Completing Rural Streets

Active transportation policy, planning and infrastructure for healthier communities

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Home of Michigan Tech University & "Birthplace of Professional Hockey"

Like many rural areas: Limited funding and resources, declining population and tax base, aging population, high rates of chronic disease and obesity, and a 20th century transportation system designed for the automobile.

Unlike some rural areas: 300 inches of snow per year, the most east of the Rockies, is an additional challenge for active transportation.

Active Transportation: How and Why

- Make healthy lifestyle choices, including daily physical activity, a safe, convenient and a normal part of everyday life.
- Complete Streets is a policy and planning process ensuring that roadways accommodate the needs of all users, all ages and abilities, including pedestrians, cyclists and transit users.
- Non-motorized transportation network plans create a vision and commit resources based on community needs.
- Policy, systems and environmental (PSE) changes are "stickier" (more effective and sustainable) than simply repeating health promotion programs that have not had any long-term impact on childhood obesity and diabetes.

Before Houghton became a healthy community and a bike-friendly city





Process for Progress

- Baseline Assessment
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Locally Tailored/Targeted Surveys
- Walking/Biking Audits (Engage City Officials)
- Planning (Evaluation, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, and of course, Engineering)
- Policy
- Built Environment
- Document and Celebrate Successes
- Repeat the Cycle



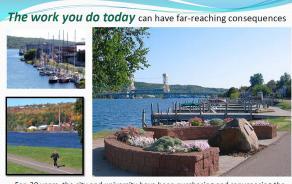
Learn from the successes and mistakes of similar communities and projects





At one time, Michigan Tech students were warned to stay away from the shore because it was too dangerous.

In the 1970s, the city planning commission visited Traverse City and other shoreline communities to learn from their experiences. They decided to make public access their priority.



For 30 years, the city and university have been purchasing and repurposing the old industrial shoreline sites for public access, building non-motorized paths, parks, playgrounds, pavilions, marinas, beaches, classrooms and a public library.



Find a core group of supporters who share your vision and then involve more

stakeholders in planning

In 2006, *citizens formed a bike committee* with city backing. The Houghton Bike Task Force developed an on-line survey. **384 bike commuters** responded with information about their summer and winter bike routes and suggestions for improvements.









Policy Successes April to September 2010

- Bike-parking ordinance adopted, an amendment to the zoning laws, April
- Bike-friendly Community Proclamation adopted, April
- MDOT "Training Wheels", June
- American League of Bicyclists Bike
- Friendly City Survey Application submitted, July
- Awarded Bike Friendly City status, Sept.
- MDCH/MDOT Complete Streets training, Sept.

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Complete Streets Ordinance, Fall 2010

- Planning Commission, Bike Task Force and city officials write and review Complete Streets Ordinance language
- Public hearings at Planning Commission and City Council in November/December
- Ordinance passed December 22, 2010, 6th city in Michigan to pass an ordinance

		ARTICLE III. DESIGN STANDARDS		
Sec	34-71. General	Requirements.		
	com adir- trans	Complete Streets. The City of Houghton will plan for, design, and construct all transportation improvement projects, bods new and reitselfs, netrivities, to previde apprepriate accommendation for bicyclistics, pediedrian, tenesis taters, and menterios of all ages and abilities in neurolance with City of Flocagittee polectinia and blicg data.		
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CITY OF HOUGHTON ORDINANCE NO. 2010-226

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2011– Safe Routes to School

The Houghton Middle School Safe Routes Team developed a plan for 3 improved crosswalks, and sidewalks on key feeder roads, with participation from students, community members and city police and engineers. Recommendations were incorporated into the city master plan and nonmotorized transportation plan.



2012 – Houghton-Hancock Bike/Pedestrian Survey and MDOT Planning

Hancock formed a bike/pedestrian committee similar to Houghton's, the two sister cities conducted a joint survey with 800 respondents, maps were created with estimated bike usage by season, and a joint committee was consulted with by MDOT for roadway designs on M-26.



2013 – More Planning, More Recognition

The Houghton Bike and Pedestrian committee used survey and crash data, sidewalk inventories and Safe Routes to School plans, and existing bike and pedestrian plans to create a Non-motorized transportation Plan that was adopted by the Planning Commission and City Council. And Houghton gained the Silver Level for Bike Friendly Community.

CITY OF HOUGHTON
NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION PLAN
2013

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2014 Safe Routes to School Houghton Elementary Bike to Work Day Walk and Roll to School Day





More than just health promotion

- Remember PSE (Policy-System-Environmental change) and the 5E's (Evaluation & Planning, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement and Engineering)
- PSE interventions are 'stickier'
- When we work with schools and communities to make walking a safe and convenient choice, people will make lifestyle changes and chronic disease risk will be reduced
- When you talk to community leaders, describe community health in broad terms, including economic vitality and quality of life, to increase support from business and government stakeholders