Get Wheelin’ in Westlawn!
Launching a Successful Bicycling Program in a Low-Income African American Community
Disclosures

• Funding from:
  • U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
    » Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE)
  • Wheel and Sprocket
  • United Neighborhood Centers of Milwaukee
  • In-kind services from many sponsors

• Views expressed are my own
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• Interactive Discussion
Outline

• Introduction
• African American women and cycling
• Improving bicycling infrastructure in the inner city
• Community involvement in development of a bicycling program
• Lessons learned – Challenges and Successes
Westlawn
Westlawn Demographics

- Economically disadvantaged community in Milwaukee
- Largest public housing development in the state of Wisconsin
- 97% of Westlawn’s residents are persons of color (92% are African American)
- 51% of Westlawn’s residents are children, ages 17 and under
- 93% of heads of households in Westlawn are female.
- Current average household income in the development is just $15,142 per year compared to $40,875 for the City of Milwaukee
Westlawn Partnership for a Healthier Environment

- U.S. EPA CARE (Community Action for a Renewed Environment) Program
- Started in 2008
- 35 organizational partners + community residents
Key Founding Partners

• Silver Spring Neighborhood Center
• Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee
• UWM College of Nursing
  • UWM Silver Spring Community Nursing Center
Westlawn Environment

• There is a wide range of environmental risks in the Westlawn community including:
  • poor air quality resulting from power plant emissions, diesel emissions, and particulate matter from buses and trucks
  • above national average for chemical releases, the number of superfund sites, and lead exposure hazards
  • poor water quality affecting the watershed, drinking water, and the beaches surrounding Lake Michigan

• Asthma rates in Westlawn are among the highest in the state of Wisconsin
CARE Process

a) Join community stakeholders together to form a broad-based partnership dedicated to reducing toxic pollutants and environmental risks in Westlawn.

b) Identify problems and solutions by working together.

c) Implement solutions and reduce environmental health risks.

d) Become self-sustaining.

CARE Roadmap:

PACE - EH

• Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health (PACE- EH)

www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/CEHA/PACE_EH.htm
Community EH Concerns Identified by the Westlawn Partnership

• indoor air pollution
• mold exposure
• access to safe and healthy food
• pesticide exposure
• outdoor air pollution
• plastics and BPA (Bisphenol A) exposure
• pharmaceutical waste (exposure through drinking water)
• lead exposure (through drinking water and other media)
• electronic waste
Overarching Goals of the Westlawn Partnership

• Long-term sustainability of the Westlawn Partnership

• Healthy Homes
  • HUD.gov
  • EPA.gov
  • CDC.gov

• Healthy Day Cares

• Bicycling Program
Where are the Bike Shops?

Get Wheelin' in Westlawn!

The Westlawn Partnership for a Healthier Environment is pleased to offer
Free Bicycle Tune-Ups on the FIRST FRIDAY of Every Month
for the Westlawn community

Dates:
- May 4
- June 1
- July 6
- August 3
- September 7

3:00-6:00 p.m.

Browning Elementary School Playground
(northwest corner)
5440 N. 64th St.

Services and Training Provided:
- air-up your tires
- oil your bike chain
- fix your flat tires
- minor adjustments

Get some exercise - Reduce air pollution - Save money on gas - Have Some Fun!

For more information contact Anne Dressel, Westlawn Partnership for a Healthier Environment, at (414) 229-3995
Free Bicycle Repairs

• Discounted supplies from local bike shop
• Volunteer bike mechanics
• Summer 2012: 120 bicycles repaired
• Summer 2013: 172 bicycles repaired
• Westlawn Resident Council donation
• Small grant from United Neighborhood Centers of Milwaukee (UNCOM) -- RWJ Foundation
African Americans and Cycling

• Fatality rate for African American cyclists is 30% higher than for white cyclists
• Only 6% of women and 5% of African Americans feel confident riding on all streets
• 25% of people of color would ride more, but worry about safety in traffic
• African American women least likely to ride bicycles

Data from League of American Bicyclists (http://bikeleague.org/)
Women on Bikes

• Monthly rides for women
• Targeted African American (Westlawn) and Latino communities
• Basic bike handling skills
• Get moms on bikes – get their kids on bikes
Women on Bikes

- Camaraderie
- Group rides
- 18 riders participated in summer 2012
Bicycling Infrastructure

• No bike shops in the area
• Fast traffic
• Poor road conditions
Bicycling Infrastructure

- Safe Streets Programs
- Local Aldermen
- Community residents
- Bike Federations/Advocacy Organizations
- Department of Transportation
- Local Businesses
- Sunday Parkways
- Bike to School Programs [http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/]
Bicycling Program

• Encourage more trips by bike rather than by car, to improve air quality
• Promote family-friendly activity for all ages
• Encourage exercise
Community Involvement

• Bike Camp for Kids
• SSNC Bike Club
• Community Rides
Bike Camp for Westlawn Kids

• 2-week camp -- 3 hours each day
• Free -- Hosted by Wisconsin Bike Federation
• Classroom and on-the-road instruction
  • Helmet safety
  • Introduction to cycling
  • Riding in traffic
  • Intersection management
• Free helmets and bikes
Bike Camp for Westlawn Kids

Get Wheelin' in Westlawn!

Summer Bike Camp for Kids!
July 29—August 1 (M-Th)
August 5—August 8 (M-Th)
1:00-4:00 p.m.

Free!

Location: Browning Elementary School Playground, next to the Silver Spring Neighborhood Center (5460 N. 64th Street, Milwaukee)

Bicycles and Helmets Provided!
For 10-12 years olds.
Daily attendance is expected at the 2-week camp.
Learn bicycle safety, go on rides, and have fun!

To sign up, call: Michael Steinborn at 414-573-3743
Space is limited to 20 kids.
Hosted by the Bike Federation of Wisconsin and the Silver Spring Neighborhood Center.

• 2012: 15 kids participated
• 2013: 17 kids participated
SSNC Bike Club

- Weekly rides
- 3.5 miles through the neighborhood
- Family activity
- 35 participants in 2013
Community Rides

- Annual event
- 17 riders in 2013
- Police escort
- Food and Drink
- First Aid (nursing student)
Westlawn Community Bike Ride 2013
Lessons Learned
Challenges and Concerns

• Fast traffic
• Road conditions
• Challenge to train local youths – bike mechanics too busy fixing bikes
• Wisconsin weather
• Need dedicated community stakeholders to make it happen
Lessons Learned

Successes

• Basic bike repair and maintenance classes
  • May 2014

• Bike racks installed at local school
  • Funding from UNCOM small grant

• Bike helmets
  • Funding from UNCOM small grant
  • Donated by Bike Federation of Wisconsin

• SSNC Bike Club and Community Rides established

• Bike Camp for Kids

• Free bike repairs
Lessons Learned

• Lead by example
• Community-driven initiative
• High level of enthusiasm and support for bicycling initiatives
• Getting more people out of cars and onto bikes can help to improve air quality
• SSNC Bike Club established as a family activity
Lessons Learned

• Biggest Impact of *Get Wheelin’ in Westlawn* Program
  • Building stronger families and community cohesion
Thank you!