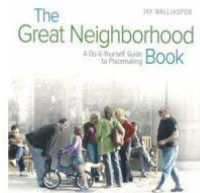


Placemaking: One Neighborhood at a Time

The Great Neighborhood Book is a “Do-It-Yourself Guide to Placemaking” and has been getting great reviews. It is written by Jay Walljasper and published in 2007. Walljasper wrote the book after successfully helping his own Minneapolis neighborhood revamp itself, using his own experiences along with stories from people all over the country to guide the reader as to how they can change their own neighborhood.

The book takes a place-based approach to improving neighborhoods and addresses challenges such as traffic control, crime, comfort and safety, and developing economic vitality. The common elements to improving any neighborhood suggested in the book



Are concepts that are generally followed in a comprehensive plan. The book suggests that these elements will make a difference in any neighborhood:

- ⇒ Public Gathering Places- Where people can spontaneously and comfortably get to know their neighbors.
- ⇒ Walkability- Promotes physical activity and people on the street, which are the best deterrents to crime and other social problems.

⇒ Social Capital- Any organization that brings people together will strengthen the community.

⇒ A Couple of Sparkplugs- A few dedicated citizens can be all it takes to get everything going.

Events such as neighborhood potlucks that bring people together to discuss ideas and opportunities, and neighborhood events or parties to celebrate victories, share stories, and discuss new ideas are successful tools used by neighborhoods throughout the country. Given the success of these tools by various neighborhoods, it may be useful for planning as well. The book and website offer many great ideas for improving any neighborhood, which can be useful for planners, as well as residents.

Comprehensive Plan Review Checklists

The Design for Health *Comprehensive Plan Review Checklists* are supported by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota. The checklists are a great tool to assist in the development or evaluation of a comprehensive plan. The checklists are divided into separate sections of land use, transportation, water resources, parks and open space, and urbanization, redevelopment, and economic development, which make it easier to use.

Each section includes a variety of questions related to the topic that can be easily answered and provides a space for comments. The checklist helps to highlight areas where improvement is needed before the plan is finalized. Listed are some of the topics included in the checklist related to active living principles.



This neighborhood has incorporated various active living principles, including benches, sidewalks, and lighting.

- ⇒ Providing transit within certain distances of residential and employment areas with underserved needs considered (those with disabilities, elderly, children, and low income)
- ⇒ Incorporating concepts of complete streets, shared streets, and traffic calming strategies
- ⇒ Considering sidewalk width and amenities (benches, trash receptacles, telephones, lighting) *continued on next page*

Comprehensive Checklists con't.

- ⇒ Incorporating mixed use development to encourage transportation related walking
- ⇒ Considering the distance residential areas from playing areas, parks and trails
- ⇒ Considering Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles for off street trail systems and in parks

The Design for Health checklist topics match the plan elements required by the Twin Cities Metropolitan Council. They use research and information regarding community design and healthy living to aid with government planning. The checklist can be located at the *Design for Health* website and can easily be printed or transferred to a Microsoft word or excel document to be used.

Walkable Community Workshop: Arden Hills

ALRC and Arden Hills collaborated to hold a Walkable Community Workshop in Arden Hills on Thursday, November 8th. The workshop highlighted ways in which local land use and transportation decisions affect walking habits, personal health, and overall physical activity. The workshop was designed for residents, local elected officials, volunteer commission members, public administrators, health officials, transportation planners and other local stakeholders.

There was a walking audit on County Road E between State Hwy 51 and Lexington Ave, which included a commercial area disconnected from a residential area. The group evaluated how walkable this stretch of road is and identified

Arden Hills' residents discuss ways their community could become more pedestrian friendly.



opportunities to reduce barriers for and enhance walking in the community.

Measures of the built environment and travel patterns are important predictors of obesity across genders and cultures. Therefore strategies to increase pedestrian connectivity from residential to commercial areas may reduce time spent in a car and be an effective intervention to promote physical activity.

Active Living Ramsey County!
2785 White Bear Avenue North
Suite 350
Maplewood, MN 55109-1320

Active Living Ramsey County is a collaborative effort working to create and promote environments that make it safe and convenient for people to integrate physical activity into their daily routines.

Do you have suggestions, comments or something to share? Please contact Amber Dallman at amber.dallman@co.ramsey.mn.us or 651.266.1179 for more information.

USEFUL RESOURCES

- ⇒ Information about The Great Neighborhood Book can be found on the web along with a few stories and ideas about how to begin improving any neighborhood. To purchase the book or get more information visit: http://www.pps.org/info/products/Books_Videos/great_neighborhood_book
- ⇒ The Design for Health website has planning tools and guides, health impact assessment information and other ideas to help with comprehensive planning. To view or download the Design for Health Checklists visit their website at: <http://www.designforhealth.net/techassistance/checklists.html>
- ⇒ ALRC is able to help with the planning of future walkable community workshops in Ramsey County. On our website is more information: www.activelivingramseycounty.org then go to "Projects"



**We're on the web:
[activelivingramseycounty.org](http://www.activelivingramseycounty.org)**