



Crim Fitness Foundation

ACTIVE LIVING SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

Written by:

Lauren Holaly-Zembo, Crim Fitness Foundation

In consultation with:

Risa Wilkerson, Active Living By Design

Sarah Panken, Michigan Fitness Foundation

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Crim Fitness Foundation 452 S. Saginaw Street, Suite 1, Flint, Michigan 48502
Tel 810.235.3396 Fax 810.235.5311 www.crim.org

ACTIVE LIVING BY DESIGN 400 Market Street, Suite 205, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27516
Tel 919.843.ALBD (2523) | Fax 919.843.3083 | www.activelivingbydesign.org

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Introduction

Statement of the Problem:

There is a great need in Genesee County for health improvement initiatives. In 2012, Genesee County ranked 77 out of 82 counties in Michigan in terms of positive health outcomes. Genesee County's population is 425,790. While nearly 200,000 people once lived within the City of Flint during the economically strong 1960s & 70s, today only 101,558 residents remain in the city, a majority being African-American (56.6%). In the city, 36.1% of residents live in poverty, while county wide nearly 30% of all children live in poverty. Unemployment rates consistently exceed state and national averages. Relative to education, the high school graduation rates for Flint and the county (54.6% and 71%) are significantly lower than State averages (74.6%) while the Bachelor's Degree attainment rate among adults is only 19%, compared to 25% statewide, 27.9% nationally. Family and social support and community safety challenge residents, as 40% of county children live in single-parent households while Flint's violent crime rate is over 400% of the national average. The physical environment creates lack of safe, low cost places such as parks and trails where people can be physically active. County per capita liquor store density is higher than 90% of Michigan counties. Furthermore, Flint's 101,558 residents have access to one major chain grocery store compared to 54 liquor stores within city limits, and a multitude of fast food restaurants, creating major food deserts. The number of vacant homes in the county has increased by 74% since 2000. Collectively, these pressing challenges serve as major risk factors for poor health, with environments that limit access to healthy foods and safe places to play contributing to unhealthy behaviors and lifestyles. The results including high rates of adult obesity (36.5%), smoking (23.5%), and diabetes (10.6%), while mortality rates are higher than state and national averages for 8 of the top 10 causes of death. Unhealthy behaviors contribute to these poor health outcomes with more than 36% adults being classified as obese and 30% of adults being physically inactive. These rates are higher than both the state and national benchmarks.

Active Living and Healthy Eating as a Solution:

The picture painted above speaks to the essential need for the Crim Fitness Foundation (Crim) and partners to continue its work to create healthy individuals and communities. While there are many challenges related to health in Genesee County there are also many assets that are preparing us for success. The Crim is well-positioned to be one of the leaders in this area and prides itself on working in partnership with the community to understand barriers and opportunities for improved health. The Community Action Model developed by Active Living by Design (ALBD) has identified five strategies that address partnerships and the ecological influences on physical activity and healthy eating behaviors: preparation, promotions, programs, policies and physical projects. These "5P strategies" provide the intervention framework for community work.

- 1) **Preparation:** While not limited to the early stages of an active living initiative, preparation is a critical first step in creating a physically active community. Preparation is the deliberate process of getting ready for action. This includes developing and maintaining a community partnership to work collectively. This strategy also entails collecting relevant data to inform program planning and pursuing financial and other resources.
- 2) **Promotion:** Effective promotion or communications efforts are vital to the success of any active living program. Communications are the means by which the project connects with the public. Specific messages include the benefits of active living and the importance of community environments in promoting healthy living. As part of this process, presentations, news releases, fact sheets, and other forms of communication are evaluated to determine whether they truly connect with the intended audiences. Promotion strategies should also help to ensure that other policy, programmatic and infrastructure goals are successfully achieved.
- 3) **Programs:** Programs are organized on-going activities that engage individuals in physical activity either directly or indirectly. Active living programs provide direct access to physical activity opportunities, such as walking clubs or bicycle recycle initiatives. Other programmatic approaches reward individuals for

adopting more active habits through incentives or other encouragements, such as benefits for employees or students who walk or bicycle to work or school.

- 4) **Policy:** Policy development is the key to institutionalizing health-supportive environments. Active living partnerships should identify and attempt to influence changes in public policies and standards as well as organizational practices. These efforts will include advocacy, relationship building with policy-makers, presentations to policy boards, and influencing employer or school policies. Educating policy-makers - as well as citizens, professionals and advocates - about the need for local environments that support active living -- is an essential component of this strategy. In general, policy tactics are those that end with a policy change (e.g., adoption of greenway master plan, pedestrian friendly street design guidelines).
- 5) **Physical Projects:** Physical projects are strategies to directly impact built environments, removing barriers to physical activity and enhance safety (e.g., trails, pedestrian improvements at intersections). While the built environment is heavily determined by public policies, active living partnerships should also look for opportunities to improve physical spaces that do not rely on a policy decision per se. Physical projects include a wide range of sizes from community trails to sidewalks to signage pointing out active living opportunities on taking the stairs.

The 5-P model allows communities to take a more comprehensive look at health. The Crim's dedication to providing opportunities for youth and adults alike to participate in physical activity, gain nutrition knowledge, acquire mindfulness skills, and create active environments allows people to incorporate physical activity and healthy eating into their daily routine. This model serves as a cornerstone for the continuing evolution of Crim's service to the Flint community. Strategies recommended in this plan include all of the five P's.

Purpose of the Plan:

This document describes how the Crim will work to ensure the long-term sustainability of active living in the communities of Flint and Genesee County, MI. This sustainability plan is intended to be a five-year plan with both a short and long term implementation strategies.

Development of the Plan:

The Crim contracted with ALBD to assist in a planning process to further develop the future of the Crim's active living work. ALBD is part of the North Carolina Institute for Public Health at the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health in Chapel Hill, and is the National Program Office for the Robert Wood Johnson funded Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities Initiative, which is the foundation's largest investment to date in reducing childhood obesity by 2015.

ALBD is well-versed in the active living field. ALBD offers more than a decade of experience collaborating with local, state, and national funding partners to design and deliver custom technical assistance and dynamic peer learning networks in service to community coalitions across the country. ALBD's multidisciplinary team includes seasoned professionals representing a variety of disciplines, including public health, nutrition, city and regional planning, community development, health policy, social work, and communications.

ALBD tailors its services based on clients' needs. Since 2002, ALBD has served a range of philanthropic, non-profit and government clients, and has provided technical assistance and consultation to nearly 200 communities in 30 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico to foster partnerships, create policy and environmental change, and achieve sustainability.

The Crim leadership staff traveled to Chapel Hill, NC to meet with ALBD to review past efforts and consider strengths/assets, challenges and opportunities that could guide decision-making. In addition, the group brainstormed ideas for a future vision and identified key informants who will be asked questions that can help test assumptions, explore current gaps and needs, and analyze potential funding and resources to support this work in the future. Highlights from the conversation are included in this document, categorized by leadership, policy/environment and resources/funding, as these are some of the key elements of a sustainability plan.

ALBD and the Crim staff assessed the Crim's current state of active living efforts, investigated opportunities for strengthening and expanding the work, developed a vision for how the active living focus could be sustained and better integrated within the organization overall, and explored possible approaches and funding sources to implement final recommendations. Key stakeholders were involved in the process to test assumptions and explore opportunities and levels of support. Interviews were conducted with 12 key stakeholders with representation from SAGE members, community leaders and funders. Seven interviews were conducted by ALBD Senior Project Officer Risa Wilkerson and five were conducted by consultant Jennifer Hill via telephone in February/March 2013.

Background of Active Living in Flint/Genesee County, MI:

Thirty-seven years ago, a running race was started in Flint, MI, by then Speaker of the House Bobby Crim to raise money for the Special Olympics. It has since become a well-recognized brand, drawing multi-generational engagement and becoming one of the Flint's most positive assets. The event attracts participants from 38 countries. It is the fourth largest 10-mile race in the country. The Crim also offers an 8K, 5K, and 1 mile race, as well as a kids' race, drawing in 16,000 participants overall.

Nine years ago, the board recognized an opportunity to use the brand for greater good in the community, so they conducted a national search for a CEO, and Gerry Myers was hired. The organization's name changed from the Crim Festival of Races to the Crim Fitness Foundation as part of their evolution and expansion of focus to address a holistic approach to health that includes physical activity, nutrition, and mindfulness. Similarly, the board has evolved significantly; the staff has grown and, along with it, acquired new areas of expertise.

With 21 employees overseeing programming for adults, youth, and active living, the Crim now offers holistic youth programs in all Flint Public schools and 26 Genesee County schools, serving 10,000 children annually, and an adult training program that reaches 1,500 people who run in groups of 20 once or twice per week through the streets of Flint. "We've created a running culture in Flint that serves as the foundation for our efforts around creating healthy individuals and communities." says CEO Gerry Myers.

Beginning in 2006, the Michigan Fitness Foundation (MFF) was awarded a grant from the Ruth Mott Foundation based on lessons learned from their experience in active living work. The MFF then partnered with the Crim to serve as a local convener to create active living policy and environmental changes locally. With its foundation in that partnership, the Crim's work has included Safe Routes to School (SRTS) initiatives, complete streets policies, trail development (maintenance and promotion) and parks improvements. The Crim provides staff leadership to the multidisciplinary Safe and Active Genesee for Everyone (SAGE) Coalition and offers technical assistance to other in the County. For example, they have helped five schools through the SRTS assessment and planning processes, written grants and/or been a fiduciary agent for federal or state SRTS money on behalf of two schools and have leveraged over \$1 million in SRTS funding. SAGE has guided Genesee County municipalities in writing complete streets policies and has successfully passed six policies. Over 300 way-finding trail signs have been installed throughout the county and more than \$200,000 in physical improvements to parks and trails. Much has happened in six years. The term active living was nonexistent in Flint previously; no one was focused on promoting active living related policies and environments. Today, strong partnerships exist and active living principles are being integrated into policies that affect residents in Flint and Genesee County.

What is "Sustainability"?

The timing is right to create an active living sustainability plan to articulate strategic focus for this work in order to ensure long-term effectiveness for not only Flint and Genesee County but also similar communities throughout Michigan. For the purpose of continuing active living into the future, the term "sustainability" is used to talk about how to develop relationships, practices, policies and supportive environments that become integrated into social norms and long-lasting components of the community.

In order to ensure that active living efforts are sustainable, it is important to consider the key elements of sustainability. ALBD utilizes a framework based on the “Triple Bottom Line.” Most often referenced in the business world, the Triple Bottom Line encompasses three elements for measuring success: economic, ecological (or environmental) and social. For a business, it means that profit is not the only measurement of success. For community partnerships, it means that participation in programs and events is not the final measure. In fact, in order to ensure long-term success, it is vital to look at all three elements.

- 1). Economic = Resources/Funding. What resources are in place to make this change or ensure continuation? Beyond short-term grants, are there partners who could commit certain ongoing resources? Could funding be included in existing budgets (within the city, county or within various organizations) to continue the work? Is there a long-range fundraising plan that reflects the strategic plan of the work?
- 2). Ecological = Policy and Environmental Change Strategies. The Centers for Disease Control states that policy and environment strategies are integrated within the socio-ecological perspective and therefore have the potential for greatest reach, effectiveness, and sustainability. A sidewalk or bike lane will be there for decades. A six-week physical activity program needs renewed funding, volunteer-time, and other resources. It is important to consider which policies are, or need to be, in place to ensure this work happens and continues as planned. Think about all related systems where policies support this work (e.g. planning documents, ordinances, funding sources). What are “low hanging fruit” opportunities that can help sell the vision or be important first steps for larger-scale change? How is existing infrastructure and future development being addressed?
- 3). Social = Leadership and Collaboration. Leadership at multiple levels is critical to sustaining the work. A formal, multidisciplinary partnership is vital and must be fostered thoughtfully, making sure there is a shared vision for change and that all members have meaningful roles which support mutually reinforcing activities. But the formal partnership is not the only leadership needed, investing in developing and supporting allies within policymaking boards, formal and informal policymakers, and others. Those leaders must also know there is community demand for such changes so grassroots leaders and advocates are needed. Consider who is, or needs to be, providing leadership for this work? Who are latent leaders that can be future assets? What support do both groups need and how are emerging leaders nurtured?

The three elements of Resources/Funding, Policy/Environment, and Leadership are interconnected. For example, it takes strong leadership to accomplish policy and environmental changes and resources must be solidified to ensure maintenance of existing infrastructure and ongoing development. Therefore, the three must work together in order to achieve sustainable results. All three elements are identified in key components of this summary document.

Sustaining Healthy Communities: A Comprehensive Framework

	<div> <div>Informal (Letting it happen)</div> <div>Strategic/Intentional (Making it happen)</div> </div>			
Social (Partnership)	Let interested partners show interest in collaboration	Develop & implement strategic communication channels	Share resources between partners, utilize a strengths-based approach	Develop & implement a plan for partners to adopt components of the work and vision
Social (Leadership)	Let leadership development happen by osmosis	Send key stakeholders to conferences and trainings	Implement grassroots and grass tops capacity building efforts	Develop & implement a system to train and enable passionate leaders and residents to become members of decision-making bodies
Environ-mental	Wait for environmental changes to happen	Seek opportunities for influencing new capital projects	Seek systematic changes in policies related to long-term upgrades and maintenance	Develop & implement a plan to influence all related policies, ensure implementation, identify and implement permanent funding source for related policies
Economic	No clearly defined process for seeking additional funds	Ask for ongoing commitments of in-kind support	Approach & develop relationship with foundations for support	Develop & implement a fundraising plan Funding is included in existing budgets

* Abridged version of *Sustaining Healthy Communities: A Comprehensive Framework* handout



Vision

The Crim has been engaged in active living work for more than six years and has focused on activities such as education, policy and environmental strategies, community organizing, and advocacy. The Crim has been very successful at raising the visibility of active living in the community and prioritizing work based on opportunities for partnership and funding.

Currently, the Crim active living work is focused primarily on physical activity while some Crim staff work on nutrition and mindfulness programming. The Crim also has an event management team that is skilled in hosting events that engages the community while promoting physical activity. This plan will help to explore how to use policy and environmental change strategies within our current food and event work.

At this time, the Crim seeks to enhance its effectiveness by broadening its vision guide its active living work in a more strategic way. The Crim is using the sustainability model developed by ALBD and understands that in order to have a larger impact; it will need to move to the more strategic side of this model. By being more strategic the Crim will achieve improved cost effectiveness and efficiency. Below is a vision specifically for active living work at the Crim, but it may be further developed, along with values, as part of the implementation of this plan.

Vision

The Crim is a leader in cultivating accessible, vibrant communities that promote healthy lifestyles where people in Flint and Genesee County can integrate physical activity and healthy eating into their daily lives and mentor other communities to do the same.

Values

- ❖ Advocacy and Leadership
 - Advocacy and leadership are important values to support the implementation of policy and environmental change strategies. Community-wide changes take the support of many people to help influence policy-makers or other leaders. Developing leaders both internally and within the community will help the Crim reach more people and empower residents to be change agents. *The stakeholder interviewees all supported the Crim taking on a larger role in advocacy. They could not identify another leader in this field of work and thought it was an important role for the Crim moving forward.*
- ❖ Social Equity
 - The Crim seeks to be more strategic about the geographic areas and populations that we serve in order to have the greatest impact. Social equity ensures that all people have access to opportunities and a voice in the process, which often requires a focus on certain populations who may have been historically disenfranchised because of lack of opportunity, income, livelihood, education, or participation in the political process. *Stakeholder interviews identified increased diversity among staff and board to be more representative of the Flint community would help to further achieve Crim's mission. In addition, by focusing on social equity we better align ourselves with other national agendas and funding opportunities. In the national active living field, equity has risen as a priority of organizations such as PolicyLink, Safe Routes to School, the American Planning Association, Transportation for America, and Active Living By Design as*

well as funders such as the National Convergence Partnership, the Michigan Convergence Partnership, the C.S. Mott Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Ruth Mott Foundation.

❖ **Collaboration**

- Collaboration is viewed as a value because it allows for partnerships around a common vision. In times where resources are limited, it is essential to continue collaborating with other groups and organizations to develop innovative partnerships and strategies to further active living. Collaboration creates greater efficiency and inspires innovative ideas because of the diverse perspectives of participants. Collaboration increases the number of people engaged in active living and broadens the reach into the community. *Based on feedback from stakeholders, it appears that the SAGE coalition could be a powerful coalition to promote active living, but many are unaware of the group's activities. Many stakeholders already view the Crim as a convener, a role that can support collaborative partnerships to avoid creating more groups competing for the same resources.*

Desired Impact

Active Living work becomes ingrained in the culture and core fabric of all policy and program work the Crim Fitness Foundation in order to create healthy communities throughout Genesee County and beyond.

Goals for Sustaining Active Living in Flint and Genesee County

- Goal 1: **Build the capacity of the Crim organization and staff** to integrate **policy and environmental change** into all work utilizing a shared values system.
- Goal 2: **Increase knowledge and visibility in the community** of the Crim's work on improving health.
- Goal 3: **Develop a grassroots advocacy training** to train latent leaders in Flint and Genesee County neighborhoods to lead policy and environmental change efforts.
- Goal 4: **Utilize partnerships and SAGE coalition** to further active living in the Flint and Genesee County.
- Goal 5: **Assess and prioritize active living policy and environmental needs based on completed Flint Master Plan** and built environment assessments and support implementation of determined activities in the community.
- Goal 6: **Lead active transportation and parks and recreations initiatives** that create safe places for people to be physically active.
- Goal 7: **Pursue funds from outside sources** to support Active Living Initiatives through grants, events, and fee for service activities.
- Goal 8: **Support implementation of active living activities** through small grants to neighborhoods and organizations.

Leadership

“A leader is action-orientated. Only through action can you bring a vision to life. But vision and action must be compatible; to make them so requires skill. That skill begins with walking the walk, energizing others around you, and recruiting them to your mission.” –Deepak Chopra

Leadership is a critical aspect of sustainability and without its implementation of this plan, or policy and environmental change work is not likely. By developing leaders, the Crim is able to multiply the efforts of active living throughout the community and ultimately improve the health of its citizenry.

Current Leadership

Crim Leadership

The Crim Fitness Foundation currently employs 21 staff covering administration, race, program, and active living departments (see attached organizational chart). The organization has a 14-member board of directors who provide leadership and guidance on the work of the organization. The current mission of the Crim is: “To receive and administer funds for participatory health and fitness activities which benefit the greater Flint community.” Recently, the Crim board decided that mission needed to be updated. The Crim board drafted the following new mission statement: “The mission of the Crim Fitness Foundation is to create healthier communities by promoting health and fitness.”

SAGE Coalition Leadership

The SAGE coalition is a collaborative of local advocates, non-profit, private, and government organizations working together to advocate for and support active living initiatives that promote fun and safe opportunities for people to be physically active throughout Genesee County. This coalition has worked over the last seven years to provide leadership in the area of active living and has had much success. The work of SAGE has included Safe Routes to School programs, promotion of active transportation, built environment assessments, identification and coordination of pedestrian, bicycle, and park improvements, and developing and assisting in the development and adoption of local complete streets policies.

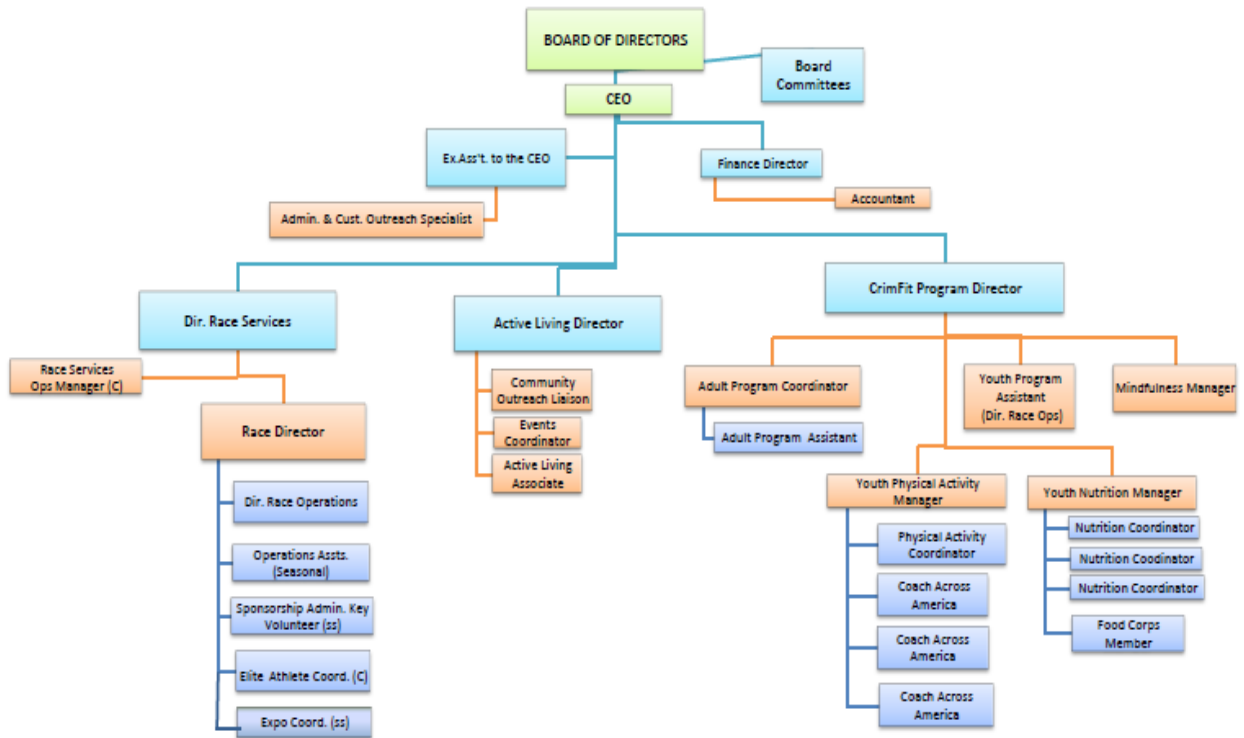
Key Considerations for Leadership

Key stakeholders believe that the Crim currently plays the roles of convener, advocate, trusted information source, and leader, with convener and advocate gaining the most responses. However, people believe the Crim needs to increase its leadership and convener role. There is 100% support for the Crim taking a more active role in leading advocacy efforts for active living. People noted that the Crim is well-known and has a good reputation for the race and training programs, and employ a skilled staff. These are viewed as strengths to the Crim’s increased involvement in leading advocacy for active living. The Crim’s work in policy and environmental change, however, is not well known, according to those interviewed.

While core members of SAGE are aware of the great active living work that is happening, it was clear from the stakeholder interviews that many were not aware of the active living work of the Crim or SAGE. There was no strong agreement about the role currently played by the SAGE Coalition nor the role the coalition should play moving forward. This could indicate a need for more clarity around the role this group aims to play and/or some discussion around the importance of raising awareness about what they do now.

While there are organizations throughout Genesee County working on active living, several people indicated that nobody is stepping into leadership around active living other than the Crim. In addition, according to respondents, active living leadership is not being developed intentionally. These considerations and insights provide support for the Crim developing latent leaders within the community.

Crim Fitness Foundation Organizational Chart



Actions listed in Recommended Strategies are coded as follows:

Short-Term= Green

Mid-Term= Purple

Long-Term=Red

Ongoing=Blue

Recommended Strategies for Leadership

Goal 1: Crim Fitness Foundation will build the capacity of the organization and staff to integrate policy and environmental change into all work utilizing a shared values system.

Strategy 1: Develop the Crim's guiding values and principles, including what active living means to the organization. (Complete by December 2013)

Action 1: Hire consultant to lead process of developing guiding values and principles. (Complete by September 2013)

Action 2: Host discussion with the Crim board and staff to determine the organization's definition of active living and how it can be integrated into all activities. (Complete by September 2013)

Outcome: The Crim organization is consistent and effective in its work to create healthy individuals and communities through a shared understanding of guiding principles and values.

Strategy 2: Build capacity of Crim staff around equity and diversity and determine a statement that allows us all to be working from the same framework. (Complete by June 2014)

Action 1: Research and hire equity and diversity consultant. (Complete by February 2014)

Action 2: Complete internal staff training. (Complete by May 2014)

Action 3: Develop a Crim equity statement. (Complete by June 2014)

Outcome 1: The Crim organization will understand the importance of social equity and use it as a core value to guide development and implementation initiatives.

Outcome 2: The Crim will match potential employees and board members to the organization.

Strategy 3: Cross-pollinate Crim program areas to develop internal leaders and an advocacy base to involve participants associated with all Crim programs in the larger work of the Crim. (Ongoing)

Action 1: Train all staff and board on the basics of policy and environmental change work and assist in integrating into annual work plans. (Complete by September 2013)

Action 2: Host regular meetings with cross-programmatic representatives to brainstorm new/changing collaborative programs. (Ongoing)

Action 3: Develop quick "calls to action" and educational messages for race/training participants in Crim newsletter that can help them to advocate for changes to create healthy communities. (Ongoing- Start January 2014)

Action 4: Train group leaders on active living policy and environmental change work and provide talking points so they can talk with their training groups each week. (Complete by April 2014)

Action 5: Explore completing built environment assessments with training program participants as they are running/walking each week to identify areas for physical improvements that make the community conducive to physical activity. (Complete by April 2014)

Action 6: Develop model to include policy and environmental change champions into Crim school-based program health teams. (Complete by August 2014)

Action 7: Research current work being done around food policy to identify gaps where the Crim could take the lead and develop a strategy for Crim support. **(Complete by December 2013)**

Action 8: Explore how to integrate policy work into existing positions or develop a new policy position. **(Complete by April 2015)**

Action 9: Research and create the Crim's policy priorities **(Ongoing)**

Outcome 1: The Crim organization has increased collaboration across departments making more efficient use of staff time and resources to support a more holistic health agenda.

Outcome 2: The Crim has an advocacy base of at least 500 participants to support active living and healthy eating.

Goal 2: Increase knowledge and visibility in the community of the Crim Fitness Foundation's work on improving health

Strategy 4: Develop a Communication and Outreach Plan to help stakeholders and the community better understand the Crim beyond the race activities and more comprehensive health focus that includes events, programs, policy, and environmental changes. **(Complete by April 2014)**

Action 1: Begin sending Crim Fitness Foundation monthly newsletter that highlights each program area. **(Ongoing)**

Action 2: Determine feasibility of hiring dedicated staff person handle marketing/communications or consultant. **(Complete by October 2013)**

Action 3: Develop key messaging to present to community and stakeholders. **(Complete by February 2014)**

Action 4: Implement communications and outreach plan. **(Complete by March 2014)**

Outcome: The Crim is recognized for its work to create healthier individuals and communities and be seen as a change agent in Flint and Genesee County.

Goal 3: Develop a grassroots advocacy training to train latent leaders in Flint and Genesee County neighborhoods (and other areas) to lead policy and environmental change efforts.

Strategy 5: Develop a grassroots advocacy training for neighborhood latent leaders to help build community leadership around advocating for policy and environmental changes. **(Complete by February 2014)**

Action 1: Review fellow HKHC grantee in Central Valley, California's Community Leadership and Training curriculum and research other potential curriculum. **(Complete by July 2013)**

Action 2: Develop Flint/Genesee County specific training materials. **(Complete by February 2014)**

Action 3: Explore potential funders for the advocacy and leadership training program. **(Complete by July 2013)**

Outcome 1: Twenty-five latent leaders in the community serve as conduits to help lead neighborhoods movements and support the Crim's health agenda.

Outcome 2: A model curriculum that can be used in other communities throughout Michigan.

Goal 4: Utilize partnerships and SAGE coalition to further active living in the Flint and Genesee County.

Strategy 6: Re-evaluate purpose and key activities of SAGE coalition to best utilize network resources. **(Complete by February 2014)**

Action 1: Review current SAGE vision and purpose, and host discussion with SAGE members on future key activities. **(Complete by July 2013)**

Outcome: The SAGE coalition has increased visibility in the community and is well-known for 1-3 key activities.

Strategy 7: Collaborate with other partners (organization, coalitions, and individuals) to leverage combined knowledge and resources. **(Complete by September 2013)**

Action 1: Research which partners have similar missions and goals. **(Complete by July 2013)**

Action 2: Host exploratory conversations about strategic partnerships or merging coalitions. **(Complete by August 2013)**

Action 3: Explore continuing partnerships with the Michigan Fitness Foundation to make connections between local advocates and state-level active living efforts. **(Ongoing)**

Action 4: Develop relationships with all local and state representatives and senators **(Ongoing)**

Outcome: Increased collaboration amongst partners by working collectively and more strategically utilizing partner networks to communicate a shared community health agenda.

Policy and Environmental Change Strategies

"It is dishonest for us to tell our citizens to walk, jog, or bicycle when there is no safe or welcoming place to pursue these 'life saving' activities." –Dr. Richard Jackson, Active Living Expert

Policy and Environmental Change Strategies are an important part of long-term change. These types of investment affect whole populations and are more permanent than short-term programs and promotional campaigns, although an integration of all of these strategies is ideal.

Current Policy and Environmental Change Strategies

Crim Active Living work currently uses policy and environmental change strategies to help improve infrastructure and policies that encourage physical activity. The Crim and SAGE have been highly involved in promoting the concept of Complete Streets, which is a policy that encourages consideration of all transportation users in the design or redesign of streets. These policies support the integration of pedestrian walkways, bike facilities, and transit so that people have transportation options. The Crim's work around complete streets has included identifying potential built environment improvements along trails and streets.

In 2009, the SAGE coalition worked to implement a county-wide, way-finding trail signage system. This ensures that signage is consistent across the county and includes distance, direction, and destinations that encourage use for active transportation. Complete streets work also included developing a template resolution for municipal decision-makers to pass in support of the concept, and over the last four years, six communities within Genesee County have passed them. SAGE and its partners have led a variety of built environment assessments including walking audits, the Promoting Active Communities assessment, and Bicycle Friendly Community and University assessments.

The Crim has also led Safe Routes to School activities within three Flint schools. The SRTS process helps identify needed improvements and programs to make it easier for students to use active transportation to and from school. These strategies help increase students' regular physical activity and make improvements such as sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and signage that the entire neighborhood can benefit from.

In an effort to increase places where people can engage in physical activity for free, the Crim, along with community partners, identified City of Flint parks as an opportunity and, in 2009, received a grant through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities (HKHC) initiative. The Flint HKHC project focused on assessing park conditions and policies in order to provide recommendations for an updated five year parks and recreation plan. In addition to city level policy review, the project focused on two parks as pilots to test out potential strategies that could then be transferred across other parks in the City. Community members around Max Brandon and Brennan Park have joined together to plan for the future of these parks and have been successful in completing improvements and hosting events to increase use of the park. These residents were also highly engaged in providing input to update the vision and goals for the five year parks and recreation plan.

Key Considerations for Policy and Environmental Change Strategies

To assess impressions of active living efforts, key stakeholders were asked what active living initiatives are currently having the biggest impact in Flint. When asked to think about which active living efforts were currently having the most impact, there were a range of answers, some related to active living policy and environmental strategies and some not. Their answers included active transportation-related efforts, parks, trailways, the city master planning process, and healthy eating work.

Active transportation-related efforts received the most responses and included public transportation, safe routes to school and complete streets. When asked what could have the biggest impact, the Flint master planning process was mentioned most often.

Recommended Strategies for Policy and Environmental Change Goals

Goal 5: Assess and prioritize active living policy and environmental needs based on completed Flint Master Plan and built environment assessments and support implementation of determined activities in the Flint community.

Strategy 1: Determine what efforts the Crim can lead to assist in implementation of the City of Flint Master Plan (Complete by December 2014)

- Action 1: Review final plan to research which activities match Crim mission, goals, and values. **(Complete by December 2014)**
- Action 2: Train all staff and board on the basics of policy and environmental change work and provide updates on best practices. (Also in Leadership section.)
- Action 3: Provide technical assistance to City of Flint related to the topics of health, parks and recreation, active transportation, and community organizing. **(Ongoing)**

*Outcome:*The Crim leads community-determined efforts to provide services or programs the City of Flint might not be able to fulfill.

Strategy 2: Train latent leaders on policy and environmental strategies

- Action 1: (See strategies 3 and 5 in Leadership). This is a best practice of implementing policy environmental changes.

Strategy 3: Encourage participation in and complete built environment assessments, and identify built environment improvements as needed based on assessment results (Ongoing)

- Action 1: Send annual letter to all municipalities, villages, and townships in Genesee County encouraging them to assess policies and infrastructure related to active living. **(Complete by February 2014)**
- Action 2: Make follow-up calls to discuss any questions or concerns regarding letters. **(Complete by February 2014)**

*Outcome:*At least 5 municipalities will complete built environment assessments.

Goal 6: Lead active transportation and parks and recreations initiatives that create safe places for people to be physically active.

Strategy 4: Advocate for and lead active transportation initiatives (Ongoing)

- Action 1: Maintain Bike It. Walk It. Bus It. (BWB) Campaign. **(Ongoing)**
- Action 2: Host annual active transportation challenge. **(Complete by July 2014)**
- Action 3: Add BWB participants to Crim advocacy constituency to help advocate for active transportation policy and environmental strategies. **(Complete by January 2014)**

Action 4: Send recognition letters to municipalities and road agencies for improvements that make it easier to use active transportation. **(Ongoing)**

Outcome1: At least 250 people use BWB website to log active transportation trips.

*Outcome 2:*The number of teams in the annual active transportation challenge grows by 20% each year.

Outcome 3: More transportation projects include pedestrian and bike improvements because municipalities feel supported and recognized.

Strategy 5: Explore integration of Safe Routes to School initiatives with Crim school-based programs **(Complete by December 2013)**

Action 1: Host discussion with Flint School administration to determine ideal SRTS candidates. **(Complete by September 2013)**

Action 2: Determine feasibility of continuing SRTS initiatives given the multiple school closings each year. **(Complete by September 2013)**

Action 3: Brainstorm with program staff about how to use the SRTS process in schools-based programs. **(Complete by July 2014)**

Outcome: SRTS is integrated as a regular part of Crim school-based programs to ensure a more comprehensive look at the school and the environment.

Strategy 6: Promote the concept of complete streets throughout Genesee County **(Ongoing)**

Action 1: Review template resolution and make necessary changes based on policy review from the National Complete Streets Coalition. **(Complete by April 2014)**

Action 2: Identify all municipalities who do not currently have a complete streets resolution in place and request presentations. **(Complete by April 2014)**

Action 3: Identify pilot community within Genesee County to pass a complete streets ordinance. **(Complete by May 2014)**

Action 4: Advocate for complete streets in the updated Genesee County Long-Range Transportation Plan. **(Complete by December 2014)**

Action 5: Advocate for complete streets in a few key transportation projects as identified in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). **(Ongoing)**

*Outcome:*An increased number of municipalities using complete streets principles to guide road projects and future development.

Strategy 7: Encourage improved parks and recreation facilities, including multi-use trails. **(Ongoing)**

Action 1: Gather feedback from community and prioritize HKHC parks and recreation policy recommendations. **(Complete by December 2014)**

Action 2: Provide technical assistance to community groups to improve neighborhood parks. **(Ongoing)**

Action 3: Partner with City of Flint to help draft new park policies based on feedback from community and stakeholders. **(Complete by December 2014)**

Action 4: Encourage use of City of Flint parks and trails as sites for programming. **(Ongoing)**

Action 5: Provide assistance in updating the Genesee County Regional Trail Plan. **(Complete by April 2015)**

Outcome: City of Flint Parks and Trail use increase and outdated policies are improved to support and enhance the current park system.

Resources and Funding

Resources and funding are another crucial piece to sustaining any work long-term. This topic includes not only financial resources, but also partnerships or resources that are received in-kind. By building the capacity of both the staff and community, the Crim will increase its ability to leverage additional resources.

Current Funding

Up until now Crim Active Living work has been entirely grant funded. The primary funder is the Ruth Mott Foundation, who for the past five years has given over \$100,000 annually. Support from the Ruth Mott Foundation allowed the Crim to leverage a four-year, \$360,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's HKHC initiative. The Crim has also supported active living through small grants from the Michigan Fitness Foundation, General Motors Foundation, and the C.S. Mott Foundation, as well as fee for service work with the Disability Network to help on complete streets efforts. Over the last five years the Crim has received over \$1.3 million to support active living work and used those funds to leverage a \$1million in additional investment in Genesee County. In addition to financial resources, the SAGE coalition provides a wealth of expertise and technical assistance throughout the community. Their time and talent provided to this community is certainly an important resource to ensure successful projects.

Key Considerations for Supporting Future Active Living Work

Active living seems to align with current funding priorities and with the future strategic direction of those key stakeholders who were interviewed. In addition, there is optimism that some funding will remain available in the future, although how much will be available to the Crim, specifically, was not explored. Ideas about other support for the work were mixed and included fundraisers/events and community benefit resources from hospitals. It will be important moving forward to consider multiple types of funding to reduce the Crim's dependence on grant funding alone.

Recommended Strategies for Resources and Funding

Goal 7: Pursue funds from outside sources to support Active Living Initiatives through grants, events, and fee for service activities.

Strategy 1: Build upon the success of the Crim Festival of races to expand to other physical activity events to raise funds to sustain active living work. (Ongoing)

Action 1: Host inaugural Tour De Crim Bicycle Challenge Event May 11, 2013. (Complete)

Action 2: Debrief and determine feasibility of continuing Tour De Crim Bicycle Challenge annually.

(Complete by April 2014)

Action 3: Brainstorm other event ideas to raise funds. (Ongoing)

Outcome: The Crim hosts an Annual signature event that raises at a minimum \$10,000 in unrestricted funds to be used for active living work.

Strategy 2: Develop membership structure with fee to develop Crim Fitness Foundation advocacy base. (Complete by June 2014)

Action 1: Survey Crim participants about interest and potential benefits. (Complete by September 2014)

Action 2: Develop structure and benefits for membership. (Complete by February 2014)

*Outcome:*The Crim has a membership of at least 1,000 individuals that will serve as ambassadors for active living and provide revenue to support the Crim's work.

Strategy 3: Develop a menu of options of fee for service activities that Crim staff could provide (Complete by September 2014)

Action 1: Assess Crim staff knowledge and skills. (Complete by August 2014)

Action2: Develop a package and create fee structure for services like the "Tale on the Trail" events. (Complete by August 2013)

Action 3: Publicize availability of Crim event bike rack rental. (Complete by August 2013)

*Outcome:*The Crim is positioned to serve as a subcontractor with organizations or municipalities who need assistance and create revenue for active living work.

Strategy 4: Explore additional grant funding sources outside of Genesee County (Complete by December 2013)

Action 1: Research potential funders using the Foundation Directory. (Complete by June 2013)

Action 2: Create spreadsheet of potential funders, funding priorities, and proposal deadlines. (Complete by June 2013)

*Outcome:*Crim receives at least one grant from a new funder for at least \$50,000.

Strategy 5: Develop the human resources to serve as leaders in active living work

Action 1: Assess staff professional development needs. (Complete by August 2014)

Action 2: Apply for capacity-building grant from the BEST Project. (Complete by January 2014)

Action 3: Develop training module for Crim volunteers on basics of policy and environmental strategies. (Complete by January 2015)

*Outcome:*The Crim employs strong, well-rounded staff that will be able to serve as leaders for health improvement in Genesee County.

Goal 8: Support implementation of active living activities through small grants to neighborhoods and organizations.

Strategy 6: Provide mini-grants to local community groups or organizations for active living projects (Ongoing)

Action 1: Refine mini-grant application and selection process. (Complete by December 2013)

Action 2: Develop coaching strategy to allow SAGE members to provide technical assistance to grantees. (Complete)

Action 3: Identify in-kind resources that are supporting active living. (Complete by August 2014)

*Outcome:*Neighborhoods and organizations pilot potential strategies and serve as models to further active living.

Putting the Plan in Place

This plan includes timelines for implementation, including short-term (June –December 2013) mid-term (January-December 2014) and long-term (January-December 2015). The plan is color-coded and includes ongoing strategies in blue, short-term strategies in green, mid-term in purple and long-term strategies in red.

Short-Term Implementation Plan

The short-term implementation will take place over the next six months. It will include maintaining current active living activities, generating at least \$75,000 in revenue from new funders and events, and exploring developing leadership both internally at the Crim and in grassroots leaders throughout the community.

Leadership

- Determine what active living means to the organization along with values and principles to help guide the work
- Explore the topics of equity and diversity to and determine a statement to help staff be consistent in their work with diverse communities
- Begin to train all staff and board on the basics of policy and environmental change strategies and host conversations to understand how programs can be integrated
- Strategize about how better communicate the efforts of the Crim Fitness Foundation to the community and key stakeholders
- Determine purpose and key activities for SAGE coalition
- Research and develop Genesee County specific grassroots advocacy training and seek funding for implementation
- Explore partnerships with other organizations and coalitions with similar missions

Policy and Environmental Change Strategies

- Continue to maintain the Bike It. Walk It. Bus It. Campaign, including an annual challenge and lead active transportation efforts
- Better understand opportunities to lead SR2S efforts with the Flint Community Schools and determine feasibility
- Continue to serve as a resource on the topics of health, parks and recreation, active transportation, and community organizing

Resources and Funding

- Debrief 2013 Tour de Crim and plan for continuation of the event in 2014 to generate unrestricted revenue for active living
- Begin to develop menu of fee for service activities starting with “Tale on the Trail” and event bike rack rental
- Research potential new funders that match Crim mission and activities and make at least two proposals with the goal of receiving at least \$60,000 in grant funds with the remainder from other sources
- Provide mini-grants to local community groups and organizations to further active living

Mid-Term Implementation Plan

The mid-term implementation will include the 2014 calendar year to coincide with Crim annual work plans.

Leadership

- Explore the topics of equity and diversity to and determine a statement to help staff be consistent in their work with diverse communities

- Continue development of all staff and board members on the basics of policy and environmental change strategies and host conversations to understand how programs can be integrated, especially with school based programs
- Begin to train adult program group leaders on policy and environmental change strategies and pilot education and environmental audit strategies
- Develop a communications and outreach plan with key messages for community members and stakeholders and implement
- Complete development of Genesee County-specific grassroots advocacy training, develop application process, and begin implementation

Policy and Environmental Change Strategies

- Encourage municipalities to participate in built environment assessments
- Lead Complete Streets efforts by working with Genesee County municipalities to pass resolutions and work with one community to pilot an ordinance
- Assess what role the Crim can play in implementation of the City of Flint Master Plan
- Determine model for integrating Safe Routes to School into school based programs
- Gather feedback from the Flint community to help determine parks-related priorities

Resources and Funding

- Explore the interest and benefits of developing Crim membership structure to serve as an advocacy base of 500 individuals at \$25 or more by the end of 2014
- Apply for grants as appropriate with at least three applications for a total of \$100,000 by the end of 2014
- Complete a fee for service menu for services that Crim can provide
- Assess staff professional development needs
- Identify in-kind resources that are supporting active living

Long-Term Implementation Plan

During the second phase of this plan (2-3 years) the Crim will continue to develop both internal and grassroots leadership. There will also be plans about how to better integrate across programs areas and the Crim will be better positioned for implementation.

All other activities will be re-evaluated prior to the 2015 fiscal year and the Crim will determine what activities and funding sources make sense to continue.

Conclusion

The Crim Active Living sustainability is based on input from the community, key stakeholders, and funders to provide comprehensive look at what strategies can have the greatest impact on improving the health of the Flint and Genesee County community (and provide leadership, education for other communities to do the same). The plan will serve as a framework to allow the Crim to be more strategic in its focus, diversify its funding sources, and guide implementation of future work.

