



Engaging local partners and municipal officials to conduct the Rural Active Living Assessment For Communities under 10,000 People

Fast Facts:

Developed by the Maine Rural Health Research Center of the University of Southern Maine, David Hartley, PhD and used across the country to:

1. Help collect data on physical environment features and amenities, town characteristics, community programs
2. Assess “friendliness” of a community for walking, biking and playing
3. Provide a structure for looking at the town as a whole
 - a. How it is laid out
 - b. Where people live, work and go to school
 - c. How people are likely to get from one place to another
4. Provide a structure for assessing the programs and policies that might help overcome an ‘unfriendly’ environment

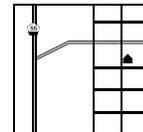
Consists of 3 separate assessments when used together provide a comprehensive active living audit of a rural town (*some communities make adaptations to the tools to accommodate variations in distance ok to travel, lack of defined center of town, or multiple ‘centers’*)

1. Town-wide assessment and scoring tool
2. Program and policy assessment and scoring tool
3. Street segment assessment and scoring tool (*which in very rural communities may not be applicable*)

Getting Started: Having a general understanding of the location, settlement patterns and physical features of the town before beginning the audit will aid in more effective early planning and efficient implementation of the assessments



1. Location:
 - a) A map that includes at least a 15 mile radius about the town center showing residences, services and businesses if possible (Google Earth, Google Maps, Mapquest are options)
 - b) The most up-to-date map town map
2. Settlement pattern:
 - a) Dispersed – most of the population is spread out
 - b) Elongated – usually small towns with one major road with residences along the road
 - c) Clustered – subdivisions, or commercial clusters
 - d) Compact – greater density of both residential and commercial development
3. Physical features can include:
 - a) Topography (especially in combination with road patterns)
 - b) Rivers and lakes
 - c) Limited access highways or active railroad tracks



Who and How Long:

1. A local discussion can identify the who, and dividing the assignments, including someone knowledgeable about all types of questions (available by phone) determines how long. Sometimes several people working together can answer most questions quite quickly – in 1-2 hours, or a 1/2 day
2. Actual field work – part of 1 day
3. Analysis and planning – up to the community and its committees

