

**NE Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative  
Region's County Planning Team Webcast Summaries  
July 2007**

**WEBCAST #1:** After viewing a 14-minute webcast titled "Fitness As a Personal Ideal," team members brought up the following points:

**Allamakee:**

- no shops for bikes/helmets/shoes
- include trails with all road designs
- guidelines for green space in apt. buildings/housing units
- partner with school for playground equipment
- increase activity if there is a route/trail
- bike racks outside stores/hospital/etc.
- resolution of where kids/adults can bike
- sidewalks in community to destinations
- trails are important-connect destinations

**Clayton:**

- The importance of putting fitness program in our daily lives
- Recognized positive programs in Clayton county
  - Elkader Hospital conducted diabetic tests in the Central school.
  - Guttenberg hospital submitted a grant to support a similar program.
  - Good transportation/easy access/ and multiple use of space is needed to support trails/fitness.
- Desire to coordinate efforts with partners and send the same message by using the media.
- Healthy children are active children and good nutrition promotes healthy children
- Need to communicate with our local and county governments to connect the green spaces and points of interest with trails.
- Teach adults on healthy eating, developing community gardens, encourage businesses to offer fitness programs, promote cooking classes, request healthy foods in restaurants, convenience stores and schools. Promote locally grown producers and provide a processing facility.

**Fayette:**

- We need to create environments that support fitness.
- Do we need to focus more on prevention policies? We need to address the issue pre-emptively.
- Industry policies, as well as government policies need to address the issue – education is key.
- Parent Education
- Insurance Incentives
- Can corporations/companies provide fitness opportunities?
- Found the correlation between "savings" and "fitness" very interesting – how can we fix the lack of fitness issue like social security attempts to fix the lack of savings issue.

**Howard: No comments – Not able to view webcast due to technical difficulties.**

**WEBCAST #1:** After viewing a 14-minute webcast titled “Fitness As a Personal Ideal,” team members brought up the following points:

**Winneshiek:**

- Health is not just a personal ideal, it also is public policy. As such, local elected officials including city, county, school and state, need to be kept informed of the Food & Fitness Initiative
- We need to provide activity systems that are easily accessible
- We need to shape policies that result in more local food consumption. In Iowa, locally grown food has dwindled from an estimated 80 percent in 1920 to 20 percent in 2000
- Fitness-Savings Comparison – in the 1930s we addressed programs for saving money (Social Security, etc.) Similar efforts need to be made for food
- There is a great misunderstanding of what we eat. “Good,” “natural” and “light” labels may not in fact be healthy
- Both food and fitness are needed equally. We need to eat less food, better quality food and be willing to be hungry part of the time
- We need structure and organization in improving our food system. We need group support
- We talk about fitness, but there is actually little planning of it. We need to find small ways of improving fitness in our homes
- Public fitness should be viewed as a community resource
- We leave a smaller carbon footprint in getting food from our garden than if food is trucked here from California
- Food safety is an increasing concern
- Some view health as shifting from strictly a personal responsibility to a public one
- The biggest single factor as to whether children go out to play is temperature. It is a myth that you will catch cold if you play outside when it’s cold

**WEBCAST#2:** The second webcast was titled “Active Living by Design – Parks, Trails, Greenways and Transportation” and yielded the following points from participants:

**Allamakee:**

- Assessment of parks & trails & sidewalks
  - Where
  - Quality of conditions
  - Safety
- Trails connecting all communities in Allamakee County
- Visit/attend city councils & supervisors-give quarterly updates
- Talk to business leaders about healthy employees
- Walkable school bus
- Identify ordinances/compare to other successful communities

**Clayton:**

- #1 - Physical project ideas for parks, trails & Greenways
- #2 - Promotion ideas for Parks, Trails & Greenways.
- #3 Preparation ideas for parks, trails and Greenways Members shared the County’s Mississippi River Trail project,
- Guttenberg’s trail project,
- Marquette/McGregor trail of two cities project and
- Elkader’s health & fitness trail.
- Connecting trails and points of interest by expanding roadways to include bike lanes.
- Discussion was to promote walking clubs in communities and schools with volunteer mentors
- Inquire with the media to share the message on obesity and promote physical activity year around.
- Sponsor community open gym’s, and walking programs to all ages. Establish walking clubs in your community.

**Fayette:**

- Trails need to be connected to each other, or to a “destination”. They must be easily accessible and available. Are looking for a comprehensive trail plan that each community feels ownership in and connection to.
- We need to take a look at state and local policies (i.e. when planning and zoning, are new developments required to have sidewalks, etc?) Let’s assess our own communities – can we make them more pedestrian and bicycle friendly? Barrier mapping? Safer intersections? Consistent Sidewalks? Community Buy-in?
- Can we utilize Safe Routes to Schools grants?
- Can we tailor programs for children w/ older care-givers?
- How can we encourage canoeing over tubing?
- Can we encourage bicycling by placing bike racks in towns – and teaching kids how to use! What about a “Bike Lock” give-away?

**WEBCAST#2:** The second webcast was titled “Active Living by Design – Parks, Trails, Greenways and Transportation” and yielded the following points from participants:

**Howard:**

- Sidewalks:
  - More sidewalks that are user friendly for walking to the parks.
  - School policy- more crossing guards
  - Bike safety rodeos and walking safety program explaining the correct side of the road to walk
  - Develop laws governing bikes/rollerblades/skateboards on sidewalks downtown
  - Lack of bike racks everywhere
  - Walking bus idea- partner older kids w/ younger
  - Improve sidewalks for more safety
- Trails:
  - Connect Lime Springs to other bike trails.
  - Add shoulders or trails from Lime Springs to Lidtke Park
  - Promote 5K run/walks in all communities
  - Trails lead to fitness—walking activities
- Parks:
  - Plenty of room & land to expand parks
  - Add more “physical” activities & equipment (obstacle courses)
  - Need to encourage physical development & maintain the equipment
  - Find money to make repairs at the pool
  - Road safety and projects for improving parks and trails
- Education & Other:
  - How do we encourage rural people to participate?
  - How do we encourage walking to become a “lifestyle”
  - What things can we do year round to maintain fitness?
  - Encourage lunch hour walking by organizations and companies
  - Provide facilities for employees

**Winneshiek:**

- Public policy for trails and walkways, etc. often doesn’t pertain in rural areas
- The highest obesity levels are usually found among the lowest income levels
- We need to examine health policies that don’t leave the poor behind
- We need to examine policies that are harmful and have bad side effects often not thought of when the policy was originated
- Bike lanes along roads can be advantageous for both rural and urban areas
- There are not many paved bike lanes in Iowa. Iowa has a very high number of roads per capita
- Decorah is re-examining the city’s comprehensive plan. It will be a good time to incorporate trails and paths, and a good time to provide input about healthy lifestyles
- Sidewalks in subdivisions can be costly for the developers, but can have health benefits
- Laws concerning cars coming to a stop when a person is in the crosswalk should be examined

- Work sites need to encourage walking (parking away from buildings, etc.)
- Insurance should be lower for those who practice healthier lifestyles
- Rural residents can be driven into their homes by smells emanating from nearby large animal confinement operations
- People need to be educated about walking in winter, and that walking on gravel roads need not be an issue