

SHIP stories

The Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) works to improve health through better nutrition, increased physical activity and decreased commercial tobacco use and exposure.

Across the state, one key to success for SHIP efforts is working with communities. As of June 2011:

- Approximately 255 cities are working on creating master walk and bike plans; updating municipal plans to include “complete streets” with sidewalks and crosswalks; increasing access to parks, trails and recreational facilities; connecting and promoting trail systems; and collaborating on projects that improve walkability and bikeability in communities.



Healthy Living Trail in Waite Park

Waite Park residents now have the opportunity for more physical activity and healthy living while at the same time learning about cancer prevention.

The Harold P. Nelson Healthy Living Trail in the city of Waite Park (population 6,715) in Stearns County received a jumpstart from the Statewide Health Improvement Program. The trail is named in memory of the trail donor, a former Waite Park resident who died of cancer. It is a “Healthy Living Trail” because it is designated as smoke free and includes features that encourage healthy behaviors with a focus on cancer prevention: trail exercise equipment, educational stations discussing cancer prevention tips and herbs and plants that are good for health and the environment.

Beginning with the donations to pave the trail, the entire project has been a venture of local partnerships. Donated services and products have been provided by Thomsens Greenhouse & Garden Center and local master gardeners, Minnesota School of Business

Interactive Media and Graphic Design program, and Auto Trim & Sign, Martin Marietta Materials, and the City of Waite Park.

The trail has been a hit, and the best may be yet to come. It is anticipated that use will increase as the St. Cloud Area Rail Legacy (STARail) Museum, planned for Third Street near the trail, is built and becomes a local historical attraction.

SHIP is working to make the healthy choice the easy choice in Minnesota. Find out how at www.health.state.mn.us/ship