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Active Living by Design
Full Proposal Stage
Full Proposal Narrative Template
Lead Agency: Town of Chapel Hill
Project Title: Chapel Hill Community Mobility and Health Initiative

ATTACHMENT 1

VISION

The overall objective of the Chapel Hill Community Mobility and Health Initiative is to create a culture of active living within the Chapel Hill community. This culture will be encouraged through the implementation of programs designed to identify and fund physical improvements that will encourage greater mobility within the Community. At the same time the Mobility and Health Initiative will implement promotional and educational programs in cooperation with community and neighborhood groups. These programs will encourage greater physical activity throughout the community and focus on selected subareas and target populations within the Town.

By the end of the first year of the Community Mobility and Health Initiative will have established a communitywide framework for developing programs designed to promote more active living. The Partnership Group will have assisted in the development of a promotional program, including the selection of a “brand” and logo to be used in all materials. Implementation of a promotional program aimed at workplaces will be initiated. The Partnership Group will also have select focus areas, including schools, activity areas, and neighborhoods, and organize community based advisory committees for each focus area. Advisory committee members will have completed community assessments to identify mobility issues within their areas and begun to develop a program of physical improvements and promotional/educational programs.

By the end of year five the “brand” will be recognizable throughout the Chapel Hill Community and the program will be sustained through annual funding from the Town.

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Successful implementation of community assessment and promotional activities will be extended to additional focus areas and ongoing promotional efforts aimed at workplaces will also be fully implemented. Beyond five years these programs will be ongoing and additional resources will be provided to expand promotional efforts and identify new populations.

PROJECT

Partnership Group

The Chapel Hill Community Mobility and Health Initiative Project will utilize the ongoing efforts of a Partnership Group that includes representatives from a wide range of disciplines, all interested in expanding the relationship between community mobility and health. Health promotion professionals will be teamed with specialists in transportation and smart growth policies to develop integrated programs to encourage more active living. The Partnership will also include members of Town's Transportation, Bicycle and Pedestrian, Greenways and Parks and Recreation citizen advisory boards. The integration of Town staff and advisory board members with representatives from public health organizations and school representatives provides a unique multi-disciplinary approach to mobility and health issues. This integrated approach will allow for the identification of policy and design barriers to mobility and active living and the development of solutions that can be recommended to policy bodies such as the Chapel Hill Town Council and School Board. The Initiative will also be able to benefit from coordination with ongoing programs such as the Town's Transportation Management Plan policy and Air Awareness Program.



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The Partnership Group will assist the Project Director in selecting focus areas that will include schools, neighborhoods and activity centers throughout the community. The Group will work with neighborhood groups, merchants and employers to develop effective promotional and outreach programs to promote more active living.

Promotional Program

The Partnership Group, which includes representatives of local media and organizations with experience in health promotions, will work with Prevention Partners to develop an overall promotional program for the Project. The promotional program will include the development of a “brand identity” and logo designed to allow provide recognition within the community of the various elements of the Project. It is intended that the “brand” and logo will be crafted in a manner that will allow its use by Orange County and other municipalities in the area. The Partnership Group will also work with the ongoing efforts within the Town, such as park and recreation mapping programs and public transit promotion programs to include information about the Mobility and Health Initiative. The promotional program will be closely coordinated to support the specific projects discussed below.

Focus Areas

The Project will pursue the development of specific programs designed to improve mobility within identified focus areas. These focus areas will include school sites, activity areas and adjacent neighborhoods. These programs will serve as models for implementation in other areas of the community and will tied into the development of the



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more general promotional programs. Two school sites will be selected, including Estes Hills Elementary/Phillips Junior High School and the new elementary school at Meadowmont. The Estes Hill/Phillips site is located among existing neighborhoods and has been designed at “walkable” school by the Chapel Hill-Carrboro School District. The Meadowmont School will open in the fall of 2003 and is part of the Meadowmont Village, a neo-traditional development, designed to encourage physical activity through the inclusion of pedestrian and bicycle facilities and integration of land uses. In both cases the Project will work with the Chapel Hill-Carrboro School District and parents groups to develop and implement a program designed to encourage walking and biking access to the schools. An advisory committee, including school staff, parents and representatives of the adjoining neighborhoods will be organized at each school. Committee members will be used to prepare an assessment of walk and bike access to the schools and help in developing a set of improvements to increase mobility. Working with the Project Director the Committee will also participate in the development of promotional programs, utilizing some existing programs such as “Walk to School” and developing additional programs unique to their school site. While the Estes Hills/Phillips Schools have participated in “Walk to School” efforts in the past, the Meadowmont School offers an opportunity to establish a tradition of walking and biking to the school. Another focus area will be the Northside neighborhood and the adjacent Town Center area. The Northside community is a low income, minority neighborhood that has been designated as a conservation area by the Town. The Mobility and Health Initiative will work with the established Conservation Advisory Committee to identify barriers to

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mobility and develop programs designed to improve the physical environment and

promote more active living. This effort will also be integrated into an assessment of

mobility issues in the adjacent Town Center commercial area. Property and business

owners will participate in an assessment of physical barriers limiting mobility and the

development of promotional material. This effort will be coordinated with ongoing

programs to improve the design of the Chapel Hill and Carrboro Town Center areas that

include the Chapel Hill Downtown Commission and Chamber of Commerce.

Two additional focus areas will include the Timberlyne Shopping Center and

Meadowmont Village Center. Both these areas include substantial residential

concentrations and offer great potential for increasing mobility and active living through

physical improvements and promotional programs.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Corridor Analysis

A pedestrian safety project will also be completed as part of the Mobility and Health

Initiative. The North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center will prepare an analysis

of pedestrian safety considerations along the NC86/Airport Road corridor. Large

multifamily residential concentrations along this corridor generate large volume transit

ridership along this corridor, resulting in significant pedestrian and bicycle activity. The

analysis will assess the status of pedestrian and bicycle safety within the corridor and

identify a program of safety improvements. The NC86 corridor also serves the

Timberlyne Shopping area and the safety study will be coordinated with the related

activity center analysis.

Employer Based Initiatives

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The Mobility and Health Initiative will also coordinate with ongoing workplace programs to promote active living. The Project will utilize the Town's existing Transportation Management Program, which includes over 40 places of employment and over 4,000 employees, to promote and implement workplace health programs. The Project will also include the University of North Carolina, which employs over 20,000 workers at sites throughout the community. The Project will take advantage of existing programs developed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Be Active North Carolina Program and others aimed at expanding awareness in the workplace of the health benefits of greater physical activity. These efforts will also be coordinated with workplaces in the focus areas of Meadowmont Village Center, Timberlyne Shopping Center and Town Center areas.

The Initiative will also coordinate with the Town's ongoing Air Awareness Program aimed to providing the public with information on ozone pollution and alerting them to potential health risks on air quality alert days.

IMPACT

The Chapel Hill Community Mobility and Health Initiative will undertake a comprehensive program of promoting more active living within Chapel Hill. The implementation of the general promotional program will increase public awareness of the opportunities for greater mobility and increased health benefits of a more active lifestyle. Through branding and logo development the Initiative can be integrated into new and ongoing efforts by various agencies and organizations to promote active living. The Initiative will bring together a number of existing efforts, including ongoing planning

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and design efforts in the Town Center Area to introduce health related elements. The

efforts to expand bicycle and pedestrian mobility will support the Town's current fare free transit policy, which has resulted in a 40% increase in daily transit ridership, to further expand opportunities for active living. By combining the promotional efforts to encourage more active living with efforts to encourage alternative modes of transportation such as public transit, bicycling and walking the project can also affect air pollution such as ozone. The health risks of ozone pollution will also be integrated into educational materials.

By focusing on school based efforts, particularly aimed at elementary and junior high school the Initiative can have a positive impact on the rise of adolescent obesity and lack of physical activity. Promoting walk and bike to school programs and other health related programs should have the effect of increasing physical activity of children in this target group. The Initiative will also focus efforts in the Northside neighborhood aimed at identifying and removing barriers to active living. This effort will improve the ability of residents of this low income, minority neighborhood to be more active. Previous community surveys in Northside have identified the lack of sidewalk connections to the Hargraves Community Center as a serious barrier, particularly for children of the community whose parents are concerned about safety. Through the Initiative we would expect that Northside residents would be empowered to identify needed improvements within the community and secure public funding for capital improvements. At the same time information would be provided to parents encouraging them to allow their children

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to walk or ride bicycles to the Community Center, which offers a variety of after school and recreational programs.

PARTNERSHIP

The Community Mobility and Health Initiative Partnership Group was formed to bring together professionals from the public and private sector to oversee the development and implementation of programs to increase active living in Chapel Hill. The Partnership Group will be involved in the development of all promotional activities, including the selection of a brand and logo. The Group will also work with representatives of the focus areas, including neighborhood groups, school parent groups and the business community to develop targeted strategies for implementation. The Partnership Group The Partnership Group will be expanded to incorporate new expertise or disciplines whenever necessary. Additional membership for the Partnership Group would include community groups, particularly in the identified focus areas, and elected officials from Chapel Hill and Orange County.

The Project Director, David Bonk, is Principal Transportation Planner with the Town of Chapel Hill. He has over 17 years of experience in the Chapel Hill community developing the Town's transportation system. He has been involved in the development of the Town's public transit system, bicycle and pedestrian network, as well as in the Town's Comprehensive Plan and Development Ordinance. He originated the Town's youth bicycle helmet program and developed the Town's Transportation Management Program for employers. He has also played a lead role in developing regional

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transportation funding policies that have provided additional funds for public transit, bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

Partnership member Meg Molloy, Executive Director of Prevention Partners, has 20 years experience in prevention, health behavior change and health policy, with focus on nutrition and physical activity program. She also has experience in media and policy development.

POPULATION AND COMMUNITY

The Community Mobility and Health Initiative will be implemented within the Town of Chapel Hill. Chapel Hill, with a population of 52,440, covers approximately 21 square miles. Nearly 50% of the Town's population is between 15-29 years of age, while between 1970 and 2000 those 65 years or older represented the largest percentage increase in population. 78% of the population is white, while 11% are black. Asian and Hispanic populations within the community represented the largest percentage growth rate within the community compared to 1990.

The Community Mobility and Health Initiative will focus its efforts on several subgroups, including the school age population and minority/low income populations.

While there are no specific statistics for Chapel Hill, statewide and nationwide data on health problems suggest the need for improvements. The UNC School of Public Health recently released data indicating that between 1980 and 2000 the number of overweight teens has increased while the amount of exercise they get has decreased. At the same time 25% of children ages 5-11 are overweight. The Prevention Partners 2002 North

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Carolina Prevention Report Card identified several failing grades, including adults and children not getting recommended amounts of physical activity.

One focus area of the Initiative will be the Northside neighborhood. Blacks make up 44.7% of the population in this neighborhood. 36.7% of the residents reported incomes below the poverty line, while 18.3% of the residents reported that they walked to work in the 2000 census. 15.7% of the households reported they had no automobile available. The Chapel Hill Town Council has adopted a 2000 Comprehensive Plan that includes a the goal of increasing mobility by promoting greater use of public transit, bicycling and walking. In 2002 the Town, in cooperation with the Town of Carrboro and University of North Carolina, implemented a fare free transit policy that has increased ridership over 40%. In January, 2003 the Town Council reaffirmed their commitment to promoting bicycling and walking, identifying them as their number one priority for implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Various citizen advisory boards, including the Transportation Board, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board and Greenways Commission have supported efforts to promote bicycling and walking and linking these activities to public health issues.

BUDGET AND SUSTAINABILITY

During the first year the Project will provide funding for a part time Project Administrator. In addition Prevention Partners will be engaged to complete a communitywide and focus area promotional program. They will also assist in training citizens to complete mobility assessments within their communities and will provide project support on health related issues. The N.C. Highway Safety Research Center will also be contracted with

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to complete an assessment of the NC86/Airport Road corridor to identify pedestrian and bicycle safety issues and prepare recommendations on improvements. They will also provide assistance on promotional program development. Funding will be provided to develop a logo and prepare promotional materials.

In the second year funding will be provided for the Project Administrator and contract with Prevention Partners to provide a reduced level of promotional support. Funding for promotional activities and promotional materials will be included.

In year three funding for the Project Administrator and promotional programs and materials will be continued.

In years four and five funding will be provided for implementation of promotional programs and materials.

The Community Mobility and Health Initiative will utilize additional local, State and federal transportation funds to implement a program of physical improvements. These will include construction of additional sidewalks and bicycle facilities.

The Chapel Hill Community Mobility and Health Initiative will be supported in several ways by Town of Chapel Hill. At this point it is our intention to use funding from the Active Living By Design grant, equivalent to a part time position, to fund a full time position with the Town. This position, which has been provided partial funding, will undertake marketing activities for the Chapel Hill Transit system and provide day to day administration of the Mobility and Health Initiative. We believe the combination of these efforts will be beneficial in several ways. The development of marketing and promotions

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programs for the Town's public transit system can compliment and incorporate elements of the promotional program to be developed for the Mobility and Health Initiative. It is expected that management of the Town's Transportation Management Program will also be incorporated into this effort, allowing for the dissemination of health related information and implementation of promotional programs in addition to transportation information. There is also a greater possibility of sustaining the position once funding from the grant is exhausted by incorporating it into the existing part time position. The Project Manager will ensure that the Administrator fulfills all responsibilities associated with funding from the Active Living By Design grant.

In kind support from the Town of Chapel Hill to the Community Mobility and Health Initiative will include office space, equipment and supplies for the Project Administrator. In addition the Town will contribute time from various existing staff, including the Long Range Planning Coordinator, Senior Planners and Principal Transportation and Community Development Planner. These staff will assist the Project Administrator in developing and implementing the Community Mobility and Health Initiative. The Town's Principal Transportation Planner will also act as Project Manager.

Members of the Partnership Group have also pledged their time to support the efforts of the Initiative. Given their wide range of experience their contributions as part of the Partnership Group will be significant.