

# *Angelina County Active Living Plan*



# Acknowledgements

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## **Angelina County & Cities Health District Leadership**

The leadership committee includes: Sharon Shaw, Administrator, Rosalind McAdams C.F.O. and Paula Botsford BSN, R.N.

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Cover photo: 1. Old Orchard Park Bicycle Loop, the Hike and Bike Trail. <http://www.cityofdiboll.com/departments/parks-and-trails#sthash.5VoJOWsW.dpuf> . 2. Dr. Stephen Parks, avid Bike enthusiast!



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We are very grateful for the time and energy our leadership has devoted to making the lives of our citizens healthier and more active!



"I am happy to welcome the Angelina Active Living Council to East Texas, and I look forward to partnering with them as they seek to improve the health of our communities. Active lifestyles and nutritious diets are essential components of healthy lives, and I commend Active Angelina's drive to promote these in East Texas. We are privileged to have access to so many wonderful parks, trails, and community centers in our area, and I challenge you and your family to enhance your lives by taking advantage of these resources."

Representative Trent Ashby  
House District 57

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## **Vision**

Transform Angelina County so that the community is active and healthy.

## **Mission**

The Angelina Active Living Council is a network of individuals and organizations working together to advance a healthy community through increased active living opportunities for all residents.

# Executive Summary

## Overview

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are many benefits of physical activity. Physical benefits include weight control, and a reduction of the risks for cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis and some cancers. Physical activity also helps build muscle and strengthen bones. Mental benefits include an improvement in mental health and mood. Furthermore, regular physical activity increases the chances of having a longer life.<sup>1</sup>

Sedentary behavior, regardless of physical activity, is also linked with a significant increase in the risk of type 2 diabetes as well as obesity. Therefore, it is not enough to avoid physical inactivity, but to simultaneously limit sedentary behavior.<sup>2</sup>

The National Physical Activity Plan (NPAP) was launched in 2010 to help increase physical activity in the population. The vision of the plan is that “One day, all Americans will be physically active and they will live, work, and play in environments that facilitate regular physical activity.” The NPAP provides recommendations for eight societal sectors: Business and Industry, Education, Health Care, Mass Media, Parks Recreation Fitness and Sports, Public Health, Transportation Land Use and Community Design, and Volunteer and Non-Profit.<sup>3</sup> As such, the recommendations listed in the Angelina County Physical Activity Plan also focus on these key areas. It is our vision that Angelina County will meet or exceed National Physical Activity recommendations, improving the quality of life for its residents.

Upon completion of the Texas Healthy Communities Assessment in the fall of 2014, the following was recommended to Angelina County: “We encourage the development of an active living plan that meets the criteria as laid out in the application toolkit. In addition continue to work with entities to establish policies placing sidewalks and biking trails in new developments.” The Angelina Active Living Council was formed and has diligently worked to develop this Active Living Plan.

The target audience for the Angelina County physical activity plan includes policy and decision makers, physical activity practitioners and advocates, but vitally important are community members who desire a safe, pleasing environment, where they live, work and play.



Photo: Morris Frank Park walking trail, City of Lufkin Parks and Recreation.

## Community Assessment Summary

Community assessment includes determining local physical activity resources, needs and barriers, looking at existing data, and using existing tools to collect necessary data. Countywide input was targeted as a goal in collecting responses. A “survey-monkey” link was distributed via email and Social media. Approximately 500 paper booklets were distributed to a cross population at area food pantry’s, civic clubs, and church’s. In addition, there was random distribution to clients at the Angelina County & Cities Health District, Intake, Environmental, the Preventative Health Center and WIC offices.

The Active Living “Adult” Assessment Survey results were tabulated, indicating of the 889 respondents to the question of which Angelina County School district they resided within, 50.62% Lufkin, 14.06% Diboll, 13.95% Huntington, 9.90% Hudson, 4.05% Central, 3.94% Zavalla and 3.49% other. Representation of a County-wide response was achieved and vital to targeting local needs.

When asked, “How would you best like to receive information about Active Living lifestyle in Angelina County and physical activity opportunities, 873 responded. The results are: 36.77% web information, 33.22% social media and 30.01% news/radio updates. This points us to the need to utilize and vary our media communication to be both traditional and web-based. The continued development and utilization of media contacts and web links must be continually surveyed and updated, to be a viable source of referral. As area communities develop/enhance their web sites, co-ordination of services gives a positive message of community cohesion to promote a healthy lifestyle.

Respondents were given a list of typical barriers to select that were applicable to their lack of an Active Living lifestyle. They were to select all that apply, from the 871 answers, 50.06% Time, 34.33% Motivation, 27.21% Work hours, 19.40%, 18.94% Sidewalks not available, 11.60% Safety and 8.15% Lack of knowledge. Since the top two barriers are time and motivation, this can be a focal targeted area of preventative health education in all of the Sectors.

To assess the use of city/county parks for Active Living, of the 880 respondents, 69.89% did not use city/county parks and, and 30.11% did. To further explore this lack/use of the existing park systems, 768 answered the following question, What prevents you from using city/county parks? The options to select all that apply, and results are 41.54% Time issues, 40.89% Safety concerns, 16.54% Lack of information about what is available at the parks, 16.41% Other (please specify), 8.46% Lack of information about where parks are located and 8.20% Transportation issues. Time issues again, will need to be addressed behaviorally to motivate lifestyle priorities towards wellness. The value of active living must be driven by personal choice to incorporate a lifestyle of habits that promote health both personally and within the family lifestyle.

The concluding question: What suggestions do you have regarding Active Living in Angelina County; please include what you would like to see added to your local community? Was answered by 304 people, responses to this question are varied and results are on file for review.

To give a “voice” to our local youth, an assessment was distributed to the Student Council members and identified youth leaders, at the six independent school districts. Results do not reflect the general physical activity level of the general youth population due to the target group being chosen vs. random students.

# Introduction

## Overview

This physical activity plan follows a somewhat similar order as the recommended intervention areas in the National Physical Activity Plan. These areas include:

- Business and Industry
- Education, Afterschool, Early Childhood and Youth
- Health Care
- Mass Media
- Parks, Recreation, Fitness and Sports, Government
- Public Health
- Transportation, Land Use and Community Design
- Volunteer and Non-Profit

Respective to each sector, it is designed to broadly meet, the identified unique needs of each community within Angelina County, to increase physical activity. Due to the assessment of what is currently being done in the area, as well as proposed interventions. Finally, strategies to encourage community participation in physical activity implementation are outlined. Community participation is vital to any physical activity intervention that wishes to be sustained into future generations, as it converts participants into stakeholders.

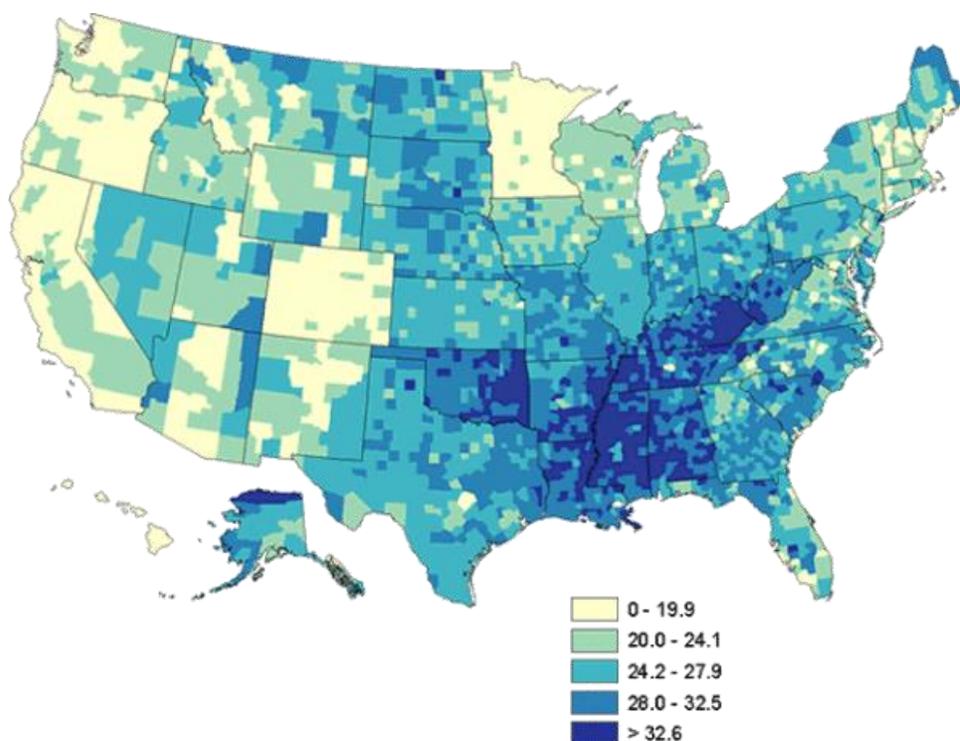
The challenge of the Angelina Active Living Council is to build a broad base of active supporters committed to moving these policy initiatives forward from the bottom up. As previous work has shown, when prevention advocates help build broad-based movements focused on concrete policy change, we can help create healthier environments that engage communities in ways traditional health education and health promotion approaches cannot.<sup>4</sup>

It is the goal of the Council to utilize the framework of the Active Living Plan to be a resource, to educate and guide County residents to be advocates and participants of an Active Living lifestyle. One example is for residents to mobilize as a grass-roots effort to advocate for policy changes, such as the planning and implementation of side-walks in new developments and existing areas where adequate places do not exist, to walk and/or ride bikes. Another opportunity is for the direct mobilization of County/City leaders to up-grade green spaces/existing parks and plan for future park development especially in areas where these are lacking, to be safe and accessible, with a design element that is based on implementing multi-use trails. An excellent source of these needed changes is the City of Lufkin, *Community Assessment Report*,<sup>2</sup> and the *City of Lufkin Parks & Open Space Master Plan 2009-2019*, which specifically outlines recommendations that will result in a healthier lifestyle for residents.<sup>5</sup>

## State and National Data

The CDC estimates that nationally only 48% of adults meet the national guidelines for physical activity. Furthermore, less than 3 out of 10 high school students participate in 60 minutes of physical activity daily. Disparities exist between different populations and age groups. More non-Hispanic white adults meet the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for aerobic and muscle-strengthening activity than non-Hispanic black adults and Hispanic adults. Men are more likely than women to meet the guidelines for aerobic activity, and younger adults are more likely to meet the aerobic activity guidelines than older adults. Adults with more education are more likely than those with less education to meet the guidelines, and adults whose family income is above the poverty level are more likely to meet the guidelines than adults whose family income is at or below the federal poverty level.<sup>6</sup>

2008 Age-Adjusted Estimates of the Percentage of Adults Who Are Physically Inactive<sup>6</sup>



As the map above indicates, East Texas compares unfavorably with regards to physical activity nationwide. According to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, the prevalence of physical activity participation (150 minutes or more of Aerobic physical activity per week) in the state of Texas was 42.1% compared to the National average of 50.5%.

<http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/brfss/list.asp?cat=EX&yr=2010&qkey=4347&state=All>

Data from the Angelina County Health Facts Profile 2009, indicates Heart Disease, Cancer and Cardiovascular Disease (Stroke) are the top 3 causes of mortality. <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/chs/>

## Social Ecological Model of Behavior Change<sup>7</sup>

This data indicates a clear need for physical activity interventions, from policies to communities to individuals. Because physical activity does rely on both external, environmental factors as well as internal influences, we use the Social Ecological Model for Behavior Change to describe the process necessary to facilitate physical activity in Texas.

**Individuals:** Addressing physical inactivity implies changing everyday behaviors. This means changing knowledge, attitudes and beliefs. This doesn't happen alone: formal and informal social networks often provide the motivation needed to engage in physical activity.



**Interpersonal:** Spouses, friends, family, peers, and coworkers represent potential sources of interpersonal influences. Interpersonal groups can facilitate individual behavior change by giving support and guidance to start making healthy lifestyle changes.

**Organizations:** Schools, workplaces, volunteer networks—these all have the capacity to help individuals make physical activity a part of their day through policy changes and promotion of healthy individual behaviors.

**Communities:** A community is essentially a large organization and consists of groups, residents and organizations that can work together to implement physical activity friendly changes to the area. For instance, communities can impact the connectedness and design of an area by designing parks, passing complete streets policies, or building trails. According to a study by T.R. Frieden in the American Journal of Public Health, April 2110, Vol. 100, No.4, pg 590-595, “Changing the environmental context so that individuals can easily take heart-healthy actions in the normal course of their lives can have a greater population impact than clinical intervention that treat individuals.” In fact, “interventions that change the context for individual behavior are generally the most effective public health actions.” To change habits, it is imperative to increase awareness and interest, but more than that, there needs to be an increase in accessibility and convenience. The first step is to make more walkable side-walks and to make existing streets safer for biking and similar activities. (*Community Assessment Report, City Of Lufkin*).

**Society:** Society reflects how all other components work together to create change. Policies and legislation supporting physical activity on a large scale helps individual, interpersonal, organizational, and community-wide programs to function successfully.<sup>8</sup>

The following information contains interventions, which will try to encourage physical activity on all levels; the responsibility of being physically active falls as much on society and the environment as it does on the individual. This guide strives to show how each component of Angelina County society can work towards a more active population.

# Strategies and Activities

## Business and Industry

The current trend in the workplace is that with the rise in technology, physical activity on the job has decreased. The consequences of a sedentary workday are many, including an increase in the likelihood of preventable health problems. Money is then lost through decreased productivity, absenteeism, and health care costs. Businesses are in a unique position given their proximity to employees. Simple policy changes or incentives can go a long way in improving employee physical activity both on and off the job.

By providing opportunities for physical activity and encouraging employees to participate in physical activity, business leaders can foster a climate that promotes healthful habits among dependents, community members, and business partners across the county.

### Strategy 1

Encourage collaboration among businesses & industries utilizing other sectors to identify and develop opportunities to promote physical activity.

#### Activity

1. Educate business and industry leaders regarding their role as positive agents of change to promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles.
  - A. Recruit a local organization to spearhead the collaborative effort.
  - B. Encourage business and industry leaders through education to interact with all other sectors to identify opportunities to promote physical activity with-in the workplace and throughout the community.
  - C. Recruit key business and industry leaders to play central roles in influencing their peers, possibly leading to mentor relationships in the business & industry setting.

### Strategy 2

Identify/develop and disseminate evidenced-based physical activity information in the workplace.

#### Activities

1. Develop and maintain a clearinghouse of resources from within the community and from other external sources, e.g., state programs and/or potential corporate campaigns.
2. Research and determine the best vehicles for disseminating information and encouraging participation (web-sites, forums, competitions, etc.)

### Strategy 3

Identify and recognize organizations that are examples of best practices, in achieving success in promoting physical activity and other aspects of wellness.

## **Education, Afterschool & Early Childhood, Youth**

Approximately one-third of children and teens are overweight or obese, and most youth do not meet National Physical Activity guidelines. The acquisition of information that shapes a lifelong pattern of physical activity vs. inactivity is developed in a child's early years. Planning daily activities ensures that children have a variety of activities that meet their developmental needs. Recent research indicates that physical activity actually has a positive impact on academic performance. These findings provide a critical impetus for teachers, coaches, school administrators, and school districts officials to take a leadership role in carrying out the following strategies.<sup>9</sup> With the increased use of classroom based, hand-held technology devices, the Active Living Council desires to foster an "active classroom" vs a sedentary setting.

### **Strategy 1**

Co-ordinate with Angelina County school districts to ensure continued standards for physical activity programming that maximizes physical activity opportunities, according to the, *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*,<sup>10</sup> and the Texas Board of Education.

### **Activities**

1. Support Angelina County School Districts, to continue and/or initiate improved integration of the components of the Presidential Youth Fitness Program.

The school's physical education program integrates all of the following components of the Presidential Youth Fitness Program. The components include, a Fitness assessment using Fitnessgram, professional development for physical education teachers on proper use and integration of fitness education, fitness assessment, and recognition of students meeting Healthy Fitness Zones or their physical activity goals.

2. Advocate, Safe Routes to Schools, in an effort to increase active transportation to and from schools, when feasible, utilizing potential Sector relationships for needed policy and environmental changes.

3. Enhance partnerships with all Sectors to continue linking youth and their families with physical activity opportunities in schools and communities, before and after school, monitoring for availability of programming for the at-risk.

### **Strategy 2**

1. Foster early childhood education settings for children ages 0 to 5 years of age to provide developmentally appropriate physical activity opportunities.

### **Activity**

1. Develop partnerships that enhance promotion through education of age appropriate physical activity guidelines in staff development settings.

## **Health Care**

The health care sector is our nation's largest industry. While traditionally the focus of health care providers has been on treatment, many are recognizing the importance of prevention. Health care providers have a unique relationship with their patients, in that they have access to and insight explaining an individual's particular health status. Due to this access and understanding, providers can potentially cause great behavior change.

### **Strategy 1**

Establish physical inactivity as a treatable and preventable condition with profound health implications.

### **Activity**

Engage health care providers in promoting physical activity through clinical practice and community outreach, by screening individuals for levels of physical activity at primary care consultations. Healthcare providers will provide brief, structured counseling and referral to community resources/programs for inactive individuals.

### **Strategy 2**

Advocate at the local level, increasing community collaboration, to improve and increase awareness of the importance of physical activity, especially among the "at risk."

### **Activities**

1. Encourage societies of health care professionals to expand their efforts to support physical activity policies and programs
2. Foster health care professionals to be role models for active lifestyles for their clients and the community, linking individuals to identify opportunities to promote a healthy community and wellness lifestyle.

## **Mass Media**

Mass media refers to both traditional and newer routes of widespread communication, including (but not limited to) TV, billboards, social networking sites and text messaging. Due to its pervasiveness in American culture, it can be a useful tool to help create changes in behavior and attitudes. Through coordination with all Sectors, Mass media will benefit community health, by promoting physical activity, especially benefitting diverse target audiences.

The World Health Organization adds that mass media campaigns are best used in conjunction with “upstream” (policy) and “downstream” (community-based) activities.

### **Strategy 1**

Encourage partnerships across Sectors to combine resources, utilizing key messages around common themes in promoting physical activity in Angelina County.

#### **Activities**

1. Utilizing Mass Media to promote the “Active Living” campaign utilizing a “shared brand”.
2. Produce a “web-banner”, promoting physical activity, coordinating with businesses and industry to promote and consolidate the “web banner” link.

### **Strategy 2**

Serve as a platform to increase citizen awareness and engagement, in physical activity by showcasing physical activity opportunities across the county, utilizing a clear and standardized “brand”.

#### **Activities**

1. Update and publicize information links to increase awareness and/or knowledge of physical activity opportunities. Engage media sources with diverse target populations.
2. Promote and incorporate the “Active Angelina”, web-site at all local and county web-sites, and with-in other appropriate Sector sites.

## **Parks, Recreation, Fitness and Sports, Government**

The parks, recreation, fitness and sports (PRFS) sector of society is designed to provide fun and meaningful channels by which individuals can engage in physical activity. From playgrounds to community sports groups to trails to gyms, this sector contributes to physical activity in a variety of ways.

For both adults and youth, access to places for physical activity can be created or enhanced by having safe, attractive parks in local neighborhoods. People who live closer to parks are more likely to visit parks and be physically active more often than people who live farther away from parks.

### **Strategy 1**

Promote and enhance public and private programs and facilities where people, work, learn, live, play, and worship to provide easy access to safe and affordable physical activity opportunities.

#### **Activities**

1. Establish and utilize partnerships within the Sectors to educate the community about the established physical activity opportunities available in Angelina County. Promote opportunities for specific activities available at each location, including joint-use facilities, (academic or religious facilities).
2. Increase signage to showcase each “Parks” specific activities in addition the utilization of mileage markers, especially within “trail systems” and areas with designated walking trails, i.e., Main Street programs.

### **Strategy 2**

Advocate to increase funding and resources for parks, recreation, fitness, sports programs and facilities in areas with limited access to physical activity opportunities. This strategy applies to capital project funding for infrastructure as well as operating funds for programs, as well as Community involvement.

#### **Activities**

1. Facilitate a local volunteer program to dedicate community service hours to local Parks and Recreation facility improvements and maintenance, such as creating the City Parks and Recreation Department volunteer program.
2. Work with community planners to develop and preserve environments that are safe and conducive to regular physical activity.
3. Research for funding opportunities to support physical activity opportunities in Angelina County.

## **Public Health**

According to the American Public Health Association, there are three primary goals of public health, they are prevention: Preventing disease and promoting healthy habits and good health, Policy Development: Advocating for evidence-based policies which promote health and Surveillance: Monitoring health of populations and keeping track of trends or epidemics (such as obesity).

The National Physical Activity plan notes the importance of public health- both as a profession and as a practice- with regards to physical activity interventions. There are several strategies offered within this sector which the Angelina Active Living Council would like to pursue.

### **Strategy 1**

Develop local expertise within governmental and non-governmental public health organizations in physical activity as part of an integrated and coordinated approach to chronic disease prevention.

#### **Activities**

1. Encourage health-care agencies and coalitions to participate/disseminate information on evidence-based policies related to physical activity, with emphasis on educating partners at local, county levels regarding chronic disease rates.
2. Foster recognition of Sectors that develop and promote active living, via Wellness initiatives.
3. Improve and broaden observation of physical activity levels throughout the County, including youth and underserved populations.

### **Strategy 2**

Disseminate tools and resources important to promoting physical activity, including resources that address the burden of disease due to inactivity, the implementation of evidence- based interventions, and funding opportunities for physical activity initiatives.

#### **Activity**

1. Utilize established resources for referral and wellness programming for community health opportunities, to increase knowledge of physical activity guidelines and opportunities.

## **Transportation, Land Use and Community Design**

An active living lifestyle incorporates physical activity as an integral part of our daily routines. Utilizing environmental and policy approaches to increase physical activity in Angelina County, will need the efforts of city planners, architects, engineers, developers and public health professionals to change the physical environment in ways that support physical activity. In addition, policy instruments such as zoning regulations, building codes, other governmental policies, and construction builders practices.

<http://www.thecommunityguide.org/pa/index.html>

An evidence-based program which the Angelina Active Living Council supports is the, Safe Routes to School Program. This intervention ties in very nicely with educational initiatives for physical activity, as it provides children the opportunity to actively transport before and/after the school day. The program works by providing a safe passage for all or part of the route students travel to school. Safe routes can be modified to drop off students within safe walking distances, or can include the entire route, depending on distance.

Complete Streets policies encourage physical activity and green transportation, walking and cycling and building or protecting urban transport systems that are fuel-efficient, space-saving and promote healthy lifestyles. <http://stateofobesity.org/active-transportation-laws/>

A great deal of community layout (and thus transportation opportunities) lies at the level of policymakers. Indeed, if the Angelina Active Living Council does not support advocacy for such projects, the feasibility of any short or long-term intervention will be compromised.

### **Strategy 1**

Promoting and supporting community design, including prioritizing resources to increase active transportation and other physical activity by designing for “people first”, through all community designs, infrastructure projects, systems, policies, and initiatives.

### **Activity**

Educate and support municipal resolutions supporting walking, cycling and recreational physical activity.

### **Strategy 2**

Increase collaboration and accessibility to essential community destinations and areas for physical activity, to increase active transportation and to improve the utilization of walking and biking areas.

### **Activities**

1. Specifically promoting Safe Routes to Schools/Transportation Alternatives Program. The public right-of-way should be designed to provide safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicycles, transit and motorists.
2. Encourage the posting of physical activity prompts for signage, displaying mileage markers and specific activities available at parks and public walking trails (Main-Street).
3. Review of Complete Streets policies and the infrastructure of Angelina County, utilizing policies that encourage physical activity and promote healthy lifestyles, to establish policies placing sidewalks and biking trails in new developments.

## Volunteer/Non-Profit

For many people, a physically active lifestyle is fraught with obstacles. Unsafe neighborhoods, limited access to parks or recreational areas, social barriers, and individual physical barriers prevent healthy levels of physical activity.<sup>11</sup>

Recognizing that non-profit organizations and volunteer groups often have the capacity and willingness to work with marginalized populations, this section of the Angelina Active Living Plan focuses on both using this group as advocates for physical activity policy, as well as internal interventions ensuring that these groups are reaching physically inactive people within their organizational scope.

Angelina County is fortunate enough to have a very active body of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and volunteer groups which, seek to provide physical activity opportunities to those who want them.

### Strategy 1

Connect and establish relationships with other non-profits, social service agencies and volunteer agencies promoting the Angelina Active Living Plan through the Interagency Coalition partnership to build awareness and encourage active living.

#### Activities

1. Educate the Interagency Coalition about the Angelina Active Living Plan and how they can promote healthy practices to advocate for policies and systems changes, aligning with the goals of the National Physical Activity Plan.
2. Provide information about the Angelina Active Living Plan to each of the Interagency Coalition members, with the hope that they will add it to their websites, weekly emails and as a resource for agency training events.
3. Five Interagency Coalition members and/or Angelina County sites will agree to provide workplace wellness initiatives within their organization.

### Strategy 2

Engage Angelina County residents to participate and support Non-Profit events that include running, biking, and walking.

#### Activities

1. Identify and promote opportunities for participation at events that foster physical activity.
2. Assist with marketing to increase the participation of community members especially the at-risk for chronic disease, by sharing event information, via each organization's social media outlets and through client referral.
3. When possible, have representatives from organizations volunteer at events: representative(s) from organizations will volunteer a minimum of one event per quarter and/or will join a steering/planning committee for an event.

#### Potential Partner Agencies

American Heart Association  
 Alzheimer's Association  
 Junior Achievement  
 Rainbow Room & Lufkin Community Partners  
 Angelina College S.P.E.A.K.S.  
 Joseph's House

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension  
 Junior League of Lufkin  
 Family Crisis Center  
 Pregnancy Help Center of Lufkin  
 Hospice in the Pines

## Engaging Communities in Implementation

There are many ways community members can and should be involved in the implementation of this physical activity plan. The Council values that community members are an integral part of program planning, implementation, and evaluation. The Active Living Plan is a valuable tool to advance the planning and strategies of *Angelina County Vision 2020*, Quality of Life, Strategy A.1. is as follows, “development and implement a cities/County recreation master plan that provides comprehensive passive and active recreational opportunities for all ages of Angelina County residents. ...Ensure that all parts of the County have adequate parks and recreation levels of service.”<sup>12</sup>

Community participation is important because it aids in efficiency, as community members often know the behaviors of other community members better than observers or interveners. Community members often have insight into specific barriers and incentives to desired behaviors, and often can help identify unforeseen consequences. Community participation increases “buy-in” in a specific project, making it more likely members will both participate in and promote specific interventions. With this sense of ownership comes also a feeling of responsibility- and when communities feel responsible for programs, the likelihood that they are sustained is increased.<sup>13</sup>

There are many stages and ways in which community members participated in this coalition. During the initial stage, “community assessment,” community members provided their input regarding desired physical activity improvements. Some of the findings that we found interesting were that safety and perceived safety at parks is vital to usage. Tennis courts are vitally in need of repair, and lighting that is on a timer and user-friendly is needed. Zavalla, Huntington, Central and Hudson are lacking public park/walking trails. During the planning phase, community members helped form strategies, offering opinions and suggestions.

The following is an example of how powerful community involvement has supported a healthy environment through policy changes.

*The Smoke-Free Lufkin campaign is a successful example of community leadership and policy change through education and strategically addressing a preventable health issue in Lufkin, Texas. Executive Director, Janet Taylor, of The Coalition, mobilized a grass-roots campaign to pass a smoke free ordinance, in all businesses and to keep smokers a certain distance from business entrances. Utilizing healthcare advocates, the Drug-free All-Stars and community partners to advance the message that smoking is harmful, on April 16, 2013, the Lufkin City Council voted unanimously to pass a comprehensive smoke-free ordinance.*<sup>14</sup>

Most tragically, physical inactivity will kill some 9 percent of the overall population—as many people as smoking. These are costs no city can afford.<sup>15</sup>

## Conclusion

The goal of the Angelina Activating Living Council is to improve access and provide a built-environment that will increase the physical activity of residents, thereby reducing inactivity, which leads to heart disease, stroke and contributes to certain cancers.

A cities ability to compete depends on an active population. The research is clear on this. Integrating physical activity into the places we work, live, learn, travel and play is the only way to ensure we move enough to thrive. Higher levels of physical activity are associated with positive outcomes for most of the things that matter to city leaders. When people move more, crime, pollution and traffic go down. Productivity, school performance, property values, health and well-being improve drastically.<sup>16</sup>

When people live in neighborhoods where they can comfortably walk or bike to workplaces, shops, and services, and where they can easily assess parks and open spaces, they are more likely to be physically active and are less likely to be overweight or obese.<sup>17</sup>

The case is clear; an active city is a competitive city. The benefits of cities designed to move include, economic benefits of cost savings, job growth and productivity. Walking and cycling projects return an average of \$20.00 in economic benefit for every \$1.50 invested.<sup>18</sup> A city's ability to compete depends on an active population, the research is clear integrating physical activity into the places we work, live, learn, travel and play is the only way to ensure we move enough to thrive. Higher levels of physical activity are associated with positive outcomes for most of the things that matter to city leaders. Safety benefits are less crime and fewer pedestrian and cyclist injuries. Environmental benefits include reduced pollution and improved climate. The Social benefits are better cohesion and increased civic engagement, which we have experienced as a council of concerned community members. Strong evidence validates the benefits of less depression, anxiety and stress, decreased obesity and chronic disease, improving the well-being of individuals and families.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, community members will be the "eyes and ears" of our physical activity interventions, they will be an immense help to on-the-ground monitoring and end-of-program evaluation efforts. Without the buy-in of Angelina County & Cities Health District leadership, policy makers and the Council members, this Physical Activity plan would not have been created, and many of the proposed interventions would never be possible. Our vision is to transform Angelina County so that the community is active and healthy.

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The Angelina Active Living Council has reviewed and approves the Active Living Plan. We as a Council value the opportunity to facilitate through education and advocacy to implement changes in local environment and policy infrastructure to reduce risk factors for chronic diseases.

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