



# **Models for Organizing to Promote Pedestrian-Friendly Environments**

*Prepared for:*

**Steps to a Healthier Clark County  
Community Walkability Policy Team**

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## I. Introduction

The Steps Community Walkability Policy Team focuses on supporting policies that strengthen individual and population efforts at walking for health, recreation, and/or transportation. With the conclusion of the Steps grant scheduled for September 2008, the committee is eager to sustain the momentum of citizen and stakeholder interest in this work. To that end, the committee commissioned research to inform a recommendation for how to organize advocates at the local level. The specific questions to be explored were:

- What models exist in community's similar to ours (rural, urban, and fast growing)?
- What are the existing regional, state, and national organizations that we could align with or become a chapter of?
- What are the implications of aligning with the Active Transportation movement?
- What are the implications of existing within a jurisdiction? A non-profit? An informal group of community volunteers.
- How do groups influence policy?
- What alliances and partnerships are most effective?
- What are the funding sources? How does funding eligibility change based on structure?
- What services do groups provide in addition to advocacy? Outreach and education? Training?
- What are the implications of aligning with bicyclists?
- What are the timelines of other groups' development and maturation?
- What are the lessons learned from other groups?
- What measurable outcomes have other groups used? Can they demonstrate a percentage increase in walking or walkability supports based on their efforts?
- What groups have broken the national average of 20% of adults participating in physical activity?
- What other community supports exist to influence the success of a particular group or model?
- How do groups engage stakeholders, constituents, and partners?
- What is the organizational structure of successful groups?
- What is the relationship to the trails system? Are they integrated? Are they competitors? Are trails aligned with transportation or recreation and what are the implications of that?
- What is the history of efforts in Vancouver and throughout Clark County? (Who has gone down this road before and what were the results?)

A public health and community development consultant was hired to spend a brief period conducting research on best practices, models, possible partners and to interview key informants locally, statewide and nationally, in order to answer the above questions.

This resulting report provides a brief summary overview of past bicycle/pedestrian local organizing efforts and an inventory of what is currently in place (and gaps). Several models are then shared for organizing or otherwise influencing bicycle/pedestrian policy, drawn from communities around the United States. The report concludes with a summary of strategic considerations offered by many of the 24 key informants who were interviewed.

## **II. Current Status of Local Bike and Pedestrian Efforts**

### **A. Organizations/Supporters in Place**

#### **1. Clark County Bicycle Advisory Committee**

This was formed in 1994 to assist with implementation of a County Bicycle Plan. One person from Public Works staffs the Committee, and is also the main/sole person addressing bicycling issues for the County. The stated role of the Committee is to review developments and comment on road project impacts.

Clark County also has some staff time devoted to walking and spends \$300,000-\$400,000 per year on sidewalks.

#### **2. Clark County ADA Advisory Committees**

ADA Committees at Parks and Recreation and Planning are reportedly effective and have some influence over project expenditures. Nationally, ADA AC's are often allied with bicycle/pedestrian advocates.

#### **3. City of Vancouver Neighborhood Traffic Safety Alliance**

The Neighborhood Traffic Safety Alliance is a group of citizen volunteers from Vancouver's neighborhoods (albeit not all) who advocate for neighborhood traffic safety and advise the City's Transportation Services department in the administration of two street improvement funding programs.

The NTSA acts as an independent advisory committee and is open to membership from any recognized neighborhood association within the City of Vancouver. It reviews grant applications for improvements, using established criteria (e.g., crash data, proximity to school, et. al.) and site visits. Based on their recommendations, the City allocates \$450,000 in projects. On occasion, NTSA also advises on specific engineering problems and projects. Project evaluation and granting occurs two months per year but the rest of the year NTSA could work additionally on overall walkability issues.

#### **4. City of Vancouver Transportation Services Department**

Within the Transportation Services Department there are four groups: Planning, Design Engineering, Traffic Engineering, and the Development Review. The City dedicates two staff to work on bicycle and pedestrian issues through Planning, but these also work on other projects.

Despite design standards that are in place, staff report that the challenge has been in real trade-offs when projects are practically implemented, as well as disagreement about priorities. How work is processed at the worker level is also a factor, as not everyone shares the same vision.

## 5. Regional Transportation Council

RTC is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (consisting of three counties, C-Tran and Cities) and acts as a forum for decision-making for regional transportation issues. Working regionally, RTC has historically considered walking and biking as local issues, for City and County planners to address.

RTC has four planning staff. The agency has some decision-making power over a small pool of funds, and these immediately address projects with established design standards. There is not a lot of relevance to strengthening codes for this group. RTC does help local jurisdictions compile applications for Enhancement funding.

RTC has no citizen advisory committees except for those established for special projects, such as the I-5 Corridor Study. RTC is a participating member of the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC).

## 6. Steps to a Healthier Clark County

Transportation Services and other City and County Departments indicate that the key walkability group that they identify is Steps, and without this project, would not have an advocacy group to connect to on efforts specific to walkability.

7. Chinook Trails Association
8. Vancouver Bicycle Club
9. Volkssport

The above three groups are reportedly mostly focused on recreation (i.e., walking, not walkability) but have participated in some educational efforts and could be developed further.

## 9. Willamette Pedestrian Coalition

WPC has been a regional advocate for pedestrians, but membership is low. In the past, they had wanted to expand into Vancouver.

Additionally, Friends of Clark County was formerly active around systemic livability issues such as controlling growth and land use, but they have dissipated in recent years. With new Board leadership pending, they may be open to reinvesting efforts in areas related to walkability.

## **B. Codes/Mandates/Plans in Place/Pending**

### 1. Clark County Bicycle Plan/Pedestrian Plan

Clark County Bike and Pedestrian Plans are forthcoming. First proposed in December 2006, the County is reportedly scoping the project now, and staff are researching what other cities and counties have done. No announcement has been made to the general public, but they are moving forward.

A decision has been made to create two separate Plans – one for bikes, one for pedestrians. No decision has been made as to which will be completed first. The County has indicated to staff that they want a manageable timeline of nine months to one year for completion.

The breadth and scope of either Plan is yet to be determined and will in part be influenced by citizen advocacy. Currently, there is an “arterial atlas” that defines all collectors and arterials, and points to areas for bike lanes. However, there are no plans connecting city and county efforts, no plans connecting county and state efforts, and no plans that look at connectivity, whether recreational trail or arterial. The County reportedly intends to make their Plans comprehensive and address some of those coordination issues.

2. City of Vancouver 20-year Transportation Services Plan (TSP)

The TSP (adopted 2004) includes walking and bicycling improvements. Design standards are in place, and the City enables at least two knowledgeable Transportation Services staff to devote time to bike/pedestrian issues.

The Transportation Planning Manager indicates that perhaps 70% of [ideally] needed bicycle and pedestrian codes are in place.

The TSP proposes to create a permanent Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee.

Bicycle System Program/Initiatives	Timing (from '04)		
	Within 3 years	Next 6 years	7 to 20 years
Create a permanent citizens' Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee (PBAC) tasked with advising the City on all matters related to walking and bicycling.	*		
Update the City's zoning code to include a bicycle parking ordinance.	*		
Implement a bicycle education program that would target middle school students.	*		
Update the City's streets standards to ensure the construction of appropriate bicycle facilities.	*		
Create and fund a pedestrian and bicycle coordinator position and program to oversee implementation of the recommendations in the Plan.		*	
Host a national walking or bicycling conference such as the bi-annual Pro-Bike/Pro-Walk conference in the next 10 years. Host a state or regional conference in the next 5 years.			*
Develop a series of support programs, including maintenance, signing, education, and safe routes to school.		*	
Develop a comprehensive bicycle system, focusing in particular on completion of the Discovery Trail system in time for the 2005 Lewis and Clark celebration.	*	*	*

Pedestrian System Program/Initiatives	3 years	6 years	7-20 years
Create a permanent citizens' Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee (PBAC) tasked with advising the City on all matters related to walking and bicycling.	*		
Develop a Transition Plan to address the need for ADA accessible curb ramps within the community and develop a program for implementation	*		
Develop pedestrian design guidelines for sidewalk width, amenities, and other items.		*	
Update the City's zoning code to ensure that developments are more pedestrian-friendly.	*		
Create and fund a pedestrian and bicycle coordinator position and program to oversee implementation of the recommendations in the Plan.		*	
Host a national walking or bicycling conference such as the bi-annual Pro-Bike/Pro-Walk conference in the next 10 years. Host a state or regional conference in the next 5 years.			*
Develop a series of support programs, including maintenance, signing, education, sidewalk aesthetic enhancements, and safe routes to school.		*	
Update City Street Standards to better incorporate pedestrian facilities.	*		
Work with traffic enforcement to improve automobile and pedestrian compliance with existing traffic laws.	*	*	*

### 3. Consolidated Parks and Recreation Department Bike/Pedestrian Plan

The consolidated Parks and Recreation Department is reportedly undertaking a bike/pedestrian system plan with an endorsement from transportation departments. This was recently approved, and staff will proceed shortly.

### 4. Consolidated Parks and Recreation Department Trails Plan

A Trails Plan was recently completed and advocates report that it is very comprehensive.

### 5. WSDOT Bike/Pedestrian Plan

A state plan is currently approximately 30 percent completed. This plan is specific to WSDOT while considering roles for other state agencies. It is state-route specific but at the same time is compiling a list of needs for any road or trail alignment across the state (to develop a generalized picture and figure for statewide bicycle-pedestrian needs). Six issue papers are being prepared as part of this plan update; it is unclear how much local data detail will be available. Issue papers are: Report A - Statewide Telephone Survey Summary; Report B - Data Analysis; Report C - Needs and Priorities; Report D - Policies and Procedures; Report E - Benchmarks and Performance Measures; and Report F - Design Guidance.

### **C. Gaps in Organizations (A) and Plans (B)**

1. No formal Bike/Pedestrian Program at City or County; limited staff;
2. No Clark County Pedestrian Advisory Committee (or combined bike/ped);
3. No City of Vancouver Bike/Pedestrian Advisory Committee;
4. No local Pedestrian, Trails or Biking Organizations with an emphasis that extends beyond recreation;
5. No strong advocacy organization dealing with local growth management and land use issues;
6. No County bike or pedestrian plan (pending).

### **D. Local/Regional Opportunities**

1. Metro Connecting Green

Metro has introduced a project called "Connecting Green," funded through the 2006 Oregon bond measure. Metro has included Vancouver in planning efforts and have reportedly indicated a desire for partners from Vancouver to step up. Documents on the web site show that two of their five objectives relate to pedestrian issues, through park trails as well as overall regional pedestrian connections to enhance health and fitness. Their vision is:

"We envision an exceptional, multi-jurisdictional, interconnected system of neighborhood, community and regional parks, natural areas, trails, open spaces and recreation opportunities distributed equitably throughout the region. This regionwide system is acknowledged and valued here and around the world as an essential element of the greater Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area's economic success, ecological health, civic vitality and overall quality of life."

2. City of Vancouver Green Ribbon Panel

The Green Ribbon Panel of 19 citizens has been tasked with developing a sustainability plan, with specific recommended policies, for the City of Vancouver. This is expected to be adopted in 2008. It will be attached to the City's Strategic Plan and therefore is expected to be formalized in terms of objectives. The City Council and Mayor are reportedly extremely supportive of this work.

Sustainability Coordinator Michael Piper met with the NTSA recently, but did not focus on walkability. Rather, he discussed energy-saving traffic lights. However, since walkability, bikability and transit are noted planks of sustainability, there may be an opportunity to set goals in this area. There was feedback about these issues lacking on the agenda of a recent sustainability conference that the City hosted. However, active transport issues do appear on the City's web site describing the initiative, as shown in # 6 on the following page.

"Examples of community strategies that may be considered by the panel include supporting local products and encouraging "green" buildings and sustainable development. For city operations, examples include practices for saving energy and other resources. In the City of Vancouver, many programs promoting sustainability are already under way, including:

- Communitywide waste recycling, reducing and reusing education programs
- Increased focus on LEED® standards and incorporating sustainable design elements into new and existing facilities.
- Switching out traditional lamps for LED lights in traffic signals
- Using ultra low-sulfur diesel for heavy duty diesel vehicles and retrofitting emission control devices on these vehicles to obtain further reductions
- Converting the Water Resources Education Center to 100 percent green energy and adding demonstration solar power through a Clark Public Utilities and Bonneville Environmental Education Foundation grant
- **Expanding trails and transportation networks that encourage bicycling, walking and reducing vehicle trips**
- Urban Forestry Program to enhance Vancouver's tree canopy

### 3. Bicycle Transportation Alliance

A preliminary conversation with the BTA Government Relations and Public Affairs Director indicated BTA's recognition that nationally, bicyclists and pedestrians are joining forces, and pedestrian advocacy in the Portland Metro area could be strengthened.

BTA also indicated that with new leadership, they may be shifting some of their focus and how they operate. They may consider a chapter model to support efforts in the broader metro area and statewide. This was preliminary and further conversations are needed.

### 4. Rails to Trails

Nationally, Rails to Trails is working hard to secure funding, and could be a good partner. The Chelatchie Rail Trail is becoming a reality and will come right through the city.

### **III. Assessment of Previous Local Bike/Pedestrian Organizing Efforts**

#### **A. City of Vancouver**

In 1994, the City of Vancouver dedicated funding to trails and walkability objectives for the first time, in their Growth Management Plan.

In 2001-02, Transportation Services convened an internal bike/pedestrian committee. The group met 4-5 times but found that they did not have sufficient support to create an official advisory committee with specific tasks or authority. At that time, the City was discontinuing some commissions and downgrading others to advisory status. Whereas a commission would have reported directly to Council, an advisory committee would report to staff. Neither was viable.

The City continues to have two staff who are proactive and known in the field for work on bicycle and pedestrian issues. However, there is no formally recognized program devoted solely to these issues; staff work on myriad projects.

#### **B. Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC)**

In 2000, it was suggested by County Commissioners that RTC should staff a Regional Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee, either as a joint powers or RTC committee. For a variety of reasons, including lack of internal high-level support at RTC and from the RTAC, this was not successful. In memos assessing the purpose of the proposed committee, it appears that the decision to not form one was a technical judgment (i.e., design standards are in place and a lack of funding) as well as philosophical (i.e., decision-making is local and should be ceded to the City, who would cede to staff). Nor was there a larger vision pursued by RTC at that time.

In 2003, RTC worked with the National Center for Bicycling and Walking to bring training on walkable communities to Clark County. For some time thereafter, Washington's DOT and DPH provided \$3,000 in support per year to convene active community task forces.

#### **C. Clark County**

At the time of RTC's consideration of a Regional Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee, the County indicated that decision-making should be local. Whereas the City identified staff to act as bike/pedestrian point people, the County declined to create any new committees or personnel assignments at that time. As described in the previous section, since that time they appear to be ready to create formal Bike/Pedestrian Plans that may necessitate more staff resources.

The County formed a Safe Walkways Committee 9-10 years ago. It disbanded rather quickly, reportedly due to infighting between neighborhoods advocating for individual projects.

The County BAC did previously expand to a BPAC, but reverted back to bikes only, as the bike advocates did not like mixing bikes and pedestrians. They reportedly still tend to prefer a focus on bike lanes within the street system rather than multi-use pathways, which in their view create more conflict.

## **IV. Statewide Efforts and Opportunities**

### **A. WSDOT Bike/Pedestrian Plan**

As described previously, this is in progress, and will cover the state, including Clark County. The emphasis is largely on improvements to state-owned roads.

### **B. WSDOT Safe Routes to School Grants**

Safe Routes to School funds are approved for allocation from 2005 through 2021. The program is an open competitive process; this year was typical with the award of 19 grants across the state. These are highly competitive and fund only a very small portion of system needs.

### **C. Washington Trails Association**

The WTA includes many stakeholders, from ATV and RV users, to horses and others. Due to difficulty reaching consensus, the usual sole commonality has been advocating for money for more trails. However, WTA's next convention theme is about how to not be divided along the two lines of transit and recreation, which makes the overall pot of funds for pedestrian improvements less effective.

A few key WTA planning and transit advocates are attempting to meet with the Governor to propose a Program of Governments to reshape fund distribution so that it is labeled "pedestrian connections" and not either recreation or transit. Otherwise, WTA is not focused on the big picture of walkability in terms of land use, because in the meantime there is so much more that can be done to achieve level funding and to change codes for a better pedestrian system.

### **D. Bicycle Alliance of Washington**

The Bicycle Alliance operates state-wide and has a long-standing relationship with the Vancouver Bicycle Club. In communities where BAW has been active (including Seattle, Spokane, and Shohomish county), bicycling, walking and health interests have worked together with those promoting more livable communities.

In Spokane, Bicycle Advisory Board members have been strong advocates. In fact, BAW has worked so much with them on technical assistance that they are considering opening a satellite office in Spokane, if it financially feasible.

BAW is willing to provide technical assistance to Clark County/Vancouver advocates. Given the Spokane experience, BAW is not categorically against this model in other locations. They encourage partners to create a coalition that brings together the city, county, public health, school district and biking/walking advocates, without incorporating.

### **E. Transportation Choices Coalition**

This group is focused on Puget Sound and Seattle. A Seattle representative reportedly indicated that they actively wanted to avoid collaborating with other jurisdictions or working on a statewide level, since they were aware that this could divert funds to other communities statewide.

## V. Models

### A. Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee – Whatcom County

Organizational Structure	County BPAC
Funding Sources	N/A – staffed by Parks and Recreation
Services Provided	Bike/Ped Plan, project review, TIP funds
Timeline for Development	4 years; came after citizen action on one project
Stakeholders/Partners	Almost none

The Whatcom County Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) was created by the County Executive and approved by the County Council through an ordinance. It provides input to the County Executive on facilities and programs that will result in the increased safety and use of bicycle and pedestrian travel. The objectives include creation of a system of designated bikeways and walkways and their connections with off-street trails, including prioritizing new bikeway and walkway facilities; standards for the construction and delineation of bikeway and walkways; and development of information programs to promote safe usage of such facilities.

The experience of the Chair (who also happens to work for the Council of Governments) is that both internal and external advocacy efforts are necessary. Things happen faster than a monthly BPAC can know about or act upon, the case of “winning the occasional battle but losing the war.” After only four years of existence, the BPAC is not yet notably proactive or effective, but getting there. To date, they have completed a bike/ped plan. They are asked to look at TIP funds each year and comment to Public Works with a priority list, but there is no obligation for the County to take recommendations from the BPAC, as in Seattle and other places. The City of Bellingham BPAC recently asked for official review status, and were denied.

The process of formation was that a BPAC was in place at the City of Bellingham, and a single activist working many hours on a single project was able to get the County to see the need for a BPAC. Over time, the area has gone from nothing, to one activist whose opinions were considered, to a BPAC, to having staff mandated to liaison with the BPAC. The next expected step will be a strengthened bike/pedestrian emphasis in a position at Planning.

Issues to consider when asking for a BPAC: which is the best department for staffing? It seems that the City BPAC, with liaison directly to the Mayor’s office, is much more effective than the County BPAC, which was assigned to Parks and Recreation. If a local BPAC cannot get the support of the Mayor or Council as the key contact, then an alliance of departments is a desirable minimum alternative, such as both public health and planning. Alliances prevent pigeon-holing (i.e., under parks and recreation, assumption that it is about trails only). The Bellingham City BPAC started as an alliance of staffers before it moved to the Mayor’s Office.

The Chair indicates that a BPAC, but more effectively, an independent advocacy group, should be constantly on the lookout for formal plans, and get bike/pedestrian language into updates so that future actions are institutionalized. In Whatcom County, they have limited advocacy groups, and they are not reliably active. They have experienced the difficulty in moving from biking to bikability, and so forth, although the local bike club has been active around education.

Bellingham had a local America Walks chapter, but they folded. They have a local physical activity coalition through public health, but these people are limited in their ability to advocate.

## **B. Funding Measure for Parks and Sidewalks – Olympia, WA**

Organizational Structure	Ad hoc committee instigated by City Council
Funding Sources	Volunteers secured passage of funding measure
Services Provided	Park projects and sidewalk improvements
Timeline for Development	One year from idea to passage of funding measure
Stakeholders/Partners	Ad hoc committee, used BPAC project priorities

Olympia is an interesting case study of a place without strong independent organized bike/pedestrian advocacy groups, and without much in the way of dedicated bike/pedestrian City staff, but which nevertheless passed a local funding measure for parks and sidewalks. In the early 1990's, the City initiated its investment in bicycling and pedestrians by creating a Transportation Demand Management Plan and TDM Planner position. Over time, the focus on trip reduction evolved to a focus almost exclusively on bike and pedestrian issues, even though the position is not classed a Bicycle and Pedestrian Planner.

There is history of Olympia having a Bike/Pedestrian Advisory Committee, but the same funding challenges as other places. The BPAC spent two years creating criteria and an inventory for the sidewalk program projects that would take 180 years to complete at the funding levels available. This plan was critical to enabling efficient implementation once funds were secured.

Other than BPAC, there have not been strong advocacy organizations. However, a group of citizens approached City Council in 2003 with the idea to fund a measure for parks. Council formed an ad hoc committee to get a 3 percent utility tax increase on the ballot. A private citizen group launched a campaign, and the Trust for Public Land was hired to run surveys and focus groups. TPL provided useful advice from their research, such as that sidewalks were more palatable packaged with parks (and vice versa) than either separately. The measure passed in 2004 and provides \$1M for sidewalks and \$2M for parks annually, in perpetuity.

## **C. Public Health/MPO Collaboration – Brown County, Wisconsin**

Organizational Structure	MPO Transportation Committee – Public Health seat
Funding Sources	N/A – Seat is part of PH staff job duties
Services Provided	Recommendations on transportation projects
Timeline for Development	Integral part of MPO; PH seat established this year
Stakeholders/Partners	County/city public health, planning, transportation departments

In this example of initial success in promoting walkability, the impetus for health and planning advocates working together was an forward-thinking Planning Department staffperson who was interested in promoting connectivity, bikes, and sidewalks, but was meeting with resistance internally. He contacted public health colleagues to brainstorm.

The Health Department reviewed maps with the Planner and chose a project area. They convened a bicycle/pedestrian coalition with representatives from planning, health and other organizations, along with local citizens. They remained a coalition (similar to Steps), but in another community in their County, the coalition was formalized to City Council. This came about through the diligence of a citizen activist.

As the exposure and influence of the coalition grew, they developed relationships. At the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), they found a champion for bike/pedestrian issues. This person worked to establish a formally appointed public health seat on the MPO's Transportation Committee (and this became part of the regular duties of the public health job). The committee just held its first meeting with the public health advocate in attendance. She already has changed procedures so that all forms of transportation are treated the same in terms of the level of assessment received.

On the MPO Transportation Committee, the public health representative will be able to make recommendations to the MPO Board; in practice, the MPO Board seconds and rarely opposes Committees. The MPO is an important vehicle for influence in Brown County, because it would be impossible to have a bike/pedestrian committee for each and every village, council, and so forth (Wisconsin is famous for having many jurisdictions and elected officials – until recently there were 54 City Council seats in Green Bay!).

Statewide, a group of public health advocates are developing policy toolkits to educate peers about issues like what the MPO is, how it works, how to influence land use, and so forth. The public health advocate works on community mobilization, education, and policy in other aspects of her walkability program. See also the paper, "Why Don't the Village Residents Cross the Road?" <http://www.dhpe.org/2006CaseStudies/>

#### **D. Public Health/Planning Collaboration – Lincoln-Lancaster Co., NE**

Organizational Structure	Joint Public Health/Planning Advisory Committee
Funding Sources	N/A – staff from two City Departments
Services Provided	Review of all proposed changes to Land Use Zoning
Timeline for Development	6-7 years of Environmental Health project review Health/Planning AC formed in 2005
Stakeholders/Partners	Primarily internal, with Board of Health and Planning Commission

The innovative concept for a joint Public Health/Planning Committee came out of the Public Health Department Environmental Health Division's (EHD) longstanding practice of reviewing all proposed land use zoning changes for health impacts such as toxins, air quality, noise and other environmental health issues. The EHD developed GIS data on all risk zones in their county, and advocated for 300-foot buffer zones (this was not in the code, but by default what was usually in practice, but easily waived). EHD had a desire to more strongly regulate buffer zones between residential and industrial uses.

At the same time, the PHD's Health Promotion Division was gaining momentum for working on walkability issues. EHD and Health Promotion jointly presented to the Board of Health about the original relationship between public health and planning, and contemporary issues (e.g., obesity, asthma). They requested and secured a formal Board of Health letter to the Planning Department requesting the appointment of health representatives to their Planning Advisory Committee. Planning agreed.

The Committee has been in existence for two years. It does not have power per se (i.e., to approve or disapprove projects) but it makes recommendations, which are generally accepted by Planning. The sphere of influence is not project-by-project but rather land use zoning overall. A recent success was getting a sidewalk requirement in the design standards for industrial, retail and commercially zoned land. Their committee dovetails nicely with the Nebraska mandate to update the Land Use Plan for each county every five years. On the first update they were not entirely successful, but expect to achieve more formalized policy changes into that Plan as time goes by.

### **E. Bicycle and Pedestrian Program – City of Austin, TX**

Organizational Structure	City Bicycle and Pedestrian Program
Funding Sources	Local \$10M Bond passed in 2000 for sidewalks STPM&M, Federal taxes, City revenue program Transit agreements, many other joint powers agreements
Services Provided	7.0 FTE provide planning, project implementation, education
Timeline for Development	Roots in early 1990's, Program established 1994
Stakeholders/Partners	ADAPT, a very strong advocacy group with focus on ADA Neighborhood Associations are very strong Other groups (e.g., League of Bicyclist Voters, City Bicycling Advocacy Council) come and go Urban Transportation Commission bicycle subcommittee (1999) Austin Choices for Transportation (organized ad hoc group to pass light rail) City passed a Smart Growth Initiative (late 1990's)

The City of Austin has had a bicycle program since the 1970s, which went away and returned, but has been in place and staffed since 1991, in concurrence with ISTEA funding (this not how position was funded, but since there were lot of projects, staff was necessary). Around 1994, the City of Austin started a formal Bicycle Program in the Department of Transportation and Public Works. In 1996, the Bicycle Program became the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program.

The goal of the Program is to promote cycling/walking and safety throughout the city. Major activities include implementing the Austin Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. This Plan provides highly detailed mapping of the entire city, which entirely drives project selection. Specific proposals will spend \$10M (from a sidewalk bond issue passed in 2000) on 1,300 miles of routes. They have completed accessible joint use paths for bike/pedestrian. Combining the diverse needs under one umbrella can get more projects done using the sidewalk bond money, and it is less costly to identify a common route. The City has educational programs, gives away free bike racks for installation, and addresses maintenance issues (e.g., tip line).

Austin has several bike/pedestrian advocacy groups. One of the most influential has been ADAPT – whose constituents are disabled citizens prompted to address ADA issues. At one point in Austin's history they chained themselves to busses to protest lack of access. That got the City's attention, and a working group was formed consisting of both the City and County, along with ADAPT and the City ADA Coordinator and ADA Committee members.

Staff report that, like many cities, other bike/pedestrian advocacy groups in Austin have come and gone. Some of the best ways to accomplish goals also include Council appointed task forces. These single out citizens who are experts to focus on an issue, and are time-limited. A current one is the Street Smarts Task Force.

Only recently is Public Health coming to the table. Public Works staff are using PH data to prioritize sidewalks and facilities.

A funding innovation in Austin is that part of every residential City of Austin utility bill is a charge for "Transportation User Fee" (TUF). One of the provisions of this fee is that people who don't own or drive cars are exempt. Other funds include STPM&M, Federal Tax money, City Revenue that funds a Child Safety Program, Transit Authority agreements, and the Transportation Bond.

## **F. Complete Streets Policy – National**

Organizational Structure	N/A – it is a policy, not an organization
Funding Sources	Varies – policies do not always lead to projects
Services Provided	Policy adoption to ensure access
Timeline for Development	Varies locally. Federal goal set for short-term.
Stakeholders/Partners	Thunderhead Alliance has 128 member organizations In Washington, BAW, Cascade Bicycling Club, Mount Baker Bicycling Club are members.

Complete Streets is a movement that is primarily focused on attaining Complete Streets policies at local, state and federal levels. These are policies that require safe accommodation of all users of a street can eliminate most of this nation's barriers to bicycling and walking. The Thunderhead Alliance is spearheading a national Complete the Streets Campaign to win at least one complete streets policy, local or state-level, in all 50 states by 2008 in order to influence a federal-level complete streets policy through the reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU, the U.S. federal transportation law. They indicate that "this tapestry of local, state and federal policies will ensure that no transportation project can move forward without being complete!"

In Washington, three jurisdictions have Complete Streets policies: a Kirkland City Ordinance, a City of Redmond Complete Streets Ordinance, and a City of Seattle ordinance.

Thunderhead Alliance has analyzed the process for attaining policies and their comprehensiveness. They categorize policies according to those achieved primarily through public or inherently political processes (interaction with elected officials or other political bodies) and those achieved through internal agency processes. They state "Of the 36 policies analyzed, 13 are laws, resolutions, or ordinances and 23 are internal policies, plans, or design manuals. In several cases the internal agency-driven processes were greatly influenced by outside agents, particularly bicycle and/or pedestrian advisory groups. These policies may have also had to go through a public approval process. In addition, a comprehensive complete streets policy may take shape at several levels: first as a general policy statement in a resolution passed by an elective body, then fleshed out with administrative policies set by the implementing agency."

A chart showing different policy language by jurisdiction is on the web site at <http://www.completestreets.org/completestreets/Tab1%20Early%20Success%20Stories/CompleteStreetsPolicies.pdf>

It is unclear whether key bike/pedestrian issues are always a lack of policy, or the will and funding to implement the policy. Thunderhead notes that many policies are “paper only.” An example of a typical policy is: “City, County Road Commission and MPO adopted nearly identical resolutions to include bicycling and walking in routine transportation planning, design, construction, maintenance, and operation.” Samples like these should be assessed in comparison to Clark County and City of Vancouver code language.

### **G. Independent 501(c)(3) Advocacy Organization – Feet First, Inc.**

Organizational Structure	501(c)(3) local/regional non-profit focused on pedestrians Staff of 4 FTE plus interns
Funding Sources	CDC, Safe Routes to School, RWJF Possibly subcontracting on Kellogg Initiative in Seattle
Services Provided	Training, education, advocacy, coalition support, research Neighborhoods on Foot maps
Timeline for Development	Formed 1996
Stakeholders/Partners	Bicycle Alliance of Washington on SRTS WSDOT on SRTS Chapter of America Walks

Feet First states that they are “a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization serving Washington State, with a focus on the Puget Sound Region. We were founded in 1996 to promote the rights and interests of pedestrians and to encourage walking. Our program areas include Community, Advocacy, Research, Education and Membership.”

It is important to note that currently, both the immediate past Executive Director and the interim ED indicate that they are not a statewide organization, and that the Board is strongly against expansion. With a staff of four, they have no capacity other than providing workshops and trainings, mapping, and potentially some technical assistance. They are unable to be involved in the local policy arena, and feel that they serve localities through their statewide advocacy.

Feet First currently works statewide only through its Center for Safe Routes to School, along with the Bicycle Alliance of Washington. They provide primarily information and coordination services, whereas WSDOT provides technical assistance to grantees.

Feet First serves communities through its website, which offers tools to organize pedestrians to take action with elected officials and others, perform audits, educate drivers and so forth, similar to what America Walks offers. Feet First is a chapter member of America Walks.

Like other non-profits, Feet First struggles with funding. Their WSDOT Safe Routes to School, CDC, and RWJF grants all end of 2008. They may receive funding through the recently awarded Kellogg King County Food and Fitness Initiative. Feet First is discovering that from a funding perspective, it is more attractive to work on both active living and healthy eating.

## **VI. Key Strategy Considerations**

The following section presents bulleted lists of themes that surfaced in conversations with key informants and/or found in the bike/walk literature. Immediately thereafter are observations and direct recommendations by key experts in the field. Their comments are wide-ranging and comprehensive enough that they are best read in their entirety.

### **A. Pedestrian, Bike, Trails, and/or Active Transportation – Combined?**

- Locally, elected officials prefer to work with bike and pedestrian advocates, together.
- At the scale of land use planning and regional transportation planning, both bikes and pedestrians benefit.
- Funding is not categorical for bikes and pedestrians, so why work separately?
- A number of large and national organizations that began as bicycling advocacy groups have morphed into bike/ped groups in recent years. This includes the National Center for Bicycling and Walking and Transportation Alternatives in New York City. Cities such as Austin started with bike programs and added pedestrian components as well. It is beginning to be a commonly held view that groups are more successful, together.
- Both the Bicycle Alliance of Washington and the Bicycle Transportation Alliance were aware of the above trend, and intrigued, but indicated no immediate plans to undertake walking advocacy.
- In Clark County, bicycle advocates have been resistant to including pedestrian advocates on the BAC.
- There is a trend in the field generally toward using the language of “active transportation.” This can and should also include transit.
- There is energy statewide for an interconnected trail system, but the challenge is to shift the perception to a trail as a transportation corridor, not just recreation.

### **B. Influencing Policy**

- Policy work cannot fall to a volunteer (i.e., an advisory committee member). It must be someone’s job, and that person must have a technical skill set.
- Advisory Committees have access to decision-makers but advocates often feel that they are not independent enough. These committees can have the unfortunate side effect of co-opting real and extensive citizen involvement.
- There are two critical elements for success for Advisory Committees: Support from the City Manager, regardless of where a committee stands on an issue. A second is funding; without some control over implementation, and being tasked with allocating dollars, is it doubtful they would be perceived as influential and probably, as unnecessary.

- Currently, the political support in the City of Vancouver for additional advisory committees, including a bike/ped committee, is mixed. However, in some cases an advisory committee are seen as useful to staff to make sensitive decisions, and can broaden the dialog generally.
- Neighborhood Organizations are powerful allies and are often more effectively organized than groups of pedestrians. Also, Mayors and City Councils take notice when a NO takes on an issue, more so than a bicycle group, for example, which can be perceived as a “special interest” group. There is the potential to tap into the NTSA for walkability advocacy.
- Governor Gregoire could be a key person in mounting a campaign to recognize trails and streets’ connectivity. For example, advocates successfully secured scoping money for a trail alongside the railroad and extending to the William O. Douglas Trail into Yakima.

### **C. Alliances and Partnerships**

- Be strategic with whom you align. Maintaining a coalition with diverse stakeholders may be a common model, but to assume it should be staffed or supported by public health may be self-limiting. Determine what city/county agency makes sense given the potential strategies and methods that the coalition will pursue.
- Be wary of having a coalition funded by single entity. WCPPA started out as coalition with DPH staffing, then went to subcontract model. They are 501(c)(3) yet DPH still tries to dictate their work plan.
- A coalition should pursue instituting all three legs of the stool: government staff, advisory committees, and citizen advocates. All three will work in synergy and act as checks and balances for one another, to keep efforts on track.
- Key influencers that are often overlooked are developers and lenders.
- An advocacy group is only as effective as their level of access to the Mayor.
- Whatever group organizes, it must be strategic and align with some of the major trends:
  - Baby boomers with recreation time
  - The end of petroleum
  - Increasing land values and pressures for density, mixed use development etc.
  - Climate change and the concern about carbon footprints
  - Urban traffic congestion as the region grows
  - Inactivity and obesity

## **D. Existing/Potential Community Supporters**

- The Green Ribbon Panel work likely to include walkability
- Ongoing Public Health Department interest
- Ongoing City of Vancouver Transportation Department interest and support
- New Clark County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans
- New Parks and Recreation Trails Plans
- Ongoing strength of NTSA and ADA Committees
- Strong Neighborhood Associations concerned about traffic
- Walking, Bicycling and Trails Groups that could be trained, mobilized

## **E. Funding**

- The largest source of funding potential is local, and you must have an advocacy group to secure meaningful amounts of funding: An example is the City of Olympia, which passed a utility tax generating \$1M annually for sidewalks and crossings plus \$2M for parks. Also, Seattle passed a property levy along with parking and employee incentives to provide \$5-10M annually for bike and pedestrian improvements.
- Funding for active transportation through government sources severely restricts advocacy efforts.
- Funding for coalitions is very limited unless they are also directly implementing a project with measurable population-level outcomes (i.e., an organization like WCPPA finds this a challenge).
- Some funders only want to support groups working on *both* halves of the obesity equation: active living *and* healthy eating (e.g., Kellogg)
- Currently, funding is limited by definitions for pedestrian improvements either being labeled as trails or as sidewalks. This needs to be overcome.
- The Department of Commerce, Trade and Economic Development has \$10,000 transportation planning grants available.
- Currently, Transportation Services is requiring of developers all that they can within law to promote walkability (i.e., street improvements) although actual construction can vary. The Department aggressively pursues all grants opportunities that arise, but these are minimal and highly competitive. For example only \$11 million will be available for pedestrian improvements statewide next year. Compare this with the cost of \$300,000/mile to build a sidewalk on one side of a road.
- The Neighborhood Traffic Safety Alliance, a committee internal to Transportation Services, reviews applications for \$450,000 worth of traffic calming projects per year.
- ADA Committees at Parks and Recreation and at Planning have some leverage over project allocation dollars.

## **Recommendations by National Experts:**

### ***Richard Bell, Project Officer – Active Living by Design***

“Spend the last year of the Steps grant doing a very solid assessment and reflection that determines where political momentum is and where the most impact will come from. In my experience, separate non-profit pressure groups are less successful due to distractions such as administration and fundraising.

A very popular model is to maintain an active coalition with members whose agencies have committed the tasks within participant job descriptions. Often, this might be supported by a health department designated staff. However, that is based on an old model of health promotion. If the group wants to focus on advocacy and policy change in the area of the built environment, they may want to get staff support from a planning department. You will still impact obesity but in a manner that might be more compelling to city leaders. But that is to be determined. What is the biggest local motivator? Foot traffic for downtown retail and economic development? Transit? Spend that year figuring which and cement relationships with those players. But continue to work on all fronts, since there are so many compelling reasons for walkability.”

### ***Mark Plotz – The National Coalition on Biking and Walking***

“Of the various options, you need at least all 3 – 1) a position at city level as bike/ped coordinator, even if it is not full-time; 2) you need institutionalization beyond that, an active living task force or committee, preferably with official advisory status; and 3) you need outside advocates, which could be coalition and doesn’t have to be a non-profit. The goal is to create checks and balances. Some places have city staff and good ped/bike plans but nothing is completed. Or they might have money, but no one to work on it. Strong local advocates hold people accountable but also provide cover.

As for the various approaches, to ensure plans are implemented, you need staff liaison. Staff is key. But if want to work on a bond, you need outside (not staff) forces. If there is a need to strengthen grants and other allocations, an internal person is needed. All of this helps if it is institutionalized through a Complete Streets policy. Even with that, introduce a check process in the approval process. Projects need to be reviewed by more than one person, and preferably you would have a bike/ped advisory committee to review.”

### ***John Williams – Active Living Resource Center***

“A friend, Charlie Gandy, who counsels bike/pedestrian groups around the country says that you need the equivalent of 3 legs to the advocacy stool: 1) good governmental folks; 2) an official city and/or county advisory committee; and 3) an active advocacy organization.

Government staffers can implement projects and incorporate bike- and pedestrian-friendly design standards into the City’s routine approach to roads and such. Simple things like replacing dangerous street drainage grate designs or incorporating bike lanes and adequate sidewalks as a normal part of street designs.

It's worth keeping in mind that the staff person doesn't have to be a full-time designated bike/ped coordinator. That can be very helpful, of course, but one of the best-known bike towns in the country, Davis CA, didn't have a coordinator for years. They did, however, have a city engineer who was very tuned in to bicyclists' needs. You have that in Vancouver (Todd Boulanger).

- A city advisory committee can serve as an "official" voice of the walking and biking community and can recommend changes to projects in the works, review transportation plans, etc. Their meeting minutes and recommendations often become part of the public record, which may go to Council and department heads.
- An advocacy organization, on the other hand, can push harder for new projects and programs, generating publicity, and sometimes causing a stir. Their activity can energize community members and bring otherwise ignored issues to the fore.

What's good, however, that the group have broader representation than just "bikies" or walking enthusiasts. They should work with school groups, non-profits, and others to forge a broader agenda. In our community, for instance, a community development corporation working in one of our lower-income neighborhoods has been one of the most active voice for bicycling and walking improvements."

## **VII. Other Organizational Profiles**

### **A. The Mobility Education Foundation**

This is new organization founded by former Feet First Executive Director David Levinger. The focus is on working to achieve driver education mandates nationally. A curriculum and policy tools are under development. There is a special focus on teen driver education laws state-by-state that will require specific additional training, with an emphasis on pedestrian and bike safety.

### **B. Washington Health Foundation**

They run a Healthiest State in the Nation campaign.

### **C. Washington Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity (WCPPA)**

WCPPA supports statewide partners in their active living education efforts. They began as an informal coalition with DPH staffing support, then went to DPH subcontract model. However, although they are now an independent 501(c)(3), at times DPH provides direction for their work plan.

Most of WCPPA's DPH funding has been via a CDC grant that expires this year (not a Steps grant). Funding is an ongoing difficulty, including funding for advocacy, which is limited under government sources. They have not met with a lot of success with corporate funders. It is also difficult for WCPPA to be funded for their coordinating work, since they are usually not implementing a project with measurable health benefits. WCPPA will be open to partnering with a local coalition on this kind of project in the future.

Other than WCPPA and the committee coordinating statewide on Safe Routes to School, not much active transportation work is occurring statewide. Some statewide walking organizations exist, but they do not work on walkability.

#### **D. America Walks**

America Walks is a national organization focused on education and advocacy for walking environments. They are expanding and moving increasingly to a chapter model where they provide a 501(c)(3) umbrella for advocacy groups for only a nominal \$50 membership fee. Currently, they have 50-60 members.

Their web site has many resources to assist with grassroots involvement locally. For example, they have toolkits specifically targeted to parents around Safe Routes to School. America Walks is launching a coaching action network to promote grassroots action.