WALKING AND BIKING FOR ACTIVE AND HEALTHY LIVING IN NEAH BAY

Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities
Technical Assistance

Prepared for the Makah Tribe based on Technical Assistance provided by Forterra on October 8th and 9th, 2012, funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program

Photo Credit: Michael Richeson
WALKING AND BIKING FOR ACTIVE AND HEALTHY LIVING IN NEAH BAY

In 2012, the Makah Tribe received technical assistance from Forterra, as part of the Environmental Protection Agency’s Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program, to engage the community in conversations about healthy living through biking and walking.

This report presents the key findings from this technical assistance, as well as recommendations to support residents in leading healthy, active lives into the future.

Participating Forterra staff: Jeff Aken, Skye Schell, Becca Meredith, Nick Cilluffo, and Chris Hoffer, as well as bike mechanic Alex Pagliere from the Bikery.

Staff from Sophie Trettevick Health Center at Neah Bay: Mel Melmed and Rosina DePoe, Public Health Program

We would like to thank all of the community members for sharing their time, ideas, and commitment to walking, biking, and active living in Neah Bay:

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Photo Credit: Nick Cilluffo
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2012, the Makah Tribe requested and received technical assistance from Forterra, as part of the Environmental Protection Agency’s Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program, to engage the community in conversations about healthy living through biking and walking.

Forterra and Makah Public Health Program staff hosted two days of activities on October 8th and 9th 2012 in Neah Bay. These included a bike repair workshop, biking and walking audits, a focus group with high school students, and a community questionnaire.

Key findings from these activities include:

- **Appreciation for safety and infrastructure investments.** Walkers and bikers appreciated existing infrastructure that promotes safe, active living. They identified additional strategies and prioritized locations for crosswalks, lighting, signage, and new paths for pedestrians and cyclists--building on current community strengths.

- **Desire for ongoing education and training.** Community members were eager to learn more about bike maintenance and how to set up a community bike repair shop. They saw training volunteer mechanics as a way to improve access to bikes, keep bikes in good shape, and also develop job skills and pathways to employment.

- **Interest in active living as a community.** Residents of all ages enjoyed walking and biking as opportunities to exercise, but also to have fun, enjoy the beauty of Neah Bay, and spend time with friends and family. Residents are excited about new opportunities, like youth-elder walks, Walk and Bike to School Day, or annual events like the Bahokus Peak Challenge.

Based on these findings, Forterra has provided a set of recommended action items as next steps for the community to consider and prioritize. These include community or “people-based” actions, as well as those to address physical infrastructure. Some will require long-term investment and planning, but others are easier to implement, with immediate benefits for community members.

Walking and biking in Neah Bay are common sights, providing active and affordable alternatives to driving while strengthening ties among community members and neighbors. Improving infrastructure, education, training, and community support will build on existing efforts and ensure residents can lead healthy, active lives into the future.

*Families and children share ideas and opportunities for walking in Neah Bay during a walkability audit led by Forterra. Photo credit: Michael Richeson*
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED ACTION ITEMS

Forterra’s recommended action items offer next steps for the community to consider and to prioritize. These include actions to improve community support and capacity for walking and biking, as well as actions to improve physical infrastructure.

More detailed descriptions are available upon request.

Community Action Items

- Organize community walks and bike rides to draw attention to walking and cycling and build support for future infrastructure.
- Improve signage and enforcement of current speed limits.
- Control loose dogs.
- Offer additional bike maintenance and repair workshops.
- Train local bike repair experts and obtain bike repair tools.
- Explore community bike shop and bicycle sharing.

Infrastructure Action Items

- Install low-cost options like crossing flags and signs.
- Install crosswalks at unmarked intersections and midblock.
- Add wayfinding signage to highlight key destinations.
- Add bicycle racks.
- Add benches and signage along key walking routes.
- Separate walking and bicycle paths from road through barriers, plantings, etc.
- Make Woodland Avenue more bicycle-friendly by considering narrowing travel lanes and adding bicycle infrastructure.
- Find and create community bike shop / repair space.
- Establish pedestrian-priority street to prioritize and pilot sidewalk maintenance and traffic enforcement efforts.
- Develop new trails and connections for recreation and tsunami evacuation.
- Install state-of-the-art crossing infrastructure such as active warning beacons that are user activated flashing lights that increase compliance at crossings.

BACKGROUND
In 2012, the Makah Tribe requested and received technical assistance from Forterra, formerly known as Cascade Land Conservancy. Forterra fills a unique and important niche as the largest conservation and community building organization dedicated to the Puget Sound and Olympic Peninsula regions. We partner with thousands of leaders and residents across the region to create healthy, livable, and prosperous communities.

This technical assistance was provided by Forterra as part of the Environmental Protection Agency’s Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program to engage communities across America in conversations about healthy living through biking and walking.

The Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities program provides targeted technical assistance to local communities using tools that have proven results and widespread application. The purpose of delivering these tools is to stimulate a discussion about growth and development and strengthen local capacity to implement sustainable approaches.

The Makah Tribe applied to Forterra for assistance in performing community engagement around walking and biking in Neah Bay in an effort to further their commitment to a healthier community. This work builds on other active and healthy living successes, which includes receiving funding to promote healthier living through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Community Transformation grant program. The Makah Tribe was one of only seven tribes nationally to receive this competitive funding in 2011.

Why walking and biking?

Active living through walking and biking provides a number of community benefits. For residents without access to an automobile or the ability to afford the costs of driving, walking and biking allows them to get to their job, run errands, and stay connected. This includes seniors who no longer drive. For them, exercise can also decrease the risk of cardiovascular disease and dementia. Additionally, every kilometer walked is associated with a 4.8% reduction in obesity rates¹, with studies finding that overweight children who are active several times a week are 85% more likely to become normal-weight adults.²

In addition to physical health benefits, increased exercise is an important tool for both treatment and prevention of substance abuse. Exercise, for example, has been found effective in smoking cessation programs, perhaps by reducing stress, preventing weight gain, and addressing other drug withdrawal needs. In terms of prevention, studies have already found that teens who exercise

regularly are less likely to smoke cigarettes or marijuana. Based on this, the National Institute on Drug Abuse is actively investing millions of dollars in research to learn how exercise may help prevent substance abuse.

**What’s already happening?**

Encouraging walking and biking is not new in Neah Bay. The successful Bahokus Peak Challenge, for example, will mark its 10th anniversary in 2013, providing a fun and healthy activity for residents and visitors during Makah Days. Similarly, the planned construction of a waterfront trail will provide new opportunities for community members to spend time outdoors walking and biking.

Active transportation is also being included in new development by the Makah Tribe. The new Sail River Heights housing development includes walking paths and is accessible by shoulder lanes with bollards along 200 Line Road, providing residents a safe and active alternative to driving. And there are many new, well-maintained crosswalks in town, including around the school.

Continuing to plan for active living will enhance these investments by creating connections between existing walking and biking paths and by strengthening community capacity for active living.

**COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES**

The conversation between the Neah Bay community and Forterra staff began with a visit to Neah Bay in August 2012 to meet with the Building Blocks technical assistance recipients from the Public Health Department and community members on the Community Transformation Coalition. A community dinner and a small focus group were held as a preliminary form of engagement to understand what types of technical assistance would best serve the community.

Based on feedback and ideas from this initial visit, Forterra and Public Health staff planned and hosted two days of walking and biking activities, workshops, and discussions on October 8th and 9th 2012 in Neah Bay. These included:

I. **Walking activities (p. 8):** a youth-elder walking audit and a walking audit with families

II. **Biking activities (p. 10):** a bike repair workshop, a community bike shop and bike share discussion, and a biking audit

III. **High school focus group (p. 13)**

IV. **Community questionnaire (p. 14)**

The following provides a summary of these activities, including key findings. Recommendations for next steps are included based on this community input, also summarized in Attachment 1 (p. 20).

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I. Walking Activities

Walking Audit with Elders and Students

A group of elders and high school students met at the Senior Center and walked up Bayview to Portage and then down Woodland Ave to 1st street, returning to the Senior Center. The audit was an opportunity to talk about safe walking with elders and kick-off for a youth-elder walking program. Forterra discussed safety, barriers to walking, and potential infrastructure improvements then led a walking audit, with community members sharing their expertise about barriers and opportunities.

Staff present: Jeff Aken, Nick Cilluffo, Chris Hoffer, Mel Melmed

Key Findings

- Elders are interested in the opportunity to walk with youth regularly, making it important to address safety concerns and other barriers.

- In addition to weather and flooding, elders identified barriers to walking such as pedestrian-automobile safety. Recommended improvements included crosswalks across Bayview Ave (at Linda’s Pizza, mini-mart, and playground on north side of street), and also infrastructure such as curb bulbs, crossing flags, stop signs, or signage reminding people about pedestrians and to slow down along with enforcing existing speed limits.

- Other accessibility concerns included not having enough space on sidewalks, and frequent curb ramps at driveway crossings that made sidewalks difficult for mobility, particularly for wheelchairs.

- Infrastructure, such as benches, was discussed to make walking easier for all ability levels. Benches could also mark distances (i.e. every ¼ mile) to encourage those walking for health, offer scenic viewpoints, and be pieces of art, although maintenance/vandalism was a concern.

Where space is limited for driveway crossings, adding a jogged sidewalk (left), or using rolled curbs (right), improves safety and mobility. Images from the Federal Highway Administration’s Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access.
Walking Audit with Families

Forterra also hosted a families walking audit. Parents and children, including those in strollers, walked from the community gym around the post office, and up and down Bayview and Woodland Avenues. They identified barriers as well as opportunities for walking more.

Staff present: Skye Schell, Becca Meredith, Alex Pagliere, Rosina DePoe

Key Findings

- Many parents were concerned about kids having to use the street while walking, either because they lived in areas without sidewalks, or because of sidewalk quality issues or obstructions. Parking on sidewalks and having boats on Woodland Ave, in particular, were mentioned.

- Other barriers included weather, dogs, and lack of connectivity to downtown from outlying residential areas.

- Opportunities to support walking included lit crosswalks (i.e. with push-buttons) on Base Road, across from 200 Line, or crosswalks at all intersections.

This homemade sign (left) is one attempt to address the speeding on back streets.

Other solutions include adding crosswalks and all-way stops at intersections.

Loose dogs (right) were also mentioned as a safety concern.

Parents were concerned about safety where kids had to use the street due to a lack of sidewalk (left), a lack of sidewalk maintenance, or other obstructions (right). Photo Credit: Skye Schell.
II. Biking Activities

Bike Repair Workshop

Bike maintenance and repair was identified by the community as a key issue for promoting bicycling in Neah Bay. To provide visible action and to understand the needs in more detail, Alex Pagliere, a bicycle mechanic and volunteer at The Bikery (a community-based bicycle shop located in Seattle), led a repair and maintenance workshop. Community members participated in fixing a flat tire, adjusting brakes and shifters, and learned about essential and inexpensive maintenance tools. To promote bicycle safety, eight attendees won a raffle for new helmets donated by Cascade Bicycle Club, and the Justice Department donated two children’s bikes to the community.

Staff present: Forterra Team, Alex Pagliere, Mel Melmed, Rosina DePoe

Key Findings

- Community members of all ages were enthusiastic about learning bike-maintenance basics, including how to use repair tools and how to change a flat tire.

- Many bikes brought in by community members will require advanced repair and new parts in order to function safely.

- Two ways to help bikes in Neah Bay last longer and ride safer are to store them indoors (protecting them from the weather) and to regularly use appropriate lubricant on moving parts such as chains and cables.
Community Bike Shop/Share Discussion

Forterra facilitated a discussion around the possibility of a community bike shop and/or bike share in Neah Bay. After brainstorming barriers and opportunities for increasing biking, Alex Pagliere shared his experience at The Bikery in Seattle as an example of a small, community-based bicycle shop. Community members discussed how a shop might work in Neah Bay, as well as the possibility of a bike share to increase access to bicycles. The discussion concluded with planning next steps and action items to pursue. More information on community bike projects is in Attachment 2.

Staff present: Forterra Team, Alex Pagliere, Mel Melmed, Rosina DePoe

Key Findings

- Community members identified both infrastructure and cost barriers to biking in Neah Bay. Infrastructure barriers include a lack of bike racks and locks and bike paths that are missing or are in need of repair. Other barriers included convenience (travel time and vehicle capacity to buy/repair a bike), weather, and dogs.

- Bike tourism was seen a major opportunity (e.g. Hobuck Cabins planning to rent bikes).

- Starting up a community bike shop will require finding a space to rent or use, or else setting up a mobile bike repair truck. Members thought regular hours once a week would be reasonable, and mechanics could get paid through the Native Employment Works program.

- A bike share program could work using a central location and make bikes available at a small cost or free, with a refundable deposit. It could be for short or long term rental (i.e. a bicycle library), for community members and visitors, but would require someone to manage it.

- A designated community member will be necessary to coordinate next steps and make progress on a community bike shop. Once there is capacity to support bike maintenance, the community can focus on increasing access to bikes.
Biking Audit

Immediately following the community bike shop and share discussion, Forterra led a bike audit of downtown Neah Bay. The route left the community hall, preceded down Bayview Ave to Buchanan Street, then returned on Woodland Ave and 3rd Avenue. The audit included three stops for community members to discuss safety, infrastructure, and opportunities for improvement. An additional outcome of the audit was strengthening relationships between cyclists and sharing stories about how to improve cycling in Neah Bay.

Staff present: Jeff Aken, Nick Cilluffo, Alex Pagliere, Rosina DePoe

Key Findings

➢ Key issues identified by community members included: the narrowing of bike lanes on Bayview Ave; cars parking on the shoulder (and a lack of clarity over whether this was a “bike lane” or just a wide shoulder, with parking allowed); and a lack of bike racks.

➢ The group discussed ways to make the key biking routes and destinations safer and more convenient.

A. During the audit, community members identified cars in the shoulder along Bayview Ave as a barrier, along with uncertainty over whether this was a bike lane or parking shoulder.

B. Marked bike lanes clarify whether road space is for cyclists and for motorists.

C. Bollards and markings help protect designated cycle tracks.

D. Where bikes and cars share the road, share lane markings or sharrows (bottom right) help alert drivers to the presence of cyclists while reinforcing routes and wayfinding for cyclists.

Photo credit: NAACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide
III. Neah Bay High School Focus Group

Forterra led a discussion with Neah Bay High School freshmen about walking and biking to school. This included discussing the pros and cons of different ways of getting to school as well as identifying common routes and unsafe locations for bicycling and walking. Students also brainstormed a bike or walk to school day and made up impromptu flyers to advertise. See Attachment 4 for sample flyers.

Staff present: Skye Schell, Becca Meredith, Rosina DePoe

Key Findings

- Students walk or bike when they want to and not for “exercise.” Getting to school is frequently more convenient by car or by bus, either due to time, distance, or lack of access to a bike.

- Students identified unsafe locations and conditions, including roads without lighting. In general, however, they felt safe to bike, although almost all had experienced bike theft.

- A Walk or Bike to School Day could be a possible event in 2013 in April or September. Students suggested having food for participants, such as smoothies or ice creams, and that the event could be a fundraiser or bike-a-thon/race. Students were excited about the idea of the Day as a competition where the winning class gets pizza (or bacon), and created sample flyers that could be used for publicity.

High school students shared their creativity and excitement around biking to school. Photo Credit: Skye Schell.

Students created flyers to help promote a Walk or Bike to School Day in 2013.
IV. Community Questionnaire

Throughout the two-days of events, community members were asked to complete a questionnaire about walking and biking in Neah Bay. The questionnaire and results are included in Attachment 5 with overall responses consistent with what was discussed from the other events.

Key Findings

- For both modes of transportation, adding points of interest, designated trails, and increasing social opportunities were all identified as strategies to increase walking and biking.

- For walking, people tend to walk to many destinations throughout town and those who do not walk prefer the convenience of cars. Respondents indicated that they would walk more if it was safer to do so, such as by addressing the issue of loose dogs, lighting, and automobile safety.

- For biking, many residents did not bike because they lacked access to a functioning bicycle. In addition to addressing safety, increasing bike infrastructure such as bike paths and trails were also listed as opportunities.

- Respondents were specifically asked if they would ride more if they had access to a bike in exchange for volunteering. The positive response indicates that members would be open to a community bike shop/share.

Many of the responses had to do with the walker having more motivation (such as having scenic destination) or safety (more lighting at night, fewer loose dogs). Adding trails and points of interest, as well as having walking groups or walking events, can address these barriers.
Many people lacked access to a working bike. A lack of bike lanes, trails, and infrastructure, was also a barrier to biking, more so than convenience factors, such as time, weather, and location.

I would bike more if...

- Access (to a working bike; permission)
- Safety (dogs, cars)
- Interest/motivation (more people did, etc.)
- Convenience (weather, time, location)
- Infrastructure (bike-friendly paths, trails)
RECOMMENDED ACTION ITEMS

Based on findings from these activities, Forterra has provided a set of recommended action items as next steps for the community to consider and prioritize. These include **community** or “people-based” actions, as well as those to address physical **infrastructure**. Some will require long-term investment and planning, and many are easy to implement with immediate benefits for community members.

For full recommended action list and resources, please contact Forterra.
**Next Steps**

Walking and biking in Neah Bay are already common sights, providing active and affordable alternatives to driving and strengthening ties among community members and neighbors. Improving infrastructure, education, training and community support will build on existing efforts and ensure residents can lead healthy, active lives into the future.

Forterra would like to thank the Makah Tribe for their efforts making this project a success, Alex Pagliere from The Bikery for sharing his bike mechanic and training skills, and the U.S. EPA’s Office of Sustainable Communities Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program for funding the work.

Please contact Forterra if there are any questions about this report: 901 5th Avenue, Ste. 2200, Seattle, WA 98164; info@forterra.org; (206) 905-6905.

*Photo Credit: Michael Richeson*
ATTACHMENTS

*Attachments 1-3 available from Forterra upon request.*

Attachment 1. Summary Matrix of Recommended Action Items
Attachment 2. Primer on Community Bicycle Repair Programs
Attachment 3. Bike Repair Kit Supply and Tool List
Attachment 4. Flyers from High School Focus Group
Attachment 5. Community Questionnaire Results
Attachment 4. Flyers from High School Focus Group

- Bike to school day?
  - The class with the most people to bike to school will win some ice cream!
- Bike 2 Work/School Day!
  - Participate!
  - Free smoothies
- Bike to school and
  - Benefit (for the winning class) (breakfast, gift certificate)
- Bikeathon
  - Reward: Pizza
- Bike to School!
  - The class with the most people to bike to school gets a pizza party!
- Help raise money for charity
  - Made by: Savannah

- Come please :) Bike-a-thon
  - Walk or bike lol
  - Prize is Pizza
Attachment 5. Community Questionnaire

Total # of respondents: 44

Age

- Under 18: 60%
- 18 to 39: 21%
- 40 to 50: 7%
- 50+: 12%

Neighborhood you live in:

- 200 Line: 16%
- In town: 18%
- Waadah: 7%
- Near clinic: 9%
- Dia’ht Hill: 5%
- East Nursery: 2%
- Neah Bay (unspecified): 5%
- Tsoo-yess: 4%
- Out of town: 11%
- Other: 9%
- Blank: 5%
Before today, have you heard of the Community Transformation Grant? Y/ N

- **No**: 41%
- **Yes**: 16%
- **(blank)**: 43%

### WALKING

Do you walk in Neah Bay? Y/N

- **No**: 11%
- **Yes**: 5%
- **(blank)**: 84%
If yes, how often?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Almost every day</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where do you walk?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everywhere, around town</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store, mini mart</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home, school</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Street</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach, trails</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gym</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To friend’s, family</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If not, why not (check all that apply):

- I prefer to drive: 61%
- I prefer to bike: 8%
- Places I go are too far away: 23%
- Other: 8%
- Places I go are too far away: 31%

I would walk more if... (Please describe)

- Interest/motivation (scenic places, people to walk with): 32%
- Safety (dogs, lighting, cars): 31%
- Comfort (weather): 21%
- Convenience (more time, better location): 16%
BIKING

Do you bike in Neah Bay?

- No: 7%
- Yes: 32%
- (blank): 61%

If yes, how often?

- Almost every day: 31%
- Often: 13%
- Rarely: 31%
- Sometimes: 25%
Where do you bike:

If not, why not (check all that apply):
I would bike more if... (please describe)

- Access (to a working bike; permission) 40%
- Safety (dogs, cars) 13%
- Interest/motivation (more people did, etc.) 20%
- Convenience (weather, time, location) 17%
- Infrastructure (bike-friendly paths, trails) 10%

If you had access to a bike in exchange for volunteering, would you ride more?

- Yes 69%
- No 22%
- Maybe/probably 9%