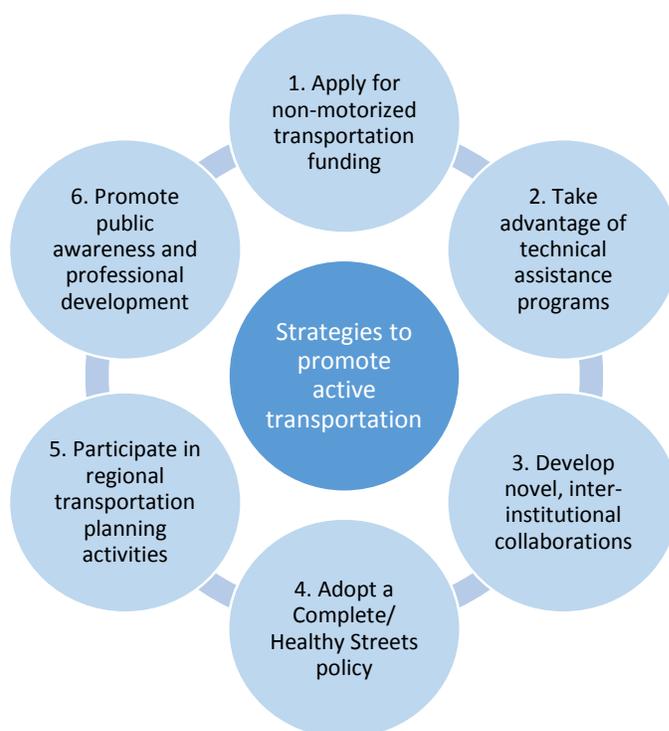


# Promoting Active Transportation in DuPage County: Trends, Tools and Strategies

---

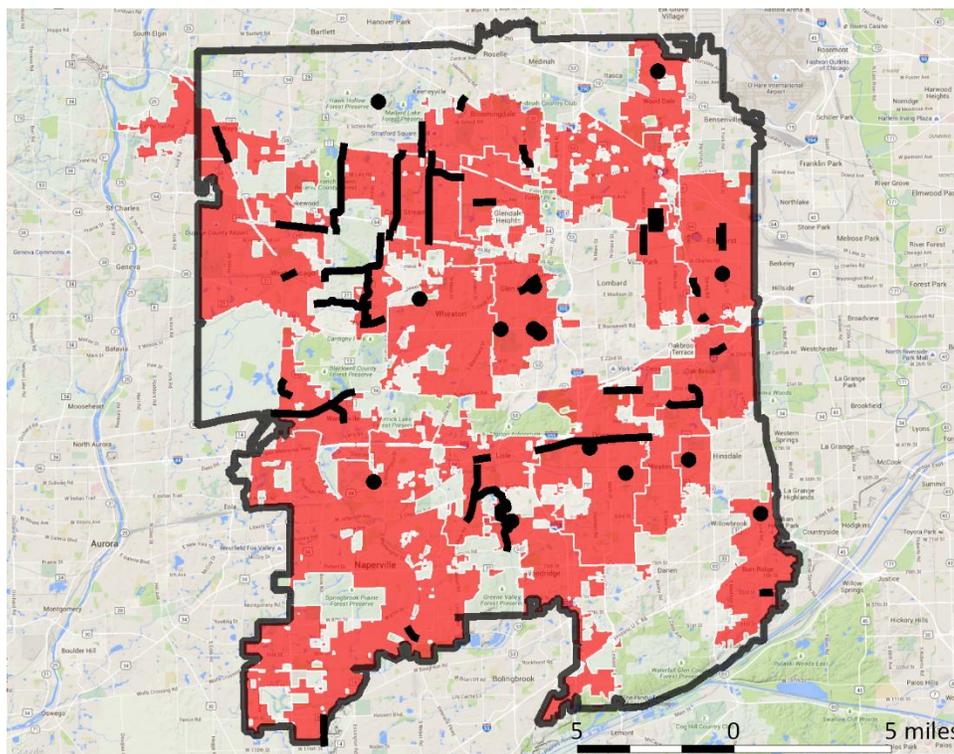
Active transportation—also called *non-motorized and/or human-powered transport*—has received a considerable amount of attention in recent years. Its increasing popularity is due in part to the social, economic and environmental benefits achieved by developing infrastructure that makes bicycling and walking safer, easier and, overall, more attractive options for getting around. A wide range of resources have been developed to assist communities in overcoming financial and other technical barriers toward realizing a more diversified transport system. This paper highlights achievements of DMMC members as well as tools and strategies members can employ to promote active transportation in their communities.



- 1. Apply for TCM and related non-motorized transportation funding opportunities:*** Active transportation involves making physical activity a part of daily life, including walking and bicycling for recreation and travel. Key urban planning strategies include developing non-motorized paths, improving regional connectivity and beautifying streetscapes to promote strolling. The Surface Transportation Program (STP) makes available federal funds that can help communities achieve these and related objectives. The DuPage Council’s STP places special emphasis on Transportation Control Measures (or TCM) or innovative solutions that reduce single-occupancy automobile travel and/or have a positive net impact on air quality.

Between 2011 and 2015, DMMC has helped members program 46 pedestrian and bicycle STP projects which together span 21 municipalities (Figure 1). DuPage County presently has over 500 miles of non-motorized pathways, with an additional 250 miles planned (Figure 2). Applying for and receiving grants for building out the planned non-motorized infrastructure will improve non-motorized regional connectivity and opportunities for active transportation. Refer to the DMMC website (<http://tinyurl.com/nnnwefv>) for STP information including the STP manual and applications. Applications for the 2016-2021 funding cycle are due by 4pm Friday, August 7 2015.

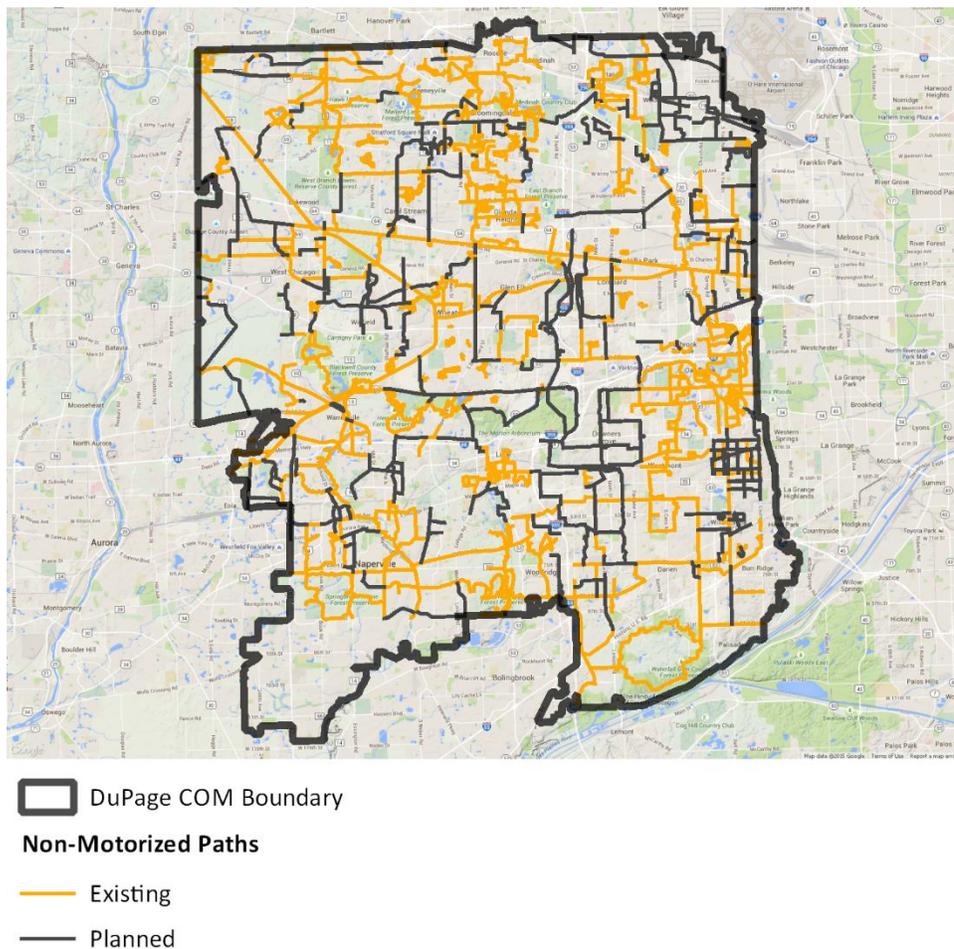
**Figure 1. DMMC-Programmed Pedestrian and Bicycle STP Projects and Host Municipalities, 2011-2015**



-  DuPage COM Boundary
-  Bike/Ped Projects (Points)
-  Bike/Ped Projects (Paths)
-  Communities with Bike/Ped Project

Source: Adapted from CMAP and DMMC Transportation Improvement Program dataset, 2011-2015

**Figure 2. DMMC-Programed Projects with Existing and Planned Bicycle and Non-Motorized Pathways in DuPage County**



Sources: Adapted from CMAP and DMMC Transportation Improvement Program dataset, 2011-2015;  
 Adapted from DuPage County Bikeways dataset, 2015

**Table 1. Bicycle and Non-Motorized Pathways by Type and Status in DuPage County, 2015**

| Segment Type   | Existing (mi) | Planned (mi) | Total (mi)   |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| Bike Lane      | 13.2          | 8.7          | <b>21.9</b>  |
| Bike Route     | 164           | 83           | <b>247</b>   |
| Multi-Use Path | 356.9         | 93.8         | <b>450.7</b> |
| Other          | 0             | 69.2         | <b>69.2</b>  |
| <i>Total</i>   | <i>534.1</i>  | <i>254.7</i> | <i>788.8</i> |

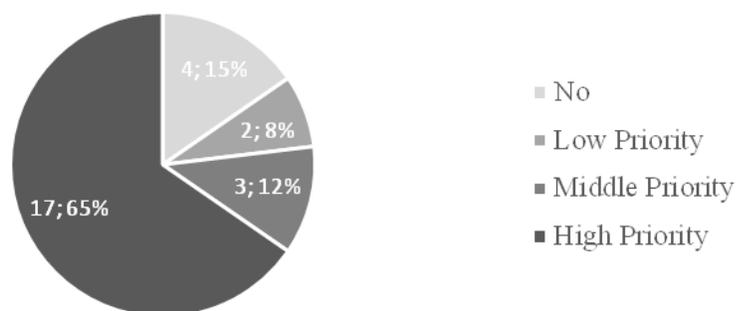
Source: Adapted from DuPage County Bikeways dataset, 2015

2. **Take advantage of technical assistance programs:** A key function of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) and Regional Transportation Authority is to provide technical assistance to communities so they may undertake community planning projects that advance regional principles including active transportation. The Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program, for example, has initiated 160 projects to address local issues at the intersection of transportation, land use, and housing. **DMMC members Addison, Bensenville, Downers Grove, Glen Ellyn, Hanover Park and Hinsdale are communities that have benefited from this program in the form of downtown, lifestyle corridor and comprehensive planning assistance.** DuPage County is also using LTA funds to create the Elgin-O’Hare Bicycle Pedestrian Plan.

A 2014 survey of 26 DuPage municipalities in DuPage County reported that 65 percent of municipal representatives expressed plan development to be a high priority activity for their respective governments (Figure 3) with a similar percentage expressing interest in receiving technical assistance from CMAP to support this effort. The latest call for LTA projects encourages the development of local active transportation plans with special attention paid to improving public health. Refer to the RTA and CMAP websites for additional information on the Community Planning (<http://rtachicago.org/plans-programs/grants-projects/community-planning>) and LTA (<http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/programs-and-resources/lta>) programs including comprehensive lists of past projects.

### Figure 3. Perceived Priority of Plan-Making among Municipalities in DuPage County, 2014

Over the next two years, would you say that producing a plan (e.g., comprehensive, transit-oriented development, water resources, economic development) is a priority for your government?



Source: CMAP 2014 Municipal Survey of 26 Municipalities in DuPage County

In response to needs expressed by localities in the 2014 municipal survey, CMAP produced toolkits designed to assist municipalities with transportation planning and related topics. For example, the Complete Streets Toolkit--designed in collaboration with the National Complete Streets Coalition and Active Transportation Alliance--is intended to serve as a guide for incorporating a Complete Streets approach into local planning, design, and construction processes and documents. This and other active transportation-related toolkits

are available via CMAP's Local Ordinances and Toolkits Program web page (<http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/programs-and-resources/local-ordinances-toolkits>).

3. ***Develop novel, inter-institutional collaborations:*** Active transportation is ultimately a multi-fold strategy to improve public health, environmental integrity and economic vitality; objectives that cross disciplinary boundaries. Therefore, achieving a more diverse and active transportation system will require further inter-institutional collaborations. **One recent and local example is Bensenville's Plan4Health Coalition which represents a new collaboration between planners and public health professionals.** The initiative addresses physical inactivity, with a focus on the needs of low-income and Hispanic residents. Efforts will include short-term solutions like raising awareness about new physical activity opportunities within the community and longer-term policy and environmental changes to promote active and healthy lifestyles in the community. Further, the coalition recently received a \$120,000 grant from the American Planning Association (APA) to aid in the creation of a Complete Streets policy, a bike-to-Metra guide and a communications plan to encourage walking and biking among residents. *The APA announced the opening of a second round of funding for the Plan4Health program with expected awards to average \$150,000. The APA website (<http://www.planning.org>) has resources for Plan4Health applicants, including information about three webinars.*
  
4. ***Adopt a Complete/Healthy Streets Policy:*** The Complete Streets movement is one of the most successful national campaigns to promote active transportation. Essentially, Complete Streets directs transportation planners and engineers to routinely design and operate the entire right-of-way to enable safe access for all users, regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation. As a result, Complete Streets make it easier to cross the street, walk to shops and bicycle to work. According to the National Complete Streets Coalition, over 700 agencies at the local, regional, and state levels have adopted Complete Streets policies including **DuPage County (2004), the Village of Lemont (2011) and the Village of Lombard (2014).** *For model policies and other information on Complete Streets visit the National Complete Streets Coalition (<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets>) and Active Transportation Alliance websites.*
  
5. ***Participate in regional transportation planning:*** Like many planning issues, promoting innovative transportation requires coordination at the regional level across municipal jurisdictions. DMMC's Transportation Policy Committee, for example, shares information about projects, policies and funding opportunities in the region, identifies strategies for improving regional mobility and inspires member communities to emulate best practices. Via the Transportation Policy Committee, members can also help inform regional transportation policies such as CMAP's new regional comprehensive plan, which begins in earnest over the 2016 fiscal year. Development of the next regional plan will build upon the foundation established in GO TO 2040 by seeking to refine the plan's major policy objectives in a manner that is supportive of the agency's core land use and transportation responsibilities as

well as identify new policy directions. DMMC can help inform and shape this dialog by identifying and communicating policy directions that are complementary to the views of members.

- 6. *Promote public awareness and professional development:*** Enhancing active transportation will require greater public awareness as well as professional development of planners and other transportation officials. To improve public awareness, municipalities can celebrate Bike to Work Month (typically celebrated in May or June) and institute a Bike to Work event similar to that of County Chair Dan Cronin's activity where he and others biked from home to the County Government Complex in Wheaton. Similarly municipalities can participate in a larger regional event such as the Bike Commuter Challenge, which, in 2014 had 6,000 participants across 650 institutions. *For more information about the Bike Commuter Challenge, visit <http://bikecommuterchallenge.org>.*

The League of Illinois Bicyclists encourages municipalities to take and promote the Illinois bicycle safety quiz challenge (<http://www.bikesafetyquiz.com>) which was developed by the League in coordination with the Secretary of State. The quiz is an educational tool designed to advance bicycle safety literacy among youth cyclists, adult cyclists and motorists.

The League of American Bicyclists has a Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) program that both acknowledges and publicizes commitments made by communities to improve conditions for bicycling within their jurisdictions. DuPage communities including the City of Elmhurst, City of Naperville, Village of Schaumburg, City of Warrenville and the Village of Winfield have sought out and received Bicycle Friendly Community designations.

Lastly, as highlighted in a recent DMMC Transportation Policy Committee meeting, municipalities can engage in pedestrian and bicycle counts to better understand non-motorized trip patterns, measure changes in mode share and quantify the demand for active transportation infrastructure. This information is helpful when applying for grants, communicating need and prioritizing projects. DuPage County, for example, installed four counters to estimate activity on the Illinois Prairie Path and Great Western trails. Annual estimates of users at select locations approached 200,000 riders in 2013 and 2014. Visit the County's Bikeways and Trails website for trail reports and maps of the DuPage County trail system (<http://www.dupageco.org/bikeways>).

With over 500 miles of non-motorized paths, increasing interest in Complete Streets and leadership in combining public health and planning, DuPage County and its municipalities are well positioned to become models for active transportation. Taking advantage of the opportunities summarized above will help continue this momentum.

Staff Contact:

C. Scott Smith, Transportation and Planning Manager ([ssmith@dmmc-cog.org](mailto:ssmith@dmmc-cog.org))