Understanding the Role of Built and Social Environments in Chronic Disease Prevention and Obesity Reduction



THE PROJECT



COMMUNITY HEALTH & THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Overall Goal: Understand how place or community environments influence physical activity and healthy eating choices for obesity reduction and chronic disease prevention.

> **Setting:** Four communities in Alberta, Canada: (1) Medicine Hat and Redcliff (population 66,193) (2) North Central Edmonton (population 41,026) (3) Town of Bonnyville (population 6,470) (4) Town of St. Paul (population 5,541)

COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP PROCESS

Objective 1: To have on-going communication between the research team and the community working groups to ensure that results are meaningful for the communities as well as for research.

 Community working groups are made up of key stakeholders from the community representing the diversity of community needs (e.g., community organizations, municipal policy-makers and community members). Both the community working group members and the research team bring four critical types of knowledge to the process: (1) empirical knowledge, (2) experiential knowledge, (3) presentational knowledge, and (4) practical knowledge.

"Outsider" Perspective - Community Observation

- Data collected June to September 2008.
- Utilized an adapted Irvine-Minnesota Inventory¹.
- Looked at 170 elements across 3,666 segments (total for all four commutation) • Observation focused on looking at characteristics in the built environmer four general themes:
 - (1) Accessibility: Includes how easily destinations can be reached (e.g. and sidewalk presence).
 - (2) Pleasurability: Includes how attractive the area is (e.g., presence of or flowers).
 - (3) Perceived safety from traffic: Includes perceptions that there are line opportunities for injury (e.g., crosswalks and grass between the sidew (4) Perceived safety from crime: Includes perceptions that there are line

opportunities for crime (e.g., street lighting and absence of graffiti). Segment was defined as from one street corner to the next street corner residential block).

Objective 3: To develop, implement a

Project Goals:

- (1) promote "free play" in the community
- (2) change perceptions of community safety
- (3) promote under-utilized community recreation spaces
- (4) Reduce economic barriers associated with participation in physical activity

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PROJECT ACTIVITIES

	"Insider" Perspective - Photo
	 Data collected May to June 2009.
	 35 participants (total for all four communities)
unities).	 Data was collected in five key stages.
nt related to	(1) Initial interview: One-on-one interview to understand the community environment.
g., land use mix	(2) Picture taking: Participants had two weeks to take pic community that made it harder or easier for them to be p
of street trees	(3) Follow-up interview: One-on-one interview to allow th about their pictures.
mited	(4) Summarize participants' photographs: The top five pl
alk and road).	were summarized for community display.
mited	(5) Community presentation of photographs: The photographs presented back to the community through reports, prese
r (i.e., typical	newspaper articles.

St.Paul Mayos

Community Project Example St. Paul MOVES (Motivation – Opportunity – Variety – Enjoy – Success)

Project Phases:

hysical activity and healthy eating.

ovoice

- participants perceptions of
- ictures of anything in their physically active or eat healthy. he participants to tell the stories
- hotographs for each participants
- graphs and stories were entations, static displays and



ate an opportunity or break down a barrier within the built and social environments.

(1) Partnering with local high schools (January-April 2009) (2) Partnering with the community (July – August 2009) (3) Expanding the program to the wider community (May – August 2010) (4) Sustainability through partnerships (2011)







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REFERENCES

1. Day, K., Boarnet, M., Alfonzo, M., & Forsyth, A. (2006). The Irvine-Minnesota inventory to measure built environments: Development. American Journal of Preventive Medicine,

Why use Community Observation and Photovoice to Understand Community **Environments?**



This is a neighborhood, probably 30 to 40 years old, where there are no sidewalks on either side of the street. Everyone has to walk on the road: school children, delivery people, and seniors. I don't know why they didn't build a sidewalk there. Community Resident