

Bike, Walk, and Wheel

Evaluation of Active Living by Design | Columbia, Missouri | 2003-2008

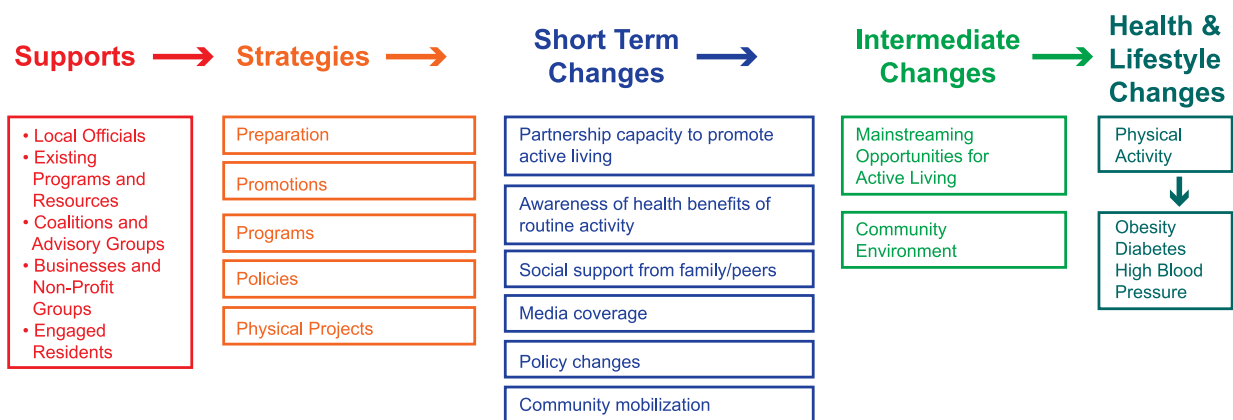
On a Fall morning, a father and son set off down the sidewalk for school. As they follow their route, they are joined by other children, forming a walking school bus. The children carry a large, bright banner as they cross the street, nearing their elementary school. This sight is common in Columbia, Missouri, where a local non-profit and a team of dedicated partners encourage citizens to lead healthier lives by creating opportunities and environments supportive of active living.

“Active living” is a way of life that integrates physical activity into daily routines in order to accumulate at least 30 minutes of activity each day. In November 2003, PedNet Coalition received a five-year, \$200,000 grant as part of the Active Living by Design national program (www.activelivingbydesign.org) funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. By advocating for changes in community design, specifically land use, transportation, parks, trails, and greenways, the Active Living by Design initiative intended to make it easier for people to be active in their daily routines.¹

“I think that most of the things you do that encourage people to be healthy are good for all other aspects of the community as well... And so I think that almost everything you do in connection with trying to design your city to be a better place to be active, you are going to improve things not only for the people who are walking and bicycling but for everybody.” -Partner

The Active Living by Design Community Action Model provided five active living strategies to influence community change: Preparation, Promotions, Programs, Policies, and Physical Projects. The 5P model represents a comprehensive approach to increasing physical activity through short-term, intermediate, and long-term community changes. This inclusive model provided a basis from which PedNet and its ALbD partnership sparked a grassroots movement for policy change and infrastructure improvements by raising awareness and providing opportunities for residents to engage in active living.

Active Living by Design Community Action Model



“There has to be an impetus to get people to change behaviors. Seeing other people doing it, they’re going to identify that. A lot of people are just programmed to get in the car and drive somewhere. A lot of people just don’t see that they can take a bike and go to the grocery store, or walk to school, in a safe manner or incorporate that as part of their daily life. I think a lot of people think of just getting on their bike for the exercise, but you can get on for enjoyment too. Just realizing that there are other options available, the fact that it can be done... The awareness is huge.” -Partner

¹ The Active Living by Design (ALbD) initiative was established by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) in 2001, and its National Program Office (NPO) is part of the University of North Carolina Gillings School of Global Public Health in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Twenty-five interdisciplinary community partnerships were selected across the country to demonstrate how changing community design can impact physical activity. Transtria was funded by RWJF to work with the NPO to conduct ALbD evaluation and dissemination activities. This case report draws from Transtria’s evaluation efforts.

Columbia, Missouri

Columbia is a sprawling city of about 100,000 residents and 25,000 college students, located in central Missouri. The city has three distinct regions, an older urban core, newer suburban housing, and rural outskirts, each with its own distinct challenges and facilitators for active living. While the physical projects and policy efforts undertaken by the Columbia partners affected the entire city, the partnership elected to focus its programmatic and promotional efforts on a four-square-mile urban area with approximately 12,000 residents and five public schools. The northern part of the area (population 7,500) is approximately 35% African American and 57% Caucasian, with a median household income below \$20,000. The southern portion (population 5,000) is about 95% Caucasian, with a median household income above \$60,000. Residents of the northern section report their health status as “good to excellent” less often (79%) than those living in the southern section (92%).

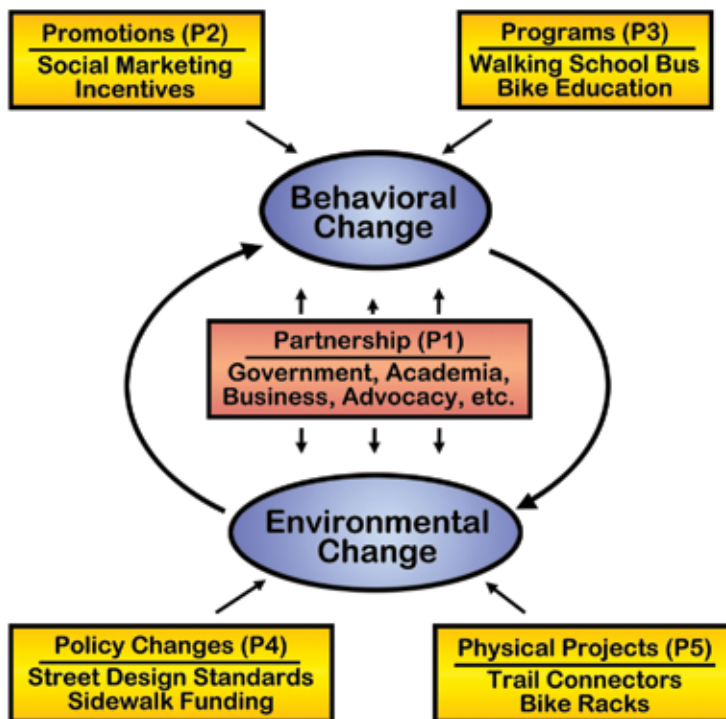
The 2000 United States Census showed that approximately 1% of Columbians traveled to work by bicycle and 5% walked to work. An assessment showed children living within one mile of one of the five selected ALbD schools, 80% were being driven to school. The partnership opted to focus its effort on children, since they were an easily accessible group whose behaviors were still malleable.

Prior to the Active Living by Design grant, the seeds of active living were planted in Columbia. In 2001, the annual Mayor’s Challenge Bike, Walk, and Wheel Week was launched to encourage citizens to use non-motorized modes of transportation through group walks, bicycle rides, safety and maintenance classes, media campaigns, and free breakfasts. In addition, the urban core was relatively pedestrian- and bike-friendly, with bike lanes and sidewalks. The city was home to 15 miles of trails and more than 30 parks. However, accessing these amenities was not always safe or feasible, especially for urban residents. Likewise, the infrastructure and connectivity of the suburban and rural parts of the city were lacking or non-existent. More than 100 streets within a quarter-mile of the five targeted schools lacked sidewalks.

“I think the trail system’s great, but the focus over the long-term needs to be in connectivity from neighborhoods.” -Partner

To address these active living challenges throughout Columbia, the PedNet Coalition designed the Bike, Walk, and Wheel project using a modified 5P model. Programs and promotions encouraged active living behaviors to generate grassroots advocacy for physical environment change. At the same time, changes in policy and the resulting physical projects created new places where active living was safe and easy. In collaboration with a diverse partnership, PedNet capitalized on the city’s existing resources to make a case for expanding opportunities for active living. The partnership focused on four primary areas: Walking School Bus, Physical Activity Self-Challenge, social marketing campaign, and policy, along with several secondary programs.





Preparation

Partnership

The PedNet Coalition was the lead agency for the Bike, Walk, and Wheel partnership. This community advocacy non-profit was founded on Earth Day in 2000 to promote healthy and active communities. As one staff member described the partnership structure, PedNet was the hub of a wheel with spokes connecting it to the partners. Partners preferred to let PedNet coordinate most of the Bike, Walk, and Wheel efforts.

While many of the partners were active in the PedNet Coalition prior to the Active Living by Design project, the lead agency worked to expand the variety of local organizations, businesses, government agencies, and residents involved in its efforts.

PedNet staff members utilized a number of strategies to bring new partners to the table

and keep existing partners involved. High-visibility promotional events raised awareness of the initiative and provided tangible successes. When individuals and organizations voiced concerns or objections related to ALbD activities, staff actively and persistently discussed the issues raised. The partnership took care to develop programming for a variety of audiences, increasing the reach of the partnership. The staff also worked to build individual relationships with new and existing organizations.

The partnership held annual meetings to discuss and plan ALbD efforts. Meetings were announced one month in advance and held on weekday evenings to maximize the number of attendees. Each meeting featured a guest speaker and an award ceremony for exemplary partners whose contributions to the partnership served as a role model for active living. Over the five-year grant period, some partners became less engaged, in part due to changes in leadership or priorities. When staff turnover occurred within partner organizations, PedNet made an effort to restore relationships.

Partners, staff, and community members identified several beneficial characteristics of the partnership:

- The staff were particularly successful at engaging diverse partners, including schools, businesses, and government agencies.
- Through the leadership of PedNet, the diverse partners were able to collaborate to address common goals.
- The partnership successfully engaged key community stakeholders, including the Mayor and the University of Missouri.
- The partners demonstrated a great degree of passion about active living.

“They’ve been really good about getting a broad segment of the community because you’ve got businesses involved, you’ve got schools, government, citizens. I think they’ve done a really nice job of trying to reach out to lots of segments of the community.” -Partner

Partners, staff, and community members also noted many challenges to creating and maintaining partnership:

- The biggest challenge was keeping the entire partnership engaged in ALbD activities throughout the grant period.
- Engaging lower-income community representatives was challenging for the partnership.

The table below lists the partners involved in the Bike, Walk, and Wheel partnership.

Members of the Bike, Walk, and Wheel Partnership	
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boone County Hospital • Boone Hospital Center • Columbia/Boone County Department of Public Health and Human Services • Mayor’s Council on Physical Fitness and Health • University of Missouri <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physical Therapy Department - School of Nursing
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Columbia Catholic School • Columbia Public Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blue Ridge Elementary - Fairview Elementary - Grant Elementary - Lee Elementary - Ridgeway Elementary - Russell Boulevard Elementary - West Junior High - West Boulevard Elementary • Parent Teacher Associations • University of Missouri Police Department
Parks & Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity and Recreation Center • City of Columbia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parks and Recreation Department
Urban Design, Planning & Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alta Planning • City of Columbia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning Department - Transportation Department • Missouri Department of Transportation
Community Leaders, Policy & Decision-makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Education • Board of Health • City Council members • City Manager’s Office • Mayor

Members of the Bike, Walk, and Wheel Partnership (continued)

Other Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Columbia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Convention and Visitors' Bureau - Disabilities Commission - Fire Department - Office of Volunteer Services - Police Department - Public Works Department
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Columbia Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission • GetAbout Columbia • PedNet Coalition* • SAFE KIDS Coalition • Sustain Mizzou (student group) • Trailnet
Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Callaway Bank • Columbia Special Business District • CyclExtreme • Empire Roller Rink • Klunk Bicycles and Repair • RagTag Cinema • The Cherry Hill Group • Try-athletics • Virtual Realty • Walt's Bicycle, Fitness & Wilderness Company
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Columbia Channel • Cumulus Media • KBXR (radio) • KFRU (radio) • KPLA (radio) • Vangel • "We're Playing Your Song"
Community & Faith-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benton-Stephens Community Association • East Campus Neighborhood Association • Fairview Neighborhood Association • YouZeum

*Organization that served as lead agency during the ALbD grant period

Leadership and Champions

Bike, Walk, and Wheel utilized a management team consisting of representatives from PedNet, the Health Department, and the Mayor's Council on Physical Fitness and Health. The Executive Director of the PedNet Coalition served as Project Director for the ALbD grant and took the lead in project coordination. Partners pointed to the consistent and passionate leadership of PedNet for much of the partnership's success. According to partners, PedNet was effective in engaging a broad segment of the community and had a large following that could be mobilized at any time. PedNet made a concerted effort to keep the community well informed.

PedNet experienced growing pains during the ALbD grant period. As the partnership grew and PedNet received additional funding and support, the staff had to shift from operating as a small, volunteer-run, three-person non-profit organization to a well-staffed organization with a more complicated decision-making process. Due, in large part, to the ALbD grant, PedNet was able to expand its staff to include a Financial Manager, a Policy Coordinator, a Safe Routes to School Coordinator, Walking School Bus Coordinators, a Communications Director, a Community Programs Coordinator, a Bicycle Education Coordinator, and an Outreach Coordinator.

“Yeah, it’s definitely different as we continue to add staff, because it’s just easier, when you have a smaller group, to make decisions... It just seems like we’re becoming more formal, which I think is a very good thing, definitely. But at the same time, I think we all just need to get used to working differently...” -Staff

Partners and community residents mentioned several champions of active living in Columbia. The Project Director, according to many partners, was considered the “epicenter” that connected people and organizations. Partners praised the Project Director’s ability to connect with others, as well as keeping the community informed and updated on the latest events. As one of the founders of PedNet, this local leader was central to the development of the Columbia active living movement.

“Also, I have to say that [the Project Director] is a consummate communicator. I mean, [the Project Director] keeps you updated on everything. So we always know what’s going on in PedNet, and he engages you in everything...” -Partner

The Mayor of Columbia was also a very visible champion of active living. Over 70 years old, the mayor could often be seen riding his bicycle around the city. His history of supporting active living extended several decades. In the mayor’s own words:

“I ride my bike as much as I possibly can and walk... I’m able to ride almost anywhere in town. There are very few places that I’m called upon to go that I can’t reach on bike or foot. Lots of people seem to like it, and they say, ‘Well you practice what you preach. I see you doing it, so I started doing it, and I like it.’” -Partner

Funding and Resources

PedNet reached out to a number of local, state, and national funding sources to expand the resources available to support and nourish its active living efforts. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation name helped the Columbia partnership leverage funds from other grant-making organizations. Financial and in-kind support came from the following sources:

- Active Living Research
- Bikes Belong
- Boone Hospital Foundation
- Boone Hospital Center
- Missouri Foundation for Health
- Walt's Bike Shop
- Local newspapers
- Missouri Safe Routes to School
- Columbia/Boone County Department of Health
- Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot Project grant

“In the grants that I have written, I have always emphasized that we have the Active Living by Design grant... and I think that really helps a lot. I think other funding agencies look to Robert Wood Johnson as a as a sort of model agency, and somebody that’s already got a Robert Wood Johnson grant must be must be worth looking at, at any rate, so I feel that’s really helped us.” -Staff

Community Supports and Challenges

Columbia, although already very bicycle and pedestrian friendly, still needed many improvements, both in physical infrastructure and in the attitudes and behaviors of residents. In addition to the issues related to connectivity mentioned previously, safety concerns related to crime continued to be a barrier to physical activity in some areas of Columbia. Many commercial and residential areas were not well connected. Although Columbia had public transit, the system did not adequately meet the needs of all residents. In addition, residents’ pedestrian and bicyclist practices were not always safe, pointing to a need for education. In order to address these deficits successfully, PedNet Coalition carefully considered and cultivated support from the community, local businesses, and political leaders.

PedNet’s membership included thousands of Columbia residents, demonstrating a strong basis of support in the community. The partnership mobilized residents to advocate for policy change, physical projects, and resource support when faced with opposition. For example, PedNet kept its members aware of city council meeting agendas. At times, hundreds of residents showed up to speak in favor of initiatives. Such demonstrations of support provided a valuable motivation for leaders to pursue active living-related policies and projects.

Residents also volunteered with and participated in PedNet and ALbD activities, which often led to changes in behavior. For example, one community resident stated that after trying the Low-Car Diet program, he and his family decided to ride bikes and walk more often. He changed his schedule to participate in the Walking School Bus with his children and began biking to work. He and his children joined other families to create a Bike Train to bike to school.

Over time, walking and bicycling became more acceptable in the community, as evidenced by improved attitudes toward biking, an increased number of bicyclists, improvements in courtesy of drivers on the road, and increased support from organizations and businesses. Many local businesses supported events and programs by donating materials, incentives, or money. Businesses made efforts to make active transportation more feasible for employees or customers by installing bike racks and allowing bikes to be stored in offices.



“My direct boss has started biking to all job sites and stuff like that, which then translates to it’s acceptable for us to do that. So, it’s kind of a... you know, it takes somebody at a high level to start doing [it]...” -Partner

The active living movement was bolstered by political support prior to and during the grant period. The partnership successfully garnered support from various political entities, including city council members. By educating leaders and demonstrating community support for specific initiatives, the partnership secured funding for infrastructure improvements, which will have a long-term impact on active living in Columbia.

“I think that Columbia has always had the seeds of what we’re seeing right now, but I think we’ve had some very active participation and strong political support for [active living], and so we’re now reaping the benefits.” -Community Member

Community Assessment

In order to better understand the needs of the community and plan ALbD activities, the partnership conducted a number of assessment activities to explore community members’ attitudes and the built environment.

The partnership trained nursing students to conduct a survey of parents and children from the project area’s five schools in order to develop a social marketing campaign. During the first year of the grant, the partnership surveyed parents and students to collect data about behaviors, attitudes, and barriers related to active living and media consumption. Specifically, these surveys collected data for physical activity levels, attitudes, behaviors, and perceived barriers and benefits of physical activity among community members. The survey revealed that parents’ most common barriers to walking their children to school were time and convenience, followed by traffic safety and stranger danger. Parents were motivated by the health benefits and the opportunity for quality time. The responses were used to create the campaign. Following the social marketing campaign, the partnership conducted focus groups with the community to structure another campaign.

The partnership performed an audit of several areas of downtown Columbia to assess the positive and negative aspects of the physical infrastructure related to active living. They ranked, characterized, and photographed the top 14 intersections that were in need of bicycle and pedestrian improvements. The partnership also recorded the number of pedestrians and bicyclists traveling through five key intersections for one hour on five separate mornings. In addition, the partnership worked with the city’s Planning Department to map the safest walking and biking routes for the Safe Routes to School program.

Policies and Physical Projects

The partnership made great strides in developing policies at many different levels that supported active living. Much of the partnership's efforts were directed toward street design projects, including improvements to the city's sidewalks, construction of bike lanes, and renovation of traffic intersections. Policy influences and physical projects, related partner, staff, and community implementation activities, and associated outcomes include the following:

► **Street Standards Ordinance**

- One of the largest accomplishments of the partnership was the street standards ordinance, passed in 2004.
- Using a grassroots approach, the partnership held community meetings and charrettes to discuss the existing status of and new plans for city streets.
- The partnership kept the community informed of city council meetings to discuss street guidelines, and residents spoke in support of the proposed street ordinance.
- The ordinance required that all newly created streets include five-foot-wide sidewalks on all streets, bike lanes of mixed-use paths on all collector and arterial streets, and narrower pavements for cars on residential streets. Any streets built prior to 2004 must be updated to meet the new standards when slotted for major repairs.



East Broadway Bridge before and after highway improvements were carried out according to the street design standards

► **Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot Program**

- In 2005, the City of Columbia received a \$22 million federal grant for physical infrastructure improvements to support non-motorized transportation as part of the Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot Program
- The PedNet Coalition was contracted by the City of Columbia to conduct and expand promotional and programmatic efforts for 18 months.
- The partnership formed an advisory committee and worked with city's public works and the planning departments to prepare for the project by evaluating bike and pedestrian barriers and the logistical details related to infrastructure change.
- PedNet also developed a Phase I Infrastructure Plan that included a new bicycle/pedestrian bridge over I-70 connecting a dense, lower-income residential neighborhood with a large park, a rebuild of an existing urban foot bridge, 66 miles of striped bike lanes, 23 miles of bike routes, 19 miles of multi-use paths and trails, 9 miles of sidewalks and pedways, and several Bike Boulevard demonstration projects.
- The grant supported most of the built environment changes accomplished by the partnership and funded a full-time Bicycle and Pedestrian staff position in the city government.

► **Sidewalk Improvements**

- In the second year of the grant, the city and school district developed a prioritized list of sidewalk segments in need of repair.
- In 2005, the partnership supported a campaign to pass a sales tax issue to raise money for sidewalk improvements around nine elementary schools, including three ALbD project area schools.
- Voters passed the issue, providing \$3.5 million over 10 years for sidewalk projects.

► **Advocacy and Advisory Efforts**

- The partnership's Policy Coordinator kept track of city council planning and zoning agendas for issues that were relevant to the ALbD grant in order to mobilize resident advocates and identify potential advisory opportunities.
- Partners and staff of the PedNet Coalition were involved in several different boards, policy, and advisory committees of other organizations in Columbia, including the Missouri Bike Federation Board, America Walks Board, and Bike/Ped Commission.
- PedNet also sponsored its own policy committees and boards, including the Zoning Laws Policy Group with the city planner, the chair of Planning and Zoning Commission, an architect, a health educator, and a pediatrician.

“So that was kind of one of the main strategies, putting together a diverse group of community members who commanded some respect and could speak to this issue...” -Staff member

► **Trail and Park Improvements**

- Partners focused on maintenance and physical improvements to some of Columbia's existing trails.
- One trail project involved improving the visibility of a one-mile section of the Douglass Neighborhood Urban Walking Trail, located in a lower-income, African American community.
- Sponsored by a local accounting firm, partners worked with 15 junior high students to paint footprints to mark a one mile walking route on the trail.
- Volunteers installed wooden posts with signs marking every one-tenth mile on the trail.

► **Other Policies and Physical Projects**

- Using funds from RWJF Special Opportunities grant, the partnership worked with Public Works to install radar signs designed to alert drivers when they exceeded 20 miles per hour in local school zones.
- Partners also made crosswalk improvements near elementary schools including flags, pushbutton-activated crosswalk lights, and sidewalk repairs.
- They negotiated with City Council and Public Works for the inclusion of wide sidewalks and striped bike lanes on Range Lane Street.
- The partnership painted over graffiti on the bridge supports near the Hinkson Trail.
- The City Council approved funding to support Bike, Walk, and Wheel Week and the Passport to Fitness program.

Challenges

The U.S. Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot Program was a great opportunity for growth and improvements in Columbia. Redesigning and restructuring streets and other physical elements in the community not only made active transportation safer for pedestrians and bicyclists but also for vehicle drivers. However, the implementation of the project was not without challenges. Initially, the federal grant funded initiative was known locally as the PedNet Project. This name created some confusion among residents who assumed the money was going directly to the organization. In reality, the City of Columbia received the funding and contracted with PedNet to manage certain aspects of the work plan.

Staff, partners, and community members noted a number of other challenges to developing and implementing policies and physical projects:

- With the federal project came the added burden of working with the bureaucracy of the government.
- Some business owners were concerned that physical infrastructure changes would actually decrease their revenue and impede the success of their business.
- Some development companies were resistant to making connections to trails in new subdivisions or developments.
- Working with the Missouri Department of Transportation proved challenging due to its focus on highways and automobiles.
- Community members worried that instead of using the parking facilities that Parks and Recreation provided at trailheads, trail users would park their cars in front of local neighborhood homes.

“[Missouri Department of Transportation] is maybe more challenging to work with because they are highway people and they are, they still tend to think very much of the automobile and not so much of the bicycles.” -Partner

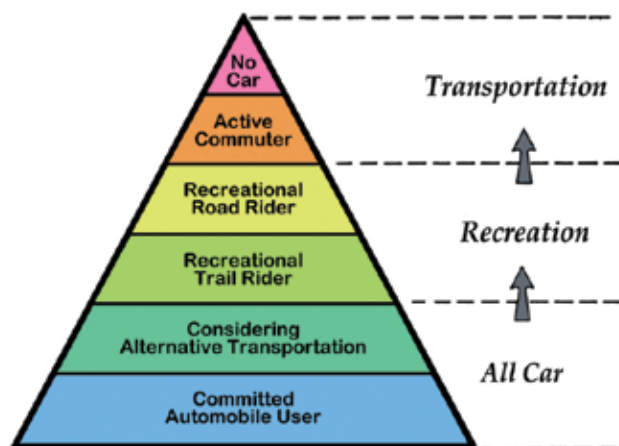
“There is opposition to [infrastructure improvements]. There always is. It’s not as if this money is coming from any local money, but local business owners are concerned that it’s going to make it more difficult for traffic to get through the intersection.” -Staff

“It’s just, when you come from working for a not-for-profit where you’re able to make decisions as opposed to working for the government, and you just can’t make a decision and go with it...” -Staff

“Yeah that is definitely a big dynamic that [staff] has not yet gotten used to. [Staff is] used to making a decision, acting on it, and doing it, but it doesn’t necessarily work that way in government... There are lots of people that need to be consulted with and such, and bidding processes and stuff like that, which absolutely slows your work down. That is something that PedNet Coalition will need to get used to as they’re working with the city on this project because the city is the one that is going to be making the final call.” -Staff member

Promotions and Programs

The Bike, Walk, and Wheel partnership had numerous successful programs and promotions over the course of the ALbD grant. The partnership utilized a modified stages-of-change model to target efforts to specific populations, based on their readiness. Most programs and promotions targeted individuals in the lower levels of change (e.g., not ready to engage in active living, thinking about engaging in active living), but some targeted those in the upper levels (e.g., already engaging in active living) to reinforce desired behaviors.



Programmatic and promotional efforts, related partner, staff, and community implementation activities, and associated outcomes are described as follows.

► **Walking School Bus**

- In order to build support for walking to school, the partnership held a number of Walk to School events, including presentations at Parent Teacher Association meetings; a poster, poem, and rap contest with prizes; children’s assemblies with entertainment; and Walk to School Days.
- After a number of successful Walk to School Day events in the first two years of the grant, a pilot Walking School Bus program was launched.
- In the program, teams of adult leaders walked along predetermined routes to school, picking up children along the way.
- The partnership promoted the program through informational meetings at the pilot schools, radio talk shows, and annual back-to-school events.
- The partnership also developed a network of school-based coordinators who received a small stipend (\$250 over 12 weeks) to promote the program, register children, recruit volunteer leaders, and manage logistics at the school.
- PedNet hired a coordinator and launched an effort to recruit volunteers to be route leaders, including students from the university, community residents, and parents.
- Route leader training included safety, the policies and procedures of the program, and a criminal background check.
- To ensure safety, each “bus” received reflective safety vests, t-shirts, and flags for children to decorate and carry when crossing streets.
- After the success of the program at the partnership’s target schools, other schools in Columbia began to develop their own programs.
- The pilot program involved four routes and 30 children. At the end of the grant period, the program had 10 participating schools, 30 routes, 50 volunteer leaders, and over 300 student participants.
- At one school, close to 100% of children who lived within walking distance were enrolled in the program.
- A resident involved in the Walking School Bus program initiated a Bike Train in which a small group of school children and parents biked to school together.
- At the end of the grant, the partnership intended to establish remote bus/car drop-off locations about a half-mile from schools to allow children who lived farther from school to participate in the program.



“We got them interested by promoting walk to school days, like we just did International Walk to School Day. We had a lot more schools participate this time around, and for one reason or another [schools] that refused to even have anything to do with it participated this year and really enjoyed it. The kids really liked it and stated that they wanted to do it all the time so we’re going to use that information and get into those schools.” -Staff

► **Social Marketing Campaign**

- The Active Living partnership developed and implemented various social marketing campaigns designed to encourage Columbians to live healthier lives by walking and bicycling more often.
- In the first year, the “Bike, Walk, and Wheel” brand and logo were developed and included on leaflets, fact sheets, TV spots, radio broadcasts, newspaper advertisements, and on the PedNet website. Catchy jingles were also created.
- An RWJF-sponsored Strategic Communications Training provided by Spitfire Communications helped the partnership design effective social marketing campaigns that could be developed from survey assessments and later evaluated.
- The partnership used the data collected from surveys to develop the “Why Do You Do It?” social marketing campaign, which included two targeted messages for each of four general goals, including walking to school, participating in Bike, Walk, and Wheel week, adopting a healthy lifestyle, and eating more fruits and vegetables.
- For each of the eight messages developed, a poster and a radio advertisement were created, featuring a Columbia resident as the role model.
- A total of 560 sixty-second radio spots and 1,000 full color posters were disseminated during a four-month period.
- After the first campaign in 2006, the partnership held five focus groups to gather more information about the community’s reaction.
- The “How Do You Do It” campaign was held in the spring and summer of 2007 and included posters promoting active living with a humorous twist (e.g., the mayor and his wife walking a huge number of dogs).
- A winter campaign, titled “Priceless,” promoted physical activity in cold weather.
- Campaign messages were often linked with other events and programs.



► **Passport to Fitness (originally Physical Activity Self-Challenge)**

- The Physical Activity Self-Challenge program was designed to encourage community members (especially youth) to develop the habit of daily physical activity.
- The seven-week challenge encouraged students, parents, and teachers to track their minutes of physical activity each day for a defined period.
- Prizes were awarded for achieving physical activity goals.
- The partnership organized events to help participants meet their goals, including clean-up days.
- In the second year of the grant, PedNet worked with the Mayor’s Council on Physical Fitness to revamp the challenge, creating the Passport to Fitness program to encourage children to engage in at least 230 minutes of physical activity each week.
- School children recorded daily minutes of physical activity in their passport booklet, which also contained tips for healthy living, cartoons, and local physical activity opportunities.
- Students who met or exceeded the goal were rewarded with a healthy living prize donated by a local business, such as day passes for recreational centers and skating rinks.

- The kickoff event occurred in January 2005 with a full page article in the Columbia Tribune.
- In the first year of the Passport to Fitness program, 1700 children registered, and at the end of the program six months later, 550 children received completion prizes.
- One physical education teacher enrolled all of her third through fifth graders in the program and required them to update their booklets in class to raise awareness about physical activity.
- Columbia Public Schools expressed an interest in making this program a regular part of its Physical Education program.

“We’re hoping actually that [the Passport to Fitness program] will become a mandated thing... across the whole district and we’re going to work with the P.E. teacher or P.E. coordinator for the district on possibly doing that or making it an option that the whole school can sign up. The kids do enjoy doing it.” -Staff member

► **Mayor’s Challenge Bike, Walk, and Wheel Week**

- Bike, Walk, and Wheel Week, an annual event held in conjunction with the Mayor’s Challenge, encouraged community members to walk, bike, or wheel themselves to and from their destinations.
- The week was organized to increase awareness of the importance of regular physical activity and of improved pedestrian safety, promote healthy and walkable communities, and mobilize communities to work together to create safer routes.
- During this event, the partnership held several giveaways and activities, including the Cycle-Recycle bike giveaway, community bike ride, skating party, women’s adventure series, and scavenger hunt.
- Local businesses, as well as regional and national institutions, participated in a sponsorship program to help make this event a success.
- Approximately twenty local businesses supported the event, donating nearly \$10,000 in cash and in-kind contributions.



► **Bicycle Education Programs**

- The partnership provided several programs and educational courses taught by certified League of American Bicyclists instructors, through Parks and Recreation, to provide bicycling classes to Columbia residents.
- The Walk Safe Bike Safe program taught bicycle and pedestrian safety classes for kindergarten through third graders through physical education and health classes at Columbia Public Schools.
- Bike Pro classes provided bike safety education to youth aged 10 to 14.
- Confident City Cycling was a series of classes that educated adult riders on how to bike safely and confidently in the city.
- Bike Skills 101 was an abbreviated (five hour) course for adults who did not have time for a full Confident City Cycling course.
- In the Bike Buddy program, residents teamed up with a more experienced cyclist to learn how to ride in Columbia.
- Through the Earn-a-Bike program, local kids earned a bike by learning the fundamentals of bicycle safety and maintenance.



► **Promotional Materials**

- PedNet developed and distributed various materials to help promote its message of active living.
- The partnership sent out press releases for its events and put up posters around Columbia to advertise its different projects.
- The partnership sent promotional flyers to elementary schools for distribution in the students' physical education classes.
- The partnership provided Sustain Mizzou with packets of information for distribution to new college students during orientation to promote active transportation.

► **Media Coverage**

- The partnership received local, regional, and national attention during the grant period, including a Time magazine article and a PBS series, "Perils for Pedestrians."
- The partnership and its programs were covered in 184 print items, 125 radio stories, and 61 television stories.

► **Presentations and Community Forums**

- Be Active New York State invited PedNet to provide a seven hour, train-the-trainer workshop on initiating a Walking School Bus program to health promoters in Saratoga Springs, New York, in March 2007.
- PedNet and the Columbia/Boone County Health Department delivered a keynote presentation on the Walking School Bus program at the inaugural Missouri Safe Routes to School conference and hosted a train-the-trainer workshop for interested Missouri communities.
- In an effort to further publicize its efforts, the partnership held community meetings and forums and made presentations at other organizations' meetings.
- Presentations and community forums also helped to recruit more partners to join the partnership and help with activities.

► **Topical Education**

- The partnership encouraged mechanics working in all of the local bicycle shops to take the partnership-sponsored cycling and bicycle maintenance course to enhance their advocacy skills, so that they could better promote biking to their customers.
- Community residents suggested that drivers' education or physical education in schools include a component on bicycling, so that young people could better understand their transportation options and their roles as bicyclists and drivers.



"I mean [the bike shop mechanic is] a very experienced cyclist already, but I think he's probably still going to learn some things, and become more of a champion for the cause and promote it to customers that come in... It's part of a strategy to get the bike shop mechanics and owners to take the course and become advocates for it." -Staff

► **Other Promotional Efforts**

- The Columbia partnership organized other promotional events and activities, including informational kiosks at local events, Walk to the Ballpark Night, and Clean Up Columbia Day.
- The PedNet website (www.pednet.org) and e-mail list were used to broadcast information about events and mobilize residents to address important issues concerning active living.
- The partnership hosted a series of bike rides, modeled after a bike program sponsored by TrailNet, and coordinated additional TrailNet rides led by trained experts.
- Many of the local businesses partners, such as bike shops, restaurants, and recreational facilities, donated gift certificates, coupons, or other items that were given out as prizes or incentives for programs and events.
- In 2006, the Active Living partnership helped Sustain Mizzou organize a two day Mizzou BikeFest, which educated over 300 college students about biking, through map distribution, bike maintenance education, commuting education, and a guided ride.
- A monthly, 40-minute radio segment was established on local talk radio KFRU 1400 to discuss incorporating active living into busy lives.
- The Starlight Bike Ramble, which was adopted by the YouZeum, was a popular five-mile night-time bike ride through downtown Columbia.
- The YouZeum, an interactive science center, created a Walking School Bus video exhibit to educate parents about the program.
- The Low-Car Diet Challenge, launched by partner RagTag Cinema, encouraged participants to complete all of their transportation during a single month without traveling in a car. Twelve participants (including two children) succeeded.
- The Way to Go to Work! Campaign encouraged commuters to sign up to use alternative modes of transportation during the month of Septembers and included brown bag lunch seminars, mentor walks and rides to employment centers, and Commuter Kudos awards and gifts.
- PedNet and Boone Hospital sponsored a Walkable Communities Workshop and Family Fun Fest, with expert Mark Fenton, that included a presentation, a walking audit around a school, and a group brainstorming session to generate ideas to address physical barriers.

► **Other Programmatic Efforts**

- Through the Activity Recreation Center, the partnership offered fitness classes for teenagers at risk for obesity that included pedometer use and aerobic exercise.
- Businesses with a large number of employees utilized a free Errand Bike program that placed bicycles in facilities for use by employees for short trips during the workday.
- Through Cycle Recycle, the partnership collected, repaired, and redistributed over 700 used bicycles to African American and lower-income school-aged children.
- The partnership trained college students to supervise the children and organize active play during afterschool programs.
- PedNet and the Health Department sponsored a 12 week walking program to encourage nearby residents to use the Douglass Neighborhood Urban Walking Trail..
- Based on Portland's SmartTrips Model, the Neighbors on the Go program encouraged residents of a specific neighborhood to try active transportation.

Strengths and Challenges

The partnership believed that the programmatic efforts successfully demonstrated to residents that they had other viable options for transportation besides cars. Furthermore, the promotional events showed residents that active transportation was fun. Partners also noted that rising gas costs motivated people to consider alternatives to driving. Staff, partners, and community members identified a number of strengths related to programs and promotions:

- By building upon existing relationships with media outlets, the PedNet Coalition was able to access media outlets frequently and with ease.
- Many of the partnership's programs were designed to give children the opportunity to have positive interactions with non-authority figure adults.
- The partnership purposefully targeted children at an early age in order to make walking and bicycling a habit and influence parents.
- By participating in the programs, children were empowered to feel they could travel on their own.
- Simple programs, such as the Walking School Bus, were better received than more complex ones, such as the Passport to Fitness program.

“I think it’s a great time for [children] to be with peers who are not always in their class...And it’s a great interaction with adults that are not any type of an authority figure.” -Community member

“They’re using kids as a catalyst to try to change some parental behavior as well. The kids come home and are talking about it, maybe a little more likely that the parents might try to engage in that, too...” -Partner

Staff, partners, and community members identified a number of challenges to implementing programs and promotions:

- Although the social marketing campaign was successful and widespread, some community members felt that the partnership could have better saturated Columbia with some of its messages.
- The partnership found it challenging to reach adolescents and working professionals.
- Bicycling and walking may not have been popular among adolescents because they were looking forward to getting their drivers' licenses.
- Many offices did not encourage or promote active transportation.
- Biking or walking to work was not practical for employees who had a dress code and nowhere to shower at work.
- Many employees lived far from work, such that biking or walking was not feasible.
- Many of the families that received bicycles through the Cycle Recycle program did not know how to repair and maintain them, nor could they afford to have them repaired by a professional.
- The partnership's efforts seemed to be less successful when they had difficulty engaging the community.
- Despite efforts to promote the Douglass Trail walking program, no one from the neighborhood participated.

“We haven’t done a lot with the junior high school. We’ve tried a number of things and not had so much success there. We’re hoping that as our elementary kids go through having had the exposure at you know six, seven, eight, nine, ten years of age that they will be more receptive at the junior high age.” -Staff

Sustainability

Through public advocacy, collaboration, and programming, PedNet and the Walk, Bike, and Wheel partnership hoped that Columbia's residents would continue to engage in active living behaviors well into the future. By the end of the grant period, staff and partners began to see signs that attitudes toward active living were beginning to improve. For example, residents were more physically active, developers began to think about active living principles when designing communities, and non-partner schools began to adopt the Walking School Bus program.

Despite many successes during the ALbD grant, partners agreed that more work was needed to make active living sustainable. The Mayor of Columbia's long-time efforts to promote physical activity in Columbia were invaluable to the ALbD initiative. The partnership recognized the need to continue its efforts to garner the support of the community and firmly establish an active core of political support.

“People’s attitudes are changing, and people with the power to influence policy and influence the future are thinking in a very different way from the way they were five or ten years ago...” -Staff

The PedNet Coalition and its partners demonstrated their long-term commitment to enhancing support for active living in Columbia by seeking additional funding and institutionalizing key active living efforts and principles. PedNet Coalition intended to move toward paid membership in the future to generate a small amount of money to support staff positions and programming and continued to pursue grant funding to support its efforts. Likewise, the City budget was revised to include funding to support specific efforts, a bike/pedestrian coordinator was hired, and plans were made to establish a permanent department of non-motorized transportation. The University of Missouri updated its bicycle and pedestrian master plan, and the school district considered including an analysis of walking to school in its transportation plan.

The partnership based most of its efforts on the idea that influencing young children to embrace an active lifestyle would likely sustain such behaviors through their adult lives. The partnership also believed in the ability of young people to influence their peers and those around them to live a similar lifestyle.

“I think one key component has been that, you have focused on some of the younger children, so you’re developing a long-term impact where you can actually grow the next wave of leaders.” -Partner

PedNet received a Sustainability Award from RWJF to support the institutionalization of the Walking School Bus program with design charrettes and remote drop off locations. As part of the Sustainability Award, PedNet also focused on the dissemination of the partnership's best practices through a statewide training and mini-grant program in partnership with Missouri's Safe Routes to School program. In the future, PedNet and its partners intend to address other issues, such as unemployment, low wages and lack of access to resources, that impact physical activity in lower-income communities.

Acknowledgements

This evaluation and report were developed under the leadership of Laura Brennan, PhD, MPH, Principal Investigator, Transtria LLC, and Ross Brownson, PhD, Co-Principal Investigator, Washington University Institute for Public Health. Support for this evaluation was provided by a grant from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (#57649). Transtria LLC led the evaluation and dissemination activities from November 2006 to December 2009. For more information about the evaluation and dissemination methods, activities or results, please contact Laura Brennan (laura@transtria.com).

Our team is grateful for the collaboration and support from the staff at the PedNet Coalition and the Bike, Walk, and Wheel partnership in Columbia, Missouri.

With special thanks to the many individuals who have contributed to these efforts from Transtria LLC (Anna Alexandrov; Joanna Bender; Shruthi Bhatt; Yolanda Campbell; Julie Claus, MPH; Kathryn Coniglio, MPH; Kate Dickman; Kate Donaldson, MPH; Melissa Hall, MPH; Courtney Jones, MPH; Shannon Keating; Allison Kemner, MPH; Benjamin Krause; Amy Krieg; Lisa Meng; Lauren Middendorff; Luke Odom; Regina Quadir, MPH; Laura Runnels, MPH; Elsa Taricone, MPH; Cindy Thomas, MPH; Sarah Weiner), Saint Louis University School of Public Health (Elizabeth Baker, PhD, MPH), Active Living By Design (Rich Bell, MCP; Phil Bors, MPH; Mark Dessauer, MA; Joanne Lee, LDN, RD, MPH; Mary Beth Powell, MPH; Sarah Strunk, MHA; Risa Wilkerson, MA), National Park Service (Helen Mahan), Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (Laura Leviton, PhD; Jamie Bussel, MPH), University of North Carolina Gillings School of Global Public Health (Kelly Evenson, PhD), University of California at Davis (Susan Handy, PhD), Wholonomy Consulting (Katherine Kraft, PhD), San Diego State University and Active Living Research (James Sallis, PhD), and Innovative Graphic Services (Joseph Karolczak).