

STEP IT UP: EFFORTS TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY DESIGN AND ACTIVE TRAVEL IN BIG SKY COUNTRY

Cathy Costakis, MS

Montana State University

New Partners for Smart Growth Conference

February 12, 2016

Objectives

- Describe a frontier state's technical assistance program to improve community design and active travel
- Describe the role of collaborative partnerships both at the state and local level
- Major takeaways and next steps

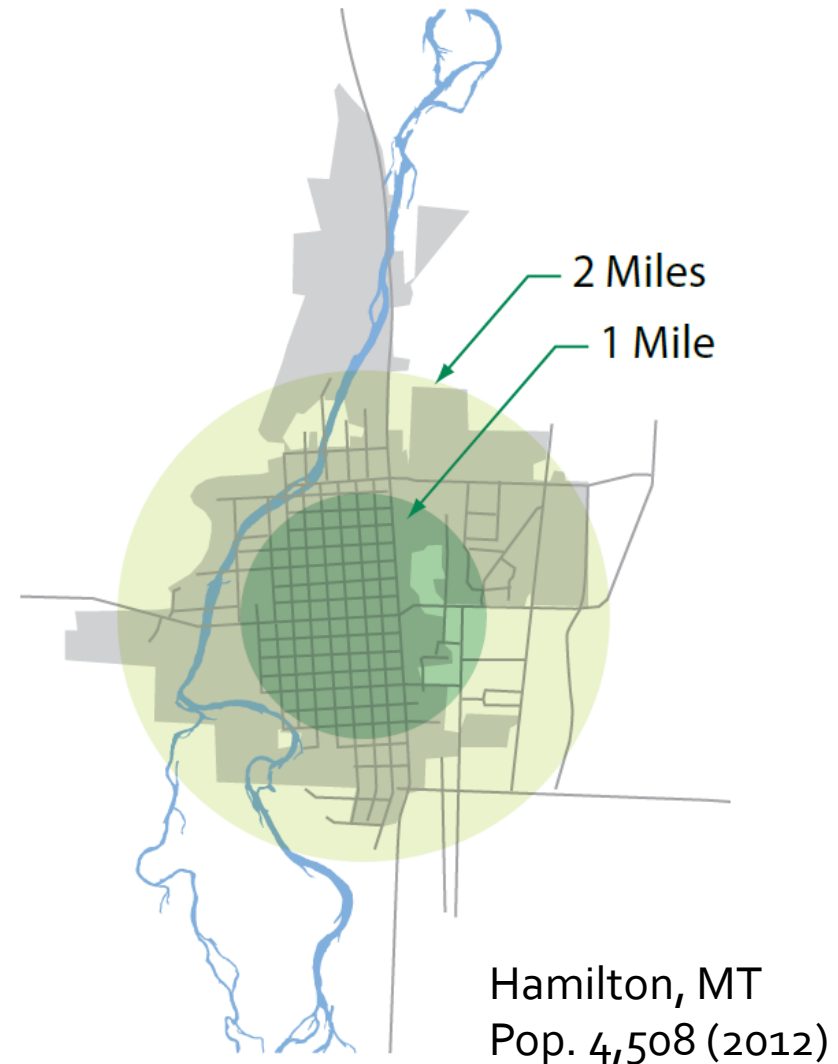
Montana is ranked:

- 4th largest in land area
- 44th by population
- 48th by population density
- 46/56 counties classified as frontier



Biking and Walking Potential in Rural Communities

- Small towns are ideally sized to maximize bicycling and walking potential
- Average walking trip in US = 1.2 miles (50% less than half mile)
- Average bicycling trip in US = 4 miles (60% less than 2 miles)





MONTANA
DPHHS

Healthy People. Healthy Communities.
Prevention. Education. Evaluation.



Building Active Communities Initiative

Goal: To encourage policy and environmental changes that help make communities safer, more accessible and inviting places for people to walk or bike or take public transportation (if available).

Building Active Communities Initiative (BACI)

- Action Institute
- Resources
- Advisors
- Webinar Series
- Mini-grants
- Technical Assistance
- Evaluation



Active Community Policy/Plans

- **Complete Streets Policy**
- **Sidewalk Policy**
- Infill Policy
- **Bicycle/Pedestrian/Active Transportation Plan**
- Mixed Use Zoning
- School Siting Policy
- **Parks and Recreation Plan**
- Joint Use Agreement
- Worksite Wellness Policy (supporting active commutes)



3. Subdivision regulations.

- Use Main Streets & compact neighborhoods as a guide.
- Densify bonuses for corner stores, affordability, infrastructure improvements.
- Residential clusters in centers, near transit.
- Require multi-modal transportation (not just traffic impact) analysis.



Walking Audit



Utilizing Transit



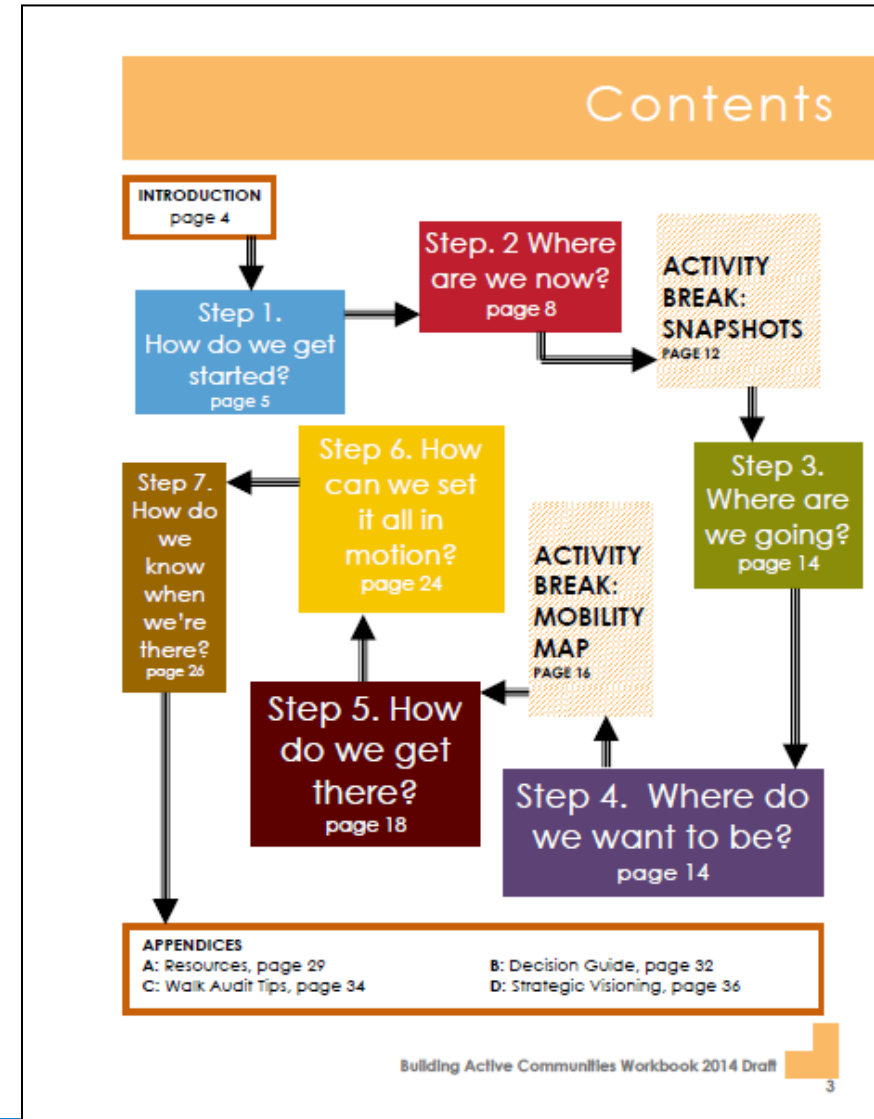
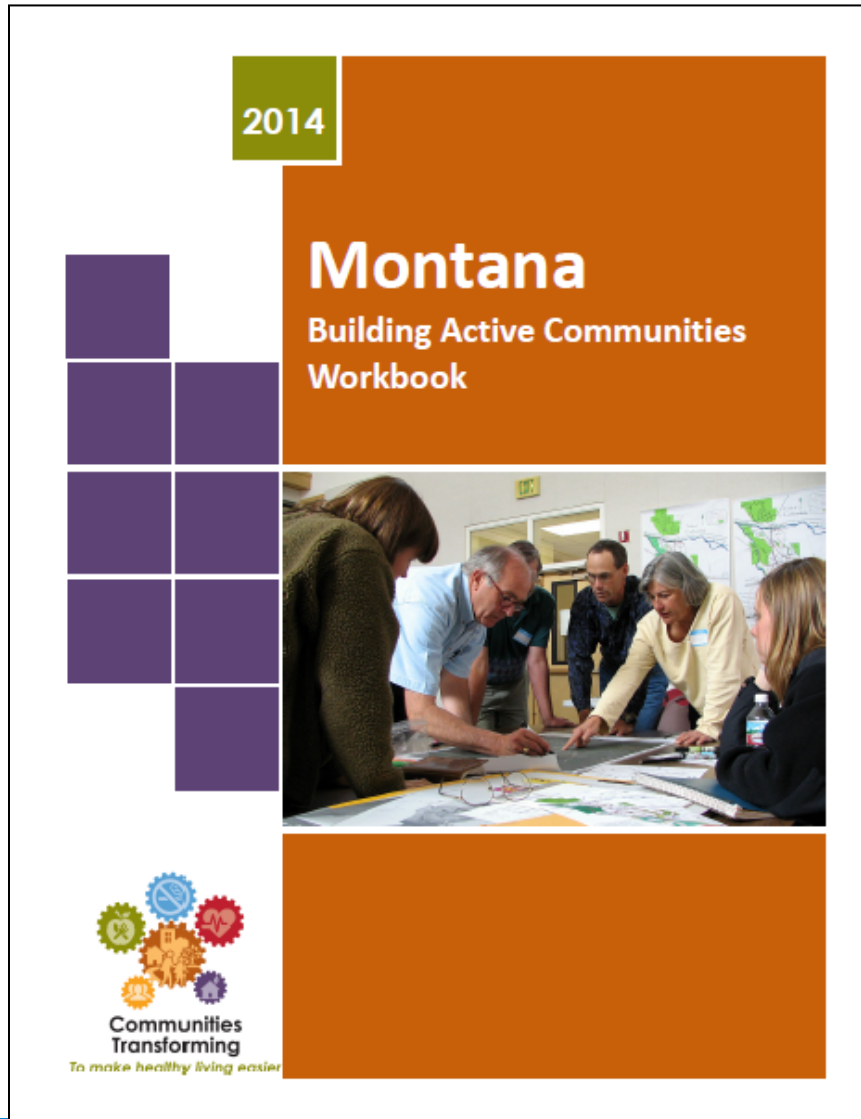


Action Planning

We are most proud of ...



Building Active Communities Workbook



Building Active Communities: Resource Guide

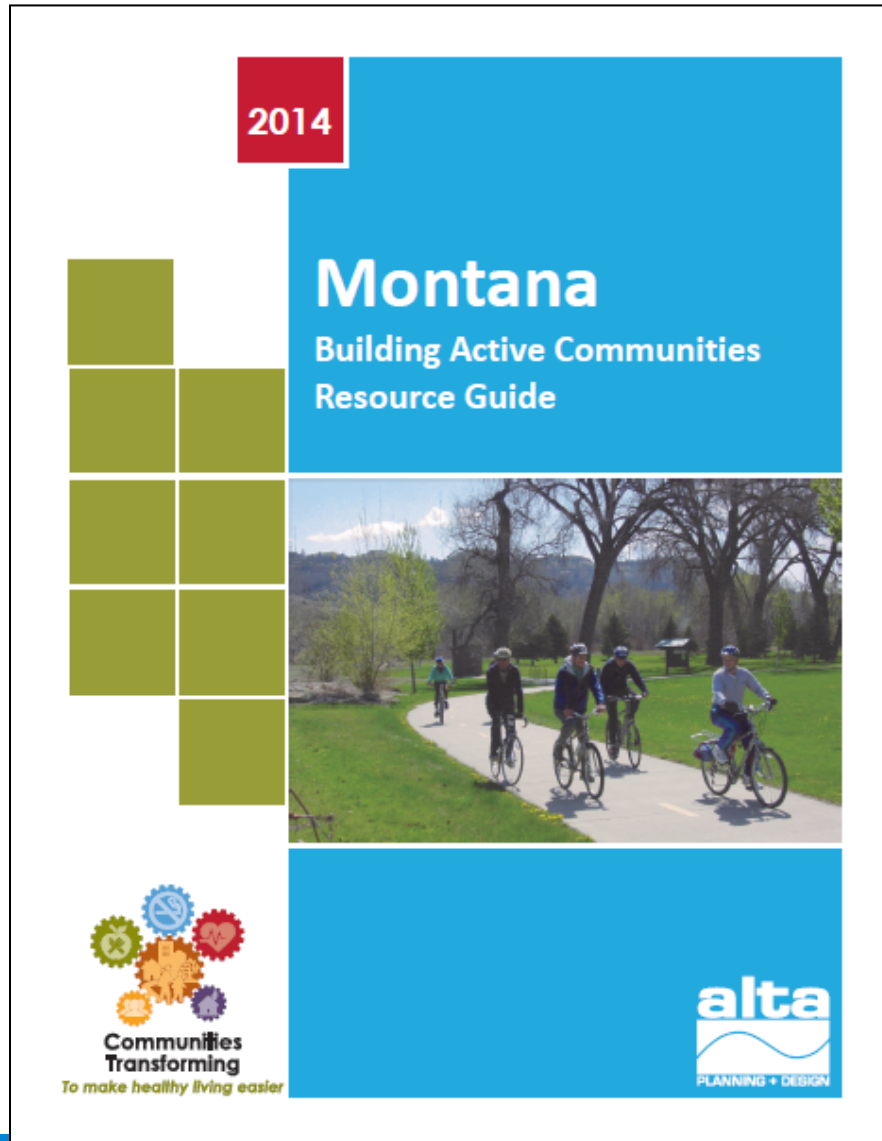
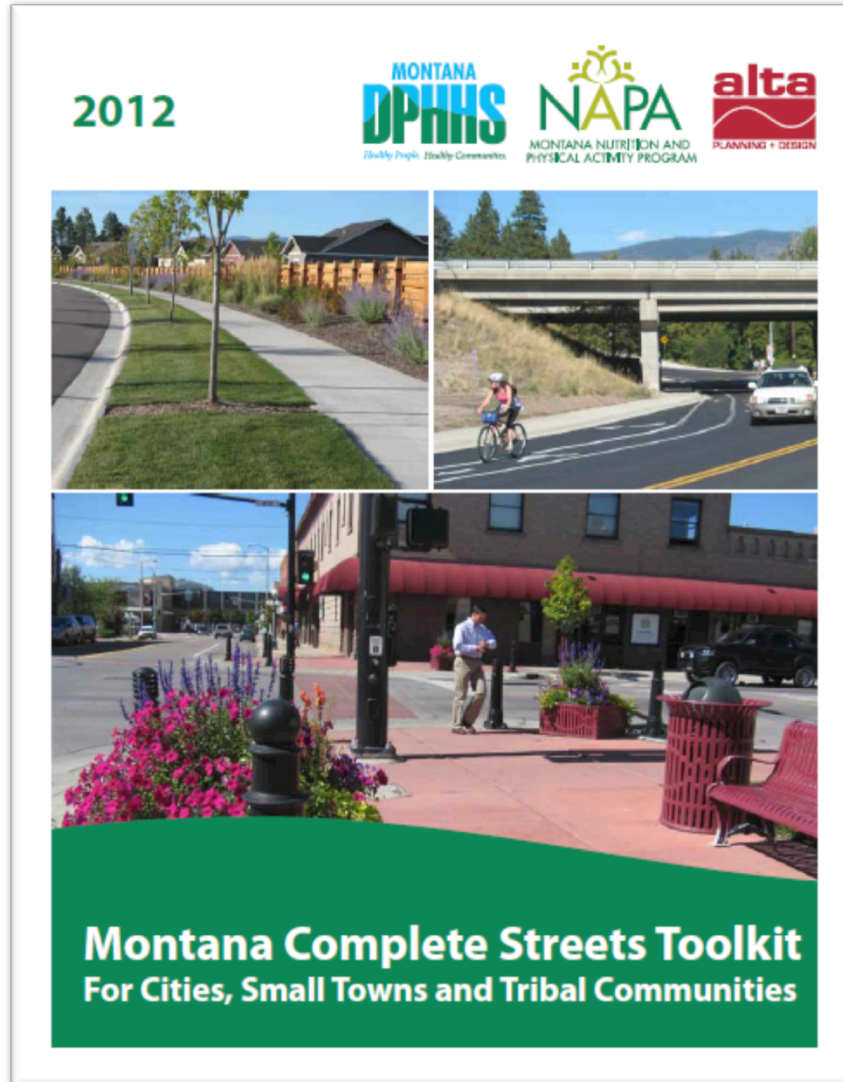


Table of Contents

Introduction	9
Strategy Descriptions and Examples	
1. Complete Streets Policies	13
2. Joint Use Agreements	33
3. Sidewalk Programs	39
4. Subdivision Regulations	49
5. Growth Policy	55
6. Transportation Plans	61
7. Transportation Districts	65
8. Safe Routes to School	69

Montana Complete Streets Toolkit



- Resource
- Planning Guidance
 - Case Studies
- Design Guidance

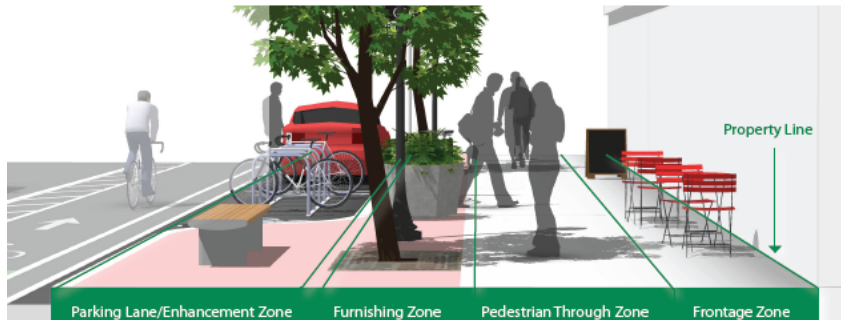
- For City/County/Town staff,
- Elected officials
- Citizens

The Complete Streets Toolkit

The Sidewalk Corridor

Description

Sidewalks are the most fundamental element of the walking network, as they provide an area for pedestrian travel separated from vehicle traffic. A variety of considerations are important in sidewalk design. Providing adequate and accessible facilities can lead to increased numbers of people walking, improved safety, and the creation of social space.



Parking Lane/Enhancement Zone	Furnishing Zone	Pedestrian Through Zone	Frontage Zone
<p>The parking lane can act as a flexible space to further buffer the sidewalk from moving traffic. Curb extensions, and bike corrals may occupy this space where appropriate.</p> <p>In the <i>edge zone</i> there should be a 6 inch wide curb.</p>	<p>The furnishing zone buffers pedestrians from the adjacent roadway, and is also the area where elements such as street trees, signal poles, signs, and other street furniture are properly located.</p>	<p>The through zone is the area intended for pedestrian travel. This zone should be entirely free of permanent and temporary objects.</p> <p>Wide through zones are needed in downtown areas or where pedestrian flows are high.</p>	<p>The Frontage Zone allows pedestrians a comfortable "shy" distance from the building fronts. It provides opportunities for window shopping, to place signs, planters, or chairs.</p> <p>Not applicable if adjacent to a landscaped space.</p>

Discussion

Sidewalks should be more than areas to travel; they should provide places for people to interact. There should be places for standing, visiting, and sitting. Sidewalks should contribute to the character of neighborhoods and main streets, strengthen their identity, and be an area where adults and children can safely participate in public life.

Additional References and Guidelines

United States Access Board. (2002). Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities.
 United States Access Board. (2007). Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG).
 AASHTO. (2004). Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities.

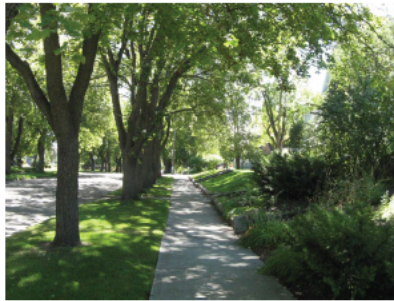
Materials and Maintenance

Sidewalks are typically constructed out of concrete and are separated from the roadway by a curb or gutter and sometimes a landscaped boulevard. Colored, patterned, or stamped concrete can add distinctive visual appeal.

The Sidewalk Corridor

Local Details

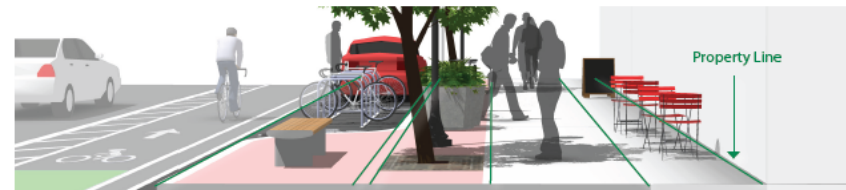
The width and design of sidewalks will vary depending on street context, functional classification, and pedestrian demand. Below are preferred widths of each sidewalk zone according to general street type. Standardizing sidewalk guidelines for different areas of the community, dependent on the above listed factors, ensures a minimum level of quality for all sidewalks. All sidewalks are recommended to include a furnishing or planting zone that can act as snow storage in the winter.



Local street sidewalk environment



Downtown Kalispell



Street Classification	Parking Lane/Enhancement Zone	Furnishing Zone	Pedestrian Through Zone	Frontage Zone	Total
Local Streets	Varies	2 - 5 feet	4 - 6 feet	N/A	6.5 - 10 feet
Main Street Areas	Varies	4 - 6 feet	6 - 12 feet	2.5 - 10 feet	11 - 28 feet

Additional Locations and Notes

It is important to provide adequate width along a sidewalk corridor. Two people should be able to walk side-by-side and pass a third comfortably. In areas of high demand sidewalks should contain adequate width to accommodate the high volumes and different walking speeds of pedestrians. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires a 4 foot clear width in the pedestrian zone plus 5 foot passing areas every 200 feet.

Six feet of through zone width enables two pedestrians (including wheelchair users) to walk side-by-side, or to pass each other comfortably.

BACI Advisors

- Western Transportation Institute
- MT Department of Commerce
- Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
- Montana Disability and Health Program
- Bike Walk Montana
- Alta Planning + Design
- Future West
- Flathead County Public Health Department
- MSU Extension Community Development
- City of Helena, Engineering

Technical Assistance



Community Outcomes

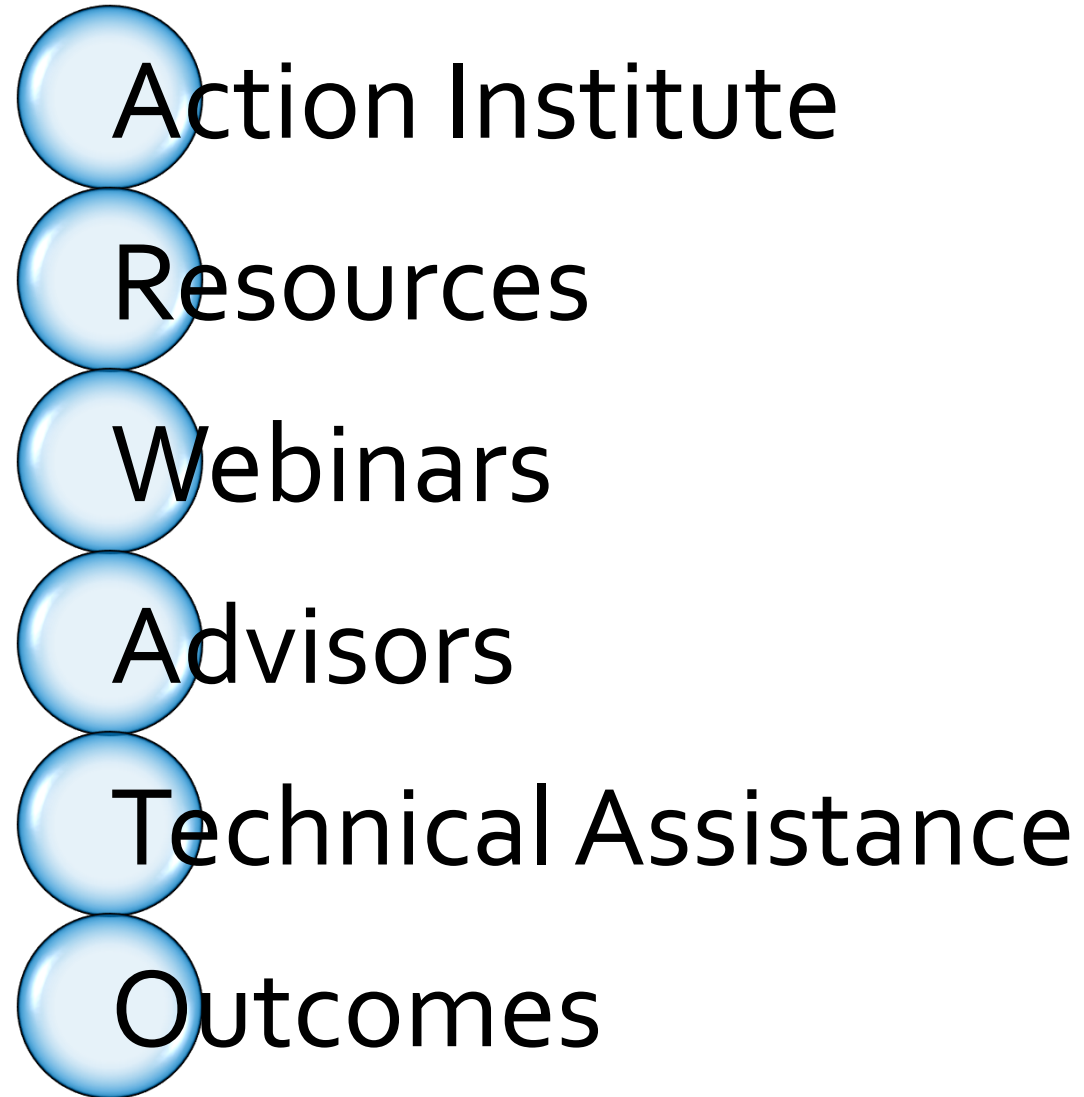
- Glendive—Master Trails Plan (2014)
- Great Falls—Growth Policy and Transportation Plan updates (2014)
- Shelby—Safe and Accessible Streets policy (2014)
- Sidney—Safe and Accessible Streets policy (2014)
- Hamilton—Complete Streets Policy (2014)
- Belgrade—Safe and Usable Streets Policy (2014)
- Polson—Safe and Accessible Streets Policy (2015)
- Glendive—Safe and Accessible Streets Policy (2015)

Community Outcomes

- Dawson County—
Complete Streets Policy
 - Ranked #3 by the
National Complete
Streets Coalition of over
70 policies adopted in
2014



EVALUATION



Major Takeaways

- The health sector cannot solve the health crisis alone
- Building multi-sector capacity is critical
- Adapt evidence-based strategies to a local context
- Enhance local efforts through better coordination at the state level

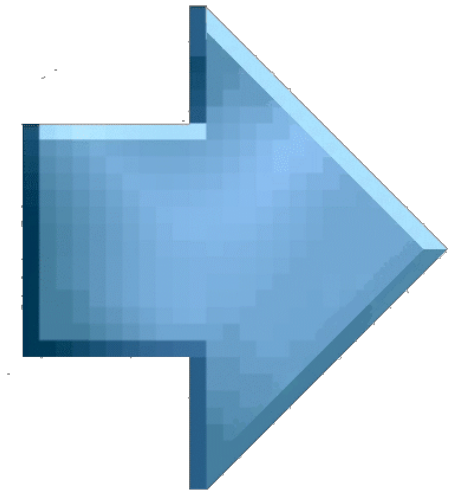
BACI-Specific Takeaways

- Bring a critical mass of the right people to the table
- Build knowledge, skills and confidence
- Allow time for peer to peer learning as well as team building
- Follow-up support is critical
- Share successes and challenges

Next Steps

- State-Level Collaborative for Walkable Communities
 - MDT, DOC, DPHHS, Bike Walk Montana, State Parks
- Action Institute 2.0
- Walkable Communities Toolbox

Next





THANK YOU!

Cathy Costakis, MS
Senior Consultant-Built Environment
Montana Nutrition and Physical
Activity Program
Montana State University
costakis@montana.edu
406.994.5734