

Engaging Public Health in Complete Streets Policy Processes: Lessons from the Trenches

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- **Co-Authors**

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What is a Complete Street?



This image was created using StreetMix. Available at: <http://streetmix.net/-/423211#>

Why do we care about Complete Streets for community walkability?

- Complete Streets can provide a wide range of public health, economic, and environmental benefits.
 - More physical activity
 - Reduced pedestrian injuries/fatalities
 - More public transit usage
 - Less cars on the road, improved air quality

Study Premise and Objective

- In a prior study we found that **responsibility for Complete Streets policies/implementation primarily rests with planning and/or transportation agencies**
 - But we **heard from a few jurisdictions that public health can and does get engaged** in these efforts.
- The **goal** with this study was to **identify “best practices” and/or examples of how the public health sector has been engaged in Complete Streets policy-related efforts** (advocacy, policy development, and/or implementation).

Methods

Documentary Research and Jurisdiction Selection

- Solicited nominations via social media, listservs/groups
 - **41 nominees** (4 with multiple nominations)
- **Developed profiles for each jurisdiction** based on nomination information and Internet research
- **Selected 15** (located in 13 states)
 - 2 counties; 2 metropolitan governments; 1 state; 10 municipalities

Complete Streets and Public Health: Nominated Jurisdictions

Nomination Information

Community name and state: City of Chattanooga, Tennessee

Nominator's organization: University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Nominator name: Gregory W. Heath, Gerry Professor of Public Health

Public health contact: Rebecca (Becky) Barnes, Administrator, Chattanooga/Hamilton County Health Department

Public health phone: (423) 209-8000

Public health email: becky8@HamiltonTN.gov

Rationale for nomination: The City of Chattanooga adopted a Complete Streets Policy and has its Office, Chattanooga/Hamilton County Health Chattanooga Area Rapid Transit Authority (CA RTA) organizations on a Complete Streets Chattanooga Streets is vetted through the above partners!

Verification of public health involvement: <http://www.chattanooga.gov/operations/special-events-and-projects/2015/06/Chattanooga-COR-content/uploads/2015/06/Chattanooga-COR>

Jurisdiction included in Best Complete Street

Jurisdiction Type: Municipality

Summary of Complete Streets Initiatives:

"The City shall develop a safe, reliable, efficient, integrated and connected multimodal transportation system that will promote access, mobility and health for all users, and will ensure that the safety and convenience of all users of the transportation system are accommodated, including pedestrians, bicyclists, users of mass transit, motorists, emergency responders, freight providers, adjacent land owners, and people of all ages and abilities, including children, youth, families, older adults, and individuals with disabilities."

"Transportation projects shall incorporate sustainable water quality management principles where applicable to reduce pollutant, temperature and runoff impacts to local waterbodies."

"The City shall measure the success of this Complete Streets policy using, but not limited to, the following performance measures:

- Total miles of bike lanes (standard, buffered and protected), bike routes, and shared-use pathways
- Total miles of pedestrian accommodation
- Percentage of intersections with ADA accessible curb ramps
- Percentage of transit stops accessible via sidewalks and bicycle facilities
- Rate of crashes, injuries, and fatalities by mode
- Rate of children walking or bicycling to school
- Commute mode share
- Mass transit ridership rates

Unless otherwise noted above, within six months of policy adoption, the City shall create individual numeric benchmarks for each of the performance measures included, as a means of tracking and measuring the annual performance of the policy. Annual reports shall be posted online for each of the above measures."

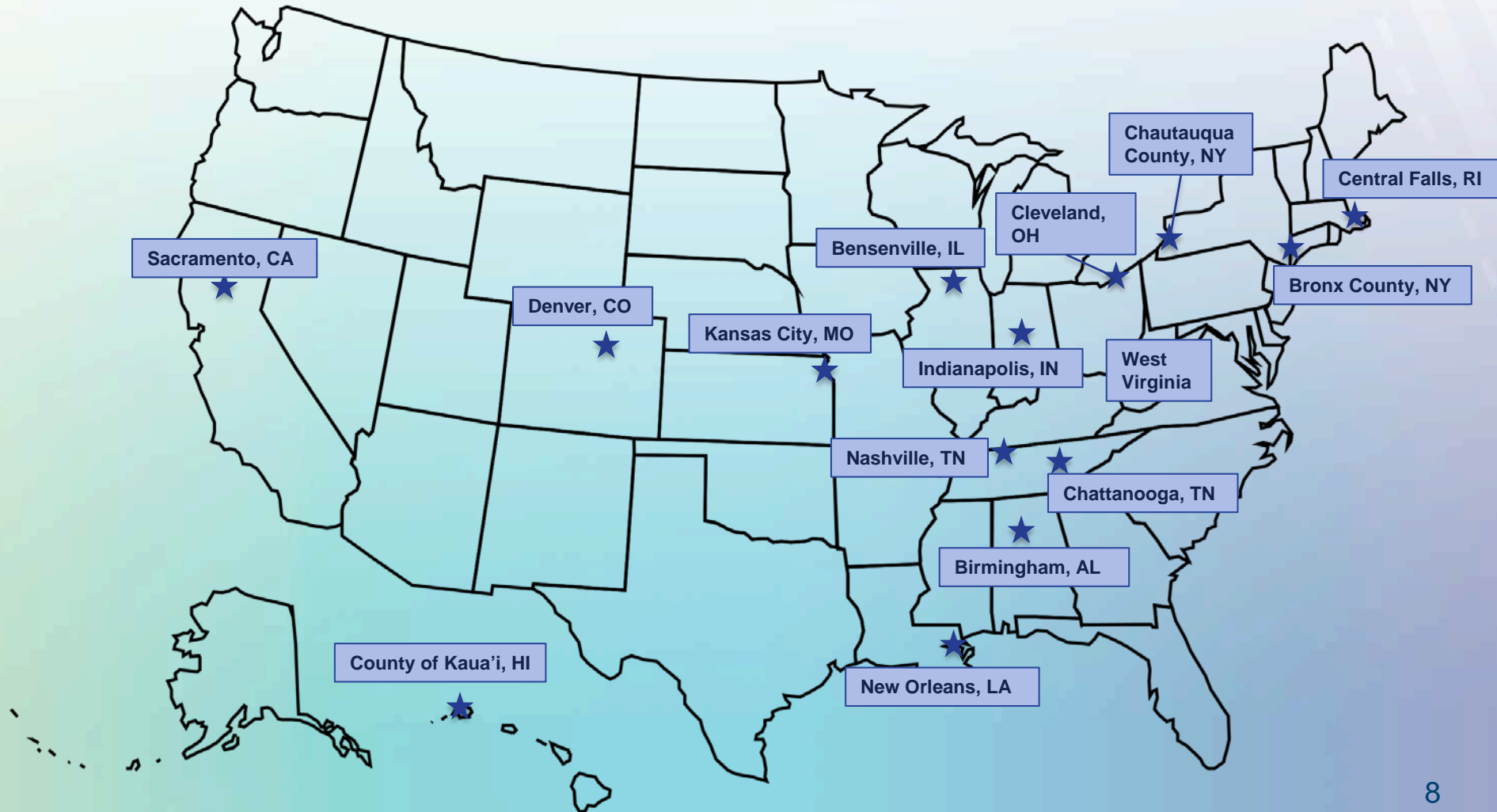
"A periodic report (annual or otherwise, as appropriate) will be made to the City Council showing progress made in implementing this policy. The Transportation Department with assistance from the Department of Public Works, the Department of Economic & Community Development, the Chattanooga - Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency, and other relevant departments, agencies, or committees shall report on the annual increase or decrease for each performance measure contained in this policy compared to the previous year(s)."

Initiatives:

In April 2017, Chattanooga TPO, Knoxville Regional TPO, and Nashville area MPO won the [Complete Streets Consortium Technical Assistance award](#) from Smart Growth America. The award was given for the three cities to be given three free technical assistance workshops. Each workshop will be hosted by one of the three cities and will be tailored to the region's specific opportunities and challenges.

In March 2015, Chattanooga Mayor Andy Berke accepted the pedestrian safety challenge to explore new ways to make Chattanooga's streets safer for bike riders, pedestrians, and drivers. There was not a grant associated with this federal challenge, but the Mayor hoped accepting the challenge would make Chattanooga more competitive for future funding opportunities.

Study Sites



METHODS: STUDY SITES

Jurisdiction	Region	Pop Size	MHH Income	% White	% Black	% Hispanic
State of West Virginia	East	1,846,092	\$42,644	92.40%	3.40%	1.40%
Sacramento County, CA	West	1,479,300	\$57,509	46.40%	9.60%	22.50%
Bronx County, NY	East	1,436,785	\$35,302	9.60%	29.50%	55.40%
Indianapolis, IN	Midwest	856,196	\$43,230	56.70%	27.60%	9.90%
Nashville, TN	East	667,885	\$50,484	56.60%	27.50%	9.90%
Denver, CO	West	663,303	\$56,258	53.40%	9.40%	30.80%
Kansas City, MO	Midwest	471,767	\$47,489	55.40%	28.80%	10.00%
Cleveland, OH	Midwest	389,165	\$26,583	34.30%	50.10%	10.80%
New Orleans, LA	South	382,922	\$37,488	30.60%	59.30%	5.60%
Birmingham, AL	South	212,424	\$32,404	22.60%	71.70%	3.40%
Chattanooga, TN	South	175,462	\$41,278	57.10%	33.50%	5.20%
Chautauqua County, NY	East	131,748	\$43,211	88.00%	2.40%	7.10%
Kaua'i County, HI	Pacific	70,447	\$68,224	29.70%	0.60%	10.60%
Central Falls, RI	East	19,366	\$28,901	20.60%	11.50%	63.80%
Bensenville, IL	Midwest	18,431	\$62,286	43.40%	3.60%	48.10%
Average		588,086	\$44,886	46.45%	24.57%	19.63%

METHODS: INTERVIEWEES

Jurisdiction	Agency
Bensenville, IL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DuPage County Health Department, Bensenville Community & Economic Development Department, Bensenville Public Works Department
Birmingham, AL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Way of Central Alabama , City of Birmingham Department of Planning, Engineering & Permits
Bronx County, NY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bronx Health REACH , Transportation Alternatives
Central Falls, RI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central Falls Department of Planning and Economic Development
Chattanooga, TN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chattanooga Department of Transportation, Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department
Chautauqua County, NY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chautauqua County Department of Health and Human Services, Chautauqua County Department of Planning & Economic Development
Cleveland, OH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cleveland Department of Public Health, City of Cleveland Planning Commission
Denver, CO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Denver Department of Public Health and Environment, Denver Community Planning and Development
Indianapolis, IN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marion County Public Health Department
Kansas City, MO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BikeWalkKC, Kansas City, Missouri Health Department
Kaua'i, HI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get Fit Kaua'i, Kaua'i County Planning Department
Nashville, TN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metropolitan Nashville Planning Department, Metro Nashville Public Health Department
New Orleans, LA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Orleans Department of Public Works , New Orleans Office of Resilience and Sustainability, New Orleans Health Department
Sacramento County, CA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WALKSacramento, Sacramento County Department of Health & Human Services, Sacramento County Department of the County Executive
West Virginia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AARP West Virginia, West Virginia University

Interview Guide Topics

- Role in complete streets
- Public health involvement/how engaged in process
 - Agencies/organizations involved
- What worked well
 - Examples
 - Lessons learned
 - Success stories
- Equity focus

Interviews and Analyses

- Telephone interviews lasted 30-45 minutes; digitally recorded and professionally transcribed
- Transcripts analyzed by two coders to identify and review key themes following the organization of the interview guide

Highlights of Key Findings

Primary Themes: How Public Health Actors Can Support Complete Streets Initiatives

- Framing Complete Streets Initiatives
- Focusing on Equity Issues
- Community Engagement
- Coalition Building
- Support Implementation Efforts
- Collect and Support Data and Evaluation Efforts

Framing Strategies

	Framing Strategies		
	Public Health	Equity	Safety
Bensenville, IL	X	X	X
Birmingham, AL	X	X	X
Bronx County, NY	X	X	X
Central Falls, RI	X	X	
Chattanooga, TN	X	X	
Chautauqua County, NY	X		X
Cleveland, OH	X	X	X
Denver, CO	X	X	X
Indianapolis, IN	X	X	X
Kansas City, MO	X	X	
Kaua'i County, HI	X	X	X
Nashville, TN	X	X	X
New Orleans, LA	X	X	X
Sacramento County, CA	X	X	X
West Virginia	X		X

Framing Complete Streets Initiatives

- **Focus on health, equity, and pedestrian safety**
 - “[H]aving that **health lens** on the Complete Streets conversation **helps make it a little more palatable for those that don't just immediately understand and get the Complete Streets concept.**”
 - **“Communities for kids. Because you build a community for a child, you build it safe for everybody.** This surprised the heck out of me. I used the radio station and my radio time to start doing exactly that... **Never was Complete Streets mentioned. We just let it rest.**”

Focus on Equity

- **“First and foremost, state it [equity] as a goal.** Make sure that everybody knows that's what you're working for and make sure you agree on the definition of health equity and that's something that we even have an equity strategist in our health department.”
- **“...we kept health equity central to everything we talked about.** We kept seniors and people with disabilities central to everything we talked about. We didn't make this about millennials biking to their tech jobs. This is about actually serving vulnerable users who are out there that we often forget when we talk about these projects, and having that be the central focus of everything else that we do.”

Community Engagement

- **Engage the community in discussions about health and (in)equity issues** and how Complete Streets projects can contribute to creation of a more walkable neighborhood.
 - *“So there was also **an education component about good built environment and bad built environment**, and Complete Streets is very much a part of that. We had youth groups get together and do that mapping and auditing, which again also **builds our capacity and awareness** of their built environment, and help them learn how to advocate for better conditions.”*

Coalition Building

- Build and/or leverage multi-sectoral collaborations and/or coalitions to gain support for Complete Streets initiatives.
 - **“...involving as many people, including the people that you don't wanna involve like the city council member who's been against biking and walking the entire time, those people are really important to get in early and be like, this is what we think is a valuable thing and communities around the country have been doing this and seeing improvements in life expectancy and health. You have to bring them on board..”**

How the Public Health Community can Support Implementation Efforts

- Help to secure funding to support implementation efforts
 - Advocate for funding when drafting/advocating for legislation
- Provide grant support to help fund implementation efforts

Public Health Practitioners Can Support Data and Evaluation Needs

- Help to **identify performance measures and create an evaluation plan.**
- **Identify sources of available data** to support policy development and/or evaluation efforts.
- **Collect process and outcome data.**
- **Identify funding sources for evaluation activities.**

Opportunities for Action and Forthcoming Products

Public Health Sector Engagement Pathways

- Help to “**frame**” the initiative within a health and equity lens
 - Employ best practices in health communications strategies
 - Be explicit with equity language
- **Engage** the community
 - Directly engage community members from marginalized communities to ensure Complete Streets projects meet their needs.
 - Use local data as a starting point to explore equity issues.
- Build/leverage **multi-sectoral relationships** and coalitions
- Help to **obtain funding** to support implementation
- **Gather data** and conduct/support **evaluation**

Report and Community Profiles

Public Health Engagement in Complete Streets Initiatives: Examples and Lessons Learned

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FEBRUARY 2019

Bensenville, Illinois

COMPLETE STREETS PROFILE
FEBRUARY 2019

Public Health Involvement and Complete Streets Key Actors

PUBLIC HEALTH INVOLVEMENT

▶ The county health department facilitated public health involvement in policy making through an existing coalition in Bensenville.

IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES

- ▶ Bensenville Public Works Department (Lead)
- ▶ Bensenville Community and Economic Development Department
- ▶ Bensenville Finance Department
- ▶ Bensenville Police Department
- ▶ DuPage County Health Department

OTHER KEY ACTORS INCLUDE

- ▶ Bensenville Youth Services Coalition
- ▶ B Well Bensenville (coalition)



Lessons Learned

- ▶ The county health department can assist capacity to facilitate C making at the municipal level.
- ▶ Culturally competent community
- ▶ Public health departments can be

Equity Matters

- ▶ Start conversations about heat coalition and with community different perspectives to the
- ▶ Mapping exercises can help identify dangerous intersection from meeting basic needs such grocery store.
- ▶ Recognize that community id may indirectly relate to Compl residents may identify snow a barrier to walking in the winter



Policy/Implementation Timeline

2015	2016	2017	2018
Feb 2015 Bensenville received an American Planning Association Plan4Health grant to engage in Complete Streets Policy work.	Mar 2016 The Bensenville Active Transportation Plan is released.		
	Mar 2018 Complete Street Ordinance (Ordinance No. 9-2018) passes.		

BENSENVILLE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Population Size	18,431
% urban	100%
Median Age	36
Median Household Income	\$62,286
% White (non-Hispanic)	43.4%
% Black (non-Hispanic)	3.6%
% Asian (non-Hispanic)	3.7%
% Hispanic	46.1%
% Occupied Housing with No Vehicle	8.3%
% Occupied Housing with at least 1	91.7%
% Workers Taking Public Transit to Work	3.9%

Source: Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2012-2018.



Resources for Further Information

LAWS/LEGISLATION

Complete Streets Ordinance (2018) <https://www.bensenville.il.us/DocumentCenter/View/10483/CS-2018-Complete-Streets-Policy?pdf>

COMPLETE STREETS-RELATED DESIGN MANUALS, PLANS, REPORTS, AND OTHER MATERIAL

Bensenville Active Transportation Plan, Including Design Guidelines: https://ap01cc02a.ms-content.com/col/col/2018/05/Bensenville_Active_Transportation_Plan_Law88a.pdf

ADVOCACY/COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

EHell Bensenville Plan4Health Coalition: <http://plan4health.us/plan4health/coalitions/bensenville-ehell-well-bensenville-plan4health-coalition/> and <https://www.bensenville.com/>

Plan4Health: <http://plan4health.us/>
Bensenville Youth Services Coalition: <https://www.bensenville.il.us/986/Bensenville-Youth-Services-Coalition>

FOR MORE INFORMATION

FOR MORE INFORMATION

16
OCT

Engaging Public Health in Complete Streets

Posted by **Jamie Chriqui** in **Physical Activity, Research.**



Most American streets were designed to prioritize cars, which makes it hard for people to safely bike, walk, or access public transportation. **Complete Streets** shifts the design principle to focus on making streets safe and accessible for users of all ages, abilities, and multiple modes of transportation.

Moving toward Complete Streets also provides opportunities to increase physical activity, decrease traffic related injuries and deaths, improve air quality, decrease storm water runoff, and increase equitable access to public transportation. This movement is motivating and challenging the public health community to engage in policy initiatives traditionally associated with planning, transportation, and public works. But how does the public health community get started, and what can they do?

Dr. Jamie Chriqui, who co-leads the **Illinois Prevention Research Center Physical Activity Policy Research Network Plus (PAPRN+)** Collaborating Center, is working on a project to identify how public health can engage in Complete Streets initiatives. She and her team are interviewing representatives from public health and planning/transportation/public works in 13-15 jurisdictions across the county where public health is actively engaged in the policy process, spanning development, adoption, and/or implementation. These interviews will inform a forthcoming public report as well as case studies illustrating best practices that can help other jurisdictions engage in Complete Streets projects.

<https://illinoisprc.org/paprn-complete-streets-project/>

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