bikes Belong by July 21, 2004*
- *T-21 has already been applied for*

Tactic #2: Create nature walks and easy access to parks

Activity #1: Survey walks and parks under development

- *Ongoing*

Activity #2: Work with four park boards in Isanti County; integrate activities and planning

- *Ongoing*

Activity #3: Develop maps, signage of points of interest, lists of flora and fauna for use along trails and parks

- *Arboretum/Nature Walk - October 9, 2004*

Tactic #3: Ensure adequate funding for improving the natural environment to promote active living

Activity #1: Work with government units to encourage proper use of park funds

Activity #2: Suggest uses of park and trail funds from new housing start and developments

Activity #3: Apply for funding from outside sources

Appendix C: Year One Accomplishments

Preparation

- *Hired part-time coordinator*
- *Recruited 31 active partnership members*
- *Established a steering committee*

Promotion

- *Full-page advertisement in local newspaper discussing Active Living*
- *Highway 65 billboard*
- *City walking maps for Isanti, Braham and Cambridge*
- *Walkable Community Workshops*

Programs

- *Isanti Jubilee Run/Walks co-sponsored by It Figures. There was a successful turnout of 140 participants as compared to the 15-20 participants when sponsored by It Figures.*
- *Braham Pie Days*
- *Walk the Town Braham*
- *The Rum River Bike Classic*
- *Rum River Rumble*

Appendix D: Year Two Work Plan Highlights

Preparation

- *2900 responses from the Survey of Health Risk Factors - October 31, 2005*
- *Develop grant writing strategy - July 31, 2005*

Promotion

- *Publish map of county with safe bicycle routes - August 31, 2005*
- *Presentation promoting our successes of Isanti County - March 31, 2005*

Programs

- *Pilot Walking School Bus - October 31, 2005*
- *Pilot Senior Walking program in place - September 30, 2005*

Policy Influence

- *Local government official attend educational workshop - October 31, 2005*
- *Meet with legislators during session - March 31, 2005*

Physical Projects

- *Opening Central Ave East in Braham - January 31, 2005*
- *Engineer study of bike/walk trail wetland crossing - March 31, 2005*

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